# BRITISH FEATURE FILMS AND WORKING-CLASS CULTURE, 1945-1950

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Philip Gillett. British feature films and working-class culture, 1945-1950.

An interdisciplinary approach is used to test the hypothesis that in the years following the Second World War, British films could offer working-class audiences reinforcement for their values and attitudes.

The work is in four parts:

- Part one comprises a critical exploration of published literature on working-class life in late 1940s across a range of disciplines.
- Part two is an examination of the neglected body of survey material from the period 1935-51. This is complemented by a comparison of programmes screened in working-class areas of Leeds, in the independent cinemas of south-east Essex and on the circuits.
- In part three, a sociological model for the analysis of class images in film is developed. This is applied to British films of the period which foreground working-class characters.
- Part four offers conclusions and places the work in a wider context.

The survey evidence in part two indicates that although cinema-going among all classes declined after adolescence, the type of secondary school attended was an important predictor of cinema-going, with secondary modern pupils attending more frequently into adult life. More direct evidence directly relating to class was limited.

The case study in part two reveals that around eighty per cent of the films screened were American, though the most popular British titles achieved more repeated screenings, especially on the circuits. In general, the British films which were programmed most frequently in the Leeds cinemas had a middle-class ethos. Differences in humour are discernible between Leeds and south-east Essex.

The portrayals of working class people in the films examined in part three are often stereotyped, dated and London-oriented, with little cohesion being apparent among working-class communities and no challenge to the authority structure being offered. The more authentic presentations of a working-class milieu were not popular with audiences, judging by the number of screenings of the films.

There is not sufficient evidence to support the hypothesis. Although class issues were important in British and American films of the period, social, economic and demographic factors were changing perceptions of class, while cinema was but one a range of influences on working class culture.

# CONTENTS

## Acknowledgements

# Abbreviations used

| | |
|---|---|
| ABC | Associated British Cinemas |
| ABPC | Associated British Picture Corporation |
| ATS | Auxiliary Territorial Service |
| BBC | British Broadcasting Corporation |
| BBFC | British Board of Film Censors |
| BFI | British Film Institute |
| BFPA | British Film Producers' Association |
| BIPO | British Institute of Public Opinion |
| BMA | British Medical Association |
| CCCS | Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies |
| CEA | Cinema Exhibitors' Association |
| *ITMA* | *It's That Man Again* |
| LCC | London County Council |
| LMS | London, Midland and Scottish Railway |
| M-O A | Mass-Observation Archive |
| NCO | Non-commissioned officer |
| NCSS | National Council of Social Service |
| NHS | National Health Service |
| NUT | National Union of Teachers |
| PEP | Political and Economic Planning |
| RAF | Royal Air Force |
| WEA | Workers' Educational Association |

PART ONE

# CHAPTER ONE

## Introduction

<u>The singular story of the missing audience</u>

*Birth of a Nation* is remembered; its audiences are forgotten. This has been the fate of cinema

audiences since the Lumière brothers first showed a programme of short films to the public on 28

December 1895, yet this most commercial of arts would not have survived into 1896 had there

not been people willing to pay at the box office.

A tangible reminder of the age of mass cinema-going is the redundant cinema. A walk

through the older and poorer districts of cities such as Liverpool, Leeds or Bradford reveals how

many of these distinctive, barn-like structures survive, often transformed into bingo halls, car

repair centres or carpet warehouses. They symbolise how working people took the cinema to

their hearts.[1] But what did the trip to the pictures mean to those forgotten audiences? Aside from

the problem that few observers bothered to document such an everyday activity, the researcher

into the topic faces the additional challenge of attempting to escape from those inescapable

images of the traditional working-class lifestyle which are our legacy. Comprehensive

redevelopment, new technologies, higher incomes and rising aspirations conspired to change

urban life irrevocably from the late 1950s. At the same time there was a resurgence of interest in

the working-class communities which were being displaced. A parallel is the yearning for an

idealised rural past evinced in the art favoured by a newly-urbanised Victorian upper middle

class.[2] It must be said that in the 1960s (and probably in the 1860s), enthusiasm for the lost way

of life was often shown by those who had escaped from its rigours, or by middle-class

commentators who had never experienced the joys of washing in a tin bath in the kitchen; but at

least the interest was there and it fed into cultural life. Alan Sillitoe and David Storey were

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amongst the writers of the 1960s who drew on their working-class roots, their work gaining wider currency in the films of directors such as Lindsay Anderson. This period also saw a revival of interest in the work of Bill Brandt, Sid Chaplin and other members of the previous generation of social commentators.[3]

Some images recur in this ferment of folk memories and literary impressions. Set against the backdrop of South Shields, Salford, or any of a score of smoke-shrouded industrial towns and cities in the north of England, children play in cobbled streets flanked by interminable rows of bye-law houses, doorsteps are scrubbed to gleaming whiteness in contrast to the surrounding grime and the corner shop is forever open to locals (except on Sundays). Visit this never-never land on a Saturday evening, knock on any front door, and you are unlikely to get a response. Mum and dad have taken the older children to the pictures. Push the door open (for in this myth, doors are never locked) and you are looking directly into the sitting room. The baby is sleeping, undisturbed by *Those were the Days* blaring from the Bakelite wireless on the sideboard. Grandma snoozes before the dying embers in the grate. She is meant to be baby-sitting (for in this age of extended families, neither residential homes nor Alzheimer's disease have been invented), but an empty Mackeson bottle lying on the rag rug tells another story.

Paul Addison offers another example of how we characterise the past:

> There are stock images for every period. For post-war Britain they are black and white images of hardship and high endeavour. They conjure up a land in which it was usually winter and people were digging themselves out of snowdrifts. The middle classes had disappeared and the male population, driven on by the exhortations of the government, were all digging coal or building ships. The women, meanwhile, were queuing for offal at the butcher's. In such spare time as they had left the people were grappling with social problems and were either squatting or looking forward to a set of NHS dentures. But the cinema brought relief — with the latest Central Office of Information documentary on the progress of the social services. After six years of work and welfare it was naturally time for a break, so in May 1951 the Festival of Britain was declared: but in keeping with the spirit of the times, newsreels show that on the first day it was open to the public, the rain came bucketing down.[4]

Both images contain enough truth to sustain them, as myths must. The first is specific to its location within the class structure; the second is specific in time. Both have elements, including the cinema, which locate them unambiguously within the memory of people still living. The

historian has the opportunity to exploit such sources as film and archive radio programmes which are not available for earlier periods. Paradoxically, this greater range includes that oldest of sources, oral testimony, with its inevitable reliance on memory.

The significance of memory in maintaining culture deserves comment. In the Britain of the eighteenth century and earlier, the spoken word was the predominant means of transmitting ideas for large sections of the population, ensuring that memory was regarded as vital and precious. The spread of literacy in the nineteenth century increased the importance of written culture, while photography provided an alternative means of recording and disseminating ideas. These developments diminished the central role of memory, though memorising facts and bleeding chunks from the canon of great literature loomed large in pedagogy until at least the 1960s. Newer technologies such as television and the computer facilitate the dissemination of ideas amongst a wider audience than ever before and at greater speed, the costs being the need to buy appropriate hardware to receive the message (with a consequent commodification of cultural life) and the potential monopolisation of communication.[5]

No means of communication is neutral. Aside from the fallibility of memory and the conscious manipulation of ideas by creative artists, editors, censors and fakers — factors which historians have traditionally taken into account — the newer media may themselves colour information (or remove colour: our images of the First World War are ineluctably black and white). Perforce, we approach the past obliquely, through a combination of surviving sources and received opinion. On occasions, academic and popular notions may conflict. A case in point is where the popular view is based on a conscious elaboration of the past by later writers: our images of King Arthur are heavily dependent on the work of Geoffrey of Monmouth, writing seven hundred years after Arthur was supposed to have lived, while the Scottish tourist industry of the nineteenth century was indebted to the imagined Scottish past of Scott's novels. In both cases the literary work provides the historian with a glimpse of the period when the writer lived, but what of the period being written about — what might be called the subject period? Myths are complex artefacts which deserve consideration in their own right rather than being dismissed

as unreliable sources for their subject period as historians are wont to do. What elements of the past have been woven into them and why? Why do these elements endure and how are they elaborated over time? A virtue of newer approaches to culture is that they encompass this complexity.[6] Rather than regarding myths as a problem, one option is to be alert for such imagery appearing in the art of the subject period — imagery which is demonstrated to have cultural resonance by its very presence and which provides the wellspring for ensuing myths, such as the role of the Jewish moneylender in *The Merchant of Venice*. Another possibility is to consider why an image should be so potent that it symbolises a period for later generations, as newsreel of Chamberlain's return from Munich still symbolises appeasement.

Attempting to combine our myth of the traditional working-class community with Addison's image of the post-war years produces something akin to a prototypical *Coronation Street*. It seems fitting that those slate roofs in the title sequence of early episodes should be glistening with rain. The myth demands it. Ironically, Granada's *Coronation Street* began in 1960 as the culture which it celebrated was slipping into history. The programme's popularity from its earliest days supports the notion that there was a fascination with what was being lost. This seam of nostalgia has since been mined by television producers in numerous Sunday evening offerings from the urban *Seaforth* (Initial, for BBC TV, 1994) to the rural *Plotlands* (Wall to Wall, for BBC TV, 1996), not to mention in Hovis commercials. Why such versions of the past should prove irresistible prompts speculation about why we need myths and how they are perpetuated. These questions are beyond the scope of this thesis, but one issue which does merit consideration is how film and television feed the myth. Their contribution is apparent in the work of Terence Davies, notably in *The Long Day Closes* (1992), where childhood visits to the cinema are lovingly recreated. Nor does this reflexive process — images on the screen feeding into the viewer's (and director's) value system — apply solely to images of the past: a television programme such as *Birds of a Feather* (Alomo, for BBC TV, 1989-98) helped to perpetuate the myths of 'Essex girl' and 'Essex man'.[7]

The same principle might be applied to audiences' reception of British feature films in the

late 1940s. If our typical working-class family on their weekly visit to the cinema watched a British film, they were likely to have seen working-class characters who were not quite like themselves, but as film-makers imagined them. How working-class characters were portrayed in feature films, though not specifically in the 1940s, has received some attention.[8] One problem is that by placing primary emphasis on the film, the audience remains an anonymous collectivity, acknowledged only as an aid to analysing the film rather than comprising individuals who have their own motives for going to the cinema. We never learn the significance of the film in their lives. There are signs of change. If the audience itself has not come under the glare of the spotlight — the fitful beam of the usherette's torch is a more appropriate metaphor in more than one sense — at least its presence is being noticed by film historians.[9]

If film historians sometimes fail to give due weight to the social implications of film-going, social historians considering the 1940s give audiences little more than a token nod when such juicy topics as rationing and the founding of the welfare state vie for attention. There is a middle way: setting cinema-going in its social and cultural context using an interdisciplinary approach. As Stuart Hall claims of popular culture. '. . . it yields most when it is seen in relation to a more general, a wider history'.[10] The need for such an approach is there. This is exemplified by the continuing concern about the effects of film violence on audiences in general and on children and adolescents in particular, which suggests that the prospect of life mimicking film has long been regarded as a threat.[11] It provides the raison d'être for that British obsession, censorship, though less clear is who is being protected — the rulers or the ruled. Leaving audiences to languish in obscurity means denying ourselves potentially valuable insights into how the processes of covert social control have functioned in twentieth-century Britain.

Following on from this, was the reflexive element of cinema itself regarded as a problem by censors: were they concerned that film-makers' images of ordinary people affected the self-image of working-class audiences?[12] Prior to the Second World War, the studied avoidance of controversy, including anything which smacked of class conflict, suggests that the answer is a qualified yes.[13] There is general agreement that with the outbreak of war, the British Board of

Film Censors became less rigid in its stance, though precisely when and why is open to debate.[14] Were censors or audiences subject to a sea change, or should everything be ascribed to the exigencies of war? Alternatively, was the premise of how films affected audiences being thrown into doubt? And what was the role of film in the immediate post-war years? Did film-makers or censors seek to reassert the values of the 1930s, or did they embrace the new Jerusalem and portray the heightened status of ordinary people as W.G. Runciman implies?[15] And how did audiences respond? These are the topics which need to be addressed by considering the significance of films for audiences as opposed to the internal evidence of the films themselves. The questions merit consideration not only for their intrinsic historical interest, but for their underlying and still relevant assumptions about the psychology of 'the masses' and the power of visual media to influence behaviour.

Given that working-class people comprised a large sector of the audience and that the commercial success of the domestic British cinema industry in the 1940s was predicated on being responsive to its market, the hypothesis is put forward that in the years following the Second World War, British films could offer working-class audiences reinforcement for their values and attitudes. Values are defined as tenets which govern behaviour and attitudes as habitual modes of thought. The thesis might be disproved by a dislike of British films, the promotion in films of overtly middle-class values and attitudes, the guying of working-class values and attitudes, or a studied avoidance of contemporary issues affecting the mass of the people. It should be noted that the hypothesis is couched in terms of the potential for reinforcing values and attitudes. Testing whether the potential was achieved requires an extended study of the psychology of perception. Not only would this exceed the time and space available, but much of the evidence is based on controlled experiments, the results of which cannot readily be applied to historical phenomena.

The topic may be approached in three stages which form the objectives of this thesis:

- to discover which British films working-class audiences watched in the late 1940s,
- to explore how working-class characters were portrayed in these films, and

- to assess the role of the cinema in working-class culture.

Because the three objectives are distinct in their methods and sources, each is considered in a separate section which is prefaced by a discussion of methodology.

- The remaining introductory material in part one comprises first a review of relevant literature in the fields of sociology, history, cultural studies, psychology, and women's studies (chapter two). One way of preventing discussion of film from becoming abstract is to draw upon the memories of people who formed the audiences. This is the approach taken by Melinda Mash.[16] Another strategy, and the principal one adopted here, is to ground readings of films in the realities of working-class life. Accordingly, chapters three and four are an examination of objective and subjective approaches to working-class culture.

- Part two comprises an analysis of audience surveys of the late 1940s and a comparison of the films screened in Leeds and south-east Essex. The purposes of the case study are to provide a clearer idea of the types of British films which were being screened, to discover which films proved most popular in working-class locations as judged by the number of bookings by exhibitors, and to highlight regional differences. Additional data is drawn from Sheffield, Cheltenham, Macclesfield and the West End of London.

- Using a sociological model, part three is an examination of images of class in some of the more popular British films and in a few which never caught the public's imagination.[17]

- Part four serves as the conclusion and is the most speculative section. It is an assessment of the role of the cinema in working-class culture.


A note on methodology and sources


Underlying the agenda offered above and providing recurrent themes throughout this work are broader methodological issues. The problem of trying to delimit an all-embracing concept such

as social class is one instance which will be considered further in the following chapters. The absence of any established sociological model for analysing class in films is another. Although a model is offered, it does not have the virtue of being tested and evaluated by other researchers before being employed. In an ideal world, a model of proven worth should be used to assess the evidence. Here, the model and the evidence are both on trial.

Sources provide their own frustrations. Discovering what was watched is a necessary step in this work: however fascinating, a film which advocated violent class conflict could have little impact if it only received a limited distribution. Yet even this modest exercise in fact-finding is fraught with difficulty. The commercial secrecy endemic in the British cinema industry in the 1940s, combined with the loss or non-availability of business records, has resulted in a dearth of hard evidence about the popularity of particular films.[18] To circumvent this deficiency, a neglected approach to be employed here is to stray from the well-thumbed pages of *Kinematograph Weekly* and utilise the cinema listings in local papers to ascertain which films audiences were being offered.

To compound the problem, the acceptance of film as a disposable medium has resulted in many films being lost. This weakness affects part three — exploring how the working class was portrayed in film. Around half the British feature films released between 1945 and 1950 are readily accessible at the BFI or on video. To these should be added an unknown number to which television companies around the world hold rights.[19] Some potentially interesting films fall into the 'missing believed lost' category. These include *The Agitator* (dir. John Harlow, 1945), with a plot involving a socialist agitator who inherits a factory; and *The Turners of Prospect Road* (dir. Maurice J. Wilson, 1947), in which a taxi-driver's daughter wins a Dog Derby with her pet greyhound. Such gaps in the range of source material have to be borne in mind in arriving at any conclusions.

The films to be considered are mainly feature films registered as British and first released between 1945 and 1950. Films made prior to 1945 were being screened in the post-war years, so these are discussed, where relevant. Documentaries and newsreels are excluded — the nature of

their relationship to historical events and the self-conscious attempt to capture reality merit more attention than can be given here.

Evidence on the role of cinema in working-class life is available from a wide range of sources including literature, oral testimony, and studies in social psychology from the 1940s.[20] In some respects, oral testimony is the most problematic. The reliability of memory and the validity of personal experience as source material are linked issues. Most people would concede that representations of the past presented on the screen are not realistic in the strict sense, but even those who lived through the 1940s and 50s may be hard put to divorce their recollections from images assimilated from television and elsewhere. Tom Harrisson has noted how the recollections of Mass-Observation observers active during the war were at variance with evidence collected at the time.[21] Reality and the elaborations introduced by memory and by images drawn from literature, film, and television merged to produce something new for these people: the myth of national unity during the blitz.[22] Government-supported propaganda won out in the end, albeit by feeding into later representations and reinterpretations of the war. Similarly, the cinema-goer of the 1940s had no means of knowing that *Brief Encounter* (dir. David Lean, 1945) would be remembered fifty years on, whilst other films released at the same time would be forgotten. How much is recall of the film coloured by its reputation and by repeated viewings, whether on television or in the cinema?[23] Alex Robertson confronts a similar dilemma in his study of the winter of 1947:

> But the documentary record of the period, it rapidly became clear, was so extensive and detailed that there seemed to be no significant gaps of the kind which oral evidence can be so successful in bridging. My doubts about the necessity for oral evidence were reinforced by misgivings about its reliability in this case. . . . Then, when I read in quick succession four separate accounts of the Fuel Crisis published by Lord Shinwell over the space of some twenty-five years, my doubts grew stronger. To say that his accounts were not entirely consistent with one another would be to put it mildly.[24]

Six pages further on, Robertson confesses that 'A brief conversation with Sir Alec Cairncross not only gave me a number of things to think about that I might otherwise have missed, but made me wonder about the wisdom of my decision as to the use of oral evidence.'[25]

In examining a social activity such as cinema-going, the case for making use of interviews is

strong. First, oral testimony gives a sense of what the cinema meant to people which cannot be gained from statistics. Secondly, reminiscences about the age, class or gender composition of audiences might not be quantifiable, but this is no worse than being confronted with a mass of survey evidence which yields contradictory results. Thirdly, oral testimony may yield details which rarely found their way into written records.[26] Popular culture divorced from the thoughts and feelings of those experiencing it can too easily take on an air of unreality.

Aside from the vagaries of memory, the use of personal experience runs the risk of introducing values and attitudes attributable to the social scientist's inability to stand aside from ideology (Mannheim's paradox).[27] The risk seems worth taking. As A.H. Halsey puts it: '. . . personal knowledge, however unsystematically, covers a vastly larger territory than any specialised knowledge. A man may be no architect, but buildings evoke periods and people he has never known. A woman may be no paediatrician yet spend half her life tending children: people may be innocent of theology but can scarcely avoid coming to terms with life and death.'[28] He might have added that even if personal experience could be set aside, drawing on it saves time and effort: ten minutes spent walking the streets can give the feel of an area's social composition as accurately as reams of labouriously-collected data. Admittedly the status of an area may rise or fall, but as Halsey implies, buildings are replaced less often than the people.

To visit Richard Hoggart's school in Jack Lane, Hunslet, is a haunting experience. Though sandwiched between modern industrial units, it still has the power to evoke the world of Hoggart's childhood, so vividly described in his autobiography.[29] It provides a tangible link with the past which must be grasped by a leap of the imagination. Without the willingness to take such a leap, history risks becoming sterile.

A further problem is how to classify sources. It is customary in historical research to distinguish between primary and secondary sources, the categorisation being a matter of timing (how long has elapsed between the events being considered and the creation of the source?), of knowledge (did the creator have first-hand knowledge of events?) and of interpretation (has an analysis been imposed on events?). In recent history, the distinctions are blurred. The

autobiographies of film stars may offer unique insights into film-making in the 1940s, yet when they are written forty years after the events recounted, should they be classed as primary or secondary? How should a 1955 account of the social attitudes of the 1940s be categorised? What of works which form part of a continuing debate on a topic such as censorship? Other disciplines are less hidebound, so a solution appropriate to interdisciplinary work and adopted here is to distinguish between primary and secondary sources only when doing so is unambiguous and useful. This approach has the added advantage that for bibliographical purposes, sources may be grouped by date of publication.[30]

Any research into a past era must draw on the skills of the historian, but this is no reason for excluding other disciplines. Although interdisciplinary work is now relatively common, a divide still exists between quantitative and qualitative approaches. An aim of this thesis is to marry the two and not to be hidebound by any one discipline. A second aim is to provide a resource for other researchers faced with this disparate array of literature.

Another problem accentuated by an interdisciplinary approach stems from the theoretical standpoint adopted. Accepting a body of theory means acknowledging its ideology. Because history has traditionally been classed among the humanities, the historian is apt to take a relaxed attitude to ideological stances (the word 'bias' is bandied about more often). The same cannot be said of the social scientist with the most ideologically sensitive nose — the sociologist. One way of reconciling these disparate positions is to make a virtue of necessity by embracing Paul Feyerabend's brand of epistemological anarchism and obtaining knowledge from a proliferation of views rather than from the determined application of a professed ideology.[31] This seems well suited to an examination of cultural artefacts such as films:

> Once it has been realized that close empirical fit is no virtue and that it must be relaxed
> in times of change, then style, elegance of expression, simplicity of presentation, tension
> of plot and narrative, and seductiveness of content become important features of our
> knowledge. They give life to what is said and help to overcome the resistance of the
> observational material. They *create* and maintain interest in a theory that has been partly
> removed from the observational plane and would be inferior to its rivals when judged by
> the customary standards.[32] (author's italics)

Though coming from a different theoretical position, Leonard Quart and Albert Austin echo

these sentiments in their study of American film and society since 1945: 'This book is based on the now anachronistic idea that a passion for and personal commitment to the imaginative life of film can be an integral part of the critical process, and that the critique can be conveyed in a language that any intelligent person who cares about film can understand.'[33] In essence, the critical process and its presentation takes precedence over the theoretical starting point, though thorough-going sociologists may object to this.

The choice of period deserves comment. All periodisation is in the final resort arbitrary. With this proviso, 1945 is an obvious starting point. It marked the end of the war and the beginning of the post-war period of austerity (a less contentious term than 'The Age of Austerity'). As an ending, 1950 is arbitrary. Though it was the beginning of a new decade — always a potent symbol — the start of the Korean War hardly carried a similar resonance to 1939 for British society: Korea was too far away. The discussion might equally well be extended to the Festival of Britain in 1951, the re-election of a Conservative government in the same year, or the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II in 1953. But social trends have an untidy habit of overlapping landmark occasions. As the restrictions of austerity were progressively eased from 1948 to 1954, consumer demand assumed increasing importance. This had implications for social activity and for the economy. There is no clear end point. For a British film industry which had seen audience figures peak in 1946, a decline was apparent by 1950.[34] This rapid change of fortune makes the latter year as good a choice for a finishing point as any.

Inevitably some topics have to be omitted. The cinema-going of rural workers is not considered in any detail. Given that there were fewer cinemas in rural areas like East Anglia, making transport more of an issue, the role of the cinema in people's lives was likely to be different.[35] Secondly, the effects of immigration from the New Commonwealth are not addressed. Though immigration did take place from the late 1940s, the numbers of people involved were relatively small and immigrants were concentrated in ports. Outbreaks of racial violence were localised and sporadic.[36] Racial tension on any scale was a phenomenon of the 1950s.

So far, the terms 'Britain' and 'England' have been used interchangeably. In part this reflects

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the vagaries of source material which was not gathered for the convenience of researchers: some

statistics are for Great Britain and others for England and Wales, while on the qualitative side in

particular, some writers never define their geographical terms. The ambiguity also arises from

everyday usage of the term 'English culture' to mean either high culture as recognised by

Matthew Arnold or F.R. Leavis, or an Englishness associated with the supposedly unchanging

English countryside and its way of life (another potent myth). High culture and shire culture are

brought together in the pastoralism of A.E. Housman and George Butterworth. To avoid these

connotations, the term 'British culture' will be used even though the emphasis is on English

urban life.[37] Sources relevant to Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland will be cited where

available.

## Notes

1. For statistical evidence see PEP, *The British film industry*. London: PEP, 1952, 196-7; H.E.
Browning and A.A. Sorrell, 'Cinemas and cinema-going in Great Britain', *Journal of the Royal
Statistical Society*, 1954, series A, general, vol.117, pt.2, 133-70.
    Using 1950 Board of Trade data, Browning and Sorrell calculate the ratio of population to
cinema seats on a regional basis (table 6). Against a national average of 11.6 persons per seat,
the older industrial regions of Scotland and the north of England, with their proportionally higher
working-class population, show a greater concentration of seats relative to population — 8.6
persons per seat in Scotland, 9.5 in Northumberland and Lancashire and 10.1 in the East and
West Ridings of Yorkshire.

2. Martin J. Wiener, *English culture and the decline of the industrial spirit 1850-1980*.
Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982, 49-80; Paul Street, 'Painting deepest England:
the late landscapes of John Linnell and the uses of nostalgia', in Christopher Shaw and Malcolm
Chase (eds.) *The imagined past: history and nostalgia*. Manchester: Manchester University
Press, 1989, 68-80. Wiener links the nostalgia for a rural Arcadia to a distaste for industry —
akin to seeing cinema as providing an escape from everyday life — though he has little to say
about visual art.

3. Alan Plater's play *Close the Coalhouse Door*, adapted from the stories of Sid Chaplin, was
premiered in Newcastle-upon-Tyne in 1968 and transferred to the Fortune Theatre, London,
where is ran from 22 October 1968 to 15 February 1969 before going on a national tour.
    John Schlesinger told Bill Brandt that he showed Brandt's photographs to actors prior to
shooting *A Kind of Loving* (1962) and *Billy Liar* (1963). Mark Haworth-Booth and David
Mellor, *Bill Brandt behind the camera: photographs 1928-1983*. Oxford: Phaidon, 1985, 73.
The authors' bibliography reflects the fluctuating critical interest in Brandt: after 1951, the next
published work was not till 1961.

4. Paul Addison, *Now the war is over: a social history of Britain 1945-51*. London: BBC and Cape, 1985, 113.

5. Peter Golding and Graham Murdock, 'Culture, communication and political economy', in James Curran and Michael Gurevitch (eds.) *Mass media and society*. London: Edward Arnold, 1991, 20; James Carey, *Communication as culture: essays on media and society*. London: Routledge, 1992, 166.

The film industry evaded the hardware problem by having the exhibitor incur the capital costs of the cinema and its equipment, recouping the outlay via the box office at a ticket price which was affordable by almost every sector of the population.

As long as the potential for monopolisation by the individual, company, or state remains, there is no *a priori* reason why a ruling cadre or charismatic leader should not seek to exert control over oral communication. Achieving it is another matter.

6. Notable in this context is Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*, trans. Annette Lavers, London: Cape, 1972, though acknowledging the importance of mythology is not the exclusive prerogative of French intellectuals. See Parker Tyler, *Magic and myth of the movies*, New York: Holt, 1947, ix; D.H. Munro, 'The concept of myth', *Sociological Review*, 1950, vol.42, 115-32.

In reviewing Jeffrey Richards, *Films and British national identity: from Dickens to 'Dad's Army'*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997, Ian Christie detects the historian's traditional reliance on facts at the expense of the symbolic importance of films. *Book of the Month*, BBC Radio 3, 11 July, 1997.

7. This use of the term 'reflexive' is akin to that of Paul Cressey: the role of the cinema is reflexive in that it takes its specific character from the social configuration in which the film is experienced. Paul G. Cressey, 'The motion picture experience modified by social background and personality', *American Sociological Review*, 1938, vol.3, 523. This is somewhat different from the use of the term by Robert Stam, who explores how the process of creating a novel or film is incorporated into the finished work. An example of this self-conscious toying with the form is John Fowles' *The French lieutenant's woman* (1969) and Pinter's screenplay of the novel. Robert Stam, *Reflexivity in film and literature: from Don Quixote to Jean-Luc Godard*. Ann Arbor, MI: UMI Research Press, 1985.

8. e.g. S. Craig Shafer, 'Enter the dream house: the British film industry and the working classes in depression England 1929-39', PhD thesis, University of Illinois, 1981; Peter Stead, *Film and the working class*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1989; Andrew Higson, *Waving the flag: constructing a national cinema in Britain*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, Clarendon Press, 1995.

9. e.g. Shafer, op.cit. (ch.1, n.8); Jeffrey Richards, *The age of the dream palace: cinema and society in Britain 1930-1939*. London: Routledge, 1989; Sue Harper, *Picturing the past: the rise and fall of the British costume film*. London: BFI, 1994.

10. Stuart Hall, 'Notes on deconstructing "the popular"', in Raphael Samuel (ed.) *People's history and socialist theory*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981, 230.

11. An example is provided by a Home Office survey of 1945:

> To girls brought up on the cinema, who copied the dress, hair styles and manners of Hollywood stars, the sudden influx of Americans, speaking like the films, who actually lived in the magic country, and who had plenty of money, at once went to the girls' heads. The American attitude to women, their proneness to spoil a girl, to build up, exaggerate, talk big, and to act with generosity and flamboyance, helped to make them the most attractive boy friends. In addition, they "picked up" easily, and even a comparatively plain and unattractive girl stood a chance.

Quoted in Sheila Ferguson and Hilde Fitzgerald, *Studies in the social services. History* of the Second World War: United Kingdom Civil Series. London: HMSO and Longmans. Green, 1954, 97-8.

More recently, a similar concern has been expressed about the effect of teenage sex story-lines in television soap operas, e.g. Olga Craig, *Sunday Telegraph*. 24 August 1997.

12. Melinda Mash shares a methodological concern with this self-regarding element of cinema, which both reflects society yet contributes to creating social norms. Following John Hill, she opts for a dual focus approach taking in both aspects. Melinda Mash, 'The imperfect woman: femininity and British cinema 1945-1958', PhD thesis, University of Middlesex, 1996, 5-6; John Hill, *Sex. class and realism: British cinema 1956-63*, London: BFI, 1986.

13. Forsyth Hardy, 'Censorship and film societies', in Charles Davy (ed.) *Footnotes to the film*, London: Lovat Dickson and Readers Union, 1938, 264-5; Richards, op.cit. (ch.1, n.9) 105-21.

14. ibid. 324; Nicholas Pronay and Jeremy Croft, 'British film censorship and propaganda policy during the Second World War', in James Curran and Vincent Porter (eds.) *British cinema history*, London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1983, 150; John Trevelyan, 'Film censorship in Great Britain', *Screen*, summer 1970, vol.11, no.3, 26.

15. W.G. Runciman, *Relative deprivation and social justice: a study of attitudes to social inequality in twentieth century England*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1966, 116.

16. Mash, op.cit. (ch.1, n.12) 16-17.

17. In her discussion of historical films, Harper suggests that giving consideration to the full range of material to account for the lack of popularity of some films helps to safeguard against latent sentimentalism. Harper, op.cit. (ch.1, n.9) 4.

18. A problem encountered by other researchers including Harper, ibid. 136-46; and Robert Murphy, *Realism and tinsel: cinema and society in Britain 1939-49*, London: Routledge, 1992, 231-59. One unusual solution is to adopt a quantitative index of popularity, e.g. John Sedgwick, 'Cinemagoing preferences in Britain in the 1930s', in Jeffrey Richards (ed.) *The unknown 1930s: an alternative history of the British cinema 1929-1938*, London: Tauris, 1998, 1-35, though once again the model is on trial as much as the evidence. Janet Thumim's approach will be considered in the next chapter.

19. The listing of films and dates used for the purposes of this thesis is Denis Gifford, *The British film catalogue 1895-1985*, Newton Abbot, Devon: David & Charles, 1986. Though there is room for negotiation in some of Gifford's genre classifications (should Carol Reed's *Odd Man Out* of 1947 really be classed as a crime film?), they are useful in such instances as comparing the patterns of screening in two areas. His decision to date films by their initial exhibition rather than by their commercial release can lead to some minor inconsistencies when a film's distribution beyond the West End of London is being followed. Whatever the quibbles, he does provide the only comprehensive listing of British films. Unless trade literature and reviews from the period are explicitly mentioned, plot synopses are taken from Gifford and from Peter Quinlan, *British sound films: the studio years 1928-1959*, London: Batsford, 1984.

The definition of a feature film is that adopted for quota purposes, which is a film of at least 3,000ft in length, i.e. with a minimum running time of 33 minutes (Donald Alexander, *Facts about films*, London: Bureau of Current Affairs, 1946, 9). Using this criterion, 491 feature films are listed by Gifford as released between 1945 and 1950. Of these, the National Film Archive held viewing copies of 247 in 1996, while around a dozen additional titles were available commercially.

20. Interviewees were enlisted by placing a letter in the *Yorkshire Evening Post* and from handouts at an exhibition on the cinemas of south-east Essex held at Southend-on-Sea Central Museum in 1997.

21. Tom Harrisson, *Living through the blitz*, London: Collins, 1976, 324-30.

22. The most trenchant attack on the orthodoxy of national unity is Angus Calder, *The myth of the blitz*, London: Cape, 1991. Whether or not Calder's thesis is correct is less important in this context than the fact that the observers' perceptions changed.

23.     To see it [*Brief Encounter*] again twenty years on, at the Baker Street Classic, is to see another film entirely. Not that it no longer rings true. But the lovers in the drab Milford Junction buffet seem so strained, guilty, cowed, and therefore cold, that in 1965 the audience in this usually polite and certainly middle-class hall couldn't restrain its derision and repeatedly burst into angry exasperated laughter.
Raymond Durgnat, *A mirror for England: British films from austerity to affluence*, London: Faber, 1970, 180.

24. Alex J. Robertson, *The bleak midwinter: 1947*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1987, viii-ix. The fallibility of memory is also demonstrated in David Niven's recollections of the English colony in Hollywood. K.R.M. Short, preface to K.R.M. Short (ed.) *Feature films as history*, Beckenham, Kent: Croom Helm, 1981, 18-20.

25. Robertson, op.cit. (ch.1, n.24) xv.

26. An example is the practice of cutting films to squeeze in an extra screening. Interview with Michael Tranded (former projectionist at Garons Cinema, Southend-on-Sea), Westcliff-on-Sea, Essex, 24 January 1997. There could also be a need to fit a programme into the restricted opening hours allowed on Sundays. Interview with George Halle (former owner of Broadway Cinema, Pitsea, Essex), Benfleet, Essex, 1 April 1997. A reel could be omitted because the programme was running late. Interview with Dick Woodley (former projectionist at the Strand Cinema, Southend-on-Sea), Southend-on-Sea, 1 February 1997 . Scattered references to the practice appear in print. Cutting did allow two strong films to be fitted into one programme. 'Does the public want longer films?' *World Film News*, July 1936, vol.1, no.4, 15. It could also make films more acceptable for audiences, such as those in the village cinema where passion in films was disliked. Charles Hatton, 'Running a village cinema', *Film Monthly Review*, December 1948, vol.6, no.14, 13-14. Whether these practices were widely employed cannot be known.

27. See Karl Mannheim, *Ideology and utopia*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1960; Clifford Geertz, *The interpretation of cultures: selected essays*, London: Fontana Press, 1993, 194.

28. A.H. Halsey, *Change in British society from 1900 to the present day*, 4th edn., Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995, 10-11.

29. Richard Hoggart, *Life and times*, vol.1: *A local habitation, 1918-1940*, London: Chatto & Windus, 1988, 138-55. The school has since been demolished (1999).

30. The same solution is adopted by Susan Harper Ditman [nee Harper],'The representation of history in British feature film 1933-50', PhD thesis, CNAA, 1990. For bibliographical purposes, Harper groups sources from 1930 to 1950 and from 1951 to 1990.

31. Paul Feyerabend, *Against method: outline of an anarchistic theory of knowledge*, London: NLB, 1975, 52.

32. ibid. 152.

33. Leonard Quart and Albert Auster, *American film and society since 1945*, 2nd edn., Westport, CT, and London: Praeger, 1991, 11.

34. PEP, op.cit. (ch.1, n.1) 186.

35. Annette Kuhn, 'Cinema culture in 1930s Britain', end of award report ESRC Project R2000 23 5385, University of Glasgow, Department of Theatre, Film and Television Studies, [1997?], 13; PEP, op.cit. (ch.1, n.1) 196-7. Len England takes a variant view, seeing the frequency of cinema-going amongst those living in the country and in small towns as only slightly less than that in larger centres. Len England, 'What the cinema means to the British public', in Roger Manvell (ed.) *The year's work in the film 1949*, London: Longmans, Green (for British Council), 1950, 63. Pearl Jephcott is of the same opinion. A.P. Jephcott, *Girls growing up*, London: Faber, 1942, 115.

36. As Juliet Cheetham points out, accurate figures for the number of coloured immigrants in Britain were not available till 1956. This lack of official interest suggests that immigration was not perceived as a problem until the mid 1950s. Cheetham offers an estimate of 103,100 coloured immigrants born in Commonwealth countries who were resident in England and Wales in 1951.
   Peter Fryer notes that immigration from the West Indies during the late 1940s was counted in hundreds rather than thousands per year. Though he mentions that there was a race riot in Liverpool in 1948 when the black population of the city was about 8,000, this needs to be seen in the context of continuing tensions not directly associated with the colour problem – there were anti-Semitic riots in the city the previous year, while feuds between Catholics and Protestants were a regular feature of Everton life.
   As an illustration of the size of immigrant groups in 1951 in an industrial centre away from the ports, the Leeds population included 682 Indians, 151 Pakistanis, 45 Africans and 107 Caribbeans, together comprising 0.2% of the population of the city. Presumably the figures include expatriates.
   John Barron Mays, *Growing up in the city: a study of juvenile delinquency in an urban neighbourhood*, Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1954, 43-4; Juliet Cheetham, 'Immigration', in A.H. Halsey (ed.) *Trends in British Society since 1900: a guide to the changing social structure of Britain*, Basingstoke, Hants, and London: Macmillan, 1972, 456 and table 14.7; Peter Fryer, *Staying power: the history of black people in Britain*, London: Pluto Press, 1984, 367-73; Garfield Allen, Black Arts co-ordinator, 'Being Here' exhibition, West Yorkshire Playhouse, October 1997.

37. The ambiguity afflicted both Michael Balcon and George Orwell. See Charles Barr, 'Projecting Britain and the British character, part 1', *Screen*, spring vol.15, no.1, 87; Robert Hewison, *Culture and consensus: art and politics since 1940*, London: Methuen, 1995, 25.

CHAPTER TWO

Perspectives and interpretations

<u>Delimiting the field</u>

Film studies is a fledgling discipline. A consequence of this is that any research from more than

twenty years ago is likely to be disseminated amongst a range of disciplines. Though cinema

audiences have hardly generated a vast literature, there is a solid body of primary source material

from the 1940s, much of it lurking between the unpromising covers of such publications as the

*Journal of Educational Psychology* and liable to be overlooked. This material is examined in

detail in part two. When taken in conjunction with an avowedly interdisciplinary approach, the

diffuseness of the source material means that from being a modest exercise, a literature survey of

material on film audiences becomes wide-ranging. Relevant material drawn from sociology,

history, cultural studies, psychology and women's studies will be considered. Given such a wide

brief, every work cannot be examined in detail. Instead, this chapter is intended to give a glimpse

of the cultural climate of the late 1940s and to survey subsequent trends and preoccupations in

academic thought about the period.

Four caveats are appropriate. First, the chosen fields are not the only ones which might

repay study — the economics of the film industry, the relationship of film to literary and

dramatic sources, and how class distinctions can be conveyed in film music are deserving of

consideration — but they do offer a spectrum of approaches, data and insights. Secondly, the

boundaries between disciplines and sub-disciplines are far from clear, notably between sociology

and social anthropology (the latter is here subsumed under the heading of sociology), between

social history and sociology, between sociology and social psychology — and between cultural

studies and almost everything else. Agonising about this blurring of academic demarcation lines

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is seldom fruitful. Assigning a work to any particular discipline is, in the last resort, arbitrary.

Thirdly, fine distinctions between 'cultural studies', 'media studies' and 'film studies' can excite

debate. The term 'cultural studies' is adopted here as the most all-embracing option. Similar

reasoning applies to the use of the term 'women's studies'. Fourthly, any bias towards British

sources is a way of keeping the discussion to a manageable length.


## Sociological perspectives


Going to the pictures is a curious activity: hundreds of people conniving in the fantasy that

images of the iconic film star projected on a screen have significance. Given the weight of

symbolism involved, it is strange that the cinema has not found its Erving Goffman to explore

this process from the inside.[1] The sociology of the cinema has the potential to offer many

insights; the surprising thing is that it yields such meagre returns. It is difficult to dissent from

the view that sociology has paid scant attention to leisure as a consequence of classical theorists'

emphasis on leisure as dependent and residual rather than autonomous and central.[2] Terry Lovell

surveyed writings on the sociology of the cinema in 1971, but it was a pretty empty field and not

much has changed since then.[3] J.P. Mayer's pioneering work in the 1940s deserves credit for

presenting film-goers' responses in their own words, even if the material is haphazardly collected

and in need of analysis.[4] Almost a quarter of a century later, Ian Jarvie's cautiously-entitled

*Towards a sociology of the cinema* may have prompted Lovell's interest (she characterises

Jarvie's work as a micro-sociological study tracing the implications of role-position within the

structure of the cinema industry).[5] Certainly Talcott Parsons, that high priest of structural-

functionalism, casts a long shadow over Jarvie's work: the emphasis on structure takes away the

sense of movement which a phenomenological approach might yield — and the cinema industry

is nothing if not in a constant state of flux. By limiting conceptual analysis, Jarvie comes close to

offering a social history of the cinema rather than a sociological critique. A similar criticism may

be levelled at Andrew Tudor's 1974 work, which is more concerned with approaches to film than

with the role of the cinema in society.[6] J.S.R. Goodlad's *A sociology of popular drama* raises hopes which are soon dashed, film being almost entirely ignored in favour of the stage and television.[7] More valuable insights into the influence of class on attitudes to films and film stars, albeit in an American context, are offered by the unpublished theses of Frederick Elkin and Robert Cunningham which straddle the divide between sociology and social psychology, though these works date from the 1950s.[8]

Italian film-makers have stimulated some enthusiasm among the sociologically inclined.[9] George Huaco's work has at least peripheral interest here. Among the directors he considers is the neo-realist Luigi Zampa, whose 1949 film *Children of Chance* was registered in Britain.

By comparison with the sociology of the cinema, the sociology of class offers an embarrassment of riches. The diffuseness of the literature on film before film studies gained academic respectability has been noted. Similar remarks apply to sociology in the immediate post-war years. Exactly what was sociology? Writing in 1947, Tom Harrisson saw it as akin to anthropology, the difference being that the latter was reserved for studying 'so-called primitive peoples'. In his view, sociology was unduly dominated by statistical methods.[10] Almost a decade later, David Lockwood was still uncertain whether sociology should be regarded as a specific or a synthesising discipline.[11] He might have added that there was an equally wide divide between the theoretical Germanic tradition carried through the works of Marx and Weber and developed in this country by émigrés including Karl Mannheim and Ralf Dahrendorf, and the socialist approach of the more pragmatic English school exemplified by G.D.H. Cole and Harold Laski. These dual tensions — a diversity of aims and of methods — underlie the corpus of what may loosely be called sociological writing from the 1940s and early 1950s in Britain. In the absence of departments of sociology, research on social issues came from such diverse sources as departments of social science (Liverpool), philosophy (Nottingham) and education (London, Leeds and Birmingham). If there was a unifying feature, it was a concern with social class. In the first issue of the *British Journal of Sociology* in 1950, five of the six articles deal with class and social status.

Socialist academics, including not only Cole and Laski, but T.H. Marshall, Richard Titmuss and R.H. Tawney, stand at the philosophical end of the spectrum of British sociology.[12] More empirical are the approaches of Ferdynand Zweig, former professor of political economy at Cracow, who relied on unstructured interviews to catch the flavour of the culture, and the statistically-inclined Mark Abrams, economist and managing director of Research Services Limited.[13] More eclectic than either was Mass-Observation, though after the war the sheer quantity of its work decreased.[14] The works from these three sources provide a mass of witting and unwitting testimony about working-class life in the 1940s.

Closer to Zweig's approach in method rather than in tone are studies drawing on the techniques of social anthropology, notably on participant observation.[15] In Noel Annan's estimation, much of the intellectual energy which might have animated sociology in the 1950s went into anthropology.[16] The result is an often intriguing cache of material in which the working class is treated like some exotic and hitherto unknown tribe, whose mores can evince wafts of disapproval. Pearl Jephcott declares of her Marylebone girls in hearty tones reminiscent of Joyce Grenfell's games mistress: 'A scanty range of interests, two or three nights a week at the pictures, and perhaps dancing a couple of nights a week, for years on end, is likely to make anyone a rather dull sort of person by 19.'[17] This approach is hardly calculated to illuminate the finer nuances of working-class life — or the social and economic constraints from which escape was difficult if not impossible.

In sum, there is an array of primary source material from the 1940s and the early 1950s which examines the working class from a number of perspectives and offers glimpses of cinema-going habits. The very variety provides a check against bias: one approach may be compared with another. With the benefit of hindsight, some implicit assumptions become apparent. 'Culture' is not defined, which points to the term being synonymous with 'high culture': by definition, it was irrelevant to the lives of factory workers. Nor is much effort made to delineate the working class, the definition generally being implicit. Henry Mess attempts in a discursive way to pin down the elusive quality of belonging to a class.[18] T.H. Pear, sometime professor of

sociology at the University of Manchester, concurs with the American sociologist Richard Centers that class is a poorly-understood concept — and investigates stratification instead.[19] For a more rigorous contemporary attempt to pin down class, the work of Centers and his colleagues is a good starting point, though whether this reveals more about sociology in America or the nature of American society is open to question.[20] One moral, drawn from criticism of Richard Centers' work in America and relevant to all studies relying on questionnaires, is that the apparent precision of a quantitative approach can be illusory if the questions are wrongly framed.[21]

Changes in the social structure of Britain were charted by David Glass in 1954[22] — significantly, he was a demographer rather than a sociologist — but a few years were to elapse before the trickle of works on contemporary British society became a torrent, in parallel with the rapid expansion of tertiary education. The late 1950s to the early 1970s were a golden age for British sociology. It was suggested in chapter one that the burgeoning interest in sociological theory and the nature of society arose because the social structure inherited from the industrial revolution was perceived as undergoing ineradicable change. An alternative explanation is that a generation of upwardly-mobile sociologists in their twenties were rebelling against the apparent class certainties of childhood in the 1940s. Whatever the reason for this interest, class, and in particular the fortunes of the working class, held sway as the dominant theme in sociology. Embourgeoisement was the concept which encapsulated much thinking of the time, with arguments raging over the nature of the new working class. The works emanating from the Institute of Community Studies have stood the test of time better than most.[23] If the debate was at times notable for the quantity of research rather than its quality, at least it ensured that class remained a living issue.

Linked to concerns about embourgeoisement was a parallel debate about the emerging meritocracy based on education. One feature of this debate was the gap opening up in working-class families between children who derived aspirations from education and parents who held to a traditional working-class value system. The problem was dramatised in such works as Arnold

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Wesker's stage play *Roots* (1959) and Alun Owen's television play *Lena, Oh My Lena* (BBC TV, 1960). It also formed an early storyline for *Coronation Street* (Granada, 1960 — ) in the character of Ken Barlow and his alienation from his parents. Sadly, there was little attempt artistically or sociologically to examine how such tensions manifested themselves in earlier years, though it had been prefigured in films such as *The Stars Look Down* (dir. Carol Reed, 1939) and *Fame is the Spur* (dir. Roy Boulting, 1947).

If the boundaries between sociology and history — even recent history — remained intact in the 1960s, the boundaries between sociology, social action and art could be blurred. The most famous and most influential work from this hybrid genre was *Cathy Come Home* (BBC TV, 1966).[24] The genesis of this movement is complex, with possible influences being documentary film-makers including Paul Rotha and Arthur Elton, documentary-style feature films from war years such as *Millions Like Us* (dirs Frank Launder and Sidney Gilliat, 1943), the left-wing Unity Theatre, as well as the social studies of Zweig and the anthropological school. Intriguing parallels might be drawn between the careers of Ken Loach and Tony Garnett, who were at the forefront of the movement, and those of the Boulting brothers a generation earlier. British sociology kept faith with its socialist roots, even if one consequence was to bequeath a legacy of images which may have been atypical or inaccurate in their stress on the negative aspects of working-class life. This can be interwoven with a strain of nostalgia, Shelagh Delaney's stage play *A Taste of Honey* (1958) being a notable example. These images are our heritage, whatever their sociological and artistic value. The problem is that they colour our judgement, however much we try to approach the 1940s with innocent eyes.

Socialists are not immune from social trends. Pace Thatcher, class moved down the academic agenda, overtaken by gender, ethnicity and religion, to the point where it is difficult to find much new work on the subject, let alone to discern any trends in current thinking. Selected at random, the March 1996 issue of the *British Journal of Sociology* has twelve articles, only three of which are on class. This is not to imply that the concept of class has lost its relevance; rather that it is attracting less academic interest, or that it has been redefined. An exception must be

made for John Goldthorpe, who, like a dog with a particularly juicy bone, shows no sign of forsaking his chosen topic.[25]

If the early 1950s mark the beginning of the consumer society, then the late 1940s might be expected to generate interest amongst sociologists, if only for comparative purposes. Aside from a rediscovery of poverty which has led to a reexamination of Rowntree and Laver's optimistic assumptions about the welfare state in 1951, this has not been the case.[26] Though British sociology is more empirically based than rival schools in France and Germany which can show a contemptuous disregard for historical detail, empiricism seems to have its limits when it involves venturing into the past. The social changes in Britain in the late 1940s, not least the peaking of cinema attendances and their subsequent rapid decline, await sociological reevaluation.

## The historian's viewpoint

Film history is an enticing byway into which unwary historians stray, rarely to return. Because the agenda of these defectors widens to include issues other than history, including gender and how culture is transmitted, their work will be considered in later sections of this chapter. The nearest thing to a 'pure' history of the British cinema is Rachel Low's multi-volume work which sadly does not reach the 1940s.[27]

Among mainstream historians writing about British society in the 1940s, the name of Arthur Marwick looms large. His claims to fame are fourfold. First, his writing on the period is extensive (some might say repetitious).[28] Secondly, he is one of the few historians who have dared to brave the wrath of sociologists by writing about class.[29] Thirdly, he pioneered the use of film as historical source material: the Open University's linking of courses to television programmes has allowed him to find a wider audience for this innovation than would be possible in a conventional university.[30] Fourthly, he has devised a model for examining the effects of total war. Like it or loathe it, when considering the late 1940s, Marwick's four-tier model is difficult to avoid.

Historians treat models warily and Marwick is no exception, even if he is more broad-minded than most. Rather than approaching from a theoretical standpoint as a social scientist might, he is more concerned with 'breaking down the complicated phenomenon of war into the most meaningful and manageable number of components', his four tiers being the destructive and disruptive effects of war, the testing of institutions, the changes brought about by military participation and the psychological effects of war.[31] The model may be criticised for not distinguishing between short-term and long-term effects, for focusing on the effects of war at the expense of more evolutionary change and for its vagueness about the gains (though this is more a matter of how the model is used).[32] The significance of the model lies in how it shapes our thinking about British society in the late 1940s, so that any bias introduced into the selection of evidence needs to be borne in mind. In particular, it colours how pre-war evidence is assessed: either discontinuities or continuities will be stressed, depending upon whether the assumptions underlying the model are accepted or rejected. As yet, Marwick's approach has not been taken up by film historians, though it offers a potentially illuminating way of analysing a film portraying working-class wartime attitudes, such as *Waterloo Road* (dir. Sidney Gilliat, 1945).

A pertinent question is exactly how war might bring about social change. The model might be reformulated to encompass popular pressure for change, pressure from above (elites), individuals who wanted to effect change and who gained opportunity from the war (likely candidates as opportunist reformers being Bevan, Bevin, Butler and, less obviously, Woolton[33]), and the exigencies of war.[34] The latter two tiers are of limited relevance here: the first two prompt interesting speculation.

Factors such as the immediate popularity of the Beveridge Report are suggestive of a general desire for change, but are difficult to evaluate.[35] A reasonable assumption is that popular pressure existed; but what was the effect upon how working people felt about themselves, and how did a commercially sensitive cinema industry react to the challenge? Here, film and the public's response to social change become inextricably linked.

The notion of pressure from above rests to a considerable extent on another myth — the

assumed effect of evacuation in making more privileged members of society aware of how the

other half lived.[36] This particular hare cannot be pursued.[37] Its importance in this context is that

if evacuation was felt to be socially significant. then this would form part of the cultural milieu

of London-based film-makers. particularly those with liberal or socialist sympathies such as

Anthony Asquith and the Boultings. Certainly evacuation was a handy device for introducing

characters into alien social situations, as in *Cottage to Let* (dir. Anthony Asquith, 1941), *Gert

and Daisy's Weekend* (dir. Maclean Rogers. 1941) and *Home Sweet Home* (dir. John E.

Blakeley, 1945).

Not all historians writing on Britain in the 1940s are in the thrall of Marwick. Decidedly on

the right of the political spectrum is Correlli Barnett, who might have preferred that workers

never left their machines to do anything as frivolous as going to the pictures.[38] Most historians do

not display their political colours on their sleeves. but they may still be divided by their emphasis

on continuity or discontinuity with the 1930s and by how they perceive the success or failure of

the post-war Labour government. These fault lines cross much writing on the period. and not

only that of historians.[39] At the end of the Second World War, the welfare state might have

seemed like the harbinger of a new Jerusalem; by the early 1960s, the political commentator,

Anthony Howard, could write that 'Far from introducing a "social revolution" the overwhelming

Labour victory of 1945 brought about the greatest restoration of traditional social values since

1660'.[40] Rhetoric might take precedence over accuracy, but the sentiment is clear. Harry

Hopkins, one of the first historians to chronicle everyday life in 1940s Britain, is more

ambivalent, but often seems to be reaching a similar conclusion, even if he does express it in

more muted terms.[41] The most complex response comes from Richard Titmuss, writing at about

the same time as Hopkins. Here, the strands of embourgeoisement and historical assessment are

drawn together in poignant disillusion:

> We thus delude ourselves if we think that we can equalize the social distribution of
> life chances by expanding educational opportunities while millions of children live in
> slums without baths, decent lavatories, leisure facilities. room to explore and the space
> to dream. Nor do we achieve with any permanency a fairer distribution of rewards and a
> society less sharply divided by class and status by simply narrowing the differences in

cash earnings among men during certain limited periods of their lives.[42]

For some children in the 1940s, the cinema was the only place where they could dream.

With no particular political axe to grind, Paul Addison offers balanced judgements on the post-war years, though balance is not calculated to stimulate controversy.[43] His 1985 work is unusual in drawing upon transcripts of filmed interviews collected for a BBC television series. He stakes out his position at an early stage:

> For a few critical years after 1945, the home front ran on without a war to sustain it, and Britain was reconstructed in the image of the war effort. War did not revolutionise the British, but it radicalised them. There was never a serious prospect that the social structure would collapse: Ealing studios would have been lost without it. But the relationship between the classes began to shift in favour of manual workers.[44]

This emphasis on the exigencies of war as a transforming factor may be compared with his introduction to the 1995 edition of the same work, which lays more stress on continuity: 'Half a century later we can see that Mr Attlee's Britain was not so much the starting point of the society we have now, as the Indian Summer of a late Victorian society founded on industry and empire. . . . Never were the British closer to socialism; never were they more deeply and complacently British.'[45] History is as much a matter of writing for the present as about the past. And even historians are entitled to change their minds.

More discursive than Addison is Peter Hennessy. Drawing upon Addison's work, he takes a similar line:

> Yet with hindsight, there is no mystery about the cause of this profound change from the do-nothing years of economic slump and the high unemployment in the 1930s to the can-do, must-do 1940s. It was a combination of common experience by all classes under the stress of total war and the Coalition Government's acceptance of responsibility for what, in Disraeli's time, was called the "condition of England" which changed the social, economic and — once the lock-gates of the 1945 election were reached — the political direction of Britain.[46]

Once again pressure from below and pressure from above elide and are combined with the exigencies of war to provide an explanation for the post-war reforms, though Hennessy is more willing to accept that there was fundamental political and social change.

Kenneth Morgan is the final member of this quartet of middle-generation, male historians who have tackled the late 1940s. Like Hennessy, he can draw on childhood memories; unlike

Hennessy he is unwilling to do so: 'For me as a child, the years 1945-51 were happy and fulfilling in every way. However, the historical records tell us that these were a time of austerity, constant crisis, and general gloom. As an historian, I have come to follow their view, although not without some reluctance and perhaps regret.'[47] This is the caution of a political historian as opposed to a social or cultural historian. Morgan is reticent about revealing his own position, though to conclude that 'In many ways the war hardened rather than dissolved social distinctions', or that '. . . many of the new social reforms were financed by transfers of income within lower-income groups themselves, rather than by transferring from the rich to the poor', betrays some disenchantment and hardly supports the notion of war as an agent for social change.[48] Ben Pimlott, a younger historian more obviously of the left, voices similar sentiments.[49]

Marxist historians have had to come to terms with the inviolable welfare state becoming violable. Not unnaturally, Ralph Miliband emphasises pressure from the people as a major factor in reform. While conceding that social democratic parties do give expression, shape and coherence to demands for reform, he cautions:

> But against this must be set the fact that social democratic parties have also tended to limit the scope for reform, and have given to the "welfare state" a highly bureaucratic and often rebarbative character; and that, where economic circumstances have seemed to demand it, they have not hesitated to practise policies of retrenchment in collective and welfare services which have borne most heavily on those who could least afford it. Faced, as they saw it, with the need for "austerity", they applied it in ways which made a bitter mockery of the "equality of sacrifice" they also preached; and thereby created a disaffection which brought conservative governments back to office, and helped those governments to go even further in the curtailment of services and benefits.[50]

Attlee's government is not mentioned, but the implication is clear.

Angus Calder writes about the war years rather than their aftermath, but he cannot avoid taking a position on the implications of war. He concurs with Howard, though his writing has a Machiavellian edge which Miliband might envy:

> Thanks to their energy, the forces of wealth, bureaucracy and privilege survived with little inconvenience, recovered from their shock, and began to proceed with their old business of manoeuvre, concession and studied betrayal. Indeed, this war, which had set off a ferment of participatory democracy, was strengthening meanwhile the forces of tyranny, pressing Britain forwards towards *1984*. The new capitalism of paternalist corporations meshed with the state bureaucracy was emerging clearly, along with the managerial ideology which supported it.[51]

Did Calder have J. Arthur Rank's empire in mind?

Addison's use of interviews and Robertson's studied avoidance of them have been noted (pages 10 and 28). Oral history might have been given new impetus by the tape recorder, but it has a tradition stretching back to Henry Mayhew and beyond. Though Robertson's caution is still not unusual among historians, Paul Thompson makes a plea for scholars to come out of the closet and talk to ordinary people.[52] Some have answered his call, including Annette Kuhn, Carl Chinn and Stephen Humphries.[53] They demonstrate that oral testimony can be a core source rather than a peripheral one. The works of the latter two writers point up an additional problem: many historians use 1939 or 1945 as a cut-off date. Whether their conclusions should apply to the post-war years raises once more the issue of how continuities or discontinuities between periods should be perceived. A comparable difficulty occurs with the use of census data: the 1951 census offers a snapshot of British society at the end of the period under review, but comparison with 1931 census data offers no clue as to whether demographic and employment changes took place before, during, or after the war.

Oral history has been appropriated, albeit incompletely, by people's history — that peculiarly English brand of pragmatic Marxism, nostalgia and history seen from the viewpoint of the underdog. The agenda was set largely by the communist E.P. Thompson, though his own work is more concerned with earlier periods.[54] The flavour of the debates within the movement is captured in the Social History Workshop papers collected by Raphael Samuel.[55] Though it can degenerate into crude Marxism, people's history at its best has stimulated local studies of topics which might otherwise be forgotten such as Jerry Hall's work on Islington.[56]

Attitudes towards the welfare state provide a litmus test for historians' political and social sympathies and indicate how they approach class in the late 1940s.[57] The very act of looking back colours the conclusions. Austerity and social reform might characterise the Attlee government (an assertion which deserves questioning), but however much we strive for objectivity, the post-war landscape can look very different when viewed from the perspective of the 1990s as compared with that of the 1960s. Working-class life in the late 1940s cannot be

dissociated from the social reforms of the period and at present the welfare state has a tarnished image. In the next decade, when there are fewer historians writing who lived through the 1940s, those years may once again be seen as a golden age. At any event, there is a case for integrating film history into social history, so that the role of the cinema in the lives of ordinary people may be better assessed.

## Cultural Studies

Annan's blend of history and autobiography provides a vivid portrait of an Oxbridge-dominated elite in the middle years of the century.[58] It is easy to gain the impression from this and from the writings of Cyril Connolly and Stephen Spender of a monolithic cultural Establishment.[59] Certainly most of the intelligentsia were to be found in Oxbridge and the metropolis, but aside from this geographical concentration, 'The Establishment' may be more accurately characterised as a loose alliance of factions and coteries. What its members shared were assumptions about what constituted culture. In the event of any uncertainty, F.R. Leavis was on hand to tell them.[60] Not that the elite was averse to slumming it: if the Leavisites kept to their ivory towers, T.S. Eliot evinced an unexpected affection for music hall, comic strips and detective fiction, particularly the works of Raymond Chandler, while Ludwig Wittgenstein was to be found in the front rows of Cambridge cinemas, indulging a passion for Carmen Miranda and Betty Hutton.[61] In general, though, from the peaks of high culture, the cinema was viewed with suspicion, as much for its popularity as for any perceived failings of the films themselves.[62] Exceptions might be made for the documentary movement (uncommercial and hence acceptable) and foreign language films (the language automatically marked these off as an elite taste). This tension between art and entertainment characterises much 1930s writing on film, as well as on jazz. Arguably the Second World War brought little change other than allowing a handful of British feature films including *Henry V* (dir. Laurence Olivier, 1944) and *Brief Encounter* (dir. David Lean, 1945) to be included in the canon of culture — and Leavis doubtless had his reservations

about this concession to the barbarians.[63]

In film literature from the 1930s to the 1950s, there is a striking contrast between the popular and commercial sector of the market and the rarified peaks of aestheticism presided over in post-war days by Roger Manvell. The trade press and fan press on one side and the contributors to *Sight and Sound* on the other rarely seem to have found any common ground. When their paths did cross, the result can be less than edifying.[64] To compound the complexity, there is no clear-cut division along political lines: the Americanisation of mass entertainment was viewed with suspicion not only by an Oxbridge elite, but by figures on the left including J.B. Priestley and George Orwell.[65] One legacy of this cultural divide is that the periodicals holdings of the British Film Institute are biased towards the elite end of the market: runs of only two popular magazines have been preserved: *Picturegoer* and *Picture Show*. Paul Swann notes this deficiency, though he has an over-optimistic assessment of the British Library's holdings.[66]

Realism is one issue on which all periodicals found common cause. Realism was a good thing; though, like nature in a suburban garden, it needed to be kept within bounds. As a commentator in *Picture Show* cautioned, 'To overdo realism is to create disbelief. However wild and thrilling the story, one likes to believe it could have happened.' Following this line of reasoning, James Mason came in for approval on the strength of his performances in *The Man in Grey* (dir. Leslie Arliss, 1943) and *The Wicked Lady* (dir. Leslie Arliss, 1945).[67] Such a conclusion might not have gone down so well amongst readers of *Sight and Sound*, but the premise they were offered was similar:

> There is a certain kind of realism in the Hollywood film of violence: the torn and bloody face of a prizefighter is true to real life. But such truth has no purpose, except to excite the sadistic and masochistic feelings of the audience — to exploit them on an emotional level. We must reject both this venal realism as well as the slice-of-life naturalism which is completely static in its unwillingness to be involved in the struggle of man towards a better and fuller life.[68]

A distinction was being drawn between a seemingly uncomplicated naturalism and a realism which fulfilled some additional purpose.[69] At the popular end of the market this purpose was expressed in emotional terms; at the highbrow end, it was moral and educational. As Geoff

Brown puts it, 'To Roger Manvell and the other earnest evangelicals of the *[Penguin Film]*
*Review*, it was better to stare soberly at fishermen's nets and bren guns than to gaze with delight
at Betty Grable.[70] How this worked in practice will be considered in parts two and three.

Education is the second theme which echoes through film literature aimed at the discerning
cinemagoer. The cinema should educate.[71] In the plea was an implied criticism of popular cinema
which patently failed to achieve this lofty aim. The implications of this normative approach go
beyond film appreciation to what society's more privileged members deemed acceptable as
culture. Whether education per se was the desired end or whether education was a euphemism for
social control is open to debate. Even if those opposed to the notion of the cinema as an
instrument of education did read *Sight and Sound*, they were doubtless too busy watching
Margaret Lockwood's latest screen exploits to pen reasoned replies, though an occasional
objection surfaces in the letter pages of the mass-market magazines.[72]

The third recurring theme is Britishness, though a disparate array of commentators offered
an equally disparate range of interpretations of this term. In the 1930s, Priestley wanted to see
more ordinary British people on the screen, while Sidney Bernstein pressed for London scenes as
backdrops to documents of English life. Herbert Morrison in 1945, Dilys Powell in 1948 and
Roger Manvell in 1953 made pleas similar in tone to Priestley's, though without his proviso that
glamour was essential.[73] A desire for realism is mixed inextricably with this emphasis on
Britishness. Linking both is an admiration for the documentary, as Bernstein and Manvell make
explicit.[74] This notion of Britishness should be distinguished from a later interpretation which
emphasises consensus, stoicism in the face of adversity and an almost mystical link with both the
past and the countryside.[75] Imagery for this approach may be teased from such wartime films as
*A Canterbury Tale* (dir. Michael Powell, 1944) and *Henry V*. Its genesis deserves a study of its
own.

What is missing from British cinema literature of 1940s and early 1950s is any analysis
which goes beyond anti-Americanism and a distaste for commercialism to consider how the mass
media interact with their public. The deriding of popular culture, which included much of the

mass media, was not simply a class issue — middle-class culture could come in for its share of criticism[76] — but an intellectual divide. The situation in this country may be contrasted with that in America where the first steps were being taken to establish media studies as a separate discipline.[77] There, the terms 'mass media', 'mass culture' and 'mass communications' can have different nuances, but the emphasis is on the appeal of popular cultural forms and their transmission. Inevitably, perhaps, there is a lack of an explicit class dimension which British writers would bring to the subject. By a double irony, when British academics discovered working-class culture in the late 1950s, not only did class assume prominence over the process of cultural transmission, but the distaste for Americanisation and the commercialisation of culture remained.

Richard Hoggart's *The uses of literacy* was first published in 1957.[78] Hoggart has been criticised for, amongst other things, offering no definition of the concept of working class, for failing to appraise the role of trade unions or the Labour Party in working-class life and for his nostalgia.[79] In spite of these reservations, *The uses of literacy* remains a turning point in post-war British academic thought. As Critcher puts it: 'What is revealed is the network of shared cultural meanings which sustains relationships between different facets of the culture, more complex in its structure than could be recognized by any sociologist attempting to penetrate the thickets of working-class life, his path but dimly lit, if not obscured, by the concept of value systems.'[80]

One work rarely stands alone — the writings of another academic of working-class origins, Raymond Williams, are complementary[81] — but apart from being a pioneer, Hoggart succeeded in crystallising his thoughts into a single volume which captured the public's imagination. A consequence of his innovative approach was the setting up of the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies at Birmingham, establishing the momentum for the broadly-based study of cultural issues in Britain.

An unresolved problem is which period serves as a model for traditional working-class culture. By ignoring the cinema, Hoggart seems to hark back to Leeds in the early years of the

century, though he was not born until 1918; Gareth Stedman Jones makes out a persuasive case for the late nineteenth century, Bernard Waites, in his discussion of popular culture in Lancashire, sees the notion of a 'friendly community' as something developing in the 1930s, while Geoff Eley spoils his insistence on historical specificity by opting for the 1880s to the 1940s.[82] Three sources of variation may be distinguished: differences of locale, differences in defining what constitutes 'traditional working-class culture' and differences in assessing the evidence once the definition is agreed. Most obviously in the case of Hoggart, cultural influences play as much a part as reasoned argument. It may be possible to demonstrate with impeccable academic rigour why aspects of working-class culture in Edwardian days are worthy of study, but Hoggart's attitude to subsequent developments stems as much from conviction as from logic.[83] It is tempting (and easy) to dismiss the cultural influences on academic writers as speculative, but this need not invalidate them, nor diminish their potency. Enoch Powell's verdict on the emotional factor in history is apposite: '. . . it is unquantifiable, it is rather shameful and it is difficult to handle, but without the emotional factor I do not think one can understand the turnaround which occurred in this country or some of the surprising things which this country did in the second half of the twentieth century.'[84] Writers who fail to make clear the cultural influences in their own work are apt to lay false trails for those who follow.

For Hoggart, the cinema and other forms of mass media were symbols of cultural corruption.[85] If his approach heralded a reorientation of academic perspectives, this hardly augured well for writing about film. An early exemplar of the shift of interest away from the Manvell tradition of films as art objects towards their wider cultural significance is Raymond Durgnat. Idiosyncratic and poorly referenced it may be, but Durgnat's *A mirror for England* does highlight the social assumptions and preoccupations which surface in post-war British films.[86] The notion of film mirroring society may not have been new — it was implicit in many of the earlier discussions on realism — but Durgnat uses it explicitly to explore a wide range of films, with class as a major topic of interest. His title also provides a clue to a major constraint in his approach: a mirror only offers a reflection. There is little discussion of the reflexive

process: how film might reinforce societal concerns and assumptions. Nor are audiences given much consideration.

Durgnat's trail-blazing has opened the way for further studies, including those by Robert Murphy, Anthony Aldgate and Jeffrey Richards, and Craig Shafer, though this leaves open the question of whether readings of films should be based on views prevalent when the film is made, or whether they may legitimately contain liberal doses of hindsight.[87] Notwithstanding such interest, films are still apt to attract more attention than audiences. Studies of directors and studios, whatever their virtues, serve to emphasise this bias.[88] Where audiences do come under scrutiny, those in the 1930s have attracted more interest amongst men; women's studies of post-war British cinema will be considered in a later section of this chapter.[89]

A clue to the relative lack of interest in audiences is the direction taking by the school of film writing which developed in Britain in the 1970s and whose ideas were disseminated in the journal *Screen*.[90] These writers were heavily influenced by French theoreticians including structuralists such as Christian Metz, post-structuralists spearheaded by Derrida, the Marxist Althusser and the psychoanalytic ideas of of Lacan. One consequence was a trend away from conceptualising film-going as a group experience towards the impact upon the individual, rechristened 'the spectator' in the work of that early exemplar of this approach in Britain, Laura Mulvey.[91] Necessarily, any explanation will be couched in terms of individual psychology. One problem this creates for the reader is that the audience is apt to become disembodied. There seems little connection between Mulvey's etiolated spectator and the boy at a children's matinee, whose pleasure was derived as much from lobbing his sister's dolly mixture over the edge of the circle as from watching the adventures of Gene Autry on the screen.

Audience response was more obvious in the music hall, where the interaction between audience and performer was crucial. Because the cinema only gradually took over from the music hall, many audience members would be familiar with the conventions of both forms of entertainment, which could be used interchangeably by film-makers. Stars like George Formby, Gracie Fields and Frank Randle were schooled in the music hall tradition and continued to

appear on stage at the height of their fame as film stars. Just as pantomime seasons have come to form a regular part of the schedules of television personalities, curiosity prompted people to see film stars in person, reinforcing the stars' popularity. This symbiosis between stage and screen has yet to attract much academic attention.[92]

A fitful scholarly interest in the music hall has been apparent since the 1970s, though an early emphasis on social control has been modified in more recent literature.[93] In their wide-ranging study, Peter Miles and Malcolm Smith veer away from a crudely Marxist explanation, seeing mass culture as helping to define the world for a social grouping prepared to make the most of a bad job.[94] Going further along this route and drawing on the works of Brecht and Walter Benjamin, Alan Swingewood sets himself in opposition to Hoggart by positively celebrating mass culture (redefined as cultural pluralism) as a sign of healthy social and political institutions, though his view of the capitalist structure within which they operate is less clear.[95]

The field of cultural studies has generated a burgeoning literature which has at least kept British films within the ken of several generations of students after what must have seemed like certain oblivion in the 1950s. Until recently, it has done less to acknowledge that cinema-going is a social activity.[96] This has in part been a matter of perspective — an emphasis on the effect of film on the individual as opposed to the group — but the context in which such films are viewed also needs to be considered. An Old Mother Riley film would originally be seen in a shabby, smoke-filled cinema by an audience who not only knew the characters and recognised the stereotypes which they represented, but who were familiar with such everyday facts of working-class life as pawnbrokers and the moonlight flit when the rent was due. Watching a video in a viewing suite is hardly a comparable experience. In spite of striving towards authenticity of performance, musicians accept that we cannot listen to a Bach cantata in the same way as the original congregation in Leipzig — too many cultural references have supervened. The best we can do is to make a leap of the imagination. Viewing a film presents similar difficulties, though the fact receives less acknowledgement.

The impact of films on audiences may be explored by means of a societal or a psychological model.[97] (The term 'societal' is used advisedly — those employing this approach might baulk at calling themselves sociologists.) The effects of film on behaviour — particularly on children's behaviour — serves to illustrate how these two models are employed and to point up the differences.

Since the early days of the cinema there have been attempts to restrict what is seen, when and by whom.[98] This may be interpreted in societal terms, social control being the most obvious example. Alternatively, a psychological explanation may be invoked — how the film affects the individual. The psychological approach is more in accord with popular sentiment and 'common sense'.[99] The implications are easier for society to deal with: a film affects vulnerable groups including children, therefore it should be banned. If this strategy fails, there is a backup position: the failure can be ascribed to individual pathology — the miscreant must be inherently weak or evil — which exonerates society as a whole from blame. The societal model, with the premise that the problem lies in the social practices of a deprived culture, may then be dismissed as a soft option. In practice, the two approaches, societal and psychological, are not mutually exclusive, but the tension between them colours the debate on how children's viewing should be controlled.

In general terms, the more researchers and their sponsors rely on evidence gleaned from experimental psychology, the easier it is to demonstrate that film can have a deleterious effect upon behaviour. (The cinema industry has been curiously reluctant to put up the money to counter this argument.[100]) The more a societal model is accepted, the less secure the relationship between films and behaviour becomes, though the more scope there is for interest groups with particular moral viewpoints to influence the outcome of any deliberations.

The Cinema Commission of Enquiry in 1917 inclined towards the societal model, concluding that there was no simple causal relationship between cinema-going and delinquency. Exemplifying an approach which is sensitive to the social context is the evidence of Miss

Vickers. For her, the cinema was somewhere for children to go when they could not play in the street, while older age groups used the cinema to get away from overcrowded homes.[101] The function of the cinema for working-class children is taken into account.

The 1917 British enquiry resulted in an impressively thick book, yet it is modest in size when compared with the Payne Fund studies of little more than a decade later.[102] Methods used in this American research vary from study to study, ranging across anthropology and psychology, but the results are remarkably consistent in showing how the individual is influenced for the worse by watching films. Dysinger and Ruckmick's testing of children's galvanic responses to films portraying danger, tragedy or sex exemplifies the greater reliance on hard science than in the British study.[103] The methodology of the Payne Fund studies was savaged by the philosopher Mortimer Adler. Opting for a societal model, he questioned the validity of the laboratory experiments and the tendency to generalise from the reported viewing habits of groups such as convicted delinquents.[104] Though his criticisms are difficult to ignore, the studies are impressive in their comprehensiveness. They also serve as a model for subsequent studies: many of the same questions were being asked by Mayer soon after the war and by Kuhn in the 1990s.[105]

In Britain, the flurry of investigations in the early 1930s testifies to the continued concerns about children and the cinema.[106] The issue surfaced again in the Wheare Report of 1950, with conclusions which reprised familiar themes: there was little evidence of adverse effects, though tighter controls were recommended, children's taste in films needed to be educated and more research was needed.[107]

Lest it should appear that psychology was preocccupied by children and the cinema, mention must be made of the psychiatrist John Bowlby. His work at the Tavistock Clinic on maternal deprivation as a cause of mental ill-health became the psychological orthodoxy in Britain in the 1940s and 50s. The implication of Bowlby's approach is that the damage is already done by the time the child discovers the mass media. The cinema does not figure in his work.[108]

Aside from the intrinsic interest of the approaches taken to investigating the effect of the

cinema on children, one notable tendency is for the results of British studies to be equivocal. British power elites — politicians, civil servants, church leaders, etc. — are apt to be educated in the humanities, which may contribute to the playing down of experimental evidence which smacks of 'hard' science (though a physical scientist might dispute the 'hardness' of psychology). This should favour a liberal stance, though inevitably findings are coloured by the cultural and political climate of the time.[109]

Running counter to the British trend towards liberalism is a touching faith in science or pseudo-science which is enshrined in administrative arrangements, a notable example being psychological testing. It says much for the power of the psychology lobby in the 1920s, led by Cyril Burt, J.A. Green and Godfrey Thomson, that the principle of an inherent and measurable division of aptitudes among children was implicit in the conclusions of the Hadow Report (1926) and the Spens Report (1938), and was accepted unquestioningly in the Norwood Report (1943).[110] This support for a tripartite system of education survived in Butler's 1944 Education Act and was part of the orthodoxy among those who taught the teachers in the 1940s.[111] One consequence was a plethora of investigations predicated on innate differences between grammar and secondary modern school adolescents, the technical school branch of the tripartite system remaining undeveloped.

For the film historian, the most valuable of these studies are those exploring the leisure interests of adolescents.[112] These provide a mass of quantitative data, even if there is little information about responses to particular films.[113] An examination of differences between cohorts in grammar and secondary schools, means that class differences have to be inferred, the grammar schools with their greater range of out-of-school activities being associated with middle-class values.[114] By default this leaves the secondary modern schools as the final and rather shaky bastions of high culture for the bulk of the school-going population.[115]

Once adolescents settled into work and marriage, psychologists of the 1940s lost interest.[116] By way of consolation for film historians, the theme of children and the cinema retained its fascination internationally through the 1950s, as the invaluable UNESCO bibliography of 1961

makes clear.[117] In Vicki Eves' 1970 survey of the literature, studies of children and adolescents still predominate, though this might be Eves' bias.[118] Television and latterly video present a similar challenge for psychologists: to what extent are the images on the screen internalised to provide a model for behaviour? The Psyclit database in psychology for the period 1981 to 1995 contains 109 abstracts on cinema and 2,508 on television, not to mention 1,610 on social class. The debate is continuing, though as Berkowitz et al. observe, it has generated more heat than light.[119]

It is as well to remember Macalister Brew's caution that popular entertainment, from bear baiting to card playing, has always been blamed for juvenile delinquency.[120] The psychology literature offers one way of following a societal concern about the effects of the mass media on behaviour over the course of the twentieth century. What it does not do is to provide definitive answers. Whether film has a cathartic function or whether the values it puts across to an audience are emulated, for good or ill, still seems as contentious as it did in 1917. Also unresolved is the importance of the social context: films are not seen in a laboratory while the individual who watches them is not the scientist's tabula rasa. It is possible to sidestep the experimental situation by adopting a psychoanalytic approach, but this is neither replicable nor amenable to testing and verification.[121] Such a course merely substitutes one set of problems for another. Another option is to look at psychological types and situations common in films, but this is one step back from considering the potential effects on audiences.[122] Jean Mitry's recent work tries to square the circle by shifting the discussion onto an aesthetic level, but this is to evade fundamental issues.[123] It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the effect of a film on an audience remains as elusive as ever.


Women's studies


Cutting across traditional disciplines over the past thirty years has been a reevaluation from the woman's standpoint of both the selection and interpretation of evidence. The work of the key

writers in this movement could be considered under the relevant disciplines. This provides a neat solution, but the distinctive character of the body of work produced by women writers would be diluted, while the aim of breaking down disciplinary boundaries would hardly be furthered.

There is a case for distinguishing between the work of writers who happen to be women and those who work from a distinctively feminist perspective. Quite where the dividing line should be drawn is less obvious, but it would be unfortunate to exclude from consideration Margery Spring Rice's 1939 study *Working class wives* on the grounds that it predates feminism.[124] The Women's Health Enquiry Committee which carried out the research may have had its own agenda, it may have seen its subjects through middle-class eyes, the sample may be biased towards the worst cases, while changes in health provision may have rendered some of the findings out of date by 1945. In spite of these cautions, what is valuable and unusual for the period is a picture of living conditions for wives who by their own admission could rarely afford any form of entertainment, including the cinema. It is easy to slip into generalisations: the cinema might have been the working-class entertainment par excellence in the 1930s, but it is salutary to remember that some sections of the community were untouched by it. This may equally well apply to post-war days, albeit for different reasons.[125]

A similar concern with the 'submerged tenth' illuminates the reports produced by the Women's Group on Public Welfare in 1943 and 1948, the first on evacuation and the second on neglected children.[126] Living conditions may have improved for the working class as a whole after the war, but this does not mean that all sections gained equally; nor does it necessarily imply an accompanying change in attitudes towards the poor or by the poor.

A point which comes out clearly in Dorothy Sheridan's anthology of wartime Mass-Observation material is the extent to which class distinctions survived in changed circumstances.[127] Eric Taylor, drawing heavily on interviews, somewhat reluctantly follows Marwick's line in accepting that war lifted women's social confidence and made them more independent.[128] Whatever their differing emphases, both Sheridan and Taylor note the general concern of women with what might happen afterwards.

The immediate post-war period exerts a fascination for its effect on women which parallels the ambivalent views of how the working class fared over the same period. Were wartime gains real or illusory? The two issues are linked insofar as the majority of women were working class. In 1956, Myrdel and Klein accepted women's gains as significant, albeit with a few reservations.[129] A comparison of their view, and the view of Pauline Gregg in 1967, with that of Elizabeth Wilson in 1977 and 1980 points up a change of emphasis towards a distinctively feminist perspective and a more equivocal evaluation.[130] Three key issues for many writers, including Wilson, are first, whether the married woman was expected or encouraged to accept a role as full-time housewife and mother — a role which was reinforced by Bowlby's theory of the perils of maternal deprivation and by concerns that the inadequate supervision of children contributed to juvenile delinquency[131] — secondly, the provision of nurseries; and thirdly, equal pay. All three have implications for cinema-going, an activity which requires both time and money and which, in the public mind, was linked to delinquency. Inevitably there have been reevaluations since the 1970s. Denise Riley has placed more emphasis on the lack of any unified social policy towards gender issues, favouring an incremental explanation for actions such as the closure of nurseries, while Dorothy Sheridan points to the post-1970 nature of these concerns.[132] The reassessments should not be seen as the exclusive preserve of feminists: aside from Eric Taylor, Harold Smith takes a pessimistic line on the gains made by women, though Penny Summerfield's more recent conclusions suggest that if opinion has not quite turned full circle, at least there is a leavening of optimism.[133]

The links between social issues and the media are exemplified in the papers brought together by Christine Gledhill and Gillian Swanson.[134] This collection explores the role of women in wartime and in the immediate post-war years. Among concerns which were dramatised in films are work *(Millions Like Us)*, nationality *(I See a Dark Stranger*, dir. Frank Launder, 1946), and new consumption patterns, *(Dance Hall*, dir. Charles Crichton, 1950). Similar links with films are evident in Gledhill's earlier collection.[135]

Several of the contributors to these two collections have also produced more extensive

works. Sue Harper deserves mention for taking seriously that neglected genre of British cinema, the historical film, and for stressing the importance of fan magazines.[136] Her emphasis is on readings of the films themselves, supported by qualitative evidence. There are moments of strain: the popularity of British National's *Waltz Time* (dir. Paul Stein, 1945), ascribed to audiences' liking for 'tenors and frills', sits uneasily within her thesis of a 'recognisable studio orientation on class matters' and of classes being addressed with 'competent discourses and coherent symbolism'.[137] And is it disingenuous to emphasise gender issues in *Scott of the Antarctic* (dir. Charles Frend, 1948)?[138] Given the scenario, there is little scope for anything other than male bonding, except males falling out. More interesting is the extent to which class differences are preserved in an extreme situation.

Janet Thumim covers similar territory and is alive to the danger of imposing a retrospective reading on a film. She adopts a more quantitative approach. It is possible to quibble with her use of a measure based on the annual 'biggest and best' listings from *Picturegoer* and two trade magazines, but any attempt to quantify popularity is to be welcomed.[139]

Melinda Mash makes use of questionnaires answered by former cinemagoers.[140] This leaves open the risk of hindsight and of selecting a biased sample of interviewees, but it does get back as far as possible to the response of the ordinary audience member to a film rather than that of the researcher or the critic. Unfortunately for the purposes of this thesis, most of the films considered were made after 1950, though she does offer interviewees' responses to *Brief Encounter* and *Dance Hall*.

A further contrast of methodologies is provided by the work of American researchers. Mary Ann Doane opts for a psychoanalytic approach, ranging across themes (such as medical discourses), the impact of historical events (the Second World War), and genres.[141] Jeanine Basinger adopts a more sociological approach, whilst still concentrating on the films rather than the audiences.[142] Both writers are concerned with American films, though some of the themes which they explore, such as the lack of happy endings in love stories or the role of the asexual male, are equally applicable to British films. More directly relevant to British cinema are the

works of Marcia Landy and Antonia Lant.[143]

Landy is less concerned with the feminine role per se than with the interaction of characters. Her viewpoint is that of the social psychologist: her treatment of language in *The History of Mr Polly* (dir. Anthony Pelessier, 1949) is particularly perceptive.[144] There are more questionable forays into psychoanalysis, as in her discussion of *The Fallen Idol* (dir. Carol Reed, 1948): 'The world, like the house, and like the behaviour of Mrs Baines [the housekeeper], is represented as castrating and ominous. Generational or class differences do not affect the sense of male impotence.'[145] To see both the world and the house as castrating is to strain the castration metaphor to a point where it has little meaning. The rigid class stratification of the ambassadorial household is as deserving of attention as the Oedipal scenario which Landy discerns.

Lant's viewpoint is more difficult to characterise, except for its emphasis on feminine experience. Films are examined in terms of key concepts such as the blackout and realism, though class receives scant attention. The use of the blackout as a symbol of national experience and hence of unity is an interesting approach which allows a sensitive discussion of *Piccadilly Incident* (dir. Herbert Wilcox, 1946), even if the term has to be stretched to encompass *The Wicked Lady* (dir. Leslie Arliss, 1945). By Lant's reading of the latter, 'A woman acquires masculine talents, and consequently loosens her ties to femininity under cover of darkness which in contemporary cultural vocabulary has come to stand for the conditions of war in which real women do indeed carry out tasks traditionally performed by men.'[146] But this is to impose a 1980s feminist interpretation. The film was released in December 1945, when the blackout was an unpleasant memory and audiences were looking forward to a return to normality. A studio attuned to its market would hardly seek to arouse memories of a tedious wartime restriction.

A comparison of Lant's discussion of trains compared with that offered by Doane points up the differences between the two authors. In considering *Brief Encounter*, Lant finds that 'The clockwork, chronological time of the external world — LMS railway timetables and dependable, regular Fred — is pitted against the convoluted and chaotic time of the film's structure, organised as Laura's remembrance.'[147] Doane detects a paradoxical role for trains. Like telephones, they

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'signify the very separation and distance conducive to desire. But they are also the ground for numerous misunderstandings, representing first and foremost the difficulties of communication' symbolised by tearful farewells and missed meetings.[148] For Lant, trains and timetables represent order; for Doane, they are associated with the descent into chaos.

On purely commercial grounds, the cinema industry has to be responsive to its audience. It follows that films offer a way of demonstrating changes in the position of women, the key issues being how women were represented in films and what the female audience derived from visiting the cinema. The two factors are distinct insofar as it would be possible to consider the representation of women in films which were never released, while female audiences might see a film set in an all-male environment such as a prison or a warship. In practice, the two issues often become intermingled. This might produce insights, but it also has its costs: gender can be stressed at the expense of class (there is sometimes a conceptual blurring between the two), male responses to stars like Patricia Roc and to her performances receive little attention, while female responses to male-oriented films such as *The Wooden Horse* (dir. Jack Lee, 1950) are equally neglected.[149]

A remaining question is where this emphasis on the feminine might lead. One recent development is a cross-cultural comparison of female identities in film.[150] Whilst this is to be welcomed, a risk is that audiences will be sidelined if undue prominence is given to such stars as Simone Signoret and Margaret Lockwood. An icon is nothing without its public.

## The literature and its implications

Audience research has never fitted into any one discipline and an increased interest over the last fifteen years has failed to produce agreement on aims or methodology.[151] The gain is the diversity of approaches, which has become evident in this brief survey, though this does not make for comparability between studies.

A noteworthy feature of the sociology and history literature generally is their disregard for

the cinema. In spite of this, neither body of work can be ignored if the significance of the cinema in the lives of working-class people is to be considered. Whether they went to escape, to find role models, or just to keep warm only assumes meaning when set against what they encountered outside: restricted educational horizons, a narrow range of employment opportunities, rationing, overcrowded homes, fuel shortages, and difficulties adjusting both to married life after demobilisation and to full-time motherhood after the companionship of war work. Other approaches are to consider film as art object, as carrier of psychological truths or as a mirror of society. These may be useful for analysing the work of a director, an individual's response to a film, or how social concerns are expressed in films. They are less able to take account of the diversity within an audience, or what critics perceived as its poor taste in films.

Psychology might be expected to provide insights into the effects of cinema-going on the individual, but the field is as open now as it was in 1917. Though it is too easy to ascribe increasing screen violence and its assumed consequences to a changing social climate, the social context is often missing in psychological research. As Hilde Himmelweit noted in 1965:

> Quite often sociologists and social psychologists study the same phenomenon, but do it
> from different points of view; this results, in the one instance, in an oversimplified model
> of maturation and learning and, in the other, in a neglect of the subtler understanding of
> the way in which social forces impinge upon the individual's outlook and behaviour.
> There have been few genuinely interdisciplinary studies.[152]

Her words are just as relevant today.

The extent to which gender colours research has been highlighted by the feminist movement. If this promising avenue has cut across disciplines rather than realigning them, it offers a new viewpoint from which to look at old issues. In particular, it has helped to shift attention from the films themselves towards their reception, though, as in much work on film, there is a risk of not distinguishing clearly between the responses of the researcher and those of the original audiences.

Culture has become a more problematic term than it was in the 1940s. The paradox is that a cultural apparatus is used to examine a cultural system — the way of life of the working class — to which it is in many ways inimical. One way to cut this Gordian knot is to focus on specific questions. What measurable changes were there in the lifestyle of the average worker in 1948

when compared with circumstances in 1938? What were accepted as the characteristics of the

working class in the late 1940s? These questions will be addressed in the following chapter.

**Notes**

1. See Erving Goffman, *The presentation of self in everyday life*, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1990. This work is among the best examples of his distinctive brand of phenomenology. The absence of a phenomenological perspective on cinema-going is explored in Dudley Andrew, 'The neglected tradition of phenomenology', in Bill Nichols (ed.) *Movies and Methods*, vol.2: *An anthology*, Berkeley, CA, and London: University of California Press, 1985, 625-32.

2. Michael Smith, general introduction to Michael A. Smith, Stanley Parker, and Cyril S. Smith (eds.) *Leisure and society in Britain*, London: Allen Lane, 1973, 3-4. Exceptions are the contrasting approaches of two founding fathers of sociology. See Thorstein Veblen, *The theory of the leisure class*, with foreword by C. Wight Mills; New Brunswick, NJ, and London: Transaction, 1992; Werner Sombart, *Luxury and capitalism*, trans. W.R. Dittmar, Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1967.

3. Terry Lovell, 'Sociology and the cinema', *Screen*, spring 1971, vol.12, no.1, 15-26.

4. J.P. Mayer, *Sociology and film: studies and documents*, London: Faber, 1946. A companion volume, id. *British cinemas and their audiences: sociological studies*, London: Dobson, 1948, is in similar style.

5. I.C. Jarvie, *Towards a sociology of the cinema*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1970; Lovell, op.cit. (ch.2, n.3) 18.

6. Andrew Tudor, *Image and influence: studies in the sociology of film*, London: Allen & Unwin, 1974.

7. J.S.R. Goodlad, *A sociology of popular drama*, London: Heinemann, 1971.

8. Frederick Elkin, 'A study of the relationship between popular hero types and social class', PhD thesis, University of Chicago, 1951; Robert P. Cunningham, 'A sociological approach to esthetics: an analysis of attitudes toward the motion picture', PhD thesis, State University of Iowa, 1954. For a more sociologically based examination of aesthetics from nearer the present day, see Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: a social critique of the judgement of taste*, trans. Richard Nice, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1984.

9. Ronald Robertson, 'A sociological approach to the cinema: some reflections on Antonioni', *Scope*, June 1964, new series, vol.5, no.10, 14-22; George Huaco, *The sociology of film art*, New York and London: Basic Books, 1965.

10. Tom Harrisson, 'What is sociology?' *Pilot Papers*, March 1947, vol.2, no.1, 10-25.

11. David Lockwood, 'Some remarks on "The Social System"' *British Journal of Sociology*, 1956, vol.7, 142.

12. e.g. T.H. Marshall (with Tom Bottomore), *Citizenship and social class*, London: Pluto Press, 1992. R.H. Tawney, *Equality*, London: Allen & Unwin, 1964; Richard M. Titmuss, *Birth, poverty and wealth: a study of infant mortality*, London: Hamilton Medical, 1943.

13. Ferdynand Zweig's works include *Men in the pits*, London: Gollancz, 1948; *Productivity and trade unions*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1951; *Labour, life and poverty*, Wakefield: EP Publishing, 1975; *The British worker*, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1952; *Women's life and labour*, London: Gollancz, 1952; *The worker in an affluent society: family life and industry*, London: Heinemann, 1961. Mark Abrams was even more prolific, producing both articles and numerous books and pamphlets including *The population of Great Britain: current trends and future problems*, London: Allan & Unwin (for London Press Exchange), 1945; *The condition of the British people 1911-1945: a study prepared for the Fabian Society*, London: Gollancz, 1945; *The home market* (rev. edn.) London: Allen & Unwin, 1950; *Social surveys and social action*, London: Heinemann, 1951; *The teenage consumer*, London: London Press Exchange, 1959; *Education, social class and newspaper reading*, London: Institute of Practitioners in Advertising, 1963; as editor, *The home market: a book of facts about people*, 2nd edn., London: Allen & Unwin, 1939. For the complementary work of other pollsters, see Hadley Cantril, *Public opinion 1935-1946*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1951.

14. The point is made by the range of material used in Jeffrey Richards and Dorothy Sheridan (eds.) *Mass-Observation at the movies*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1987. Almost nothing is said about the post-war years. For an exception to this trend, see Sue Harper and Vincent Porter, *Weeping in the cinema in 1950: a reassessment of Mass-Observation material*, Brighton: Mass-Observation Archive, University of Sussex Library, 1995. After 1950 the baton passed from Mass-Observation to other organisations and individuals offering snapshots of lifestyles. Amongst the more valuable studies are T. Cauter and J.S. Downham, *The communication of ideas: a study of contemporary influences on urban life*, London: Chatto & Windus (for Reader's Digest), 1954; Geoffrey Gorer, *Exploring English character*, London: Cresset Press, 1955.
    Differing attitudes towards methodology led to criticism of Mass-Observation by Abrams and others. See Dennis Chapman, 'Towards the study of human ecology', *Pilot Papers*, January 1946, vol.1, no.1, 81; Penny Summerfield, 'Mass-Observation: social research or social movement?' *Journal of Contemporary History*, 1985, vol.20, no.3, 449.

15. Notable are Pearl Jephcott, *Rising twenty: notes on some ordinary girls*, London: Faber, 1948; Madeleine Kerr, *The people of Ship Street*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1958; Raymond Firth (ed.) *Two studies of kinship in London*, LSE monographs on social anthropology no.15, London: University of London, Athlone Press, 1956. These and similar studies are extensively analysed, though poorly referenced, in Josephine Klein, *Samples from English cultures*, 2 vols., London: Routledge & Kegan Paul 1965. Waites traces this tradition to Edwardian amateurs, but this is to ignore Victorian figures such as Henry Mayhew. Bernard Waites, 'War and the language of class', in Patrick Joyce, *Class*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995, 337.

16. Noel Annan, *Our age: portrait of a generation*, London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1990, 258.

17. Jephcott, op.cit. (ch.2, n.15) 116.

18. Henry Mess, *Social groups in modern England*, London: Nelson, 1940. See also Tawney, op.cit. (ch.2 n.12) 57-90.

19. T.H. Pear, *English social differences*, London: Allen & Unwin, 1955, 10.

20. Richard Centers. *The psychology of social classes: a study of class consciousness*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1949, and London: Oxford University Press, 1949; W. Lloyd Warner, *Social class in America: a manual of procedure for the measurement of social status*, New York: Harper, 1949. For a summary of academic concerns in America, see E.R. Shils, 'The present situation in American sociology', *Pilot Papers*, June 1947, vol.2, no.2, 8-36. For the relationship of American sociological concerns to the Cold War, see Graham Murdock and Robert McCron, 'Youth and class: the career of a confusion', in Geoff Mungham and Geoff Pearson (eds.) *Working class youth culture*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1976, 10-26.

21. H.J. Eysenck, 'Social attitudes and social class', *British Journal of Sociology*, March 1950, vol.1, no.1, 64.

22. David V. Glass (ed.) *Social mobility in Britain*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1954.

23. e.g. David Lockwood, *The blackcoated worker: a study in class consciousness*. London: Allen & Unwin, 1966; John Goldthorpe, et al. *The affluent worker in the class structure*. London: Cambridge University Press, 1969; Michael Young and Peter Willmott, *Family and kinship in East London*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1957. A later addition to the genre is Martin Bulmer (ed.) *Working class images of society*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1975. For a history of the Institute of Community Studies and the development of British sociology in the 1950s and 60s, see Martin Bulmer (ed.) *Essays on the history of British sociological research*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985. The evolution of the 'affluent worker' debate is examined in James E. Cronin, *Labour and society in Britain 1918-1979*. London: Batsford, 1984; Mike Savage and Andrew Miles, *The remaking of the British working class 1840-1940*, London: Routledge, 1994.

24. The apogee of this marriage of the social and the artistic was probably the now-forgotten play *Life Price* by Michael O'Neill and Jeremy Seabrook, set on a Midlands council estate and staged by the English Stage Company in 1969. O'Neill was a sociology lecturer turned teacher, while Seabrook was both teacher and polemicist.

The same company also revived a trilogy of D.H. Lawrence's early plays which offer a more balanced view of working-class life, but from more than half a century earlier. The recurring problem of dating 'traditional' working-class culture will be considered further in later sections of this chapter.

25. A recent example of Goldthorpe's opus is Robert Erikson and John H. Goldthorpe, *The constant flux*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, Clarendon Press, 1992. For a critique of his approach, see Gordon Marshall et al. *Social class in modern Britain*. London: Routledge 1993; Jon Clark, Celia Modgil and Sohan Modgil (eds.) *John H. Goldthorpe: consensus and controversy*, Basingstoke, Hants: Falmer Press, 1990. If not a new dawn, a string of works signal a reawakened interest in class: David J. Lee and Bryan S. Turner (eds.) *Conflicts about class: debating inequality in late industrialism*, Harlow, Essex: Longman, 1996; Peter Saunders, *Unequal but fair? A study of class barriers in Britain*, Choice in welfare no.28, London: Institute of Economic, Affairs Health and Welfare Unit, 1996; Andrew Adonis and Stephen Pollard, *A class act: the myth of Britain's classless society*, London: Hamilton, 1997; Stephen Brook, *Class: knowing your place in modern Britain*, London: Gollancz, 1997; Gordon Marshall, Adam Swift and Stephen Roberts, *Against the odds? Social class and social justice in industrial societies*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, Clarendon Press, 1997; David Cannadine, *Class in Britain*, New Haven, CT, and London: Yale University Press, 1998; Ross McKibbin, *Classes and cultures: England 1818-1951*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998.

26. B. Seebohm Rowntree and G.R. Lavers, *Poverty and the welfare state: a third social survey of York dealing only with economic questions*. London: Longmans, Green, 1951; Peter

Townsend, 'A society for people', in Norman Mackenzie (ed.) *Conviction*, London: MacGibbon & Kee, 1958, 93-120; Ken Coates and Richard Silburn, *Poverty: the forgotten Englishmen*, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1981; Dorothy Wedderburn (ed.) *Poverty, inequality and class structure*, London: Cambridge University Press, 1974; Peter Townsend, *Poverty in the United Kingdom: a survey of household resources and standards of living*, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1979.

Not surprisingly, the rediscovery of poverty has been followed by support for Rowntree. See John Veit-Wilson, 'Paradigms of poverty: a rehabilitation of B.S. Rowntree', *Journal of Social Policy*, 1986, vol.15, no.1, 69-99 and no.4. 503-7

27. Rachael Low (with Roger Manvell for vol.1), *The history of the British film*, 7 vols., London: Allen & Unwin, 1948-1985. A more modest effort relevant to 1940s and deserving of mention is Tony Aldgate, 'Ideology and consensus in British feature films 1935-1947', in K.R.M. Short (ed.) *Feature film as history*, Beckenham, Kent: Croom Helm, 1981, 94-112.

28. Arthur Marwick's extensive bibliography includes *Britain in the century of total war: war, peace and social change 1900-1967*, London: Bodley Head, 1968; *The home front: the British and the Second World War*, London: Thames & Hudson, 1976; *Britain in our century: images and controversies*, London: Thames & Hudson, 1984; *British society since 1945*, 2nd edn., Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1990; *Culture in Britain since 1945*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1991; (as editor) *Total war and social change*, Basingstoke, Hants., and London: Macmillan, 1988.

29. Arthur Marwick, *Class: image and reality in Britain, France and the USA since 1890*, London: Collins, 1980; id. (ed.) *Class in the twentieth century*, Brighton, E. Sussex: Harvester Press, 1986.

30. Marwick has his blind spots. He is dismissive of B-features, which might be expected to yield more unwitting testimony than the expensive and more consciously-manipulated first features. See Marwick, *Culture in Britain since 1945*, 57.

31. Arthur Marwick, 'The consequences of wars', in Open University, *The study of war and society: Thucydides to the eighteenth century*, War and Society course, block 1, Bletchley, Bucks: Open University Press, 1973, 82. This 'seminar' (pages 80-8) provides one of the clearest expositions of the model and its genesis.

32. The model's detractors are on parade in Harold L. Smith (ed.) *War and social change: British society in the Second World War*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1986.

33. Lord Woolton, who was to become chairman of the Conservative Party, has Calder as his present-day advocate. Angus Calder, *The people's war: Britain 1939-1945*. London: Pimlico, 1992, 384. For Bevin's claims to the mantle, see ibid. 102.

34. 'But what was insufficiently realised was that many town children were not equipped for winter in the country, and that evacuation imposed a compulsory levelling-up in social standards of dress in large numbers of children.' Richard M. Titmuss, *Problems of social policy*, History of the Second World War: United Kingdom Civil Series, London: HMSO and Longmans, Green, 1950, 165-6. Clothing is but one of many examples which could be cited.

35. Janet Beveridge, *Beveridge and his plan*, London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1954, 114-36; British Institute of Public Opinion, *The Beveridge Report and the public*, London: British Institute of Public Opinion (for Gallup Polls), [1943]. For conflicting evidence on public expectations about the post-war world, see Hadley Cantril, op.cit. (ch.2, n.13) 892-3; M-O A: FR 1032-3 'What people want from the war', 5 January 1942; M-O A: FR 1568 'Public reaction to the Beveridge Report', 12 January 1943.

36. Among those who accept this uncritical reading is Annan, op.cit. (ch.2, n.16) 218. More surprising are Townsend, op.cit. (ch.2, n.26) 93-4; and Philip Abrams, 'Social factors and sociological analysis', in Philip Abrams (ed.) *Work, urbanism and inequality: UK society today*, London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1978, 3.

37. Titmuss, *Problems of social policy*, 114-82, surveyed the extensive body of evidence and failed to come to any conclusion. More recent assessments are John Macnicol, 'The evacuation of schoolchildren', in Smith, op.cit. (ch.2, n.32) 3-31; and Travis L. Crosby, *The impact of civilian evacuation in the Second World War*, Beckenham, Kent: Croom Helm, 1986. Crosby prefers to turn the myth on its head: evacuation opened the eyes of the working class to the advantages of the few. ibid. 10. Several accounts in B.S. Johnson (ed.) *The evacuees*, London: Gollancz, 1968, e.g. pages 33 and 40, note how working-class children acquired middle-class habits, though any hint of envy or antagonism is absent.

38. Correlli Barnett, *The audit of war: the illusion and reality of Britain as a great nation*, Basingstoke, Hants., and London: Macmillan: 1986; id. *The lost victory: British dreams, British realities 1945-1950*, Basingstoke, Hants., and London: Macmillan, 1995.

39. The varying ideologies are well characterised from a sociological viewpoint in Vic George and Paul Wilding, *Ideology and social welfare*, rev. edn., London: Routledge, 1993.

40. Anthony Howard, 'We are the masters now', in Michael Sissons and Philip French (eds.) *The age of austerity 1945-1951*, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1964, 33.

41.     It was one of the characteristic ironies of the time that the massive, liberating programme summed up in the wartime slogan, "Free Secondary Education for All", and hailed as a great advance towards a unified, modern society, should, in its enactment, have provoked a sharper, grittier, more particularised, consciousness of class and social inequalities than had perhaps ever before existed in Britain.

Harry Hopkins, *The new look: a social history of the forties and fifties in Britain*, London: Secker & Warburg, 1963, 143. See also pages 86, 187-8.

42. Richard M. Titmuss, introduction to Tawney, op.cit. (ch.2, n.12) 11-12.

43. Paul Addison, *The road to 1945: British politics and the Second World War*, London: Pimlico, 1994; id. *Now the war is over: a social history of Britain 1945-51*, London: BBC and Cape, 1985.

44. ibid. 2.

45. id. *Now the war is over: a social history of Britain 1945-51*, London: Pimlico, 1995, ix. For an emphasis on the discontinuities from a historian from the previous generation, see Henry Pelling, *The Labour governments 1945-51*, Basingstoke, Hants., and London: Macmillan, 1984, 262, though even this is a shift in position from that found in his earlier work, id. *Britain and the Second World War*, London: Fontana, 1970. It also contradicts conclusions penned at the time. See Ernest Watkins, *The cautious revolution*, London: Secker & Warburg, 1951, 12, for the view that the Labour programme of 1945 was backward-looking.

46. Peter Hennessy, *Never again: Britain 1945-51*, London, Cape, 1992, 70-1.

47. Kenneth O. Morgan, *Labour in power 1945-51*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985, ix-x.

48. id. *The people's peace: British history 1945-1989*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990, 18-19. See also id. *Labour in power 1945-51*, 185.

49. Ben Pimlott, 'The myth of consensus', in Lesley M. Smith (ed.) *The making of Britain: echoes of greatness*, Basingstoke, Hants, and London: Macmillan (with London Weekend Television), 1988, 129-42.

50. Ralph Miliband, *Divided societies: class struggle in contemporary capitalism*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991, 73. See id. *Parliamentary socialism: a study in the politics of Labour*, London: Allen & Unwin, 1961; 2nd edn., London: Merlin, 1972, for a detailed assessment of Attlee's government.

51. Angus Calder, *The people's war: Britain 1939-1945*. London: Pimlico, 1992, 18. His socialist sympathies show clearly in his forward to Pete Grafton. *You, you and you! The people out of step with World War II*. London: Pluto Press, 1981.

52. Paul Thompson, *The voice of the past: oral history*, 2nd edn., Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988, 71.

53. Annette Kuhn, 'Cinema culture in 1930s Britain'. End of award report ESRC Project R2000 23 5385. University of Glasgow, Dept. of Theatre, Film and Television Studies, [1997?]; Carl Chinn, *They worked all their lives: women of the urban poor in England 1880-1939*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988; Stephen Humphries, *Hooligans or rebels? An oral history of working-class childhood and youth 1889-1939*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1995.

54. E.P. Thompson, *The making of the English working class*, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1980.

55. Raphael Samuel (ed.) *People's history and socialist theory*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981.

56. Jerry White, *The worst street in north London: Campbell Bunk, Islington, between the wars*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1986.

57. The debate has widened from what was achieved to how concepts like citizenship were given new significance. The change of focus is signalled in Jose Harris, '"Contract" and "citizenship"', in David Marquand and Anthony Seldon (eds.) *The ideas that shaped post-war Britain*, London: Fontana Press, 1996, 122-38. A concise historiography of the period is offered by Nick Tiratsoo in his introduction to Nick Tiratsoo (ed.) *The Attlee years*. London: Pinter, 1991, 1-6.

58. Annan, op.cit. (ch.2, n.16). The subtitle of the paperback edition goes some way to resolving he ambiguity about the 'us' to whom he is referring: *Our age: the age that made post-war Britain*, London: Fontana, 1991.

59. e.g. Cyril Connolly, *Ideas and places*. London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1953; or any issue of *Horizon* (a magazine which carried no film reviews). In strictly historical terms, the 'Establishment' was a 1950s notion. Vernon Bogdanor and Robert Skidelsky, introduction to Vernon Bogdanor and Robert Skidelsky, *The age of affluence 1951-1964*. London: Macmillan, 1970, 14.

60. In his chapter on Leavis, Annan, *Our age*, 1990 edn., 315-31, makes clear that Leavis's lower-middle-class origins caused him to be regarded as an outsider by many members of the Establishment. The same may be said of popularisers such as A.J.P. Taylor and Raymond Williams.

61. T.S. Eliot, 'Music Hall' (1923), in *Selected Essays*, 3rd edn., London: Faber, 1951, 456-9; Peter Ackroyd, *T.S. Eliot*, London: Hamish Hamilton, 1984, 31, 162 and 167; Norman Malcolm, *Ludwig Wittgenstein: a memoir*, London: Oxford University Press, 1962, 28.

62. 'The training of the reader who spends his leisure in cinemas, looking through magazines and newspapers, listening to jazz music, does not merely fail to help him, it prevents him from normal development . . . partly by providing him with a set of habits inimical to mental effort.' Q.D. Leavis, *Fiction and the reading public*, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1972, 180. See also F.R. Leavis, *Mass civilisation and minority culture*, Cambridge: Minority Press, 1930, 9-10; St John Ervine, *The alleged art of the cinema*. London: University College Union Society, 1934, (Ervine makes an exception for Chaplin and René Clair.) The Leavis's attitude to Dickens makes a revealing parallel: Dickens' popularity counted against him.

63. The Leavisite attitude towards the cinema is summed up in William Hunter, *Scrutiny of cinema*, London: Wishart, 1932. For a useful historiography of cultural change in the 1940s, including an assessment of the influence of Leavis and Eliot, see Robert Hewison, *Culture and consensus: England, art and politics since 1940*, London: Methuen, 1995.

64. e.g. Samuel Harris's editorial in response to a broadcast by E. Arnot Robertson, *The Cinema*, 6 March 1946, 5; also P.L. Mannock's review of Paul Rotha's *The film till now*, *Kinematograph Weekly*, 16 March 1950, 6.

65. Paul Swann, *The Hollywood film in postwar Britain*, New York: St Martin's Press, 1987, 18; George Orwell, 'The lion and the unicorn' (1941), in *Inside the Whale and other Essays*, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1962, 89. Swann does not cite his reference for Priestley's suspicion of the cinema, though it is noteworthy that in reviewing the relationship between the state and the arts, Priestley ignores the cinema. J.B. Priestley, *The arts under socialism*, London: Turnstile Press, 1947.

66. Swann, op.cit. (ch.2, n.65) 67-8. *Film Fantasy and Fact, Film Post, Film Forecast* and *Screen Stories* are all mentioned by Swann. None is held by the British Library. The 1947 edition of the *Newspaper press directory and advertisers' guide* lists a range of other film titles such as *Filmfare* and *Film Star Weekly*. Neither the British Library nor the British Film Institute holds copies.

67. E. Wood, 'Films we can believe in', *Picture Show*, 20 April 1946, 5. See also Edward Green, 'The rise of reality films', *Picture Show*, 18 May 1945, 13; editorial, *Film Weekly News*, 5 July 1947.

68. Paul Strand, 'Realism: a personal view', *Sight and Sound*, February 1950, vol.18, 23-6. In similar vein see Maurice Beresford, 'Realism and emotion', *Sight and Sound*, April 1945, vol.14, no.53, 13-15; Francis Howell, 'Realism in British pictures', *British Film Review*, June 1948, vol.1, no.4, 12-14. For Hollywood's wary view of realism, see Colin Shindler, *Hollywood goes to war: film and American society 1939-1952*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979, 89.

69. For an analysis of the concept of naturalism see Richard Collins, 'Seeing is believing: the ideology of naturalism', in John Corner (ed.) *Documentary and the mass media*, London: Edward Arnold, 1986, 124-38; Rob Lapsley and Michael Westlake, *Film theory: an introduction*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988, 156-80. For another approach to realism in the 1940s, see John Ellis, 'Art, culture and quality: terms for a cinema in the forties and seventies', *Screen*, 1978, vol.19, no.3, 9-49

70. Geoff Brown, 'Paradise found and lost: the course of British realism.' in Robert Murphy (ed.) *The British cinema book*, London: BFI, 1997, 188.

71. e.g. Michael Balcon, 'The cinema's place in society', *Contemporary Cinema*, February 1947, vol.1, no.1, 3-5; Dilys Powell, 'Film in educational and social life', *Documentary Film News*, January 1949, vol.8, no.71, 2-4 and 12; id. 'Should schools teach film appreciation?' *Film Forum*, June 1949, vol.4, no.2, 4; Mayer, *British cinemas and their audiences*, 243.

72. 'When I go to the cinema I go to laugh, or to be thrilled or moved, or because I like spectacle; in short I go to be entertained. . . . But I do not go to be educated.' Herbert S. Briscoe, Birmingham, *Picture Show*, 13 August 1949, 14.

73. J.B. Priestley, 'English films and English people', *World Film News*, November 1936, vol.1. no.8, 3; Sidney L. Bernstein, 'Walk up! Walk up! — please', in Charles Davy (ed.) *Footnotes to the film*, London: Lovat Dickson and Readers Union, 1938, 227; Herbert Morrison speaking at the CEA annual dinner, *Daily Mirror*, 19 December 1945, 'British films 1945' file (BFI Library); Dilys Powell, *The Dilys Powell film reader*, ed. Christopher Cook, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992, 6; Roger Manvell, 'Britain's self-portraiture in feature films', *Geographical Magazine*, August 1953, 226.

74. Bernstein, op.cit. (ch.2, n.73); Michael Balcon, 'The feature carries the documentary tradition', *Quarterly of Film, Radio and Television*, summer 1952, vol.6, no.4, 351-3.

75. e.g. William K. Everson, 'The English home and garden in film', *Films in Review*, January 1986, vol.37, no.1, 35-9; Michael O'Shaughnessy, '"What I wouldn't give to grow old in a place like that": *A Canterbury Tale'*, in Pat Kirkham and David Thoms (eds.) *War culture: social change and changing experience in World War Two Britain*, London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1995, 42; Jeffrey Richards, *Films and British national identity: from Dickens to 'Dad's Army'*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997, 98-9.

76. '[The new lower middle class] supplies an eager and growing market for the worst — in movies, radio and journalism — that the United States has to send them. . . . To an American, these signs of Americanisation seem mostly stale and depressing. The British feed themselves on our banality, without catching our excitement and gusto. Most of them chew gum.' Edmund Wilson, *Europe without Baedeker: sketches among the ruins of Italy, Greece and England*, London: Secker & Warburg, 1948, 11; see also ibid. 10; T.S. Eliot, 'Marie Lloyd' (1923), in Eliot, op.cit. (ch.2, n.61) 458-9; T.S. Eliot, 'Modern education and the classics' (1932), in ibid 508; Graham Greene, 'Subjects and stories', in Davey, op.cit. (ch.2, n.73) 65; Lindsay Anderson, 'Angles of approach', *Sequence*, winter 1947, no.2, 5-8.

77. e.g. Bernard Berelson and Morris Janowitz (eds.) *Reader in public opinion and communication*, 2nd edn., New York: Free Press of Glencoe, 1953; Elihu Katz and Paul F. Lazarsfeld, *Personal influence: the part played by people in the flow of mass communication*, New York: Macmillan, Free Press of Glencoe, 1955.

78. Richard Hoggart, *The uses of literacy: aspects of working-class life with special reference to publications and entertainments*, Chatto & Windus, 1957; Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1958. Subsequent references are to the 1958 edition.

79. Charles Critcher, 'Sociology, cultural studies and the post-war working class', in John Clarke, Charles Critcher and Richard Johnson (eds.) *Working class culture: studies in history and theory*, London: Hutchinson, 1979, 19; Stephen Humphries, op.cit. (ch.2, n.53) 7; Andy Medhurst, 'Music hall and British cinema', in Charles Barr (ed.) *All our yesterdays: 90 years of British cinema*, London: BFI, 1986, 186; Alan Sinfield, *Literature, politics and culture in postwar Britain*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1989, 256; Janet Thumim, 'Methodological and critical problems arising from the question of popular cinema's contribution to the ideology of the feminine in Britain between 1945-1965', PhD thesis, University of London, 1992, 87.

80. Charles Critcher, 'Sociology, cultural studies and the post-war working class', in Clarke et al. op.cit. (ch.2, n.79) 19.

81. Raymond Williams' major works from the same period are *Culture and society 1780-1950*, London: Chatto & Windus, 1958; *The long revolution*, London: Chatto & Windus, 1961.

82. Hoggart, op.cit. (ch.2, n.78) 26 and 31; Gareth Stedman Jones, 'Working-class culture and working-class politics in London 1870-1900: notes on the remaking of the working class', *Journal of Social History*, summer 1974, vol.7, no.4, 460-508; Bernard Waites, 'Popular culture in late 19th and early twentieth century Lancashire', in Open University, *Historical development of popular culture in Britain 1*, Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1981, 97; Geoff Eley, '*Distant Voices, Still Lives*. The family is a dangerous place: memory, gender, and the image of the working class', in Robert A. Rosenstone, (ed.) *Revisioning history: film and the construction of a new past*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995, 121.

83. Hoggart is aware of the problem. Hoggart, op.cit. (ch.2, n.78) 224.

84. J. Enoch Powell, Commentary one, in Brian Brivati, and Harriet Jones (eds.) *What difference did the war make?* London: Leicester University Press, 1995, 14.

85. Hoggart, op.cit. (ch.2, n.78) esp. 246-72.

86. Raymond Durgnat, *A mirror for England: British movies from austerity to affluence*, London: Faber, 1970.

87. Robert Murphy, *Realism and tinsel: cinema and society in Britain 1939-49*, London: Routledge, 1992; Anthony Aldgate and Jeffrey Richards, *Britain can take it: British cinema in the Second World War*, 2nd edn., Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1994; Richards, op.cit. (ch.2, n.75); S. Craig Shafer, *British popular films 1929-1939: the cinema of reassurance*, London: Routledge, 1997. The title of Shafer's work suggests a shift of emphasis from audiences to films when compared with his 1981 thesis on which it is based: id. 'Enter the dream house: the British film industry and the working classes in depression England 1929-39', PhD thesis, University of Illinois, 1981.

88. One virtue of such works is that they may reveal the assumptions of film-makers about their intended audiences and the values and concerns they wished to portray. Relevant in this context are Wheeler Winston Dixon (ed.) *Reviewing British cinema 1900-1992: essays and interviews*, Albany, NY: SUNY, 1994; Charles Drazin, *The finest years: British cinema of the 1940s*, London: Deutsch, 1998.

89. Richards and Sheridan, op.cit. (ch.2, n.14); Jeffrey Richards (ed.) *The unknown 1930s: an alternative history of the British cinema 1929-1939*, London: Tauris, 1998. A chapter is devoted to audiences in the 1930s in Jeffrey Richards, *The age of the dream palace: cinema and society in Britain 1930-1939*, London: Routledge, 1989; and Shafer, 'Enter the dream house'. Of primary sources for this period, the most useful quantitative summary is Simon Rowson, 'A statistical survey of the cinema industry in Great Britain in 1934', *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society*, 1936, new series, vol.99, no.1, 67-120. The only periodical which showed much interest in who saw films was the short-lived *World Film News*, published in the late 1930s. For post-war audiences, apart from women writers considered later, see H.E. Browning and A.A. Sorrell, 'Cinemas and cinema-going in Great Britain', *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society*, 1954, series A, general, vol.117, pt 2, 133-70; Philip Corrigan, 'Film entertainment as ideology and pleasure', in James Curran and Vincent Porter (eds.) *British cinema history*, London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1983, 24-35.

90. It was a direction which had its critics at the time, notably Kevin Brownlow and Paul Rotha. Philip M. Taylor, 'Introduction: film, the historian and the Second World War', in Philip M. Taylor (ed.) *Britain and the cinema in the Second World War*, Basingstoke, Hants., and London: Macmillan, 1988, 1-14.

91. Laura Mulvey, 'Visual pleasure and narrative cinema', *Screen*, 1975, vol.16, no.3, 6-18.

92.         When fans cause a riot outside a cinema in their efforts to catch a glimpse of a star it
        is not merely vulgar curiosity, it is the fervour of the believer whose faith is justified, to
        whom is vouchsafed the ocular demonstration that what he believes in actually exists,
        and this fervour springs from the very remoteness of screen actors from their audience.
Anthony Asquith, 'The tenth muse takes stock', in Roger Manvell, R.K. Neilson Baxter and H.H. Wollenberg (eds.) *The cinema 1950*, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1950, 38. Asquith's view may apply to stars such as Margaret Lockwood who worked almost exclusively in film, It has latterly found an advocate in Richard Dyer. See Richard Dyer, *Stars*, London: BFI, 1979. Something equally complex was at work where stars alternated between stage and film and stressed their closeness to their audiences.

93. Laurence Senelick, 'Politics as entertainment: Victorian music-hall songs', *Victorian Studies*, 1975, vol.19, no.2, 149-80; 'The working class and leisure: class expression and/or social control', *Society for the Study of Labour History Bulletin*, spring 1976, no.32, 14; Bernard Waites, 'The music hall', in Open University, op.cit. (ch.2, n.82) 41-76; Humphries, op.cit. (ch.2, n.53) 25-6; Medhurst, 'Music hall and British cinema', in Barr, op.cit. (ch.2, n.79) 168-88; Savage and Miles, op.cit. (ch.2, n.23) 65.

94. Peter Miles and Malcolm Smith, *Cinema, literature and society*, Beckenham, Kent: Croom Helm, 1987, 254-5.

95. Alan Swingewood, *The myth of mass culture*, Basingstoke, Hants., and London: Macmillan, 1977.

96. One indication of the shift in academic circles from film theory to a greater emphasis on popular cinema and cinema history is the founding of the Society for the Study of Popular British Cinema in 1997. See also, Pam Cook, introduction to Pam Cook (ed.) *Gainsborough pictures*, London: Cassell, 1997, 5-9.

97. For the distinction, see Karl Popper, *The open society and its enemies*, London: Routledge, 1995, 319-29.

98. On Christmas Eve in 1904, Mayor McKellan of New York ordered police to close every nickelodeon in the city. Margaret Thorp, *America at the movies*, London: Faber, 1946, 107. A date of 1908 appears in Robert Maltby, 'The social evil, the moral code and the melodramatic imagination', in Jacky Bratton, Jim Cook and Christine Gledhill, (eds.) *Melodrama: stage, picture, screen*, London: BFI, 1994, 219.

99. Henry J. Forman, *Our movie made children*, New York: Macmillan, 1933.

100. A modest exception is a handout — British Film Producers' Association/Motion Picture Association of America, *Delinquent children: a world problem*, n.p.: British Film Producers' Association/Motion Picture Association of America, [1950]. This rare example of collaboration cites quotations from the police, civic leaders, academics, religious leaders and educationalists as evidence that cinema-going does not cause delinquency.

101. National Council of Public Morals. *The cinema: its present position and future possibilities*. London: Williams & Norgate, 1917, 259.

102. W.W. Charters, *Motion pictures and youth: a summary*. New York: Macmillan, 1933; Herbert Blumer, *Movies and conduct*. New York: Macmillan, 1933; Herbert Blumer and Philip M. Hauser, *Movies, delinquency and crime*. New York: Macmillan, 1933; F.G. Cressey and F. Thrasher, *Boys, movies and city streets*. New York: Macmillan, 1933; Edgar Dale, *Children's attendance at motion pictures*. New York: Macmillan, 1933; id. *The content of motion pictures*. New York: Macmillan, 1935; Wendell S. Dysinger and Christian A. Ruckmick, *The emotional responses of children to the motion picture situation*. New York: Macmillan, 1933; Perry W. Holaday and George D. Stoddard, *Getting ideas from the movies*. New York: Macmillan, 1933; Charles C. Peters, *Motion pictures and standards of morality*. New York: Macmillan, 1933; Ruth C. Peterson and L.L. Thurstone. *Motion pictures and the social attitudes of children*. New York: Macmillan, 1933; Samuel Renshaw, Vernon L. Miller and Dorothy P. Marquis, *Children's sleep*. New York: Macmillan, 1933; Frank K. Shuttleworth and Mark A. May, *The social conduct and attitudes of movie fans*. New York: Macmillan, 1933. A condensed version for popular consumption is Forman, op.cit. (ch.2, n.99). The genesis and influence of the Payne Fund studies are examined in Garth S. Jowett, Ian C. Jarvie and Kathryn H. Fuller, *Children at the movies: media influence and the Payne Fund controversy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996. This work also contains hitherto unpublished sections of the studies.

103. Dysinger and Ruckmick, op.cit. (ch.2, n.102).

104. Mortimer J. Adler, *Art and prudence: a study in practical philosophy*, New York: Longmans, Green, 1937, 260-426.

105. Mayer, *Sociology and film* and *British cinemas and their audiences*; Annette Kuhn, 'Cinemagoing in the 1930s: report of a questionnaire survey', University of Glasgow, Dept. of Theatre, Film and Television Studies, [1997?].

106. Birkenhead Vigilance Committee, *The cinema and the child: a report of investigations June-October 1931*. Birkenhead: Birkenhead Vigilance Committee, 1931; F.H. Spencer, *School children and the cinema*. London: London County Council Education Committee, 1932; A.D.K. Owen, *A survey of children's cinema matinees in Sheffield*. Sheffield: Sheffield Social Survey Committee, 1931. The 1931 Birmingham cinema enquiry is analysed in Jeffrey Richards, 'The cinema and cinema-going in Birmingham', in John K Walton and James Walvin (eds.) *Leisure in Britain 1780-1939*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1983, 31-52. Questions such as the effects of films on children's sleep which figure in the Payne Fund studies also appear in these British studies made around the same time.

107. Secretary of State for Home Department, Minister of Education and Secretary of State for Scotland, *Report of the departmental committee on children and the cinema*. 1950; Cmd 7945 (Wheare Report). The vague suspicion of the cinema is illustrated in County Councils Association, *Second report of the special sub-committee on the cinematograph and education of films and the admission of children to cinemas*. London: County Councils Association, [1946]. As para. 18 declares, '. . . the cinema damages the development of independent thought which the educational process in the school is designed to produce'. The strong appeal of love in films came in for particular criticism. There was also an implicit class bias: 'Success is commonly presented as material success, an unfilled desire for the ordinary man and woman with a "humdrum" existence.' (loc.cit.)

108. John Bowlby, *Child care and the growth of love*. 2nd edn., Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1965, is representative. See especially pages 197-8 on the rejection of environmental explanations of mental ill-health. Cautions about the application of his theory are offered by

Alva Myrdal and Viola Klein, *Women's two roles: home and work.* 2nd edn., London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1968, 127-8.

109. The Payne Fund studies might suggest a greater acceptance of experimental evidence in America, with delinquency being ascribed to individual pathology (the psychological model). By contrast, Biskind sees the societal model as holding sway in the 1930s and 40s, citing *Boys of the Road* (dir. William Wellman, US release 1933), *Boys' Town* (dir. Norman Taurog, US release 1938) and, as one of the last films in the tradition, *Knock on any Door* (dir. Nicholas Ray, US release, 1949). Peter Biskind, *Seeing is believing: how Hollywood taught us to stop worrying and love the fifties.* London: Pluto Press, 1984, 198. For the ways in which post-war preoccupations shaped attitudes to youth, see Graham Murdock and Robert McCron, 'Youth and class: the career of a confusion', in Mungham and Pearson, op.cit. (ch.2, n.20) 10-26.

110. For a summary of the findings of the committees, see Keith Evans, *The development and structure of the English school system.* London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1985, 92-6.

111. e.g. W.D. Wall, *The adolescent child.* London: Methuen, 1948, 95. Wall lectured in the Department of Education, University of Birmingham.
    There were chinks in this apparent unanimity. In her thesis a year later, Hilda Pieris was anticipating that the further development of comprehensive schools would render the tripartite division obsolete, though as Burt was Professor of Psychology at the University of London (and formerly the Professor of Education), Pieris was hardly in a position to challenge his tenets. Hilda E. Pieris, 'A comparative study of the interests of adolescent girls in certain urban and rural schools', MA thesis, University of London, 1949, 85.

112. e.g. H.E.O. James and F.T. Moore, 'Adolescent leisure in a working-class district', *Occupational Psychology,* pt.1: January 1944, vol.18, no.3, 123-45; pt.2: *Occupational Psychology,* January 1944, vol.18, no.1, 24-34; J.W. Reeves and P. Slater, 'Age and intelligence in relation to leisure interests', *Occupational Psychology,* July 1947, vol.21, no.3, 111-24.

113. Some detail is provided by the studies in which W.D. Wall collaborated: W.D. Wall and E.M. Smith, 'The film choices of adolescents', *British Journal of Educational Psychology,* June 1949, vol.19, no.2, 121-36. W.D. Wall, 'The adolescent and the cinema', *Educational Review,* June 1949, vol.1, no.1, 34-46 and February 1949, vol.1, no.2, 119-30; W.D. Wall and W.A. Simpson, 'The emotional responses of adolescent groups to certain films', *British Journal of Educational Psychology,* November 1950, vol.20, no.3, 153-63, and June 1951, vol.21, no.2, 81-8. See also Maurice T. Woodhouse, 'Children's film judgments', *Researches and Studies,* December 1949, no.1, 33-45.

114. Although the ideal would be to obtain evidence based on social class rather the type of school, the absence of the former does not invalidate the exercise. So long as it is accepted that the grammar schools were more likely than secondary modern schools to promote middle-class values, irrespective of the pupil's origins, a class-based perspective is going to result from studies based on schools. This point will be pursued in subsequent chapters.

115. 'If many modern schools are now human, civilizing places with much to offer the social and spiritual side of their pupils' development, far fewer seem to have come to grips with the problems of how to meet intellectual needs and how to stimulate further development.' *Education in 1949,* London: HMSO, 1950, 23, cited in H.C. Dent, *Growth in English education 1946-1952,* London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1954, 96.
    At the chalkface, there was less scope for ideals: '. . . the large majority of pupils showed more aptitude for practical work than academic work.' Miss A.C. Coombes, headmistress of Southchurch High School for Girls, Southend-on-Sea, speaking at the (secondary modern) school's prize-giving. *Southend Standard,* 27 July 1950.

Yet another view on what was expected from girls came from academe: 'The secondary modern school has, as one of its functions, to contribute to the creation of a happier, and more varied family life for the majority of the next generation by helping adolescents to become *home-makers.*' [author's italics] Miss D.J. Phillips, 'A study of the concepts of family life held by a group of adolescent girls', *Researches and Studies*, May 1954, no.10, 17.

116. One of the few studies of adult leisure interests comes from the anthropological school: Doris Rich, 'Social relationships in leisure time: a study of adult behaviour in a Black Country community', PhD thesis, University of Birmingham, 1951.

117. UNESCO Department of Mass Communication, *The influence of the cinema on children and adolescents: an annotated international bibliography*, Paris: UNESCO, [1961]. It makes an interesting comparison with Schramm's sociological orientation: Wilbur Schramm/ UNESCO Department of Mass Communication Research (for International Association for Mass Communication Research), *The effects of television on children and adolescents: an annotated bibliography with an introductory overview of research results*. Reports and papers on mass communications no.43, [Paris]: UNESCO, [1964].

118. Vicki Eves, 'The effects of violence in the mass media', *Screen*, summer 1970, vol.11, no.3, 31-43.

119. Leonard Berkowitz, Ronald Corwin, and Mark Heironimus, 'Film violence and subsequent aggressive tendencies', *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 1963, vol.27, 217.

120. J. Macalister Brew, *Informal education: adventures and reflections*. London: Faber, 1946, 231.

121. For Lacan's psychoanalytic approach and its applicability to film see Lapsley and Westlake, op.cit. (ch.2, no.69).
Popper is the standard-bearer of academic rigour. See Karl Popper, *The poverty of historicism*, London: Routledge, 1991, esp. 130-9.

122. Martha Wolfenstein and Nathan Leites, *Movies: a psychological study*. Glencoe, IL: Free Press of Glencoe, 1950. The limits of this approach are reached in Kracauer's attempt to postulate the portrayal of national character in films: Siegfried Kracauer, *From Calagari to Hitler: a psychological study of the German film*, London: Dobson, 1947. More relevant is: id. 'National types as Hollywood presents them', in Manvell et al. op.cit. (ch.2, n.92) 140-69, which includes a discussion of the British character in film.

123. Jean Mitry, *The aesthetics and psychology of the cinema*, trans. Christopher King, London: Athlone Press, 1998.

124. Margery Spring Rice, *Working class wives: their health and conditions*, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1939; London: Virago, 1989.

125. One tentative conclusion, stemming from several fruitless attempts at interviews, is that the self-employed — particularly shop-keepers — had little time for going to the cinema in the late 1940s.

126. Women's Group on Public Welfare, *Our towns: a close-up – a study made in 1939-42 with certain recommendations by the Hygiene Committee of the Women's Group on Public Welfare (in association of the National Council of Social Service)*. London: Oxford University Press, 1943 (the phrase 'submerged tenth' is used on p. xiv); id. *The neglected child and his family: a study made in 1946-7, together with recommendations made by a sub-committee of the*

*Women's Groups on Public Welfare (in association with the National Council of Social Service)* London: Oxford University Press, 1948.

127. Dorothy Sheridan (ed.) *Wartime women: an anthology of woman's wartime writing for Mass-Observation 1937-45.* London: Mandarin, 1991, esp. 151-6 and 161-3.

128. Eric Taylor, *Women who went to war 1938-46.* London: Grafton Books, 1988, 18. A similar sentiment was expressed by an interviewee in *Frontline Females.* BBC Radio 4, 19 April 1998. Once again this points up the way subsequent experiences might colour memory to conform with a generally accepted view. To limit this risk, oral testimony must be tested against other primary sources. The entry for 10 May 1945 in Nella Last's diary, kept for Mass-Observation, indicates a change in attitude brought about by the war:

> I love my home dearly, but *as* a home rather than a house. The latter can make a prison and a penance, if a woman makes too much of a fetish of cleaning and polishing. But I will not, *cannot*, go back to the narrowness of my husband's 'I don't want anyone else's company but yours — why do *you* want anyone else?'

Richard Broad and Suzie Fleming (eds.) *Nella Last's war: a mother's diary 1939-45.* London: Sphere Books, 1983, 282 (original emphasis).

129. Myrdal and Klein, op.cit. (ch.2, n.108) 53.

130. Pauline Gregg, *The welfare state: an economic and social history of Great Britain from 1945 to the present day.* London: Harrap, 1967; Elizabeth Wilson, *Women and the welfare state.* London: Tavistock, 1977; id. *Only halfway to paradise: women in postwar Britain 1945-1968.* London: Tavistock, 1980.

131. id. *Women and the welfare state,* 64.

132. Denise Riley, '"The free mothers": pronatalism and working women in industry at the end of the last war in Britain', *History Workshop Journal,* 1981, no.11, 59-118; id. *War in the nursery.* London: Virago, 1983; Dorothy Sheridan, 'Ambivalent memories: women and the 1939-45 war in Britain', *Oral History,* spring 1990, vol.18, no.1, 33.

133. Harold Smith, 'The problem of "Equal pay for equal work" in Great Britain during World War II', *Journal of Modern History,* December 1981, vol.53, 671-2; Penny Summerfield, 'Approaches to woman and social change in the Second World War', in Brivati and Jones, op.cit. (ch.2, n.84) 77. Summerfield was one of the contributors to that earlier assault on the Marwick thesis of war as an agent for social change. See Penelope Summerfield, 'The levelling of class', in Smith, *War and social change* (ch.2, n.32) 179-207.

134. Christine Gledhill and Gillian Swanson (eds.) *Nationalising femininity: culture, sexuality and the British cinema in the Second World War.* Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996.

135. Christine Gledhill (ed.) *Home is where the heart is: studies in melodrama and the woman's film,* London: BFI, 1987.

136. Sue Harper, *Picturing the past: the rise and fall of the British costume film.* London: BFI, 1994.

137. ibid. 105.

138. ibid. 114-15.

139. Thumim, op.cit. (ch.2, n.79). There are several possible criticisms of Thumim's approach. Two impressionistic trade listings of top-grossing films are not necessarily better than one: they may simply compound an erroneous impression. Adding points together for top ten films and top ten stars may have a similar effect: the star may achieve his or her position on the strength of appearing in a top ten film (though Thumim does point out that omitting stars from the calculations makes little difference to the ranking of films). Audience opinion as expressed in the *Daily Mail* film awards is omitted. Nor is the annual roundup of cinema in Britain appearing in *Showmen's Trade Review* taken into account. The weight accorded to critics' views is sometimes ambiguous (cf. Thumim, op.cit. [ch.2, n.79] vol.2, 109-10 with 112 and 119, and with her later restatement, id. 'Film and female identity: questions of method in investigating representations of women in popular cinema', in Colin MacCabe and Duncan Petrie (eds.) *New scholarship from BFI research*, London: BFI, 1996, 165-6). Finally, overall popularity is not necessarily a measure of popularity with the working class — or, for that matter, with women.

140. Melinda Mash, 'The imperfect woman: femininity and British cinema 1945-1958', PhD thesis, Middlesex University, 1996.

141. Mary Ann Doane, *The desire to desire: the woman's film of the 1940s*, Basingstoke, Hants., and London: Macmillan, 1988.

142. Jeanine Basinger, *A woman's view: how Hollywood spoke to women 1930-1960*, New York: Knopf, 1993.

143. Antonia Lant, *Blackout: reinventing women for wartime British cinema*, Princeton, NJ, and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 1991; Marcia Landy, *British genres: cinema and society 1930-1960*, Princeton, NJ, and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 1991.

144. ibid. 260-1.

145. ibid. 310.

146. Lant, op.cit. (ch.2, n.143) 140.

147. ibid. 193.

148. Doane, op.cit. (ch.2, n.141) 112-13.

149. An encouraging sign is a study of male stars in a recent book. See Anthony Spicer, 'Male stars, masculinity and the British cinema', in Murphy (ed.) *The British cinema book*, 144-53.

150. The conference 'Heroines without Heroes' at the National Film Theatre on 28 February 1998 is indicative of this trend.

151. Robert C. Allen, 'From exhibition to reception: reflections on the audience in film history', *Screen*, winter 1990, vol.31, no.4, 347-56. For a summary of research into the 1980s, see Bruce A. Austin, *The film audience: an international bibliography of research with annotations and an essay*, Metuchen, NJ, and London: Scarecrow Press, 1983

152. Hilde T. Himmelweit, 'Social background, intelligence and school structure: an interaction analysis', in J.E. Meade and A.S. Parkes (eds.) *Genetic and environmental factors in human ability: a symposium held by the Eugenics Society in September-October 1965*, London: Oliver & Boyd, 1966, 25

# CHAPTER THREE

## Who were the workers?

## Aspects of working-class culture

It is not necessary to be a thorough-going Marxist to accept that there is an intimate relationship

between the economic infrastructure and culture, even if the exact nature of that relationship is

open to debate.[1] Reviewing some of the social and economic factors relevant to working people

in the late 1940s offers a way of making sense of working-class culture, as well as serving as a

springboard to a discussion of audiences and individual films. There are two additional reasons

why such an apparently circuitous approach is necessary. First, as has been implied in the

previous chapter, it is not clear whether the post-war working class reverted to the pattern of life

known from the 1930s, continued in the less even tenor of wartime existence, or presaged the

more acquisitive trends of the fifties. The viewpoint taken will colour how the culture of the

period is perceived. Secondly, if films such as *Millions Like Us* (dirs Frank Launder and Sidney

Gilliat, 1943) are to be read as consciously or unconsciously encouraging a sense of consensus

and community, there needs to be a consideration of the consequences in terms of changes in

working-class life (a measure of how well the films achieved their aim) and how the message

(and the films) changed over time.[2]

It can be claimed that Raymond Williams made a career of defining culture. If the grail

ultimately eluded him, his efforts have made the path easier for those who follow. He offers three

categories of culture: the ideal, the documentary (a body of intellectual and imaginative work)

and the social. The latter is    '. . . a description of a particular way of life, which expresses

certain meanings and values not only in art and learning but also in institutions and ordinary

behaviour'.[3] This option serves as a working definition, even if it does miss the evolving nature of

culture.[4]

Arriving at an adequate definition of class is more problematic. Sociologists have been characterised, not entirely inaccurately, as endlessly packing and repacking their conceptual baggage for a journey they never take. They deserve some sympathy. The raw material of sociology is apt to be so nebulous that it is tempting to spend more time defining concepts than using them. Like love, depression and the feel-good factor, class is easier to recognise than to define. This makes it not only fertile ground for theorists, but an enduring problem for those who draft surveys, censuses and laws.

One minor but interesting problem is terminological: whether to refer to the 'working classes' or the 'working class'. British governments between the two world wars favoured the former, as housing legislation of the twenties and thirties reveals. By 1949, a change had occurred: drafters of the Housing Act of that year omitted any reference to class. Since then, 'working class' has become the dominant term, though Eric Hopkins, for one, prefers the plural form.[5] The latter does emphasise the diversity of the people involved, which can be overlooked if a simple dichotomy of bourgeoisie and proletariat is accepted. However, in conformity with the majority opinion, the singular form will continue to be used here.

The historian of class has to confront the same problems which beset the sociologist — with the added difficulty that surveys can never be repeated. The best which may be hoped for is to uncover what people at the time meant by belonging to a class and the implications this had for their way of living. The sociologist may find this tautologous; the historian has to accept whatever evidence survives, however unyielding or fragmentary. This is the nature of the difference between the two disciplines. As Arthur Marwick puts it somewhat acidly, 'I prefer "class" to mean what people in everyday life mean by it, rather than what Runciman or Weber tell me I should mean by it. I have never yet heard anyone speak of "working-status" homes, nor of "middle-status" education. Sociologists, I fear, often preach in preference to practising.'[6]

Marwick's aversion to sociological theory conceals his own acceptance of a distinctively British liberal and empirical tradition, though a historian from the left can take a similar

viewpoint.[7] A relativist approach is well suited to the treatment of historical data. It obviates the need to seek a precise definition: if one is formulated, the available data would probably prove inadequate. There are quantifiable measures such as income which may be taken into account, but where the line should be drawn between a working-class income and a middle-class income is a matter of judgement, not of fact; nor does income distinguish between the lifestyle of the genteel poor and the affluent worker. Income is but one indicator of class. It has to be taken into account alongside such readily ascertainable factors as occupation (manual or non-manual); housing tenure (owner-occupier or rented); housing type (terraced or semi-detached); length of education (whether it goes beyond the legal minimum); and type of education (secondary modern or grammar). When this is done, two things are still lacking: the minutiae of objective class distinctions apparent in clothing, behaviour, speech and attitudes, etc. (the very factors which allow characters in films to be identified by their class); and the subjective awareness of being different which a working-class child might experience on entering a middle-class grammar school. These factors are not easily quantifiable, but they are no less essential in arriving at an understanding of what membership of a class means to those involved.

Class, then, is recognised in terms of a complex of tangible and intangible factors. For analytical purposes, these factors may be separated, but it has to be acknowledged that this is a heuristic device.

This remainder of this chapter is devoted to the socio-economic measures which distinguish the working class. Inevitably the discussion has to be couched in general terms: little can be said about differences between occupations or between localities, still less about differences between individuals. The primary aim is to find quantifiable markers of class. Apart from delineating the working class, these may indicate any significant changes occurring in working-class life between the late 1930s and 1950. After a survey of the demography of the period, the topics to be considered are Beveridge's five evils and juvenile delinquency. The relationship of delinquency to film-going was introduced in the previous chapter; here, the empirical evidence will be considered. Beveridge's evils might seem peripheral to cinema attendance, but they encompass

areas of life in which marked class disparities might be anticipated. These are also central to working-class culture, in which the risk of poverty was ever present. There are parallels between the assimilation of welfare reforms into working-class culture and how the cinema was assimilated earlier in the century. In Marxist terms, both are means of social control.

More direct links between social conditions and cinema-going can be found. One was alluded to in the previous chapter: a preoccupation among academics at the time with differences between the leisure habits of grammar and secondary modern pupils. Aside from their intrinsic interest, such concerns touch on the wider question of how far people are shaped by their environment. One tantalising issue is whether improved housing conditions changed cinema-going habits. It is unfortunate that the links between housing and cinema-going never caught the imagination of researchers in the immediate post-war years as much as differences in education. This lack of interest and the resulting paucity of data does not mean that the subject should be set aside. The commodification of leisure and how this process relates to living conditions is still an important issue in how people live together and how cities are planned.


Demography


The population of Britain at the beginning of 1949 was 48,800,000.[8] Determining the proportion of the working-class population depends on how class is defined and on what can be gleaned from the available data. The 1951 census employed a classification based on five social classes, the criterion being the occupation of the head of the household (appendix 1, table 3.1). Social class IV (semi-skilled workers and agricultural labourers) comes nearest to being unambiguously working class. Social class V (unskilled workers and 'other ranks' in the services) is boosted by national service. Even more problematic is social class III, comprising skilled, clerical and personal service workers. Some of these would doubtless have called themselves lower middle class, while a few shopkeepers in social class II probably thought of themselves as working class.[9] Theodore Cauter and John Downham provide two permutations of the census data: John

Rex offers three.[10] In spite of making class the subject of his book, G.D.H. Cole baulks at offering any precise estimate of the working-class population, though percentages of between 64 and 86.9 per cent have been hazarded elsewhere.[11]

The age structure of the population is easier to ascertain (appendix 1, table 3.2), It reveals a relatively low birthrate in the inter-war and early war years, followed by an increase after the Second World War. Longer term, the changing pattern in the birthrate shows up starkly in the general fertility rate (the number of births in any one year related to the number of women of child-bearing age) (appendix 1, table 3.3). The steepest decline in fertility took place in the 1920s. Even in the years after the Second World War, fertility levels apparent at the turn of the century were not attained. Using the Registrar General's definition of social classes, the standardised fertility rate can be calculated, based on a figure of 100 for the fertility of the cohort of all classes (appendix 1, table 3.4). Somewhat perversely, this reveals a general increase in fertility among married women between 1931 and 1951, with the exception of social class V. It is clear from other evidence, however, that the reversal was a post-war phenomenon.[12] It can be attributed to increased rates of marriage and to delays by many couples in starting families until hostilities were over.[13] Aside from this hiatus, a consistent pattern of smaller families being associated with higher social class persisted throughout the first half of the century, along with a general trend to limit family size (appendix 1, table 3.5). This occurred even though earlier marriage was becoming the norm.[14] The implication is that the population increase resulted from more family units with smaller families. It presupposes the increasing acceptance and availability of contraceptives, which itself marks a change in working-class attitudes.[15] The smaller family unit changed family life, not least by freeing disposable income for the couple in the early years of marriage. Economic prosperity and welfare provision are inextricably linked to family size.[16]

Demographic changes have implications for cinema-going, though these cannot be couched unambiguously in class terms. The importance of adolescents to the cinema industry will be considered in part two; what might be noted here is that although cinema attendances reached record levels at the end of the Second World War, the industry needed to adapt to changes in the

age structure if it was to maintain audience levels in the medium term. It had to woo children, who would make up the audience of the future, as well as older people who might have given up the habit of cinema-going. The notable success was in attracting children. Rank may have had moral and religious reasons for encouraging the spread of children's cinema clubs and the production of films for children, but it was also a shrewd business move, even if it was thwarted by the growing popularity of television.[17] Against this, there is little sign that the industry paid much attention to older age groups.[18]

The other factor which had implications for the cinema industry was the shift in the geographical distribution of the British population away from the old industrial regions of the north of England, Scotland and Wales towards the midlands and south-east England, both of which had a below-average birthrate (appendix 1, table 3.6).[19] Clearly there was a net migration to these regions from the less prosperous parts of the country. The high concentration of cinema seats in Scotland and the north of England already touched upon (ch.1, n.1), often in older buildings, made cinemas in these areas particularly vulnerable to any fall in demand. However, both the cinema industry and spokesmen for the film unions displayed an understandable concern about the more immediate difficulties affecting production. The consequence was that the demographic shift went largely unremarked.[20]


## Beveridge's five evils[21]


It should be emphasised that the aims are to uncover markers for class and to detect changes in working-class life rather than to offer a comprehensive review of social policy.

Several problems quickly become apparent in considering what, for convenience, can be termed the welfare state. First, raising the school leaving age to fifteen was delayed until 1947, while the creation of the National Health Service (NHS) was not implemented until 1948, making it difficult to view the period as a whole. Secondly, changing the nameplate outside a workhouse infirmary or any other institution does not necessarily herald a change of attitude by

staff or inmates. There is little research on how such changes were perceived. Thirdly, social changes may exert their effects in the long term. Jay Winter points out that the effects of malnutrition in the 1930s were still apparent three generations later; the effects of post-war changes in health care and education might not have been apparent until well after 1950.[22] Finally, as so often in social history, the data is fragmentary and sometimes contradictory. These problems do not invalidate the exercise of seeking markers of class, though they do make it more difficult.

*(i) Squalor.* The worsening housing conditions apparent in the aftermath of the war were an incentive to escape to the cinema. The slum clearance programme of the 1930s had been suspended because of the war; 222,000 houses had been destroyed or damaged beyond repair by enemy action, while an estimated 4,698,000 sustained lesser damage.[23] To this depressing scenario should be added the lack of routine maintenance over the war years and the overcrowding occasioned by displaced families and newly-married couples having to share homes with relatives. Rebuilding and repair were hindered by shortages of materials and skilled labour, while the involvement of a multiplicity of agencies was a recipe for bureaucratic delays.[24] Squatting was a warning to the authorities of what might happen if the housing need was not met.[25]

By 1951, the first year after the war for which detailed figures are available, progress on the housing front was mixed. Census data reveals an increased number of families having gained a home of their own since 1921 (appendix 1, table 3.7): against this, more dwellings were being shared by two households, reflecting post-war pressure on housing, while the number of households sharing three or more to a dwelling was little changed. The dwellings used by the latter group would include larger inner-city houses built for single, upper middle-class families and given over to multiple occupation.[26] The data should be considered in conjunction with the trend towards a greater number of smaller families (appendix 1, table 3.5) which limited overcrowding, though poverty would drive the poorest of the larger families into the worst and

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most overcrowded housing.[27] Pressure on housing had tangible social costs: not having a home of one's own or sharing with in-laws were cited by 21 per cent of Geoffrey Gorer's respondents as reasons for wrecked marriages.[28] A benefit for the cinema was that couples who were living in shared homes went out more.[29]

Another glimpse of housing conditions in 1951 is provided by census data on amenities. In England and Wales, 37 per cent of households had no access to a fixed bath: the percentage was higher in older, working-class districts.[30] These households (and probably the vast majority of working-class homes) had no hot water supply.[31] Nationally, 10 per cent of households were without an electricity supply.[32] Such facts should be remembered when attempting to put a date to the commencement of the post-war consumer society: it could hardly be said to have arrived when basic amenities were still lacking for significant numbers of people.[33] These inadequacies also helped to make the kitchen the focus of home life: cooking, eating and washing took place there, with the cooker or the range providing heat. The pattern could persist when people moved into council houses, exacerbating overcrowding where it did not technically exist.[34]

War may have temporarily exacerbated problems of overcrowding, but at least some of the working class did make gains in the late 1940s, particularly in London where most rebuilding took place.[35] By 1951, around one million houses had been completed nationally since the end of the war, 82 per cent of these by local authorities aided by more generous financial provisions from the Exchequer. Though local authority housing was built to higher standards than in the 1930s, in many cases new estates were built on cheap land on the periphery of towns, making leisure facilities like town centre cinemas less accessible.[36] In the private sector, rent controls cushioned the upward trend in rents which would otherwise have accompanied the housing shortage. This probably reduced the appeal of owner occupation which nationally had never been strong in the working class and which serves as another marker of class (appendix 1, table 3.8). Against this, rent controls gave landlords little incentive to improve or maintain property.

Little attention has been paid to the significance of prefabs. Some 125,000 were erected by 1948.[37] Gardens, fitted kitchens with refrigerators, bathrooms, indoor WCs, the absence of rising

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damp and the ease with which rooms could be kept clean all brought a new standard of home life to working-class families, thereby raising expectations.[38] Prefabs were intended to be temporary: what replaced them had to be just as good. It might be argued that prefabs helped to encourage the shift from a kitchen mentality to a living-room mentality which both Zweig and Josephine Klein felt worth noting.[39] And with a more comfortable home, one incentive to leave the fireside to go to the cinema was taken away.

*(ii) Ignorance.* Education at the end of the war presented a similar picture of dislocation. Working-class children, particularly from inner city areas, were the group most likely to have their education disrupted by evacuation, by teachers entering the services, by bomb damage to schools (20% of school buildings were damaged or destroyed), by failure to take up scholarships and by breakdowns in administration leading to truancy.[40] Titmuss notes the deterioration of spelling, reading, history, geography and arithmetic among pupils of thirteen and fourteen in 1943 when compared with their counterparts in 1924 — a deterioration which was confirmed when boys entered the army in 1946 and 1947.[41] Nor is there much sign that by 1950 the working class were making any relative gains from the new education system, competition for grammar school places based on the eleven plus examination disadvantaged working-class children, meaning that the proportion of sons of manual workers gaining grammar school places dropped in the two areas studied by London School of Economics researchers in 1949.[42]

The assumption underlying this litany of educational failures is that the middle-class values of the educational system were desirable. It might be argued that they were antithetical to working-class culture, separating working-class children from their cultural roots. The much-vaunted secondary education for all only amounted to an extra year at school, reinforcing a distrust for authority where the child went unwillingly to a secondary modern school with a syllabus seemingly irrelevant to everyday life. Studies of differences in cinema-going by grammar school and secondary modern school pupils may be reinterpreted in this light.

*(iii) Disease.* Another way of distinguishing the working class from other social groups is by their diseases. Death might be the great leveller, but what people die of is a matter of class (appendix 1, table 3.9). While males of working age from social class I were succumbing to the diseases of old age and affluence, the unskilled were still battling with the effects of overcrowding, malnutrition and poor working conditions. Not that prospects for the working class were unremittingly negative: for social class V, the standardised mortality rate (the rate of observed mortality compared to a standardised rate of 100 for all classes) for men aged twenty to sixty-four in England and Wales decreased from 125 in 1921-23 to 118 in 1950, whilst for social class I it had increased from 82 to 97.[43] Maternal and natal/post-natal mortality levels also showed improvements for social classes IV and V, though as part of a general reduction over a long period. Along with a fatalistic attitude towards disease, class differentials remained.[44]

Although Beveridge subsumed malnutrition under disease, the lack of food is intimately associated with poverty and serves as a marker of class in its own right. Increased affluence does not necessarily mean a change towards a middle-class lifestyle: socio-economic differences in diet were still apparent in the 1990s.[45]

The British Medical Association's Committee of Nutrition Report of 1950 gives a picture of sustained improvements in working-class diets between 1942 and 1947 — a view which has survived basically unchallenged.[46] Gains may be attributed to fairer distribution of food with rationing, increased wages, food subsidies, the provision of British Restaurants, more works canteens and the special attention given to mothers and children.[47] Accompanying improvements in diet were changes in attitudes: before the war, accepting school meals was regarded as a sign of poverty (in 1938, 3.8 per cent of children received them), while by 1948, such meals were accepted as part of the school routine, with half of all children receiving them.[48] The presence of more women in factories contributed to the demand for improved canteen facilities, while eating away from the home became more acceptable, helped by the fact that such meals were unrationed.[49] For cinemas, this often meant the transformation of tea lounges into restaurants.[50]

On the debit side, food shortages in 1947 threatened to halt any advances which had been

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made.[51] More seriously, entrenched attitudes survived, suggesting that old dietary habits persisted, particularly among the poor.[52] In spite of these reservations, it is reasonable to conclude that the widespread malnutrition highlighted by John Boyd Orr in 1937 had been ameliorated.[53] A British Medical Association report noted the improved physique of children in poor neighbourhoods of Liverpool and Glasgow in 1945-47 compared with 1937-39.[54] Similar improvements were noted in Leeds.[55] Socio-economic differences persisted, however: in a study of 4,663 babies followed from 1946 to 1950, 3.9 per cent of children of professional and salaried parents were under 37 inches tall at the age of four years; the figure rose to 16.2 per cent among the children of semi-skilled and unskilled workers.[56]

If an emphasis on nutrition marginalises the contribution of the NHS in improving health standards, perhaps this is as it should be. The compromise between Bevan and the BMA resulted in a hospital-based service targeted at treating disease rather than promoting health. The alternative would have been to place more emphasis on health centres and primary health care along the lines of the Peckham experiment of the 1930s.[57] This might have given the NHS an even greater impact on working-class life. The improvements in health which it brought about were largely in fields to which the poor previously had limited access — dental care, gynaecology, obstetrics and paediatrics.[58] Nevertheless, the assurance that medical treatment was available took away another of life's major uncertainties for the poor. It was seen as the most valuable benefit of the welfare state by a woman interviewed in an East End club: 'We couldn't afford to call the doctor unless we were really ill. This way its going to put years on our lives. What I mean is by the worry it saves us alone.'[59]


*(iv) Idleness.* The greatest change in the lives of working-class people was brought about not by social legislation but by full employment.[60] Financial insecurity was intrinsic to traditional working-class culture. Regular work brought not only prosperity but self-respect to those working people who had endured the endemic unemployment of the inter-war years. Alongside this transformation was a structural change. The proportion of manual workers and foremen fell

from 78.07 per cent of the labour force in 1931 to 72.19 per cent in 1951, with a corresponding

increase in clerical workers who might be expected to harbour middle-class aspirations.[61]

Were class differences apparent in levels of pay and did pay keep pace with the cost of

living? With some qualifications, the answer is yes in both cases. The problem in responding to

the first question is determining where the lines between classes are to be drawn. Dudley Seers,

the first post-war researcher to explore this topic, adopted the simple expedient of defining

everybody earning £250 a year or under as working class, which put 80 to 85 per cent of the

population in the 'working class' category, though he acknowledged that subjectively they may

have had other views.[62] His conclusion, comparing net incomes at 1947 prices, was that working-

class net income from all sources rose by over 9 per cent in real terms from 1938 to 1947, whilst

middle-class incomes fell by over 7 per cent. On a net income per head basis, middle-class

income in 1947 was about 3.65 times working-class income compared with 4.3 times in 1938.

This relative working-class prosperity accords with evidence from non-statistical sources, though

Seers cautioned that if the greater equality of distribution was due more to fiscal policies than to

fundamental changes in the distribution of income, then it could be reversed by fiscal means.[63]

His solution fails to solve the problem of whether gains were made during or after the war.[64] It

must also be said that the data on which he and other commentators rely comes in for criticism,

even if his analysis of it is accepted.[65]

Female participation in the labour market inevitably increased during the war; in the longer

term, this does not markedly change the gradual increase apparent through the century. The

female participation at age fourteen and over was 34.2 per cent of the total female population in

1931 and 34.73 per cent in 1951, which hardly suggests a profound social upheaval.[66] Raising

the school leaving age to fifteen slightly depressed the 1951 figure. The major change was in the

participation by married women of forty-five to fifty-four, which increased from 8.52 per cent to

23.66 per cent over the same period. Women who were no longer tied to the home by young

children were less inclined to remain housewives or were more in need of money.[67] Given

improvements in men's earnings, it seems unlikely that poverty was the primary cause of married

women's increased participation in the labour force in the majority of cases.[68]

*(v) Poverty.* Defining poverty is fraught with as much difficulty as defining class. An indirect but revealing measure is the number of pawnbrokers — that standby of the working class. In 1930 there were 3,000; the number had dropped to 1,500 by 1950 and to 1,000 five or six years later, though in part this was a result of new forms of credit becoming available.[69] In 1950, Seebohm Rowntree and G.R. Lavers concluded that 4.64 per cent of working-class families in York were in poverty compared with 31 per cent in the 1936 survey. In their view, the inadequate wages of earners in regular employment was the major cause of poverty in 1936 (32.8 per cent of those affected), while old age was the major cause in 1950 (68.1 per cent).[70] York may not be representative and the definition of poverty used may be questionable, but this should not be allowed to detract from the real advance which had been made. For those willing to brave the bureaucratic hurdles, poverty was no longer the threat which it had posed for earlier generations.[71] Working-class life had changed for the better — and in the process the perceptions of life by those who had suffered during the depression years might be expected to change. Film-makers had to take this into account. It is hard to imagine films such as *The Proud Valley* (dir. Pen Tennyson, 1939), or *The Stars Look Down* (dir. Carol Reed, 1939) with their blend of resignation and impotent rage being made ten years later.

## The welfare state in feature films

Though the welfare state has captivated historians, the same cannot be said of film-makers. That most astringent critic of the British film industry, Lindsay Anderson, lamented its failure to confront the contemporary reality of welfare reforms and nationalisation.[72] This neglect of the welfare state in feature films may be interpreted from a variety of perspectives. In economic terms it might be argued that the demand was for escapism rather than drab reality, so this was duly supplied. Whether this was true will be considered further in subsequent chapters. From a

creative viewpoint, personalities have more dramatic potential than administrative arrangements, so curing one patient in *The Seventh Veil*, (dir. Compton Bennett, 1945) — particularly if she is young and attractive — has an emotive appeal missing from reorganising the hospital service. An early screen advocate for a national health service was John Clements' doctor in *South Riding* (dir. Victor Saville, 1937); but he was a minor character.[73] With a few exceptions, notably *Cage of Gold* (dir. Basil Dearden, 1950), A.J. Cronin kept down-market medicine to himself, though doubtless Dr Montgomery (Alistair Sim) who provides the somewhat patronising commentary in *Waterloo Road* (dir. Sidney Gilliat, 1945) would have approved of the NHS.[74]

Film-makers' lack of enthusiasm for welfare reform is understandable: the ready availability of dentures and surgical corsets is hardly the stuff of dreams. One exception is the Fleming Report, which provided the impetus for *The Guinea Pig* (dir. Roy Boulting, 1948). By a double irony, the report was quietly shelved, while the film upheld the values of the public school.[75] The plea at the end of *Medal for the General* (dir. Maurice Elvey, 1944) provides an explicit statement of the changes needed in society: 'The world must be made a place fit to live in. Slums must be pulled down and proper houses built in their place.'[76] Evidently such sentiments were not deemed a risk at the box office. In the eyes of the public, housing was moving up the agenda towards the end of the war.[77] In *She Snoops to Conquer* (dir. Marvel Varnel, 1944), George Formby battles to expose municipal chicanery in the redevelopment of slum property.[78] The perils of sharing a house, albeit by two upper middle-class families, was still being used as a plot device in *Young Wives' Tale* (dir. Henry Cass, 1951). The world had some way to go before Elvey's plea was answered.

From a theoretical viewpoint, the neglect of the welfare state might be explored by adopting Gramsci's concept of hegemony as developed by Williams.[79] Dominant middle-class values could be promulgated in films, concealing weaknesses of the welfare state by transferring the blame to recipients. By 1949, there were already whisperings that increased security was sapping initiative.[80] When failings became increasingly obvious, more comprehensive theories based on the recipient of welfare as an outcast or as an exemplar of moral turpitude were offered by way

of explanation.[81]

Juvenile delinquency

Though crime comes into a different category from Beveridge's evils, potentially it offers another marker of class. The problem is not that the working-class were the victims — that they were was often conveniently forgotten — but that the working class, and particularly working-class youths, were perceived as the perpetrators.

The contrasting psychological and sociological perspectives on the possible relationship between film and children's behaviour were delineated in chapter two. Here, the focus will be on delinquent behaviour as a manifestation of working-class culture. The sociological perspective will be used to provide three ways of conceptualising delinquency. These serve as an introduction to considering whether delinquency really was increasing. The public perceived that it was and that films were implicated.[82] Certainly film-makers were not reticent in offering a rich assortment of delinquent and criminal types.[83] Whether their interest represented social responsibility or prurience is a moot point.[84]

The stereotype of the spiv in films is deserving of extended treatment and will not be considered in detail here, though a comment by Trevor Blackwell and Jeremy Seabrook serves as an introduction to this section:

> The spiv, and the yearning for prohibited luxuries which he embodied, was a symbol to those who might see their way to making big money out of the long history of privation and poverty of so many working people. He is also a reminder that many working-class pleasures have been illicit, and that the majority of working-class people have proved much more adept at learning to play the system rather than to transform it.[85]

By this 'bottom up' interpretation, minor crime is firmly linked to working class experience as a way of playing the system. Delinquency may be seen as part of this learning process: a journey from rebelling against the system by vandalism and truancy to making the best of it by such acts as petty thieving. With only a slight difference of emphasis, Jerry White views crime as a way of hitting back at authority, though as Stanley Cohen points out, this type of approach plays down

the extent to which the particular form such behaviour takes is shaped by the consumer society.[86]

The mirror image of the 'bottom up' approach — and one which takes account of Cohen's caution — is embodied in the work of the American social scientists Clifford Shaw and Henry McKay, dating from the 1940s:

> The automobile, motion pictures, magazine and newspaper advertising, the radio and other means of communication flaunt luxury standards before all, creating or helping to create desires which often cannot be satisfied with the meagre facilities available to families in areas of low economic status. The urge to satisfy the wishes and desires so created has helped to bring into existence and to perpetuate the existing system of criminal activities.[87]

Here, viewed from a more conventional, middle-class position, relative deprivation, aided and abetted by the cinema, fuelled crime.

Two traditions conceptualising the behaviour of working-class youth are detected by Stephen Humphries: the mass culture theory — malleable youth being led astray by the mass media — and the deprivation theory premised on faulty socialisation.[88] His own approach, which he seems not to acknowledge as belonging to a third tradition, is derived from Gramsci: 'The behaviour that I contend can be regarded as resistance is the persistent rule-breaking and opposition to authority characteristic of working-class youth culture that has traditionally been viewed as indiscipline or delinquency.'[89] From this viewpoint, minor crime is seen as a symbol both of class conflict and of inter-generational conflict.[90] This puts Humphries in the same camp as Blackwell and Seabrook, and reprises John Barron Mays' perspective of a generation earlier.[91]

Humphries' work is not beyond criticism. One methodological objection is that he uses the term 'theory' too freely. The more cautious term 'model' might be less deterministic. Secondly, and retaining his terminology, he links the deprivation theory to theories based on heredity, including social Darwinism and eugenics. Though he sees this as a weak point in the deprivation theory which has to be stretched to encompass both genes and faulty parental control, his own linkage of the theories may be at fault.[92] The genetic model accords equally well with approaches postulated on mass culture, e.g. working-class youth might be particularly suggestible for genetic reasons. Finally, there need be no *a priori* distinction between the mass culture theory and the

deprivation theory: when Shaw and McKay's work is taken *in toto*, it straddles both camps.

Table 3.10 in appendix 1 indicates the scale of the delinquency problem in England and Wales in the 1940s.[93] The number of children and young persons found guilty of indictable offences in all courts increased markedly during the war, then declined slightly in 1946 and 1947 before peaking again in 1948. A comparable increase, though with a more rapid decline, was apparent during the First World War.[94]

A Workers' Educational Association study conducted in Lincoln in 1942-43 sheds more light on the age and social origins of offenders.[95] The 'dangerous age' for boys according to this research was twelve, which accords with government figures for 1947 and 1948. The peak age in 1947 for girls (who made up a small but increasing proportion of offenders) was sixteen. By 1948, the peak age group was fourteen to fifteen for both sexes.[96] The class dimension is considered in the WEA study. The father's occupation in 35 per cent of all Lincoln households was semi-skilled or unskilled. Before the war, 67.3 per cent of juvenile offenders came from this group; during the war, the percentage rose to 84.3 per cent. In spite of this, the study's authors conclude that poverty was not a factor in juvenile crime. One argument put forward to support their view is that the proportion of offenders coming from homes where the weekly income was at least 20 shillings per head increased from 2 per cent before the war to 13.2 per cent during the war.[97]

There is some substance in the view that juvenile delinquency was increasing, albeit in a step-wise fashion, though the increase came with the war rather during with the subsequent peace. If films are implicated, it must be demonstrated that their message became anti-social with the outbreak of war. Given the stress on national unity which is more often detected, this seems a wilful reading of the film evidence.[98]

Whether the blame for the surge in juvenile delinquency can be laid at the door of the working class is not something which cannot be substantiated without more detailed data (assuming that the loaded term 'blame' is accepted). The sort of factors which need to be considered are not only the increased opportunities for antisocial behaviour afforded by bombing,

truancy and the blackout, but the effects of less supervision of children where the father was called up and the mother was working. Certainly the scale of the official response hardly supports the suggestion that delinquency was reaching epidemic proportions.[99] Prys Williams breaks down the post-war figures by age group and category. He ascribes the increase in crime to the seventeen to twenty-one age group, though cases of theft by this group declined in the late 1940s. Those who attribute delinquency to a lack of discipline can hardly draw solace from his view that conscription had a bad effect on youth — crime figures improved when conscription ceased.[100] To keep things in perspective, Frank Musgrove concludes that youth was generally conservative and most young people, for better or worse, were adjusted to their position in life, with fewer than four per cent of the age group being at risk of criminal deviation.[101]

A central problem, then, is that crime may be defined culturally as well as legally, which prevents it from serving as a objective marker of class in the same way as housing conditions. What constitutes criminal behaviour may be viewed differently by members of an impoverished community and by those who police them. The working out of this difference may be seen as the struggle for power between a subordinate group and the dominant group. For those who have already reached an accommodation with the dominant group, this oppositional state need not prevail: as Mays notes, fiddling employers is not the prerogative of the working class and neither does it arouse much moral indignation.[102] Juvenile delinquency happened to be an easy target for the authorities as well as for the public and the media.

For the film historian, a question to be asked about any film is whose viewpoint is being offered: that of the dominant group or a dissident group. Offering a dissident view implies being sympathetic towards dissident behaviour. In the age of the spiv and the delinquent, this may have proved unacceptable both for some sections of public opinion and for the BBFC, unless the action was set safely in the past, or within a comedy, or both, e.g. *Cardboard Cavalier* (dir. Walter Forde, 1949). The solution adopted in *Waterloo Road* was to frame the action by using a middle-class narrator. Another solution is to make the dissident an upper-class character, which is somehow more acceptable. *The Wicked Lady* (dir. Leslie Arliss, 1945) adopted this approach

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— and set the action in the past for good measure. More equivocal is *Kind Hearts and Coronets*, (dir. Robert Hamer, 1949). With its sympathetic viewpoint towards a mass murderer, the film is dissident, though leavened by being set in the past — albeit a past still within memory — and by being ostensibly a comedy — albeit a black comedy. It is also framed, with the story told in flashback; but the narrator is the central character, Louis Mazzini, who occupies an uncertain class position. Nor can the film be said to be made for the mass market: a critic at the time called it 'Essentially literary in conception, its poker-faced fun can be appreciated only by people with a good working knowledge of English language and the English people . . .'[103] Presumably it was aimed at a middle-class audience who would be expected to take the dominant (hegemonic) view. Little wonder that the audience at the Venice Film Festival were mystified, though less explicable is why their counterparts at Cannes received the film with delight.[104] But ultimately the dominant view triumphed. In Barr's words, 'As *The Blue Lamp* soon confirms, Ealing is *for* established moral convention, and believes that it can be practised.'[105]

## Delimiting working-class culture

Both culture and working class are problematic concepts. The term culture is elastic enough to embrace all aspects of human activity. The focus must be on those aspects which are considered important, while avoiding the temptation to broaden the use of the term to a degree where it becomes unwieldy. There is consensus about the individuals who make up the core of the working class, but at the margins there is ample room for dispute. The problem with many surveys into poverty made during the inter-war years (and earlier) is that little space is devoted to defining terms.[106] This compounds the difficulty of evaluating post-war advances.

Beveridge's evils were tamed rather than abolished. Whatever gains the working class made by 1950, differentials between classes were still glaringly apparent. Psychologically, the insecurity of working-class life was reduced, though this is difficult to demonstrate in quantifiable terms.

From a 'bottom up' perspective, a Marxist interpretation of the welfare state is appealing: a welfare system to maintain profits, to appease the workers and to maintain the status quo.[107] The weakness of this approach is that its proponents come perilously close to invoking a conspiracy theory when supporting historical evidence has to be cited. Who were propping up the system and precisely how did they do it? Bevan's passionate commitment to welfare reform has to be explained away, as does the enthusiastic uptake of welfare state benefits by the middle class. The cinema might be seen as serving a similar role to the welfare state in exerting social control, but a similar methodological problem arises. If film was the opiate of the twentieth-century masses, who was doing the peddling: screenwriters, producers, directors, or J. Arthur Rank?

It is easy to over-estimate the significance of the battery of welfare reforms which made up the welfare state. Smaller families and full employment were crucial to the improvement in working-class conditions and owed nothing to Beveridge.[108] If anything, full employment served to obscure inadequacies in welfare legislation which have since become apparent.[109] Post-war legislation was a matter of codification rather than thorough-going reform: the exigencies of war had already prompted changes such as improved maternity services which could not easily be reversed, though the fate of nursery provision is a cautionary reminder that reversal was not impossible. The corollary of so much state involvement in people's lives was increased bureaucracy: what Barbara Cartland calls 'the underlings with a little power' who were 'multiplying week by week like sleek, well-nourished mice'.[110] The working class had more of 'them' to complain about. One consequence has been the tilting at petty bureaucrats in generations of film comedies, from *Passport to Pimlico* (dir. Henry Cornelius, 1949) to *A Private Function* (dir. Malcolm Mowbray, 1984), also set in the late 1940s.[111]

Films provide a glimpse of something which statistics cannot encompass: the experience of living through the period. But what was it like to be a member of working class in the late 1940s? What values were held? How was authority regarded? Answering these questions requires a different approach, which will be the subject of the next chapter.

# Notes

1. After some wriggling, Williams accepts the emphasis of the Marxist view, if not its detail. Raymond Williams, 'Culture is ordinary', in Norman Mackenzie (ed.) *Conviction*, London: MacGibbon & Kee, 1958, 122. Marwick concedes that cultural production is closely related to, though not determined by, class structure. Arthur Marwick, 'The arts, books, media and entertainments in Britain since 1945', in James Obelkevich and Peter Catterall (eds.) *Understanding post-war British society*, London: Routledge, 1994, 179.

2. The notion of a consensus can sometimes seem as much a matter of faith as of fact. A recent commentator gives a balanced account of both left-wing and right-wing criticisms of the term, but still comes down in favour of its existence. Michael Sullivan, *The development of the British welfare state*, Hemel Hempsted, Herts: Prentice Hall/Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1996, 245-54. In film history, there is a risk of emphasising wartime films purporting to demonstrate consensus, while playing down those illustrating continuing class differentiation or distinctions between officers and other ranks.

3. Raymond Williams, *The long revolution*, London: Hogarth Press, 1962, 41.

4. E.P. Thompson has taken issue with Williams, preferring to define culture as a field of contention rather than a static entity. Renato Rosaldo, 'Celebrating Thompson's heroes: social analysis in history and anthropology', in Harvey J. Kaye and Keith McClelland (eds.) *E.P. Thompson: critical perspectives*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990, 105.See also Colin MacCabe, *The eloquence of the vulgar*, London: BFI, 1999, 73-8.

5. Eric Hopkins, *The rise and decline of the English working classes 1918-1990*, London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1991, vii

6. Arthur Marwick, *Class: image and reality in Britain, France and the USA since 1890*, London: Collins, 1980, 15.

7. 'Class is defined by men as they live their own history, and in the end, this is its only definition.' E.P. Thompson, *The making of the English working class*, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1980, 10.

8. Mark Abrams, *The home market*, London: Allen & Unwin, 1950, table 1.

9. 'A corner shop would not make a living in itself. Somebody had to go out to work as well.' Don Haworth, *Bright morning: images from a thirties boyhood*, London: Mandarin, 1991, 45. The precarious financial state of the corner shop is echoed in Walter Greenwood, *How the other man lives*, London: Labour Book Service, [1939?], 215-6. Like the boy educated out of his class, the corner shop provided another storyline in the first episode of *Coronation Street* (Granada, 1960 — ).

Breaking down the figures, Cole estimates that clerical workers comprised 5.1 per cent of the heads of households, shop assistants 3.1 per cent and personal service workers 4.1 per cent. G.D.H. Cole, *The post-war condition of Britain*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1956, table 23. Given the high number of female shop assistants, his figure probably underestimates the proportion in the employed population. Cauter and Downham give figures of 8.6 per cent, 5.1 per cent and 7.4 per cent respectively. T. Cauter and J.S. Downham, *The communication of ideas: a study of contemporary influences on urban life*, London: Chatto & Windus (for Reader's Digest), 1954, 258.

10. ibid. 257-8; J. Rex, 'National class structure', in Eric Butterworth and David Weir (eds.) *The sociology of modern Britain: an introductory reader*, rev. edn., London: Fontana, 1975, table 1.

11. G.D.H. Cole, *Studies in class structure*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1955, 48. The lowest percentage comes from Crompton's estimate of manual workers. Rosemary Crompton, 'Non-manual labour', in Obelkevich and Catterall, op.cit. (ch.3, n.1) 99. The highest is Rex's percentage of 'operatives'. J. Rex, 'National class structure', in Butterworth and Weir, op.cit. (ch.3, n.10) table 1. The least ambiguous computation, with a brief definition to characterise each group, is the 72 per cent offered by Geoffrey Browne, *Patterns of British life: a study of certain aspects of the British people at home, at work and at play, and a compilation of some relevant statistics*, London: Hulton Press, 1950, 87.

Self-assessment of class gives lower figures for membership of the working class: 45 per cent of poll respondents called themselves working class in March 1948 and November 1949. George H. Gallup (gen. ed.) *The Gallup international opinion polls: Great Britain 1937-1975*, vol.1: 1937-1964, New York: Random House, 1976, 172 and 213.

12. Concern about the falling birthrate was first voiced in the 1930s, e.g. A. Emil Davies, *Our ageing population*, London: Fabian Society, 1938. It was still apparent in 1945: M-O A: FR 2236, 'Observations on the reluctant stork', 1945; Mark Abrams, *The population of Great Britain: current facts and future problems*, London: Allen & Unwin (for London Press Exchange Ltd), 1945, 10. A Royal Commission was appointed to look into the problem at the end of the war; by the time it reported, the downward trend in the birthrate had reversed.

13. Eliot Slater and Moya Woodside, *Patterns of marriage: a study of marriage relationships in the urban working classes*, London: Cassell, 1951, 186, 215-17; Constance Rollett and Julie Parker, 'Population and family', in A.H. Halsey (ed.) *Trends in British society since 1900: a guide to the changing social structure of Britain*, Basingstoke, Hants., and London: Macmillan, 1972, tables 2.14 and 2.19.

14. In 1951, the number of married men and women aged under 24 was 84 per cent greater than in 1931. Edward Royle, 'Trends in post-war British social history', in Obelkevich and Catterall, op.cit. (ch.3, n.1) 10. See also Slater and Woodside, op.cit. (ch.3, n.13) 125.

15. There is anecdotal evidence of a desire by working-class girls in London for smaller families, e.g. Ruth Glass [nee Durant] and Maureen Frankel, 'How they live in Bethnal Green', *Contact*, 1946, unnumbered issue, 34; Slater and Woodside (ch.3, n.13) 177-213; Pearl Jephcott, *Rising twenty: notes on some ordinary girls*, London: Faber, 1948, 83. See also Shani D'Cruze, 'Women and the family', in June Purvis (ed.) *Women's history: Britain 1850-1945, an introduction*, London: UCL Press, 1995, 58; Josephine Klein, *Samples from English cultures*, vol. 2, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1965, 439, n.2. Quantifiable evidence comes from a newspaper survey to which 16,000 people responded: men wanted three children, women of twenty-six to thirty-nine wanted two children and younger and older women wanted four children. *Daily Express*, 19 January 1949.

The shortage of rubber restricted the availability of contraceptives during the Second World War. Helen Jones, *Health and society in twentieth-century Britain*, Harlow, Essex: Longman, 1994, 96; A.M. Carr-Saunders, D. Caradog Jones and C.A. Moser, *A survey of social conditions in England and Wales as illustrated by statistics*, London: Oxford University Press, Clarendon Press, 1958, 28. Jenkins notes that in the 1940s, local councils tried to stop the sale of contraceptives from slot machines. Alan Jenkins, *The forties*, London: Heinemann, 1977, 184.

16. For further discussion of this topic, see Richard A. Easterlin: *Birth and fortune: the impact of numbers on personal welfare*, London: Grant McIntyre, 1980; John Benson, *The working class in Britain 1850-1939*, Harlow, Essex: Longman, 1989, 100-3.

17. Arthur Rank's attitude is revealed in a letter to the *Methodist Recorder* of 26 March 1942:
> When I got into the business in all its sides and branches I realized the great possibilities for making entertainment films with a message that would not merely please the eye and

> stimulate the imagination but would also become a help in the serious matters of the daily lives of film-goers. I could relate to you some of my various adventures and experiences in the larger film world and you would not only be astonished, but it would, I think, be as plain to you as it is to me that I was being led by God.

Quoted in Michael Wakelin, *J. Arthur Rank: the man behind the gong*, London: Lion, 1996, 64. For Rank's involvement with children's films, see Mary Field, *Good company: the story of the children's entertainment film movement in Great Britain 1943-1950*, London: Longmans, Green, 1952.

Harper detects among the backers of films a more general awareness of changes in the age composition of audiences in the 1950s. Sue Harper, 'Bonnie Prince Charlie revisited: British costume drama in the 1950s', in Robert Murphy (ed.) *The British cinema book*, London: BFI, 1997, 136.

18. One enterprising manager, Douglas Ewin of the Lyric, Wellingborough, organised baby-sitting services, while Robert Parsons of the Piccadilly, Birmingham, had a rest lounge for elderly patrons which was furnished by local tradespeople. Ewin's ingenuity was praised by the *Daily Mail* and the *News Chronicle. The Daily Film Renter*, 17 May 1951, 10. Both the interest of London dailies and the lack of written and oral evidence of similar initiatives suggest that these cases were exceptions.

The CEA membership set its face against cheap matinee seats which might be expected to attract pensioners. *The Daily Film Renter*, 18 November 1948, 9 and 25 November 1948, 3. The issue seems not to have generated any controversy later in the period.

19. Carr-Saunders et al. op.cit. (ch.3, n.15) table 2.4.

20. The BFI's 'British films cuttings' file for 1950 reveals unrelieved gloom about British film production, but less about exhibition. The same emphasis is apparent in the trade press: *The Daily Film Renter, Kine Weekly* and *Today's Cinema/The Cinema*. The perception of changing demand could occur at a local level, e.g. the proposals by both ABC and Rank to build new cinemas in Coventry town centre to supplement existing capacity. Hideo Ichihashi, 'Working-class leisure in English towns 1945-1960, with special reference to Coventry and Bolton', PhD thesis, University of Warwick, 1994, 212-13.

It might be objected that census data collected in 1951 could hardly shape business strategy in the late 1940s. However, Abrams was noting similar trends in 1939. Mark Abrams (ed.) *The home market: a book of facts about people*, 2nd edn., London: Allen & Unwin, 1939, tables 3-6.

For further discussion of regional disparities, see George Taylor and N. Ayres, *Born and bred unequal*, London: Longman, 1969; E.D. Smithies, 'The contrast between north and south in England 1918-1939: a study of economic, social and political problems with particular reference to the experience of Burnley, Halifax, Ipswich and Luton', PhD thesis, University of Leeds, 1974.

21. *Parliamentary Papers* (Commons) 1942-45, vol.6, *Social insurance and allied services*, Cmd 6404, 1945 (Beveridge Report) . The five evils are want, disease, squalor, ignorance and idleness.

22. Jay Winter, 'Unemployment, nutrition and infant mortality in Britain 1920-1950', in Jay Winter (ed.) *The working class in modern British history: essays in honour of Henry Pelling*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983, 254.

In 1954, Glass could look forward to the provisions of the 1944 Education Act improving social mobility. A decade later, Westergaard and Little took a more gloomy view. David V. Glass, *Social mobility in Britain*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1954, 21-3; John Westergaard and Alan Little, 'Educational opportunity and social selection in England and Wales: trends and policy implications', in Maurice Craft (ed.) *Family, class and education: a reader*, London: Longman, 1970. 65.

23. Richard M. Titmuss, *Problems of social policy*. History of the Second World War: United Kingdom Civil Series, London: HMSO and Longmans, Green, 1950, 329-30. Titmuss estimates that nationally two in seven houses were damaged or destroyed.

24. Kenneth O. Morgan, *Labour in Power 1945-1951*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985, 164-5.

25. Squatting involved 1,038 camps housing some 39,535 people by the autumn of 1946. *Parliamentary debates*, (Commons) 5th series, 1946, vol.427, col.339. Addison quotes higher figures citing the same reference. Paul Addison, *Now the war is over: a social history of Britain 1945-51*. London: BBC and Cape, 1985, 68. Susan Cooper offers lower figures (source uncredited), noting that some squatters were still entrenched in camps four or five years later. Susan Cooper, 'Snoek piquante', in Michael Sissons and Philip French (eds.) *The age of austerity*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1964, 48.

26. Citing a 1946 survey, Titmuss suggests that 16 per cent of manual workers were living at a density of two or more to each room. Titmuss, op.cit. (ch.3, n.23) 411. By far the highest proportion of sharing households in 1951 was the 34.2 per cent in London. Constance Rollett, 'Housing', in Halsey, op.cit. (ch.3, n.13) 302. This may be compared with the 37 per cent found in Slater and Woodside's London study of 1943-46. Slater and Woodside, op.cit. (ch.3, n.13) 216-17. Evidently little progress was being made, particularly when it is remembered that some rooms could be unusable because of damp. Madeleine Kerr, *The people of Ship Street*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1958, 23. A description of inter-war life in a house in multiple occupation in Islington is to be found in Angela Rodaway, *A London childhood*. London: Virago, 1985. For a rowdier picture, see Marie Paneth, *Branch Street: a sociological study*, London, Allen & Unwin, 1944; Jerry White, *The worst street in London: Campbell Bunk, Islington, between the wars*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1986.

27. Notwithstanding the increase in the birthrate after the war, the trend towards having small families was noticeable in a London suburb by 1950 and limited overcrowding, even though most dwellings were shared by two families. Lulie A. Shaw, 'Impressions of family life in a London suburb', *Sociological Review*, new series, December 1954, vol.2, no.2, 181.

28. Geoffrey Gorer, *Exploring English character*, London: Cresset Press, 1955, 137. Interfering relatives as a common cause of marital friction is also noted by Slater and Woodside, op.cit. (ch.3, n.13) 151-2.

29. In a 1947 survey, married couples sharing a home went out three times as much as those having a home of their own. Phyllis G. Allen, 'Evening activities in the home', *Sociological Review*, 1951, vol.43, 133.

30. Carr-Saunders, op.cit. (ch.3, n.15) table 4.5. In a Newcastle-upon-Tyne sample of almost a thousand houses in 1946-1947, 65 per cent were without bathrooms, in Bethnal Green the figure reached 89 per cent at the end of the war, while in the poorer working-class housing of Glasgow, the figure was 94 per cent. James Spence, W.S. Walton, F.J.W. Miller and S.D.M. Court, *A thousand families in Newcastle-upon-Tyne: an approach to the study of health and illness in children*, London: Oxford University Press, Geoffrey Cumberledge (for the Nuffield Foundation) 1954, 118; Glass and Frankel, op.cit. (ch.3, n.15) 40; B.M. Osborne, *The Glasgow and north Lanarkshire housing and new towns survey*, Social Survey NS 102, 1948, table 8. By 1966-68, 85 per cent of houses in the St Ann's district of Nottingham were still without bathrooms. Ken Coates and Richard Silburn, *Poverty: the forgotten Englishman*, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1981, table 4.

31. In 1966-68 in the St Ann's district of Nottingham, 54.5 per cent of houses had no hot water system. loc.cit.

32. James Obelkevich, 'Consumption'. In Obelkevich and Catterall, op.cit. (ch.3, n.1) 145. It should not be assumed that all the households without electricity were rural: most homes in Kerr's Liverpool study were lit by gas, a few by oil. Kerr, op.cit. (ch.3, n.26) 27.

33. Obelkevich betrays this vagueness. He dates the consumer society from the 1950s. Obelkevich, 'Consumption', in Obelkevich and Catterall, op.cit. (ch.3, n.1) 141. In spite of entitling one section 'Trends in consumption since 1945' (ibid. 143-4), he ignores the late 1940s.

34. Brian Jackson and Dennis Marsden, *Education and the working class*, rev. edn., Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1966, 61.

35. Half of all houses affected were in London. Titmuss, op.cit. (ch.3, n.23) 329-30. The corollary is that in the industrial towns and cities of the north of England, where there was less bombing, fewer housing gains were made in the decade following the war. By 1967, 15.1 per cent of housing stock in the northern region was unfit, compared with 6.4 per cent in London and the south east. Rollett, 'Housing', in Halsey, op.cit. (ch.3, n.13) table 10.14. Schemes such as the Quarry Hill flats in Leeds might have represented an advance in the 1930s, but there was little further large-scale development in northern cities until the 1960s. Consequently, the communities of the north were more settled and conform more closely to the stereotype of the traditional working-class area.

36. Council houses built while Bevan masterminded housing were over 1,000 sq.ft. compared with 800 sq.ft. during the inter-war years and 900 sq.ft. after Dalton's intervention in 1951. John Campbell, *Nye Bevan and the mirage of British socialism*, London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1987, 156-62; Peter Hennessy, *Never again: Britain 1945-51*, London: Cape, 1992, 169-74.

37. ibid. 173.

38. Nearly 40 per cent of households in the lowest income groups had no garden in the late 1940s, this being most noticeable in the north west. J.A. Cook 'Gardens on housing estates: a survey of user attitudes and behaviour on seven layouts', *Town Planning Review*, 1968, vol.39, no.3, 218, cited in Ichihashi, op.cit. (ch.3, n.20) 49.

  In a 1950 survey of 300 housewives, over 80 per cent found cleaning and food preparation easier in prefabs, while there was a higher standard of cleanliness and increased leisure time. Women's Group on Public Welfare, 'The effect of the design of the temporary prefabricated bungalow on household routines', *Sociological Review*, 1951, vol.43, 17-32. For an account of one woman's attachment to her prefab (and the problems resulting from its having only two bedrooms) see Joyce Storey, *Joyce's dream: the post-war years*, London: Virago, 1995, 9, 25 and 49.

39. Klein, op.cit. (ch.3, n.15) 232. Klein supports an observation made by Zweig, for which no reference is given.

40. Richie Calder, 'The school child', in Richard Padley and Margaret Cole (eds.) *Evacuation survey: a report to the Fabian Society*, London: Routledge, 1940, 153; H.C. Dent, *Education in transition: a sociological study of the impact of war on English education 1939-1943*, London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner, 1944; Titmuss, op.cit. (ch.3, n.23) 404-9; Addison, op.cit. (ch.3, n.25) 145.

41. Titmuss, op.cit. (ch.3, n.23) 408-9. Against this, as Calder notes, teachers were 'tested': imagination and improvisation had to replace set courses. Richie Calder, 'The school child', in

Padley and Cole, op. cit. (ch.3, n.40) 152.

42. In Middlesbrough, the allocation of sons of manual workers in grammar schools dropped from 58 per cent in 1939-44 to 54 per cent in 1948-51. There was a smaller reduction in south-west Hertfordshire. Of entrants for two Wiltshire grammar schools in 1952, 65 per cent had been coached for the entrance examination. Coaching gave an average rise in I.Q. of about 14 points, which hardly supported Burt's contention, based on eugenics, of intelligence (and by inference class) being genetically determined. J.E. Floud (ed.) A.H. Halsey and F.M. Martin, *Social class and educational opportunity*, London: Heinemann, 1956, 38; *Times Education Supplement*, 1 February 1952, cited in H.C. Dent, *Growth in English education 1946-1952*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1954, 71-2.

For a later and more optimistic view, see Jean Floud, 'Social class factors in educational achievement', in Craft, op.cit. (ch.3, n.22) 31-48. A 1964 paper comparing children born in the 1930s with those born in the previous decade found a one per cent increase in the sons of semi-skilled and unskilled workers gaining grammar school places. For daughters, the increase was from five to ten per cent. Alan Little and John Westergaard, 'The trend of class differentials in educational opportunity in England and Wales', *British Journal of Sociology*, 1964, vol.15, 301-16. More recently, the methodology of the 1949 LSE study under David Glass has been called into question. See Geoff Payne, *Mobility and change in modern society*, Basingstoke, Hants., and London: Macmillan, 1987.

For the flavour of Burt's views, see Cyril Burt, *Intelligence and fertility: the effect of the differential birthrate on inborn mental characteristics*, Occasional papers on eugenics, no.2, London: Eugenics Society and Hamish Hamilton, 1946.

43. Carr-Saunders, op.cit. (ch.3, n.15) table 2.4. The SMR for social class III (skilled workers) increased from 95 to 102 over the same period, which may reflect poorer working conditions during the war, e.g. decreased ventilation with the blackout.

44. ibid, table 16.1; J.M. Munro Kerr, R.W. Livingstone and Miles H. Phillips, *Historical review of British obstetrics and gynaecology 1800-1950*, Edinburgh: Livingstone, 1954, 272. Other measure showing class differences are to be found in ibid. and in Joint Committee of the Institute of Child Health (University of London), Society of Medical Officers of Health and Population Investigation Committee, *The health and growth of the under-fives*, London: Joint Committee of the Institute of Child Health (University of London), Society of Medical Officers of Health and Population Investigation Committee, [1954].

45. A.T. Pienst, M.J. Whichelow and B.D. Cox, 'Longitudinal dietary changes between 1984-5 and 1991-2 in British adults: associations with socio-demographic lifestyle and and health factors', *British Journal of Nutrition*, 1997, vol.78, 873-88.

46. British Medical Association, *Report of the committee of nutrition*, London: BMA, 1950, 36-8. This optimism was echoed in 1956 in Cole, *The post-war condition of Britain*, table 65. Cole recorded increases in the consumption of milk, fish, potatoes, fruit, vegetables and cereals, with slight declines in the consumption of cheese, meat and fats. Class differentials remained, however. The same optimistic view was accepted in 1993, though the increased consumption of sugar amongst the poor was one caution. Michael Nelson, 'Social class trends in British diet 1860-1980', in Catherine Geissler and Derek J. Oddy (eds.) *Food, diet and economic change past and present*. Leicester and London: Leicester University Press: 1993, 101-20.

47. For improved welfare provision and mass catering, see following endnotes. The effects of rationing are difficult to quantify, though it may have introduced diversity into the diets of the poorest and helped to iron out shortages which would otherwise have been reflected in increased prices. For effects of subsidies, see E.F. Nash, 'Wartime control of food and agricultural prices', in D.N. Chester (ed.) *Lessons of the British war economy*. London: Cambridge University Press,

1951, 200-38.

48. ibid. 49: Titmuss, op.cit. (ch.3, n.23) 510. A lower figure is offered by Julia Parker, 'Welfare', in Halsey, op.cit. (ch.3, n.13) table 12.16. Ambiguity probably arises over which schools and which meals are being included, some schools providing breakfasts and teas as well as dinners, and whether Britain or England and Wales are considered. The government's estimate was that 50.4 per cent of children in England and Wales were receiving school meals in 1950. Central Statistical Office, *Annual abstract of statistics*, No.92, London: HMSO, 1955, table 101. Whichever figures are used, the trend is in upwards.

49. By 1944, there were 17,000 canteens and 2,082 British Restaurants, though most of the latter closed soon after the war. Vera Douie, *Daughters of Britain*, Oxford: published by author, [1949], 105 and 91; Dennis Rooke and Alan d'Egville, *Call me mister! A guide to the civilian life for the newly demobilised*, London: Heinemann, 1946, 22; Ferdynand Zweig, *Women's life and labour*, London: Gollancz, 1952, 91. The corollary of this spread of mass catering was an increase in the incidence of food poisoning, with more stringent regulation as a way of controlling it. Alan Ross, *The forties: a period piece*, London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1950, caption to unnumbered photograph of mass-catering kitchen; R.J. Hammond, *Food*, vol.2: *Studies in administration and control*, History of the Second World War: United Kingdom Civil Series, London: Longmans, Green, 1956, 392-411.

  A more conservative trait among women cotton-mill workers in resisting better facilities in their rest room is recorded in J. L. Hodson, *The way things are: being an account of journeys, meetings, and what was said to me in Britain between May 1945 and January 1947*, London: Gollancz, 1947, 152. This need not be seen as a gender issue: it accords with Zweig's aside that before the war, some miners voted against pithead baths. Ferdynand Zweig, *The British worker*, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1952, 83. If not apocryphal, both these comments suggest regional, industry-based and/or status differences among workers.

50. Guy Morgan, 'War and the one-and-sixpennies', *Pilot Papers*, July 1946, vol.1, no.3, 96.

51. Hennessy, op.cit. (ch.3, n.36) 276-7. Sheila Ferguson and Hilde Fitzgerald, *Studies in the social services*, History of the Second World War: United Kingdom Civil Series, London: HMSO and Longmans, Green, 1954, 157.

52. One example is the evacuated child who refused to eat fresh food and had to be provided with tinned food. [Gertrude Wagner], *Our wartime guests: opportunity of menace? A psychological approach to evacuation*, London and Liverpool: University Press of Liverpool and Hodder & Stoughton, 1940, 31. More usual are references to fish and chips, and the ubiquitous bread, marge and strong tea with condensed milk, often consumed by children on the doorstep. These appear in many pre-war, wartime and post-war sources, e.g. Syd Foley, 'Asphalte', quoted in John Burnett (ed.) *Destiny obscure: autobiographies of childhood, education and the family from the 1820s to the 1920s*, London: Routledge, 1994, 333; Pilgrim Trust, *Men without work: a report made to the Pilgrim Trust*, London: Cambridge University Press, 1938, 114-15; National Federation of Women's Institutes, *Town children through country eyes: a survey of evacuation*, Dorking: National Federation of Women's Institutes, [1943], 7-10; Women's Group on Public Welfare, Hygiene Committee, *Our towns: a close-up. A study made in 1939-42 with certain recommendations*, London: Oxford University Press, 1943, 29; B.M. Spinley, *The deprived and the privileged: personal development in English society*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1953, 56; Kerr, op.cit. (ch.3, n.26) 194; Peter Townsend, *The family life of old people*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1957, 15.

53. John Boyd Orr, *Food, health and income: a report on the adequacy of diet in relation to income*, London: Macmillan, 1937.

54. British Medical Association, op.cit. (ch.3, n.46) 80; The BMA Report notes that the improvements were not evident in the East End of London, though no reasons are given. Possibilities are more entrenched attitudes towards diet and child-rearing, continuing poverty, higher food prices in the capital, more serious effects of bombing and evacuation, and poorer welfare provision. Improvements in York, though with continuing class differentials, are noted in B. Seebohm Rowntree and G.R. Lavers, *Poverty and the welfare state: a third social survey of York dealing only with economic questions*, London: Longmans, Green, 1951, 93-5.

55. Leeds City Council Education Department found that between 1923 and 1945, the weight and height of both boys and girls in the city had increased, e.g. at the age of twelve, the average weight of boys in the city was 72lbs in 1923 and 79lbs in 1945. This was ascribed to 'a better type of parent'. *Yorkshire Evening Post*, 15 October 1946.

56. Joint Committee of the Institute of Child Health, op.cit. (ch.3, n.44) 5 and 9. The orthodoxy was that nutritional status could be measured by growth. Celia Petty, 'The Medical Research Council's inter-war dietary surveys', *Society for the Social History of Medicine Bulletin*, December 1985, no.37, 76-8.

57. Campbell goes along with the view of the health service historian, Harry Eckstein, that Bevan was not in favour of health centres. John Campbell, op.cit. (ch.3, n.36) 179. This interpretation needs examining critically given Bevan's early work with the Tredegar Medical Society which might be expected to have made him sympathetic towards primary healthcare. Certainly his rhetoric showed approval. Webster sees the main obstacles as the British Medical Association and the Treasury. Charles Webster (ed.) *Aneurin Bevan on the National Health Service*, Oxford: Wellcome Unit for the History of Medicine, 1991, 74-5; id. *The health services since the war*, vol.1: *Problems of health care: the National Health Service before 1957*, London: HMSO, 1988, 380-8. Honigsbaum sees doctors and local authorities as being the sources of resistance. Frank Honigsbaum, *Health, happiness and security: the creation of the National Health Service*, London: Routledge, 1989, 95 and 105-7.

58. These were the services most used by women who, as dependents, were excluded from previous insurance schemes. Such treatments as were available for infectious disease before the Second World War were provided as public health measures, so poverty was not a disqualification from treatment. Even amongst insured people in the 1930s, only 7 per cent received dental treatment. Rodney Lowe, *The welfare state in Britain since 1945*, Basingstoke, Hants., and London: Macmillan, 1993, 168-9. This was one of the deficiencies in health care exposed by the wartime call-up: 'If an army dentist found only five cavities in a recruit's mouth, he rejoiced.' Jenkins, op.cit. (ch.3, n.15) 181.

For anecdotal evidence of working-class attitudes towards dental health prior to the establishment of the NHS, see Virginia Cowles, *No cause for alarm: a study of trends in England today*, London: Hamilton, 1949, 199; Jephcott, op.cit. (ch.3, n.15) 51; Kerr, op.cit. (ch.3 n.26) 71. Girls' admiration for stars did not extend to emulating their dental work.

On women's health among the poor in the inter-war years, see Margery Spring Rice, *Working class wives: their health and conditions*, London: Virago, 1989; Jones, op.cit. (ch.3, n.15) 75.

Infectious diseases had been showing a downward trend over a far longer period. For an introduction to the debate, see J.M. Winter, 'The decline in mortality in Britain 1870-1950', in Theo Barker and Michael Drake (eds.) *Population and society in Britain 1850-1980*, London: Batsford, 1982, 100-20.

59. Cowles, op.cit. (ch.3, n.58) 201.

60. The highest unemployment rate for the immediate post-war years was 3.1 per cent in 1947, a level which was attributable to the severe weather. The 1946 figure was 2.5 per cent. The annual figure from 1948 to 1951 was below 2 per cent. George Sayer Bain, Robert Bacon and John

Pimlott, 'The labour force', in Halsey, op.cit. (ch.3, n.13) table 4.8. Lower figures are found in 'One hundred years of economic statistics', *The Listener*, cited in Hennessy, op.cit. (ch.3, n.36) 450. This discrepancy reflects the difficulty in defining unemployment. See John Oxborrow, 'Unemployment', in Barker and Drake, op.cit. (ch.3, n.58) 14-33.

61. Guy Routh, *Occupational pay in Great Britain 1906-79*, 2nd edn., Basingstoke, Hants., and London: Macmillan, 1980, 5. For the marginal status of clerks, see David Lockwood, *The blackcoated worker: a study in class consciousness*, 2nd edn., Oxford: Oxford University Press, Clarendon Press, 1989, 131; Elizabeth Bott, *Family and social network: role, norms and external relationships in ordinary urban families*, 2nd edn., London: Tavistock 1971, 173.

62. Dudley Seers, *Changes in the cost-of-living and the distribution* of *income since 1938*, Oxford: Blackwell, [1947], 7.

63. The gain by the working class was not solely attributable to earnings: at 1947 prices, the increase in net wages since 1938 was 18 per cent, while social income (benefits, pensions, etc.), though only representing 21 per cent of 1947 net wages, had increased by 57 per cent (ibid. 64). Routh sees a similar narrowing of differentials over the period 1937 to 1949. Routh, op.cit. (ch.3, n.61) 157. Taking a different period, 1938-1950, Carr-Saunders et al. opt for more modest working-class gains. Carr-Saunders, op.cit. (ch.3, n.15) table 11.4. Among qualitative sources indicating improved working-class incomes see Guy Morgan, *Red roses every night*. London: Quality Press, 1948, 46; L.G. White, *Tenement Town*. London: Jason Press, 1946, 58; Roy Lewis and Angus Maude, *The English middle* classes, London: Phoenix House, 1949, 203-14 and 259-60.

64. Using the wage rate index and the cost-of-living index provided by Routh (both of which are admittedly crude measures), wages slightly outstripped the cost of living over the period 1938 to 1945 (wages increased 50 per cent as against a 48 per cent increase in the cost of living). In the 1945 to 1950 period, the reverse was the case (a 23 per cent increase in wages compared with a 24 per cent increase in the cost of living). Routh, op.cit. (ch.3, n.61) table 3.1. Carr-Saunders et al. offer different figures, but the trend is the same. Carr-Saunders, op.cit. (ch.3, n.15) table 11.4.
   There was a similar pattern of gains by manual workers in the First World War, but in this case it was checked by subsequent unemployment. David Vincent, *Poor citizens: the state and the poor in twentieth century Britain*, Harlow, Essex: Longman, 1991, 81 and 132.

65. Amongst those offering re-evaluations are Allan M. Cartter, *The redistribution of income in post-war Britain: a study of the effects of the central government fiscal program in 1948-49*, Port Washington, NY, and London: Kennikat Press, 1955; Richard M. Titmuss, *Income distribution and social change: a study in criticism*, London: Allen and Unwin, 1962; Adrian L. Webb and Jack E.B. Sieve, *Income redistribution and the welfare state*. Occasional papers in social administration no.41, London: Bell, 1971; R.C.O. Matthews, 'Why has Britain had full employment since the war?' in Charles Feinstein (ed., for Economic History Society) *The managed economy: essays in British economic policy and performance since 1929*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983, 118-32. A thoughtful analysis of the evidence from a left-wing viewpoint, is offered by John Westergaard and Henrietta Resler, *Class in a capitalist society: a study of contemporary Britain*, London: Heinemann, 1975, 40-115. Differences hinge on when gains were made, when they stopped being made, the role of the state, how welfare benefits should be costed, how the cost-of-living index was constructed and on its re-indexation in June 1947.

66. Aside from questioning the validity of some of the data, Summerfield points out that in some sectors, notably engineering and white-collar work, the wartime changes were not reversed. Reversals need not take away from the psychological effect of participation in paid work. Penny

Summerfield, 'Women, war and social change: women in Britain in World War II', in Arthur Marwick (ed.) *Total war and social change*. Basingstoke, Hants., and London: Macmillan, 1988, 98, 101, 109-10.

67. George Sayer Bain, Robert Bacon and John Pimlott, 'The labour force', in Halsey, op.cit. (ch.3, n.13) table 4.7. Casual and part-time work is likely to be under-reported in census data. Elizabeth Roberts, 'Working women and their families', in Barker and Drake, op.cit. (ch.3, n.58) 150.

68. Zweig concludes that a third of wives worked for economic reasons, the rest to earn extras. Zweig, *Women's life and labour*. 47. This leaves open the question of how such a distinction should be made.

69. Harry Hopkins, *The new look: a social history of the forties and fifties in Britain*. London: Secker & Warburg, 1963, 345. For the importance of pawnbrokers in working-class life see Walter Greenwood, op.cit. (ch.3, n.9) 230-39; Melanie Tebbutt, *Making ends meet: pawnbroking and working-class credit*. London: Methuen, 1984. Working-class autobiographies on life earlier in the century invariably mention the pawnbroker, e.g. extracts from Jack Lanigan's unpublished autobiography in Burnett, op.cit. (ch.3, n.52) 87; Aubrey S. Darby, *A view from the alley*. J.G. Dony (ed.) Luton: Luton Museum and Art Gallery, 1974, 9 and 11; Edward Ezard, *Battersea boy*. London: Kimber, 1979, 143-4. By the post-war years, around a quarter of working-class housewives wanting to buy a carpet for a room turned to hire purchase, though 50 per cent of working-class households had no carpeted floors. E.G. Reeve, *Carpets*, Social Survey NS 82, 1946, summary and table 35.

70. B. Seebohm Rowntree, *Poverty and progress: a second social survey of York*, London: Longmans, Green, 1941, 32 and 34; Rowntree and Lavers, *Poverty and the welfare state*. 34 and 35.

71. The safety net was the provision of non-contributory National Assistance. By the end of 1950, 1,350,000 people were receiving help, 873,000 of these because other benefits were too low. Of the latter group, 650,000 were old age pensioners. The application of a means test gave the National Assistance Board the same stigma which attached to poor law relief, reducing the take-up among older people in particular. Shaw, op.cit. (ch.3, n.27) 185-6; Townsend, op.cit. (ch.3, n.52) 161-3; Coates and Silburn, op.cit. (ch.3, n.30) 59; Sidney Pollard, *The development of the British economy 1914-1990*. 4th edn., London: Edward Arnold, 1992, 222; Anthea Tinker, 'Old age and gerontology', in Obelkevich and Catterall, op.cit. (ch.3, n.1) 77-8.

72. Lindsay Anderson, 'Get out and push', in Tom Maschler (ed.) *Declaration*, London: MacGibbon & Kee, 159-60.

73. James C. Robertson, *The British Board of Film Censors: film censorship in Britin 1896-1950*. Beckenham, Kent: Croom Helm, 1985, 74.

74. Cronin's novels spawned not only the television incarnations of Dr Finlay, but *The Citadel* (dir. King Vidor, 1936).

75. More entertainingly, bureaucratic bungling is the premise of *The Happiest Days of Your Life* (dir. Frank Launder, 1950).

76. Cited in Linda Wood (ed.) *The commercial imperative in the British film industry. Maurice Elvey: a case study*. London: BFI, 1987, 29.

77. From being ranked second to demobilisation in a December 1943 public opinion poll, housing ranked first in five surveys from August 1944 to January 1946. Hadley Cantril, *Public opinion 1935-1946*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1951, 677-8.

78. Though the scenario was appropriate to spivery, it could equally well form the basis of a Priestley film script from the 1930s: George unmasks the chairman of the council who owns slum property and is hoping to make money on its development.

79. Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Noel Smith (eds. and trans.) *Selections form the prison notebooks of Antonio Gramsci*, London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1971, 11-13; Raymond Williams, *Marxism and literature*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977.

80. Cowles, op.cit. (ch.3, n.58) 200.

81. John Westergaard, 'About and beyond the "underclass": some notes on influences of sociological climate on British sociology today', *Sociology*, November 1992, vol.26, no.4, 575-87.

82. 'The delinquency of children *en mass [sic]* since the war is a fact well known to all psychologists. . .' Letter from Winifred S. Hunt, *Southend Standard*, 13 May 1948. Soon afterwards, a local street was being called by a resident a Dead End Kids' paradise for its level of hooliganism. *Southend Standard*, 24 June 1949. (The Dead End Kids appeared in a series of low-budget American films. That they lived in downtown New York while the street in Southend was in an upper middle-class enclave was an irony which went unremarked — as did the fact that the Dead End Kids pitted themselves against organised crime and municipal corruption.)

83. Of the 491 British features first released between 1945 and 1950, 135 (28 per cent) are classified as 'crime' by Gifford. Most were released in the second half of the period.

84. How film-makers wanted to be seen is exemplified by the on-screen message at the start of *Cosh Boy* (dir. Lewis Gilbert, 1952):

> By itself, the "Cosh" is the cowardly implement of a contemporary evil; in association with "Boy", it marks a post-war tragedy — the juvenile delinquent. "Cosh Boy" portrays starkly the development of a young criminal, an enemy of society at sixteen. Our Judges and Magistrates, and the Police, whose stern duty is to resolve the problem, agree that its origins lie mainly in the lack of parental control and early discipline. The problem exists — and we cannot escape it by closing our eyes. This film is presented in the hope that it will contribute towards stamping out this social evil.

Quoted in *Halliwell's film and video guide*, 13th edn., ed. John Walker, London: HarperCollins, 1997, 169.

85. Trevor Blackwell and Jeremy Seabrook, *A world still to win: the reconstruction of the post-war working class*, London: Faber, 1985, 69. For an authentic whiff of spivery, see Bill Naughton, 'The spiv', in Charles Madge (ed.) *Pilot papers: social essays and documents*, London: Pilot Press, 1946, 99-108.

The viewpoint of Blackwell and Seabrook is at odds with that of McKibbin who sees the black marketeers as objectionable to the working class because they infringed the principles of fair play. Ross McKibbin, *Class and cultures in England 1818-1951*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998, 202-3. He cites as evidence the way the poor working class found the rich working class objectionable, but this is hardly the same thing. Alan Jenkins may be more anecdotal, but he can bring his own testimony to bear — he served in the army during the Second World War. His view is that fiddling was a way of life after the war. Jenkins, op.cit. (ch.3, n.15) 185.

'Nobody thought of it as breaking the law. We thought of it — we thought we were a bit

clever in beating the government.' Miki Cogswell, *Ready to Wear*, BBC TV, 18 May 1999.

86. Jerry White, op.cit. (ch.3, n.26) 125; Stanley Cohen, *Folk devils and moral panics: the creation of mods and rockers*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1987, xii.

87. Clifford R. Shaw and Henry D. McKay, *Juvenile delinquency in urban areas: a study of the delinquents in relation to differential characteristics of local communities in American cities*, Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1942, cited in John Barron Mays, *Growing up in the city: a study of juvenile delinquency in an urban neighbourhood*, Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1954, 12. A British work in similar vein to Shaw and McKay is J.H. Bagot, *Juvenile delinquency: a comparative study of the position in Liverpool and England and Wales*, London: Cape, 1941. See also: Stephen Humphries, *Hooligans or rebels? An oral history of working-class childhood and youth 1889-1939*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1995, 175.

88. ibid. 1-26. The distinctions are similar to those employed in Westergaard, 'About and beyond the "underclass"'.

89. Humphries, op.cit. (ch.3 n.87) 1.

90. The crimes were generally minor and opportunist. In Bagot's 1935-36 Liverpool study, most of the items stolen had been left unattended, or were taken from open shop counters. 68 per cent of goods stolen were valued at less than a pound, with 15 per cent being under a shilling. Bagot, op.cit. (ch.3, n.87) 36-7.

91. Blackwell and Seabrook, op.cit. (ch.3, n.85); Mays, op.cit. (ch.3, n.87). See also Paul Corrigan, 'Deviance and deprivation', in Sissons and French, op.cit. (ch.3, n.25) 249-96; Jerry White, op.cit. (ch.3, n.26) esp. 95-133. The various approaches, including those of American social scientists, are examined in David M. Downes, *The delinquent solution: a study in subcultural theory*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1966.

92. See Humphries, op.cit. (ch.3, n.87) 16-18.

93. Hermann Mannheim's caution is worth bearing in mind: 'Statistics of Juvenile Delinquency do little more than indicate the varying degrees of willingness on the part of the public and the Police to bring this category of delinquents before the Juvenile Courts.' Hermann Mannheim, *Social aspects of crime in England between the wars*, London: Allen & Unwin, 1940, 18.

94. Workers' Educational Association, *A study in delinquency: who has offended?* London: Workers' Educational Association, [1945], 3.

95. ibid. The limitations are that it only applies to Lincoln, the findings may not necessarily be applicable post-war trends and the data is not necessarily presented in the desired form.

96. ibid. 5; Home Office and Ministry of Education joint circular, *Juvenile delinquency*, HO 99/1953 and Min. of Ed. 265/1953, 20 July 1953, 7.

97. WEA, op.cit. (ch.3, n.94) 10 and 12. This fails to take into account the upward movement of wages in wartime and does not make clear whether the earnings of older siblings went into the pooled household budget.

   The WEA study might be compared with studies of adolescent criminals in Glasgow and London showing that they came from more crowded homes and from larger families. T. Ferguson, *The young delinquent in his social setting: a Glasgow study for the Nuffield Foundation*, London: Oxford University Press, Geoffrey Cumberlege, 1952, tables 3 and 4; W. Norwood East, with Percy Stocks and H.T.P. Young, *The adolescent criminal: a*

*medico-sociological study of 4,000 male adolescents.* London: Churchill, 1942, 113 and 126. Though unemployment was no higher than in the general population, the adolescents were more likely to commit crimes during spells of unemployment (ibid. 166). Though this seems logical, it is difficult to reconcile with the post-war experience, when full employment and rising crime levels co-existed.

98. For a stress on unity, see Antonia Lant, *Blackout: reinventing women for wartime British cinema.* Princeton, NJ, and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 1991. Anthony Aldgate and Jeffrey Richards, *Britain can take it: the British cinema in the Second World War.* 2nd edn., Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1994.

99. The number of police officers in England and Wales declined from 63,800 in 1938 to 60,418 in 1949, while the hours they worked per 1,000 of the population declined from 3,595 to 3,040. The number of officials in the probation and aftercare service remained almost unchanged: 1,004 in 1938 and 1,006 in 1950. Nigel Walker, 'Crime and penal measures', in Halsey, op.cit. (ch.3, n.13) table 15.10.

100. G. Pryce Williams, *Patterns of teenage delinquency in England and Wales 1946-61.* London: Christian Economic and Social Research Foundation, 1962, 8 and 34.

101. F. Musgrove, *Youth and the social order.* London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1964, 20.

102. Mays, op.cit. (ch.3, n.87) 117.

103. Campbell Dixon, 'The year's work in the feature film: a personal impression', in Roger Manvell (ed.) *The year's work in the film, 1949.* London: Longmans, Green (for British Council), 1950, 23.

104. ibid. 23-4.

105. Charles Barr, *Ealing studios.* 2nd edn., London: Studio Vista, 1993, 133.

106. Sean Glynn and John Oxborrow, *Interwar Britain: a social and economic history.* London: Allen & Unwin, 1976, 33.

107. e.g. Norman Ginsburg, *Class, capital and social policy.* Basingstoke, Hants., and London: Macmillan, 1979; Ian Gough, *The political economy of the welfare state.* Basingstoke, Hants., and London: Macmillan, 1979.

108. The demographic and economic changes have, perhaps, not been accorded enough attention by historians from the liberal arts tradition such as Marwick and Addison. Marwick's model steers attention away from them. Aside from the obvious benefits from smaller family size such as less overcrowding, there could be unintended gains: children from small families do better at school. Frank Musgrove, 'The "good home"', in Craft, op.cit. (ch.3, n.22) 184-8. This, in turn, might be expected to affect both their film preferences and the time available for cinema-going.

109. A glaring example is the absence of a national minimum wage. Low pay as a cause of poverty only emerged as an issue as unemployment rates rose. As Vincent notes, the central failing was the inability to resolve the contradiction between insurance and subsistence. Vincent, op.cit. (ch.3, n.64) 130.

110. Barbara Cartland, *The years of opportunity 1939-1945.* London: Hutchinson, [1948], 239. She might have added that the corollary to increased regulation was sleek, well-nourished black-marketeers.

For other comments on the burgeoning bureaucracy, see Negley Farson, *Bomber's moon*, London: Gollancz, 1941, 100; J.B. Priestley, *British women go to war*, London: Collins, [1943], 14; Alan Ross, op.cit. (ch.3, n.49) pages unnumbered. For a more theoretical viewpoint of bureaucracy, see Joseph A. Schumpeter, *Capitalism, socialism and democracy*, London: Allen & Unwin, 1943; 6th edn., 1987, 207; Leonard Skevington, 'The crisis in bureaucracy', *Pilot Papers*, June 1947, vol.2, no.2, 71-84.

Putting a figure to the increase in the number of civil servants is complicated by groups like Post Office workers who occupied an anomalous position and by part-time workers. Taking seven home ministries, the equivalent of full-time posts was 31,300 on 1 April 1939, 114,100 on 1 April 1945 and 166,600 on 1 April 1950. Moses Abramovitz and Vera F. Eliasberg, *The growth of public employment in Great Britain*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957, table 4. For the non-industrial civil service as a whole, official figures for equivalent full-time posts were 387,400 in 1939, 684,500 in 1946 and 706,200 in 1949. *Annual abstract of statistics*, op.cit. (ch.2, n.48) table 137.

111. The problems of the hard-pressed businessman did not have to be fictionalised to descend into black comedy. A Ministry of Food inspector was dining in a restaurant with his wife. Both meals were of more than the permitted three courses and 1s.3d over the permitted price. The restaurant owner, Mr Travers, was duly prosecuted. 'In defence, Travers claimed he was absent at the time of the offence which had been caused by the serving of peach melba.' He was fined ten pounds. *Southend Standard*, 12 February 1948.

One of the more extreme examples of bureaucracy was the need to obtain planning permission to paint the outside frames of windows. This requirement was little known, as Dalton conceded when he repealed it in 1950. *Keesing's contemporary archives*, vol.7, 1949-50, 10795A, 24-30 June 1950. Presumably it was also both widely flouted and unenforceable.

CHAPTER FOUR

Subjective approaches to working-class culture

## Concepts of class

One way to probe beneath the surface of working-class life is to examine those concepts which keep recurring in research from the 1940s and 1950s — research emanating largely from the field of social anthropology. Cultural continuity is implied if the concepts are also to be found in works from the earlier years of the century, including autobiographies of working-class people.

*Neighbourhood* refers to the surrounding district which is known intimately. Particularly for women, most journeys outside the home would be made on foot, so that the neighbourhood might not extend beyond a quarter of a mile from the front door.[1] There is certainty in the known; going outside the known, including straying beyond the neighbourhood, means a loss of security and could be perceived as intimidating.[2] Mass entertainment, life in the services, bombing and wartime work outside the home by women might all be expected to reduce ties to the neighbourhood, though child-rearing and a lack of transport would serve to reinforce them. The neighbourhood is less prominent in post-war anthropological literature, but became enshrined in the doctrines of town planning which shaped post-war redevelopment.[3]

Though the neighbourhood is taken to mean more than the built environment, *community* more aptly describes the social network within the neighbourhood.[4] It is also the concept most at risk from being distorted by nostalgia. The community could provide and police standards of behaviour, even where those standards were not the norms of the wider society.[5] It seems not to have been strong in the inner-city St Ebbe's district of Oxford in 1950, though 36 per cent of the population had been resident for twenty years or more: 60 per cent of families reported having no friends, compared with 30 per cent making a similar claim on the more modern Barton council

estate.[6] Conversely, a study on a Sheffield estate revealed that two-thirds of its inhabitants between 1927 and 1952 married another resident, which might be expected to strengthen links within the community.[7] Ties are likely to be stronger in isolated communities or where a single industry provides a unifying factor. Both of these factors apply in mining.[8]

*Neighbours* are those members of the community in close physical proximity. The nature of facilities in older areas — corner shops, shared WC blocks and washing lines strung across streets — would make frequent contact unavoidable, although there is no reason why this should make for friendship rather than friction. Researchers on a Liverpool estate in 1951-52 noted that families with four or more children would ask for help more frequently, whilst older residents in particular felt there was too much privacy.[9] The researchers' overall conclusion was that 'the degree of contact between neighbours is regulated by convention, and there is probably rather less permitted or desired nowadays than in the past.'[10] Similarly, in Houghton, a modern and planned artisan neighbourhood of Coventry, the tendency was to be reserved with neighbours, though the district was sometimes described as poor because of the low standard of privacy.[11] Geoffrey Gorer's 1951 national survey bears out this impression: those who visited neighbours had an income of less than £5 or more than £15 a week, which excluded most of the working class except the poorest.[12] These tantalising clues suggest that if neighbourliness had once been important, a change was taking place, associated with smaller families and improved living conditions.[13]

*Family* is an amorphous term, embracing not only the nuclear family, but the wider kinship network. Though the nuclear family was getting smaller in the long term with the reduction in the birthrate, a consistent feature of the studies is that kinship remained important, particularly for the wife.[14] It promised not only emotional support, but help in such practical matters as child-minding, finding a job, finding a house and support in old age.[15] This closeness was particularly evident among the working class.[16] Whatever the psychological benefits of closeness, it acted as a constraint on geographical mobility and probably on social mobility. The tensions show in a 1954 study of secondary modern girls, probably made in the Leeds area. Most of these working-

class girls had two or three siblings. Their preference was to spend leisure time outside the home and in the company of friends, siblings and boyfriends. Though most girls did not wish to follow their parents' occupations, they were unwilling to follow occupations which the parents believed would necessitate living away from home.[17]

*Home* occupied an ambiguous place in the working-class world. Wanting a home was the most common reason for marriage according to the London study conducted by Eliot Slater and Moya Woodside.[18] Marriage was a means of escaping from an overcrowded parental home where there was parental discord and little privacy, as in the case of Diana Dors' home in *A Kid for Two Farthings* (dir. Carol Reed, 1955). But this is as much about escaping from home as desiring it, while there was a risk that the new home could become all-enveloping for the wife, restricting wider contacts.[19]

The emphasis on family links militates against the desire to escape from the parental home, so that in Sheffield, the University of Liverpool team noted that children often chose to remain in the parental home after marriage.[20] Home was the place for the family to the exclusion of the community — what Townsend calls the 'privacy of the hearth' — with neither workmates nor neighbours generally being invited inside.[21] Overcrowding and the habit of heating only one room were constraints on extending the social life of the home beyond the immediate family.[22] This enhanced the value of the street, pubs, cinemas and dance halls as meeting places.

The lack of privacy for family members within the home deserves emphasis. Closeness was not necessarily perceived as a problem — at least until there was a basis for comparison among people in the same social group, which happened as housing improved.[23] For the girls interviewed by Pearl Jephcott in 1945-46, these improvements had yet to be enjoyed at first hand.[24] They must have been experienced vicariously through films, though whether with envy or frustration is not recorded.

*Gender roles* were clear, though contradictory accounts suggest that there was considerable variation according to local circumstances. Fathers played a shadowy role in Liverpool, Oxford and London studies, though a different pattern was evident in the mining community of Ashton.[25]

Zweig sketches an ambiguous picture of change here: though facilities like pithead baths and canteens made life easier for the housewife, it gave her a different order of importance from when she scrubbed her husband's back and cooked his meals.[26] Ambiguity also shows in the husband's degree of involvement in housework and child-rearing, with, perhaps, a north-south divide becoming apparent.[27] Geoff Mungham suggests that the intolerance by males of bad language amongst women was the product of a strongly matriarchal society, though he offers no evidence.[28] Drunkenness and violence by the husband were less prominent than before the war. Though these traits hardly figure in Slater and Woodside's London study, they receive mention in post-war studies of poor communities, while Gorer refers to them as persisting in the midlands.[29]

*Respectability* was a key component of working-class life, with a distinction being made between the rough and the respectable. The former were usually poor, while the latter avoided this state by the application of hard work and self-improvement.[30] Though the distinction was clear, where to draw the line between the two groups was a fine social judgement. Zweig catches the complexities:

> Working-class women divide themselves not so much by the jobs their husbands do — and still less by the jobs they themselves do — but rather by ways of life. . . . The main line of division is respectability, and the sense of respectability, i.e. conformity to accepted standards, is much stronger among women than men. A labourer's wife, if she is respectable and leads a clean reasonable life, doing her bit and coping sensibly with adversities, is much more respected and classed higher in the social hierarchy than a craftsman's wife who leads the irresponsible life of a waster.[31]

One of the girls interviewed by Macalister Brew put it more succinctly: 'The closer you live together, the more respectable you have to be.'[32]

Respectability could limit social interactions: children's contact with their rougher counterparts was discouraged, while families with social aspirations might be accused of 'getting above themselves' and treated with suspicion.[33] Poverty could militate against respectability by making it difficult to keep up standards. The important point was not to let it show. In the words of Nigel Grey, the working class 'instead of fighting poverty, try to hide it like underwear under the cushions'.[34]

Respectability was one aspect of *status*. Superiority had to be asserted. This might be by dress, by locality or by occupation: 'Engineers thought they were better than boilermakers, they were more highly skilled. Boilermakers used to think they were the salt of the earth, because they literally built the ship, and if they didn't build the ship, the engineers couldn't finish it. There was a sort of class warfare.'[35] Status could also be indicated by the display of ornaments in the parlour. Creating a shrine in this way meant that the room was seldom used: 'You lived in the kitchen and you went in the parlour for your best room. . . . It was dusted and kept nice and never sat on [*sic*]. It was just used on special occasions . . . [for] visitors, weddings, funerals, birthdays, happen on a Sunday'.[36]

Status might imply an element of change, of a need to keep up with the Joneses, but the desire for respectability and for doing the proper thing meant that the prevailing attitude of the working class was one of *fatalism* and acceptance of the status quo, summed up in the Victorian hymn:

> The rich man in his castle,
> The poor man at his gate,
> God made them, high and lowly,
> And ordered their estate.[37]

Subservience was less overt by the late 1940s, but the passive acceptance of one's role in life and the fatalism which this engendered were not completely lost.[38] C.S. Wilson saw the relative freedom of working-class children and the inherent opportunities for developing chance relationships which this provided as determining their attitude towards chance and fate.[39] Life was a matter of chance, with gambling as a logical extension of this principle.

*Conservatism* was allied to fatalism and showed itself in an unwillingness to change working practices, though this was more apparent in older industries like mining and shipbuilding, and was not a prerogative of the working class.[40]

The reduction of *insecurity* brought about by material improvements has already been noted, though after studying inner-city Liverpool in the late 1950s, John Barron Mays could still write that: 'Old customs and habits die hard. The years of scarcity are for some a living memory.

The days of full employment are still young, still uncertain. Suspicion of social discrimination and fear of possible unemployment even now activate the minds of many people.[41]

Insecurity might be expected to result in planning ahead. When allied to fatalism, the consequence was likely to be living for the present, limiting goal-oriented activities like saving and education.[42] The only certainty — death — was the subject of elaborate planning by means of life assurance.[43] Bernice Martin offers a perceptive analysis, linking several of the concepts already discussed to the insecurity of working-class life: a culture of control was the only hope of creating human dignity and a modicum of self-determination against all odds. She introduces the notion of liminal moments, set off against the rules, roles and categories of everyday life, when high spending was expected. These include funerals, weddings, holidays and Christmas celebrations.[44] Unfortunately she does not explore the role of the cinema as an alternative means of release from the culture of control, or as a source of new values.

## An autobiographical excursion

There are habits of thought which may be said to characterise the working class and which persisted after the Second World War, though neighbourliness and the importance of the neighbourhood are not necessarily among them. The evidence needs to be treated with caution. A noticeable feature of studies of the post-war period is that they focused on life in council estates more than on traditional working-class enclaves. This may reflect a belief that the latter represented a residual problem which would be solved once slum clearance resumed. Where inner city areas were examined, notably in Liverpool, it was because they were perceived as problem areas. This is hardly surprising: traditional working-class communities were being displaced by a combination of economic changes and council rehousing policies, creating ghettoes for those who were particularly disadvantaged.[45] As a consequence it is difficult to gain an accurate impression of life in urban areas less affected by this process such as Wavertree in Liverpool, or Leyton in London. Equally neglected are the working class who rented privately or

became owner-occupiers and who lived on the cheaper, privately-built estates which ring every town and city.[46] One, admittedly partial, way to gain access to this group is to draw on my own memories of childhood in the early 1950s, comparing them with the concepts discussed above.

My father was born into a large working-class family in Walthamstow, London, and followed the family trade of painting and decorating. The family moved to Southend-on-Sea in the 1920s because there was more work available in a developing town. My father married during the Second World War. In 1950, his gross earnings were six pounds a week. Personal transport was a bicycle. My mother came from a similar background and worked part time after her marriage. They had no other surviving children. Home was a rented semi-detached house, with a garden to the front and rear. In industrial towns it would be called middle class. Although it had electric light, the only other items of electrical equipment were an immersion heater (rarely used because of the expense), an iron, a portable fire, a radio and a table lamp.

Of the concepts introduced above, *neighbourhood* was relevant to the extent that, except for travel to work, daily life was largely restricted to the shopping parade and school, both of which were within walking distance. Bus journeys into the centre of town were a treat reserved for Saturday afternoons. There was no sense of territoriality. Still less was there any sense of *community*, though a street party was held at the time of the 1953 coronation. A range of occupations and incomes among wage-earners in the area meant a lack of shared values. *Neighbours* generally got on, though they would not be treated as friends and not invited into the house. Contacts made at school and in my mother's work widened the circle of family friends. Nor was the extended *family* close: though my father had four siblings living within walking distance, he never met them more than once a month.

*Home* was central. Although this was largely a matter of choice, the location precluded other options. In common with many speculative estates built in the 1920s and 30s, no leisure facilities were provided. The nearest cinema was three-quarters of a mile away. This was only visited about once a month on grounds of cost, so the radio provided day-to-day entertainment.

With both parents working, *gender roles* were not asserted. They were internalised to the

extent that my father looked after the garden while my mother did the cooking and mended clothes, though this internalisation was hardly exclusive to the working class.

*Respectability* was important for my mother, with phrases like 'What are people going to think?' and 'It looks as if you don't care' frequently to be heard.[47] *Conservatism* was marked. This showed in *fatalism* towards the short spells of unemployment experienced by my father. That was the way things were. He showed little faith in the union, letting his membership lapse. Respectability also showed in deference towards people in authority. (This attitude must have been widely held, or teachers could not have maintained control over classes of forty children.) Almost in contradiction to the fatalism, saving was encouraged by my mother, probably as a consequence of her Methodist background, self-help being equated with respectability. Saving was in the form of that working-class standby, the industrial insurance policy, together with the Post Office Savings Bank. Banks and building societies were 'Not for people like us'.[48]

This willingness to look to the future should be seen in conjunction with the value placed on education, the security afforded by the welfare state and by the relative ease of obtaining work. They suggest that *insecurity* was not an issue. Certainly there was no sense of living only for the present.

One value little stressed in sociological and anthropological studies of the immediate post-war years is frugality. This derived from a combination of low income and rationing, and showed itself most obviously in Sunday visits to the allotment to grow food and in making items for the home from recycled wood (wooden boxes seemed to be the only things available in abundance). Frugality may have contributed to the do-it-yourself industry which developed in the late 1950s, when the ending of rent controls gave a stimulus to owner-occupation.

What has been presented may be some way from the received notion of working-class life in the 1940s, yet it probably corresponds to the experiences of many people brought up in working-class homes at the time. These families might be called the new working class, who were not dependent on traditional heavy industries and who enjoyed improved housing, yet who were still marked as working class by their attitudes and income. Attitudes like conservatism persisted

better than ties which were dependent on territoriality, such as the pull of the neighbourhood. These were diminished by enforced geographical and social mobility. Income differentials were reduced, but a combination of entrenched attitudes, rationing and shortages meant that spending patterns hardly reflected this: a case of more of the same rather than new possibilities.

## Love on the Dole

The aspects of 'traditional' working-class culture which have been considered are crystallised in *Love on the Dole* (dir. John Baxter, 1941). The film introduces two more: the entrepreneurial activities of the women — from fortune-telling and letting rooms, to selling alcohol and taking clothes to the pawnbrokers — and the importance of illegal gambling in the lives of the men.[49] Those audience members intent on making a hasty exit before the national anthem missed the statement screened at the end of the film: "'Our working men and women have responded magnificently to any and every call made upon them. Their reward must be a new Britain. Never again must the unemployed become forgotten men of the peace." A.V. Alexander.'[50] Not only was film allowed to portray social problems, but this policy shift was endorsed by a member of the government (Alexander was First Lord of the Admiralty). Subsequently, Baxter's film and Alexander's plea were overtaken by events. A comparison with Elvey's filmic statement of three years later (page 76) shows how housing supplanted unemployment as the major social problem. War changed social concerns.

Yet should *Love on the Dole* be taken to symbolise the inter-war years? Was the poverty it portrayed already acquiring the status of myth? For Robert Murphy, Baxter was attempting to consolidate the myth.[51] A similarly astringent view of the nostalgia industry is taken by Roger Bromley in his longer critique, while historians including John Stevenson and Derek Aldcroft can point to an overall rise in the standard of living during the 1920s and 30s.[52] Revisionist perspectives produce new insights, but if history is written by the victors, this is history written by the heirs to Priestley's third England, 'the England of arterial and by-pass roads, of filling

stations and factories that look like exhibition buildings, of giant cinemas and dance halls and cafés, bungalows with tiny garages, cocktail bars, Woolworths, motor-coaches, wireless, hiking, factory girls looking like actresses, greyhound racing and dirt tracks, swimming pools and everything given away for cigarette coupons.[53] Aside from methodological difficulties (Bromley omits to explain how 'good' oral history is to be distinguished from the myth-laden history which he castigates), events take on a different hue when viewed from the wrong side of the poverty line. If poverty looms large in the autobiographies of working-class people who lived through the 1930s, this should be enough to make us take its impact seriously. For these people, the effects were indelible, whatever changes were wrought by the war and the social reforms which followed.

## Revisiting aspects of working-class culture

The image of working-class society inherited from Hoggart has become something of a touchstone, though as Blackwell and Seabrook point out, Hoggart fails to recognise clearly enough that what he is evoking is a particular moment in the history of the working class, and of the rooted, skilled, respectable working-class at that.[54] It is misleading to think in terms of a 'true' working-class culture which was somehow corrupted. To attempt to pin down culture in this way is to invite distortion.[55] Urban working-class culture as we recognise it was a product of the industrial revolution and has continued to evolve with changes in social attitudes, technology and the economy. Increased incomes and smaller family size are major factors contributing to social change amongst working people in the twentieth century, though old norms and values cannot easily be shrugged off even when their rationale is no longer relevant.

The workers in older industries, including mining, shipbuilding and textiles, provide the archetype of what is now thought of as working-class culture. Though these industries experienced an Indian summer in the late 1940s, this was a hiccup in longer-term decline as other countries adopted newer technologies and produced comparable products more cheaply.[56] It is

misleading to see workers in these industries as typical. Workers on car assembly lines or in the electrical industries of the midlands and the south east were just as much members of the working class, though their lifestyles may have lacked the patina of tradition. Better material conditions brought psychological changes: on the Barton estate in Oxford, Mogey found that two-thirds of families reported a change of attitudes since moving to the new houses, with a greater emphasis on the solidarity of the nuclear family. Interestingly, the desire for still better housing was greater there than in the older St Ebbe's district, suggesting that aspirations increased in line with material improvements.[57]

It is as well to remember Martin's caution that the middle-class home was also based on regularity, order and ritual.[58] The essence of class distinction is that the attitudes, values and rituals of each group are different. The concept of embourgeoisement can also miss the possibility that values and rituals may change subtly to maintain status differences. When the working class could afford fish knives and forks in the 1960s, the middle class abandoned them. Though prosperity may promote change, class differences need not disappear. Margaret Stacey comes to a similar conclusion from a different direction. On the basis of her 1948 study of Banbury, she concludes that the better-off members of the working classes did not adopt a middle-class pattern of life, but lived more lavishly in a working-class style.[59]

The working class perspective can be distinct. It can also arouse middle-class ire. A clear example where there is an intimate relationship to economic circumstances is 'the welt'. While half a gang of Liverpool dockers unloaded a ship, the other half would disappear. The *Daily Telegraph* reader in Weybridge might find this reprehensible; from the workers' viewpoint it was a rational response to the payment system: overtime payments at between two and four times the basic rate were worth more than the bonus offered for a job done quickly.[60] Similarly, though saving for hard times might seem logical, there was little point when it was impossible to accumulate enough money to cover periods of sickness or prolonged unemployment. For Nigel Grey, honesty can be seen in different ways: 'To "them" it means not telling lies. To "us" it means not being a hypocrite. Not playing the middle-class game of adopting roles and living

behind a facade dressed in illusions.'[61] Poor housing provides other examples of behaviour which is open to conflicting class interpretations. Women of the 'poorer class' would put down newspaper for small children to defaecate on, which was then burnt. Middle-class hostesses of evacuee children may have thrown up their hands in horror, but '. . . this is the practice of the cleaner rather than the dirty mother, presumably because the drains are obstructed'.[62] Sometimes the link between attitudes and socio-economic circumstances is more baffling. Zweig cites the case of girls who leave their work without giving notice, or who fail to turn up for a job. This is perceived as rudeness by the managers, but Zweig attributes it to coyness or shyness on the part of the girls.[63] Alternative explanations might be a lack of social skills or a disdain for authority.

Almost in contradistinction to these traits, Zweig also detects a blurring of class differences:

> The working-class girl can be first discerned by the way she speaks, not so much by the way she dresses. Her aspirations are primarily seen in her way of dressing to try to attain the standards of her opposite numbers — the middle-classes, perhaps the only difference being in the brightness of the colours which are intended to make up for cheapness of materials and drabness of environment. Young girls are struggling hard to obviate class differences in clothes, and fashion may be regarded primarily as the battle of the two classes, one trying to keep the gap as wide as possible, the other to make it as narrow as possible.[64]

The two sets of observations are not necessarily contradictory. Attitudes (and speech) may be more enduring than manifestations of class based on purchasing power. (Clothing is a special case. Restrictions on the availability of clothing militated against marked class differences in dress, though headscarves provided the rare case of a working-class fashion which permeated up to the princesses.)[65] Another possibility, implied by Zweig, is that although the attitudes of the young were changing, girls deferred to the more conservative attitudes of their parents, to the low expectations of the juvenile employment service and to economic imperatives. No sign of a nascent youth culture is apparent here. Jephcott recounts the story of a working-class girl whose hopes of becoming an artist, a dress designer or a nurse remained unfulfilled: she went into domestic work.[66] Researchers in Sheffield noted girls' changed aspirations for cleaner jobs. Sadly, the girls ended up in unskilled factory work.[67] Did the cinema both foster ambitions and provide succour when they were dashed? One intriguing aspect is the dissonance between the

attitudes, values and rituals of a middle-class world portrayed in films and of the working-class audiences who watched them. Both worlds were seemingly assimilated without any psychic conflict in the same way that several speech patterns might be employed by working-class people, e.g. local dialect being spoken at home, something closer to received pronunciation being used in school and at work, and American slang derived from films being common currency among friends.[68]

There may also have been regional differences as Orwell suggests, though his generalisation that the working class in the south sought to adopt upper-class manners and habits is difficult to substantiate.[69] Gittins is more convincing in suggesting that the strong social networks in Bethnal Green contributed to the high fertility compared with national trends; and that the higher rates of female employment in textile areas led to a more equal role relationship of husband and wife, lower fertility levels (child-bearing conflicted with work) and less glorification of domesticity.[70] Brennan et al., in a study of Swansea in the early 1950s, noted the importance of the chapel and to a lesser extent of the trade union over class, though even here more leaders came from the middle class.[71]

Drawing on oral testimony, Addison sees factors like life in the services and increased union power leading to increased assertiveness among the working class — and among working-class women in particular. As one middle-class interviewee noted:

> . . . you were confronted with a clippie in charge of a bus, she was in control and you did what she told you, and shop assistants were suddenly powerful people because things were in short supply and all these people who, before the war, had been rather subservient sort of people and always terribly polite, were just the same as everybody else.[72]

Evidently some middle-class citizens were having to regard their working-class compatriots through new eyes, though how far this extended is another matter.[73]

Class in films is not simply a matter of the sympathetic or hostile treatment of working-class characters, or their authenticity. The perspective is fundamental: are working-class characters being portrayed from their own viewpoint, or through middle-class eyes? Which value system is being applied, whether wittingly or unwittingly? Do younger characters betray conflicting

values? What is the attitude towards other classes? Are images of northern working-class characters more stereotyped? These points will be explored in part three. What must be considered first is what was watched and by whom.

## Notes

1. 'The Cockney fellow's street was his kingdom, and not lightly trampled on by outsiders. Even we small girls felt the bristling pride in belonging.' Doris Bailey, born 1916, Bethnal Green, cited in Steve Humphries, Joanna Mack and Robert Parker, *A century of childhood*, London: Sidgwick & Jackson (in association with Channel Four Television), 1988, 121. Robert Roberts repeatedly refers to 'the village' though he was living in an inner city area. Robert Roberts, *The classic slum: Salford life in the first quarter of the century*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1971, 132, 136, 137 and 140. The most poetic description of the neighbourhood before the Second World War is Richard Hoggart, *The uses of literacy: aspects of working-class life with special reference to publications and entertainments*, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1958, 58-68. Don Haworth recalls that there were enough shops within a quarter of a mile to serve all daily needs. Don Haworth, *Bright morning: images from a thirties boyhood*, London: Mandarin, 1991, 47. See also Jerry White, *The worst street in north London: Campbell Bunk, Islington, between the wars*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1986, 78-9.

In a wartime survey in urban Scotland, 48 per cent of respondents went to a cinema within 600 yards of the home. Dennis Chapman, *The location of dwellings in Scottish towns: an inquiry into some of the factors relevant to the planning of new urban communities made for the Department of Health for Scotland*, Wartime Social Survey NS 34, 1943, 24. The cinema was being incorporated into the social life of the neighbourhood, even though the exigencies of war may have restricted travel further afield in this case. See also L.G. White, *Tenement Town*, London: Jason Press, 1946, 17.

2. Madeleine Kerr, *The people of Ship Street*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1958, 23-4, 29; Margaret Stacey, *Tradition and change: a study of Banbury*, London: Oxford University Press, 1960, 155; Carl Chinn, *They worked all their lives: women of the urban poor in England 1880-1939*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988, 24. Given the strong Irish ties in Liverpool and the high proportion of Roman Catholics among Kerr's sample, her findings should not necessarily be seen as typical. However, something of the neighbourhood mentality was described by officers at a Junior Employment Board in inter-war days, where youths in a London suburb were unwilling to venture out of the area for work. David Fowler, *The first teenagers: the lifestyle of young wage-earners in interwar Britain*, London: Woburn Press, 1995, 26. This persisted into the 1980s: working-class youths in Brixham were unwilling to look elsewhere in Torbay for work. David Norman, Youth Employment Officer for Brixham in the 1980s (personal communication).

3. e.g. J.P. Hayes, 'Convenience and selectivity, and the planning of neighbourhood units', part of 'Coventry Sociological Survey', 1953 (Coventry City Libraries).

4. For the prototypical working-class community, see Hoggart, op.cit. (ch.4, n.1) 80-6.

5. Peter Townsend, *The family life of old people*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1957, 127; Terence Morris, *The criminal area: a study in social ecology*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1958, 177-8; Jerry White, op.cit. (ch.4, n.1) 75 and 104-5. Tebbutt notes the importance of

gossip in reinforcing norms of behaviour up to the Second World War, which leaves the post-war years in limbo. Melanie Tebbutt, *Women's talk? A social history of 'gossip' in working-class neighbourhoods 1880-1960*, Aldershot, Hants.: Scolar Press, 1995, 3.

6. J.M. Mogey, *Family and neighbourhood: two studies in Oxford*, London: Oxford University Press, 1956, tables 7 and 26.

7. Mark W. Hodges and Cyril S. Smith, 'The Sheffield estate', in University of Liverpool, Department of Social Science, *Neighbourhood and community: an enquiry into social relationships on housing estates in Liverpool and Sheffield*, Liverpool: University of Liverpool Press, 1954, 90.

8. 'The "lump" [a collection of houses plus a pub and a shop] is a closely coherent social organism more important in the life of the residents than the individual families of which it is composed.' E.R. Manley, *Meet the miner*, Wakefield: published by author from 3 Leeds Road, Lofthouse 1947, 63.

9. Mark W. Hodges and Cyril S. Smith, 'The Sheffield estate', in University of Liverpool, op.cit. (ch.4, n.7) 110 and 117.

10. ibid. 110. Similar restrictions on contact with neighbours are noted in Lulie A. Shaw, 'Impressions of family life in a London suburb', *Sociological Review*, December 1954, new series, vol.2, no.1, 193; Ray Gosling, *Personal copy: a memory of the sixties*. London: Faber, 1980, 17 and 104.

11. Mark W. Hodges and Cyril S. Smith, 'The Sheffield estate', in University of Liverpool, op.cit. (ch.4, n.7) 110-17; Leo Kuper, 'Blueprint for living together', in Leo Kuper (ed.) *Living in towns: selected research papers in urban sociology of the Faculty of Commerce and Social Science, University of Birmingham*, London: Cresset Press, 1953, 79. This may be contrasted with inter-war evidence: of 500 children who wrote essays on 'My home and who lives there', 16 per cent of the total mentioned neighbours, compared with 61 per cent of those living in tenements. The latter group mentioned their parents far less frequently. Charles Madge and Tom Harrisson (for Mass-Observation), *Britain*, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1939, 219.

12. Geoffrey Gorer, *Exploring English character*, London: Cresset Press, 1955, 53. A similar pattern emerges in Janet H. Madge, 'Some aspects of social mixing in Worcester', in Kuper, op.cit. (ch.4, n.11) 290.

13. Any conclusions need Townsend's caution as a caveat: if people admitted to little contact with neighbours, it could be because they thought of them as friends. Townsend, op.cit. (ch.4, n.5) 120. Precisely what the investigator asked in many of these studies must remain unknown.

14. Townsend's thesis is convincing (ibid. 77 and 79). A mother could be fifty-nine before her last child reached the age of marriage. This prolongation of the time spent caring for children was a major reason for the maintenance of family ties, particularly when there was a short period between children depending on parents and parents depending on children. The corollary is that in the longer term, a reduction in family size would be likely to reduce family contact. See also Stacey, op.cit. (ch.4, n.2) 115-23.

15. Pearl Jephcott, *Rising twenty: notes on some ordinary girls*, London: Faber, 1948, 47; Shaw, op.cit. (ch.4, n.10) 183; Gorer, op.cit. (ch.4, n.12) 45-6; Raymond Firth and Judith Djamour, 'Kinship in South Borough', in Raymond Firth (ed.) *Two studies of kinship in London*, University of London, Athlone Press, 1956, 63; Mogey, op.cit. (ch.4, n.6) 77-81; Townsend, op.cit. (ch.4, n.5) tables 8 and 28; Michael Young and Peter Willmott, *Family and kinship in*

*east London.* London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1957, 23-6; Kerr, op.cit. (ch.4, n.2) 13-15; Josephine Klein, *Samples from English cultures,* vol. 2: *Child-rearing practices,* London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1965, 186; Elizabeth Bott, *Family and social network: role, norms and external relationships in ordinary urban families.* 2nd edn., London: Tavistock Publications, 1971, 124.

By Young and Willmott, op.cit. 26, one of the factors working against the continuation of the kinship network was the expansion in the provision of council housing: the mother's influence in finding a home could not extend to the town hall.

Mike Savage cites evidence that 34.3 per cent of boys and 28 per cent of girls obtained work through family and friends in the 1930s, though more formal channels were increasing in importance. Mike Savage, 'Capitalist and pluralist relations at work: Preston cotton weaving 1890-1940', in Lancaster Regionalism Group, *Localities, class and gender.* London: Pion, 1985, 186.

16. Gorer, op.cit. (ch.4, n.12) 44-5; Bott, op.cit. (ch.4, n.15) 136-7; Colin Rosser and Christopher Harris, *The family and social change: a study of family and kinship in a south Wales town,* London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1965, tables 6.3 and 6.4.

17. Miss D.J. Phillips, 'A study of the concepts of family life held by a group of adolescent girls', *Researches and studies,* May 1954, no.10, 14-18.

18. Eliot Slater and Moya Woodside, *Patterns of marriage: a study of marriage relationships in the urban working classes.* London: Cassell, 1951, 117; Jerry White, op.cit. (ch.4, n.1) 139, 146 and 214.

19. Slater and Woodside, op.cit. (ch.4, n.18) 87; Diana Gittins, *Fair sex: family size and structure 1900-39.* London: Hutchinson, 1982, 140.

20. Mark W. Hodges and Cyril S. Smith, 'The Sheffield estate', in University of Liverpool, op.cit. (ch.4, n.7) 85. Continuing ties to the parental home were also apparent in Bethnal Green among married children. Townsend, op.cit. (ch.4, n.5) 27. In south Wales, roughly 50 per cent more couples shared a home with parents than before the war, suggesting necessity rather than choice. Rosser and Harris, op.cit. (ch.4, n.16) table 7.5. A lack of savings may also provide a partial reason in addition to housing shortage. Elizabeth Roberts, *Women's place: an oral history of working-class women 1890-1940.* Oxford: Blackwell, 1984, 43.

21. Townsend, op.cit. (ch.4, n.5) 12. Surprisingly in view of his stress on community, Hoggart seems to go along with this. Hoggart, op.cit. (ch.4, n.1) 34.

22. Winifred L. Whitely, 'Littletown-in-overspill', in Kuper, op.cit. (ch.4, n.11) 211; Mogey, op.cit. (ch.4, n.6) 133; Raymond Firth and Judith Djamour, 'Kinship in South Borough', in Firth op.cit. (ch.4, n.15) 34; Norman Dennis, Fernando Henriques and Clifford Slaughter, *Coal is our life: an analysis of a Yorkshire mining community.* London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1956, 182.

23. William Woodruff, *Billy boy: the story of a Lancashire weaver's son.* Halifax: Ryburn, 1993, 12.

24. Jephcott, op.cit. (ch.4, n.15) 15 and 34-5.

25. A. P. Jephcott, *Girls growing up.* London: Faber, 1942, 129; Jephcott, *Rising twenty,* 48-9; Mogey, op.cit. (ch.4, n.6) 59-60; Kerr, op.cit. (ch.4, n.2) 88; Dennis, et al. op.cit. (ch.4, n.22) 181-2 and 201. It is not always clear in the studies from the 1940s whether the fathers were home or in the services.

Women may have had more authority in big towns and in the poorest families. Gorer, op.cit.

(ch.4, n.12) 171.

Attitudes from the inter-war years are noted in Hoggart, op.cit. (ch.4, n.1) 41-58; John Burnett (ed.) *Destiny obscure: autobiographies of childhood, education and the family from the 1820s to the 1920s*. London: Routledge, 1994, 235 and 243.

26. Ferdynand Zweig, *Men in the pits*. London: Gollancz, 1948, 102.

27. Mogey, op.cit. (ch.4, n.6) 17 and 65; Klein, op.cit. (ch.4, n.15) 179-80. Mays recounts how a working mother wanted her daughter to have time off school to look after the bed-ridden father. When it was pointed out that two unemployed teenage sons were at home, the mother responded: 'I pray that as long as I've my strength, no man will ever be asked to cook in my house.' John Barron Mays, *Education and the urban child*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1962, 98. For comparisons with inter-war years, see Hoggart, op.cit. (ch.4, n.1) 55-8; Haworth, op.cit. (ch.4, n.1) 10.

28. Geoff Mungham, 'Youth in pursuit of itself', in Geoff Mungham and Geoff Pearson (eds.) *Working class youth culture*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1976, 88.

29. Gorer, op.cit. (ch.4, n.12) 147; Slater and Woodside, op.cit. (ch.4, n.18) table 10b; Marie Paneth, *Branch Street: a sociological study*. London, Allen & Unwin, 1944, 26; Jephcott, *Rising twenty*, 147-8.

30. George Orwell, *The English people*. London: Collins, 1947, 29; Leo Kuper, 'Blueprint for living together', in Kuper, op.cit. (ch.4, n.11) 78. For a comparison with the inter-war years, see Hoggart, op.cit. (ch.4, n.1) 77-80; Haworth, op.cit. (ch.4, n.1) 9.

31. Ferdynand Zweig, *Women's life and labour*. London: Gollancz, 1952, 123-4. Zweig's views find an echo a generation later:

> Social historians studying the working class in the recent past, are almost overwhelmed at times by the total devotion and dedication shown towards the concept of respectability. It can be seen in the lives of almost all members of the working class, even in those who in the eyes of others were 'rough'. 'To be respectable' was in its original sense, to be respected, and in closely-knit communities, it was difficult to live comfortably without the respect of one's family and neighbours.

Elizabeth Roberts, op.cit. (ch.4, n.20) 14.

32. J. Macalister Brew, *Informal education: adventures and reflections*. London: Faber, 1946, 101.

33. Mark W. Hodges and Cyril S. Smith, 'The Sheffield estate', in University of Liverpool, op.cit. (ch.4, n.7) 116; Elizabeth Roberts, op.cit. (ch.4, n.20) 195-6; Leslie Halliwell, *Seats in all parts: half a lifetime at the movies*. London: Granada, 1985, 19

34. Nigel Gray, *The silent majority: a study of the working class in post-war British fiction*. London: Vision Press, 1973, 139.

35. A shipyard joiner cited in Peter Pagnamenta and Richard Overy, *All our working lives*. London: BBC, 1994, 269. For other examples see Paneth, op.cit. (ch.4, n.29) 55; Klein, op.cit. (ch.4, n.15) 126; Ted Willis, *Whatever happened to Tom Mix? The story of one of my lives*. London: Cassell, 1970, 12; Robert Roberts, op.cit. (ch.4, n.1) 7; Angela Rodaway, *A London childhood*. London: Virago, 1985, 23; Burnett, op.cit. (ch.4, n.25) 33.

36. Quoted in Elizabeth Roberts, op.cit. (ch.4, n.20) 129. See also Leo Kuper, 'Blueprint for living together', in Kuper, op.cit. (ch.4, n.11) 72; Pearl Jephcott, *Some young people*. London:

Allen & Unwin, 1954, 56; Mogey, op.cit. (ch.4, n.6) 23; B.S. Johnson (ed.) *The evacuees*. London: Gollancz, 1968, 145. For earlier in the century see Robert Roberts, op.cit. (ch.4, n.1) 17-18; Walter Southgate, *That's the way it was: a working-class autobiography 1890-1950*. Oxted, Surrey: New Clarendon Press, 1982, 67; Jean Faley, *Up oor close: memoirs of domestic life in Glasgow tenements 1910-1945*. Wendlebury, Oxon: White Cockade (in association with Springburn Museum Trust), 1990, 33 and 35-6.

In Chapman's Liverpool study, interviewers were shown into the formal room on 44 per cent of occasions in bye-law houses, compared with 22 per cent in semi-detached houses. Dennis Chapman, *The home and social status*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1955, 73.

37. Mrs C.F.A. Alexander, 'All things bright and beautiful', in Ian Bradley (ed.) *The Penguin book of hymns*. London: Viking, 1989, 30.

38. Ferdynand Zweig, *Labour, life, poverty*. Wakefield: EP Publishing, 1975, 89. See also Hoggart, op.cit. (ch.4, n.1) 91-4.

39. C.S. Wilson, 'The family and neighbourhood in a British community', MSc thesis, University of Cambridge, 1953, 183.

40. Zweig, *Men in the pits*, 63 and 81; Correlli Barnett, *The audit of war: the illusion of Britain as a great nation*. London: Pan, 1996. Swingewood notes the tenacious clinging to habits and customs in Walter Greenwood's novel *Love on the dole*. Alan Swingewood, *The myth of mass culture*. Basingstoke, Hants., and London: Macmillan, 1977, 60.

41. Mays, op.cit. (ch.4, n.27) 92. This has not entirely disappeared: after fifty years of the National Health Service, some old people still refer to seeing their panel doctor.

42. For fatalism, see Ross McKibbin, *The ideologies of class: social relations in Britain 1880-1950*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, Clarendon Press, 1994, 115-16. Miller and Reissman see the distrust of education and abstract ideas as symptomatic of a focus on getting by rather than getting ahead, on results rather than means. S.M. Miller and Frank Reissman, 'The working class subculture: a new view', *Social Problems*, summer 1961, vol.9, no.1, 91-4.

For saving, see Charles Madge, *Wartime patterns of saving and spending*. National Institute of Economic and Social Research occasional paper 4. London: Cambridge University Press, 1943, 16; Richard Hoggart, op.cit. (ch.4, n.1) 132-3. Klein cites with approval Zweig's conclusion that women took a different attitude. Klein, op.cit. (ch.4, n.15) 169-70.

Changes in saving were already afoot in 1931, when endowment policies were showing more rapid growth than assurance policies. Paul Johnson, *Saving and spending: the working-class economy in Britain 1870-1939*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, Clarendon Press, 1985, 41. The view that saving was becoming more acceptable with all social classes is put forward in M-O A: FR 1050, 'Report on attitudes to socialism and communism', 18 January 1942.

For conservatism in education see Mogey, op.cit. (ch.4, n.6) 75; Townsend, op.cit. (ch.4, n.5) 101; Hoggart, op.cit. (ch.4, n.1) 84. This aspect of conservatism could also be expressed in gender roles: '. . . some of the girls from poorer homes also seem to have a feeling that any skill which costs money to acquire is the prerogative of the boy.' Jephcott, *Rising twenty*, 104.

A more optimistic attitude may have been on its way by 1950. In the London School of Economics study, 88 per cent of the manual workers questioned considered that their children had a better chance of advancement than they did themselves, citing improved educational standards as the reason. However, unskilled workers were less likely to prefer grammar school education for their children. F.M. Martin, 'Some subjective aspects of social stratification,' and id. 'An enquiry into parents' preferences in secondary education,' both in David V. Glass (ed.) *Social mobility in Britain*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1954, 67-9 and 166.

For the view that the working class took a realistic view of their life chances, see David Hargreaves, 'Two subcultures', in Maurice Craft (ed.) *Family, class and education: a reader*,

London: Longman, 1970, 133.

43. For the significance of life assurance and burial clubs for the working class see Rowntree, *Poverty and progress*, 212-13; Charles Madge, op.cit. (ch.4, n.42) table 23; M. Fitzgerald (for Manchester University Settlement) *Ancoats: a study of a clearance area. Report of a survey made in 1937-1938*, Manchester: Manchester University Settlement, 1945, 41.

44. Bernice Martin, *A sociology of contemporary cultural change*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1981, 61, 71-3.

45. Mungham sees geographical parochialness and lack of transport as leading to ghettoisation and reinforcing working-class solidarity. Mungham, op.cit. (ch.4, n.28) 90. This is ahistorical: by the 1940s there were pressures towards the ghettoisation of some groups in some localities, but there were also pressures (not least from the cinema) towards wider social contacts.

46. An exception is Gosling, op.cit. (ch.4, n.10).

47. Raymond Briggs, who was brought up in a similar background at much the same time, recalls the same phrases. *Bookworm*, BBC TV, 20 November 1998. See also Raymond Briggs, *Ethel and Ernest: a true story*, London: Cape, 1998, 45, 59, 61 and 71.

48. 'Esther's mother was . . . a victim of this eccentricity — an eccentricity to be found more amongst the very poor than any other class. Mrs Downs, sane as she was, did not fully trust even Post Offices or Banks.' Patrick Hamilton, *The west pier*, London: Constable, 1951, 170.

49. The importance of gambling is explored in detail in Andrew Davies, *Leisure, gender and poverty: working-class culture in Salford and Manchester 1900-1939*, Buckingham: Open University Press, 1992, 143-67.

50. According to Orwell, poor people walked out at the end of the picture, while richer classes in the West End of London stood to attention for the national anthem. Orwell, op.cit. (ch.4, n.30) 24. This view of the working class is not the recollection of an interviewee who attended a local cinema in Bradford. Interview with Doreen Betts, Bradford, 13 October 1999.

51. Robert Murphy, 'British film production 1939 to 1945', in Geoff Hurd (ed.) *National fictions: world war two in British films and television*, London: BFI, 1984, 16

52. Roger Bromley, *Lost narratives: popular fictions, politics and recent history*, London: Routledge, 1988. The historiography of the inter-war years is reviewed in Keith Laybourn, *Britain on the breadline: a social and political history of Britain between the wars*, Gloucester: Sutton, 1990, 41-54.

53. J.B. Priestley, *English journey*, London: Heinemann, 1984, 300.

54. Trevor Blackwell and Jeremy Seabrook, *A world still to win: the reconstruction of the post-war working class*, London: Faber, 1985, 26.

55. Paul Willis goes further, concluding that explicit consciousness of class may be our poorest and least rational guide. More important are the cultural conflicts and processes beneath it:
> Repetition of given patterns, attempts to please the other, superficial mimicry, earnest attempts to follow abstract norms of say, politeness and sophistication or what is taken as intelligence, can be mixed in with comments and responses which have a true cultural resonance. Survey methods, and all forms of methods relying basically on verbal or written responses, no matter what their sophistication, can never distinguish these

categories.

Paul E. Willis, *Learning to labour: how working-class kids get working-class jobs*, Farnborough, Hants: Saxon House, 1977, 122. Though Willis is intent on flying the flag for participant observation, his point is well made. Relying on survey responses means accepting a considered, self-conscious and necessarily restricted view of belonging to a class. The obverse is that a greater emphasis on such intangibles as attitudes and values threatens to leave class as an even more nebulous concept.

56. The fate of the cotton industry in the 1930s is a case in point, dramatised on the screen in *Sing As We Go* (dir. Basil Dean, 1934). Unwitting testimony about the British shipbuilding industry appears in the opening sequence of *Spare a Copper* (dir. John Paddy Carstairs, 1940). In a montage of wartime industries is a clip of riveters at work on a ship. Britain was soon to receive liberty ships from the U.S.A. Extensive use of welding meant that they could be built far more quickly than vessels produced in British shipyards where rivetting was still the primary method of construction.

57. Mogey, op.cit. (ch.4, n.6) 70-5.

58. Martin, op.cit. (ch.4, n.44) 77.

59. Stacey, op.cit. (ch.4, n.2) 156.

60. A.J. Eccles, 'Dock work', in Eric Butterworth and David Weir (eds.) *The sociology of modern Britain: an introductory reader*, rev. edn., London: Fontana, 1975, 245.

61. Grey, op.cit. (ch.4, n.34) 219.

62. Women's Group on Public Welfare, Hygiene Committee, *Our towns: a close-up. A study made in 1939-42 with certain recommendations*, London: Oxford University Press, 1943, 89.

63. Zweig, *Women's life and labour*, 93.

64. ibid. 124.

65. James Lavers, 'Fashion and class distinction' in Charles Madge, *Pilot papers*, London: Pilot Press, 1946, caption of photograph facing page 65. For restrictions on clothing, see Paul Addison, *Now the war is over: a social history of Britain 1945-51*, London: BBC and Cape, 1985, 7.

66. Jephcott, *Girls growing up*, 19-22.

67. Mark W. Hodges and Cyril S. Smith, 'The Sheffield estate', in University of Liverpool, op.cit. (ch.4, n.7) 87.

68. Mays, op.cit. (ch.4, n.27) 92; Jephcott, *Rising twenty*, 155.

69. Orwell, op.cit. (ch.4, n.30) 29. Orwell suggests that there was a habit surviving in areas of heavy industry of looking down on the upper class as effeminate and 'la-di-dah', though he is not clear about where the middle class fit into this picture.

70. Gittins, op.cit. (ch.4, n.19) 88 and 185. Elizabeth Roberts takes issue with any simple relationship between a wife's paid employment and power relations within the home. Elizabeth Roberts, op.cit. (ch.4, n.20) 118.

71. T. Brennan, E.W. Cooney and H. Pollins, *Social change in south-west Wales*. London: Watts, 1954, 92, 107 and 175.

72. Addison, op.cit. (ch.4, n.65) 8. This echoes the view of Runciman noted in chapter one (page 7).

A reversal of status occurs in *English Without Tears* (dir. Harold French, 1944), where a butler becomes an officer and employs the niece of his former employer. The plot is exploited for its romantic potential rather than its class potential. *The Chiltern Hundreds* (dir. John Paddy Carstairs, 1949) is also worth considering in this context.

73. Hoggart's view is that the levelling effect of the services was temporary and marginal. Richard Hoggart, *Life and times*. vol.2: *A sort of clowning 1940-59*. London: Chatto & Windus, 1990, 5.

PART TWO

# CHAPTER FIVE

## British cinema audiences of the late 1940s

### Surveys and polls of the period

Audience surveys dating from 1935 to the early 1950s which yield quantitative data are annotated in appendix 2. Studies from the early 1930s are excluded on the grounds that they reveal a pattern of cinema-going too remote from the post-war years, when the novelty value of the talkies may have been a distorting factor.[1] Studies made between 1935 and 1939 are included to provide some indication of longer-term trends in peacetime cinema-going. Data from the 1950s does this inadequately: the precipitous decline in audience numbers overshadows all other statistics, whatever its intrinsic interest.[2] Accordingly, no attempt is made to survey audiences beyond the early 1950s, the exception being a 1961 Edinburgh study included for its comparability with a survey made ten years earlier.[3]

The surveys and polls reveal varying degrees of sophistication and an annoying lack of comparability, but a few general points might be made. First, cinema-going in one season cannot be inferred from a survey made at another time of year, any more than the effect of weather can be ignored: more rival attractions are likely to be available on a hot day in summer than on a wet November evening. Cinemas in seaside resorts are particularly sensitive to seasonal factors and the vagaries of the weather. Some studies note the time of year: none notes the weather. Secondly, surveys made in cinemas have the obvious bias that they exclude non-attenders, while under-emphasising views of those who rarely attended. This need not invalidate the findings on matters such as film preferences, so long as it is accepted that the results are skewed towards frequent attenders. The Bernstein questionnaires are affected in this way.[4] Their findings also reflect metropolitan tastes, given that most Granada cinemas were in and around London.[5]

Thirdly, children's film tastes are pliable: they might be expected to change markedly between the ages of five and fifteen, whilst the tastes of adults are likely to remain relatively stable over the same time span. More than half the studies listed are of children's cinema-going, meaning that there is enough data available for this group to be considered separately. Finally, there are the problems inherent in every survey, e.g. the people who co-operate are likely to be better educated and to display a greater interest in the subject. Respondents may try to anticipate the desired answer. Given the wariness of some teachers towards the cinema, this is likely to be a particular handicap in exploring children's cinema-going habits when anonymous questionnaires were not used.[6]

The bulk of relevant data is included in the tables, the exception being that percentages for casual cinema-goers are excluded. In most cases, these can be calculated from the figures provided. Blanks denote that data was omitted in the original survey. In the discussion which follows, surveys are not referenced where the information is available from the tables. Given the small number of surveys in statistical terms and the lack of consensus apparent in many of the results, averages are of limited usefulness, though statistical summaries are provided after each table, where appropriate. Minimum and maximum values give a clearer idea of the disparities between surveys and will be cited in this discussion. The criteria for employing statistical tests, both here and in subsequent chapters, are that, as far as possible, they should be easily comprehensible and should facilitate comparison between tables. This means that they are few in number, while more powerful tests have sometimes been passed over.

The adult population and the cinema

*(i) The adult population as a whole.* Adulthood was taken to commence at any time between fourteen — the school leaving age for the bulk of the population prior to April 1947 — and twenty-one, while some surveys leave the matter open. This flexible use of the term makes comparison problematic. Appendix 1, table 5.1 summarises the evidence available from the

surveys under review. Surveys of adolescents are included where the upper age limit is twenty-one or over. Two early studies — those of C. Cameron et al. and of A.J. Lush — only just qualify on these terms. Surveys made in cinemas are excluded on the grounds that they are biased towards frequent attenders.

On the basis of survey evidence, between 30 and 80 per cent of the adult population went to the cinema one or more times a week. These can be termed the frequent attenders. Age differences, sampling error, the season and the weather account for some of the variation, though the restricted sampling frame of some surveys means that any quest for comparability is fruitless. There is no reason why Scottish housewives and the residents of Willesden should have similar cinema-going habits. Excluding the earlier Mass-Observation survey reported in *Kinematograph Weekly*, of the thirteen surveys made from the end of the war until 1951, estimates of frequent cinema-goers range from 31 to 67 per cent.[7] The spread is still too broad for any firm conclusions to be drawn.

A noteworthy feature is the number of people who did *not* go to the cinema. Again excluding the earlier Mass-Observation study, among the eighteen surveys yielding data on non-attenders, estimates range from 3 to 32 per cent. The crucial point of agreement is that more people attended regularly than never went at all.

There is also a fair measure of agreement on the number of people keen enough to go to the cinema at least twice a week. Estimates vary between 10 and 38 per cent, with all but three surveys producing figures within the 10 to 21 per cent range. This hard core of enthusiasts provided a regular source of revenue for exhibitors and had to be central to any marketing strategy. They made screening a film from Monday to Saturday a problematic exercise, drawing in more casual cinema-goers at the cost of forcing enthusiasts to look elsewhere for their second film of the week.

The percentages presented suggest an enthusiasm for the cinema by the adult population, but not an all-consuming passion. Nor does the data reveal any slackening of interest in 1949 and 1950, though annual admissions in Great Britain declined from 1,585 million in 1945 to 1,430

million in 1949 and 1.396 million in 1950 — figures which were still higher than for any year between 1934 and 1941.[8]

*(ii) Cinema-going by class.* More pertinent to this discussion is adult cinema-going by class (appendix 1, table 5.2). Once again, the problem of delineating the working class has to be confronted. The income of the chief wage-earner is the obvious and relatively easy measure adopted by Louis Moss and Kathleen Box in 1943. Box in 1946 and in the Hulton surveys directed by Mark Abrams. The statistics provided by Geoffrey Browne and the British Film Producers' Association are drawn from the Hulton surveys. Included in Moss and Box's lower economic group are families where the chief wage-earner earned £5 or less per week or where there was reliance on pensions and state allowances. For her 1946 study, Box reduced the earnings limit for her lower income group to £4 per week, effectively putting more people into the middle income group. The Gallup surveys offer no definition of 'poor' or 'very poor' categories, while the Hulton survey of 1949 defines the working class as class D (the usual income of the head of the household being £225 to £399 a year) and the poor as class E (the comparable income being under £225 a year), with unspecified adjustments being made for the social background of respondents. As classes D and E are grouped together in the Hulton tables (and in Browne's extended analysis), any fine distinctions between the two groups are lost.[9] Abrams' other Hulton surveys follow the same procedure.

In general, the income levels selected by the researchers bear no relationship to each other, or to changes in the cost of living.[10] Because the number of respondents in the upper economic groups is small, more reliable comparisons can be made between lower and middle income groups. As added complications, two surveys — Box in 1946, and Theodore Cauter and John Downham in 1954 — do not distinguish between respondents going to the cinema once a week and those going more frequently, while Cauter and Downham opt for a two-class system.

Given these limitations, can anything be gleaned from the surveys in table 5.2? With the exception of the earlier Gallup survey, more people in the lower economic group were staying

away from the cinema than in the middle economic group by a margin of between 1 and 19 per

cent. The 19 per cent difference in Box's 1946 survey is markedly at variance with the results

found in other surveys, though her lower income threshold for the middle income group means

that a disproportionately high number of retired people living on pensions were included in the

lower income group. This group displayed little interest in the cinema, as will become evident

later in this chapter.

In considering frequent cinema-goers by economic class, the percentages put forward by

Box in 1946 and by Cauter and Downham in 1954 have to be set aside for their lack of

comparability. Among the other surveys, there is no consensus on how many people from the

lower and middle economic groups went to the cinema weekly, though there is general agreement

that a higher proportion of people from the lower economic group went two or more times a

week by a margin of between 3 and 6 per cent.

If working-class people predominated in cinema audiences, the obvious reason was that the

working class comprised the bulk of the population rather than that their cinema-going habits

were markedly out of line with those of other social classes. Insofar as lower income groups

displayed a distinct behaviour pattern, a higher percentage of both non-attenders and frequent

attenders came from this sector. Clearly the working class as defined by income displayed

considerable diversity in cinema-going habits. A breakdown by occupation might yield more

detail, but the data is fragmentary and inconclusive: Moss and Box's 1943 survey shows workers

in light munitions manufacture going to the cinema more frequently than other groups, but this

has little relevance to post-war conditions given that munitions was essentially a wartime

industry.[11] In 1946, Box adopted different occupational groupings. Though some coincide with

the earlier study, her residual categories of 'housewives' and 'retired and unoccupied' yield no

clues about class.[12] Even a simple manual non-manual distinction becomes unreliable when

clerical and distributive workers are grouped together. The only firm conclusion to be drawn

from the 1943 and 1946 surveys is that managerial and professional workers were more likely to

be infrequent attenders when compared to other workers, though whether this was the

consequence of inclination or pressure of work is not clear.[13]

The numerical dominance of the working-class gave its members formidable purchasing power as cinema-goers, particularly as most of the frequent attenders came from this sector of the population. The survey evidence on cinema-going by class is less than ideal, but clearly any film which was to recoup its costs quickly had to appeal to working-class audiences.

*(iii) Cinema-going by sex.* On the basis of *Picturegoer* and *Daily Mail* ballots (appendix 1, table 6.10), many of the popular post-war films might be described as women's films.[14] This does not seem to have deterred men from cinema-going (appendix 1, table 5.3). Included in the table are surveys with respondents of twenty-one and over. Inevitably the figures mirror the wide variety of estimates of adult cinema-going as a whole noted in appendix 1, table 5.1. With this accepted, there is no indication that among the frequent attenders, men and women went to the cinema with markedly differing frequencies. Box's 1946 survey shows the greatest disparity, her 8 per cent excess of women attenders over men reducing among infrequent cinema-goers.[15]

The lowest percentages of regular male attenders occur in the official social surveys made in 1943 and 1946, when wartime leisure patterns and the presence of many men in the services introduced distortions (both surveys only cover civilian cinema-going).[16] Nor can these surveys accurately reflect cinema-going in towns with a strong service connection such as Aldershot or Portsmouth. Tantalisingly, the five final surveys in table 5.3 reveal more men in the frequent attenders category, though the margins are small.

*(iv) Cinema-going, marriage and parenthood.* Marriage might be expected to change cinema-going habits, if only because unmarried people are likely to have more spare time and a greater disposable income. The only studies which distinguish respondents by marital status are the Moss and Box survey of 1943 and the earlier Gallup survey of 1948. Both show single people going to the cinema more than married people. According to Moss and Box, 46 per cent of single people over eighteen were going to the cinema one or more times a week compared with 24 per

cent of married and widowed people; comparable percentages from Gallup are 41 and 33.[17]

Parental status may be as important as marital status. Doris Rich notes that having three or more children limited the time a woman could spend out of the home.[18] No other researcher relates cinema-going to family size. Several of Seebohm Rowntree and G.R. Laver's respondents reported that their cinema-going was restricted by looking after young children, though Dennis Chapman's wartime study reveals little difference in cinema-going habits between housewives who had children and those who did not.[19] The earlier Gallup survey of 1948 contains additional information on cinema-going by married women which supports the observations of Rich and of Rowntree and Lavers: 31 per cent of those with no children were frequent attenders, compared with 26 per cent of those with pre-school children. Of married women with children at school, 49 per cent were frequent attenders. Among single women of twenty-one and over, 41 per cent were frequent attenders.[20]

Married women, including those with families, had different leisure patterns from other groups stemming from the particular demands upon their time. Responsibility restricted their cinema-going — the responsibility first of setting up home, though more data would be welcome on this point, and secondly of being a parent. When children reached school age, mothers accompanied their offspring to the cinema. This would account for the increase in cinema-going by this group which shows up in the Gallup survey, though mothers may also have taken the opportunity to attend matinee performances on their own, indulging in their earlier love of cinema-going now that they were less tied to the home.


*(v) Cinema-going and age.* Marital status is difficult to disentangle from age — as adolescents move into their twenties, they are more likely to be married. The variety of ways in which respondents are grouped by age means that direct comparability between surveys is not possible. Whatever their differences, a trend on which all the surveys are in agreement is that cinema-going declined with age (appendix 1, chart 5.1). This shows up starkly when the proportion of non-attenders in the youngest and oldest age cohorts in each survey are compared (appendix 1,

table 5.4). Among the youngest groups surveyed, estimates for the proportion of non-attenders range from 0 to 17 per cent; among the oldest groups, estimates range from 22 to 69 per cent. The reasons for the waning interest in the cinema by older age groups are likely to be complex: changes in leisure interests, changes of taste in films (changes for which the cinema industry was patently not catering), an increasing disinclination or inability to take part in activities outside the home, and a reduction in disposable income (where middle-class incomes would generally increase with career advancement, the income of a manual worker would reach an early peak and either level off or possibly decline in middle age).[21]

*(v) The young adult and the cinema.* Adolescence fills the void between childhood and adult life, but beyond this obvious point, the term was used flexibly by commentators. The extent of cinema-going amongst young people is detailed in appendix 1, table 5.5. As far as possible, the surveys included are those conducted amongst working adolescents, though in some cases a proportion of respondents was still at school.

John Barclay's 1961 survey betrays the declining fortunes of the cinema industry by producing the lowest figure, though even by this time, 55 per cent of adolescents were going to the cinema one or more times a week. This compares with 69 per cent in Box's 1946 survey. Overall, the proportion of adolescents attending with this frequency ranges from 54 to 91 per cent. Local surveys yield higher percentages than those conducted nationally, which may indicate an increased frequency of cinema attendance in larger centres of population, where such surveys are easier to organise and are generally conducted.[22]

There is no ambiguity about the importance of the cinema in the lives of young people. In part this reflects the paucity of alternative leisure pursuits available immediately after the war. More positively, the cinema industry satisfied its adolescent patrons enough to commit many of them to regular cinema-going. This has implications for the reliability of data on the adult population as a whole which has already been considered (appendix 1, table 5.1): as the lower age limit for examining adult cinema-going varies from fourteen and twenty-one, selecting an age

at the top end of this range excludes from consideration a large swathe of cinema-goers.

**The cinema audience**

Alternative approaches to examining cinema-going habits are to focus on the composition of either the average audience or the key group of frequent attenders who visited the cinema at least once a week. Though the two methods are conceptually distinct, in practice they cannot easily be separated given the paucity of data.[23] An added difficulty is that data on the audience needs to be assessed against the composition of the sample and of the population as a whole. A sample comprising 90 per cent of clerical workers would yield results which were not representative of the population. Equally, if 60 per cent of an audience were clerical workers, this would be a high proportion, but they would still be under-represented if they made up 90 per cent of the sample. Moss and Box's 1943 survey yields data on both frequent attenders compared with the sample and on the cinema audience compared with the population. In 1946, Box's comparisons were with estimates of the population, while later in the 1940s, Abrams profiled frequent cinema-goers, but with no point of comparison.[24] In quantity and comparability, therefore, the evidence leaves something to be desired.

*(i) The adult audience by economic group.* Moss and Box's four profiles by economic group appear in appendix 1, chart 5.2. The profile of the sample is closely matched to that of the population as a whole, though the dubious method of obtaining the population profile which Box employed in 1946 may have been used here (see ch.5, n.24). The profiles of the frequent attenders group and of the audience are also similar, with the lower economic group being over-represented in both cases. This accords with the findings on cinema-going by class (page 123). Abrams' data (appendix 1, table 5.6) confirms this pattern, though his sample is skewed towards the middle class.

*(ii) The adult audience by occupation.* In 1943, Moss and Box analysed the audience by occupation. Box repeated this exercise in 1946. The results appear in appendix 1, chart 5.3. In both surveys, factory workers and clerical/distributive workers were over-represented in the audience, while housewives were under-represented. The latter finding gives some hint as to the pressures upon married women brought about by rationing, queuing and the attendant difficulties of food preparation. Neither survey indicates whether part-time work was taken into account — a weakness which particularly affects how married women were classified. In 1946, the post-war baby boom restricted the cinema-going of married women, most of whom would be classed as housewives. With this taken into account, housewives still made up a sizeable and increasing proportion of the audience.

The 'retired and unemployed' category is difficult to assess given the small numbers involved. It was likely to be composed largely of the retired, given the low rates of unemployment throughout the period under review (see ch.3, n.60). The under-representation of the retired is consistent with the declining interest in the cinema apparent amongst the population at large with increasing age, though the percentages conceal an unknown number of younger civilians who could not attend the cinema as a consequence of sickness or injury.


*(iii) The adult audience by sex.* Data on the sex ratio of the cinema audience is shown in appendix 1, table 5.7. The two surveys in which Box was involved (Moss and Box in 1943, and Box in 1946) are strikingly similar in showing women as over-represented in the audience. This appears to run counter to the conclusion that taking the population as a whole, roughly equal proportions of men and women came into the frequent attenders category (page 124). Assuming that the survey results are representative, female cinema-goers in the casual and/or frequent attender categories may simply have attended more often than their male counterparts. This may have been a wartime hiatus which was left behind by the time of Abrams' 1950 survey.


*(iv) The adult audience by age.* The difficulty of comparing an average audience with a cohort

of frequent attenders as well as the varied array of age cohorts employed complicate any analysis of audiences by age. (appendix 4, tables 5.8a-d). The results reprise the pattern noted amongst the population as a whole, with a dwindling enthusiasm for the cinema becoming apparent with increasing age, this being notable in Abrams' percentages for non-attenders. Equally striking in Abram's two studies is the absence of age disparities among frequent attenders: people of forty-five and over who did go to the cinema attended as regularly as their younger counterparts.[25] This contradicts the findings of Moss and Box's 1943 survey (appendix 1, table 5.8a) in which the enthusiasts are preponderantly in the eighteen to forty age group. Assuming Abrams' results are representative of the population as a whole, this indicates the increased amount of leisure time and money available to older age groups by comparison with the war years. There may also have been an increased inclination among well-paid, middle-age workers without family ties to stray outside the home in the evenings. They would have discovered a world freed of blackout restrictions, where there was a cinema within walking distance in most towns.

*(v) The adult audience by marital status.* Only the Moss and Box survey of 1943 provides an analysis by marital status (appendix 1, table 5.9). Though 56 per cent of frequent attenders were married or widowed, as this group made up three-quarters of the sample, they were still under-represented in the audience. Young people were the group least likely to be married, but Moss and Box's eighteen to forty age category is too broad to be useful. As the survey only covers civilians, the high proportion of single people in the services in 1943 was a source of distortion.

*(vi) The adult audience by region.* Moss and Box's 1943 survey provides one of the few analyses of frequent cinema-goers by region (appendix 1, table 5.10). Those in the north west, the north, the midlands and London were over-represented, comprising 54 per cent of frequent attenders, although only 44 per cent of the sample lived in these regions. This offers tentative support for the notion that the working class in urbanised regions were the keenest cinema patrons, though the findings in the north east of England and to a lesser extent in Scotland

conflict with this and deserve more research (see ch.1. n.1). The Gallup survey of 1948,

calculated on a different basis and using different regional groupings, is in line with Moss and

Box's findings in showing a lower level of frequent attendance in southern England. The greatest

disparity is in cinema-going in Wales, where Moss and Box found fewer frequent attenders in

contrast to the Gallup figures. Without more detailed information about the sampling techniques

used, the anomaly is difficult to pursue.[26] The data given by H.E.Browning and A.A. Sorrell

(which includes children) shows a pattern of decreasing cinema-going from north to south of the

country, though the figures conceal marked differences between urban and rural areas.[27]


*(vii) Seat prices.* Only Box's 1946 survey casts any light on what adults paid for seats.[28] Her

findings are unsurprising. In general, the more often people went to the cinema, the less they paid

for their seats. More manual workers and the retired/unemployed were to be found in the cheaper

seats and more professional/managerial and clerical/distributive workers in the dearer ones. Seats

in the middle price band, defined by Box as 1s.6d. to 2s.2d., were most popular with all other

groups. Though high rates of entertainments duty inflated seat prices during and after the war,

the opportunity to opt for the cheapest seats was not taken by most people, indicating that

cinema-going was not a price-sensitive activity.[29] This need not preclude social stratification: the

circle with its higher prices was an obvious means of being literally above hoi polloi, while those

with enough money could take themselves off to the more select cinemas in town centres or the

affluent suburbs.[30]


**Adults' film-going habits**


Was cinema-going merely a habit, or did people seek out particular films or favourite stars?

Given a town with a range of cinemas from which to choose, the habit model implies a degree of

passive acceptance of what was provided, while the seeking-out model suggests that a process of

active discrimination was at work. Three surveys provide clues (appendix 1, table 5.11), though

the broadness of the questions asked of respondents makes arriving at conclusions difficult. On the basis of the results, most cinema-goers exercised discrimination, either by choosing between films or by going to the cinema only when they wanted to see a particular film. Box's 1946 survey is alone in providing results broken down by age (appendix 1, table 5.12). Her data, covering patrons who went to the cinema at least once a month, reveals marked differences, with 19 per cent of younger people going to the same cinema regularly compared with 31 per cent of those aged fifty-five and over. Though increasing age was associated with more staid cinema-going habits, a majority in all age groups exercised some choice. Nor was it necessarily the case that going further afield meant choosing from among a greater range of films or paying higher prices. On the basis of Coventry data, J.F. Hayes argues that city centre prices were not necessarily higher, while the city centre cinemas offered the advantage of screening the latest films. Once people patronised them, there was a running disincentive to relying on local cinemas which screened the same films a few weeks later.[31]

Discrimination may also be explored by considering how people selected films (appendix 1, table 5.13). The BFI and the *Daily Express* surveys include percentages of the respondents who admitted to being influenced by the sources. Other surveys give percentages of respondents who took note of media sources of information on films without necessarily being influenced by them. The difference between the two sets of figures can be considerable, with only 14 per cent of respondents admitting to being influenced by newspaper critics in the Mass-Observation survey, against 76 per cent who read the criticisms, but preferred to form their own judgment.[32] Quite how much influence critics wielded is impossible to measure, but a majority of cinema-goers sought information on films from the media, even if they were unwilling to admit to being influenced by it.

Only Box analysed regular cinema-goers by occupation. The results give a clue to the habits of regular cinema-goers by class (appendix 1, table 5.14). The small number of professional and managerial respondents in the sample means that their percentage figures have to be treated with caution, but as these occupational groups showed limited interest in the cinema, the relatively

high percentage only visiting it for particular films is not surprising. The pattern of cinema-going is similar across all occupational groups, with a majority of respondents making a choice between cinema programmes.[33] This pattern of making programme choices militates against the notion of traditional working-class life being bounded by the neighbourhood: almost half of manual workers chose between cinemas, which implies that they were willing to accept some travelling in their search for entertainment which suited them. There are two caveats. First, it is regrettable that Box's occupational classification omits the 'retired and unoccupied' category which she used earlier (see appendix 1, chart 5.3). Its inclusion would give a better indication than a broad age category of how retired people selected films. Secondly, cinema-goers in small towns might not have a choice of cinemas.[34] How they were expected to respond to the questions is not clear.

**Adults' film preferences**

A third of the surveys attempted to delineate the types of films which audiences preferred. The aim is praiseworthy, the results disappointing. One problem is how films should be classified by genre when one man's thriller is another man's comedy. This difficulty is compounded when each survey offers a slightly different range of genres, with 'miscellaneous' proving disconcertingly popular. As far as possible, the range of genres in the table has been standardised for comparative purposes. A second problem is the lack of information on how questions were couched and how they were interpreted by respondents, e.g. whether genres were chosen from a list or volunteered, whether ranked choices were used in computing the results, and whether respondents indicated what they wanted to see or what they actually saw. Thirdly, some surveys provide a ranking with no percentages, which gives no clue as to how much more popular one genre was than another. Finally, the emphasis on genre may be misleading: an avid fan of westerns might have queued to see *The Third Man* (Carol Reed, 1949) on the strength of its reputation in preference to seeing an inferior western for the second time. Quality and the

availability of films have to be taken into account.[35]

Ways of assessing the popularity of individual films will be considered in the next chapter. The genre choices should be taken for what they are: expressions of what topics interested audiences. They are presented in appendix 1, table 5.15, which gives the top three genres mentioned in each survey. For comparative purposes, the 491 British feature films released between 1945 and 1950 are classified by genre in appendix 1, table 5.16, the genres used being those provided by Denis Gifford.

Musicals merit a mention in all the 1930s surveys, but only in three of the eight surveys conducted after the war. Only 34 (7 per cent) of the post-war British releases were musicals, though this may indicate no more than that Hollywood with its greater resources made better musicals. Taking survey evidence into account, together with audience polls held by *Picturegoer*, the *Daily Mail* and the Granada circuit, and the fact that 19 of the 34 British musicals were released in 1945 and 1946, a dwindling interest in the genre is evident by 1950. One explanation is that females, who were the principal enthusiasts for the genre, formed a declining proportion of the audience, though a shift in taste cannot be ruled out.[36]

Thrillers and crime loom large in the preferences and constitute the largest category of British films made in the post-war years at 28 per cent. Landy notes that the preoccupation with disrupted family life, law enforcement, generational relationships, juvenile delinquency and poor 'social adjustment' was consonant with concerns expressed by law makers, sociologists and popular journalists at the time.[37] It might also be argued that whatever success the British crime film achieved was on back of Hollywood's film noir, *No Orchids for Miss Blandish*, (dir. St John L. Clowes, 1948) being a blatant example. Aside from overlooking the popularity of the thriller and crime genres in the 1930s, neither explanation accounts for why the genres should have been taken up with such alacrity by audiences in the first place. The public in the late 1940s might be expected to turn their backs on spivs, the black market and juvenile delinquency, but instead they paid to see the more unsavoury aspects of post-war life paraded on screen — as well as more of the working-class characters who peopled this world.[38] This was hardly escapism, though there

was one crucial difference between real life and make believe: at least on the screen, audiences had a chance to see criminals getting their just deserts.

Comedy lagged behind other genres, which is surprising given the way Ealing comedies have come to symbolise the post-war years.[39] In nothing else, this serves as a reminder that the initial reception of any cultural artefact has nothing to do with its subsequent reputation.[40] A partial explanation for comedy's poor showing is the lack of new cinematic comedians who could build up audience loyalty by creating a recognisable identity through a series of films. Formby's last film was *George in Civvy Street* (dir. Marcel Varnel), released in 1946. His demise as a film star may be attributed to the lessening quality of his films after his move from Ealing to Columbia, or to a style of comedy which was increasingly out of touch with the times.[41] Will Hay's last feature film was *My Learned Friend* (dirs Basil Dearden and Will Hay, 1943). Though a stroke cut short his career, his brand of humour, like that of Formby, was becoming dated by the late 1940s.[42] The nascent film careers of Tommy Hanley and Sid Field were not markedly successful and both men died prematurely. All that Britain could offer to rival the *Road* series of Bob Hope and Bing Crosby were Arthur Lucan's Old Mother Riley and the Mancunian films of Frank Randle. The popularity of these homegrown offerings will be examined in subsequent chapters. What might be noted here is that both were ignored by critics and both were produced outside the Rank/ABPC oligopoly, which put them a disadvantage when it came distribution. British comedy headed in a new direction with Frank Launder's *The Happiest Days of Your Life* in 1950, but this was hardly apparent as the new decade began.[43]

Only in Farr's 1939 survey do historical films or melodramas figure in the top three places. In part this is a matter of how films are categorised, but in view of the reappraisal of Gainsborough melodramas over recent years, their failure to rate highly in audience surveys is surprising and emphasises the need to assess popularity using the widest possible range of sources.[44]

Some genre categories are vague, none more so than ordinary life/human interest which gained popularity after the war. The three films ranked most highly by Granada patrons in the

1946 Bernstein questionnaire may be considered in this context. *The Way to the Stars* (Anthony Asquith, 1945), *The Seventh Veil* (dir. Compton Bennett, 1945) and *The Captive Heart* (dir. Basil Dearden, 1946), rated as outstanding by 73, 69 and 56 per cent of patrons respectively, all contain human interest in abundance, as well as being British.[45] As Bernstein's respondents gave drama as their favourite category, presumably these were the sort of films which they had in mind. Drama may thus be added to the portmanteau term ordinary life/human interest.

Realism is almost a *sine qua non* for films about ordinary people, *When the Wind Blows* (dir. Jimmy Murakami, 1987) being a maverick exception which points up the different nuances of 'ordinary people' and 'ordinary life' by presenting ordinary people in an extraordinary situation. Crime films in the 1940s teemed with ordinary people, so presumably respondents meant something more by 'ordinary life' when they put it in a separate category. There was an apparent desire by audiences to find in films a point of reference to their own lives, conceptualised in Ang's study of soap opera as an emphasis on psychological reality as opposed to external reality.[46] The distinction is at its clearest in verismo opera, *La Bohème* being a notable example, where recognisable emotions are portrayed though the form is inimical to external reality — dying consumptives do not sing arias. Psychological reality in a film implies emotional veracity. Characters' responses have to be believable, even if those involved include royalty — or Bette Davis — rather than ordinary people. Inevitably, external reality intrudes. Normally the story is set in the contemporary world, or at least within living memory, allowing the participants to be 'like us'. Contrasting two of David Lean's films of the 1940s illustrates this point: the contemporary *Brief Encounter* (1945) carries an emotional resonance lacking in the period piece *Madeleine* (1950). The distance afforded by the Victorian setting in the latter is one factor in allowing Lean to take a detached view of a crime of passion. Nor does ordinary life allow too many liberties to be taken with time, which puts Priestley's time plays in an anomalous position. Ordinary life implies if not real time, at least the illusion of real time, with events occurring in chronological order. An exception is *In Which We Serve* (dirs Noel Coward and David Lean, 1942), with its complex structure of flashbacks.

Whatever the symbolism of *The Seventh Veil*, it hardly portrays ordinary people, though it contains facets of ordinary life as audiences knew it: the setting is contemporary and the emotions have credibility. Ordinary life in *The Way to the Stars* and *The Captive Heart* is wartime life, with class distinctions transmuted into distinctions between officers and other ranks. In all three films, psychological reality is stressed at the expense of external reality.

The ordinary life/human interest/drama genre only received mention in post-war surveys. Although this could be interpreted as marking a change of taste amongst audiences, it also points to a change in the type of features being produced. With the defeat of Dunkirk and the civilian experience of bombing, a jingoistic approach to war was no longer possible. Elements of the documentary infiltrated wartime feature films, *San Demetrio London* (dir. Charles Frend, 1943) being a notable example. The documentary influence persisted with the coming of peace, notably in Ealing's films. Whether the emphasis on realism was consumer led or spearheaded by the industry is another question. All that can be said is that it was there.[47]

**The place of the cinema in adult leisure**

Comparing cinema-going with other activities is fraught with difficulty (appendix 1, table 5.17). It may be assessed either by the time devoted to each activity, or by preference. Both methods have virtues and defects. Comparing activities by preference allows them to be ranked in order of importance, but preference may be interpreted by respondents as an ideal which has little to do with how they really spend their time. If time is chosen, it may be measured by observation, or by each respondent keeping a diary. Though either method allows the cinema-going habits of different individuals to be compared quantitatively, the period chosen may be atypical, while the time spent on an activity gives no indication of how it is valued: cinema-going occupies less time than washing and household duties, but presumably such mundane matters hold less interest.[48] The radio presents a particular problem in this context. It might be left on as a constant accompaniment to other activities, while some programmes such as comedy shows are listened to

more intently. Measuring radio listening by time spent allows for no distinction.

Leslie Wilkins in his 1950 survey was assiduous enough to compare preferences with how time was spent both on the day prior to the interview and over the previous weekend. His conclusion, based on limited evidence, was that a preference for sport was emphasised at the expense of the cinema, with the latter being seen as a means of 'killing time'.[49]

Whichever method of comparing leisure choices is adopted, there are other difficulties. The categories used in some surveys are vague — quite what is included in 'social activity'? — while winter and summer leisure habits will differ (page 119). Comparisons between different age groups have limited value — it is hardly surprising that pensioners have different interests from adolescents — but as most of the surveys considered here focus on young people, this is less of a problem than it appears. The paucity of information about the leisure preferences of older age groups does constitute a limitation, however. It means that how a large sector of the population spent its leisure time remains shadowy. This is another topic deserving of further research while oral testimony is available.

What emerges from the table is that cinema-going had to vie with reading, dancing and sport for the public's time and money. Among alternatives to the cinema, young men were drawn to sport, while young women preferred reading and dancing. Although marketing terms such as diversification and tie-ins were not common currency, the underlying principles were in place.[50] The cinema industry sought to complement as well as to compete with other leisure pursuits. Sports fans could be lured into cinemas by newsreels of football, boxing or cricket.[51] Larger cinemas in town centres had ballrooms to attract dancers. Aside from the extent to which films like *Great Expectations* (dir. David Lean, 1946) encouraged the reading of established classics, condensed versions of popular films appeared weekly in *Picture Show*, while there was a ready market for novelisations.[52] The relationship between stage and film was equally symbiotic. West End stage successes were frequently filmed, but while plays such as *Dear Octopus*, *The Guinea Pig*, *The Chiltern Hundreds* and *No Room at the Inn* were doing the rounds of repertory theatres, managements could trade on audiences' knowledge of the films.[53]

Two major activities which deserve mention and which do not appear in the tables are gambling and drinking. Consumers' expenditure (£ million) in 1938 and 1949 gives an idea of the relative size of the markets, though changes over time are distorted by changes in taxation and in the cost of living:[54]

|          | 1938 | 1948 |
|----------|------|------|
| Cinema   | 42   | 109  |
| Alcohol  | 285  | 762  |
| Gambling | 381  | 650  |

In general, drinking and gambling were subjects which survey interviewers skirted over, or which respondents were coy about divulging.[55] Expenditure on gambling dropped back slightly after 1947, either because betting tax was imposed from 1948, or because wartime gratuities and savings were used up.[56] Gambling was regarded by Zweig as a hobby, given the diligence which went into studying form and filling in football pool coupons.[57] The culture of the pub was beloved by middle-aged men in traditional working-class communities — and by Mass-Observation observers — though Zweig detected its declining importance in the face of other leisure activities.[58] The cinema had little to offer in either sphere. Though sporting events could be screened (see page 137), the cinema could not compete with newspapers or the radio for speed in disseminating results, which was essential to the gambler. Nor were cinemas licensed to sell alcohol, though this was the custom in the theatre — the pub and the music hall had come from the same roots.[59] Why the cinema should have taken a different evolutionary path has not sparked the curiosity of researchers.

Though men and women went to the cinema with roughly equal frequency, there were gender differences in the use of spare time. A greater interest by women in the home-based activity of reading has already been noted (page 137). Another illustration of gender difference comes from Rich's 1949 study of leisure in the industrial suburb of Coseley on the fringes of Birmingham. Here, 62 per cent of married men's time in the cinema and theatre was in the company of their wives, while only 46 per cent of married women's time in the cinema was spent

with their husbands.[60] This was a traditional. working-class district. dominated by metal industries. where men's leisure was centred on the pub and the social club. Cinema-going by a married man was regarded as a concession to his wife. though the evidence is too fragmentary to establish whether this was widespread.[61]

## Children's cinema-going

In 1946, Box estimated that children of school age or younger made up about 21 per cent of the population and about 25 per cent of the total cinema audience. The cinema was attended at least once a week by 43 per cent of children.. By comparison, 69 per cent of the sixteen to nineteen age group and 32 per cent of older people attended with this frequency.[62] A comparable degree of enthusiasm is evident from all surveys of children (appendix 1. table 5.18). The term 'child' is sometimes interpreted broadly. while as an additional problem. it is not always clear whether visits to Saturday morning cinema clubs are included. The data provided by A.J. Jenkinson in 1946 and W.D. Wall in 1950 do not allow simple percentages to be calculated.[63] Both surveys are omitted from this table.

*(i) Cinema-going by the child population.* On the evidence of appendix 1. table 5.18. there was no decline in enthusiasm for the cinema after the war by the younger generation. though the estimates of between 38 and 100 per cent of children going to the cinema one or more times a week betray disparities between surveys which are more marked than in the case of adolescents (appendix 1. table 5.5).

*(ii) Non-attenders.* Scant information is available about children who did not go to cinemas. Estimates of their number vary from J.P. Mayer's nil to Box's 34 per cent (appendix 1. table 5.18). Not surprisingly. non-attenders disappear from surveys on cinema-going at an early stage. leaving the reasons for their non-attendance unexplored. Religious or ethical objections by

parents were likely in some cases, though the association between magic lantern shows and films meant that even parents with strong religious beliefs did not necessarily stop their children from going to the cinema.[64] There were also some young people who displayed no great interest in the cinema: one interviewee preferred playing cards.[65]

*(iii) Children's cinema-going by age.* Age was the major variable in determining frequency of cinema-going by adults. Comparable data for schoolchildren is presented in appendix 1, table 5.19. As with adults, the variety of age groupings makes comparison difficult, though there is general agreement that frequency of cinema-going increased till secondary school age; after that, the surveys yield contradictory findings.

*(iv) Children's cinema-going by sex.* Boys' and girls' cinema-going is summarised in appendix 1, table 5.20. The range of estimates for boys' attendance is 28 to 89 per cent, while for girls the range is 19 to 87 per cent. Once again, the lack of consensus makes conclusions difficult.

*(v) Mothers' estimates of children's cinema-going.* Consensus is not the first word which comes to mind when mothers' estimates of how often their offspring went to the cinema are compared with the children's own answers. In Joy Ward's 1947 survey, mothers estimated that 18 per cent of boys and 12 per cent of girls aged between eleven and fifteen attended more than once a week; the children's own figures were 30 and 25 per cent respectively. Whether the disparity held good among younger age groups is not revealed, but it calls into question the reliability of data on children in Moss and Box's 1943 survey and that of Box in 1946, in both of which the mothers were interviewed rather than the children.[66] Some of the mothers' reportage in these two surveys cannot be summarily dismissed, however: where the mothers only had elementary education, 50 per cent of children went to the cinema one or more times a week compared with 28 per cent of children whose mothers went on to secondary or technical education. Of mothers in the lower economic group, 22 per cent left their children free to see whatever they wanted, compared with

18 per cent of mothers in the middle economic group and 4 per cent in the higher economic group.[67] A genuine difference of attitudes with a class dimension appears to exist in these cases.

Children's own estimates of cinema attendance cannot be accepted uncritically. Wilkins attempted to test the accuracy of the answers given by adolescents, as did Barbara Kesterton in her study of schoolchildren in West Bromwich. After comparing pupils' estimates with their attendance during the previous two weeks, Kesterton came to the opposite conclusion to Wilkins: respondents exaggerated their customary frequency of attendance.[68] Other researchers avoided the topic altogether.

*(vi) Cinema-going and the school.* The measure which attracted most attention in considering children's cinema-going was the type of school attended (appendix 1, table 5.21). Some surveys were conducted prior to the implementation of the 1944 Education Act, so for comparative purposes, secondary schools are taken as analogous to grammar schools under the reorganised education system of 1945, while senior schools are equated with secondary modern schools.

Estimates of how many grammar school pupils attended the cinema one or more times a week range from 19 to 84 per cent; for secondary modern pupils, the range is 35 to 98 per cent. Notwithstanding these disparities, all the surveys show more frequent attenders among the secondary modern pupils, though the margin varies from 8 to 54 per cent.

Aside from the administrative hiatus already noted, the difficulty in assessing findings associated with the type of school is that school and social class are elided: grammar school education and being middle class become synonymous. Basil Bernstein, for example, offers a criterion for being middle class as having a father with grammar school education.[69] The association between the type of school attended and social class need not be disputed, but the exceptions should be recognised. Working-class children also attended grammar schools and in doing so assimilated middle-class values, as the biographies of the Richard Hoggarts of this world testify. Less publicised is the fate of working-class children who went to grammar school and who retained working-class values.[70] Completely neglected are the fortunes of middle-class

children who found themselves placed in secondary modern schools.

If social class and type of school are equated, ascribing to social class the differences in cinema-going between pupils in the two types of schools becomes meaningless. Striving for a quantifiable measure of class is laudable — but not if the findings dwindle into tautology. There is a need to go beyond the generalisations. Aside from innate intelligence or inculcated values, there are pragmatic reasons why grammar school pupils attended the cinema less often, such as the increased time spent travelling to and from school, the greater burden of homework and the competing attractions of school societies, though inevitably these factors have class implications.[71] Equally, a working-class grammar school pupil might be accorded greater freedom by parents who saw this as 'only natural' for someone already marked out for higher status.[72]

One way of distinguishing between internalised values and pragmatic considerations is to compare the number of films pupils saw with those they desired to see. The diligent researcher who did this was J. Struthers, who in the 1930s studied pupils in a secondary school which had societies and compulsory homework. Boys saw an average of 12 films over a given period (not specified) and still desired to see 11.9, while girls saw an average of 9.2 films and desired to see a further 11.4.[73] This would suggest that demands upon time limited cinema-going, though the evidence must be treated cautiously. A tempting hypothesis is that older pupils wished to broaden their social lives beyond the confines of school by going to the cinema more often. However, the unsatisfied demand came primarily from the first form, while in the fifth form, it shrank to half the first form level.[74] Whether older pupils were being more realistic or whether they simply preferred other activities was not pursued.

*(vii) Children's cinema-going by class.* A clearer idea of the role of class in children's cinema-going should be provided by allocating children to economic groups as determined by the income of the head of each household. Unfortunately only four surveys analyse the data in this way (appendix 1, table 5.22), with one of these dating from wartime (Moss and Box, 1943), one

giving little detail (Box, 1946), and two being the work of the same researcher (Ward, 1948 and 1949). As in the case of adults, the varying income thresholds selected by the researchers do not make for ease of comparison — a weakness compounded by differences in the choice of age groupings. Because numbers in the higher income groups are small, middle and higher income groups are combined in the table.

There is little difference between the income groups in the number of children never going to the cinema. Of those attending once a week, results are equivocal. Among more frequent attenders, there is agreement that children from the lower economic class predominated by a margin of between 3 and 11 per cent. Compared with the disparity in cinema attendance between grammar school pupils and those in secondary modern schools, the differences are small.

*(viii) Adult cinema-going and schooling.* Another clue as to how the values of the school were internalised comes from examining the cinema-going of the working population in terms of their education. The two surveys yielding comparable data both reveal minimal differences between those who went to secondary schools and those who ended their formal education at elementary school (appendix 1, table 5.23). In his 1950 survey of adolescents, Wilkins was able to take account of the reorganisation of secondary education by comparing former pupils of grammar schools with those of secondary modern schools. From a sample of 1,390 civilian male adolescents, those who had attended grammar school went to the cinema 1.29 times a week compared with 1.73 times for former secondary modern pupils. Among 451 female adolescents, the comparable figures were 1.07 and 1.53 times per week.[75] Here, the type of school does provide a predictor of cinema-going in later life, though the absence of comparable studies means that there is no opportunity to replicate Wilkins' findings.

*(ix) Children's cinema-going by region.* Because many of the studies are restricted in their geographical scope, little can be said about regional differences in cinema-going by children. Ward provides a crude breakdown, dividing Great Britain into four regions — the north of

England, the midlands and Wales, south-east England (including London), and Scotland. By her data, Scottish children were the most frequent attenders, with 18 per cent attending more than once a week compared with 7 per cent in south-east England, the other two regions coming in at 11 per cent. In south-east England, 24 per cent of children never went to the cinema compared with 16 to 18 per cent elsewhere.[76] The enthusiasm shown by Scottish children may account for the region's top placing in Browning and Sorrell's data of admissions per person, which makes no differentiation between adults and children (see appendix 1, table 5.10).

**Children's film preferences**

Any attempt to analyse children's film choices (appendix 1, table 5.24) comes up against the same problems encountered in examining the film choices of adults (page 132), with the added complications that relatively small differences in age may have a profound effect on taste, while the type of secondary school attended needs to be taken into account. As in the case of adults, genres are standardised as far as possible.

Among boys, crime headed the list of preferences, followed in rank order by thrillers, comedies, adventure stories, animal films, war films, and westerns. Amongst girls, preferences were for musicals, romance, thrillers and crime, and comedies, with adventure stories, animal films and dramas sharing equal place below the favourites. The results hardly confound expectations. Boys preferred action films spiced with danger or violence. Girls displayed less enthusiasm for these attributes, though they shared an interest in thrillers and crime films. Westerns were popular with younger children, particularly boys, whilst girls in their teens turned to romance. Costume dramas do not figure in the rankings, though in some cases they may be subsumed under the heading of 'romances'. The one marked difference from the adult lists, aside from westerns, is the liking for animal films found amongst children of both sexes. This allowed for some skilful mixing of genres: *My Friend Flicka* (dir. Harold Schuster, US release 1943) contrived to put a horse and a boy in a setting which was worthy of a western. The formula was

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successful enough to repeat in *Thunderhead, Son of Flicka* (dir. Louis King, US release 1945). The popularity of the earlier film and of the *Lassie* series was noted by Mayer.[77] This profitable seam was not mined by British producers.

Factors influencing the choice of film by children and adolescents are presented in appendix 1, table 5.25. Though a wide range of influences could be brought to bear on the choice of film, the reliance on trailers betrays a greater tendency among children than among adults to return to the same cinema. This might be a matter of economics: admission to the local cinema was cheap, with none of the travelling costs incurred in venturing into town centres. It might also be the consequence of parental strictures against straying too far from home. A further option was put forward by Joan Harley in the 1930s: 'quite a number of girls will see the same film twice rather than go to a less familiar cinema where they do not know the people who go'.[78] Here, the film is secondary to the social aspect of cinema-going — something which will be returned to later in this chapter.

The other noteworthy feature of the table is the relatively low place accorded to fan magazines in making film choices. Magazines may have been used as a way of following stars rather than of selecting films — the sources are silent on this point — but another possibility is that the emphasis accorded by some researchers to film magazines may be misplaced.[79]

Adults opted for middle price seats. The scant evidence available on children's attendance suggests that they did the same. In Kesterton's 1948 West Bromwich study, over half of children paid 1s.0d. to 1s.6d., with girls paying more than boys and grammar school pupils paying more than other children. This is the same as the figure cited by Wall and accords with Ward's national average of 1s.0½d.[80]

**Children's leisure activities**

Amongst a range of leisure activities, the cinema rarely assumes first place (appendix 1, table 5.26), having to compete with reading and sport. As in the case of adults, only activities in which

there was an element of choice are considered. The result is little different from the pattern found amongst adults (appendix 1, table 5.17), except that dancing was more popular among children. This enthusiasm is difficult to evaluate. Dancing assumes increasing importance among girls in the final school years and in the first years of work, so that where wider age bands are used, it fails to achieve a high rating. The burgeoning interest in dance from the age of thirteen or fourteen shows up clearly when data is presented graphically.[81]

One interpretation of gender differences in the survey evidence on leisure interests is that boys and girls were adopting different perspectives. To the question 'What do you most like about life today?', the boys in John Atkins' 1947 study placed sport in first place, followed by free time. Pictures and shows came sixth. By contrast, girls put the home circle first, followed (somewhat virtuously) by work, with free time, pictures and shows in third place.[82] Boys adopted an outward-looking perspective, echoing the findings of James and Moore in 1940 that on starting work, boys were released from domestic duties and gave up listening to the radio, both activities being seen as too bound up with the home.[83] By focusing more on the home and relationships within the home, girls signalled their acceptance of a set of values oriented around marriage and raising a family. Where mother and daughter shared an interest in films, this served to cement domestic bonds.[84] The expectation is that a home-based perspective would be reflected in their film preferences, but genre is too crude a measure for detecting this. An alternative possibility is that the element of fantasy in films offered a respite from what must have seemed an inevitable destiny.

The high place accorded to reading deserves comment, given that it is an individual rather than a social activity. There may have been an element of the children supplying the expected answer, so corroborative evidence is needed. Membership of public libraries should provide a quantifiable measure of enthusiasm for reading (appendix 1, table 5.27), but no pattern is discernable. Working-class people, particularly children, could find public libraries intimidating — an attitude which lingered beyond the 1940s — while there were alternatives in school libraries and the user-friendly tuppenny libraries conveniently located in newsagents and corner

shops (library usage at all ages decreased sharply if the library was not within walking distance).[85] Nor should it be assumed that reading implied reading books: comics and 'bloods' such as *Wizard* and *Hotspur* loomed large in children's literary tastes, while tuppenny libraries only stocked light fiction.[86] Such reading material offered familiar characters and plenty of action without too much preliminary scene-setting — the same qualities found in B westerns and in film serials such as the *Superman* series. Where reading preferences can be discerned, they seem remarkably similar to film preferences (appendix 1, table 5.28), with adventure stories, thrillers and crime stories proving popular. For girls, romance and domestic stories show up well. The only surprise is that school stories so rarely found their way onto film, though their fall from favour in the mid teens meant that their box-office potential was limited.

**Children and cinema-going — a summary**

As with adults, age was an important determinant of children's cinema-going, though in this case frequency of attendance increased with age as the child gained more independence, more friends and a greater appreciation of what the cinema had to offer. Enthusiasm for the cinema reached its peak in adolescence. There is little evidence that the transition into work greatly influenced this, nor that there were marked differences between the cinema-going of boys and girls.

The type of secondary school and its effect on cinema-going attracted much interest at the time — an understandable response when the education system was undergoing reorganisation. A fundamental question is what differences in leisure use by type of school attended signify: variations in innate ability, differences in attitudes inculcated by the school, differences in attitudes derived from home influences, or simply a difference in opportunity and time available. All but the first might be viewed as markers of class. If the type of school was implicated in differences in cinema-going, its role was not necessarily causal. Unfortunately the seductive power of the eleven-plus examination, predicated upon measurable differences in innate ability and/or aptitude, largely preempted discussion. Greater frequency of cinema-going by secondary

modern pupils only served to confirm their lower ability.

Cinema-going has to be placed amongst a range of cultural and leisure activities which influenced children. It was by no means dominant. It could interact with other activities, colouring reading choices and tapping into children's interest in animals. The disciplines and opportunities of grammar school reinforced, or (in the case of working-class children) introduced middle-class values, though how this affected leisure use or the choice of films seen during the school years or subsequently is difficult to evaluate from the available data. Boys and girls displayed predictable differences in their film preferences, this being most noticeable among older children.


## The cinema as social centre


Writing in the early 1960s, Penelope Houston noted that 'pictures' meant a double feature and a choc-ice, though the term was losing ground to 'film'.[87] This hints at the experience of cinema-going being something more than the viewing of a film. It can be considered as a social activity comparable to dancing or sport.

Jephcott describes a Nottingham cinema as a 'typical children and poor mothers' picture palace, with hard and ricketty seats and a serial guaranteed to be of the *Jungle Girl* brand. It has a noisy, enthusiastic audience who wander about and are liable to throw things at each other in a matey way'.[88] Her study was made in the early 1950s, though the description could have been penned a generation earlier. She had a soul mate in Dr B.R. Wilson, who spoke at an NUT conference in 1960:

> I have spent a number of Sunday evenings in cinemas in rough sections of Leeds and if you think there is any individual choice among the young people, I think you are grossly mistaken. There is only a mass response. If you think they wait for the moral at the end of the film, again, you are even more mistaken. They watch the violence and in between they move around with their girlfriends in a sort of game of musical chairs while the dull bits are on.[89]

Jephcott's description of the seats is hardly surprising given the lack of investment in

cinemas since pre-war days — a consequence of the shortage of labour and materials, the priority given to house building and the squeeze on profits brought about by entertainments duty.[90] The comments of Jephcott and Wilson on the patrons are in opposition to the views of Nicholas Hiley, who argues that in the 1930s there was a deliberate attempt by managers to move their cinemas up-market, even if this meant alienating sections of the audience.[91] If true, this attempt may have been abandoned in post-war years. Hiley's view need not be accepted unreservedly, however. Aside from a lack of evidence of disaffected audiences, it overestimates the power accorded to managers, which was often limited to day-to-day administration and to publicising the films they were given.[92] More seriously, Hiley takes no account of location. A cinema situated in a solidly working-class area had little to offer middle-class patrons from further afield.[93] Many cinemas in this situation were buoyed up by the wartime and post-war cinema boom, enabling them to survive with a minimum of investment until television began luring away working-class audiences in the 1950s and innovations such as the wide screen had to be tried.

Craig Shafer portrays the local cinema in the 1930s as being close to the community, with the manager or owner becoming involved in local charities and being brought gifts by audiences.[94] While this degree of closeness may be atypical and may have been altered by the war, even circuit cinemas could function as social centres, most obviously by offering Saturday morning cinema clubs for children and by providing cafes, restaurants and ballrooms for older patrons. For adolescents, Paul Corrigan's comments on football are apposite to cinema-going: rather than being, like education, a means to an end, it provided a total experience. Money spent on a cinema ticket bought freedom. Though this was a commercial contract, both sides respected each other's autonomy. Providing the bounds were respected — the management screened an entertaining film while patrons refrained from wrecking the seats — adolescents could create their own structure of activity in a way which was not possible in youth organisations.[95] Grammar school pupils were by definition being socialised into middle-class values; if the process was successful, the immediate gratification of the Corrigan's 'total experience' may have

come less naturally. Once again it was working-class grammar school pupils who fell between two camps. On the evidence of Brown's West Ham study, at weekends this group engaged in non-cultural, non-serious pursuits. They went to the cinema more often than their middle-class compatriots, in part because there were few alternatives, but also as an escape from crowded housing.[96] This begs the question whether overcrowded housing and the attendant noise were problems for those who grew up with them, or, as Raymond Williams suggests, just for middle-class observers.[97]

Amongst all age groups, especially adolescents, Saturday evening was the main occasion for visiting the cinema.[98] Working on Saturday morning was normal for manual workers and many clerical workers until the 1960s. This made Saturday evening the only occasion when getting up for work in the morning was not a constraint. For girls not working in shops, Saturday afternoon also provided an opportunity for shopping and for the elaborate ritual of getting ready to go out for the evening.[99] This attention to appearance was more than a matter of vanity. As Jephcott puts it, for a poor girl with a job lacking in career prospects, her personal appearance was her stock-in-trade.[100] Saturday was also conveniently close to pay day — normally Thursday, Friday or Saturday — which generally meant that there was enough money available for having a good time.

For all adolescents, the cinema provided an opportunity for encounters with the opposite sex:

> A typical case . . . was that of two Modern boys who wrote that they had gone to the pictures together and spent some while waiting about outside before entering the show. 'Finally', they said, 'we entered and noticed two nice girls who were waving to us. We called them over and sat by them'. We are not told what happened after this, but when they came out of the show, the same waiting about occurred, while they chatted to the girls for twenty or twenty-five minutes before going home.[101]

Here, the social aspect of cinema-going is emphasised ( the title of the film is never mentioned). A poor film had its compensations: it proved less of a distraction from more intimate activities in the back of the stalls, though the fury of other patrons might have curbed passions.[102] If a relationship progressed to courting, the cinema was an obvious place to go. The reminiscences

collected by Yorkshire Art Circus attest to this, though the absence of transcripts makes it difficult to know how questions were couched: this aspect of cinema-going may have remained vivid in the memory simply because it was important early in the relationship with the spouse rather than because of its frequency.[103] Without prompting, my interviewees never mentioned the role the cinema played in their courting days. All-male or all-girl groupings in the cinema were usual in at least some adolescent sub-cultures until the age of about sixteen.[104] The film reinforced group identity by providing a topic of conversation the following day — not only the plot, but the values being espoused.[105] The corollary is that not seeing popular films isolated the individual from the group, though no researcher saw fit to test this.

Several references to comfort are a clue that the quality of the film was not the only criterion for choosing one cinema rather than another.[106] This emphasises the need to see cinema-going as a total experience, comprising not merely the main film, but the second feature, the trailers, the newsreel and the ambiance of the cinema. Because the latter was both taken for granted and difficult to define; it was not easily captured in surveys. One approach is to consider what might have influenced the choice of cinema by a boy seeking to impress a new girlfriend. A spacious foyer offered a comfortable and warm waiting area, the carpet providing a touch of luxury in an age before homes had fitted carpets. Rowdiness was not desirable on such an evening, which made an efficient management a prerequisite — providing efficiency did not extend to discouraging back-row activities. An organ solo during the interval might enhance the sense of occasion. The modernity and good sightlines of a 1930s super-cinema were preferable to the faded glories of a converted music hall.[107] City centre cinemas, and particularly West End cinemas, were able to offer an experience which older, local cinemas could not emulate.[108]

The opulence of city centre cinemas could be counter-productive. A commentator in 1937 noted of an audience in a local cinema that 'Some are people from small provincial towns and villages who find the less luxurious cinema more like home.'[109] A more ambivalent view comes with hindsight: 'Visits to them [centrally-located cinemas] were disturbing as well as a special treat. They aroused feelings of discontent with, even contempt for, the smaller, humbler suburban

cinemas which would not show the latest films until weeks, even months after they had been shown in the city.[110] Attitudes rather than age per se influenced the choice of cinema, though the two are inextricably linked. The local cinema offered the comfortingly familiar for those who wanted it. Increasingly, adolescents did not.

Cinema-going was an accumulation of experiences, often hardly noticed at the time, but brought vividly to mind in Proustian fashion by some incidental detail. For John Sutherland, tobacco smoke curling in the beam from the projector epitomises his childhood memories.[111] The memory which lingers for me from childhood cinema-going in the 1950s is the distinctiveness of each cinema. This was not only a matter of lighting and decor. You knew where you were by the design of the usherettes' torches. Each circuit seemed to have its pattern, tantalisingly different from anything available in shops. Sometimes even the ice cream was distinctive — the Essoldo circuit had a monopoly on Eldorado ice cream, the grittiness of ice particles betraying the haste of its manufacture.

Smells can evoke the experience of cinema-going.[112] Whenever the door to the gentlemen's toilets was opened, disinfectant wafted through the auditorium, mingling with stale tobacco smoke and the dust disturbed from ageing, plush seats. On rainy days, these smells were overwhelmed by an odour reminiscent of wet dogs emanating from countless steaming raincoats. These sensory trifles often survive better than memories of the films.

Cinema-going may have been a habit, but it was a habit sustained because it was enjoyable, or people would hardly have queued without complaint for an hour or more in the rain.[113] As Mass-Observation put it: 'The compulsive element is a real factor in Saturday night pleasure. People quite often feel restless and listless if they don't go out on Saturday — not because they've nothing to do at home, but because they feel they've somehow missed the bus by staying home.'[114] But this applied to younger people. After poring over the football results and shrugging off dreams of fortunes so nearly won, their seniors were just as likely to spend Saturday evening at home, listening to *Music Hall* on the radio, while in more traditional communities the men retreated to the pub or the allotment, as they had done before the war.[115] There was also room for

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mavericks like Jack Rosenthal, who was living in Colne just after the war: 'I often took a perverse pleasure in not going out on a Saturday night just because everybody else did. I thought this was pretty Bohemian. Instead, I stayed in and listened to *Saturday Night Theatre* on the wireless.'[116]

## Surveys and cinema audiences reviewed

It is easy to settle for the notion that the post-war years were a boom period for British cinema. More accurately, there was a boom in entertainments, with spectator sports and dancing also gaining from the combination of high earnings, increased leisure time and a lack of alternatives.

Amongst the surveys considered, Box's 1946 work is notable for its detail and for the transparency of its methodology.[117] These factors, allied to easy accessibility, make it a convenient source for characterising the post-war audience.[118] Aside from the questionable procedure of relying on one source — a source which is not beyond criticism — this ignores the array of other survey material which is available. The quality may vary, but some points of consensus emerge:

- The major predictor of cinema-going habits was age, with attendance peaking during adolescence. Amongst regular cinema-goers, however, there was a hard core of older people.

- The type of secondary school attended influenced the frequency of cinema-going both at the time and in later life, with grammar school pupils going to the cinema less often than secondary modern pupils.

- Overall, there was little difference in the attendance rates of males and females.

- A higher than expected proportion of both non-attenders and frequent attenders came from the lower economic group.

- Film tastes showed gender differences, with males preferring films emphasising action and excitement, and showing little taste for the romantic films which were more popular

with females.

- The cinema had to compete with other interests, notably sport and reading.

- Though cinema-going was a habit, most patrons exercised discrimination in their programme choices.

These findings hardly overturn accepted notions about audiences — writing of American audiences in 1947, Paul Lazarsfeld noted the declining interest in the cinema with age.[119] What the surveys do provide is a quantifiable basis, however imperfect, from which to explore post-war cinema-going in greater detail. They also help to overcome a deficiency which may afflict other sources: the ubiquity of cinema-going meant that it could be taken for granted unless details were specifically requested.[120]

A disturbing feature of the surveys is their lack of consistency. The selection of specialised groups such as Scottish housewives accounts for some of the variation. Other reasons are sampling error and seasonal variation. There is a further possibility: cinema-going habits may have been more varied than is generally supposed, either by location, or by social grouping. This calls into question the very notion of a common working-class culture.[121]

Tony Bennett has been castigated for viewing Blackpool as 'the expression of a distinctively regional, anti-metropolitan alternative popular culture', the problem being his 'cavalier disregard for what his sources are actually saying'.[122] Whatever Bennett's methodological sins, he has a point. It is still too easy to slip into a monolithic and London-centred view of culture when national newspapers review mainly London first nights and column inches are devoted to foreign language films which are rarely seen outside the West End. Leaving aside the issue of quality, screening the same film in cinemas from Blackpool to Bognor might be expected to lead to a uniformity of culture, with the attendant blandness so disliked by cultural critics such as Dwight Macdonald.[123] This is to dismiss audiences as passive recipients, which is misleading. As Stam puts it, 'It is the reader or spectator, in short, who transforms cardboard miniatures into imposing towers, who turns verbal representations into a novel or filmic images into a "story".[124] The cinema audience constructs a story from the common pool of cultural

experience and in turn the experience of watching the film enriches that pool, however marginally. The patrons in Blackpool and Bognor may see the same film, but drawing on different cultural traditions means that they come away from the cinema with different stories. This approach, too, leads to a cultural plurality, though it may go beyond what Bennett had in mind.

Some questions remain. Could the ideal type of working class community delineated in chapter four be a chimera? Miners in a Derbyshire village and factory workers in Lambeth might share working-class status when viewed with the perspective of a middle-class professional, but this need not imply a common culture.[125] So long as the ideal type is used as a means of characterising similarities rather than of holding together dissimilarities, the concept has value. Accepting this has methodological implications. Delineating fine cultural distinctions between communities requires ethological studies with a level of detail which is beyond reach fifty years on.

Was the traditional working-class culture already an outdated phenomenon by the 1940s? It should be borne in mind that the facets of working-class life delineated in chapter four are drawn from studies of post-war communities. But, as implied in that chapter, were these merely extreme instances? Was there a cultural lag, with communities evolving at different speeds through their unique historical circumstances, whilst subject to similar political and commercial pressures? It seems reasonable to posit that the shared class position of the Derbyshire miner and the Lambeth factory worker will result in common features within their cultures which are not shared by the banker in Woking. One instance may be a shared taste in films. Differences in film preferences can be discerned and are measurable, as John Sedgwick's pioneering work on cinema-going in the 1930s demonstrates.[126] One way of pointing up cultural differences a decade later and after the upheaval of a world war is to consider whether there was a distinctively class-based taste in film programmes. Though surveys reveal something about audiences in the late 1940s, they give no clue to which films were popular. It is difficult to place films in their social context without knowing how widely they were seen and by whom. The judgements in trade journals may be

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accurate, but they are not quantifiable and not specific to any one class. They also require

corroboration. With these points in mind, a case study of what was screened in two areas forms

the basis of the next chapter.

## Notes

1. An alternative view is that the coming of sound led to an expansion in cinema size rather than
an increase in audiences. Nicholas Hiley, '"Let's go to the pictures" The British cinema audience
in the 1920s and 1930s', *Journal of Popular British Cinema (Audiences and reception in
Britain* issue) 1999, no.2, 43.

2. See John Spraos, *The decline of the cinema: an economist's report,* London: Allen & Unwin,
1962.

3. The two studies referred to are J.B. Barclay, *Edinburgh report on junior cinema clubs,*
Glasgow: Scottish Educational Film Association, 1951; id. *Viewing tastes of adolescents in
cinema and television,* [Edinburgh]: Scottish Educational Film Association and Scottish Film
Council, 1961.

4. Sidney Bernstein, 'The Bernstein Film Questionnaire', 1937 (BFI Library); id. *The Bernstein
film questionnaire 1946-7.* London: [Granada Theatres], 1947.

5. Allen Eyles, *The Granada theatres,* London: BFI, 1998.

6. For examples of teachers' negative attitudes, see Middlesbrough Head Teachers Association,
*Children and the cinema: report of an investigation carried out in Middlesbrough in June
1946,* [Middlesbrough: Middlesbrough Head Teachers' Association, 1946], 10 and 11. For a
more positive assessment, albeit at second hand, see Richard Ford, *Children in the cinema,*
Allan & Unwin, 1939, 193.
    General problems in conducting surveys are considered in Edward A. Suchman, 'An analysis
of bias in survey research', *Public Opinion Quarterly,* spring 1962, vol.26, no.1, 102-11.

7. The surveys included are: *Daily Express,* 15 February 1946; Kathleen Box, *The cinema and
the public: an enquiry into cinema-going habits and expenditure,* Social Survey NS 106, 1946;
M-O A: FR 2467 'Saturday evening', April 1947; Gallup surveys 169, 1948, and 174, 1948
(BFI Library); Bertram Hutchinson, *Willesden and the new towns,* Social Survey NS 88,
[1948]; M.A. Abrams (director) *Hulton readership survey,* London: Hulton Press, 1947-50; J.F.
Hayes, 'Convenience and selectivity, and the planning of neighbourhood units', in 'Coventry
Sociological Survey', 1953, table 12 (Coventry City Libraries); George H. Gallup (gen.ed.) *The
Gallup international opinion polls: Great Britain 1937-1975,* vol.1: 1937-1964, New York:
Random House, 1976, 161-2 and 214.
    A survey in which everybody goes to the cinema is suspect. For this reason the Mass-
Observation poll reported in *Kinematograph Weekly,* 20 December 1945, 71-2, is excluded.
Though the proportion of the population claimed by Mass-Observation as going to the cinema
frequently is higher than in other studies, the difference between weekly cinema-goers and those
going more often is consistent with other studies at 8 per cent.

8. British Film Producers' Association. 'The film industry statistical digest'. no.1. 1954. 9. The 1945 and 1949 figures are based on an estimate supplied by H.M. Customs and Excise. the 1950 figure being an actual figure supplied by Statistics Division. Board of Trade.

9. Louis Moss and Kathleen Box. *The cinema audience*. Wartime Social Survey NS 37b. 1943: Box. op.cit. (ch.5. n.7); Gallup surveys 169 and 174. 1948 (BFI Library); Geoffrey Browne. *Patterns of British life: a study of certain aspects of the British people at home. at work. and at play. and a compilation of some relevant statistics*. London: Hulton Press. 1950. 87. For other Hulton data see Abrams. op.cit. (ch.5. n.7).

10. A cost-of-living index is provided by George Sayer Bain. Robert Bacon and John Pimlott. 'The labour force'. in A.H. Halsey (ed.) *Trends in British society since 1900: a guide to the changing social structure of Britain*. Basingstoke. Hants.. and London: Macmillan. 1972. table 4.11. Using these figures. and taking the cost of living as £5 in 1943. this gives a figure of £5.46 for 1946 and £6.34 for 1949.

11. Moss and Box. op.cit. (ch.5. n.9) table 8.

12. Box. op. cit. (ch.5. n.7) table 5. One solution is to apportion these residual groups among the occupational groupings. but this risks introducing a further source of distortion.

13. By Moss and Box. op.cit. (ch.5. n.9) table 8. 59 per cent of the professional and managerial group went to the cinema less than once a week compared with a mean of 38 per cent for all groups. By Box. op.cit. (ch.5. n.7) table 5. the percentage is 55 against a mean of 41. The percentages of infrequent attenders amongst this group were higher than for any other occupational grouping in both studies..Unlike Box in 1946. Moss and Box in 1943 categorise clerical workers separately As this group were among the most frequent attenders. a simple manual/non-manual distinction between frequent and infrequent attenders becomes untenable

14. The term 'women's film' is contentious. but female consumers constituted a significant consumer group to be wooed:
> The [Hollywood] studios conducted gender-differentiated surveys to discover what it was that women (supposedly) wanted to see. Based on the results. a set of criteria was developed for attracting women to the movies: it was concluded that women favoured female stars over male. and preferred. in order of preference. serious dramas. love stories. and musicals. Furthermore. women were said to want 'good character development'. and stories with 'human interest'. In one sense. the woman's film can be viewed as the attempt to cover as much of this territory as possible.

Maria Laplace. 'Producing and consuming the woman's film: discursive struggle in *Now. Voyager'*. in Christine Gledhill (ed.) *Home is where the heart is: studies in melodrama and the woman's film*. London: BFI. 1987. 138-9.

15. 41 per cent of men and 40 per cent of women were in Box's infrequent attender category. Box. op.cit. (ch.5. n.7) table 1.

16. Demobilisation was still taking place early in 1947. with over a quarter of a million men and women being demobilised monthly from January to May 1946. Part of Box's survey took place in March 1946. By June 1947. the strength of the armed forces stood at 1.291.000. compared with 5.090.000 in mid-1945. Barry Turner and Tony Rennell. *When daddy came home: how family life changed forever in 1945*. London: Hutchinson. 1995. 231-2: *Keesing's contemporary archives*. vol.6. 1946-48. 8811D. 6-13 September 1947.
  A particular problem of Box's 1946 study is that respondents were asked 'How often do you go to the cinema at this time of year?' They might have given different answers if asked 'How often do you go to the cinema now?' i.e. not referring by implication to March in 1945 or in other

17. Moss and Box, op.cit (ch.5, n.9) table 5; Gallup survey 169, 5 July 1948 (BFI Library). The latter makes no mention of widowed respondents.

18. Doris Rich, 'Social relationships in leisure time: a study of adult behaviour in a Black Country community', PhD thesis, University of Birmingham, 1951, 69 and 71.

19. B. Seebohm Rowntree and G.R. Lavers, *English life and leisure: a social study*, London: Longmans, Green, 1951, 48, 97 and 101; Dennis Chapman, *The location of dwellings in Scottish towns: an inquiry into some of the factors relevant to the planning of new urban communities made for the Department of Health for Scotland*, Wartime Social Survey NS 34, 1943, 25.

Having a baby was not necessarily a bar to cinema-going. Denis Norden recalls working at the Troxy, Commercial Road, Stepney, when the front row was occupied by women breast-feeding their babies. The date is not given, though it was probably the late 1930s. Margaret O'Brien and Allen Eyles (eds.) *Enter the dream house: memories of cinemas in south London from the twenties to the sixties*, London: BFI, Museum of the Moving Image, 1993, 40.

20. Gallup survey 169, 5 July 1948 (BFI Library).

21. For data on income and age, see John Westergaard and Henrietta Rester, *Class in a capitalist society: a study of contemporary Britain*, London: Heinemann, 1975, 81.

22. Tentative support for this view comes from Moss and Box who note in their 1943 study that in towns with a population of over 50,000, cinema enthusiasts were over-represented. Moss and Box, op.cit. (ch.5, n.9) table 17.

23. For a breakdown of the cinema audience see Moss and Box, op.cit. (ch.5, n.9) 17-21; Box, op.cit. (ch.5, n.7) 6-9; Abrams, 1949, 48; id. 1950, 48. For regular cinema-goers, see Moss and Box, op.cit. (ch.5, n.9) 11-14; Mark Abrams, 'The British cinema audience', *Hollywood Quarterly*, 1947-48, vol.3, no.2, 156-7; id. and id. 'The British cinema audience 1949', *Hollywood Quarterly*, 1949-50, vol.4, no.3, 254-5.

24. Moss and Box, op.cit. (ch.5, n.9) 11-14 and 17-21; Box, op.cit. (ch.5, n.7) 6-9; Abrams, 'The British cinema audience', 156-7; id. 'The British cinema audience 1949', 254-5.

Box's data for analysis of the population by occupation is based on an 'estimate from a random sample of 3000 individuals' (Box, op.cit. ch.5, n.7) 7. Presumably this is distinct from the sample of 3,137 respondents who took part in the survey, though if drawn from the same locations, a similar occupational profile might be expected.

25. Although Brew was investigating the cinema-going of adolescents, she notes as an aside that it was the over-forties who attended the cinema 4 to 5 times a week. The survey was made during the war, when cinema-going patterns may have been atypical. British Film Institute, *The film in national life, being the proceedings of a conference held by the British Film Institute in Exeter, April, 1943*. London: BFI, [1943], 8.

26. Cinema-going in industrialised south Wales might be expected to differ markedly from the pattern in parts of the principality which have few large population centres, different linguistic traditions and poor transport links. However, as five of the seven towns where Moss and Box conducted their interviews were in the south (Moss and Box, op.cit. [ch.5, n.9] 25), the explanation is unsatisfactory.

27. In Scotland, the total of 36 admissions per person per year includes 51 per year in towns of 50,000 to 100,000 inhabitants and 29 per year in rural districts. H.E. Browning and A.A. Sorrell, 'Cinemas and cinema-going in Great Britain', *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society*, 1954, series A, general, vol.117, pt.2, table 6.

28. Box, op.cit. (ch.5, n.7) 12-13.

29. Between 1939 and 1946, the year when admissions peaked, attendances increased by 65 per cent, gross revenue by 184 per cent and entertainments duty by 654 per cent. From 1945 to 1950, 35 per cent of gross takings comprised entertainments duty. Calculated from British Film Producers' Association, op.cit. (ch.5, n.8) 9.

30. In Whitstable, Bill Halle's mother always took him to the balcony, though they were very hard up at the time. 'She said she couldn't stand those people down below.' O'Brien and Eyles, op.cit. (ch.5, n.19) 25. Sometimes 'those people' got upstairs: 'There was one part of the auditorium to avoid at the Grand West Bar and that was the area below the circle side aisle. Patrons used to come and tiddle over the balcony. The seats there were always damp.' Unattributed quote in Colin Harding and Brian Lewis (eds.) *Talking pictures: the popular experience of the cinema*, Bradford, and Castleford, West Yorkshire: National Museum of Film, Photography and Television, and Yorkshire Art Circus, 1993, 48

31. Hayes, op.cit. (ch.5, n.7) 14.

32. Mass-Observation, 'The voice of the kinema-goer', *Kinematograph Weekly*, 20 December 1945, 71-2.

33. Some support comes from Jephcott, who notes that 'more girls than one would expect,' exercised selection in the films they saw by using newspaper reviews, radio reviews and trailers. Jephcott, *Rising twenty: notes on some ordinary girls*, London: Faber, 1948, 154.

34. John Sedgwick suggests that it was towns with a population of less than 20,000 which were likely to have only one cinema (personal communication).

35. Andrew Bear, 'The idea of culture', in Peter Davison, Rolf Meyersohn and Edward Shils (eds.) *Literary taste, culture and mass communication*, vol.1: *Culture and mass culture*, Cambridge: Chadwyck-Healey, 1978, 127

36. A 1947 poll in the United States of 3,750,000 subscribers to *Women's Home Companion* named musicals as the most popular genre, though there was an increased interest in psychological drama. *Cinema and Theatre Construction*, September 1947, no.4, 43.
    For the importance of musicals to working-class women, see Joanne Lacey, 'Seeing through happiness. Class gender and popular film: Liverpool women remake the 50s film musical,' PhD thesis, University of London, 1997.

37. Marcia Landy, *British genres: cinema and society 1930-1950*, Princeton, NJ, and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 1991, 436.

38. Napper draws attention to the frequent portrayal of working-class homes and manners in crime films in the 1930s. Much the same might be said about crime films in the 1940s. Lawrence Napper, 'A desirable tradition? Quota quickies in the 1930s', in Robert Murphy (ed.) *The British cinema book*, London: BFI, 1997, 45.

39. It is not clear whether the problem was in the demand for good comedy films, or their supply. See Norman Lee, 'Where are the comedies?' *Cinema and Theatre Construction*, August 1947,

40. 'Apart from a character-performance by Basil Radford the film has not a great deal to offer in the way of entertainment.' Rank film card on *Whisky Galore* (dir. Alexander Mackendrick, 1948). The film was distributed without a West End release. *Daily Express*, 5 July 1949.

41. For an early pointer to the way things were going, see W. Farr, 'Analysis of questionnaire to adolescents, 14-18 years', [1939], 5. Though 'light comedy' is relatively popular, ranking fifth out of nine genres at 11.5 per cent, 'crazy and slapstick farces' rank seventh at 7 per cent, with little enthusiasm for the latter category being shown by girls in particular. Formby's declining fortunes illustrate the shift in audiences' preferences. His music-hall origins show in his emphasis on stage business, which became anachronistic as he grew older. His biographers take the view that *South American George* (dir. Marcel Varnel, 1941) and *George in Civvy Street* (dir. Marcel Varnel, 1946) were his least satisfying films. Alan Randall and Ray Seaton, *George Formby: a biography*. London: W.H. Allen, 1974, 107.

42. Ray Seaton and Roy Martin, *Good morning boys: Will Hay, master of comedy*. London: Barry & Jenkins, 1978, 131.

43. For the 1950s, see Sue Harper and Vincent Porter, 'Cinema audience tastes in 1950s Britain,' *Journal of Popular British Cinema (Audiences and reception in Britain issue)*, 1999, no.2, 66-82.

44. All feminist commentators on British films have made their obeisances to the genre. Notable are Sue Harper, *Picturing the past: the rise and fall of the British costume picture*. London: BFI, 1994; Pam Cook, *Fashioning the nation: costume and identity in British cinema*. London: BFI, 1996. Though costume melodramas do not rank highly among genres, the popularity of their foremost proponents, James Mason and Margaret Lockwood, in *Picturegoer* and *Daily Mail* polls must be taken into account.

45. Bernstein, *The Bernstein film questionnaire 1946-7*, 17. Patrons were provided with a list of thirty-six films to be marked from 'outstanding' to 'bad'. It is not clear how the films in the list were selected. The explanatory comments emphasise that this was not a list of best films, but presumably popularity was a criterion in their selection. Aside from a Bing Crosby vehicle, the four films with musical content appear in the bottom third of the list.

46. Ien Ang, *Watching Dallas: soap opera and the melodramatic imagination*, trans. Della Couling, London: Methuen, 1985, 47

47. Every film-producing country saw a resurgence of realism after the war. For Paul Schrader, 'The postwar realistic trend succeeded in breaking film noir away from the domain of the high-class melodrama, placing it where it more properly belonged, in the streets with ordinary people.' Paul Schrader, 'Notes on film noir', in John Belton (ed.) *Movies and mass culture*, New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1996, 156. One interpretation is that audiences could see through phoney emotions after the experience of war.

48. The table contains only those activities in which the respondents had an element of choice. Activities like homework and running errands are excluded.

49. Leslie J. Wilkins, *The adolescent in Britain*. Social Survey SS 148(P), 1955, 86-94.

50. Press books such as that for *Bedelia* (dir. Lance Comfort, 1946) reveal how tie-ins were used as an explicit marketing strategy.

51. Major sporting events might lure audiences. *Scenes from the Cup Final* was screened at the Crescent Cinema, Leeds for three days from 29 April 1946 as second feature.

52. 'Although . . . [a girl's] literary tastes are limited (she only possesses four books of her own and she does not even know Penguins by name), she nevertheless keeps an eye open for any book from which a film has been made.' Jephcott, op.cit. (ch.5, n.33) 154. The increased demand for novels which had been filmed is also noted in Westhill Training College (for the Edward Cadbury Charitable Trust) *Eighty thousand adolescents: a study of young people in the City of Birmingham,* London: Allen & Unwin, 1950, 45. This was not necessarily the case for boys. See R.F.G. Logan and E.M. Goldberg, 'Rising eighteen in a London suburb: a study of some aspects of the life and health of young men', *British Journal of Sociology,* 1953, vol.4, 323-45.

The BFI holds four of Arnold Meredith's novelisations of films, all dating from 1948. The publishers, World Book Publications, issued seventy such novelisations. See Alan Burton and Steve Chibnall, 'Promotional activities and showmanship in British film exhibition', *Journal of Popular British Cinema (Audiences and reception in Britain* issue) 1999, no.2, 83-99. The story of how the film was made could also be turned into a book, e.g. David James, *Scott of the Antarctic: the film and its production,* London: Convoy Publications, 1948. With good publicity, sales of a book could increase before the film was released. For the case of *Things to Come* (dir. William Cameron Menzies, 1936), see Norman Wilson, 'Films increase book sales', *World Film News,* September 1936, vol.6, 21.

There is little quantifiable evidence on the incestuous links between cinema-going and reading. Brew found that readers went twice as often as non-readers. BFI, op.cit. (ch.5, n.25) 9. Wilkins found an inverse relationship: among civilian male adolescents who went to the cinema less than once a week, 25 per cent had read no books in the past month. Among those who went three times a week, the non-reading proportion increased to 52 per cent. Wilkins, op.cit. (ch.5, n.49) table 118. No figures are given for female adolescents.

53. Southend-on-Sea, a town of some 150,000 people, supported three repertory theatres in 1948. The four plays mentioned were amongst those performed.

Seeing the film of a play might be expected to diminish the play's commercial potential. Against this, audiences for stage and film were not necessarily the same, while a successful film could stimulate interest in the play.

54. Sources. For cinema: Browning and Sorrell, op.cit. (ch.5, n.27) table 1. For alcohol: Rowntree and Lavers, op.cit. (ch.5, n.19) 160. For legal gambling: ibid. 124. The authors cite *The Economist,* 29 March 1947 for their estimate of gambling in 1938-39.

The accuracy of the figures is open to question. The CEA produced lower figures for cinema takings: £21 million in 1938-39 and £50 million in 1947-48 (*Kinematograph Weekly,* 3 March 1949, 8-9). A figure of £306.4 million for alcohol expenditure in 1938 appears in Richard Stone and D.A. Rowe, *The measurement of consumers' expenditure and behaviour in the United Kingdom 1710-1938,* vol.1, London: Cambridge University Press, 1954, table 72. Personal expenditure on gambling rarely appears in official statistics, reflecting the ambivalent attitude of the government, while the amount of illegal gambling can only be guessed at. See Ross McKibbin, 'Working-class gambling in Britain 1880-1939', *Past and Present,* 1979, no.82, 159, for alternative (net) figures.

55. Andrew Davies, *Leisure, gender and poverty: working class culture in Salford and Manchester 1900-1939,* Buckingham: Open University Press, 1992, 33.

56. Rowntree and Lavers, op.cit, (ch.5, n.19) 124-5; McKibbin op.cit. (ch.5, n.54) 157.

57. Ferdynand Zweig, *Labour, life and poverty,* Wakefield, West Yorkshire: EP Publishing, 1975, 41.

58. Ferdynand Zweig, *The British Worker*, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1952, 134-8 and 147; Rich, op.cit. (ch.5, n.18) 99-100; Mass-Observation, *The pub and the people: a worktown study*, London: Gollancz, 1943.

59. Bernard Waites, 'The music hall', in Open University, *The Historical development of popular culture - 1*, Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1981, 41-76.

60. Rich, op.cit. (ch.5, n.18) 96.

61. For other examples of this attitude, see Rowntree and Lavers, op.cit. (ch.5, n.19) 31 and 40; Gary S. Cross (ed.) *Workers in Blackpool: Mass-Observation and popular leisure in the 1930s*, London: Routledge, 1990, 30.

62. Box, op.cit. (ch.5, n.7) 7 and tables 1 and 2.

63. A.J. Jenkinson, *What do boys and girls read? An investigation into reading habits with some suggestions about teaching literature in secondary and senior schools*, 2nd edn., London: Methuen, 1946; W.D. Wall, 'The adolescent and the cinema', *Educational Review*, October 1948, vol.1, no.1, 34-46.

64. H.K. Clarkson, *A survey of the leisure time of West Lothian school children*, Edinburgh: Educational Institute of Scotland, 1938, 9; interview with June McDowell, Southend-on-Sea, 2 March 1997.

65. Interview with Irene Harvey, Leigh-on-Sea, Essex, 5 January 1999.

66. Joy C. Ward, *Children out of school: an enquiry into the leisure interests and activities of children out of school hours carried out for the Central Advisory Council for Education (England) in November- December 1947*, Social Survey NS 110, 1948, 36.

67. Moss and Box, op.cit. (ch.5, n.9) table 20; Box, op.cit. (ch.5, n.7) table 13.

68. Wilkins, op.cit. (ch.5, n.49) 107; Barbara Kesterton, 'The social and emotional effects of the recreational film on adolescents of 13 and 14 years of age in the West Bromwich area', PhD thesis, University of Birmingham, 1948, 47.

69. B. Bernstein, 'Some sociological determinants of perception', *British Journal of Sociology*, 1958, vol.9, 160.

70. The conflicting cultural values come out clearly in Roy Greenslade, *Goodbye to the working class*, London: Boyars, 1976. This impressionistic study looks at the 1958 intake of Dagenham County High School. The catchment area for the school took in the LCC estate at Dagenham and Becontree, whose residents were primarily working class. A useful companion work is Peter Willmott, *The evolution of a community: a study of Dagenham after forty years*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1963. See also Morveen S. Brown, 'A sociological study of a grammar school in a working-class community', PhD thesis, University of London, 1950; Brian Jackson and Dennis Marsden, *Education and the working class*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1962.

71. Ward, op.cit. (ch.5, n.66) table 15; J.C. Ward, *Children and the cinema*, Social Survey NS 131, 1949, 18.

72. Brown, op.cit. (ch.5, n.70) 344.

73. J. Struthers, 'A study of the leisure activities of secondary children in a Middlesex secondary (mixed) school', MA thesis, University of London, 1939, table 41.

74. loc.cit.

75. Wilkins, op.cit. (ch.5, n.49) table 121.

76. Ward, *Children and the cinema*, table 9.

77. J.P. Mayer, *Sociology of film: studies and documents*, London: Faber, 1946, 119-20.

78. Joan Harley, 'Report of an enquiry into the occupations, further education and leisure interests of a number of girl wage-earners from elementary and central schools in the Manchester district, with special reference to the influence of school training on their use of leisure', M.Ed dissertation, University of Manchester, 1937, 112, n.3, cited in Davies, op.cit. (ch.5, n.55) 94.

79. e.g. Harper, op.cit. (ch.5, n.44); Jackie Stacey, *Star-gazing: Hollywood cinema and female spectatorship*, London: Routledge, 1994.

80. Kesterton, op.cit. (ch.5, n.68) 52; Wall, op.cit. (ch.5, n.63) 39; Ward, *Children and the cinema*, tables xviii-xv. Wall may have drawn on Kesterton's work.

81. H.E.O. James and F.T. Moore, 'Adolescent leisure in a working-class district', *Occupational Psychology*, 1940, vol.14, no.3, diagrams 1 and 2; Wilfrid Harper, 'The leisure activities of adolescents: an investigation of the psychological function of the various leisure activities of adolescents in a particular town with some special references to the cinema and reading', MA thesis, Victoria University of Manchester, 1942, figs. 6-10.

82. Confusingly, going to the pictures was the favoured way of spending a free evening for the same teenagers. This points to the significance of the precise wording of the questions — which may still elicit contradictory responses. John Atkins, 'Industrial teenagers', *Pilot Papers*, December 1947, vol.2, no.4, 38-44.

83. James and Moore, op.cit, (ch.5, n.81) 142-3.

84. Jephcott, op.cit. (ch.5, n.33) 16. Ward found that the frequency of cinema-going by children up to the age of eleven was strongly associated with that of their mothers. Ward, *Children and the cinema*, table 11.

85. Bertram Hutchinson, *Scottish mining communities*, 97-8; M-O A: FR 3537 'Reading in Tottenham', November 1947, 15; Jephcott, op.cit.(ch.5, n.33) 114; Hayes, op.cit. (ch.5, n.7) 36; Barry Hines, *A kestrel for a knave*, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1969, 32-3; Jack Jackson, *Under the smoke*, [Manchester]: Neil Richardson, 1990, 25.

86. Jenkinson, op.cit. (ch.5, n.63) 64-8 and 211. See also Penny Tinkler, *Constructing girlhood popular magazines for girls growing up in England 1920-1950*, London: Taylor & Francis, 1995.

87. Penelope Houston, *The contemporary cinema*, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1963, 11-12.

88. Pearl Jephcott, *Some young people*, London: Allen & Unwin, 1954, 34.

89. National Union of Teachers, *Popular culture and personal responsibility*, Proceedings of an NUT conference held in 1960, London: National Union of Teachers, [1961], 53.

90. These were familiar themes in the cinema industry's trade journals of the period. Problems were acute in industrial areas which had suffered from bombing: in Lancashire, 143 of the 400 cinemas were damaged. *Kinematograph Weekly*, 30 August 1945, 4. For the woes of exhibitors generally, see *Ideal Kinema* (supplement to *Kinematograph Weekly*), 8 June 1944, iii; *Kinematograph Weekly*, 14 November 1946, 1; 25 December 1947, 27; and 19 May 1949, 6.

91. Hiley, op.cit. (ch.5, n.1) 49-50.

92. Interview with Ernest Trumper (former ABC manager), Southend-on-Sea, 10 February 1997. According to a former Leeds cinema manager, of fifty-five cinemas in the city in 1953, only in eight cases were managers entrusted with film bookings. John R. Broadley, 'A life in Leeds cinemas 3: facing the fifties', *Picture House*, spring 1990, 36. Managers of circuit cinemas pleaded for more power, especially to book films. *Kinematograph Weekly*, 1 June 1950, 6.
    Managers outside the circuits did not necessarily have more latitude, as the cinema listings in the *Kinematograph Year Books* reveal. For Garons Cinema, Southend-on-Sea, a small, independent cinema, booking in the late 1940s was handled by an agent in Carshalton. However, there was considerable variation amongst the independents. What managers did retain was status. Harding and Lewis, op.cit. (ch.5, n.30) 92.

93. 'You won't get the middle and upper middle class back to the cinema, no matter what product you have to offer, because they never went in the first place.' Letter of the week, *Kinematograph Weekly*, 27 April 1950, 6.

94. S. Craig Shafer '"Enter the dream house": the British film industry and the working classes in depression England 1929-39', PhD thesis, University of Illinois, 1981, 19-23.

95. Paul Corrigan, 'What do kids get out of pop music and football?' in C. Critcher, P. Bramhan and A. Tomlinson (eds.) *Sociology of leisure: a reader*, London and Glasgow: Spon, 1995, 74-6.
    The tacit contract between audience and management comes out clearly in Laurence Edmonds, 'Fleapit nights', *Sight and Sound*, October-December 1951, new quarterly series, vol.21, no.2, 87, which presents a cinema-going experience similar to that found by Jephcott and Wilson (see ch.5, n.88 and 89), but from a more sympathetic viewpoint.

96. Brown, op.cit. (ch.5, n.70) 335.

97. Raymond Williams, *Culture and society*, London: Hogarth Press, 1987, 206. It is easy to judge working-class living conditions in the past by present-day standards or middle-class standards (or both). A resident of the Salford terraces in the 1930s has recorded that he was habituated to the conditions, though he could hardly have been aware of this at the time. Jackson, op.cit. (ch.5, n.85) 4. Titmuss points out that the poor made no violent objections to sleeping in underground stations during the blitz: 'they had lived too long on top of one another to mind about any lack of privacy'. Richard M. Titmuss, *Problems of social policy*, History of the Second World War: United Kingdom Civil Series, London: HMSO and Longmans, Green, 1950, 342.

98. e.g. Struthers, op.cit. (ch.5, n.73) table 23; Ward, *Children and the cinema*, table 14; Westhill Training College, op.cit. (ch.5, n.52) tables 13-16; Wilkins, op.cit. (ch.5, n.49) 91. The exception was the Jewish community. See Gerald Kaufman, *My life in the silver screen*, London: Faber, 1985, 22.

99. Madeleine Kerr, *The people of Ship Street*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1958, 71. Cross, op.cit. (ch.4, n.61) 31.
    Wilkins found 20 per cent of female adolescents were working on the Saturday afternoon prior

to his survey, while 32 per cent went shopping. These were the two major activities. By comparison, 43 per cent of males adolescents played or watched sport. Wilkins, op.cit. (ch.4, n.49) table 110.

100. Jephcott, *Rising twenty*, 63;

101. Owen Dudley, 'The leisure of secondary school children', MA thesis, University of London, 1951, 91.

102. M-O A: FR 3086 'Love-making in public', February 1949, 9.

103. Harding and Lewis, op.cit. (ch.5, n.30) 14-22; Colin Harding (personal communication).

104. James and Moore, op.cit. (ch.5, n.81) 143-4; Atkins, op.cit. (ch.5, n.82) 39. This may have been a vestige of an older working-class cultural pattern, as the gangs of the early decades of the century were displaced by the middle-class concept of the 'best friend'. See Stephen Humphries, Joanna Mack, and Robert Baker, *A century of childhood*, London: Sidgwick & Jackson (in association with Channel Four), 1988, 118-35.

The Sunday evening 'monkey run' was a phenomenon of northern towns during the inter-war years, with groups of three or four older adolescents seeking groups of the opposite sex. This may be viewed as a transitional stage, not only in the move from childhood to adulthood, but from the gang culture to the best friend culture. The monkey run dwindled during the Second World War with conscription, the threat of the blitz and the coming of GIs, though it could still be experienced in Manchester in the late 1940s. See ibid. 152; J.B. Priestley, *English journey*, London: Heinemann, 1984, 143-4; Davies, op.cit. (ch.5, n.55) 102-8.

105. 'They talked the film over with real gravity. It was one of the very few events that seemed to soften that particular little group, one of whom, late in the evening, mentioned that she intended to get blind drunk to celebrate V.E. day.' Jephcott, *Rising twenty*. 156. The film was *Since You Went Away* (dir. John Cromwell, US release 1944). See also A.J. Lush, *The young adult in south Wales: being a report prepared in co-operation with young men in Cardiff, Newport and Pontypridd, under the auspices of the Carnegie United Kingdom Trust*, Cardiff: University of Wales Press Board, 1941, 80.

106. e.g. British Film Institute, *Children and the cinema: a report of a conference organised by the British Film Institute and National Council of Women*, London: BFI, 1946, 11; Bernstein, *The Bernstein film questionnaire 1946-7*, 15 (comfort was noted by 31.7 per cent of Bernstein's respondents); J.B. Barclay, *Viewing tastes of adolescents in cinema and television*, table 6 (warmth and comfort were noted by 9 per cent of boys and 3 per cent of girls).

107. In converted theatres, projection was often a compromise. A projection box situated behind the balcony resulted into a steep throw, so that the image on the screen was distorted when viewed from the front of the stalls. This problem afflicted the Gaumont, Southend-on-Sea. Allen Eyles, *Gaumont British cinemas*, Burgess Hill, W. Sussex: Cinema Theatre Association, 1996, 62.

108. Visiting city centre cinemas in order to impress girlfriends is noted in Manchester Studies Oral History Archive, tape 996, cited in David Fowler, *The first teenagers: the lifestyle of young wage-earners in interwar Britain*, London: Woburn Press, 1995, 131.

109. Richard Carr, 'Cinemas and cemeteries: an examination of the film goers of a typical London suburb. The taste of Tooting,' *World Film News*, May 1937, vol.2, no.2, 18. Presumably, Carr was writing metaphorically: few provincial cinema-goers were likely to be tempted into London to visit a shabby, Tooting cinema. He notes the preponderance of children

in the audience, along with the elderly (loc.cit.).

110. Eric M. Sigsworth, *Leeds in the 1930s*, Beverley, Humberside: Highgate, 1994, 31.

111. John Sutherland, 'Ealing', a paper presented at the British Library/University of Sheffield conference 'British cinema in the 1950s: a festival', held at the British Library, 5 December 1998.
    In two 1947 Gallup surveys, 66 and 63 per cent of respondents smoked. Gallup, op.cit. (ch.5, n.7) 155 and 159. Smoking was common amongst working-class girls, Jephcott, *Rising twenty*, 58-9. Ernest Trumper recalls working in a projection room in the 1920s when the ports to the auditorium were unglazed. As tobacco smoke rose to the auditorium ceiling, it was sucked into the projection room, where it formed a fog by the end of the evening. Interview with Ernest Trumper, Southend-on-Sea, 10 February 1997.

112. Others have recalled the distinctive smell of each cinema. See Audrey Field, *Picture palace: a social history of the cinema*, London: Gentry Books, 1974, 128; Kaufman, op.cit. (ch.5, n.98) 13.

113. 'Queuing for up to two hours was taken as normal to see a film. I remember queuing for three hours to see *Quo Vadis*.' Interview with Bill Doyle of Derby, quoted in Ashley Franklin, *A cinema near you: 100 years of going to the pictures in Derbyshire*, Derby: Breedon Books, 1996, 91. Also my own interview with Mick Crossley, Bradford, 24 October 1997.

114. M-O A: FR 2467 'Saturday evening', April 1947, 15.

115. Mass-Observation, *The pub and the people*, 113; id. 'Saturday night', *Contact (World off duty* issue) 1947, no.6, 2.

116. Jack Rosenthal, *Omnibus — Jack the Lad*, BBC TV, 23 June 1997.

117. Box, op.cit. (ch.5, n.7).

118. A notable culprit here is Arthur Marwick. See Arthur Marwick, *Culture in Britain since 1945*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1991, 57.

119. Garth Jowett (for American Film Institute), *Film, the democratic art*. Boston, MA: Little, Brown, 1976, 343.

120. University of Bristol, *The welfare of youth: a city survey*. Bristol: University of Bristol, 1945, 22. A telling example which passes without comment by the author is to be found in the extract of an interview with Mrs Rankine in Davies, op.cit. (ch.5, n.55) 60.

121. This viewpoint is implied as much as stated. See Brian Jackson, *Working class community: some general notions raised by a series of studies in northern England*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1968, 5-6; Carolyn Steedman, *Landscape for a good woman: a study of two lives*. London: Virago, 1996, 11-15; Geoff Eley, '*Distant voices, still lives*. The family is a dangerous place: memory, gender, and the image of the working class', in Robert A. Rosenstone (ed.) *Revisioning history: film and the construction of a new past*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995, 17-43. Eley draws heavily on Steedman's work.

122. John K. Walton, afterward to Cross. op.cit. (ch.5, n.61) 239.

123. Dwight Macdonald, 'A theory of mass culture', reprinted in Peter Davison, Peter, Rolf Meyerson, and Edward Shils (eds.) *Literary taste, culture and mass communication*, vol.1: *Literary taste, culture and mass communication*. Cambridge: Chadwyck-Healey, 1978, 165-83.

124. Robert Stam, *Reflexivity in film and literature: from Don Quixote to Jean-Luc Godard*, Ann Arbor, MI: UMI Research Press, 1985, 34. For a similar point made at greater length, see Stuart Hall, 'Encoding/decoding', in Stuart Hall et al. (eds.) *Culture, media, language*, London: Hutchinson (for CCCS), 1980, 128-38; David Morley, *The 'Nationwide' audience: structure and decoding*, London: BFI, 1980.

125. This is the approach taken by Davies, who contrasts it with the Marxist-inspired view of Thompson and Hobsbawm based on a monolithic working class and linked to the emergence of working-class politics. Davies, op.cit. (ch.5, n.55) 169.

126. John Sedgwick, 'Film "hits" and "misses" in mid-1930s Britain', *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television*, 1998, vol.18, no.3, 333-51.

# CHAPTER SIX

## What a working-class audience watched: a case study

The main objective of this chapter is to ascertain what was watched by a working-class audience between 1945 and 1950. Cinema-going practices in working-class districts of Leeds and in south-east Essex are compared in order to determine which films were popular with audiences in both areas and to reveal any distinctive characteristics of working-class cinema-going. The conclusions provide a basis for considering how film preferences were associated with other aspects of working-class culture and whether values derived from films fed back into that culture.

It was suggested in the previous chapter that the notion of a single working-class culture is misleading. The cinema audience constructs a story from a pool of cultural experience in which class position is but one factor, along with age, occupation, urban/rural location, etc. This accords with Jeffrey Richards' thesis, derived from the work of Patrick Joyce, that audiences had multiple identities rather than being delineated purely by class and gender, with a distinctive regional identity of dialect culture cutting across class lines.[1] If correct, regional variations in programming might be anticipated. John Sedgwick has detected regional and local patterns of cinema-going in the 1930s which lend support to Richards' viewpoint.[2]

### An approach to local cinema-going: a methodology refined

Several problems stem from the objectives outlined above. The first is ensuring that, as far as possible, any audience selected was genuinely working class. Secondly, some measure of popularity needs to be devised. Thirdly, determining whether a working-class audience had distinctive tastes requires a comparison with a control group. Finally, regional differences should

be distinguishable from class differences. These problems will be addressed first.

*(i) Finding a working-class audience.* Assessing the class composition of a present-day audience presents conceptual difficulties which are compounded in assessing audiences of fifty years ago. It is axiomatic that cinema audiences in a working-class area came predominantly from the working class. No doubt there were middle-class interlopers, but their numbers were limited by the competing attractions of newer and more luxurious cinemas nearer their own homes, the variety of programmes offered in city centre cinemas, and the dubious reputation of some cinemas in rougher areas.[3]

The cinema industry accepted a *de facto* hierarchy of audiences and cinemas. Trade journals helpfully pointed cinema managements towards those films which would go down well with 'family' audiences or 'discriminating' audiences, or which were more suited to 'industrial halls' or 'industrials'.[4] This suggests that each type of cinema had a distinctive programme profile suited to its audience.[5]

*(ii) Measuring popularity.* For a seemingly simple concept, popularity can prove remarkably elusive. Because *Brief Encounter* (dir. David Lean, 1945) has stood the test of time, this does not mean that it achieved instant popularity.[6] A film's reputation is not a reliable guide to how it fared on first release. Nor is oral testimony, unless the fallibility of memory can be checked against other primary source material such as a diary of film-going. Even this provides no more than an individual response. Film fan magazines give a better feel for what was popular, but the evidence is qualitative and may represent a minority view (see appendix 1, tables 5.13 and 5.25).[7] Thumim's use of audience polls and trade journals was discussed in chapter two (page 44) and relies on a mix of qualitative and quantitative sources.[8]

The ideal quantitative measure of popularity is the number of people seeing a film. Box-office takings fail to distinguish between a few people paying for expensive seats and a large number opting for cheaper seats. The cinema records which survive from the 1940s will be

considered later in the chapter, but they are few in number and fragmentary.

If discovering what audiences liked presents difficulties, what exhibitors judged to be popular is readily identifiable from the programmes which they booked. A film which was repeatedly rebooked was more popular than one which was only shown for a day. Managements may sometimes have misjudged their audiences' tastes, but for a cinema to remain in business, it must be assumed that the exhibitor got things more or less right most of the time. This was exploited by John Sedgwick with his POPSTAT index of film popularity, which provides a quantitative assessment of popularity based on what was screened.[9] The present work uses a similar starting point.

Leaving aside the West End of London, the major circuits — Odeon, Gaumont (both belonging to Rank) and ABC — were at the apex of the hierarchy of cinemas. They owned the bulk of the larger, more modern cinemas and had the financial power to rent the best of the new releases. Below them came the prestigious independents and the smaller circuits, which scooped some new releases, but were heavily reliant on films which had already proved themselves on the major circuits. Below this second tier were the smaller and older independent cinemas, often sited in less prominent locations. They competed with their richer brethren by offering cheaper seats, but this limited their income, meaning that they could only afford to rent older or less popular films. After a year of descending through the hierarchy of cinemas, a film's low rental value no longer justified making more prints, at which point it dropped from circulation unless it was re-released.[10]

An independent cinema could not compete with the buying power of the circuits, but with this proviso, the assumption is that it offered the best available programmes to attract a local clientele. However inadequately, the number of days on which a film was screened (referred to subsequently as 'screen days') provides a means of quantifying its popularity. It does so more accurately than the number of bookings, which makes no distinction between a film showing for a single Sunday performance and one screened for a week. A third measure is the number of programme changes. This is a more precise term than the number of programmes, which fails to

make clear how duplicated programmes are treated . This aggregate measure is useful for assessing, amongst other things, the number of 'U' programmes screened.

Screen days as a measure of popularity is open to the criticism that it takes no account of either the number of performances or the size of the cinema. Whether a more elaborate model is needed which incorporates these factors deserves consideration.

While there is a case for distinguishing between a cinema offering two performances a day and another offering five, in practice such information is not always available. It may also be misleading if cinema-going habits are not taken into account. The essence of continuous performances was that people could wander in at any point during the screening and either wander out when the same point came round again, or stay for a second viewing — or for a sleep.[11] No measure can take account of such random behaviour. Nor were matinee performances necessarily well attended. The opportunity of seeing the film is being measured, rather than whether the opportunity was taken up. The latter is adduced from repeated bookings, which will increase the number of screen days accrued.

The same point applies to cinema capacity. If the opportunity to see a film is being measured rather than whether the opportunity is taken up, the size of the cinema is not critical. Taking cinema capacity into account means that a film running in a 1,000-seat cinema for a week appears more popular than one running in a 500-seat cinema. This relies on the unproven assumption that audience size is dependent on cinema size. It exaggerates the popularity of poorly-attended films in large cinemas — with an audience of fifty, the size of the cinema becomes immaterial. If a large West End cinema is being compared with a small local cinema in a working-class area, there is a case for taking account of capacity, but most of the cinemas to be examined here have 800 to 1,200 seats and all are in two circumscribed and socially fairly homogenous geographical areas. Relying on screen days without taking account of cinema capacity gives a conservative estimate of popularity; trying to refine the measure means increasing its complexity without necessarily improving its accuracy.

*(iii) Finding a control group.* Determining whether the programmes seen in working-class areas were distinctive requires making comparison with what was seen elsewhere. Programmes in the circuit cinemas come nearest to providing a measure of national taste. Although working-class people contributed to this by their numerical superiority both in the population and among audiences generally, middle-class patrons were likely to have their preferences well represented in circuit cinema bookings. Circuit cinemas were evenly distributed throughout the country rather than being concentrated in densely-populated working-class areas such as the north west, while middle-class patrons were more likely to patronise a high-status circuit cinema than its low-status and rowdy rival. These factors counter a bias towards working-class taste.

Bookings on the circuits were handled by central booking departments. With a few exceptions, discussed below, each film would be sent around a circuit on a rolling release programme, irrespective of the social composition of audiences in any particular area.[12] What was seen in Worthing would sooner or later be seen in Wigan. Although the circuits' release patterns were relatively inflexible, they could be modified in the light of local circumstances — where a circuit had two cinemas in close vicinity, where it had no cinema in a town, or where it owned a run-down cinema in a poor area.[13] There might also be variations when a film had poor box-office potential and was given limited distribution, or when programme fillers were bought from independent distributors.[14] In spite of these distortions, the basic tenet remains: the circuit cinemas creamed off the films with the greatest commercial potential and marketed them as a rolling programme of releases throughout the country. To this extent they serve as an indicator of national taste.

Both the major circuits and independents operated within constraints. Independents were doubly disadvantaged in the film rental market: not only were the most popular new releases priced out of their reach, but barring created a pecking order amongst cinemas, with circuits usually assuming dominating positions.[15] By the time a low-ranking cinema obtained a print, the commercial potential of even a popular film had dwindled.

Rank and ABC were able to benefit from vertical integration by controlling the distribution

of their own films to their own advantage, as well as by using their buying power to acquire the pick of releases from other distributors. Despite these advantages, the circuits suffered from a lack of flexibility in programming. Not only were they denied quota relaxations, but they were hamstrung if one of their own films proved a failure at the box office. Once a film was released, an attempt had to be made to recoup its costs, even if this meant occupying cinemas which might be used more profitably by screening other product. The alternative of withdrawing a film which failed to live up to expectations could prove even more costly — independents would be reluctant to book a failure — and there is no evidence that this course was adopted.[16]

*(iv) A regional comparison.* In England, the most obvious regional disparity is between the north and the south. This was at its starkest in the 1930s, but given the hold the north south divide exerts on the English psyche, any economic improvements apparent in the north by the late 1940s were unlikely to have brought about a decisive shift in cultural values.[17] If independent cinemas are accepted as being more responsive to local taste than the circuits, then samples of independent cinema programmes from the north and south provide a regional comparison. The problem is how to avoid confusing differences associated with class with those associated with location. The two areas should be comparable in their social composition, but how should this be assessed? Types of occupation and wage levels may differ widely between a mining town and a manufacturing town a dozen miles apart, while the perception of class in a northern industrial city with a distinctively working-class culture may differ from that in a socially mixed town such as Hastings.[18] This point will be returned to in considering the two areas finally selected.

*(v) Research methodology.* The methodology may now be stated formally. Taking a sample of independent cinemas in a working-class area, the films screened over the period 1945 to 1950 are ranked by the number of days on which they were screened. A similar exercise is carried out for Gaumont, Odeon and ABC cinemas in a location where all three circuits are represented. The policy of rolling releases means that a circuit's programmes can be charted at any one of its

cinemas. All other things being equal, the rankings of films screened in the working-class area and on the circuits should be similar. Any marked divergencies suggest that there were differences in audiences' preferences associated with class.

As a second stage, the exercise of ranking films is repeated among independents in two widely-separated areas. Any marked divergences in ranking are suggestive of regional differences in taste, though class differences between the areas are a complicating factor.

One problem is that films released early in the given period have more time to accrue screen days than later releases. Given the short life of most films, this significance of this can be overstated. It would be possible to follow the fortunes of the films into the 1950s, but the commercial potential of the later films was handicapped by the decline in audiences throughout that decade, while earlier films would continue to accumulate screen days if they were re-released. Trying to solve one problem can generate more work while only serving to introduce more distortions.

Screen days provide a means of charting not what people watched, but what they had the opportunity to watch. The measure has the virtues of being simple and understandable. These qualities can be sacrificed by making it more sophisticated, while the gains in accuracy are questionable. The limitations of the approach have to be acknowledged. In particular, the wider applicability of findings from two areas cannot be taken for granted.

## A regional comparison of cinemas in Leeds and south-east Essex

*(i) The choice of areas.* The cinema programmes available to working-class communities in Leeds are taken as an example of what urban working-class audiences watched. Leeds offers several advantages for of this study:

- It is an industrial city with well-demarcated working-class sectors.

- In spite of being a centre for heavy engineering, Leeds suffered little bomb damage during the war.[19] This means that the housing stock remained largely intact in 1945 and

communities were not broken up.

- Whereas inner-city areas of other conurbations have undergone considerable redevelopment since the war, Leeds retains large tracts of Victorian housing. This allows housing to be used as a criterion for determining the social status of communities in the recent past.

- Leeds had a stronger tradition of building back-to-back housing than any other location.[20] This has always been distinctively working-class housing which is easily identifiable today.

- Independent cinemas were well represented in Leeds.

- It is a relatively compact city, meaning that most cinema advertising in the 1940s was contained in one newspaper, the *Yorkshire Evening Post*.

Four criteria were applied for inclusion in the sample. First, the cinema was situated in an area ascertainable as working-class by the quality of the housing. Secondly, it was not controlled by any of the three major circuits. Thirdly, it advertised in the *Yorkshire Evening Post* throughout the period 1945 to 1950. Finally, the bookings policy of each cinema was unrelated to that of others in the sample. This criterion was introduced because some small circuits booked a film for six days, screening it in one cinema for three days and in a nearby cinema for the remainder of the week. Including both cinemas leads to an over-estimate of the film's popularity.

Cinemas with a local clientele could rely on trailers and local poster advertising. They had less to gain from advertising to the whole of Leeds than city centre cinemas.[21] As a consequence, independent cinemas in working-class areas comprised the group least likely to employ newspaper advertising. This constituted a major limitation in drawing up the sample. Of the forty or so cinemas advertising in the *Yorkshire Evening Post*, only fifteen satisfied the four criteria. A further criterion was then introduced. As barring by one dominant cinema might determine what films were available elsewhere in the area (see ch.6, n.15), the sample cinemas should be distributed as evenly as possible among working-class communities. This reduced the sample from fifteen to ten.

Brief details of the sample cinemas are given in appendix 3. Two were situated in Harehills to the east of the city, three in Beeston and Hunslet to the south, two in the outlying districts of Bramley and Wortley to the west and three in Burley to the north. The ideal was to select two inner-city cinemas to the west. Armley, a large working-class district, was the ideal choice of area, but none of the cinemas there fulfilled the criteria, though Wortley and Bramley were easily accessible from Armley. Of the sample cinemas, the Burley Picture House was unambiguously industrial, while the Crescent, Beeston, with its higher ticket prices, was a family house. The others came between the two extremes. Though some of the films reaching the sample cinemas were on their second run in the Leeds area, many had accrued several runs.

The majority of the circuit cinemas in Leeds were in the city centre. The only exceptions in the districts being considered were Gaumont's Pavilion in Beeston to the south and the ABC's Gaiety in Burmantofts, close to Harehills in the east. Both functioned primarily as second-run cinemas for product which was successful in the city centre.[22] Although working-class people undoubtably frequented these and other circuit cinemas, the survey evidence presented in the previous chapter makes clear that for children and older people in particular, the local cinema held considerable attraction. In most cases, local cinemas were independent. Nor does the presence of a circuit cinema affect the assumption that cinemas in working-class areas were primarily frequented by working-class people.

In seeking an area in the south of England with a comparable social structure to working-class Leeds, an obvious choice is the East End of London. Finding a sample of independent cinemas there in post-war years proved unexpectedly difficult. The circuits had assumed a dominant position in the area by the 1930s, while many of the remaining independents were put out of action by bombing.[23] As an additional disadvantage, advertising was spread across several newspapers, which makes data-gathering a time-consuming exercise. Similar limitations apply to inner-city areas of south London.

With London excluded, there is no obvious location in southern England with working-class communities supporting enough cinemas to constitute a sample. What appears as a

methodological difficulty is in reality a reflection of the different physical and social structure of southern towns and cities compared with those in the north. Working-class districts in cities such as Southampton and Plymouth, as well as being smaller and less homogenous than those in the north, are in many cases post-war estates on the edge of built-up areas. This makes identifying traditional working-class communities more problematic. The term 'working class' is no more than a heuristic device for grouping people who felt that they shared a common class position. In southern towns, residents might have been less confident about identifying themselves in these terms Attempting to apply rigid criteria for class membership in such cases may result in a failure to make sense of the very phenomenon which is being examined.

Ease of access and personal knowledge made south-east Essex the chosen area for a regional comparison and for charting circuit releases. It provides an interesting counterpoint to Leeds:

- It was in one of the more prosperous regions of the country, with none of the traditional heavy industries found in Leeds.

- The area was more socially varied than Leeds. It was traditionally a route of upward social mobility from the East End of London, resulting in a high proportion of first and second generation Londoners and a relatively large Jewish population.

- By Leeds standards, much of the housing of south-east Essex is lower middle class: built since 1890, with three bedrooms and a bathroom being the norm, and with a garden to front and rear.

- The three major circuits had cinemas in Southend-on-Sea, the principal town.

The area presented no sampling problems: the *Southend Standard* was the area's principal weekly newspaper and all the cinemas advertising in it were included (see appendix 3). However, some of the outlying cinemas — the Palace, Shoebury, the Radion, Laindon, and the Carlton, Wickford — only advertised for part of the period.[24] The one cinema in the area which eschewed newspaper advertising and which was not included in the study was the Rio on Canvey Island. Four cinemas — the Mascot and the Metropole, both in Westcliff-on-Sea, and the Corona and

the Coliseum, both in Leigh-on-Sea — belonged to the same small circuit, with programmes alternating between Westcliff and Leigh. Although a case can be made for applying the criterion followed in Leeds and excluding these cinemas to avoid inflating a films' popularity, the policy of alternating programmes was not followed consistently and sampling bias is not a problem when all the area's cinemas are included in the dataset.

The absence of distinctively working-class districts means that all the independents in the area can be categorised as family cinemas. The possible exception is the Palace, situated near Shoebury Garrison. Its popularity with soldiers gave it some characteristics of an industrial hall, though at 2s.6d., the price of the most expensive seats was on a par with that in circuit cinemas.


*(ii) A comparison of social and economic differences between Leeds and south-east Essex.*
**Leeds'** early development was attributable to its position as a crossing place on the River Aire. Coal fields to the south stimulated its industrial growth from the late eighteenth century. The canal and latterly the railway followed the course of the Aire from west to east. This has resulted in an economic and social divide, with the part of the city south of the river being given over to industry and working-class housing.[25] To the north, nineteenth century working-class housing forms an arc around the central business district, with more recent and mainly middle-class housing constituting an outer arc. The city's broad industrial base saved it from the worst of the slump in the 1930s.[26]

**South-east Essex** is an amorphous region with large stretches of agricultural land and marshland as well as built-up areas. The economy was based on agriculture until the coming of the railway in the 1850s. The improvement in communications led to the rapid growth of Southend-on-Sea as a seaside resort. Because the railway put London within easy commuting distance, Southend-on-Sea also became a dormitory town, with development taking place along the railway to give a linear pattern of growth. Neighbouring villages on either side were absorbed into the borough, which hardly developed inland until the inter-war years of the twentieth century. To the west, much low-grade agricultural land went out of production with the recurrent

collapses in prices from the late nineteenth century onwards. In the 1920s, large tracts of land were divided into small plots which were sold to East Enders who could reach them easily by train.[27] These plotlands were later incorporated into Basildon New Town, though by 1950, redevelopment had hardly begun.

The data available for the County Borough of Southend-on-Sea means that it serves as the most convienient geographical unit for comparison with the City of Leeds. Demographic and socio-economic data for the two authorities are contained in appendix 1, table 6.1. Alphabetical references in the following paragraphs refer to the rows in this table.

The population of Leeds was relatively stable over the period 1931 to 1951 (a and b), with 81.1 per cent of those enumerated in 1951 being born in the East or West Ridings.[28] The growing population of Southend-on-Sea over the same period (17 per cent) is attributable to the drawing power of the town rather than to natural increase (c).[29] Of those enumerated within the borough in 1951, 43.1 per cent were born in Essex and 26.8 per cent in London.[30] The hinterland showed an even more rapid population growth of 56.3 per cent to 60,137 in 1951.[31]

Although the proportion of children was similar in both areas, Southend-on-Sea had more over-65s in its population (d). This reflects not only the higher mortality in an industrial area such as Leeds (e), but the attraction of retiring to the seaside.

The social class structure of Leeds (f) was distorted by the tendency of those in the higher social classes to live outside the city, towards Ilkley to the west or Harrogate to the north. Confounding Southend's image as a playground for East-Enders, the population was skewed towards the higher social classes as a consequence of the upper middle-class estates built during the inter-war years. Though more socially diverse than Leeds, Southend's geographical closeness to the East End of London meant that the bulk of the population had working-class origins, even if they had achieved middle-class status.[32] The class disparities between the two areas were parallelled in educational achievement, with more adolescents in Leeds leaving school at the earliest opportunity (g).

The importance of the holiday trade and of commuting to London accounts for the high

proportion of workers in service industries in Southend-on-Sea (h). Leeds showed a greater

reliance on manufacturing. The establishment in Southend during the inter-war years of factories

producing clothing and electrical equipment, together with the seasonal demand for labour in

hotels and cafes, meant that the town had a high proportion of women workers, though Leeds

with its clothing and textile industries was not far behind (i). Most of these women were likely to

be working class.

The rapid population growth of Southend-on-Sea after the war increased pressure on the

housing stock and resulted in a high proportion of shared dwellings (j). In spite of this, there was

less overcrowding than in Leeds with its large stock of cramped back-to-back houses (k). The

lower housing standards in Leeds were also apparent in the higher proportion of households with

no access to such facilities as a fixed bath (l).

The spread of technology and electrical goods into the home was still at a low level in both

areas, apart for the ubiquity of the radio (m). The Holme Moss transmitter serving Leeds was not

operational till 12 October 1951, so the Leeds cinemas had yet to confront their rival.[33] TV was

available in Southend-on-Sea, but had made little impact.

Cinema-going was a more popular activity in Leeds than in Southend-on-Sea (n). This

should be reflected in the sales of film fan magazines, but no detailed post-war data is available.

The best which can be obtained is regional sales data for the four most popular fan magazines in

1936, which can be assessed against population data from the 1931 census. On this basis, 56 per

cent of sales were to the 23 per cent of the population living in London and the south east,

compared with 4 per cent of sales to the 9 per cent of the population living in the East and West

Ridings. Overall, *Picturegoer* outstripped its rivals in both areas. The exception was that among

those in the Ridings earning the average manual worker's wage of £125 to £249 per annum, the

down-market *Picture Show* was more popular, accounting for 34 per cent of sales. This

compares with 18 per cent of sales to the same income group in London and the south east,

where *Picture Show* lagged behind *Film Pictorial* and *Film Weekly*.[34] In sum, Yorkshire

provided a relatively small market for magazines targeted at film fans, though the pattern of sales

was distinct from that in London and the south east. Not too much should be made of these differences. They may indicate only that magazine buyers in Yorkshire lent copies to more of their friends.

The linear development of Southend-on-Sea meant that visiting the town centre from outlying areas necessitated considerable travelling — as much as a forty-minute bus ride from Laindon or Wickford. This must have increased the appeal of local cinemas, particularly for working-class people in outlying areas. By comparison, all the cinemas in the Leeds sample were within fifteen minutes by bus from Leeds city centre.


## A comparison of cinema programmes 1945-1950


The programmes screened in the ten Leeds cinemas are compared with circuit releases and with the programmes screened in independent cinemas in south-east Essex. Circuit releases are taken as the items programmed in the five south-east Essex circuit cinemas. All advertised items are included, a few of which will be shorts. Where only features are considered in the ensuing discussion, this is specified.

A complicating factor in south-east Essex is ABC's second-run cinema, the Kingsway, Hadleigh, with a programming policy only loosely tied to that of ABC's first-run house, the Rivoli in Southend-on-Sea: of the Kingsway's 833 first features during the period, 264 had previously been screened at the Rivoli. Though the Kingsway data could be omitted, adopting this course would be to downplay ABC's influence in the area. For the sake of completeness, the Kingsway screenings are included with the circuit data.

There can be problems of identification where two films with the same title were in circulation, such as the British and American versions of *Dance Hall*, and where no stars were named in newspaper advertising. In these cases, the version screened is taken to be the one most recently released.

*(i) Single features v double features.* In the six years under review, 6,652 programme changes were advertised in the *Yorkshire Evening Post* by the ten cinemas in Leeds and 9,833 in the *Southend Standard* by all the cinemas in south-east Essex.[35] In Leeds, a single feature was advertised in 5,020 (75 per cent) of cases, compared with 967 (10 per cent) of cases in south-east Essex. In both areas, the advertised supporting items were occasionally cartoons or documentaries from Rank's *This Modern Age* series rather than features, but even allowing for this, the disparity in single-feature programming is marked. A film screened as a second feature in Essex often appeared as the sole advertised item on a programme in Leeds. A shorter programme was to the advantage of exhibitors, who could more easily fit two performances into an evening. Some audiences seemed to prefer this arrangement.[36]

The double feature was introduced in the early 1930s to attract audiences at a time when the talkies had lost their novelty value and economies were going into recession.[37] The pattern throughout the country is variable. The Bernstein surveys make clear that double features were preferred by the majority of patrons of the predominantly London-based Granada circuit in the 1930s and 40s.[38] In Birmingham, double features were the norm.[39] In the city centre cinemas of Sheffield, more than half the programmes contained two features, though outside the central area, more single feature programmes were shown.[40] In Bradford, 48 per cent of cinemas advertising in the local paper listed supporting items, those cinemas showing only a single film being mainly outside the central area.[41] These findings accord with H.E. Browning and A.A. Sorrell's data for the first quarter of 1950, in which only the cinemas in the older industrial areas of the north screened a significant proportion of single-feature programmes.[42] One explanation for the difference is that the northern cinemas already had capacity audiences, so that the increased costs of screening two features would not be matched by increased returns. The flaw in this solution is that the large number of quota reliefs in Yorkshire indicate that managements could not take capacity audiences for granted, but were having to respond to patrons' demands.[43] Nor can shorter programmes be equated with significantly lower prices. The mean minimum and maximum seat prices in the sample Leeds cinemas were 8d. and 1s.7d., while the comparable

figures for south-east Essex independents were 10d. and 2s.2d. Cinema-going could be almost as cheap in both areas, the difference being in the price of the more expensive seats. Another possible explanation for the disparity is that more patrons in south-east Essex opted for expensive seats, the greater profitability allowing cinemas to screen double features. This was not the case for the year from April 1950, when cinemas in Leeds earned £16.54 per seat, compared with £14.04 in Southend-on-Sea.[44] More convincingly, competing leisure activities and different working patterns led to distinctive programming in the two areas, though this leaves unresolved the economic and cultural factors underlying the differences.[45]

The south-east Essex cinema showing most single-feature programmes was the Plaza in Southend-on-Sea — an outpost of the Manchester-based Emery circuit. Though the Plaza had an unopposed position in an area with many young families, its programming policy failed to attract audiences. This was the first cinema in the area to founder in post-war years — it became a repertory theatre in March 1948, with only Sunday screenings being retained.


*(ii) The American influence.* The fear of the intellectual elite that the mass media were encouraging the Americanisation of British culture was introduced in chapter two. The process of Americanisation was accelerated by the war. Not only did the presence of GIs allow British people to experience American culture at first hand, but American radio programmes and their style of presentation proved popular.[46] The flow of American product to British screens was stimulated by the relaxation of quota restrictions and by the dwindling supply of British features as studios were requisitioned.[47] Though most commentators agree that in some sense the British film came of age during the war, this has not been matched by research into what people actually watched.[48]

The proportion of American product screened in both areas, based on the number of programme changes, is shown in appendix 1, table 6.2. It is calculated as the residual left after excluding all British films and the handful of continental, Australian and Canadian titles. Joint Anglo-American productions are classed as British.

It is evident from the table that all exhibitors relied heavily on the Hollywood studios, particularly for programme fillers. This applied to independents more than to circuit cinemas and to independents in Leeds more than to those in south-east Essex.

The data presented may be compared with the views expressed in the trade press. Impressionistic and partial though these may be, they give a feel for the concerns of those who worked in the industry. Early in the post-war period, there was general satisfaction with the quality of British films; such criticisms as there were focused on inadequate supply, though it is not clear whether exhibitors were more intent on satisfying their audiences or their quota requirements.[49] Criticism about the quality of British films began to be voiced halfway through the period, with Herbert Wilcox calling 1948 'The non-vintage year of abounding mediocrity'.[50] Exhibitors were divided; what independents could agree on was that high rental charges made British films less attractive commercially.[51] Yet as long as quotas forced exhibitors to screen British films, distributors had little incentive to lower their charges.

Adopting this approach, the post-war period may be considered in two halves. At the end of the war, there was a demand for British films to fulfil quota obligations if not to satisfy audiences — a demand which was not being matched by the supply. Within three years, not only did the demand for British films remain unmet, but those which were produced were more expensive than their American counterparts and in many cases were less attractive to audiences.

In his discussion of dime novels, Michael Denning discerns a tension between allegoric and novelistic modes of reading, the former usually relying on a master plot or some existing body of narrative such as Christian allegory, with individuals standing for social groups.[52] Richard Dyer applies a similar distinction to film, seeing a stereotype (corresponding to Denning's allegoric mode) as a 'character constructed through the use of a few immediately recognisable traits, which do not change or "develop" through the course of the narrative'. He contrasts this with the novelistic character, 'defined by a multiplicity of traits that are only gradually revealed to us through the course of the narrative'.[53] Though the categories, allegoric and narrative, need not be accepted uncritically, they do draw attention to differences of approach.[54] The allegoric mode

was evident in such American genres as the western, the gangster story and the musical.[55] By contrast, British films were often novelistic in structure, with an emphasis on narrative development.[56] Of the 491 British films released between 1945 and 1950, 122 (25 per cent) were based on novels, including such episodic offerings as *It Always Rains on Sunday* (dir. Robert Hamer, 1947) and *London Belongs to Me* (dir. Sidney Gilliat, 1948) in which allegoric meanings can be hard to discern. An interviewee who ran an independent cinema in south-east Essex asserts that British films held less appeal because they were drama based.[57] The nuances are different, but the contrasting approaches of British and American film-makers are underlined.

*(iii) 'A' v 'U' features.* The Wheare Report of 1950 is typical of the concern voiced in the post-war years that children were seeing unsuitable 'A' features.[58] In one survey of 480 secondary modern pupils who saw 'A' features, 66.2 per cent of boys and 53.8 per cent of girls went with older friends or alone.[59] One problem was the shortage of 'U' programmes. Certificates are shown in the *Yorkshire Evening Post* for 4,871 programme changes in the sample Leeds cinemas. Of these, 1,653 (34 per cent) of programmes were comprised solely of 'U' features, i.e. suitable for attendance by children under sixteen unaccompanied by adults. Of the 9,773 south-east Essex programme changes for which certification is available, the comparable figure is 2,238 (22 per cent). The legitimate choices for unaccompanied children were limited, while the widespread flouting of the classification system could negate the censors' best efforts.

*(iv) Sunday opening.* Whether cinemas should open on Sundays was a matter left to the discretion of local authorities under the Sunday Entertainments Act 1932, with local voters having their say in referenda. Religious scruples were set aside during the war and restrictions on Sunday opening were relaxed — a measure which appeared to win general approval.[60] After the war, restrictions were reimposed in spite of efforts to exploit the precedent.[61] This meant that the residents of south-east Essex continued to see films on Sundays as they did before the war, while their compatriots in Leeds did not. There was a cultural divide, with the referenda results which

appear in the trade press in the late 1940s coming mainly for northern towns and cities. In the south. Sunday opening had been the norm since before the war. In August 1945, J.L. Hodson visited Leeds and found that the only places open on Sundays were churches.[62] In March 1946, the electorate of Leeds voted in favour of Sunday screenings.[63] Out of the city centre, this had little impact, with only three of the ten cinemas in the sample opening regularly on Sundays.[64]

For exhibitors, the incentives for Sunday opening were few. The local licensing authority could restrict Sunday opening hours, limiting programme length, as well as determining the proportion of takings which went to charity.[65] The result was that shorter and cheaper films were screened on Sundays. As these were older, their commercial potential was lower and the work of the projectionist in repairing the prints increased.[66] Individual authorities could impose additional restrictions, ranging at various times from a ban on young couples sitting together in Clones, Co. Monaghan and in Dorset, an insistence that preference be given to British films in Smethwick, to a ban on children attending Sunday performances on the Isle of Wight.[67] Against these disincentives, seaside resorts had a vested interest in providing more entertainments for Sunday visitors, in spite of a rearguard action by the Lord's Day Observance Society.[68] All the cinemas in south-east Essex opened on Sundays, though not always throughout the period. The battle here was to increase Sunday opening hours.[69]


*(v) Genres.*  A comparison of the British films screened in the two areas by genre is contained in appendix 1, table 6.3. The genre classification used is that provided by Denis Gifford. Figures in the table refer to programme changes, i.e. titles are duplicated where they were programmed more than once.

The shortage of documentaries in Leeds may be misleading. These were normally programme fillers which would not be included in the restricted classified advertising in the *Yorkshire Evening Post.* By contrast, Rank cinemas in Southend-on-Sea regularly included *This Modern Age* titles in newspaper advertising. Aside from this, the differences between the three groups of cinemas are small. Such differences as there were in the tastes of audiences are not

apparent from exhibitors' choices of genre.

*(vi) The most popular films: a ranking.* The films which achieved the greatest exposure in the three groups of cinemas are listed in appendix 1, tables 6.4 to 6.6. Because of differences in the numbers of cinemas in each group and hence in the numbers of screen days accrued, rankings give a more reliable measure for comparative purposes.[70] Screen days provide an indication of the differences between rankings within each group.

Though Rank cinemas were still short on quota by 1950, the most noticeable feature on the circuits (appendix 1, table 6.4) is the high place accorded to British films.[71] This indicates the popularity of British films with mixed-class audiences. Three *This Modern Age* shorts appear in the table — *Ceylon, the New Dominion; Women in our Time;* and *Shadow of the Ruhr.* As noted above, the series was screened ad nauseam in Rank cinemas; the fact that three of the titles were screened so often is more a measure of audiences' tolerance than an indication of the popularity of the series.

The documentary on the royal wedding is a special case which illustrates the importance of film for disseminating spectacle before the rise of television. Whether the British penchant for ceremonial would have survived the middle years of the twentieth century without the medium of film is a question for counterfactual historians.[72]

Where features were released near the end of the period, second and subsequent runs had not taken place by the cut-off date of 31 December 1950. As a consequence, these films were little seen outside the circuits. This distortion affects *Treasure Island* (dir. Byron Haskin, 1950) in particular.

Among the independents in south-east Essex, British films show up creditably (appendix 1, table 6.5). The conservatism of the circuits is apparent in their failure to screen the notorious *No Orchids for Miss Blandish* (dir. St John L. Clowes, 1948).[73] The film's regular appearance in independent cinemas suggests that there was no lack of interest among audiences in south-east Essex. Its failure to emulate this popularity in Leeds may have resulted from adverse publicity

restricting the availability of the film for youthful audiences.[74]

The American films favoured in south-east Essex independents are a mixed bunch. Among the highly-rated American features, both *The Jolson Story* (dirs Alfred E. Green and Joseph H. Lewis, US release 1946) and *The Bandit of Sherwood Forest* (dirs George Sherman and Henry Levin, US release 1946), achieved a comparable ranking in Leeds, though *Ghost Catchers* (dir. Edward Cline, US release 1944) starring Olsen and Johnson failed to appeal to Leeds audiences. This discrepancy may be indicative of a difference in humour — a point which will be considered in more detail later in this chapter.

A ranking of the films receiving most exposure in the ten Leeds cinemas appears in appendix 1, table 6.6. The films heading the list generally proved less popular in south-east Essex. In circuit cinemas, only four of the thirty-nine films come within two points of their Leeds ranking. Independents in south-east Essex hardly matched their counterparts in Leeds any more closely with just five films coming within two points of their Leeds ranking, in spite of a weak but significant correlation between the two sets of results. Though few British films appear in the list, when the small number of British titles screened in the sample cinemas is taken into consideration, their frequency of screening is greater than expected.[75]

Aside from adventure films, which were likely to be most popular with children, the American contributions to the Leeds list can be summed up as containing a star, a laugh, a tear and a song, *The Bells of St Mary's* (dir. Leo McCarey, US release 1945) being a representative example.[76] The popularity of *The Jolson Story* in Leeds has been noted by Broadley.[77] Exhibitors exploited the popularity of Danny Kaye, Bing Crosby and Bob Hope, the three stars appearing variously in seven of the thirty American films in the list. The liking for visual humour is evident from the inclusion of two Laurel and Hardy: *Bullfighters* (dir. Mal St Clair, US release 1945) and *Nothing but Trouble* (dir. Sam Taylor, US release 1944).

The American films screened most frequently are confections. Although they are difficult to classify by genre, comedies and musical elements are prominent. The strains of fantasy and utopianism have little to do with the realist values espoused by British critics (see pages 32-3).

On the basis of the Leeds results, there was a divergence between what working-class audiences watched and what critics thought they ought to watch. Nor is it surprising that elitists should be concerned about the spread of American values, given the popularity of Hollywood product.

One element of fantasy apparent in the American films is the studied avoidance of work. Characters in urban settings often inhabit the upper middle-class stratum, with little or no indication of how the bills are paid. The link between status and employment is broken, which must have proved a novel idea for British audiences. While the characters in *Up in Arms* (dir. Elliott Nugent, US release 1944) enjoy a comfortable lifestyle seemingly without having to work to support it, in British films only the upper classes can indulge themselves in this way.[78] Even Laurel and Hardy in *Fraternally Yours* (dir. William A. Seiter, US release 1934) had settled into an affluent existence in which work is never mentioned — a far cry from the duo's two-reelers of a few years earlier, in which they were forever trying new jobs and failing spectacularly.

Many popular American films present a world in which lack of money is no bar to participation in society. The poor are people with fewer material possessions rather than being intrinsically different. They have the capacity to become rich and famous, as *The Jolson Story* or countless other backstage musicals testify. Yet equality is a chimera. Other social distinctions exist: between town and country in *State Fair* (dir. Walter Lang, US release 1945) and *Three Little Girls in Blue* (dir. Bruce Humberstone, US release 1946), and between races — the black servant lurks in the background of many films including *Blossoms in the Dust* (dir. Mervyn LeRoy US release 1941) and *No Sad Songs for Me* (dir. Rudolph Maté, US release 1950).

The elements of fantasy and utopianism are shared by the leading British films in the list, notably *The Seventh Veil* and *Madonna of the Seven Moons* (dir. Arthur Crabtree, 1944). Even the documentary on the royal wedding may be seen as the story of a fairy-tale princess, while *The Way to the Stars* (dir. Anthony Asquith, 1945) has its utopian strand in the heroine's search for happiness within a relationship, though in this case an American airman takes the place of the foreign aristocrat as prince charming. In the 1940s, realism had its virtues, but fantasy filled the cinemas.

*(vii) The popularity of British films.* The frequency of screenings of British films by screen days in the three groups of cinemas is given in appendix 1, chart 6.1. In the Leeds cinemas and the independent cinemas of south-east Essex, around half of all British films programmed were screened for six days or less over the years 1945 to 1950. This is indicative of the sheer number of films available as much as the indifferent response of audiences. The circuits had the pick of releases, so it is not surprising that poor performers were only programmed once, while the commercial potential of the more successful features was exploited by re-screening them. The higher percentage of also-rans among British films screened in the Leeds cinemas than among the independents of south-east Essex may be attributable to the large number of cinemas in a fairly compact city — with so much competition, second-run films were only given one opportunity to prove their worth at the box office, though this does imply that a sizeable proportion of audiences actively sought out films rather than staying loyal to a local cinema.[79]

The particular circumstances of south-east Essex must be borne in mind when considering the higher frequency of repeat screenings of British films by circuit cinemas. The Kingsway was used as a second-run cinema by ABC, boosting the number of repeats. A characteristic of programming at the Gaumont, Southend, was for popular films to be retained for a second week. When this occurred, Gaumont's normal programme of weekly releases was transferred to the nearby Ritz, which had a larger capacity, but a less prominent position.[80] Other Odeon and Gaumont rereleases were also screened at the Ritz. Such opportunities were not available in towns without a third Rank cinema.

The British features receiving the greatest exposure in each of the three groups of cinemas are listed in appendix 1, table 6.7. The cut-off point for inclusion in the table is necessarily arbitrary, so any conclusions must be treated with caution.

Films with contemporary settings predominate. Of the twenty-nine films in the Leeds list, only five are historical dramas. Eight are either set in wartime or focus on the problems of readjusting to civilian life. All of these had been released by the end of 1946.[81] The oldest film in the Leeds list is *The Thief of Baghdad* (dirs Michael Powell, Ludwig Berger and Tim Whelan,

1940). Though its inclusion emphasises the independents' reliance on older films, it also reveals the liking of Leeds' cinema-goers for old favourites — a sentiment which was not shared in south-east Essex.

Independents could not escape the dominating influence of the Rank empire on the British cinema industry. Of the twenty-nine most popular British features shown in the sample Leeds cinemas, thirteen (45 per cent) were rented from Rank's General Film Distributors, compared with 33 per cent from the same source on the south-east Essex independents list. On the circuits, the percentage was 41 per cent, with most of the higher rankings going to Rank's own titles. Even this underestimates Rank's influence given that some features from the Gainsborough and Ealing studios (owned by Rank), including Ealing's *The Overlanders* (dir. Harry Watt, 1946), were distributed by Eagle-Lion. The corollary is that ABPC's product fared less well. Only one title in the Leeds list came from the ABPC stable — *Piccadilly Incident* (dir. Herbert Wilcox, 1946). Two ABPC features appear in the circuits list and none in the list for south-east Essex independents. Excluding the second-run Kingsway from the circuit data set would worsen ABPC's position among circuit cinemas in south-east Essex even more.

Of the twelve ABPC features for which data is available, the three earning most among the independents nationally — *My Brother Jonathan* (dir. Harold French, 1948), *The Guinea Pig* (dir. Roy Boulting, 1948) and *Brighton Rock* (dir. John Boulting, 1947) — had modest success in Leeds, each achieving twelve screen days and ranking twenty-first.[82] They fared little better in south-east Essex independents, *My Brother Jonathan* being screened for twenty-four days, ranking nineteenth, and the other two for eighteen days, ranking twenty-fifth.

A breakdown by genre of the titles in appendix 1, table 6.7 is given in the following table, appendix 1, table 6.8. On this basis, the favourites on the circuits are a more varied collection than those of the independents. Romances figure highly among the favourites in Leeds, which is suggestive of a high proportion of women among the cinema-goers. The absence of musicals in the list seems to contradict the success of *The Jolson Story* and *State Fair* (appendix 1, table 6.6). Nor does it accord with the relatively high percentage of British musicals screened in Leeds

(appendix 1, table 6.3). Taken together, the facts are indicative of the limited appeal of British musicals — at least of those which independent cinemas in Leeds were able to afford — though exhibitors were ever hopeful.[83]


*(viii) British stars.* Defining stars arbitrarily as the principal actors listed for each film in *Halliwell's film and video guide,* the names which recur most frequently against the titles in appendix 1, table 6.7 may be computed.[84] The results are shown in appendix 1, table 6.9. The number of films involved is small, so that including one more might be enough alter the rankings of the stars. This means that the results can be no more than a starting point for more detailed research.

Aside from Anne Crawford and Marius Goring, both of whom might be thought of as actors rather than stars, most of the names are those appearing in audience polls. James Mason dominates the rankings amongst independents in both areas. His success in *Picturegoer* and *Daily Mail* polls (appendix 1, table 6.10) suggests that his name was enough to attract audiences, irrespective of the film.

There are two surprises. Margaret Lockwood's dominant position in polls during the first years of the period is less evident in the sample cinemas, where she only appears in one film on the circuit cinemas list in appendix 1, table 6.7. Though her name has become synonymous with 1940s British cinema, particularly for her roles in costume dramas, on this evidence, her pre-eminence needs to be treated with caution.

The second surprise is the indifferent response to Anna Neagle in the Leeds cinemas. The polls in appendix 1, table 6.10 show the most popular British features as well as the most popular stars. In the immediate post-war years, the polls correspond fairly well with what was screened most frequently in Leeds. Later, the national popularity of the Wilcox films starring Neagle was not matched in Leeds. Aside from *Odette* (1950), the Wilcox films had reached second-run cinemas, so timing is not a sufficient explanation. The dated class image and/or the London settings of the Mayfair cycle may not have appealed to Leeds audiences, though a more

prosaic solution is that high rental costs deterred exhibitors.

The poor showing of Lockwood on the circuits and of Neagle in the Leeds cinemas should serve as a caution against an over-reliance on poll results to indicate popularity. Although the chosen cinemas may be atypical, other possibilities are that the stars' predominance may not have been countrywide, or that the polls were not representative of audiences' views.

*(ix) Quality British films.* It is easy to assume that cinemas in a working-class community screened undemanding fare designed to appeal to the lowest standards of a mass audience. One virtue of local studies is that they confound easy value judgements.

What constitutes a 'quality' film is contentious. Patently, cost is not a reliable measure: *Saraband for Dead Lovers* (dirs. Basil Dearden and Michael Relph, 1948) cost over three times as much as *Hue and Cry* (dir. Charles Crichton, 1947), but by the standards of the box office it could hardly be deemed three times better.[85] Recourse has to be made to critical judgement. But whose judgement?

An inkling of the pitfalls becomes apparent from examining Pierre Bourdieu's approach. He begins from a theoretical standpoint: 'To the socially recognised hierarchy of the arts, and within each of them, of genres, schools or periods, corresponds a social hierarchy of the consumers. This predisposes tastes to function as a markers of "class".'[86] Though Bourdieu subsequently modifies his stance, as a definition of class, his approach remains problematic.[87] Class might equally well function as a marker of taste, with the implication that low class equates with low taste. To avoid such *a priori* assumptions, taste and class need to be treated as independent variables.

An approach more satisfying to historians than that proposed by Bourdieu is to consider what critics at the time thought. Ostensibly, this is what John Ellis provides.[88] But this is historiography with an agenda, which is to provide a critique of 1970s attitudes to film-making by summoning a retrospective definition of quality. As one instance, Ellis detects a distinction between the creative freedom apparent prior to 1948 and the subsequent control of film

production by accountants.[89] Though this may be convenient for finding parallels with the film industry of the 1970s, the validity of his assertion is questionable.[90]

In the absence of agreement on what constitutes a quality film, an arbitrary definition has to be employed. Supposing that four directors — Anthony Asquith, David Lean, Michael Powell and Carol Reed — are taken as representative of the values upheld in the 1940s, to the extent of having their work reviewed in the quality press. How did their films fare in the sample cinemas? Their most often-screened works as identified by their appearance in appendix 1, table 6.7 are tabulated in appendix 1, table 6.11. The work of the four directors appeared with comparable frequency in all three groups of cinemas. On this basis, working-class audiences displayed no lack of discrimination. This would have pleased Michael Powell, who claimed that 'I have great respect for the popular audience: they know what we are driving at before we know it ourselves.'[91]

Inevitably there are idiosyncrasies. The failure of Lean's *Brief Encounter* with a working-class audience in Rochester has been noted (page 169). The film managed a single three-day run in the Leeds cinemas, suggesting that working-class audiences there were no more enthusiastic. Nor is it likely that many parents in working-class Leeds could afford ballet lessons for their daughters, so the lack of success of *The Red Shoes* (dirs Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger, 1948) is not surprising. This was another film which never got beyond a single three-day run. Though it achieved twenty-five screen days among south-east Essex independents, ranking eighteenth, it was a failure in Pitsea, a predominantly working-class district, when it was screened at the Broadway cinema.[92] Popular audiences did not always divine what Powell and Pressburger were driving at. A more modest ballet film made for children — *The Little Ballerina* (dir. Lewis Gilbert, 1947) — failed to get a showing in the Leeds cinemas, even though it was the story of a girl from a poor background who became a ballerina.

The high ranking of *The Way to the Stars* (dir. Anthony Asquith, 1945) both in Leeds and on the circuits indicates that critical and popular success were not incompatible. Barring may have been a factor in the film's poor ranking amongst independents in south-east Essex. If the

title was not available to them until its commercial potential had dwindled, what is not clear is why its distribution did not follow a similar course in Leeds. Rank may have misjudged its box-office potential there, Leeds audiences may have been slow to take to the film, or they may have decided that this was a film which did not have to be caught on its first run.[93] Similar arguments may be adduced for the mixed fortunes of a film which received less critical acclaim, *Madonna of the Seven Moons*. It was screened for eighteen days in the south-east Essex independents — a respectable, but not outstanding total — but did well in Leeds and in the circuit cinemas.

*(x) Humour.* The popularity of Laurel and Hardy in Leeds has already been noted (page 188). The success of *Old Mother Riley at Home* (dir. Oswald Mitchell, 1944) reinforces the view that Leeds cinema-goers enjoyed visual humour derived from the music hall. A clearer idea of tastes in humour in the two areas can be gained from appendix 1, table 6.12. The failure of an Old Mother Riley film to achieve such a high ranking in the independents of south-east Essex indicates the lack of any obvious favourites in the series rather than any overall lack of popularity there — on the basis of screen days, the success of the films south-east Essex independents was comparable to that enjoyed in Leeds.

Old Mother Riley films were not prime circuit fare, normally playing as supporting features. The same might be said of the output of John Blakeley's Manchester Film Studios. The Mancunian films were almost exclusively comedies, the difference from the Old Mother Riley series being that they were as northern as black pudding and mushy peas, and had little exposure in south-east Essex. Determining how far south their popularity extended might shed light on a complex web of cultural attitudes: the name of Frank Randle failed to elicit any glimmer of recognition from two interviewees who grew up in Birmingham.[94] A further point of interest which cannot be explored here is how far the popularity of the Mancunian films was based on class rather than being geographically determined. What did cinema-goers in middle-class Harrogate or Didsbury think of them? To confound this rather insular picture, one Mancunian film was successful on the circuits. This was *Home Sweet Home* (dir. John E. Blakeley, 1945),

which ran for two weeks as main feature at the Gaumont, Southend-on-Sea, and ranked eleventh in circuit screenings.

Formby's waning appeal at the box office was noted in the previous chapter (page 134). It is apparent in the circuits' lack of interest in his films. Though Formby might be thought of as a northern taste, a higher proportion of screen days were devoted to his films in the south-east Essex independents than in the Leeds cinemas. Conversely, his early and less sophisticated films *Boots, Boots* (dir. John Tracey, 1934) and *Off the Dole* (dir. John Mertz, 1935) were held in affection by Leeds audiences, being screened for a total of twenty-one days between 1945 and 1950. Over the same period, they were never programmed in south-east Essex.

If the humour of Mancunian films appealed to Leeds audiences more than to audiences further south, the opposite applied to the Will Hay comedies. Hay's screen persona also developed from a music hall tradition, but the verbal element was stronger, reflecting Hay's own fascination with language.[95] Seaton and Martin quote from an interview with Fred Karno, in whose troupe both Chaplin and Hay worked early in their careers: 'The secret of the old-time North Country comedian's success . . . lies in the fact that he is what you might call a domestic comedian. His background is usually the kitchen, which in working-class homes is the homeliest room in the house.'[96] Karno's words help to define what Leeds audiences looked for in films about ordinary people: characters who appeared in familiar settings and who responded to situations in ways which audiences might themselves choose. Hay failed to measure up to these ideals. Kitchens loom large in the comedy of Old Mother Riley, Formby and the Mancunian films; washing up never featured in Will Hay sketches. This accords with Eric Midwinter's assessment of Hay as representing the lower middle class aspiring for the middle — a theme redolent of the thirties.[97] For the middle class, the kitchen was too much like a reminder of working-class origins to be put on display.

Though associated with this avoidance of domestic comedy, the absence of family life in Hay's films has failed to attract comment. It makes him the most enigmatic of the comedians considered. This becomes apparent when his biographers fail to find common ground on such a

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basic issue as his attitude to authority.[98]

Even further from Karno's dictum were the Ealing comedies produced under Balcon's tutelage. The only post-war Ealing comedies shown in the Leeds cinemas were *Hue and Cry* (dir. Charles Crichton, 1947) with six screen days (ranked twenty-seventh) and *Passport to Pimlico* (dir. Henry Cornelius, 1949) with three screen days (ranked thirtieth).[99] Although most of the Ealing comedies appeared towards the end of the period, this does not fully explain the paucity of screenings in working-class Leeds given that subsequent-run cinemas in south-east Essex were booking them. Nor is barring an adequate explanation given that the 1947 comedy *Hue and Cry* achieved seventeen screen days in the south-east Essex independents. If there was any demand for the film in working-class Leeds, exhibitors would have seized the opportunity to screen it over the ensuing three years. What aspect of the Ealing films failed to appeal to Leeds audiences can only be guessed at. It may have been the element of whimsy, though *Kind Hearts and Coronets* (dir. Robert Hamer, 1949) is more black than whimsical. It may have been the London settings. *Whisky Galore* (dir. Alexander Mackendrick, 1949), with its Scottish setting, might have served as a test case in this respect, but it was issued too late in the period to make any impact in second and subsequent-run cinemas.[100] The strong verbal element of Ealing comedies may have counted against them in Leeds — Max Miller's quickfire delivery never went down well in the northern variety halls.[101] Another possibility is that the citizens of Leeds favoured a casual approach to cinema-going, dropping in during the course of a continuous performance. Plot-driven scenarios are inimical to this. Enter a cinema in the middle of a feature starring Laurel and Hardy or Old Mother Riley and the visual gags can be savoured without having to make sense of the plot. This can hardly be said of Ealing's humour.

The characteristics of Ealing comedies are also elements of Balcon's middle-class value system. As in the Will Hay comedies, authority could be gently mocked, but it was not to be overthrown. It is hard to imagine Balcon sanctioning *Zéro de Conduite* (dir. Jean Vigo, 1933) or *If. . .* (dir. Lindsay Anderson, 1968).

The Marx Brothers are included in the table for two reasons. First, they offer a distinctive

brand of comedy in an identifiable body of films. Their wisecracking approach puts them closer

to the metropolitan humour of Max Miller and Will Hay (or the Liverpudlian humour of Tommy

Handley, Ted Ray and Ken Dodd) than to the domestic humour of Formby, Old Mother Riley

and the Mancunian comedies. Secondly, Durgnat notes the popularity of Marx brothers films in

Leeds, relating this to the Jewish sense of humour.[102] His assessment of their popularity is not

borne out by the frequency of screenings in the sample cinemas, though cinemas in districts with

larger Jewish populations such as Chapeltown and Alwoodley might have yielded different

results.[103]

Enough films are extant to give an idea of performers' styles. Why did an Aldwych farce

such as *Banana Ridge* (dir. Walter C. Mycroft, 1941) achieve sixteen screen days in south-east

Essex (including a week as second feature at the prestigious Odeon, Southend-on-Sea), while it

was never shown in the Leeds cinemas? Similarly, the Crazy Gang never met with any success in

the Leeds cinemas.[104] Regional differences in humour merit further study.

Successful comedies are those which make audiences laugh. What is not apparent so long

after the event is why they laughed. One retired projectionist felt that audiences enjoyed cheap

British comedies because they were so bad.[105] This introduces a note of knowingness into the

reception of films by audiences — an awareness of quality and of the potential of the film-

making process which make popularity and success into problematic terms. Audiences can

appreciate a film as narrative at the same time as savouring the skill (or lack of skill) which goes

into its creation. Given that the audiences of fifty years ago were steeped in the ways of the

cinema, it is naive to assume that they were unable to make the distinction.


British feature films not screened in the sample cinemas


It should not be assumed that every release was seized upon by grateful exhibitors. As appendix

1, table 6.13 makes clear, around a quarter of all British features released between 1945 and

1949 were never screened in the sample areas by the end of 1950. (Films released in 1950 are

excluded from the table on the grounds that many would have had little opportunity to reach subsequent-run cinemas.) Leeds exhibitors showed little enthusiasm for booking new British releases. Their aversion to romances was marked, which seems contrary to the popularity of the genre in Leeds apparent from appendix 1, table 6.8 (see page 192). Evidently only romances with proven box-office potential were sought.

The Leeds exhibitors' reluctance to book children's films is also striking. Though this may indicate a reluctance to deter older age groups or to pay high rentals for films with limited appeal, it may also be an indication that Rank's children's films found little favour with working-class audiences. Aside from an occasional Saturday matinee western to replace a regular programme, newspaper advertising fails to reveal any attempt to woo an exclusively juvenile audience with Saturday cinema clubs.

Many of the crime films released between 1945 and 1949 were second features running for 60 to 80 minutes. Circuits could take their pick among these. The same applies to comedies. Independent Leeds exhibitors placed more reliance on older, cheaper films which had proved their worth at the box office, while independent exhibitors in south-east Essex were willing to gamble on a greater proportion of newer British releases. Audiences in the latter area may have shown a greater liking for the novelty of the new. From the exhibitors' viewpoint, if the regular audience was intolerant of older films, more variety had to be sought from newer product which satisfied quota requirements.

It is tempting to speculate whether some films were not screened in working-class Leeds because audiences there disliked the middle-class, home counties ethos. The failure of the Leeds cinemas to programme *Mr Perrin and Mr Traill* (dir. Lawrence Huntington, 1948), set in a boarding school, or *Dear Mr Prohack* (dir. Thornton Freedland, 1949), in which the leading character inhabits the upper echelons of Whitehall, supports this view. But to assess class ethos in films, each one has to be taken on its merits; the loss of so many films means that this can only be partially attempted, even if the quagmire of value judgements can be negotiated. And how can class be distinguished from cultural values attributable to regional differences and in particular

to the north south divide? The success in Leeds of *29 Acacia Avenue* (dir. Henry Cass, 1945) (see appendix 1, table 6.7), or to a lesser extent of *Great Day* (dir. Lance Comfort, 1945), which managed twelve screen days — both resolutely middle-class films — confounds any simplistic notion of how class was viewed by audiences.

## Cinemas and audiences in other parts of England

Aside from survey evidence, some quantitative data on cinema audiences elsewhere in the country has survived, more by luck than foresight.

Returns from the Majestic, Macclesfield, have been analysed by Julian Poole.[106] The Majestic was an independent, first-run cinema in a town with no circuit cinemas.[107] Unfortunately only 1945 and 1946 data overlaps with the present study.

The returns from the Gaumont, Sheffield, are mentioned in Allen Eyles' book on Gaumont cinemas.[108] Extant returns run from January 1948 into the early 1950s, but as each return includes a comparison with the same week in the previous year, effectively they provide a record of attendances and box-office receipts back to January 1947.[109] The manager's comments on audience reactions to the films take the data beyond mere figures and will be utilised in later chapters.

Allen Eyles also holds records from the Empire, Leicester Square.[110] This is seemingly the only extant run of attendance figures for the whole period 1945 to 1950. A prominent West End theatre has even less connection with the Leeds cinemas than the Gaumont, Sheffield, but no detailed data on audiences can be ignored.

Finally, a few weekly returns have recently come to light for the Daffodil in Cheltenham, an independent, family cinema.[111] These give tantalising clues to what people watched in a town far removed socially from the back-to-back houses of Leeds.

No direct comparison is possible between the data from the four cinemas: different periods are covered and the cinemas pursued different programming policies (the Gaumont, Sheffield,

screened mainly Rank films, the Empire almost none). What can be done is to assess the popularity of British films, both in terms of their position within the rankings for each cinema and in how the rankings compare between cinemas and with those in Leeds. The results are summarised in appendix 1, table 6.14.[112] All British features for which details are available and which were screened between 1945 and 1950 are listed, with the exception that only the most popular of some 140 British features screened at the Gaumont, Sheffield, are included. Data on attendance/revenue is provided as a guide to the quantitative differences between rankings. Because records of the Gaumont, Sheffield, and the Empire, Leicester Square, run to 1950, new releases from the end of the period will not always have percolated through the distribution system to other cinemas; accordingly, release dates are given for films shown in both cinemas.

Aside from *The Wicked Lady* (dir. Leslie Arliss, 1945), British films received a middling response at the Majestic, Macclesfield. This contrasts with the early years of the war, when George Formby films achieved top positions. The change can be attributed to the presence of American troops from 1942 to 1944, which boosted the demand for American films.[113] Not that this deterred Macclesfield residents from visiting the Majestic: Mancunian comedies were the top-ranking British films of 1942 and 1943.[114] The appearance of *Home Sweet Home* in sixth place in the 1945-46 list (appendix 1, table 6.14) confirms the impression gained from the film's success on the circuits that there was something about it which caught the public's imagination (see page 195). Ealing's post-war output was not to the taste of Majestic patrons, judging by the two Ealing titles languishing at the bottom of the list. Not that the middle-class angst of *Brief Encounter* fared much better. Whatever Majestic audiences liked, it was not this.

The most notable feature of the Gaumont, Sheffield, list is the success of Dickens adaptations. Quality will out, though other explanations for their success are that the publicity was effective, or that schools encouraged or cajoled older pupils to attend. The high placing of *The White Unicorn* (dir. Bernard Knowles, 1947) is misleading. This is a rare instance of a supporting item carrying the main feature: the documentary on the royal wedding was screened in the same programme.[115] British features did well at the Gaumont, with highest attendances

showing up early in the period. As in Macclesfield, Ealing fared badly, with only *It Always Rains on Sunday* (dir. Robert Hamer, 1947), in many ways atypical Ealing fare, achieving any sort of popularity.

British features fared less well at the Empire, Leicester Square. This has always been a location from which to launch prestigious productions, so these dominate the list. Not that prestige always equates with success, as the fate of *Bonnie Prince Charlie* (dir. Anthony Kimmins, 1948) illustrates.[116] Wilcox's Mayfair cycle did well at the Empire, which accords with its popularity in the polls. *Spring in Park Lane* (1948) is the only film in the cycle whose progress can be followed at the Gaumont, Sheffield, where it was the fourth most popular British feature. This contrasts with the indifferent response to *I Live in Grosvenor Square* (1945) in Macclesfield — the only film of the cycle to appear in the extant records of the Majestic. Judging by its fifteen screen days in Leeds, the film was hardly more popular there.

The records from the Daffodil, Cheltenham, are fragmentary, though the ordering is still interesting. *Black Narcissus* (dirs Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger, 1947) does not appear in the other three listings, so its fortunes cannot be compared. Repressed passions and meaningful glances failed to stir Leeds audiences. The film managed six screen days there. In south-east Essex, it ranked eighth in the circuit cinemas with twenty-three days (appendix 1, table 6.4) and a less impressive twenty-eighth in the independents, with fifteen screen days.

The success of *Great Expectations* (dir. David Lean, 1946) in Cheltenham mirrors its success at the Gaumont, Sheffield, and in the circuit cinemas of south-east Essex (appendix 1, table 6.4). It was screened for a creditable twenty-eight days in the south-east Essex independents, ranking fifteenth, but only managed nine screen days in the Leeds cinemas.

It cannot be said that the rankings in any of the four cinemas for which returns are available correspond with those in the sample cinemas of Leeds or in south-east Essex, though a few titles such as *The Way to the Stars* and *They Were Sisters* (dir. Arthur Crabtree, 1945) recur. Such fragmentary details are not enough to confirm Richards' thesis of multiple identities (page 168). More work needs to be done, but unless more returns come to light, resort will have to be made

to such indirect measures as Sedgwick's POPSTAT (page 170), or to screen days.


## The cinema-going experience


If audiences interpreted films in the light of their own experiences and reflexively used films in making sense of their own lives, the exhibitor was the ringmaster in this dialectical sleight of hand. His was not a neutral role. The exhibitor wooed a potential audience by selecting and advertising the programme. It was the exhibitor who determined the balance between rowdyism and officiousness, the temperature of the auditorium, the music played during the interval, the level of lighting and whether the stocks of ice cream were adequate for the last house on a Saturday evening. It was from such prosaic details that the cinema-going experience of patrons was made.

Though the ability of an exhibitor to offer added value such as an organ interlude was dependent on the size and facilities of the individual cinema, there were regional differences in what audiences expected. The preponderance of shorter, single-feature programmes in Leeds has already been noted. Others differences were less obvious. As both written and oral sources confirm, Leeds cinemas adopted a policy of separate, bookable performances on Saturday evenings.[117] This emphasises the popularity of the cinema as a Saturday evening entertainment, though it does not account for why Leeds should be different from south-east Essex — or from nearby Bradford, where the policy was only followed by a few cinemas.[118] No live performances were advertised in the Leeds cinemas, whereas these were regular occurrences in south-east Essex — not only talent contests and amateur pantomimes, but stage acts introducing audiences to Carl Memphis, international astrologer, at the Plaza, Southchurch, and to the Great Nixon, conjuror, at the Regal, Rayleigh.[119] No cinema went as far as the Odeon at Alfreton, Derbyshire, in having animal acts on stage between films — the fashion for live performances was not a simple north south distinction.[120] Where cinema-goers in south-east Essex did lose out was in the provision of double seats. These were recalled by all northern interviewees. They were to be

found in the Birmingham area and at the Daffodil. Cheltenham, but were a rarity in southern England.[121] The watershed is no clearer than where the northern term 'bug-hutch' for the more dubious industrials gives way to the southern term 'flea-pit'.

Another aspect of the cinema-going experience was savoured by taste. In normal times, the spacious foyers of super cinemas with their separate confectionery kiosks allowed a greater range of confectionery, nuts and cigarettes to be displayed than in older cinemas where stocks had to be crammed into an often minuscule box office. Rationing reduced this advantage, though by some quirk of the regulations, Butterkist remained off ration.[122] The returns from the Gaumont, Sheffield, give an idea of the importance of sales as a sources of income: from 6 October 1947 to the end of 1950, gross revenue from tickets was £252,575, of which around a third comprised entertainments duty; over the same period, cafe sales totalled £38,665 and theatre sales £61,161. Half the latter figure came from ice cream, the rest being made up from confectionery and cigarette sales. the proportions fluctuating from week to week according to whether the film being screened appealed more to children or to adults.[123] With duty excluded, sales made up almost forty per cent of income, though independent cinemas may have relied more on the box-office.[124]


## Conclusions


The primary purpose of this case study has been to discover what a cinema audience in a working-class area watched. This is possible, though how much of what was seen came about as a result of the demands of audiences and how much from the power accorded to distributors and exhibitors is less clear. Nor can a quantitative approach reveal why some films achieved repeated runs. The attraction may have been the star, the genre, the story or its treatment.

Though the working-class community in Leeds has been used as a sample, it should not necessarily be taken as typical. The paucity of detailed research into cinema-going in the 1940s means that there are few points of comparison  A study of cinema-going in Manchester and

Bristol might yield differing results. The regional comparison reveals some differences in taste, but is open to the criticism that south-east Essex is dissimilar to Leeds in its social structure and its urban-rural mix.

Some elements of a national distribution pattern can be seen in operation in both areas, notably the circuits' superior buying power, which determined when British films reached second-run houses. But differences between the two groups of independents hint at local factors being implicated. It is useful to consider national taste as the sum of regional and class preferences rather than as a homogeneous entity existing throughout the country with minor variations. Nor can region and class be easily separated. Where Leeds exhibitors found little demand for films which were popular elsewhere, it is difficult to determine whether it was the films' middle-class ethos or their southernness which failed to appeal. Almost inevitably, this case study throws up as many questions as it answers.

Notwithstanding these cautions, some conclusions are possible:

- Independent cinemas showed a higher proportion of American product than circuit cinemas.

- On the circuits, most of the films receiving the greatest exposure were British; among independents, most were American.

- Patrons of cinemas in working-class Leeds were overwhelmingly exposed to American cultural values in their film-going.

- Differences of humour between Leeds and south-east Essex are discernible, with a greater emphasis on visual humour in Leeds.

- In booking British films, the exhibitors in the sample Leeds cinemas chose a greater proportion of older films than independents in south-east Essex.

- Leeds cinema-goers followed the northern cultural pattern of accepting single-feature programmes more than their counterparts in south-east Essex.

- Where stars were popular nationally, this was not always emulated in local studies, the poor exposure of Anna Neagle's films in Leeds being a case in point.

- The films receiving most exposure in the Leeds cinemas emphasised entertainment and utopianism. Less prominent were films with a realist stance, in which narrative and dialogue were paramount. This trend was less apparent on the circuits or in the south-east Essex independents.

- Many of the most popular films seen in the sample Leeds cinemas were middle class in ethos, which casts doubt on the original hypothesis (page 7).

Having determined what working-class patrons watched, it is possible to go a stage further and to consider how the makers of the films portrayed them, both in films which were popular and in some which few working-class audiences saw. The intention is not merely to illustrate how class was treated in films, but to consider what this indicates about audiences who paid to see people like themselves on the screen. This study forms the basis for part three.

## Notes

1. Jeffrey Richards, *Stars in our eyes: Lancashire stars of stage, screen and radio*, Preston: Lancashire County Books, 1994, 4 and 5; Patrick Joyce, *Visions of the people: industrial England and the question of class 1848-1914*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991.

2. John Sedgwick, 'Film "hits" and "misses" in mid-1930s Britain', *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television*, 1998, vol.18, no.3, 333-51.

3. The Gaumont-owned Pavilion cinema in Beeston, Leeds, gained the disapproval of Gerald Kaufman's parents who felt that the area was 'rough'. Gerald Kaufman, *My life in the silver screen*, London: Faber, 1985, 24.

4. An explicit statement of the categories appears in 'Conflicting tastes of British film-goers', *World Film News*, February 1937, vol.1, no.11, 6-7. Distinctions are made by the 'social type' of the audience: working-class, mixed 'family' and middle-class. Cinemas in working-class areas were more usually termed 'industrial halls' or 'industrials' in trade reviews, including those of the 1940s, while middle-class areas had 'discerning audiences'. By inference, the mixed 'family' audiences belonged to the lower middle class and upper working class.
   The geographical dimension is exemplified in a trade paper from the same year: 'Many films that have been eminently suitable in the West End of London have registered very badly in the provinces, particularly Yorkshire, Lancashire and the North.' Arthur R. Favell, director of Hillsborough Kinema and Walkley Palladium, Sheffield, 'Exhibitors discuss what the public wants', *The Daily Film Renter*, 1 January 1937, v.

5. Support for this comes from the Mass-Observation study of cinema-going in Worktown. See Jeffrey Richards and Dorothy Sheridan (eds.) *Mass-Observation at the movies*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1987, 41-135.

6. Jephcott's sample of London working-class girls voted *Brief Encounter* very poor. Pearl Jephcott, *Rising twenty: notes on some ordinary girls*, London: Faber, 1948, 155. Neither did it please juvenile audiences generally. 'Audience probes', *Cinema and Theatre Construction*, July 1947, vol.14, no.2, 27. The working-class audience at the preview in Rochester laughed at the love scenes. The film had to be advertised in the north as being good in spite of the wild praise of London critics. Kevin Brownlow, *David Lean: a biography*, London, Faber, 1997, 203.

7. The problems of using film fan magazines have been encountered by Jackie Stacey, who resorted to questionnaires for her study. Jackie Stacey, *Star gazing: Hollywood cinema and female spectatorship*, London: Routledge, 1994. Annette Kuhn suggests that one in ten of regular cinema-goers read fan magazines. These were mainly adolescent females. Annnette Kuhn, 'Cinema, culture and femininity in the 1930s', in Christine Gledhill and Gillian Swanson (eds.) *Nationalising femininity: culture, sexuality and the British cinema in the Second World War*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996, 183.

8. Janet Thumim, 'Methodological and critical problems arising from the question of popular cinema's contribution to the ideology of the feminine in Britain between 1945-1965', PhD thesis, University of London, 1992.

9. John Sedgwick, 'Cinema-going preferences in Britain in the 1930s', in Jeffrey Richards (ed.) *The unknown 1930s: an alternative history of the British cinema*, London: Tauris, 1998, 1-35.

10. id. 'The British film industry and the market for feature films in Britain 1932-37', PhD thesis, London Guildhall University, 1995, 10-20; Kaufman, op.cit. (ch.6, n.3) 35-6.
    The average life of a print was 70 screenings, though with skilled projectionists and good equipment, a life of 900 screenings was possible. *Odeon Circle*, March 1948, vol.1, no.9., 4.

11. For seeing the same film twice, see Jephcott, op.cit. (ch.6, n.6) 153; David Fowler, *The first teenagers: the lifestyle of young wage-earners in interwar Britain*, London: Woburn Press, 1995, 132. For the habit of leaving before the end of the second house, see Laurence Edmonds, 'Fleapit nights', *Sight and Sound*, October-December 1951, vol.21, new quarterly series, no.2, 87. Even Jephcott's girls failed to rival the Liverpudlian Pat O'Mara who could while away twelve hours in the Palais de Lux in Lime Street before the war. Pat O'Mara, *The autobiography of a Liverpool slummy*, London: Martin Hopkinson, 1934, 71.

12. Allen Eyles (personal communication). For details of Gaumont's booking arrangements and their relative inflexibility, see Allen Eyles, *Gaumont British cinemas*, Burgess Hill, West Sussex: Theatre Cinema Association, 1996, 129. This work also provides a listing of Gaumont releases for the 1945 to 1950 period. For a listing of ABC releases see Allen Eyles, *ABC: the first name in entertainment*, Burgess Hill, West Sussex: Theatre Cinema Association, and London: BFI, 1993.

13. The latter problem applied particularly to Gaumont, which inherited a collection of run-down cinemas. Representative of these was the Cameo in Webster Road, Liverpool. The Cameo was a converted chapel hidden amongst the working-class housing of Wavertree. It gained notoriety in 1949 when the manager was murdered during a robbery. Eyles, *Gaumont British cinemas*, 146.
    From his work on cinema-going in the 1930s, Sedgwick concludes that the circuits did not exclude their rivals' films. Sedgwick, 'Cinema-going preferences in Britain in the 1930s', 5. However, where a Rank first-run cinema was available, there would be no incentive to let an ABC cinema screen a new Rank release.

14. A notorious example of a film receiving a limited distribution was *Chance of a Lifetime* (dir. Bernard Miles, 1950), which was forced on the circuits by the Board of Trade. See *The Daily Film Renter*, 27 February 1950, 3. This film will be considered further in chapter eight.

15. Barring gave a larger and more powerful cinema the sole right to screen a film in an area until its commercial potential had dwindled. The major circuits could control the exhibition of the more lucrative films by barring them to all other cinemas within a specified distance. In turn, the more prestigious independents and the smaller circuits such as Shipman and King barred their weaker brethren.

16. For a theoretical approach to exhibition strategies within the industry, see Arthur de Vany and W. David Walls, 'Bose-Einstein dynamics and adaptive contracting in the motion picture industry', *Economic Journal*, November 1996, vol.100, no.439, 1493-514.

One example of a film which struggled through a limited circuit release but failed to attract audiences is Rank's *Uncle Silas* (dir. Charles Frank, 1947). It grossed £42,800 from circuit bookings by 24 December 1949 (the mean circuit gross of 24 Rank films was £79,500) and £53,200 from other bookings (the mean gross for the same 24 films was £82,371). The producers' share was £70, 200. Given the high costs of production (£366,254), the film lost £283,600. PRO BT 64/4490, schedules 2 and 4. (The extra £12,454 of producers' income probably derived from overseas bookings.) Without a circuit release and its attendant publicity, few independents would have been likely risk a booking. Much the same may be said of ABPC's *Temptation Harbour* (dir. Lance Comfort, 1947). PRO BT 64/4492, enclosure 7.

17. For the development of this concept, see Helen M. Jewell, *The north-south divide: the origins of northern consciousness in England*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1994. Unfortunately Jewell does not venture beyond the industrial revolution. For the north south divide in the 1930s, see J.B. Priestley, *English journey*. London: Heinemann, 1984.

18. Though applicable to the end of the nineteenth century, the flavour of working-class life in Hastings is captured in Robert Tressell, *The ragged-trousered philanthropist*. London: Paladin, 1991. This may be compared with the larger and more complex working-class community recalled by Robert Roberts, though this may have the patina of nostalgia. Robert Roberts, *The classic slum: Salford life in the first quarter of the century*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1971.

19. Leeds suffered nine air raids. Steven Burt and Kevin Grady, *The illustrated history of Leeds*. Derby: Breedon Books, 1994, 227.

20. M.W. Beresford, 'The back-to-back house in Leeds 1787-1937', in Stanley D. Chapman (ed.) *The history of working-class housing: a symposium*. Newton Abbot: David & Charles, 1971, 95-132.

21. For cinema advertising in Leeds, see Kaufman, op.cit. (ch.6, n.3) 42-4.

22. The 1,300-seat Crescent in Beeston barred twelve cinemas. John R. Broadley, 'A life in Leeds cinemas', *Picture House*. 1987-88, no.11, 9. See appendix 3 for details.

23. For an annotated listing of the cinemas in the London (east) postal districts, see Bob Grimwood, *The cinemas of Essex*. Wakefield, West Yorkshire: Mercia Cinema Society, 1995. Aside from three Granada cinemas, only fifteen independent cinemas were operating in working-class areas of the East End in the late 1940s. For contemporary views of the tribulations of exhibitors in London, see *Kinematograph Weekly*. 6 September 1945, 3, and 30 August, 1945, 4.

24. The Carlton advertised from May 1948, the Radion and the Palace from November 1948.

25. The atmosphere of Hunslet prior to the Second World War is recaptured in Richard Hoggart. *Life and times*, vol.1: *A local habitation 1918-1940*, London: Chatto & Windus, 1988; id. 'Growing up', in id. *Speaking to each other*, vol.1: *About society*, London: Chatto & Windus, 1970, 11-27. For an account of life on the nearby Middleton council estate in the 1930s, see Keith Waterhouse, *City lights: a street life, London*: Sceptre, 1995; and his fictionalised account id. *There is a happy land*, London: Sceptre, 1992. For cinema-going during the 1940s in Chapeltown, adjoining Harehills in the east, see Kaufman, op.cit. (ch.6, n.3)

26. Amongst insured persons in Leeds in 1937 (a measure lower than the total workforce), 25.6 per cent were employed in tailoring, 13.8 per cent in distributive trades, 7.6 per cent in wool, 7.2 per cent in general engineering, 3.6 per cent in printing and 20.8 per cent in other trades and industries, including mining. M.P Fogarty, *Prospects of the industrial areas of Great Britain*, London: Methuen, 1945, 246. By 1951, amongst all workers in paid employment in Leeds, 13.6 per cent were in tailoring and clothing, 2.8 per cent in wool, 12.4 per cent in engineering and 1.8 per cent in printing. Other important employment sectors were clerical (10.2 per cent), commercial (10.7 per cent), personal service (9.1 per cent), transport (6.8 per cent) and unskilled (7.0 per cent). General Register Office, *Census 1951, Occupational Tables*, London: HMSO, 1956, table 20.

27. For an account of the development of the plotlands, see Dennis Hardy and Colin Ward, *Arcadia for all: the legacy of a makeshift landscape*. Oxford: Alexandrine Press, and London: Mansell, 1984.

28. General Register Office, *Census 1951, England and Wales county reports: Yorkshire West Riding*, London: HMSO, 1954, table 19.

29. The war had major demographic implications for Southend-on-Sea. In common with other coastal towns in the south east, it was a restricted area: residents were encouraged though not compelled to leave, while visitors were subject to extra scrutiny. The population of Southend-on-Sea halved, with residents trickling back towards the end of the war. Though a few scattered references appear, the phenomenon has never been researched. Richard M. Titmuss, *Problems of social policy*. History of the Second World War: United Kingdom Civil Series, London: HMSO and Longmans, Green, 1950, 364 (footnote); Vere Hodgson, *Few eggs and no oranges: a diary showing how unimportant people in London and Birmingham lived through the war years 1940-1945*, London: Dennis Dobson, 1976, 157 and 167; Norman Longmate, *How we lived then: a history of everyday life during the Second World War*, London: Arrow Books, 1973, 74; Dennis Sherringham, *Growing up in Southend-on-Sea*, n.p.: published by author, [1997]; Jim Worsdale, *Southend at war*, Southend-on-Sea: published by author from 62 Leitrim Road, Shoeburyness, Southend-on-Sea, 1998; interview with Irene Harvey, Leigh-on-Sea, 5 January 1999. For a portrait of a seaside resort recovering from the war, in this case Folkestone, see Elizabeth Bowen, 'How people live', *Contact*, 1946, no.1, 49-52.

30. General Register Office, *Census 1951, England and Wales county reports: Essex*, London: HMSO, 1954, table 19.

31. The surrounding districts are Benfleet (19,882), Canvey Island (11,258), Rayleigh (9,388) and Rochford (19,609). ibid. table 2.

32. The published census data is silent on social origins, though the number of Southend inhabitants who were born in London is suggestive. In the absence of any local studies, resort has to be made to a straw poll. Of a dozen friends and interviewees aged over sixty who have been long-term residents of Southend-on-Sea, only one, George Halle, whose father owned the Palace in Shoebury, can be defined as middle class in origin. Another, born in Germany, came to the town as a bride after the war. The other ten are working class in origin. Three were born in

Southend-on-Sea. Two were brought up in Southend, their parents moving to the town in search of work. Five showed a stepwise migration. John Cattell's story is typical of these. The son of a printer from Hoxton in inner London, he was apprenticed to a precision engineer in the 1930s. His skills were in demand after the war, so that by the 1950s he was running his own company at Brentwood, Essex. After selling up, he bought a hotel in Southend in the 1960s (personal communication).

33. Asa Briggs, *The history of broadcasting in the United Kingdom*, vol.4: *Sound and vision*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979, 249.

34. W.N. Coglan (director) *The readership of periodicals 1936*, London: Incorporated Society of British Advertisers, 1936, 272-3, 283-4 and 347-8; Geoffrey Browne, *Patterns of British life*. London: Hulton Press, 1950, table 2. Though less detail is contained in M.A. Abrams (director) *Hulton readership survey*, London: Hulton Press, 1947-50, the trend is similar, with *Picturegoer* leading the field and most sales taking place in the south-east. See also A.P. Jephcott, *Girls growing up*. London: Faber, 1942, 99; Nicholas Hiley, '"Let's go to the pictures" The British cinema audience in the 1920s and 1930s', *Journal of Popular British Cinema (Audiences and reception in Britain* issue) 1999, no.2, 44.

35. Since circuit cinemas normally showed double features, independents and circuit cinemas in south-east Essex are grouped together.

36. Complaints on the excessive length of programmes came from CEA branches, e.g. *The Daily Film Renter*, 18 November 1948, 9. They are also scattered through the manager's comments on the weekly returns for the Gaumont, Sheffield. It is not clear from either source whether the complaints came from exhibitors, audiences or both sides. However, the Gaumont, Sheffield return for 22 January 1949 notes that 'Some patrons complain of length of programme. Long programme lost us £300 at least.' The programme comprised *Here Come the Huggetts* (dir. Ken Annakin, 1948) with an American supporting feature, *13 Lead Soldiers* (dir. Frank McDonald, US release 1948). The films ran for 93 and 66 minutes respectively.

37. 'The cinema programme in Great Britain', in Roger Manvell, R.K. Neilson Baxter and H.H. Wollenberg (eds) *The cinema 1950*, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1950, 183; Basil Dean, *Seven ages*, vol. 2: *Mind's eye: an autobiography 1927-1972*, London: Hutchinson. 1973, 151. The same tactic was used in the United States. See Douglas Gomery, 'The popularity of filmgoing in the US 1930-1950', in Colin MacCabe (ed.) *High theory low culture: analysing popular television and film*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1986, 72-4.

38. In 1934, 84 per cent of respondents preferred two features. In 1937 the percentage was 79. In 1946-7, 80 per cent preferred two features, plus a newsreel and either a short or an organ solo. Sidney Bernstein, *The Bernstein film questionnaire 1946-7*. London: [Granada Theatres], 1947, 13. For the locations of Granada cinemas, see Allen Eyles, *The Granada theatres*. London: BFI, 1998.

39. 'I still do no[t] know of any cinema getting away with only showing a single feature in this town or surrounding area. Most film programmes were two and a half to three and [a] half-hours long and anything less than that would not have been accepted by the public.' Barrie Gray, Birmingham, correspondence 22 April 1997. Mr Gray worked as a cinema projectionist in Birmingham.

40. Percentage of double features in Sheffield cinemas 1945-1949 (Monday programmes only):

|                     | 1945 | 1946 | 1947 | 1948 | 1949 |
|---------------------|------|------|------|------|------|
| City centre cinemas | 73   | 64   | 69   | 64   | 79   |
| others              | 25   | 24   | 21   | 24   | 25   |

Source: unpublished data provided by Dr Clifford Shaw, Sheffield.

41. Of the 45 cinemas with classified advertising in the 6 May 1947 edition of the Bradford *Telegraph and Argus*, 22 advertised two items, though in two cases the additional items billed were shorts.

42. Percentage of cinemas screening single features in the first quarter of 1950:

| Scotland        | 25.0 |
|-----------------|------|
| Northern        | 50.7 |
| E & W Ridings   | 46.7 |
| North West      | 47.8 |
| North Midlands  | 24.3 |
| Midlands        | 7.5  |
| Eastern         | 6.4  |
| London & SE     | 5.8  |
| Southern        | 9.3  |
| South West      | 8.3  |
| Wales           | 17.8 |
| Great Britain   | 25.8 |

Source: H.E. Browning and A.A. Sorrell, 'Cinemas and cinema-going in Great Britain', *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society*, 1954, series A, general, vol.117, pt.2, 144.
   Some of the older industrial areas did not follow the pattern found in the north of England. 'If they don't get a three-hour program *[sic]* they consider that they have not had enough for their money'. W.T. Vaughan, general manager of South Wales Cinema Ltd, Swansea, 'Exhibitors discuss what the public wants, *The Daily Film Renter*, 1 January 1937, iv.

43. e.g. *The Daily Film Renter*, 15 December 1948, 8, and 24 November 1949, 13. All the cinemas in the Leeds sample were granted quota reductions or exemptions at some point between 1945 to 1950.

44. Browning and Sorrell, op.cit. (ch.6, n.42) table 6. The figures are computed by dividing the net takings in Leeds and Southend-on-Sea by the number of seats in the respective locations, though the data conceals differences between prestigious circuit cinemas and small local venues.

45. See Geoffrey Gorer, *Exploring English character*. London: Cresset Press, 1955; D. Elliston Allen, *British tastes: an enquiry into the likes and dislikes of the regional consumer*. London: Hutchinson, 1968.

46. For a concise history of the American influence on British radio and the BBC's greater responsiveness to public taste, see David Cardiff and Paddy Scannell, 'Radio in World War II', in Open University, *The historical development of popular culture in Britain 2*. Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1981, 33-78. Under John Reith, the BBC had previously been allied to the Establishment. In 1932, it offered to dissuade people from attending demonstrations by the National Unemployed Workers' Movement. John Stevenson and Chris Cook, *The slump: society and politics during the depression*. London: Cape, 1977, 222-3.

47. Peter Noble, *The British film yearbook 1946*. London: British Yearbooks, [1946]. 72. Noble implies that even the revised quotas were not enforced. For further details of the wartime reduction in quotas, see Roger Manvell, 'Cinema and population: supply and demand', Fabian Society archives, 37/2 134, 10 (BLPES).

48. The assessment of the improvement of British film quality was apparent at the time, e.g. *The Cinema*, 2 January 1946, 30; Bernstein, op.cit. (ch.6, n.38) 8; Peter Noble, *Spotlight on filmland*. London: Ward & Hitchon, 1947, 7-8.
    The main source of evidence on wartime cinema-going is the Mass-Observation Archive, with most of the relevant material appearing in Richards and Sheridan, op.cit. (ch.6, n.5). However useful, one source can only provide a partial view.

49. e.g. *Today's Cinema*, 1 January 1947, 75 and 76; *Kinematograph Weekly*, 7 March 1946, 1. Where there was criticism of the quality of British films at this time, it was offered as a defence by quota defaulters, e.g. *Today's Cinema*, 8 October 1946, 17.

50. *The Daily Film Renter*, 1 January 1949, 15. The quality of British films also came in for criticism from exhibitors, e.g. from the Scottish CEA. *The Daily Film Renter*, 25 November, 1948, 7.

51. For one exhibitor in a mining area, average rental of British films was £51 compared with £46 for American films. Rental for British films was 50 per cent of the box-office take, after tax; American rentals, including reissues, were 25 to 50 per cent. *Kinematograph Weekly*, 28 October 1948, 17. The CEA was engaged in negotiations with Rank to reduce the rentals for film in smaller cinemas. *The Daily Film Renter*, 14 October 1948, 3 and 9. Progress was desultory. Obtaining British films at flat rates was 'extremely difficult'. CEA memorandum to Portal Committee, *The Daily Film Renter*, 2 March 1949, 7. This was in contrast to the bargains on offer from American distributors. John Broadley recounts being offered *High Noon* (dir. Fred Zinnemann, US release 1952), for three days at a total fee of £2 to make up for a film which was a box-office failure. John R. Broadley, 'A life in Leeds cinemas 3: facing the fifties', *Picture House*, spring 1990, no.14-15, 37.

52. Michael Denning, *Mechanic accents: dime novels and working-class culture in America*, London: Verso, 1987, 72-3. See also Frederick Elkin, 'A study of the relationship between popular hero types and social class', PhD thesis, University of Chicago, 1951.

53. Richard Dyer, *The matter of images: essays on representations*. London: Routledge, 1993, 13.

54. Some works overlap the two modes, notably the novels of Dickens. Some novelists including Eric Ambler and Graham Greene wrote film scripts. How the two activities interacted is beyond the scope of this thesis.

Though Denning refers to modes of reading rather than modes of writing, he minimises what the reader brings to the act of reading.

55. As a counter to this argument, Morris Beja notes that among the winners of the New York Film Critics Award for 'best motion picture', around half were adaptations of books and novels, while as of 1977, fourteen of the top twenty money-makers listed in *Variety* were based on novels. Morris Beja, *Film and literature: an introduction*, New York and London: Longman, 1979, 78. However, the resulting film need not be given a narrative treatment — *Apocalypse Now* (dir. Francis Ford Coppola, US release, 1979) was derived from a novel by Joseph Conrad, but hardly exemplifies a narrative approach. With some hesitation, Beja classes *The Ten Commandments* (dir. Cecil B. de Mille, US release 1956) as being based on a novel (loc.cit.). If any figure is allegorical, it is Moses.

56. John Hill argues for the gangster film as allegory — but not until the 1980s. John Hill, 'Allegorising the nation: British gangster films of the 1980s', in Steve Chibnall and Robert Murphy (eds.) *British crime cinema*, London: Routledge, 1999, 160-71.

57. George Halle, Benfleet, Essex (personal communication).
Of the 491 British films released between 1945 and 1950, 15 per cent were based on stage plays. Sally Mitchell views the dramatic method in literature as being employed in highly-constructed (major) novels in which every event is related to the characters' psychology. Sally Mitchell, *The fallen angel: chastity, class and women's reading*, Bowling Green, OH: Bowling Green University Popular Press, 1981, 165.

58. Secretary of State for Home Department, Minister of Education and Secretary of State for Scotland, *Report of the departmental committee on children and the cinema*, May 1950. Cmd 7945. Chairman: K.C. Wheare

59. [N.D. Dodman], 'The adolescent and the cinema', *Education*, 19 November 1948, no.12, 890. See also J.C. Ward, *Children and the cinema*, revised edition, Social Survey NS 131, 1949, 35.

60. In April 1941, 71 per cent of respondents approved of cinemas opening on Sundays in wartime. George H. Gallup (gen.ed.) *The Gallup international public opinion polls: Great Britain 1937-1975*, vol.1: 1937-1964, New York: Random House, 1976, 44.
Though Rank might be expected to disapprove of Sunday cinema opening on religious grounds, his justification for the practice was that it reduced drinking in public houses and young people were kept off the streets. Michael Wakelin, *J. Arthur Rank: the man behind the gong*, London: Lion, 1996, 58.

61. *The Daily Film Renter*, 12 November 1945, 3.

62. James L. Hodson, *The way things are: being some account of journeys, meetings, and what was said to me in Britain between May 1945 and January 1947*, London: Gollancz, 1947, 23. Something of the Puritan atmosphere persists in Leeds: fifty years on, Hodson would still have problems getting dinner on a Sunday.

63. 62,962 people voted for Sunday opening in Leeds and 37,824 against. *The Daily Film Renter*, 21 March 1946, 3. Cinemas were licensed to open from 4.30 p.m. to 9.30 p.m. Broadley, 'A life in Leeds cinemas', 8.

64. These were the Crescent, Harehills Picture House and the Hillcrest. Both Beeston and Burley Picture Houses opened occasionally on Sundays.

65. Middlesex imposed a levy of 12.5 per cent in 1945. *The Daily Film Renter*, 26 March 1945, 3.

66. Leslie Halliwell, *Seats in all parts: half a lifetime at the movies*, London: Granada, 1985, 112; Geoffrey H. Carder, *The man in the box: memoirs of a cinema projectionist*, St Ives, Cornwall: United Writers, 1984, 49; Ashley Franklin, *A cinema near you: 100 years of going to the pictures in Derbyshire*, Derby: Breedon Books, 1996, 87.

67. *The Cinema*, 14 March 1945, 25; *Kinematograph Weekly*, 30 November 1939, cited in Audrey Field, *Picture palace: a social history of the cinema*, London: Gentry Books, 1974, 135; *Today's Cinema*, 11 April 1946, 3; *The Daily Film Renter*, 4 April 1945, 3.

68. *Daily Express*, 20 January 1949.

69. *Southend Standard*, 1 May 1947. Signs of a more restrictive attitude occasionally surface in the newspaper reports. A concert by Geraldo and his orchestra in the Ritz cinema, Southend-on-Sea, was banned by local magistrates on the grounds that the music was not suitable for a Sunday. *Southend Standard*, 15 January 1949.

70. To keep the number of rankings manageable given the large number of films screened over six years, the number of titles sharing a rank position are not taken into account, i.e. if four films are ranked first by the number of days screened, the next ranking will be second rather than fifth.

71. *Today's Cinema*, 18 September 1950, 3. Harold Wilson later admitted that a 45 per cent quota was imposed as a political ploy, with failure to reach the percentage being condoned. Margaret Dickinson and Simon Hartog, 'Interview with Sir Harold Wilson', *Screen*, 1981, vol.22, no.3, 17-18. This accords with the evidence of the prosecutions for quota infringements, which numbered under twenty a year, except for 1948-49 (46) and 1950-51 (21). The circuits were never prosecuted. Quota Offences file (BFI library).

72. In a Gallup poll conducted in Britain in November 1946 for the most admired person, the king and queen were named by just 3 per cent of respondents — on a par with Bevin and Stalin. Churchill headed the list with 24 per cent. Gallup, op.cit. (ch.6, n.60) 143.

73. This was the most notorious of post-war British films. See Brian McFarlane, 'Outrage: *No Orchids for Miss Blandish*', in Chibnall and Murphy, op.cit. (ch.6, n.56) 37-50. For the censorship issues which it posed, see Guy Phelps, *Film censorship*, London: Gollancz, 1975, 17-18.

74. The Chief Constable of Leeds wanted the film banned. *The Daily Film Renter*, 10 May 1948, 3. Though such adverse publicity may have stimulated adolescent curiosity, it may also have turned parents against allowing their offspring to see the film and made cinema managements with licences at stake assiduous about turning away unaccompanied children.

75. The proportion of British titles among the most popular films listed in appendix 1, tables 6.4 to 6.6 should be the same as in the dataset. In each table, a higher than expected number of British titles appear, e.g. nine are included among the most popular Leeds films where six might be expected. Details appear at the end of each table.

76. An exception is *Black Magic* (dir. Gregory Ratoff, US release 1949), a melodrama in which a hypnotist infiltrates the higher reaches of society and seeks revenge on the nobleman who ordered the killing of his mother. As a study of power and manipulation, it has its merits. C.A. Lejeune never found them. For her, it was 'at times a grotesque, and at others a melancholy spectacle including once scene of humiliating burlesque . . . that is as vile as anything I have witnessed in the cinema. . . . Whether Mr [Orson] Welles deliberately enhanced the joke by

adding bad acting to bad material is between him and his own soul.' Quoted in *Halliwell's film and video guide*, 13th edn, ed. John Walker, London: HarperCollins, 1997, 83.

77. Broadley, 'A life in Leeds cinemas', 8.

78. Though work does not normally take centre stage in British films, it is unusual for the leading character's job not to be mentioned.
   Some occupations do recur in American films about contemporary life where they are intrinsic to the plot, notably the policeman, the private eye, the doctor, the showgirl and the reporter. With the exception of the doctor, these are of indeterminate status.

79. An alternative argument — that each Leeds cinema had its regular audience, reducing the incentive to repeat programmes — is harder to support. In this case, even a mediocre film might be expected to be programmed once in each cinema, which would give a total of thirty days' screenings over the ten cinemas.

80. This policy was less apparent at the Gaumont, Sheffield, though in a city with several Gaumont houses, there was little need to hold over programmes.

81. The period dramas are *Fanny by Gaslight* (dir. Anthony Asquith, 1944), *Caravan* (dir. Arthur Crabtree, 1946), *The Man in Grey* (dir. Leslie Arliss, 1943) and in a different vein *The Thief of Baghdad* (dirs Michael Powell, Ludwig Berger and Tim Whelan, 1940). The films involving wartime life or demobilisation are: *The Way to the Stars* (dir. Anthony Asquith, 1945), *2,000 Women* (dir. Frank Launder, 1944), *Waterloo Road* (dir. Sidney Gilliat, 1945), *Demobbed* (dir. John Blakeley, 1944), *George in Civvy Street* (dir. Marcel Varnel, 1946), *Piccadilly Incident* (dir. Herbert Wilcox, 1946), *Hotel Reserve* (dirs Victor Hanbury, Lance Comfort and Max Greene, 1944) and *The Years Between* (dir. Compton Bennett, 1946).

82. For details of the net income derived from British independents by ABPC, see PRO BT 64/4492. No detailed comparison is possible with the data supplied by Rank (PRO BT 64/4490), Ealing (PRO BT 64/4491) and British Lion (PRO BT 64/4493). Varying dates are used for the end of the accounting period, while it is not always clear whether the receipts are net or gross, nor how net figures are calculated. The files are more useful in yielding comparisons within each company's list and in providing production costs.

83. Concern about the quality of British musicals was voiced at the time. See Eric Maschwitz, 'Can British studios make a first-class musical?' *The Cinema*, 2 January 1946, 126 and 128.

84. *Halliwell's film and video guide*, op.cit. (ch.6, n.76).

85. *Saraband for Dead Lovers* cost £371,205 and by 1950 had earned £87,335 in the U.K; *Hue and cry* cost £104,222 and had earned £112,937 in the UK by the same date. PRO BT 64/4461.

86. Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: a social critique of the judgement of taste*, trans. Richard Nice, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1984, 1-2.

87. For Bourdieu's second thoughts, see ibid, 57-8.

88. John Ellis, 'Art, culture and quality: terms for a cinema in the forties and seventies', *Screen*, 1978, vol.19, no.3, 16-45.

89. ibid. 42-3.

90. Ellis asserts that freedom for creative units could produce some of the most rented films of the period, including *A Canterbury Tale* (dirs Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger, 1944) and *Love Story* (dir. Leslie Arliss, 1944). loc. cit. The box-office success of these films is difficult to measure, while it may be argued that the same creative freedom lead to *Caesar and Cleopatra* (dir. Gabriel Pascal, 1945),which hastened the reign of the accountant.

Wilcox's comment on the mediocrity of British films in 1948 will be recalled (page 184). Though this seems to support Ellis's assertion, it hardly counts as evidence that accountants were to blame.

91. Michael Powell, *A life in movies: an autobiography*. London: Heinemann, 1986, 543.

92. Interview with George Halle, Benfleet, Essex, 1 April 1997.

93. In the south-east Essex circuit cinemas, *The Way to the Stars* played as main feature for seventeen days in 1945 and for a further seven days as a supporting feature in 1946. In 1949 it returned as main feature for a further nine days, probably as a consequence of the shortage of bankable British titles. In the sample Leeds cinemas, it always played as main feature, for nine days in both 1945 and 1946, seven days in 1947 and 1949 and three days in 1950.

94. Interviews with Marion Bassett-Read, Witham, Essex, 4 December 1997, and her sister Margaret Popman, Cowbridge, Mid Glamorgan, 31 March 1999.

95. Hay learned Latin, French, German, Italian, Cantonese and Norwegian. Ray Seaton and Roy Martin, *Good morning boys: Will Hay, master of comedy*, London: Barrie and Jenkins, 1978, 20, 27 and 114.

96. ibid. 94.

97. Eric Midwinter, *Make 'em laugh: famous comedians and their worlds*, London: Allen & Unwin, 1979, 61.

98. ibid. 66-7; Seaton and Martin, op.cit. (ch.6, n.95) 35. Midwinter stresses the anti-authoritarian aspects; Seaton and Martin emphasise the ultimate acceptance of authority.

99. The Ealing comedies in the tables are *Hue and Cry*, *Kind Hearts and Coronets* (dir. Robert Hamer, 1949), *Passport to Pimlico* (dir. Henry Cornelius, 1949), *A Run for your Money* (dir. Charles Frend, 1949) and *Whisky Galore* (dir. Alexander Mackendrick, 1949).

100. In its use of a Scottish setting, *Whisky Galore* might be compared with *I Know Where I'm Going* (dirs Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger, 1945), which achieved a respectable eighteen screen days in Leeds.

101. John M. East, *Max Miller: the cheeky chappie*, London: W.H. Allen, 1977. 85.

102. Raymond Durgnat, *Durgnat on film*, London: Faber, 1976, 151.

103. Kaufman, op.cit. (ch.6, n.3) 18.

104. The Crazy Gang films were omitted from the table because none were shown in the Leeds cinemas in post-war years. In south-east Essex, they achieved seven screen days in circuit cinemas and sixteen screen days among the independents.

105. Interview with Frank McCalla, Paignton, Devon, 23 September 1997.

106. Julian Poole, 'British cinema attendance in wartime: audience preference at the Majestic, Macclesfield, 1939-1946', *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television*, 1987, vol.7, no.1, 15-43.

107. ibid. 15-16.

108. Eyles, *Gaumont*, 135. A reproduction of one of the returns is shown.

109. Photocopies of the returns from 9 October 1948 are held by the Theatre Cinema Association. Allen Eyles has kindly provided a summary of returns from January 1948 till that date. This gives a run of data from January 1947 to December 1950.

110. Allen Eyles, 'Hits and misses at the Empire', *Picture House*, summer 1989, no.13, 35-47, and correspondence with Allen Eyles, 8 January 1997.

111. Access to the books was kindly provided by the building's present occupant, Mark Stephens. Memories of the cinema came from David Hawkins of Cheltenham in correspondence dated 3 October 1997.

112. Films are ranked by admissions in Poole's tables — Poole, op.cit.(ch.6, n.106). In table 8 for 1946, either the ranking goes awry or the admission figures are incorrect. Since only American films are involved, this does not affect rankings of British films.
    Returns for the Gaumont, Sheffield, give weekly admissions, inclusive of the different Sunday programme. This source of error could be avoided by relying on the revenue, which is given on a daily basis. However, as already noted (page 169), there is a case for saying that revenue represents a second best measure.

113. Poole, op.cit. (ch.6, n.106) 17.

114. ibid. tables 4 and 5.

115. On the five occasions on which the royal wedding documentary was programmed in the south-east Essex circuit cinemas, it was paired with a different feature each time. The objective was to screen the film as soon as possible after the event, irrespective of the suitability of the programme.
    John Huntley attests to the popularity of the film of the royal wedding: more people were willing to visit city centre cinemas and to pay higher prices to see it. *On This Day*, BBC Radio 4, 13 December 1997.

116. Released in 1948, *Bonnie Prince Charlie* cost £760,000. By April 1950, it had taken £143,611 in the UK. PRO BT 64/4493. Michael Korda suggests that it gave offence to many patriotic Scotsmen by overemphasising the prince's relationship with Flora MacDonald. Michael Korda, *Charmed lives: a family romance*, London: Allen Lane, 1980, 258. If true, this did nothing for the film's chances in the Scottish market.

117. *Kinematograph year book 1948*; interview with Kath Rudd, Horsforth, Leeds, 30 July 1997.

118. *Kinematograph year book 1948*; interview with Jean Proctor, Bradford, 31 July 1997.
    Returns from the Gaumont, Sheffield, emphasise the importance of Saturdays for cinemas: from a gross revenue of £165,385 for the period from October 1948 to December 1950, when daily takings can be identified, £33,533 (20 per cent) was taken on Saturdays — the highest total for any day of the week. Next came Mondays at £25,347.

119. *Southend Standard*, 7 March 1946 and 24 June 1949.

120. Franklin, op.cit. (ch.6, n.66), 53.

121. Interview with Sir Sidney Samuelson, British Film Commissioner, 23 January 1997; undated 1997 correspondence from Mrs M. Beerling, Barbara Falconer and Mrs Evelyn Iwaniak, all of Cheltenham. A former projectionist recalled one Odeon on the Sussex coast — possibly Brighton — which had double seats. Interview with Frank McCalla, Paignton, Devon, 23 September 1997.

122. Franklin, op.cit. (ch.6, n.66) 84. Many interviewees recalled eating ice creams in cinemas at this time without having to produce coupons. Ice creams may have evaded rationing — or memories are fallible.

123. The forms went through several designs, which give varying amounts of information. Data on sales of nuts and drinks only appear on the design adopted from July 1949.

124. The accounts for the independent Crown cinema in Coventry for the period 1945 to 1950 show profits on sales boosting net revenue by 8 per cent. R.H. Dawes collection (BFI Library). With their superior purchasing power, the major circuits could achieve better margins. Circuits with over 50 cinemas comprised 25 per cent of all cinemas, but took 70 per cent of total sales revenue. There was also a geographical disparity: 14 per cent of cinemas were situated in London and the south-east, whilst 29 per cent of total sales revenue was generated there. Calculated from Browning and Sorrell, op.cit. (ch.6, n.42) table 24.

PART THREE

# CHAPTER SEVEN

## Class in films: a methodology

In this chapter, a model for examining images of the working class in films is put forward. In the sense that audiences and critics of the 1940s could identify working-class characters in films, such a model was implicit in their response. If the working class characters are to be taken seriously, those defining features need to be made explicit.

It was against a backdrop of demobilisation, shortages and rationing that working-class life in the late 1940s was played out. Films are a tangible reminder of that world, providing a historical link with audiences of the time, even if the imaginative leap proposed in chapter two is needed to see the material through eyes innocent of the cultural changes of the intervening fifty years. It might be argued that such a leap implies an unacceptable degree of interpretation. By Mannheim's paradox (page 11), any attempt to stand outside present-day culture is a doomed attempt to achieve objectivity. Though these contradictions cannot be denied, the issues must be confronted each time an attempt is made to stray from the present, or to look beyond the immediate culture. Something of this process can be seen at work whenever a historian employs primary or secondary source material, or an actor performs Shakespeare. There comes a point in many fields where art has to take over from science, though aims can still be pursued with equal rigour.

As noted in chapter two (page 35), Raymond Durgnat was one of the first commentators on British cinema to shift interest from the aesthetic significance of film to its social significance. For Durgnat, 'A middle-class cinema will tend to acknowledge the working-class only (1) insofar as they accept, or are subservient to, middle-class ideals, (2) where they shade into the feckless and criminal stream, and (3) humorously. All these approaches can be concertina'd into one.'[1] Durgnat's imaginative leap was to discern a pattern in the portrayal of working people on the

screen. Inter-war films accord most closely with his criteria, with a more democratic and reconciliatory attitude emerging in the wake of Dunkirk and a slow receding of the populist tide becoming apparent at the end of the war.[2] Few would dispute that revealing patterns can offer insights into the past: discerning patterns over time is a raison d'être for historians. A risk is that films which fail to fit the pattern are ignored and another myth is perpetuated. A second problem is Durgnat's failure to stray beyond middle-class cinema. Films such as the Old Mother Riley series leave the way open for alternative treatments of working-class characters. Finally, his approach leaves post-war films in limbo, not quite measuring up to his model, but not being conceptualised in a different way.

Durgnat offers an intriguing, though not entirely original insight — the humorous portrayal of working-class characters was noted by earlier commentators.[3] As a methodology for examining images of the working-class in films, his three criteria are too restrictive and require being accepted as axiomatic despite being unproven. Something more flexible is needed which directs attention to aspects of working-class life in a non-judgmental way.

A positive feature of Durgnat's approach is his avoidance of a rigid ideological or disciplinary line. Inevitably, sociological concepts such as social class have to be employed; nor is it possible to consider films from the past without resorting to at least some of the techniques of the historian. But the strength of his schema is its eclecticism. As Paul Feyerabend puts it, '. . . knowledge is obtained from a proliferation of views rather than from the determined application of a professed ideology.'[4]

How did audiences identify characters in films as belonging to the working class? The imaginative leap is to tease from the surviving films those qualities which audiences recognised. These qualities can then be incorporated into a model for considering how the working-class were portrayed in films, without imposing a theoretical framework so rigid as to exclude potentially useful material.

*(i) Place in the authority structure.* As generations of comedians can testify, the working class

are defined by their attitude to authority — and by the attitude of authority to the working class.[5] The vestigial salute implied in touching the cap and the failure to acknowledge it can speak volumes. Power and status are intrinsic to the equation, though they need not be vested in the same person.[6] At least in films, the lowly man who suddenly achieves wealth and status and tries to pass himself off as belonging to a higher social class is apt to betray his origins by his social gaffes — a fate more often avoided by the rich man's offspring who samples ordinary life.[7] This distinction rests on the artistic conceit that upper-class codes of behaviour are more complex than working-class codes.[8]

Working-class characters in films constantly confront authority in the shape of civil servants, policemen, probation officers and employers. Because of the importance of occupation in determining the class position of manual workers, work can be accorded considerable attention in films about miners, fishermen and mill-workers. For higher social groups, where most occupations offer less visual interest and status can assume greater importance, work rarely figures in films, except for the skills of the doctor. The equivocal position of the foreman has particular interest in the context of authority structures. He is promoted from the shop floor, yet he has authority over the men who were his colleagues. This is exemplified in *Millions Like Us* (dirs Frank Launder and Sidney Gilliat, 1943), where gender differences and the presence of workers from a higher social class increase the potential for conflict.

There is satisfaction in outwitting authority, even if authority ultimately wins out, whether in Ealing comedies or in crime films. Not that authority is faceless: the hero in crime stories can be on the side of law and order, with the humble PC49 assuming the role as readily as the amateur sleuth or the Scotland Yard detective. A clash with authority can provide tension in a film, though it may be expressed as a battle between good and evil, or between spontaneity and bureaucracy, rather than in class terms.

*(ii) Cohesion/fragmentation within the working class community.* A distinctive feature of traditional working-class culture was the emphasis on community and shared experience, this

being most evident where there was a dominant industry. It was often portrayed dramatically —

the mine overshadows *The Proud Valley* (dir. Pen Tennyson, 1939) and *Blue Scar* (dir. Jill

Craigie, 1949) as surely as fishing is woven into the fabric of *Johnny Frenchman* (dir. Charles

Frend, 1945) and *The Silver Darlings* (dirs Clarence Elder and Clifford Evans, 1947). During

the war, class cohesion could be subsumed within the movement towards national unity in the

face of a common enemy, so that in *Millions Like Us*, class cohesion and national unity cannot

readily be separated.[9] *Chance of a Lifetime* (dir. Bernard Miles, 1950) provides a glimpse of

attitudes after the war, with the workforce accepting the challenge to run the factory, but

fragmenting as the traditional authority structure is disrupted and workers have to manage

workers.

To generate drama, either the working-class community is pitted against another class or

there is fragmentation within the community. The latter can occur as characters acquire values

derived from outside — often from education or the media. A defining event may polarise the

community, though it can also draw it together. The latter is the response in *Passport to Pimlico*

(dir. Henry Cornelius, 1945), when buried treasure belonging to the Duke of Burgundy is

accidentally discovered and the threat of its being ceded to the government brings the community

together in opposition to these plans.


*(iii) Internalised values.* This concept embraces such abstractions as attitudes, mores and habits

which stamp a character as working class. A sense of fatalism, living for the present and the

delicate balance between striving for respectability and 'getting above oneself' can all be found in

films. A crucial question is whether these values were changing. Answers may be sought in the

differences of attitudes between older and younger characters, though this method must be

treated with caution: each succeeding generation is apt to be seen as beginning the spiral into

moral decline.[10] Comparison with other sources and with earlier films is necessary to chart

changes with more certainty. *Millions Like Us* teems with differences in attitudes to matters like

sharing rooms which help to define characters in class terms. Where film-makers are out of touch

with the working class, they are more likely to resort to stereotypes. Bernard Miles' petty officer in *In Which We Serve* (dirs David Lean and Noel Coward, 1942) is but one example to be encountered in Lean's films.

*(iv) The built environment.* What kind of place do the characters inhabit? Is there a sense of oppressive overcrowding and dilapidation in the home? Is family life centred on the kitchen? Are bedrooms (or beds) shared? Does the housewife attempt to keep the home clean and tidy, or is she overwhelmed by squalor? Is the neighbourhood a place of cramped streets, with a shop or a pub on every corner? How is the man's workplace presented and how does it contrast with the home? Audiences unused to this world may need to be brought into it by devices such as the use of a middle-class narrator in *Waterloo Road* (dir. Sidney Gilliat, 1945), or the introduction of a character who, like them, is a newcomer and who can explore the environment with them and share their feelings.[11]

The set designer has a major role in evoking a working-class milieu, which can be enhanced by the judicious use of location shooting and documentary material. A tight budget need not pose a problem: a limited number of sets can reinforce the sense of the characters' material impoverishment and limited outlook.

The built environment should be seen as a measure of the power and economic circumstances of the participants. It helps determine the form of social interactions in films, as well as colouring the expectations of the characters and limiting their opportunities. This is exemplified in the British realist films produced from late 1950s onwards, where the industrial landscape both shaped and oppressed working-class characters, fuelling their frustration. A common plot line is where a sibling desires to escape from an overcrowded and squalid home.

*(v) Signifiers of class, notably speech, hair-styles and clothing.* These are the outward manifestations of an individual's class. When the street market, the factory or the slum is not there to provide a context, the flat cap is enough to place a character socially. Is the shabbiness

apparent in earlier films about working-class people still apparent in post-war films, or was austerity reducing class-based distinctions in women's dress as Zweig detected (page 108)? How are clothes worn? (The working-class Sunday best in all its glorious discomfort was still on parade in Gordon Parry's 1956 film *Sailor Beware.*) How are spivs presented? The essence of spivery is ostentation, which is expressed in dress and accessories. How distinctive is young people's dress? A sign of the emergence of the post-war consumer society was that young men no longer dressed like their fathers. These visual details are crucial in creating verisimilitude in films about ordinary people.

Speech is of particular interest. Though authentic northern or Glaswegian accents might have deterred southern cinema-goers, speech places people geographically and socially. In one survey, it was considered the most frequently-used way of ranking people by class.[12] The most well-known interpretative framework for examining the class aspects of speech in Britain is that of Basil Bernstein.[13] The restricted speech code of the working class orients the user towards description rather than abstract concepts, with an emphasis on 'we', 'you' and 'they' pronouns to denote group membership. A shared set of values means that non-verbal communication and verbal shorthand are possible. By contrast, use of an elaborated speech code depends on access to specialised social positions within the social structure such as the professions, and aims at the delivery of an explicit meaning. The restricted code is not perceived as a major means of presenting inner states to others, but as a means of reinforcing group values; the elaborated code with its greater use of the 'I' pronoun gives awareness of orders of relationships — intellectual, social and emotional — its high level of abstraction emphasising structure rather than content.[14] The working-class mother orders where the middle-class mother appeals. Although Bernstein was at pains to emphasise that the restricted code was not exclusively working class and not inferior, these caveats have not always been accepted by his critics.[15]

A more recent approach to language is discourse analysis, in which attention is focused on such aspects of speech as the frequency of extreme case formulations, e.g. 'always' or 'never'; or degrees of variability in, for example, how objects are evaluated.[16] A difficulty with this

approach is the relativist problem of why one interpretation should be privileged over another.[17] A more pressing limitation is that discourse analysis has yet to be employed in delineating the class aspects of speech, meaning that there is no body of research upon which to draw.[18]

If a full linguistic analysis is out of place, speech patterns need to be taken into account in considering how working-class people were portrayed in feature films.

## A model for examining working-class characters in films

The five-dimensional model outlined above provides a way of codifying images of class in films. Because the films may straddle several dimensions, the model is less satisfactory as a means of grouping films for the purposes of discussion. It would be possible to consider only the most popular films as identified in the previous chapter, but some have negligible class interest. Among other approaches, grouping films by director might be appropriate for an auteur like Hitchcock, but it is restrictive in the range of films which can be considered, it ignores the cooperative aspect of film-making and it is unsatisfactory as a means of exploring the work of journeyman directors who had to take what projects they were offered, often with disparate subject matter. Examining the output of individual studios is possible with Hollywood films, but with a few exceptions such as Ealing and Gainsborough, it cannot satisfactorily be applied to the cottage-industry approach to film production prevailing in Britain. Grouping films by genre has more potential, but means corralling disparate material on the basis of some theoretical unity — Durgnat identifies seventeen sub-genres of the crime film, many of which have little in common.[19] Colin Shindler offers a more promising approach, linking changes in inter-war American society to changes in the content of films and in their treatment.[20] The danger has already been noted in the context of Durgnat's work (page 221): films are selected for discussion because they fit the theory, while those which do not are ignored. A variant on Shindler's approach which is employed here is to group films by their focus on the recurring preoccupations of working-class life which were introduced in chapter four, including community, upward

mobility, the family, leisure and juvenile crime. What links the films under discussion is that the main characters belong to the working class. A chapter is also devoted to the treatment of war in films of the late 1940s. As the defining event of the period, the war cannot be omitted, even though it lies outside the strict terms of the class model.

There is an important proviso. The limitations of film as source material must be kept in mind. Aside from artistic licence, many films of the late 1940s were based on books or plays which were written before 1945 or were set before the war. Even where settings are updated in film adaptations, attitudes and language may be left unchanged. The date of the original source and its viewpoint has to be borne in mind when exploring issues of social class.

**Notes**

1. Raymond Durgnat, *A mirror for England: British movies from austerity to affluence.* London: Faber, 1970, 48.

2. ibid. 49-51.

3. Richard Winnington, *Drawn and quartered,* London: Saturn Press, [1949], 106;.Michael Booth, *English melodrama,* London: Jenkins, 1965, 33.

4. Paul Feyerabend, *Against method: outline of an anarchistic theory of knowledge,* London: NLB, 1975, 52.

5. This predates the cinema. Michael Booth notes of melodrama: 'The comedian — servant, artisan or tradesman, usually a member of the working class and thus loosely identified with his audience — is a friend or manservant of the hero, and thus sometimes carries on the battle against villainy (though by comic means) in the absence or incapacity of his superior.' ibid. 33.
 The tension between the common man and authority runs through George Formby's films, an early example being George's fruitless attempts to order a drink on the Isle of Man steamer in *No Limit* (dir. Monty Banks, 1935).

6. The uneasy relationship between Captain Mainwaring and Sergeant Wilson in *Dad's Army* (BBC TV, 1968-77) is a case in point.

7. An example of the rich man in disguise occurs in *Car of Dreams.* (dirs Graham Cutts and Austin Melford, 1935), in which John Mills, playing the son of a musical instrument manufacturer, poses as a chauffeur to win the girl of his dreams. For other examples see S. Craig Shafer, 'Enter the dream house: the British film industry and the working classes in depression England 1929-39', PhD thesis, University of Illinois, 1981, 172-99.

8. Working-class codes may be just as impenetrable as those of the middle and upper classes, as John McCallum discovered when he visited an East End pub to research his role in *It Always*

*Rains on Sunday* (dir. Robert Hamer, 1947). Although wearing old clothes and a cloth cap, he was identified as an outsider on his first and only visit. John McCallum, *Life with Googie*, London: Heinemann, 1979, 18-19.

9. The striving for national unity was summed up by J.B. Priestley: 'The war because it demands a huge collective effort, is compelling us to change not only our ordinary, social and economic habits but also our habits of thought. We've actually changed over from the property view to the sense of community, which simply means that we realize we're in all the same boat.' J.B. Priestley, *All England listened*, New York, 1967, 57, cited in Anthony Aldgate and Jeffrey Richards, *Britain can take it: the British cinema in the Second World War*, 2nd edn., Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1994, 50-1.

10. This theme is explored in Christopher Shaw and Malcolm Chase (eds.) *The imagined past: history and nostalgia*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1989.

11. Terry Lovell detects this process in early episodes of *Coronation Street*. Terry Lovell, 'Landscapes and stories — 1960s British realism', *Screen*, winter 1990, vol.31, no.4, 363.

12. I. Reid, *Social class differences in Britain: a sourcebook*, London: Open Books, 1977, table 2.5.

13. The seminal papers are contained in Basil Bernstein, *Class, codes and control*, vol.1: *Theoretical studies towards a sociology of language*, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1971. 'Interpretative framework' is Bernstein's own description of his work in preference to the more exacting term 'theory' (ibid. 20).

14. ibid. 76-147.

15. For Bernstein's defence of his approach, see ibid. 19. For his critics, see Denis Lawton, *Social class, language and education*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1968, 77-102; A.D. Edwards, *Language in culture and class: the sociology of language and education*, London: Heinemann, 1976. Most trenchant is Harold Rosen, *Language and class: a critical look at the theories of Basil Bernstein*, Bristol: Falling Wall Press, 1972.

16. Adrian Coyle, 'Discourse analysis', in Glynis M. Breakwell, Sean Hammond and Chris Fife-Schaw (eds.) *Research methodology in psychology*, London: Sage Publications, 1995, 243-58.

17. Coyle suggests that significant amounts of raw data overcomes the danger of relativism (ibid. 256). It might be argued that more data simply compounds the problem.

18. A related criticism is raised by Colin MacCabe, who accuses sociolinguistics of using banal sociological or psychological categories. Colin MacCabe, *The eloquence of the vulgar*, London: BFI, 1999, 51.

19. Raymond Durgnat, 'Some lines of enquiry into post-war British crimes', in Robert Murphy (ed.) *The British cinema book*, London: BFI, 1997, 90-103.

20. Colin Shindler, *Hollywood in crisis: cinema and American society 1929-1939*, London: Routledge, 1996.

CHAPTER EIGHT

People don't lock their doors: the working-class community

A problem of portraying a community in any dramatic medium is that following the fortunes of a large number of characters necessitates keeping several storylines before an audience. A contrast of personalities has to be presented and plots have to be sustained without any loss of tension. In this respect, a film about a community presents its makers with structural difficulties akin to those found in novels and soap opera.

A distinction should be made between community and communality. Though there may be communality in the sense of sharing a similar class position, this need not imply the common outlooks or goals which are the hallmark of a community. Even within a community, straying from the common goals may reveal differences of interest. Family loyalties, gender, age, education, morality and economic circumstances all have the potential for creating conflict.

There has to be some means of delimiting the community for the audience. In the countryside, the village provides an obvious social unit. In towns, the street is comparable and more clearly delineated than the neighbourhood. Writ small, the shared house performs the same function. There are other possibilities, less topographically determined, such as the community centred on the workplace. Life in the services was often explored in films of the 1940s and 50s, but this will be considered separately in chapter fourteen. Leisure interests provide another locus for the community. Both the club and the holiday camp offered contexts which were exploited in British films of the 1940s.

The community writ large

To the extent that the traditional working-class community as portrayed in chapters three and

four survived the war, it might be expected to appear in post-war films. The archetypal community film, *Passport to Pimlico* (dir. Henry Cornelius, 1949), must be put aside. Judging by the standards of the film, Pimlico was largely inhabited by lower middle-class shopkeepers who were on nodding terms with the bank manager. No working-class person would venture into a bank — that bastion of power, wealth and status.

The working-class neighbourhood is shown to better effect in *It Always Rains on Sunday* (dir. Robert Hamer, 1947), scripted by Hamer and Henry Cornelius. The setting is the East End of London. Apart from a couple of flashbacks, events take place during a single Sunday, which enhances the sense of real events unfolding on screen (see pages 135-6). There are three inter-related plot strands. In the first, Tommy Swann (David McCallum) has escaped from prison and seeks help from Rose Sandigate (Googie Withers), to whom he was once engaged. Unknown to her husband, George, and her step-daughters, Vi and Doris, she hides Tommy in their home. He flees when a journalist visits the house, but is recaptured by the police after a chase across a marshalling yard. In the second strand, three local thieves try to dispose of a consignment of stolen roller skates. The religious fence, Caleb Neesley (John Salew), gives them less money than they were expecting. The gang's leader, Whitey Williams (Jimmy Hanley), later attacks and robs him in revenge. In turn, Whitey is robbed by Tommy Swann before being arrested himself. In the third strand, the sisters Vi and Doris discover that they have been deceived by the Hyams brothers, the philandering bandleader, Morry (Sidney Tafler), and the local fixer, Lou (John Slater).

The pervasive power of law and order is one leitmotiv running through the film. The first person to be seen is a policeman, donning his cape against the rain. Sergeant Fothergill (Jack Warner) continually prowls his patch. Wrong-doers never go free. If they escape the law, they receive retribution in other ways. Morry's wife leaves him and his car is stolen. The fence, Caleb Neesley, dies of injuries sustained during Whitey's attack. Rosie tries to gas herself when she is discovered helping Tommy. The exception to the rule of inevitable retribution is the upwardly-aspiring Lou, who talks his way out of any situation.

The other leitmotiv is betrayal. Again with the exception of Lou, everybody is betrayed: Rosie by Tommy Swann, who does not recognise the engagement ring which he gave her and who has no compunction about hitting her when she gets in his way, George Sandigate by his wife's deceit, his daughters by their encounters with the Hyams brothers, Morry Hyam's wife by Morry and the three petty crooks by their fence. Lovable cockneys are in short supply. This is a world where people live by their wits rather than by the law, and where the strong prosper at the expense of the weak.[1]

Lou Hyams has a hand in every lucrative activity in the community, but he is also aloof from it, decrying the squalor of the East End as he urges his sister and their father to move away. The cut of his clothes marks him as having plenty of money, yet the police show no interest in his activities. This was the first starring role for John Slater, who graduated into films from his work at the Unity Theatre.[2] The panache of his performance cannot conceal that the complexities of the character were lost in the compression of the novel for the screen.[3] The scene in which Lou visits his father and sister loses all relevance when it is stripped of its context: his sister's aspirations to be a pianist and Lou's conflict with her socialist friend, Bessie Weinbaum, who loves the vivacity of the area.[4]

The amusement arcade is Lou's legitimate business, though legitimacy is relative: Doris suspects that the machines are rigged. The amusement arcade is a recurring image in films of the 1940s, notably in Sidney Gilliat's *Waterloo Road* of 1945, to be considered in the next chapter. The arcade's associations with gambling mean that if not overtly criminal, it is never entirely respectable. In common with the fairground, it has a brashness which taints anybody coming into contact with it. The amusement arcade is a natural haunt of that epitome of brashness, the spiv, whose contacts extend into the underworld, but who exists to make good the shortages experienced by respectable society.

Hamer is quoted as saying of the film, 'I want to do this out in the streets where it all happens.'[5] In this he succeeded. The external scenes establish its sense of place: the street market with the patter of the costermongers (including one Yiddish voice among the cockneys) is

particularly evocative. Similarly, the location shooting of empty, rain-swept streets captures the desolation of a Sunday evening in the East End, even if the topology might puzzle residents. Sunday evening is a time for being home, putting family bonds to the test. The only public places open are the church and the pub. In this community, the pub is more enticing.

The location seen most often is the street where the Sandigates live. Like the set of *Coronation Street*, the Victorian street is closed by a railway viaduct.[6] The terrace is characteristic of those found in working-class London, the two-storeyed dwellings having a continuous high facade which conceals the roof line and gives the illusion of flat roofs.

The Sandigate's house has two rooms up and down. Downstairs, the parlour is used as a bedroom for the youngest child, Alfie, and is little seen. Most of the action takes place in the kitchen, which doubles as the living-room. Clothes are airing on a clothes-horse in front of the range — a reminder of the working-class housewife's ever-present problem of what to do with washing which is not completely dry. Upstairs, the unheated bedrooms are hardly visited during the day: Rose can safely let Tommy sleep in the front bedroom. The two girls share a double bed in the back bedroom. As in many working-class homes, privacy is at a premium. There can be no escaping to the bathroom. As the film reveals, savouring a soak involves not only the laborious task of boiling enough kettles of water to fill the tin bath placed strategically in front of the range (to say nothing of emptying the dirty water afterwards), but the complicated logistic exercise of ensuring that other members of the family are either out of the house or in bed.

The importance of the pub is evident. It is the pivot of Mr Sandigate's social life: a darts match prevents him from staying home with Rose on that fateful Sunday evening. Rose often goes with him. It was while working as a barmaid that she first met Tommy.[7] It is in the pub that the reporter learns of the relationship between Rose and Tommy. The three petty crooks hatch their plots there. The pub is the easiest place to find people, as Sergeant Fothergill well knows.

The dialogue might be called anglicised cockney. While being intelligible for most British audiences, it never draws attention to itself as glaringly wrong, providing cockneys suspend disbelief. Neither the Australian John McCallum nor the children let the side down, even if visual

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signifiers such as the street market ultimately establish the location as working-class London more securely.

The film received enthusiastic coverage from the trade press.[8] It also found favour amongst highbrow critics, with Roger Manvell praising its reality.[9] Compared with nine other Ealing features for which box-office data is available, by 1950 it had accrued the greatest number of circuit bookings and the highest circuit revenue; amongst independents, it fared almost as well.[10] Success was patchy, however. In protesting against the quota, the manager of the New Tivoli in Edinburgh claimed that along with *Fame is the Spur* (to be considered in chapter ten), *It Always Rains on Sunday* yielded a profit of 16s.10d, though whether jointly or severally is not clear.[11]

Appendix 1, table 8.1 charts the film's fortunes in the sample Leeds cinemas and in south-east Essex.[12] It probably did better in the latter area because of the number of families from the East End who lived there. This was their world brought to the screen. Whether there was a north south divide in responses to the film is a topic worthy of further research.

'If togetherness isn't a dream, it's a lie . . . yet that we must accept . . . The next stage is to try and show some sort of interdependence, of *virtual* togetherness, in the structures of civilian life.'[13] [Author's ellipses and italics.] By stressing the notion of virtual togetherness, Durgnat implies the weakness of the concept of community. The social structures cannot bring real togetherness. The Sandigates, Tommy Swann and the local thieves all belong to the working class — the class without power. The Hyams brothers and the fence, Caleb Neesley, have achieved some power — and assert it. There can be no bridging the gap between the two groups. The final reconciliation of George and Rosie is the film's only hint of forgiveness or redemption.

Drazin is less opaque than Durgnat, preferring to see as a measure of Hamer's disillusionment the array of characters who lie, cheat, exploit, manipulate and murder to achieve their aims, though Balcon's influence tempered the film's darker elements.[14] The essential difference between the two explanations is one of levels. Drazin turns to individual psychology, stressing Hamer's tortured vision of the world. Durgnat adopts a sociological approach, albeit

equally coloured by despair. What cannot be doubted is that the film leads the audience far from the warmth of Young and Wilmott's East End, in which the closeness of the family and the neighbourhood are stressed.[15]

## The community writ small

The boarding house provides a dramatic device for bringing together disparate individuals, while emphasising that communality evolves by force of circumstance more than by voluntary association. The house is usually presided over by a landlady. Often a widow, she maintains her independence in a male-dominated world by relying on the rent to supplement her pension. The landlady can assume the role of upholder of morality, stressing the respectability of her establishment. She appears fleetingly in *It Always Rains on Sunday*, turning her disapproval on Doris's suitor, Ted, when he invites the girl to his room. The landlady as keeper of her tenants' morals is also embodied in the characters of Mrs McTavish in *Floodtide* (dir. Frederick Wilson, 1949) and Mrs Chalk in *Good Time Girl* (dir. David Macdonald, 1948), to be considered in chapters ten and eleven respectively. She assumes a prominent role in *London Belongs to Me* (dir. Sidney Gilliat, 1948).

The film of *London Belongs to Me*, like the novel on which it was based, opens just before the Second World War.[16] Behind the credits, aerial shots along the Thames establish the location. A street nameplate indicates that Dulcimer Street is in south-east London (the location is later revealed as Kennington). As the tall town houses are first seen, the voice-over makes clear that 'they've come down in the world a bit'. This is emphasised by the gasometers which dominate the skyline. The lodgers are introduced: the elderly and impoverished Connie (Ivy St Helier), who likes to think of herself as a resting actress; the respectable Josser family, coming to terms with Mr Josser's retirement; and the widowed Mrs Boon who dotes on her rather simple son, Percy (Richard Attenborough). Later, the phony spiritualist, Mr Squales (Alastair Sim), joins the household, ingratiating himself with the widowed landlady, Mrs Vizzard (Joyce Carey), who

is ever hopeful of contacting her husband in the spirit world.[17]

Percy works as a garage hand, but finds an extra source of income in respraying stolen cars. He is pressed into driving a former girlfriend, Myrna, home in a stolen car. She panics when he fails to stop for the police. As she struggles to open the door of the moving car, he hits her. She falls into the road and is killed. Evidence found at the lodging house incriminates Percy, who is charged with murder and found guilty. The other residents campaign to save him from hanging. The news that his sentence has been commuted comes as they lead a march to Whitehall.

Several of the leading characters are trying — and failing — to cling to the remnants of their middle-class lives.[18] This is most obvious in the case of Henry Squales with his pedantic speech: 'I am never aware of what passes in a trance state. After all, it is not I who speak.' He knows what he has been reduced to. As he looks in the mirror before tricking Mrs Vizzard into letting him stay, he asks rhetorically, 'Henry Squales, have you sunk so low as to do this thing? There can only be one answer — yes, you have.'

The genteel Mrs Vizzard knows the poor condition of her house. When Mr Squales takes the basement room, her surprise cannot be concealed. As the shot of her poring over an accounts book makes clear, she is reliant on the rent from her tenants, though she insists that her late husband left her comfortably provided for. She reveals to Mr Squales that she came to the house as a bride. Since her husband died in 1922, it can hardly have changed, except to become shabbier.

Fred Josser's work in an office is a clue to his status, though as he retires after a lifetime with the same company, he still occupies a lowly position, despite the prompting of his ambitious wife. His reward for years of deferred gratification is that he has he saved enough money to buy a country cottage. His wife is in two minds about the move. His daughter, Doris (Susan Shaw), is not keen on leaving London, though she does not contemplate leaving the parental home.

Yet for all the characters' aspirations, they are condemned to share the same, shabby house. More than anything, this gives a sense of eavesdropping on a working-class world, where fellow-lodgers cadge a shilling for the gas, or steal milk left in the hall.

Visual signifiers reinforce the characters' lack of status. This is a world of back street garages under railway viaducts, of the incessant roar of traffic and of dowdy, gas-lit rooms with curtains pulled across doors to keep out draughts. The leisure activities glimpsed in the film are working-class activities: the cinema and the amusement arcade. It is from a cinema car park that Percy steals a car, to the accompaniment of a muffled film soundtrack filtering from the auditorium and by the light of the flashing neon sign over the cinema entrance. It is in an amusement arcade that he first meets the car thief, Jack Rufus (Maurice Denham). Myrna, the girl Percy kills, works there as a cashier. There is a brashness in her manner and her dress which is not found in Doris Josser, though Eleanor Summerfield's portrayal gives Myrna vulnerability.

The characters' attempts to climb the social ladder always fail. Connie's white lie in calling herself a hostess is exposed when Percy and Doris visit the club and discover that she is a cloakroom attendant. Percy's attempt to impress Doris comes to nothing when the club proves to be crowded and uncongenial and is raided by the police. His scheme to sell a stolen car so that he can buy a garage with the proceeds results in a murder charge. Mr Josser's dream cottage has to remain a dream when he uses his savings to hire a barrister for Percy's defence. Mr Squales' hopes of marrying Mrs Vizzard are dashed when his fraudulent activities as a medium come to light.

The soundtrack of *London Belongs to Me* is enough to reveal the social milieu. Though the accents are not particularly idiomatic (both Susan Shaw as Doris and Stephen Murray as her Uncle Henry sound middle class), working-class idioms such as Fred Josser addressing his wife as 'mother' give the dialogue an authentic ring. The stratum of the working class which the characters inhabit is made clear by the emphasis on respectability by the women of the house. Mrs Vizzard's first remark when Percy is arrested is, 'I'll never live it down. I've always done my best to keep this house respectable.' Mrs Josser makes it clear that she does not like her daughter going out with a garage hand. Not that she is any more enthusiastic at the prospect of having a policeman in the family. When Doris goes out with the detective sergeant, Bill Todds (Andrew Crawford), first encountered when the police raid the club, Mrs Josser remarks to her husband

that 'It doesn't seem quite respectable'. Respectability is worth clinging to when it is the only vestige of status left.

Deference is another characteristic apparent in both the dialogue and the acting. In Percy's case, this may in part be deference to age — an attitude which was not eroded until the 1980s, when career advancement became less dependent on length of service — but Fred Josser's manner cannot be explained in this way. This is the deference of class. His bearing at his retirement presentation verges on the obsequious. Something of the same attitude is apparent when he visits Percy's solicitor. Though Fred is putting up the money for Percy's defence, he calls the solicitor 'sir'. The anomalous position of the youthful Bill Todds presents a particular dilemma for Fred, which shows in his forced conversation. How should he respond to a man who is young, but who represents authority and who might become one of the family?

What welds disparate individuals into a community is the campaign to have Percy's death sentence commuted. This is spearheaded by Uncle Henry, who is forever seeking a cause to champion. To his chagrin, his campaign is usurped by a priest with similar ideas. The culmination of the campaign is a march to Whitehall. It begins in a mood of optimism, which is dissipated as the downpour begins and a wheel comes off the pram carrying the petition. When news of the reprieve reaches the supporters, they drift away. In a final scene which foreshadows the ending of *Genevieve* (dir. Henry Cornelius, 1953), Uncle Henry pushes the broken pram across Westminster Bridge, accompanied by Percy's fellow lodgers and Bill Todds. As in *Passport to Pimlico*, the community spirit engendered by one defining event cannot survive once that event loses its significance. Instead, there is a resort to smaller, familial groupings, symbolised by Doris's acceptance of Bill as a suitor.

The anonymous reviewer in *Picture Show* notes the omission of the ending of the novel, in which Fred Josser goes back to his office which is short-staffed because of the call-up.[19] Opting not to follow the stories of the characters through the war gives the film a tighter dramatic structure, albeit with the imposition of a sentimental ending. The loss is the Dickensian aspiration of a novel which teems with characters and subplots, held together by the ironic tones

of the narrator.

The world of Dulcimer Street, like that of *It Always Rains on Sunday*, was known to most working-class people in south-east Essex. This may account for the relative success of *London Belongs to Me* in the independent cinemas there (appendix 1, table 8.1). In Leeds, houses were generally smaller and boarding houses were rarer. The world of Dulcimer Street was less familiar to cinema-goers. Here, the film was another poor performer.

It is tempting to see *London Belongs to Me* as a metaphor for the condition of England in the austerity years, with the community spirit engendered by the war being dissipated and the middle class sinking into genteel poverty. However, the novel on which it was based was first published in 1945 — too early for disillusionment to set in. Nor did critics of the time see the film from that perspective. The general critical response was muted, with Forsyth Hardy's verdict being typical: 'The vivid figures of the novel seem flat and lifeless. . . . The Dulcimer Street of this film is a long way from the Waterloo Road which directors Frank Launder and Sidney Gilliat, once made so real and memorable.'[20] Subsequent commentators have scarcely been more enthusiastic — if they refer to the film at all. Raymond Durgnat gives it a passing mention, while Robert Murphy dismisses it as sentimental.[21] With hindsight, both Frank Launder and Sidney Gilliat concede that the book contained too much material for the film.[22] In spite of these negative responses, the film remains compulsive as a study of tragedy striking the claustrophobic world of the shared house and drawing its inhabitants together. If Alistair Sim's portrayal of Mr Squales threatens to dominate the screen, at least it lightens the prevailing mood of despair.

The other lodging house saga, *The Gorbals Story* (dir. David MacKane, 1950), was based on a play by Robert McLeish. It was the only work of the left-wing Unity Theatre in Glasgow to reach the West End stage or the commercial cinema.[23]

Artist Johnnie Martin (Russell Hunter) recalls the people he knew when he was a newspaper boy living in an impoverished tenement lodging house in Glasgow. It was presided over by another harridan landlady, the widowed Mrs Gilmour, though she is away for much of the film. Peggie and Hector (Betty Anderson and Roddy McMillan) provide the sensible, respectable

core around which the life of the house revolves. In Mrs Gilmour's absence, Peggie takes the opportunity to disobey her by giving shelter to a destitute couple. Another young couple, the Potters, are expecting a baby. Willie Murtrie (Howard Connell) is forever avoiding work and dreaming of the pools win which will solve his problems. His long-suffering wife, Jean (Marjorie Thomson), has a sharp tongue, but indulges Willie by giving him money for his betting. Ami, the youthful Indian peddler, attempts to maintain his cultural identity by his insistence on eating his own food, in spite of the good-natured gibes of the others. He courts another tenant, Magdalene, while Johnnie hopes to marry Nora Reilly (Isabel Campbell), who lives with her parents.

There are few happy endings. The Potters delay too long in calling a doctor, with the consequence that the wife dies. Willie's pools selection comes up, but he confesses that he spent the stake money on a fish supper for Jean instead of posting the coupon. In spite of vowing never to drink again, he goes to the pub with Hector. Both men get drunk, hardly aware that they cause the fight which erupts around them. When Johnnie proposes to Nora, her violent father objects, forcing the couple to renounce each other. Johnnie seeks oblivion, first in a dance hall and then in drink. He returns to the tenement for his cutthroat razor, determined to seek revenge on Nora's father. As a storm breaks, Peggie talks him out of his chosen course.

*The Glass Menagerie* received its first London production in 1948. Tennessee Williams described it as a memory play.[24] *The Gorbals Story* is similar in structure and mood, with the artist providing a commentary on events; the heightened, poetic dialogue; the emotionally charged atmosphere as the storm gathers; and the prevailing sense of people imprisoned within an enclosed world. Though Johnnie becomes successful in material terms, *The Gorbals Story* gives no indication of how he achieves his ambition to become an artist. The mature Johnnie is little more than a device for introducing the stories of the other characters. This is not an account of one man's social advancement.

The film portrays people coping with poverty, though they are not on the lowest rung of the social ladder, as Peggie acknowledges when she wraps food in newspaper and throws it to the children outside the window, with instructions to 'Blow your nose on the paper.' Vermin are a

constant worry. Peggie is concerned that the fish and chip wrappers left in the toilet will attract

rats. Hector is more philosophical: 'If they sleep on your feet and don't nibble your toes, they

keep you warm.' It is a communal world where food is shared (apart from Ami's exotic dishes)

and where men wash and shave at the sink, though women are never seen washing. The desire for

something different is voiced by one of the younger characters, Nora, as she talks to Jean of

being with Johnnie:

> 'It's nice being with someone you understand and who understands you. It makes you feel
> quiet inside — quiet, as if you had a home of your own, really your own, where if you
> wanted to go away and shut the door, you could keep out the people, even those you
> love. Yet they would understand. It would be so peaceful.

Though Hector and Willie go to the pub together, their reasons differ. For Willie, gambling

and drinking are the only routes of escape. Hector's demeanour and his clothing — he visits the

pub in a three-piece suit and a bowler — signal that he belongs to the respectable poor. For him,

drinking is part of the pattern of life rather than an escape. For Johnnie, when the dance hall fails

to offer him consolation after his relationship with Nora has been thwarted by her father, the pub

is his last resort: 'I thought to myself, this is what I am part of. This is what I was born to. Why

should I struggle? Why struggle?'

The strength of family relationships is unquestioned. The landlady is only prevented from

watching over her lodgers because she is called away to look after her ailing sister. Jean's

indulgence towards Willie is underpinned by the couple's devotion to each other. This becomes

explicit when he tells of his dream of taking her on holiday and buying her dresses. As she

comforts him she tells him, 'Remember, I took you for better or for worse and whatever you are

or whatever you've done, you're my man and I love you. And you love me still, don't you?' And

for all his feckless behaviour, Willie is faithful to her. Peter Reilly's possessiveness towards his

daughter, Nora, may be misplaced, but it reveals a fierce loyalty. Even Ami is accepted when he

proposes to Magdalene. Only Johnnie, the creative artist, is destined to remain an outsider. He is

the only one seen to travel far from his roots.

The Gorbals has come to symbolise poverty in the same way as the Bronx. In post-war

years, it must have been little different from when it gained its reputation in the 1920s and 30s — major change was heralded by the comprehensive development of the 1960s. Many familiar elements of working-class life feature in the film, including drunkenness, gambling and poor housing. 'Escape' and 'struggle' occur frequently in Johnnie's narrative. The problem is universalised: 'How long will they endure environments like that? How long will they remain painted in drab and dirty colours, sullying the canvas of our social conscience?' Yet the closeness is portrayed affectionately. Escape from that world implies loss.

The film was released in January 1950. Its non-appearance in the circuit cinemas of south-east Essex indicates that it failed to get a full circuit release (appendix 1, table 8.1). With little word-of-mouth publicity, its exposure among independents was limited. This lack of commercial success is not surprising. The stage origins of the story show rather too obviously, while the Glaswegian accents might have deterred English audiences, even if they are toned down. Nor was there much enthusiasm among audiences for re-examining the 1930s world of poverty epitomised by *Love on the Dole* (dir. John Baxter, 1941), judging by the films which were successful. *The Gorbals Story* must be deemed a failure, but an honourable failure. It has sunk so far into obscurity that a recent work exploring the byways of post-war British film culture fails to mention it.[25]


The community of work


Work plays no part in *The Gorbals Story*, except in the negative sense that Willie is unemployed. Though work can define a community, it is difficult to portray dramatically and it has limited audience appeal. As a consequence, it rarely assumes a central place in films: There are obvious exceptions in occupations where life and death are close at hand, such as mining and nursing. Feature films occasionally portray more humdrum occupations, with *Millions Like Us* (dirs Frank Launder and Sidney Gilliat, 1943) and *I'm All Right Jack* (dir. John Boulting, 1959) falling within this category. Between them came *Chance of a Lifetime* (dir. Bernard Miles,

1950).

Factory owner J. Courtney Dickinson (Basil Radford) faces a rebellious work force. When he challenges them to run the business, they take up the gauntlet. George Stevens (Bernard Miles) and Ted Morris (Julien Mitchell) assume control of the administration, while Adam Watson (Kenneth More) manages the workshop. The team face hostility from suppliers and from the bank manager, but they ensure that the business survives financially by mortgaging their homes. When an order from Xenobia for a new design of plough falls through, Dickinson surprises his business colleagues by helping to find alternative markets for the product. George and Ted are relieved to hand back the management to him, but Dickinson cedes control to Adam.

As a snapshot of British industrial practices, *Chance of a Lifetime* makes Correlli Barnett seem restrained in his criticisms.[26] This is the family firm at its lowest ebb. The factory is outdated and ill-kept, while Dickinson is autocratic and out of touch with his workforce. Both design and selling appear to be his sole prerogative, so it comes as no surprise that he works long hours. As he tells the men, 'It's seven days a week, working twelve, fourteen hours a day.'

The film presents rather than challenges the classic Marxist distinction between the ownership of capital and the proletarian sellers of labour. Interest often resides in the characters who inhabit the divide. One is the works manager, Bland (John Harvey). In appearance, he resembles the last of the spivs, but he deserves sympathy. Though his own interests ally him with management, both sides make him the butt of their anger. Bland is the only person shown in the film to lose his job.

The second transitional character is Palmer (Russell Waters), the bookkeeper. When George and Ted take over the office, their first task is to discover whether Palmer is on their side. He is equivocal. To confound their expectation that white collar workers are invariably well paid, they discover that he only earns eight pounds a week. Had they seen his home, where he lives alone except for his dog, they might have been less surprised. It is an impoverished place, the door opening off an alley to give direct access to the living room. A kettle boils on the range. Nothing can have changed for years. When George promises to increase Palmer's salary, the old

bookkeeper sides with his fellow workers.

The third transitional character is the most developed. This is Dickinson's secretary, Miss Cooper (Josephine Wilson). She is on social terms with her employer to the extent of visiting his home. Whilst he is in charge, she acts as an intermediary, smoothing over problems with the workforce. A woman's touch achieves what men cannot do. At first, divided loyalties make her hesitant about working for men from the shop floor, but their consideration wins her over. She decides to continue in her job, though she keeps her old employer abreast of what is happening.

Although no women volunteer to run the business — how this might have changed the film — there are women on the shop floor as well as in their traditional role of serving in the canteen. It is a woman who drives the tractor for the demonstration of the new plough. At least some of women's wartime roles in industry have been retained. And it is Hattie Jacques who injects some much-needed vivacity into the film in a scene where a coin is thrown inside her dress.

The script-writers never resolve the structural difficulty of sustaining dramatic tension when the workers take control and the opportunity for confrontation between management and workers is removed. There is one potential point of conflict when reorganisation of the workshop causes a temporary loss of earnings and talk of a strike. The union officials are uncertain whose side they should take. Audiences must have sympathised: the film-makers' approach gives little incentive to root for either side.

Durgnat takes a different starting point for his critique, seeing the film as making working-class spectators feel doubly incompetent by simplifying the mutual distrust between workers and management and by ignoring workers' organising skills in trade union branches and friendly societies.[27] If audiences identified with Miles' bucolic performance, they could hardly feel anything else.

The film appeared too late in the period for any accurate estimation of its fortunes in Leeds or south-east Essex to be gauged, though it had reached second-run cinemas by the end of 1950 (appendix 1, table 8.1). The story of the film's exhibition makes up for any drama lacking on screen: its rejection by the circuits, its championing by Guidice as a *cause célèbre* and its

imposition on the Odeon circuit by the Board of Trade.[28] On the whole, critics gave the film a favourable response.[29] An indication of the audience response comes from a Mass-Observation survey of 100 patrons in London cinemas. Although half the respondents thought the film 'outstandingly good', the other half saw it because they had nothing else to do or because they visited the same cinema regularly.[30] The response of audiences generally was less equivocal: they stayed away.[31] The circuits' original judgements had been sound. The film still comes across as worthy rather than engrossing. It has interest as a historical document, but not as a piece of entertainment.

Another film based on work and released in the same year had more commercial success. This was *The Blue Lamp* (dir. Basil Dearden), scripted by T.E.B. Clarke from an idea by Ted Willis and Jan Read. In Paddington Green, PC Andy Mitchell (Jimmy Hanley) is shown the ropes by old hand PC George Dixon (Jack Warner). A jeweller's shop is robbed by two young working-class criminals, Tom Riley (Dirk Bogarde) and Spud (Patric Doonan). They graduate to robbing a cinema. George Dixon intervenes and is shot by Riley. There is a disagreement between the thieves as to whether Riley's girlfriend, runaway Diana Lewis (Peggy Evans), might pose a threat to them. In an act of bravado, Riley goes to a police station to clear himself, but only succeeds in implicating himself in the robbery at the jeweller's shop. The police follow him home, intervening when he tries to strangle Diana. He escapes, but is captured in a crowded greyhound stadium.

Two communities are represented in the film. Both are comprised largely of working-class people. The first is that of the police, which had already been introduced to audiences in *Night Beat* (dir. Harold Huth, 1948). The camaraderie of the canteen extends beyond the confines of work. Choir practice and darts occupy spare moments between patrols, while Andy Mitchell lodges with the Dixons and other officers drop into the Dixons' home for meals. The second community is that of the neighbourhood, embracing villains as well as law-abiding citizens. When George is in hospital after the shooting, a costermonger asks after him, making clear that such concern in no way reflects any liking for the police as an institution. In the stadium, a

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bookmaker who has an uneasy relationship with the law mobilises his men to look for Riley. Tic-tac men signal that they have found him. Riley has no chance against the will of the community.

Near the beginning of the film, PC Andy Mitchell is seen in a tenement flat, taking details about the missing Diana Lewis from her mother. This dissolves to a night scene, with Diana walking jauntily along a street bright with the lights of an amusement arcade and a cinema (showing an Anna Neagle film). A bebop soundtrack sets the mood. The film cuts to two swaggering youths in the West End who are clearly up to no good. Instead of the white shirt, that signifier of respectability, one wears a dark shirt and the other a striped shirt. Neither wears a tie. A middle-class voice-over sets the documentary tone over both outdoor sequences:

> The case of Diana Lewis is typical of many: a young girl showing the effect of a childhood living in a home broken and demoralised by war. These restless and ill-adjusted youngsters have produced a type of delinquent which is partly responsible for the post-war increase in crime. Some are content with pilfering and petty theft. Others with more bravado graduate to serious offences. Youths with enough brain to organise criminal adventures and yet who lack the code, experience and self-discipline of the professional thief, which sets them as a class apart, all the more dangerous because of their immaturity. Young men such as these two present a new problem to the police: men as yet without records, for a natural cunning and a ruthless use of violence has so far kept them out of trouble. The small, exclusive circle which represents the underworld does not accept them and they are avoided by the regular criminals, for they are a liability even to their associates.

The social problems of the day, including the increase in crime, are ascribed to the war, which prevented youngsters from becoming properly socialised at home. 'Real' thieving is elevated to the status of a profession, conducted according to rules which are accepted by both sides. The trouble with the new generation of criminals is that they have not learned the rules. Their youth constitutes part of the problem, making them unpredictable and a nuisance to everybody.

The film contents itself with an exposition of what has gone wrong. Other films supplied solutions. One was a good belting, as in *Good Time Girl* (dir. David Macdonald, 1948), or *Cosh Boy* (dir. Lewis Gilbert, 1952). Another answer was national service, which supposedly instilled self-discipline and had the incidental virtue of keeping young men off the streets. Film-makers with left-wing sympathies were equivocal about national service. Although it could stiffen the moral fibre, as in *Carry on Sergeant* (dir. Gerald Thomas, 1958), it was not without problems.

In *Private's Progress* (dir. John Boulting, 1956); corruption entered the system. More seriously, in *The Bofors Gun* (dir. Jack Gold, 1968), a mindless emphasis on discipline destroyed men.

The stable nuclear family is notable by its absence in *The Blue Lamp*. If Tom Riley and Spud have families, they are by definition ineffective, for parental control has not been exercised. Diana Lewis is part of a large family, but all it offers her are violence, poverty and overcrowding. The Dixons' son has been killed, presumably in the war. Andy Mitchell becomes a surrogate, to the extent of calling Mrs Dixon (Gladys Henson) 'ma'. The communality of the police force, evident in the Dixons' home and in the police station, is the film's substitute for the family. Whether this exemplifies *gesellschaft* masquerading as *gemeinschaft* is an open question.

Dearden's sureness of touch in the scenes involving children deserves acknowledgment (Carol Reed has received more credit in this respect).[32] Women fare less well in *The Blue Lamp*, being both marginalised and stereotyped. The only two women with more than peripheral roles have only to respond to situations. Diana cries and Mrs Dixon is stoical. This is a man's world, as much as cinematic representations of the armed forces or of mining. Because it is a man's world, feelings can only hinted at by a change of tone or a stiffening of the lip.

Authority is stamped on the film even more firmly than on the earlier Ealing film, *It Always Rains on Sunday*. Police provide both the first and the final images. Just as quasi-military discipline is imposed on the police by officers who have themselves risen through the ranks, the police function as NCOs, imposing a benign discipline on the wider working-class community. The uniformed police are drawn from that community as the Dixons' respectable working-class home and the off-duty banter about gardening make clear, though the extent to which these men have cut themselves off from their social origins by their choice of career is not explored. They address middle-class figures as 'sir' or 'ma'am', whilst lower class men are more likely to be called by their forenames, though the young Andy Mitchell addresses the lower class Mrs Lewis as 'ma'am' when asking about her daughter. Even those outside the force recognise rank and defer to it: Mrs Henson calls the chief inspector 'sir' when he breaks the news that George is dead. Age can also signify authority. Andy defers to George Dixon when they are on patrol together, while

the costermonger ordered to move on by George is addressed as 'son' even though he is middle aged.

Detectives play an ambiguous part in the authority structure. They are generally middle class, with gradations only partly based on rank. The social gap between Sergeant Roberts (Robert Flemyng) and Inspector Cherry (Bernard Lee) is difficult to discern, unlike the chasm between the sergeant and Constable Campbell (Bruce Seaton). The latter is seen eating in the canteen, unlike his fellow detectives, and his clothes are conspicuously not made to measure. Even though he is a detective, as a constable, Campbell belongs among the other ranks.

Much of the film is shot on location, conveying the feel of inner-city London in the late 1940s, when peeling house-fronts betrayed a decade of neglect and bombsites were an everyday feature.[33] Aside from the police station, few interiors are shown except for Tom Riley's lodgings and George Dixon's living-room. Their dated furnishings betray how little can have changed since the First World War. In Riley's bleak, rented room, the sleeping area is curtained off. A washstand stands across the corner. Otherwise, furnishings are minimal. George Dixon's home is more comfortable. The kitchen is an alcove off the living room, removing the clear distinction between food preparation and eating which marked middle-class homes of the period. There is a noticeable lack of formality. On Andy Mitchell's first visit to the house, a beer bottle and a sauce bottle are on the table as Mrs Dixon puts his dinner before him. When other policemen drop in for a meal, socks are hanging over the living-room range. The table and dresser dominate the room, the latter being used to display china as much as to store it. It is in a vase on the dresser that Mrs Dixon arranges the flowers intended for her husband when she discovers that he has died. Andy Mitchell has let himself and the chief inspector into the house. If Mrs Dixon had opened the front door to a senior officer, she would doubtless have invited him into the parlour.

By 1950, film-makers were getting to grips with presenting an acceptable form of working-class speech. The dialogue rarely jars. Tom Riley's speech is a textbook example of Basil Bernstein's restricted linguistic code, with emphasis on the imperative verb form and a preference for 'you' or 'they' among pronouns, e.g. he tells Diana to 'Keep your mouth shut, see? You don't

know nothing. Understand?'[34] Turning commands into questions and the use of the double

negative are other obvious characteristics in this example. Working-class speech in British films

was to be little changed until censorship was further relaxed and a new generation of actors such

as Albert Finney and Tom Courtney with their regional accents assumed centre stage a decade

later.

The historiography of critical approaches to *The Blue Lamp* is worthy of study in itself,

revealing the preoccupations of the commentators and changing attitudes to gender, youth, crime

and the police. Charles Barr focuses on the disruption and restoration of order.[35] Stuart Laing

sees in the film the lack of regulation associated with a competitive and acquisitive society.[36]

Marcia Landy detects the masking of repressed and repressive sexuality.[37] Both John Hill and

Robert Murphy emphasise the juxtaposition of the steady, dependable Andy Mitchell with the

rootless Tom Riley.[38] The risk is that readings of the film are based on present-day

preoccupations and can become divorced from its historical context. In spite of cautioning

against 'twisted teleology', Andy Medhurst cannot resist the temptation.[39] What matters for this

thesis is how people at the time responded to the film. The censors themselves were divided.[40]

Critical responses were equally mixed.[41] On the evidence of the trade press, the public was more

enthusiastic.[42]

This is another film which came too late in the period for its performance in subsequent-run

cinemas to be fully assessed. With this handicap, it still did well in south-east Essex (appendix 1,

table 8.1). As with the other films so far considered, this success was not emulated in the sample

Leeds cinemas where it only managed a single three-day run by the end of 1950.

*The Blue Lamp* was released at a time when juvenile crime was a topical issue. The film's

solution — a strong police force and the support of the community — might have been

simplistic, but it was a contribution to the debate. The salient point is that delinquency is defined

in the film as a working-class problem. To what extent it stemmed from the war rather than from

the nature of working-class society is left vague, though the message is clear that, for whatever

reason, working-class socialisation had failed. Yet this very same working-class community had

to contribute to the solution, both by its coherence and by providing a recruiting ground for the police. Quite how this transformation was take place remained unexplained. Eugenics had been rendered unacceptable by the war. Instead, the British chose socialism at the ballot box. By 1950, the limitations of socialism in a capitalist world were beginning to show, but what was to take its place had yet to become apparent. Ealing presented the problem; the solution was beyond Ealing's remit.

The world of leisure

Mass leisure implies more than the provision of leisure facilities for individuals or families. The very act of people coming together connotes shared interests and values which bind the group and distinguish members, however transiently, from others. Two examples of leisure activities performing this function in films of the 1940s are the holiday camp and the cycling club.

The holiday camp as a commercial enterprise developed in the 1930s. It was predicated on a population with enough leisure time and money to enjoy a week at the seaside. A crucial factor was the widespread adoption of holidays with pay, though as the grumbles of the men in *Chance of a Lifetime* make clear, this had yet to reach some firms in post-war years.[43] With the war came the improvement in manual workers' earnings, to be followed by limited opportunities for spending the extra money during the subsequent peace. Allied to these factors were a desire to spend gratuities on leaving the services and a wider acceptance of mass catering. For a while, the holiday camp had everything in its favour. With the coming of cheap air travel and the package holiday, the camp's decline parallelled that of the cinema under the onslaught of television.[44]

The atmosphere of the holiday camp at the peak of its popularity is captured in *Holiday Camp* (dir. Ken Annakin, 1947). The involvement of so many hands in a script — Muriel and Sydney Box, Peter Rogers, Mabel and Dennis Constanduros, and Ted Willis — does not augur well. In practice, such plot devices as the sharing of chalets and the throwing together of strangers can be exploited, so that the stories are woven together more successfully than in other

examples of the portmanteau film. For a week, the campers are part of a community, even if their paths will never cross again.

One family seen on their holidays are the Huggetts. Joe and Ethel (Jack Warner and Kathleen Harrison) are accompanied by their son, Harry (Peter Hammond) and their daughter, Joan Martin (Hazel Court), who brings her child. Harry loses at gambling, but Joe turns the tables by winning the money back and leaving the gamblers penniless. Joan meets a sailor, Jimmy Gardner (Jimmy Hanley), who has been let down by his girlfriend. Misunderstandings abound, but by the end of the film, Joan and Jimmy are reconciled. Joan's friend, Angela (Yvonne Owen), hopes to become engaged to Squadron Leader Binkie Hardwicke (Dennis Price), who is ostensibly on holiday. At the end of the week, she leaves without discovering that he has been arrested on suspicion of murder, and that Elsie Dawson (Esme Cannon), who also came to the camp looking for romance, went for a walk with him the previous evening and never returned.

A spinster, Esther Harman (Flora Robson), finds something familiar about the voice on the camp's public address system. On visiting the control tower, she discovers that the announcer was blinded during the First World War and has no memory of his previous life. Now he is happily married. She leaves without revealing that he was once her fiancé. She befriends a young couple, Michael (Emrys Jones), who is working as a musician at the camp, and Valerie (Jeannette Tregarthen), who has been living with an aunt. When the aunt discovers her niece's pregnancy and disowns her, Esther offers the lovers a home.

Annakin, a documentary director, was encouraged by Sidney Box to direct *Holiday Camp*.[45] His background shows in the location shooting. The film preserves such set pieces of holiday camp life as the arrival of guests at the railway station, where a fleet of coaches is waiting to ferry them to the camp, and the melee at the camp entrance as the bewildered newcomers unload their luggage. These make the film as valuable a historical record as the Blackpool scenes in *Sing As We Go* (dir. Basil Dean, 1934) and *Hindle Wakes* (dir. Arthur Crabtree, 1952).

The range of people going to the camp is apparent from these opening scenes. They include

the middle class (Squadron Leader Hardwicke, Esther Hartman and Valerie), as well as the working class (the Huggetts).[46] If class differences are not abolished, the communal atmosphere of the camp makes them more difficult to sustain. It legitimises behaviour which is frowned upon outside — campers are urged to kiss strangers on the dance floor, to watch girls in the bathing beauty competition and to join in communal singing. In this world, the villainous squadron leader has no difficulty in finding working-class victims such as the naive chambermaid, Elsie Dawson.

Authority might be expected to be absent on a holiday; instead, it takes more subtle forms. As Colin Ward and Dennis Hardy put it, 'The Camp is indeed a universal symbol of the twentieth century, along with barbed wire and the Unknown Political Prisoner.'[47] In 1947, memories of other uses for camps were vivid: holiday camps had themselves been pressed into service as internment camps or service camps. This does not go unnoticed by the characters:

ESTHER: Where does the announcer's voice come from?

ELSIE:    The control tower.

ESTHER: The control tower. Sounds like a prisoner of war camp.

ELSIE:    That's right — only we're the prisoners.

Like the prison camp, the holiday camp was an enclosed community, though lacking the barbed wire. Larger camps boasted ballrooms, bars, theatres, sports facilities and supervision for children. It was not that campers were prevented from venturing beyond the gates; they had no need to do so. Failing to take everything that was offered would be tantamount to foolishness in an age of austerity. As Joe puts it while Ethel struggles with her morning physical jerks among the rows of campers on the beach: 'Stick it, mother. Good money we're paying for this. You don't want to waste it.'

Uniformed staff — the redcoats or their equivalents — were the NCOs of the camp, their function being not to maintain discipline, but to facilitate pleasure. One steers a reluctant Ethel onto the ballroom floor. Others are seen urging girls to take part in the beauty contest. From the window of the control tower, Esther watches them jollying a crowd of campers. As one of

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Yvonne Roberts' interviewees who worked in the camps put it, 'Everybody wants to be a Redcoat . . . because the blazer gives you the authority to be the kind of person you really are.'[48]

Two phenomena of the time captured in the film are of particular interest. The first is the one-parent family. The war had turned this into a pressing social problem which could no longer be hidden or forgotten. The film rehearses several responses. Valerie is a pregnant and single. Her reaction is melodramatic: to jump off a cliff into the sea, preferably with her boyfriend, Michael. The response of her aunt — to have nothing more to do with Valerie — is likely to have been more usual among older members of the middle class and the respectable working class. Thinking of her own lost love, Esther takes a pragmatic and sympathetic line more in keeping with the times.

For the Huggetts' daughter, Joan, the one-parent family is already a reality. Her status is made clear. As she tells Jimmy, 'Of course I'm married. You don't imagine I'd have a child like that if I wasn't, do you?' A conversation with her friend, Angela, in their chalet reveals that Joan is widowed. Practical support in such matters as baby-sitting comes from her parents, though Ethel sees the visit to the camp as an opportunity for Joan to find a husband. If the film does not show Joan's situation resolved by marriage, at least it allows for the possibility as the misunderstandings with Jimmy are overcome.

The other phenomenon of the time is the situation of Esther Harman, who never married after her fiancé disappeared and who devoted herself to looking after her ageing mother.[49] For many young women, the First World War took away the opportunity for marriage. As a consequence, the maiden aunt of late middle age was a feature of family life in the 1940s and 50s. She has been neglected by historians, though she often appears as a paid companion in Agatha Christie novels. A disproportionate number of such women came from the large working-class families of the early years of the century. Like the grandmother in the traditional extended family, they were on hand to help with child-rearing, to dispense wisdom, and to defuse parent-child conflicts. In this case, the middle-class Esther acts as fairy godmother to the young lovers, Michael and Valerie. The choice she offers Michael is between his music and Valerie. True to his

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middle-class upbringing, he puts Valerie first.

With so much visual interest, the film's dialogue takes second place. Joe and Ethel Huggett are the archetypal cockney couple, immediately distinguishable by their speech. Elsie Dawson's speech also marks her as working class. If the speech of the younger people is less class-bound, this is indicative of the predilections of drama schools as much as any reduction in class differences in the real world. The acting conventions of the period have to be accepted.

Particularly among the women, clothes do not distinguish classes, reflecting the leavening effects of rationing and utility styles. In the coach to the camp at the opening of the film, the range of clothes is displayed to advantage. Older women wear hats. Elsie Dawson betrays her age by wearing a hat, though later she considers herself youthful enough to enter the bathing beauty contest. Jimmy is resplendent in his sailor's uniform. Joe's pocket watch and cap are in evidence, though as the holiday progresses, he relaxes enough to put on an open-neck shirt with the collar worn outside his sports jacket in the fashion of the time.

When the guests arrive at the camp, the clothes of the men are more noticeable than those of the women. Though the sports jacket is the norm, several men wear suits (one has a three-piece suit). A common accessory is the raincoat, slung over one shoulder or carried over the arm. In an age before the car, a raincoat was a prerequisite for any journey away from home. There is no distinction of dress by age, though in a later scene, Harry Huggett wears a school blazer, denoting that the Huggetts belong to the respectable working class.

The adoption of formal clothing should not be seen as indicative of shortages. The notion of leisure wear hardly developed until the 1960s. In spite of the uniformity, social distinctions are detectable. The squadron leader's clothes are smarter than those of the other men, while the ostentation of the card sharps' clothes betrays their intentions (Charlie wears a bow tie, or those hallmarks of the spiv, a dark shirt with a showy tie; John Blythe sports his trademark cravat).

For Murphy, 'the holiday camp is treated very much as a microcosm of British society and Dennis Price's irrational, war-obsessed killer functions effectively as an embodiment of post-war anxiety, jolting the film out of cosy complacency and acting as a sinister antidote to Jack Warner

and the Huggetts'.[50] A problem with this interpretation is that an institution is not a microcosm of anything. It has its own rationale for existence, its own history, and generates its own dynamics. An army exists with the aim of defending the state and has a discipline based on a clear command structure. It is not a microcosm of society. Society is more messy. The holiday camp displays aspects of the army and of society at large, but it is a commercial organisation aimed at purveying pleasure. Instead of being viewed as a microcosm of society, it can be envisaged more usefully as society's mirror image, in which the traditional roles and proprieties of behaviour do not apply — the woman can pursue the man, while the mother can abdicate responsibility for supervising her children to the staff.

There is a further problem with Murphy's approach. The risk in treating any institution as a microcosm of society is that the characters have to take on a mythic status almost too heavy for them to bear. Annakin makes clear that it was Muriel Box who worked the character of sex murderer Neville Heath into the film.[51] Heath was a former borstal boy who had been arrested in Bournemouth in 1946 while posing as an RAF officer. His trial captured the public's imagination.[52] This is not the same as seeing him as 'an embodiment of post-war anxiety', though Murphy is surely right in seeing Binkie Hardwicke as 'jolting the film out of cosy complacency'.[53]

The fate of Elsie Dawson is left unresolved. As the film progresses, she becomes a tragic character rather than a figure of fun. With her story, the film takes on a darker hue rather than concluding on the anti-climax of the end of a holiday.

Martha Wolfenstein and Nathan Leites took the film seriously enough to write about it not long after its first release. Their general contention is that 'Ultimate fulfilment of . . . film's promise to reveal everything can be achieved if actors were to play themselves.' Citing *Holiday Camp* as a rare example of this among British films, the authors continue. 'The self portrayal occurs in a film expressing the breakdown of the traditional British value of privacy. The scene is a crowded vacation camp where inmates are organised into mass dancing and kissing games approximating Huxley's orgy-porgy forecasts.'[54]

Patricia Roc, Charlie Chester and Gerry Wilmot appear as themselves in the film, though

what this reveals is debatable. It might be argued that the presence of stars only emphasises the

film's artifice. The practice was not as unusual in British films as Wolfenstein and Leites seem to

think: the Mancunian films and the Old Mother Riley comedies abound with stars making cameo

appearances (see chapter twelve). Nor does the holiday camp necessarily symbolise a breakdown

of the traditional British value of privacy. As Ward and Hardy point out, 'a chalet at Butlin's was

for many couples their first experience of domestic privacy'.[55]

Rather than accepting the sinister overtones detected by Wolfenstein and Leites, the function

of the camp can be summed up by a speech made by Esther when she visits the control tower. Its

socialist tone makes Ted Willis the likely author. The blind announcer takes Esther to the

window and opens it, letting the noise of the campers reach them. The announcer was played by

Esmond Knight, himself blinded during naval service in the war.

> ANNOUNCER: Do you see what I see?

> ESTHER:     What do you see?

> ANNOUNCER: One of the strangest sights of the twentieth century: the great mass of
> people all fighting for the one thing you can't get by fighting for it —
> happiness. When I first came here, I thought I couldn't stand it — the
> noise, the crowds, the frantic search for pleasure. Then I saw it wasn't
> really a crowd at all — just separate individuals, each one of them with
> a different set of problems and worries, hopes and fears; each one of
> them tired and dispirited, eager for peace and yet frightened to be alone.
> And I thought, if I can help to make them happy, just for a while, if I
> can enable them to forget their everyday anxieties while they're here,
> then I've done a little to repay the great happiness the world has given
> me.

The words apply equally well to the cinema.

*Holiday Camp* was popular with audiences. The profit of £16,000 as at 24 December 1949

made it the fourth most profitable Rank feature of the thirty for which data is available — a

creditable performance given that twenty-two of the thirty made a loss. The gross film hire of

£184,300 put it in fifth place out of thirty, though well behind the top-grossing *Great*

*Expectations* (dir. David Lean, 1946) at £303,700. Independents contributed 59 per cent of the

total British income from *Holiday Camp*.[56] This is at variance with the film's performance in

south-east Essex (appendix 1, table 8.1), where it did particularly well on the circuits. It was also

the only film among those considered in this chapter to have more than a token showing in the sample Leeds cinemas. One reason may be that the film does not have a London location. Another factor in the film's success in Leeds is its association with holidays — particularly at a place which some of the cinema-goers must have visited (Annakin, along with Godfrey Winn who devised the story, researched the film at Butlin's Filey camp in Yorkshire).[57] More important than either of these possibilities is the rich texture of the film, with plenty of variation in mood and pace, and a host of storylines. The characters are recognisable enough for audiences to empathise. They have psychological reality. Elsie Dawon's fate and whether Joan got her man do linger in the mind. The moment at dusk when Joe and Ethel lie in the sand dunes, talking of life together, does have poignancy. For a director making his first feature, *Holiday Camp* is a notable achievement.

Like the holiday camp, cycling has hardly captivated film-makers, though in 1948 came *Jour de Fête* (dir. Jacques Tati) and *Bicycle Thieves* (Vittorio de Sica). Critically, they have fared better than the British entry in the canon, *A Boy, a Girl and a Bike* (dir. Ralph Smart, 1949), scripted by Ted Willis.

In a Yorkshire mill town, wealthy young David Howarth (John McCallum) is attracted to Susie Bates (Honor Blackman), a mill girl who belongs to the local cycling club. He joins the club, buying a bike from dealer Bill Martin (Maurice Denham). The bike was stolen by the delinquent Charlie (Anthony Newley) to pay a gambling debt owing to Martin. Ada Foster (Diana Dors) overhears Martin and Charlie talking. When the cyclists go camping, Charlie tries to destroy the evidence so that the theft will not be discovered, but he is too late. Bill Martin's son has let Ada down by not taking her to a dance and in revenge she tells the others about the plot. At the camp, David Howarth proposes to Susie. She hesitates. Her boyfriend, Sam Walters (Patrick Holt), becomes jealous and picks a fight with David. Later, the rivalries are forgotten as David takes part in the championship race. He wins for the team. When the club organiser, Steve Hall (Leslie Dwyer), finds a home for Sam and Susie, he does not reveal that David has provided it.

Along with rambling, cycling was taken up by the working class and the lower middle class from the 1890s. H.G. Wells' *The wheels of chance: a holiday romance* (1896) evokes this early freedom — a theme taken up by Alan Bennett in *A Day Out* (BBC TV, 1972). The hostility of David's family to his new hobby illustrates that cycling remained a low-status pastime. Both rambling and cycling threatened the hegemony of the ruling classes by increasing mobility and hence the contacts between lower-class communities and by giving women freedom from chaperones. Sometimes the threat was more specific, notably the ramblers' challenge to private land ownership in the Kinder Scout trespass of 1932.[58]

Clubs also enhanced the ability of working-class people to organise themselves A noticeable feature of the film is the time cycling club members devote to running the club, including the holiday savings scheme. This expertise spills out into the wider community: Steve Hall is on the council's housing committee.

Outsiders can disrupt the community. The most obvious example is David Howarth, who precipitates a rift between Susie and Sam, even if he steps back so that it can be healed. In the championship, David stands in for another outsider crucial to the plot: the mysterious Londoner, Bert Gardener, who joins the club at the same time as David. Bert's wife wants to go back to London, but he demurs. Only when Bert is arrested as a deserter does the reason for his reluctance become clear.

The third pair of outsiders, also from London, are Charlie and his widowed mother, Nan (Megs Jenkins). Nan is being wooed by Steve Hall. She has been assimilated into the community, though the same cannot be said of Charlie. His mother blames his unruly behaviour on evacuation. Steve sees the absence of a father's firm hand as the cause and hints darkly that the boy needs disciplining. Presumably he has corporal punishment in mind, though the film allows him no opportunity to carry out his threat.

It is not only outsiders who are disruptive. As with many of Diana Dors' characters, Ada's power to upset the equilibrium of the community resides in her sexuality. After David and Sam fight over Susie, Ada turns her charms on Sam, though without success. The difference between

Ada and the outsiders is that her disruptive potential can be contained by the community. Her activities are treated tolerantly and she remains not only a member of the club, but a friend of Susie. In this, her treatment is different from that of Bill Martin, who is given over to external authority in the shape of the police. Charlie is young and impressionable. His disciplining can also be kept within the club.

Women occupy a subordinate role in the club. Its organisation is in the hands of men, the exception being Nan Ritchie, who keeps the money and in whose cafe the club meetings are held. Running a business makes her into an honorary man. Women go cycling with the men, but when heats for the championship are held, women are relegated to the role of spectators. At the championship, Nan is on hand to assume the traditional feminine role of dispensing refreshments. (David's family is conspicuous among the spectators — his mother and sister are the only women seen wearing hats.)

Much of the film is devoted to location shots of the cycling. The Yorkshire setting is more effective at establishing a sense of place than the variable Yorkshire dialects.[59] The world of work is established by shots of the interior of a mill. Here, the noise is more noticeable than any visual signifiers. The high incidence of deafness among mill workers is hardly surprising.

The only home in the town shown in any detail is that of Susie Bates. Her father is a dustman. The overcrowding is apparent in a scene in the living room when her parents, her grandmother, two younger siblings and the lodger all crowd around the table. Another telling scene shows the trouble she has in finding somewhere to talk to Sam about their future. In the living room, her father is bickering with grandma, while his wife temporises. This was an age when widowed in-laws were usually assimilated into the household, though not always without tensions showing. Susie's sister is with her boyfriend in the parlour. Bedrooms are not a proper place to talk, so Susie and Sam eventually retreat to the greenhouse to dream of the home they will one day make for themselves. The contrast is with David's house, set in its own grounds in the country, where a grand piano fails to dominate the panelled morning room. The point is not laboured.

Recent commentators have ignored the film. An exception is Landy, who takes a Darwinian view of cycling:

> Cycling is a signifier for the working-class community in the film, testing the mettle and morality of the men and serving as a means of eliminating discordant elements. . . . The film adheres to a rigid notion of community. Susie does not get her rich man and abandon her social class. Though the film flirts with such an alliance, it ultimately frustrates hopes for a Cinderella ending and aligns itself with the working-class characters.[60]

Landy's rider holds out some possibility for change: '. . . the film harbours a tension between realism and melodrama. The realism opens up a space to see the characters as struggling over issues of economy, family and gender, but the melodrama insists on the maintenance of the family as the cohesive force that binds the community, curing the disruptiveness generated by generational, sexual, and class differences.'[61]

The characters are grouped into families or proto-families, Diana Dors' Ada being the exception. The family does not necessarily cure disruptiveness: in the case of the Martins or the Gardeners, it singularly fails to do so. More often, the cycling club is seen to exert control to maintain the values of the community. Nor is wayward behaviour necessarily bad. It can function as the grit in the oyster. Whatever problems Susie's flirtation with David causes, it shows the limits of his own family's control over him and ultimately leads to a home for Susie and Sam. To see the family (or the club) merely as proscribing or curing certain behaviours is to underestimate the forces for societal change and the capacity of social institutions to accommodate change.

In McCallum's words, the film 'only aimed to entertain on a fairly simple level, and it did this reasonably well'.[62] Although lacking artistic pretension, it captures the place and the period as surely as its more illustrious rivals, *Jour de Fête* and *Bicycle Thieves*. Few film-makers ventured into Yorkshire, which makes this filmic record of a mill town during its post-war Indian summer all the more valuable. In passing, it touches on preoccupations of the time, including housing shortages and the deserter's fear of discovery. That the lost world of the mill town nestling in the valley, with its precipitous flights of steps linking the streets, and its cobbled

ginnels, should evoke nostalgia is both an acknowledgement of the changes which have taken place and an opportunity to compare values. These issues are not exclusively a matter for historians or psychologists. They fall equally well within the province of the philosopher and the town planner. Why does this townscape hold an appeal for us? Precisely what aspects of the community as portrayed seem worthwhile today? Why as a society have we been willing to forgo them for other benefits? How inevitable was this change? A film, like any work of art, can amuse and entertain, while at the same time prompting such speculation.

*A Boy, a Girl and a Bike* ran for a week at the Gaumont, Southend-on-Sea, in June 1949. There were no further screenings by the end of 1950, either in south-east Essex or in the sample Leeds cinemas. There was time for the film to reach second-run cinemas, but it never did. Evidently the independents concluded that its commercial potential was minimal. Judging by the film's performance at the Gaumont, Sheffield, they were right. Out of 206 weeks of releases, it ranked 198th in attendances. As the manager commented, 'well balanced programme cannot understand why we have not taken more money'.[63]


## Six communities in film


Of the six films, three are set in London. This is not unexpected given that London was both the largest conurbation and the centre of the film industry. One consequence is that, if the chosen films are typical, audiences would see the working class predominantly in terms of the London working class. The concerns, the environment and the voices of the working class in other areas remained largely hidden. The British cinema of the 1940s might have been a mass medium, but it was also a selective medium.

Mutual dependence rather than emotional ties bind the communities, except in *A Boy, a Girl and a Bike*. Individuals may come together over particular issues *(London Belongs to Me)*, but crime can also fragment them *(It Always Rains on Sunday)*. Older women like Peggy in *The Gorbals Story* are often crucial in maintaining communal bonds, while the sexuality of young

women like Ada Foster in *A Boy, a Girl and a Bike* can threaten them. This can make men appear weak and vacillating, though Jack Warner's characters in *The Blue Lamp* and *Holiday Camp* deny this possibility.

The communities presented would hardly make present-day audiences yearn for the world we have lost. Only *A Boy, a Girl and a Bike* comes near to satisfying the received notion of a traditional working-class community. The film happens to be set in a small northern town, which may be no coincidence given the appeal of such locations to television audiences, most famously Holmfirth in *Last of the Summer Wine* (BBC TV, 1973 — ). For better or worse, television helps to mould our imagined past, while the community of *It Always Rains on Sunday* can be conveniently forgotten.

**Notes**

1. See Dick Hobbs, *Doing the business: entrepreneurship, the working class and detectives in the East End of London*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989.

2. Colin Chambers, *The story of the Unity Theatre*. London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1989, 185 and 189.
  In 1961, Sidney Box paid credit to what the Unity Theatre had done for the film industry (ibid. 369), but the topic remains unresearched. Amongst the roster of names mentioned by Chambers are Bill Owen, Alfie Bass, Vida Hope, Ted Willis, Herbert Lom, Maxine Audley, David Kossoff, Warren Mitchell, Lionel Bart, Rita Webb, John Bluthal, Walter Lassally and Stanley Baxter.

3. Arthur La Bern, *It always rains on Sunday*. London: Nicholson & Watson, 1947.

4. ibid. 77-84 and 135-50.

5. Googie Withers in Brian McFarlane, *Sixty voices: celebrities recall the golden age of British cinema*, London: BFI, 1992, 235.

6. The townscape is reminiscent of Kentish Town rather than Bethnal Green, with the truncated steeple of Holy Trinity, Clarence Way, rising above the railway viaduct.

7. A flashback in the film makes clear that Tommy was a spiv in those days. His appearance catches his description in the book: 'Rose had been working at "The Two Compasses" for a fortnight when in walked Tommy in a new light-blue suit, a tan-shade trilby hat, a coloured silk shirt, with a floral-patterned tie, and a new black, herringbone overcoat neatly folded over his arm.' La Bern, op.cit. (ch.8, n.3) 19.

8. For a range of reviews, see *Cinema and Theatre Construction*, January 1948, vol.15, no.3, 4-7.

9. Roger Manvell, 'Recent films', *Contemporary Cinema*, January 1948, vol.2, no.1, 18-21. The strict observance of natural time contributes to the feeling of reality. See John Caughie, 'Progressive documentary and television drama', *Screen*, 1980, vol.21, no.3, 21.

10.

*Bookings and revenue of ten Ealing features to 1950*

|  | Circuit bookings | Circuit revenue (£) | Independent bookings | Independent revenue (£) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *It Always Rains on Sunday* (1947) | 473 | 146,982 | 2,018 | 82,724 |
| *Frieda* (1947) | 466 | 116,813 | 2,269 | 110,204 |
| *Scott of the Antarctic* (1948) | 433 | 140,665 | 1,446 | 73,558 |
| *Hue and Cry* (1947) | 382 | 70,466 | 2,154 | 68,847 |
| *Against the Wind* (1948) | 366 | 47,268 | 1,798 | 47,727 |
| *Saraband for Dead Lovers* (1948) | 349 | 45,311 | 1,271 | 42,024 |
| *Another Shore* (1948) | 323 | 26,259 | 760 | 9,111 |
| *Nicholas Nickleby* (1947) | 319 | 54,341 | 1,778 | 42,471 |
| *Passport to Pimlico* (1949) | 318 | 71,764 | 1,113 | 32,679 |
| *The Loves of Joanna Godden* (1947) | 309 | 36,054 | 1,920 | 46,854 |

Source: PRO BT 64/4461 (Whether the revenue figures are net or gross is not indicated.)

11. *Kinematograph Weekly*, 8 July 1948, 13.

12. The table includes all thirty-two films discussed in this and subsequent chapters, giving the number of days on which they were screened in the three sample groups of cinemas considered in chapter six, along with rankings by screen days which take into account all the titles screened in each location. As in chapter six, no account is taken of the number of films within each ranking (see ch.6, n.70).

13. Raymond Durgnat, *A mirror for England: British movies from austerity to affluence*, London: Faber, 1970, 201.

14. Charles Drazin, *The finest years: British cinema of the 1940s*, London: Deutch, 1998, 76-8.

15. Michael Young and Peter Willmott, *Family and kinship in East London*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1957.

16. Norman Collins, *London belongs to me*, London: Collins, 1945.

17. As Andrew Davies notes, fortune-telling and spiritualism were integral to working-class women's networks. Andrew Davies, *Leisure, gender and poverty: working-class culture in Salford and Manchester 1900-1939*, Buckingham: Open University Press, 1992, 79-81. This is

also apparent from *Love on the Dole* (dir. John Baxter, 1941), though it was not a purely working-class concern as Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's interest in spiritualism illustrates.

18. For a similar point made by Durgnat, see Durgnat, op.cit. (ch.8, n.13) 36.

19. *Picture Show*, 18 September 1948, 8.

20. Forsyth Hardy, 'Safety first for British films?' *Film Forum*, autumn 1948, vol.4, no.1, 1.

21. Durgnat, op.cit. (ch.8, n.13) 36 and 242-3; Robert Murphy, *Realism and tinsel: cinema and society in Britain 1939-49*. London: Routledge, 1992, 159-60.

22. Geoff Brown, *Launder and Gilliat*. London: BFI, 122-3.

23. Chambers, op.cit. (ch.8, n.2) 282.

24. Tennessee Williams, *'Sweet Bird of Youth'; 'A Streetcar Named Desire'; 'The Glass Menagerie'*. E. Martin Brown (ed.) Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1962, 229.

25. Margaret Dickinson (ed.) *Rogue reels: oppositional film in Britain 1945-90*. London: BFI, 1999.

26. Correlli Barnett, *The lost victory: British dreams, British realities 1945-1950*. London: Pan, 1996.

27. Durgnat, op.cit. (ch.8, n.13) 70.

28. Edgar Anstey et al. (eds.) *Shots in the dark: a collection of reviewers' opinions of some leading films*. London: Allen Wingate, 1951, 158-63; Guidice papers (BFI Library); *The Daily Film Renter*, 27 February 1950, 3.
   Richard Winnington in Anstey et al. 163, names Alan Osbiston as co-director. In the title credits, Miles is named as sole director.

29. ibid. 159-63. The Rank card calls the film an 'Unspectacular production, but one of general interest'.

30. For the first draft of the survey see Guidice papers, item 26 (BFI Library). For the final version see 'Film and public: *Chance of a lifetime*'. *Sight and Sound*, January 1951, new series, vol.19, no.9, 349-50.

31. Guidice's reservations about Rank's marketing of the film surface in his correspondence: 'There is no doubt they will kill it.' Letter dated 9 March 1950 from Guidice to Bernard Miles. Guidice papers (BFI Library). Later there was a change of heart, with lack of audience interest rather than poor marketing being held to be responsible for the film's failure at the box office: 'It is a bitter pill to swallow but we must swallow it. The film has done badly, notwithstanding the genuine efforts of the Odeon people to boost it in every possible way.' Letter dated 9 September 1950 from Guidice to Bernard Miles. Guidice papers.

32. For Reed, see Drazin, op.cit. (ch.8, n.14) 55-70.

33. Paddington in wartime is evoked in Marie Paneth, *Branch Street: a sociological study*, London: Allen & Unwin, 1944. Dirk Bogarde calls *The Blue Lamp* the first example of *cinema vérité*, with the chase across the electrified railway lines being made without permission and nobody in the stadium being told that a movie was being shot. Bogarde in McFarlane, op.cit. (ch.8, n.5) 26.

34. Basil Bernstein, *Class codes and control*, vol.1: *Theoretical studies towards a sociology of language*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1971, 110 and 156.

35. Charles Barr, *Ealing studios*, 2nd edn., London: Studio Vista, 1993, 83.

36. Stuart Laing, *Representations of working-class life 1957-1964*, Basingstoke, Hants., and London: Macmillan, 1986, 112-13.

37. Marcia Landy, *British genres: cinema and society 1930-1960*, Princeton, NJ, and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 1991, 467.

38. John Hill, *Sex, class and realism: British cinema 1956-1963*, London: BFI, 1986, 70; Murphy, op.cit. (ch.8, n.21) 166.

39. Andy Medhurst, 'Dirk Bogarde', in Charles Barr (ed.) *All our yesterdays: 90 years of British cinema*, London: BFI, 347. The point has been made before. See Steve Chibnall, 'The teenage trilogy: *The Blue Lamp, I Believe in You* and *Violent Playground*.' in Alan Burton, Tim O'Sullivan and Paul Wells (eds.) *Liberal directions: Basil Dearden and postwar British film culture*, Trowbridge, Wilts: Flicks Books, 1997, 143.

40. For AFM, it was 'A sordid, vicious, unpleasant story'. The report continues, 'I deplore this type of film being produced in this country. I feel certain that it does a great deal of harm to those of the younger generation who are criminally minded.' FNC was more lenient: 'Without his revolver, Riley showed what a coward he really was.' BBFC scenario notes no.24, 12 April 1949 (BFI Library).

41. Anstey et al. op.cit. (ch.8, n.28) 127-30.

42. On its north-west London circuit release, *The Blue Lamp* did better at the box office than the Danny Kaye vehicle, *The Secret Life of Walter Mitty* (dir. Norman Z. McLeod, US release 1947). *The Daily Film Renter*, 8 March 1950, 9. A month later, the *Kinematograph Weekly* described *The Blue Lamp* as 'still raking in the shekels'. *Kinematograph Weekly*, 13 April 1950, 12. It was one of the few films to produce a profit. *Daily Mirror*, 28 April 1950. 'British films, 1950' cuttings file (BFI Library). A *Picturegoer* reader in south London described queuing for two hours with thousands of others to see the film in a suburban cinema. *Picturegoer*, 13 May 1950, 3.

43. PEP estimated that by the end of the war, two-thirds of workers were entitled to a week's paid holiday under collective agreements or statutory order. PEP, *British trade union: six studies*, London: PEP, 1948, 94; Harry Hopkins, *The new look: a social history of the forties and fifties in Britain*, London: Readers Union and Secker & Warburg, 1964, 341; George Sayer Bain, Robert Bacon and John Pimlott, 'The labour force', in A.H. Halsey (ed.) *Trends in British society since 1900: a guide to the changing social structure of Britain*, Basingstoke, Hants., and London: 1972, table 4.1.

44. The rise and fall of the holiday camp is documented in Colin Ward and Dennis Hardy, *Goodnight campers! The history of the British holiday camp*, London: Mansell, 1986. For contemporary accounts of life in a holiday camp, see Kenneth Adam, 'Anatomy of Butlin', *Pilot Papers*, April 1946, vol.1, no.2, 81-90; Hilde Marchant, 'Life in a holiday camp', *Picture Post* 13 July 1946, reprinted in Tom Hopkinson (ed.) *Picture Post 1938-50*, London Allen Lane The Penguin Press, 1970, 192-6.

45. Ken Annakin in McFarlane, op.cit. (ch.8, n.5) 5 and 6.

46. The roster of the great and the good who sampled holiday camp life, albeit with some prompting from Billy Butlin, included the Archbishop of York, Lady Violet Bonham Carter, Anthony Eden and Hugh Dalton. Peter Hennessy, *Never again: Britain 1945-51*, London: Cape, 1992, 315.

47. Ward and Hardy, op.cit. (ch.8, n.44) 105.

48. Yvonne Roberts, 'Is everybody happy?' *New Statesman*, 26 August 1977, cited in Ward and Hardy, op.cit. (ch.8, n.44) 89.

49. Ray Seaton and Roy Martin see the mother who was in a wheelchair and whom Esther took to Torquay as representing Mother England of the previous generation. Roy Seaton and Ray Martin, 'Gainsborough in the forties', *Film and Filming*, June 1982, no.333, 17. This seems an oblique approach to the film. More prosaically, Torquay symbolises traditional, middle-class England. It had no holiday camps: the nearest were at Paignton, its proletarian neighbour. Esther makes the effort to embrace the new by staying in a holiday camp, though it turns out not to be to her liking.

50. Murphy, op.cit. (ch.8, n.21) 215.

51. Ken Annakin in McFarlane, op.cit. (ch.8, n.5) 6.

52. Hopkins, op.cit. (ch.8, n.43) 50-1.

53. see note 50

54. Martha Wolfenstein and Nathan Leites, *Movies: a psychological study*, Glencoe, IL: Free Press of Glencoe, 1950, 289-90.

55. Ward and Hardy, op.cit. (ch.8, n.44) 75.

56. PRO BT 64/4490, schedules 4 and 6.

57. Ken Annakin in McFarlane, op.cit. (ch.8, n.5) 6. John Huntley is unclear whether the film was shot at Filey or Skegness. John Huntley, *Railways on the screen*, London: Ian Allan, 1993, 70 and 72.

58. Mike Harding, *Walking the Peak and Pennines*, London: Joseph, 1992, 107.

59. Filming took place in Wharfedale. John McCallum, *Life with Googie*, London: Heinemann, 1979, 44.

60. Landy, op.cit. (ch.8, n.37) 449.

61. loc. cit.

62. McCallum, op.cit. (ch.8, n.59) 44.

63. Weekly return for Gaumont, Sheffield, 13 August 1949.

# CHAPTER NINE

## Family fortunes: portrayals of the working-class family

Almost all films concerned with working-class life offer some image of the family. In *Holiday Camp* (dir. Ken Annakin, 1947), it is the stable and coherent social unit of the Huggetts. In *It Always Rains on Sunday* (dir. Robert Hamer, 1947), the family generates conflict and divided loyalties. In *Good Time Girl* (dir. David Macdonald, 1948), it is a wellspring of faulty socialisation. Children can be a source of heartbreak as much as pleasure, as in *The White Unicorn* (dir. Bernard Knowles, 1947) and *When the Bough Breaks* (dir. Lawrence Huntington, 1947). The films considered in this chapter have the family as their centrepiece.

A family seen struggling through the war are the Cotters in *Waterloo Road* (dir. Sidney Gilliat, 1945). The story is told towards the end of the war by the local GP, Dr Montgomery (Alastair Sim), and is an extended flashback to a day in 1941. Jim Cotter (John Mills) has recently married Tillie (Joy Shelton). They live in his family home, along with his sister and her husband. While Jim is serving in the army, his sister, Ruby (Alison Leggatt), writes to tell him of Tillie's involvement with a local amusement arcade owner, Ted Purvis (Stewart Granger). Jim goes absent without leave, intending to confront his adversary at the arcade, but Ted is not in there. Instead, Jim is knocked out by one of Ted's cronies during a scuffle. After being tended by Dr Montgomery, he continues his quest, eventually coming upon Ted and Tillie in the flat over the arcade. The two men fight as an air raid rages, with Jim emerging as the victor. As the flashback ends, Dr Montgomery is seen giving a toy railway engine to Jim and Tillie's son. The couple have stayed together.

A continued friction with authority runs through the film. The military police are the most obvious manifestation of power. They, rather than the Germans, are the enemy. This is evident in the subplot involving a Canadian renegade whom Jim encounters in Waterloo Station — a man

who joined the army to fight and who deserted when service life proved to be a matter of routine and discipline rather than getting to grips with the enemy. When his unit is posted overseas, the Canadian is happy to give himself up — until he discovers that he will be arrested instead of being allowed to fight.

Jim's battle with authority is woven through the film as he seeks to evade the military police until he has settled his score with Ted. His adversaries are not portrayed as being overtly hostile. When Jim is first arrested, the officer in charge offers him the opportunity to return to his regiment on his own. When Jim turns this down, he is given an escort as far as Clapham Junction. On the train, the corporal accompanying him offers him a cigarette as they chat. This is the unforced conversation of two men who share the same class position. Yet the corporal is still the enemy. Jim has no compunction about seizing the chance to escape. He goes home, though he has to leave by the back door when the corporal and a colleague come looking for him. Jim's mother defends him, voicing her own attitude towards authority: 'Why don't you leave our boys alone? They're doing their bit, aren't they? Always badgering 'em, badgering 'em.' Though the corporal sees her concealing Jim's belt, he contents himself with a friendly warning that Jim should give himself up.

Jim perceives military authority as an annoyance; the audience is shown its human face. The tension between the two viewpoints makes the evasion of the military police by Jim and particularly by the Canadian seem like a game. This may be interpreted as directorial uncertainty, or an attempt to humanise the military machine. Landy accords it greater significance: '. . . French leave is justified in the context of the imperative to bolster morale on the home front, to diminish threats to domestic stability.'[1]

Civilian authority is represented by air-raid wardens and the police. The power of the police is evident in the dance hall which Jim visits in his search for Ted. During a spot check on identity papers, Jim uses his uniform to outwit authority by posing as being on the side of the police in helping to round up miscreants. Yet civilian authority is weak, as the special constable's hesitation at breaking up the fight in the amusement arcade makes clear. He takes the easy

option, blaming Jim for the affray. It is Dr Montgomery's intervention which saves Jim from being charged. Ultimately it is the all-knowing, middle-class doctor who wields power most effectively, if benignly, though his legal authority is limited.

While other characters are preoccupied with the problems of survival, Dr Montgomery can reflect on the past and speculate on the future. The film was made in 1944, when the future was uncertain. Not surprisingly, aspiration takes precedent over detail, though the sort of post-war world the doctor envisages is clear enough. He takes a dim view of Ted Purvis: 'Hope he's not still having his cake and eating it when the war's over.'² At the end of the film, the doctor surveys the rubble of a blitzed street and declares, 'We'll need good citizens when this is all over. Millions of them.' As well as being narrator of the film, he is its conscience — and perhaps the mouthpiece of Sidney Gilliat, who wrote the script as well as directing.

The problems of sharing a house come over clearly as Jim's married sister, Ruby, squabbles with Tillie, while his mother tries to mediate. Fred is the man of the house. He avoids the domestic tensions by finding a second home in the pub, or by retreating to the yard where he keeps pigeons. Though the image of the caged bird might be a convenient metaphor for working-class lives, (it occurs in *It Always Rains on Sunday*), it also reflects the realities of the working-class home in which there was little room for pets.

The sense of place in *Waterloo Road* is firmly established by location shooting in and around Waterloo Station. The Cotters' house is beside the railway viaduct which provides a backdrop to the domestic scenes, with trains continually passing the kitchen window. The terrace has the distinctive London feature, encountered in *It Always Rains on Sunday*, of a high facade concealing the roof line, though here the houses are lower in the social scale, lacking even vestigial front gardens. In spite of the front doors opening directly onto the pavement, the houses do have hallways, which gives them some social tone.

The period is established by the opening shots in the station air raid shelters, the ubiquitous service personnel, the mounds of rubble in place of houses and by the streets closed by unexploded bombs. Missing is the tape crisscrossing the windows in a diamond pattern to hold

shards of glass in place in the event of a bomb blast. Even in the the tattooist's shop where Jim hides from the police, the plate glass window is unprotected.

The interior of the Cotters' house is not shown in any detail, though the cramped conditions and dated decor are evident: the runner on the mantlepiece is a Victorian hangover, while the shallow stoneware sink in the scullery has survived from when the house was built in the mid-Victorian period. At the back of the house is a yard barely large enough for pigeon hutches. When the birds are released to fend for themselves, they come back. Home might not be ideal, but for pigeons as much for Jim, it is known and it is the place to which they return.[3]

Jim is marked as working class by his home. There is little attempt to delineate his position by speech. His training as a locomotive engineer suggests that he is upwardly mobile. As Tillie looks at a photograph of her wedding in a photographer's window, there is a flashback to the couple setting off on their honeymoon. From the train they see the house they hope to buy. It is an inter-war terraced house — modest enough, but as Jim says, 'a change from the Waterloo Road'.

The art deco simplicity of Ted Purvis's flat is in contrast to the clutter of the Cotters' home. Ted Purvis is a more interesting character than Jim. Robert Murphy considers him to be the screen's first fully-fledged spiv.[4] He is first seen shaving in the communal shelter — his electric razor is a rarity for the period. One of his acolytes ministers to him, like a butler fussing over his master. The other members of Ted's gang are introduced in the amusement arcade scenes. As in Gilliat's *London Belongs to Me*, released three years later, the amusement arcade has symbolic significance as a place which, if not a hive of criminal activity, attracts those on the fringes of the law. Ted has evaded being called up by buying a medical certificate. His charm and assurance are well displayed by the way in which he cajoles Tillie into spending the afternoon with him, even though she only keeps their date in order to tell him that they cannot go out together. Gilliat seems unwilling to let him off lightly for persuading her to visit his flat. Not only does Ted lose his fight with Jim, but Dr Montgomery pronounces that he really does have a heart condition.

In general, morality is not underlined so obviously. As a glimpse of the problems of

marriage in wartime, the film remains affecting. There is an underlying sense of the working class being at the bottom of the hierarchy of authority, but finding their own accommodation with it. Visually, trains and train journeys punctuate the action as much as in that other railway film from later in 1945, David Lean's *Brief Encounter*. The difference is that the wartime setting and the social milieu rooted *Waterloo Road* in reality for working-class audiences. This may account for the film's appeal amongst the independents in the two sample areas (appendix 1, table 8.1), though it met with a lukewarm reception on the circuits if the response in south-east Essex is anything to go by.

By the time the Huggett family were introduced to audiences, the war was over. Ethel and Joe Huggett made their first appearance in Ken Annakin's *Holiday Camp* in 1947. The subsequent Huggett films were not intended as sequels. While Annakin was making *Wedding Bells* in the following year, again with Kathleen Harrison and Jack Warner, Harrison suggested using the name Huggett because 'It brought us luck'.[5] *Wedding Bells* was retitled *Here Come the Huggetts* for its 1948 release and was followed by two sequels also directed by Annakin: *Vote for Huggett* and *The Huggetts Abroad*, both released in 1949. A further film, *Christmas with the Huggetts*, was submitted to the BBFC in 1949, but never made.[6] Instead of fading into obscurity, the family re-emerged on the BBC Home Service in *Meet the Huggetts*, which became staple Sunday listening from 1953 until 1961.[7]

Throughout the three films, Joe and Ethel were played by Jack Warner and Kathleen Harrison. To differentiate the series from *Holiday Camp*, they had three children: Jane, who appears in two films (Jane Hylton in *Here Come the Huggetts and* Dinah Sheridan in *The Huggetts Abroad*). Susan (Susan Shaw) and Pet (Petula Clark).[8]

*Here Come the Huggetts* introduces the family in their suburban home. Joe works in a local factory. Susan and Jane are working, though Pet is still at school. The plot contrasts the royal wedding, itself a major attraction in the cinema (see page 187), with the ups and downs of Jane's wedding. A subplot involves the complications which ensue when Ethel's niece, Di (Diana Dors), comes to live with the family and Joe persuades his employer to give her a job in the office. In

*Vote for Huggett.* Joe is pressed into becoming a local councillor, with businessmen on his side and on the side of his opponent hoping to gain from the result. In *The Huggetts Abroad*, the family set out to emigrate overland to South Africa, but their tribulations in the Sahara cause them to return home.

The family's social status is described as working class by Robert Murphy and Sarah Street; Jeffrey Richards is more circumspect in defining them as upper working/lower middle class, while Landy, less attuned to the nuances of the British class system, ignores their social position entirely.[9] An apt description of the Huggetts' status is transitional, with a working-class outlook confronting the trappings of middle-class life.

Ethel and her ever-complaining mother (Amy Veness) belong firmly to the respectable working class. The bond between mother and daughter is reinforced by Ethel's limited horizons. She is the one who shows most alarm when the prospect of emigrating is mooted. She is equally flustered at the prospect of being thrust into the limelight as a councillor's wife.

Joe is happier with upwardly mobility. He has been promoted from the shop floor to the position of foreman, though he is still deferential to his employer, Mr Campbell, whom he addresses as 'sir'. The obvious signs of Joe's newly-acquired status are his car, the telephone and the suit which he wears for work. Cars were still a rarity for the working class at the time. Rising working-class incomes made the purchase of a car a possibility, but production was still aimed at the export market, credit controls were still in place and the cultural shift towards a lifestyle incorporating the car in such everyday activities as getting to work had not taken place. In 1949, 3 per cent of social classes D and E (the working class by the Hulton Readership Survey definition) owned one or more cars. This compares with 11.5 per cent of class C (the lower middle class) and 26.5 per cent of classes A and B (the upper middle class).[10] When he is called out at night because of a fire at the factory, he discovers that one of the younger members of the family has borrowed the car. For them, it represents leisure; for Joe, it is an extension of his work. He resorts to his bicycle. Resplendent in suit and bowler hat, he pedals to the fire. Draped over his shoulder is a stirrup pump, that relic of the war which adorned many garden sheds into

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the 1950s. A bucket of water hangs from the bicycle handlebars. This is British improvisation at its best — and at its least effective.

Cost, non-availability and a lack of cultural acceptance also limited the spread of the telephone.[11] In *Here Come the Huggetts*, it is clear that Joe's supervisory position requires a telephone. Having the telephone installed provides an excuse for an extended comedy sequence on the ways of the British workman. Ethel's suspicion of the new technology betrays a working-class conservatism which is not shared by the younger generation. It is Pet who has to dial when Ethel wants to speak to Joe at work.[12]

The initial precariousness of Joe's status is apparent in *Here Come the Huggetts*, in which he is demoted as a consequence of Di's incompetence. Later, when it is revealed that Joe has saved the company money, Mr Campbell reverses his decision. In *Vote for Huggett*, Joe is sure enough of his position to stand for the council and to accept an invitation to the golf club, though he causes some sniggers among the club members by sporting a check jacket and plus fours more suited to a P.G. Wodehouse story. In *The Huggetts Abroad*, Joe is in charge of the packing department, though it is his unjust dismissal from this post which prompts him to emigrate. His speech still retains such working-class idioms as turning a statement into a question: he cannot argue against his dismissal because 'I haven't got any proof, see?' On the journey, he becomes unofficial leader by virtue of his age and service experience. He knows how to gain the compliance of foreign customs officials by giving them alcohol, though he still addresses senior officers as 'sir'. Serving in the forces has made Joe a man of the world, as much as being confined to the home has made Ethel parochial, though it has not allowed him to shrug off his origins.

Joe's daughters are difficult to identify in class terms by their voices or their clothes. The adoption in post-war Britain of middle-class styles of clothing by working-class girls and the consequent blurring of class distinctions are noted by Zweig (see page 108). Speech is a more complicated issue. In some films, middle-class speech can be a jarring intrusion in supposedly working-class homes. If this does not apply to the Huggett films, it is in part because the family

is not resolutely working class. The girls' work underlines this. Jane works in Boots' lending library, while Susan begins the series by commuting to an office job, presumably in central London. By *Vote for Huggett*, she is working locally as a secretary.

The Huggetts' house is in accord with their transitional status. It is a modest semi, typical of those found on the inter-war speculative estates which ring every city. Such houses were bought by the lower ranks of the middle class such as clerks or black-coated workers, or were rented by the respectable working class. Neighbourliness is lacking, as an opening scene of *The Huggetts Abroad* makes clear. Ethel quarrels with her neighbour about Joe's garage which was built without planning permission — the provisions of the Town and Country Planning Act 1947 came into force on 1 July 1948. Regulations are never far away in films set in the late 1940s. The neighbour also complains about Joe's chickens escaping into her garden. Keeping chickens and rabbits was rooted in pre-industrial working-class life, but it assumed new significance during the austerity years when eggs were difficult to obtain and rabbit meat helped to eke out the rations (providing people could bring themselves to kill what had become a family pet).

True to working-class custom, the front room of the Huggett's house is reserved for special occasions and important visitors. Status is denoted by possessions. This is evident from the corner display cabinet and the ornate china bowl on the table. The front room is where Joe talks to Mr Campbell in *Here Come the Huggetts*, and where Ethel brings the lawyer and the alderman's wife in *Vote for Huggett*. It is seen at its 1930s best as guests gather for Jane's wedding in *Here Come the Huggetts* and the piano, that status symbol of the Edwardian age, is pressed into use.

The rear room is the living room. The kitchen cabinet, used for storing food, fills the alcove beside the fireplace. In older houses, a dresser would be built in, though this had more of a display function. Food preparation takes place in the living room. The kitchen with its butler sink is relegated to its traditional role in the working-class home as the scullery. It opens off the rear of the living room rather than being accessed from the hall as in most inter-war houses. The living-room range is a modern version of the Victorian black-leaded monster, but it is still

recognisably a range. The ground floor layout of the house provides one-room living essentially the same as in Victorian working-class homes. Coincidently, it provides the easiest arrangement for shooting family scenes.[13]

Unusually, the upper floor of the Huggetts' house is more recognisably of its period than the ground floor. Given that bedrooms were not used during the day and were rarely seen by visitors, more money and effort went into furnishing the reception rooms. By comparison with the Sandigates' bedrooms in *It Always Rains on Sunday*, the Huggetts' furnishings are modern, though in a household which swells to four adolescent girls when cousin Di arrives, lack of privacy is still a problem. In *Here Come the Huggetts*, Jane resorts to locking herself in the bathroom to get away from the others — an option denied to the Sandigates with their tin bath in front of the range.

In each film there are characters who disrupt the smooth progression into lower middle-class suburban cosiness. One is Harold Hinchley (David Tomlinson), a suitor for Jane in competition with her longtime fiancé, Jimmy (Jimmy Hanley). Harold comes from a social class which is used to power. This becomes apparent in *Vote for Huggett*, in which, with no knowledge of the issues, he expects to take his place on the council as of right. In *Here Come the Huggetts*, he is presented as an intellectual, spurning conventions like marriage and forever pursuing Jane in the library. Roy Seaton and Ray Martin comment on how he presents her with an apple, that age-old symbol of temptation.[14] Jane could turn her back on conventional values; instead she signals her acceptance of them by marrying Jimmy. In *Vote for Huggett*, Harold tacitly accepts them by standing for the council.

The most interesting of the aberrant characters is Ethel's niece, Di (Diana Dors), whose values are so at odds with those of the Huggetts. Her aim is to enjoy herself while doing as little work as possible — a philosophy out of step with austerity Britain, which puts her on the side of the spivs. Her primary asset in this is her sexuality. Seaton and Martin see Dors as bringing a new type to the British cinema: the office Salome, offending lower-middle-class mores and producing moral indignation. As they note, Annakin seems fascinated by her well beyond her

nominal place in the scenario.[15]

In *Here Come the Huggetts*, the object of Di's attention is Gowan (John Blythe), whom she meets through Susan Huggett's boyfriend, Peter (Peter Hammond), a mechanic at Gowan's garage. It is Gowan who takes Di to a West-End restaurant and who crashes Joe's car when driving home after drinking too much. By the time of *Vote for Huggett*, she has married him.

Gowan is the third disruptive force. He is the wartime spiv evolving into the entrepreneur of the consumer society of the 1950s. His motives are always presented as suspect, notably his hopes of making money out of a land deal in *Vote for Huggett*. His clothes are also just too smart for the owner of a small garage, raising questions about how he makes his money. In *Vote for Huggett*, an angry Susan accuses him of 'under-the-counter business', but generally the family are content not to enquire too closely into his affairs. His contact with the family is usually indirect, either through Di or Peter. This means that the Huggetts' respectability is not compromised by his dubious business deals, though as Di reminds him in *Vote for Huggett*, he is one of the family now.

The scenario of *The Huggetts Abroad* precludes any major disruptive acts by Harold, Di or Gowan. Instead, a new character, the diamond smuggler Bob McCoy (Hugh McDermott), is introduced. Though he precipitates the family's problems with authority, ironically it is Susan's childhood sweetheart, the jealous Peter, who becomes the outsider, sabotaging one of the party's lorries. It is Peter on whom the group turns and who is knocked out by Joe in a rare display of feeling.

If the Huggetts' social status is transitional, *Here Come the Huggetts* may also be seen as transitional in incorporating the shift from the wartime emphasis on the community to the narrower focus on the family. The royal wedding should exemplify the community spirit, with a single event drawing people together both metaphorically and physically. So it seems as the Huggetts join the other spectators in camping overnight on the Mall to get a good vantage point (with Ethel and grandma harking back to pre-war habits by wearing their hats). The procession is appearing when grandma declares that she is ill, causing the family to abandon their place at

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the front of the crowd as they trail after her and Ethel. The illness proves to be a false alarm. The family's attempts to get back to their original position provoke a fight. As a consequence, the procession is never seen. Even at the royal wedding, community apparently counts for little. The contrast is with Jane's wedding, where Pet sings for the guests as they wait for Jimmy to arrive.

In *Vote for Huggett*, attention is turned to local politics. Joe wants to give a garden to the community, but he is no more than a pawn of the businessmen and local politicians. The prevailing mood of the film is of cynicism with bureaucracy and the political process. Joe's electioneering is amateurish and dependent on the family. It is Pet and her friends from the youth club who produce and distribute his election posters. Although Joe manages to thwart the vested interests, his victory is a long time coming.

In *The Huggetts Abroad*, disillusion with life in Britain is explicit. In this strange amalgam of family drama and adventure story, the family are more than ever thrown onto their own resources by the barrier of language and by the isolation of the Sahara. This is a man's world, where men do the talking, the driving and the shooting. With the prevailing mood of pessimism, it is fitting that the Huggetts fail to reached their promised land. Instead, they end their cinematic triptych by returning home to grandma's never-ending complaints.

As Jeffrey Richards notes, the Huggetts endorsed such established values as family life, sexual responsibility and clearly-defined male and female roles.[16] Joe is never seen doing the shopping. As Ethel points out to grandma in *Vote for Huggett*, he never pushed a pram when the girls were young. Yet it is an evolving family, grappling with enhanced status and new technology. It is of its time.

The film-makers attempted to minimise the gap between screen and audience by giving many of the characters the same Christian names as the actors who played them. This makes it difficult to distinguish between, for example, Di and Diana Dors. The Dors persona was hardly established when the films were released; if anything, the Huggett films contributed to her reputation rather than drawing upon it. Much the same might be said of Petula Clark, who was subsequently condemned to a prolonged screen adolescence.

The Huggett films might be expected to appeal to working-class audiences. As far as the sample Leeds cinemas were concerned, this was not the case (appendix 1, table 8.1). In south-east Essex, the films met with fair success both in circuit cinemas and in the independents. At the Gaumont, Sheffield, the two Huggett films screened there were described as well received.[17] In terms of attendances in Sheffield, *Here Come the Huggetts* ranked 34th out of the 206 weeks for which data is available; *The Huggetts Abroad* ranked 99th. This runs counter to the notion that a regional factor was at work, with a London setting and London people failing to appeal to northern audiences, though the Huggetts' lack of popularity in Leeds after the success of *Holiday Camp* is surprising.

A family seen under pressure are the McCabes in *Waterfront* (dir. Michael Anderson, 1950). The film is set in the depression of the inter-war years. Liverpool sailor, Peter McCabe (Robert Newton), goes to sea, leaving no money for his family and not communicating with them for years. His wife (Kathleen Harrison) brings up their son and two daughters alone. The older daughter, Nora (Avis Scott), hopes to marry ship's engineer, Ben Satterthwaite (Richard Burton), but he loses his job. Her sister, Connie (Susan Shaw), becomes friendly with the affluent but dubious Maurice Bruno (Kenneth Griffith). Peter returns home unexpectedly after walking off his ship. While drinking, he encounters the officer who was instrumental in turning the captain against him. Peter kills the officer in a fight outside a pub. Without knowing of Peter's involvement, Ben Satterthwaite takes the officer's job. When Peter is charged with murder, Maurice Bruno distances himself from Connie, afraid that his reputation will be tainted. Peter McCabe is visited in prison by his son. It is the first time they have met. When Ben discovers how he gained his job, he visits Nora, not sure how she will respond. He discovers that their relationship is secure.

Nora is the power in the family. It is Nora who orders her father out of the tenement flat when he appears after years without contact, expecting to resume his place as head of the family. His wife is always ready to forgive him. In the wider world, Peter McCabe is equally without power. His lack of responsibility and his drunkenness are stressed, though the demotion from

greaser to stoker which prompts him to leave the ship is the consequence of being 'insubordinate' and a 'thorough-going sea lawyer'. Whether his real crime is to challenge authority is not pursued.

The McCabes live in a Liverpool tenement where the families know each other's business. There is little evidence of companionability. One of the neighbours is not averse to seducing Peter when the opportunity arises. The McCabes' home is impoverished and plainly furnished, though the girls have separate beds. Quite how the family afford to let the son take up his scholarship to the secondary school is not pursued.

Unemployment and the debilitating effects of being in a pool of casual labour are emphasised throughout the film. For Peter and his wife, it is a constant accompaniment to their lives. For the officer, Ben, it is harder to bear, affecting his relationship with Nora. Though Nora is working, marriage is out of the question until he can be the breadwinner. Only Maurice Bruno stands outside this cycle of poverty. Whether his business which he describes vaguely as insurance is entirely legal is something else which is left explored, though it allows him to be smartly dressed and to run a car.

In compensation for the sketchy characterisation, location shooting gives the film much of its appeal. Liverpool rarely appears in feature films.[18] Here, the dockland settings are fully exploited, with the overhead railway much in evidence, along with those pre-Beatles symbols of the city — the Liver Building, the Mersey ferry and the department stores Owen Owen and George Henry Lewis. Incongruously, Scouse voices are absent, though desultory and inappropriate attempts at a Lancashire accent are made by the girls. Kathleen Harrison sounds like a recent migrant from the East End of London, though she was born in Lancashire.

The other attraction of the film is its male leads: Richard Burton for an early starring role and Robert Newton for the strength of his performance. Newton portrays the traditional working-class father who assumes a peripheral place in other post-war films including *The White Unicorn* (dir. Harold French, 1947) and *Good Time Girl* (dir. David Macdonald, 1948), to be considered in chapter eleven. He is feckless, prone to drinking and violence, and content to leave

child-rearing to his wife. The prison scene in which Peter shows his pride in his son is impressive and moving. Asking the boy to put on his school cap and to recite a poem in Latin reveals with a minimum of effort the effect of education on social mobility, the pride of the working-class parent and the gulf which education might open between parent and child. Passing on to the boy the tobacco tin which belonged to his own father emphasises the continuity between generations and the possibility that the gulf can be overcome. The irony is that Peter will be probably hanged for murder.

*Waterfront* was released in July 1950. It reached south-east Essex two months later, running for a week at the Gaumont, Southend-on-Sea (see appendix 1, table 8.1). The distributors evidently had little confidence in the film which within two weeks had reached a second-run cinema in the area, the Corona in Leigh-on-Sea. The Corona normally alternated its programme with a neighbouring cinema after three days (see pages 177-8). This failed to happen in the case of *Waterfront*, which presumably did not perform well enough to justify a continued run. In Sheffield, the film was described as 'well received by all types of patrons', though it only ranked 137th in the number of attendances over 206 weeks of programming. For many people, the 1930s were still an unpleasant memory; there was little taste for reliving the experience in the cinema.

The films considered portray the working-class family in inter-war, wartime and post-war roles, even if they are not necessarily typical. A contrast of the McCabes with the Huggetts shows how family life had changed within two decades. Joe Huggett is closer to his children than Peter McCabe, while unemployment is more an annoyance than a tragedy. The younger generation is gaining from education. The self-confident, articulate children in *Vote for Huggett* have no place in *Waterfront*. Kathleen Harrison provides a link between both films. She is resolutely working class, subservient and home-centred both as Mrs McCabe and as Ethel Huggett. Change comes from those around her. This is likely to be the consequence of the scripts and of typecasting rather than of any limitations in Kathleen Harrison's performances: the character of Ethel was more positive in her later incarnation on the radio, when she was again

played by Harrison.

The Cotters' home might resemble that of the McCabes, but Jim and Tillie are closer in spirit to the Huggetts, looking forward to life together in suburbia. This was their pre-war dream. Film cannot resolve the question of what difference the war made to their hopes. All it can do is to provide a progress report on the state on the family. The problems which beset the Huggetts were familiar to audiences, from Joe's encounters with a cantankerous mother-in-law and Ethel's difficulties in finding any fish other than cod for the family dinner, to Jane's dilemma in choosing between two suitors. The Huggetts epitomised the post-war working-class family making good. It is hard to find another family in post-war British cinema of which this may be said.

**Notes**

1. Marcia Landy, *British genres: cinema and society 1930-1960*. Princeton, NJ, and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 1991, 301.

2. Raymond Durgnat seems to have strayed into the wrong film: he describes Sim as the crooked doctor helping the spiv to seduce Jim's wife (Rosamund John) *[sic]*. More usefully, he sees *Waterloo Road* as affirming the working man's right to little revolts, rather than insisting on discipline as salvation as in *The Bells Go Down* (dir. Basil Dearden, 1943). Raymond Durgnat, *A mirror for England: British movies from austerity to affluence*. London: Faber, 1970, 20 and 50-1.

3. The metaphor of the pigeons is not lost on Lant. See Antonia Lant, *Blackout: reinventing women for wartime British cinema*, Princeton, NJ, and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 1991, 86-7.

4. Robert Murphy, 'Riff-raff: British cinema and the underground', in Charles Barr (ed.) *All our yesterdays: 90 years of British cinema*, London: BFI, 1986, 293.

5. *Kinematograph Weekly*, 1 April 1948, 34. This is at variance from the impression given by Richards that the Huggett films were a spin-off of *Holiday Camp*. Jeffrey Richards, *Films and British national identity from Dickens to 'Dad's Army'*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997, 143.

6. BBFC scenario notes no.9, 7 February 1949 (BFI library).

7. Paul Donovan, *The radio companion*. London: Grafton, 1991, 174-5.

8. Dinah Sheridan stepped in when Jane Hylton was ill. Dinah Sheridan in Brian McFarlane, *Sixty voices: celebrities recall the golden age of British cinema*, London: BFI, 1992, 199. In the radio series, the family only had one daughter, the troublesome Jane.

9. Robert Murphy, *Realism and tinsel: cinema and society in Britain 1939-49*, London: Routledge, 1992, 215; Sarah Street *British national cinema*, London: Routledge, 1997, 67; Richards, op.cit. (ch.9, n.5) 143; Landy, op.cit. (ch.9, n.1) 317-18.

10. A.H. Halsey, 'Leisure', in A.H. Halsey (ed.) *Trends in British society since 1900: a guide to the changing social structure of Britain*, Basingstoke, Hants., and London: Macmillan, 1972, table 16.9.

11. The number of residential exchange stations increased from 1,196,577 in 1939 to 1,266,275 in 1945 and 1,837,247 in 1950, though the proportion of residential exchange stations decreased from 38.6 per cent of the total in 1939 to 36.8 per cent in 1950. 'Telecommunications statistics 1952' (BT Archives). There was growth in telephone usage, but it was mainly in the business sector.

12. For a similar suspicion of the telephone by a working-class housewife, see Raymond Briggs, *Ethel and Ernest: a true story*, London: Cape, 1998, 74.

13. Annakin used different camera angles and techniques to suggest breakfast, midday and evening. *Kinematograph Weekly*, 8 April 1948, 34.

14. Ray Seaton and Roy Martin, 'Gainsborough in the forties', *Films and Filming*, June 1982, no.333, 17.

15. loc.cit.

16. Richards, op.cit. (ch.9, n.5) 143.

17. Weekly returns for Gaumont, Sheffield, 22 January 1949 and 1 October 1949.

18. The exceptions are two other 1950 films, *The Clouded Yellow* (dir. Ralph Thomas), in which Liverpool docks provide the location for the denouement; and *The Magnet* (dir. Charles Frend).

## CHAPTER TEN

### Going up in the world: good-bye to the working class

If portraying a working-class community presents the writer with structural problems in holding together potentially disparate storylines, no such difficulties arise in charting the social advancement of one character. The enduring power of the theme is apparent from the Dick Whittington legend, while the implied element of self-help appealed to nineteenth century novelists, including Dickens. Later treatments have focused as much on what is lost by social mobility as on what is gained — something which is apparent in several films of the 1940s.

In two Boulting brothers films, class position is crucial, though both have surprisingly little to offer here. *Fame is the Spur* (dir. Roy Boulting, 1947) charts the rise of Hamer Radshaw (Michael Redgrave) from child of the Manchester slums to Labour cabinet minister. In achieving his ambition, he moves away from the people whose cause he once championed. The film stands apart from those so far discussed in being a political biography, consciously contrasting working-class poverty in the late nineteenth century with subsequent affluence.

Raymond Durgnat interprets the film as an attack on Attlee's administration.[1] Jeffrey Richards and Anthony Aldgate make a convincing case for seeing it as a warning to the Labour government not to repeat the mistakes of the past.[2] The point of agreement is that the film is about the betrayal of socialist principles. Potentially, the figure of Hamer Radshaw might be found in any Labour administration.

Three sources of power within society are represented in the film: political power, (Hamer), financial power (Tom Hannaway the entrepreneur) and power derived from status (Lady Lettice, upon whose land Hamer once trespassed, but whose social circle increasingly attracts him). The three are not mutually exclusive. Hamer gains both status and wealth, while Hannaway becomes a Conservative peer. The balance of power continually shifts throughout the film, interacting

with two more personal forms of power: the power of love, which is denied to Hamer when his wife dies, and the power of youth which slips away over the course of the film, leaving him an old and lonely man who has to be helped to bed.

The compression necessary in translating Howard Spring's novel into a film and the unrelenting focus on Hamer means that the ordinary people who attend meetings and demonstrations appear as little more than cyphers.[3] Yet this is not inappropriate: it is how Hamer comes to see them. As he complains to Lady Lettice, 'Trying to show wider issues to a crowd of working men is like trying to show a picture to a blind man.' The film is a rags-to-riches odyssey which reveals more about the rulers than the ruled.

One trade journal considered the film 'Outstanding entertainment of absorbing interest to all patrons'.[4] The Rank card was more circumspect in recommending it 'for good class houses'. In the event, it was not a commercial success.[5] In the sample Leeds cinemas, it managed a single three-day run (appendix 1, table 8.1). It did better in south-east Essex, though it was hardly a hit at the box office.

The other Boulting film is *The Guinea Pig* (dir. Roy Boulting, 1948), in which Jack Read (Richard Attenborough), the son of a Walthamstow tobacconist, attends a public school. This is a working out of the recommendations contained in the Fleming Report, which aimed to reduce disparities between state and private education sectors by funding the placement of children of less affluent parents in public schools. Although Walthamstow is an appropriately proletarian location, the occupation of Jack's father locates the boy as lower middle class rather than working class. A more serious drawback in the context of this thesis is that, as Richards and Aldgate point out, the film adopts the form of the standard public school story, with the unhappy newcomer adapting to his surroundings.[6] The world in which Jack was raised is only revealed indirectly though Jack's reactions and the reactions of his parents. Both generations come to accept the values of the public school. The social gulf between Jack's father (Bernard Miles), a former sergeant major, and the old housemaster, Hartley (Cecil Trouncer), is bridged by their common belief in team spirit and the virtues of fitting in.

The Boultings saw the film as 'of value domestically because it helps people to understand some of the issues and problems involved in social change' and to show the world how Britain was 'endeavouring to adjust itself to changing conditions and new ideas'.[7] This implies a reformist agenda which is hard to detect in the film. Its one concession to progressive thought is when Hartley admits to feeling out of step with the times. Typically, Durgnat takes an astringent view: 'Isn't Guinea Pig strategy the Trojan Horse which the um-class offer their middle-middle-class antagonists, to separate them from the lower orders?'[8] He neglects to mention that the Trojan horse only contains men: women have a marginal role in *The Guinea Pig*, which is in keeping with the film's conservative viewpoint. The less partisan Aldgate and Richards examine reviews of the film and how they were coloured by whether or not the writers had attended public school.[9] The ideal would be to know whether the same fault line was apparent in the attitudes of audiences.

In terms of net box-office revenue, *The Guinea Pig* was successful. Of the thirteen films released by ABPC for which details are available, it ranked second both on the circuits and in independents, being beaten only by *My Brother Jonathan* (dir. Harold French, 1948).[10] *The Guinea Pig* had a fair success in all three groups of cinemas considered (appendix 1, table 8.1). What audiences in working-class Leeds made of the film has to remain an unanswered question. One factor in is relative success there might be the star appeal of Richard Attenborough.

Other films fix the working-class origins of their social climbers more securely. *Once a Jolly Swagman* (dir. Jack Lee, 1948) is the only film of the period to be set in the world of speedway racing. It begins in 1937. Bill Fox (Dirk Bogarde) grows discontented with his dead-end job in a factory.[11] When he is sacked, he ignores his mother's misgivings and becomes a speedway rider. He is encouraged by an old hand, Lag Gibbon (Bill Owen), while becoming attracted to Lag's sister, Pat (Renee Asherton). Bill does well, taking over as star of the show after Lag is injured on the track. This rise in status is accompanied by a rise in income. Bill moves in a new social circle, but he cannot feel at ease there. His discontent is reinforced by the return of his brother, disillusioned from fighting in the Spanish Civil War, and by a visit to a

nursing home to see Lag, now suffering from depression. In a speech made at his wedding to Pat, Bill declares his intention of fighting for the rights of speedway riders. The other riders are wary of supporting him, suspecting self-interest. As Bill's discontent grows, Pat urges him to retire from racing. His way of resolving his problems is to leave her and to begin a new life in the army. After the war, the lack of alternative employment forces him back into speedway racing, but his heart is not in it. At the end of the film, he is reconciled with Pat.

The novel on which the film was based was first published in 1944.[12] The differences between the two forms are instructive. In the novel, Bill is one of seven children. His father is a dustman. The family home in Kentish Town is precisely located in the neighbourhood around Lismore Road and Maldon Road.[13] A traditional, circumscribed, working-class community is evoked:

> There are about twenty streets on the side of the hill ending in a little circus of trees. Nobody left the place much except to go to work; and there were plenty of women who knew less about London than people do in Manchester. The local pubs and the flea-pits, . . . the billiards-hall, the open-air market gave them all they wanted. The men get about because their work takes them.[14]

This makes the contrast with Bill's fame all the greater. His geographical horizons are further expanded by a speedway tour of South America which is omitted from the film.

The novel focuses on Bill's family relationships and on his increasing disgust with himself: 'I was trying to forget the figure I had seen in the mirror, the figure I had become that wasn't really me.'[15] This is translated into increasing risk-taking as he works on a wall of death and eventually joins the commandoes during the war — aspects of his life which again do not figure in the screen version.

The film was targeted at speedway fans. As the poster proclaimed, '12,000,000 speedway fans . . . will jampack this smashing film.' Speedway scenes occupy around half the running time, though they only receive passing mention in the novel. Bill's background is moved up the social scale for the film. He is one of three children. His father wears a uniform and works shifts, though his occupation is left vague. The family home is in a 1930s block of council flats in south London — not the sort of place where Bill's motor-bike would be the only one in the street,

which the novel is at pains to emphasise.[16] All this diminishes the extent of Bill's social climb, as does Bogarde's performance. He never convinces as a working-class lad, either in his bearing or his voice. His rise in income is signalled by his choice of clothes and his pencil moustache — an unsettling premonition of his appearance in *Death in Venice* (dir. Visconti, 1971) — yet this is never more than Bogarde in a better suit. Thora Hird fits more convincingly into the working-class milieu as Bill's mother.

A sherry party given by Bill's sophisticated girlfriend, Dorothy Liz (Moira Lister), epitomises the shift of emphasis between the film and the novel. In the film, Bill is annoyed by the shallowness of her pretentious, art-loving companions and orders her to get rid of them. When she refuses, he makes a petulant exit, leaving his fellow rider, American Tommy Fossey (Bonar Colleano), to move effortlessly between the social groups. In the novel, Bill's disgust is internalised: 'I saw my smart alec suit and my way of wearing it, my way of standing and swaggering about: and I knew why none of those people were taking any notice of me. I was just another of the wide boys, and not quite wide enough.'[17]

Landy comments on the orgiastic effect of speedway on the female audiences shown in the film, though she omits to mention their youth.[18] Their numbers lend support to McKibbin's contention that speedway racing was more attractive to women than rugby or football.[19] Within ten years, they had changed their allegiance: similar orgiastic scenes greeted the early rock and roll films.

The militaristic quality of the speedway scenes is also worthy of note. Before the racing begins, St John's Ambulance Brigade members and mechanics parade around the track, marching in step to music blaring from the speakers. This is solidarity which would gladden the heart of any dictator.

The novel ends in wartime; the film grafts on post-war scenes. Bill's interview at a labour exchange points up the reversal of his social mobility. It also offers a clash of perspectives as the middle-class bureaucrat pigeonholes him as a man lacking in workplace skills, only to be disconcerted when Bill reveals his pre-war earnings. Aside from this, the post-war additions

provide a stereotyped ending — happiness is being married to a good woman.

The translation to screen emphasises the thrills of the speedway, albeit with a loss of characterisation. The omission of Bill's plunge into the classless world of the commandoes, where action is all, was probably deliberate given the public's lack of interest in war films at this time (a point to be taken up in chapter fourteen). The novel's first person exploration of the costs of social mobility is replaced by an overt socialism which seems out of character. The overall impression is of unease about dealing with class on the part of the director, who co-scripted the film. This leaves the actors to stake out their own class positions with varying degrees of success. Durgnat interprets this as middle-class moralising, in spite of his admiration for the film.[20]

Of the 12,000,000 speedway fans, many of those living in south-east Essex decided that *Once a Jolly Swagman* was a film which could be caught when it came to a local cinema (appendix 1, table 8.1). At the Gaumont, Sheffield, the supporting feature was a Canadian documentary, *The Connors Case* (1948). The pairing was described as 'a poor programme' which received 'a mixed reception'.[21] It ranked 122nd out of 206 weekly programmes in terms of attendance. Leeds was short of speedway fans, judging by film's fate in the sample cinemas there, where it only managed a single three-day run. This variable response mirrors the patchy popularity of speedway, which was centred in working-class areas of London and the south-east and was probably past its peak by the time the film was released.[22]

*The Gorbals Story* (dir. David MacKane, 1950) has already been touched on as exemplifying both the community and social mobility. *Floodtide* (dir. Frederick Wilson, 1949) is another film with a Glaswegian setting which focuses more explicitly on social mobility. Orphan David Shields (Gordon Jackson) leaves the family croft to work in a shipyard on the Clyde. He makes friends with another apprentice, Tim Brogan (Jimmy Logan), sharing his room before taking up lodgings of his own. The owner of the shipyard, Mr Anstruther (Jack Lambert), notices David's potential and promotes him to the drawing office while encouraging him to take evening classes. David's progress is such that he is allowed to design a ship for a client, Senor Arandha.

David's social contact with his employer means that he sees a lot of Mr Anstruther's daughter, Mary (Rona Anderson). The day before the launch, Mr Anstruther entertains Senor Arandha. Mary is put out when David tells her that he cannot attend because he has already promised to go to Tim Brogan's engagement party. In a storm that night, a barge breaks free and threatens to damage the ship's propellor. Mary searches Glasgow for David and finds him with Judy, a girl from the party whom he met on first coming to the city. David saves the ship, but fails to appear at the launch. Mary knows his haunts. She seeks him out and they make up.

Paternalism and Calvinism permeate the film in a way which would jar in an English production. Paternalism is most evident on the part of Mr Anstruther, who worked his way up from the shop floor. (Jack Lambert's characterisation is disconcertingly similar to J. Arthur Rank in appearance and personality.) David's lodgings are recommended by the company. His fees for evening classes are paid by the company and he is accepted in Anstruther's house more or less as a social equal.

In films, Calvinism is often evident in prickly Scots characters. Richard Todd's Corporal Lachlan McLachlan in *The Hasty Heart* (dir. Vincent Sherman, 1949) being a notable example. In *Floodtide*, it is apparent not only in David's own devotion to hard work, but in the horror of his landlady, Mrs McTavish (Molly Weir), when she returns home to find him entertaining his friends in the parlour. Alcohol, dancing and playing the piano all come in for her disapproval. She threatens to tell Mr Anstruther what has happened in her report on her tenant — another paternalistic touch.

David's insistence on keeping his promise to attend Tim Brogan's engagement party in the face of Mary Anstruther's displeasure may be seen as another example of Calvinism; alternatively it may be interpreted in class terms as a choice between social groups, or in personal terms as a clash of loyalties. Much the same range of interpretations can be brought to his choice between the sensuous Judy (Elizabeth Sellars) and the rich, clean-living Mary Anstruther. The film sides with Mary.

The glimpses of Glasgow are all too brief. The parlour is the only room seen in Mrs

McTavish's house. As befits the lower middle-class home of an elderly widow, it is furnished in Victorian style and is markedly larger than Tim Brogan's tenement room with its bed-recess behind the door. The lowest rung of the social ladder is represented by Judy's bleak, comfortless room. The comparison is with the simplicity and spaciousness of the Anstruthers' home.

Status is determined as much by age as by class. David's friends defer to Mrs McTavish. In the shipyard, the sheds are presided over by older men, their status signified by suits and bowler hats. David has to buy a bowler when he leaves the plating shed to go into the drawing office. He tries to hide it from Tim Brogan on the tram home. In his new post, he comes into conflict with the manager, though eventually the older man admits his grudging admiration for David's design.

The film betrays an ambivalence towards the working-class. Getting on is seen as a good thing by David's grandmother and by his uncle, Joe Drummond (John Laurie), who knows Mr Anstruther and is instrumental in getting David the job — another example of paternalism. Equally, loyalty to a workmate, Tim Brogan, is presented as an admirable quality. The message is that working-class life can be left behind by a combination of hard work and knowing the right people, but friends are still friends. Though the two strands hold the potential for conflict, it comes too late in the film. Only the final scenes with Judy's attempt to revenge her betrayal by attacking David with a bottle, followed by his battle to control the drifting barge, grip the attention.

*Floodtide* was released as a main feature on the Gaumont circuit, supported by the American semi-documentary *Cannon City* (dir. Crane Wilbur, 1948). At the Gaumont, Sheffield, this coupling had the dubious distinction of attracting the lowest weekly attendance over the four years for which data is available. The manager noted that it was 'a poor programme'.[23] The film found little favour among the independents in either Leeds or south-east Essex (appendix 1, table 8.1). Nor has it received any subsequent critical attention, though its evocation of Glasgow in the 1940s makes it unique among feature films.[24]

Another film which fared badly at the box office was *Blue Scar* (dir. Jill Craigie, 1949). The action takes place in a south Wales mining valley in the late 1940s. Olwen Williams

(Gwynneth Vaughan), wins a scholarship to music college in Cardiff. She is congratulated by Alfred Collins (Anthony Pendrell), an industrial psychologist who visits her office and who is attracted to her. Her boyfriend, Tom Thomas (Emrys Jones), is a miner who loves the valleys and knows that he will lose her if she goes away. He gets drunk to obliterate his feelings and is thrown out of the pub.

Olwen's father is brought home from the pit after an accident — the film gets its title from the characteristic blue tinge which coal dust brings to cuts. Later, when he dies, Olwen returns home for the funeral. She reveals to Tom that she is to marry Alfred as the best way of helping her mother.

Tom is promised promotion to under manager, but his socialist principles bring him into conflict with the manager. He witnesses a dispute in which a miner strikes a deputy who is more interested in output than safety. Tom's dilemma is that in testifying against the deputy, his own promotion may be jeopardised. The consequence of following the deputy's orders is a roof fall in which Tom is injured. He is sent to a convalescent home where his physiotherapist is Glynis, a girl whom he knew before his relationship with Olwen.

The deputy is pressured into admitting that he provoked the miner, so that Tom's evidence is no longer needed. When Tom is promoted to management, he goes to London to see Olwen who by now is building a career as a singer. Glynis is afraid that she will lose him, but does not try to dissuade him. In London, he urges Olwen to go back to Wales, but she refuses. The world of her new friends is alien to him and he returns to the Welsh valleys and to Glynis.

The love-hate relationship between the miner and his work is summed up by Olwen's father as he looks down on the valley: 'I've cursed this place many a long year. Today I'm thinking it's beautiful.' The scale of the scenery dwarfs the inhabitants, most noticeably when the men are seen climbing the hillside to the football match, though the photography hardly takes a nostalgic view of the huddle of terraced houses under the belching factory chimneys.[25]

Material changes in the life of the miner are acknowledged — pit baths are contrasted with the days when a wife scrubbed her husband's back; when Olwen's father is brought home in an

ambulance, a neighbour remarks that 'They bring them in lovely these days — all washed and cleaned.' At the same time, traditional values are stressed. The men's clothes would not have looked out of place two generations earlier. When Olwen's brother misses his shifts at the pit, her father puts in extra shifts so that the family will not get a record for absenteeism. For grannie, waiting for the football results on the wireless so that she can check her football coupon, 'Everything's something for nothing, these days — a five-day week, holidays with pay. That's what comes when the God-fearing goes out of people.' She does have the grace to feel guilty about doing the pools.

Yet in spite of the traditionalism, change is at the heart of the film — change which does not always proceed as anticipated. There is social change as the pits are nationalised, albeit with misgivings on both sides. On telling Tom of his impending promotion, the manager declares that 'Nationalisation, ideals and business don't go together.' while the miners feel that all the public wants is cheap coal, irrespective of the human cost. There is also personal change. Olwen breaks free of the valleys and acquires upper middle-class friends and acquaintances, though she realises that her aspirations to become an opera singer will never be realised. Tom announces early in the film that he will 'get a job that people respect. Something with a cup of tea in the middle of the morning. Adding up figures — that's what they like.' Yet he too compromises his principles in becoming a manager, distancing himself from the men he used to work alongside at the coalface.

Class is presented in simplistic terms, middle-class characters being depicted as shallow, out of touch with working people and self-obsessed. When the industrial psychologist is asked why he does not circumvent the lack of secretarial support by typing his own letters, he explains, 'Well if I did that, how would anyone know I was important?' By contrast, working-class people derive solidarity from such activities as their work at the pit, following their football team and singing. This gives an irony to Olwen's radio broadcast of 'Home Sweet Home' at the end of the film — she had sung 'Bless This House' with her family at the beginning.

The *Kinematograph Weekly* judged the film 'Doubtful booking . . . for the general run of halls'.[26] The anonymous reviewer whose opinions appear on the Rank card was scarcely more

enthusiastic and concluded that the film 'Will appeal to the thinking types who like natural realistic drama'. Not many of these turned out in south-east Essex or in working-class areas of Leeds (appendix 1, table 8.1), though the film did run for a week at ABC's Rivoli cinema in Southend-on-Sea as second feature to *Saints and Sinners* (dir. Leslie Arliss, 1949).

*Blue Scar* is unusual in being directed by a woman and in being made outside of London, a disused cinema in Port Talbot being used as a studio.[27] The film attempts to offer a realistic view of working-class people. In this it was out of the run of feature films, but novelty alone was not enough to ensure commercial success. Durgnat lumps *Blue Scar* among the documentaries, dismissing it as dreary and stilted.[28] More charitably, the miner in the film was probably correct in his summing up of British society — people were content to forget miners, particularly when nationalisation should have resolved their grievances. There is little relief in the film from the dourness of mining, while the documentary style and overtly socialist stance give the work the feel of a Labour Party polemic from the 1930s. A decade was to pass before the industrial landscapes of *Blue Scar* became fashionable in such films as *A Kind of Loving* (dir. John Schlesinger, 1962).

Rags to riches does not seem to have been a popular theme in contemporary drama of the 1940s, though its use in costume dramas including *Blanche Fury* (dir. Marc Allegret, 1948) and *The Reluctant Widow* (dir. Bernard Knowles, 1950), and the relative success of *The Guinea Pig*, suggest that the problem lay less in the subject per se than in how it was treated. Following the struggles of a star to overcome obstacles could give the subject an appeal for audiences which was lacking if it was treated in a more documentary style. *Once a Jolly Swagman* had Bogarde, though he was still at the beginning of his career. Among the films considered, only *The Guinea Pig* could offer audiences a star, albeit a minor one, in the shape of Richard Attenborough.

*Floodtide* and *The Guinea Pig* both emphasise the importance of education in getting on, as opposed to luck, calculation, looks or talent. A decade was to pass before Jimmy Porter and then Billy Liar were to demonstrate in their different ways that education was not enough.

# Notes

1. Raymond Durgnat, *A mirror for England: British movies from austerity to affluence*, London: Faber. 1970, 67 and 234.

2. Jeffrey Richards and Anthony Aldgate, *Best of British: cinema and society 1930-1970*, Oxford: Blackwell. 1983, 75-8.

3. The film is based on a novel. Howard Spring, *Fame is the spur*, London: Collins, 1940.

4. *The Cinema*. 24 September 1947, 19.

5. '. . . after five years of death, destruction and austerity, *Fame is the Spur* was far too grim for an audience now seeking escapism and peace. It flopped.' Roy Boulting in Brian McFarlane, *Sixty Voices: celebrities recall the golden age of British cinema*. London: BFI, 1992, 34.
   Bernard Miles (who played Tom Hannaway) considered that Redgrave was not a popular star and that the role was not sympathetic. Bernard Miles in ibid. 167. In this, Richard and Aldgate concur. Richards and Aldgate, op.cit. (ch.10, n.2) 84.
   Along with *It Always Rains on Sunday*, this was one of the films which only yielded a profit of 16s.10d. in the New Tivoli cinema, Edinburgh (see page 233). *Kinematograph Weekly*, 8 July 1948, 13.

6. Richards and Aldgate, op.cit. (ch.10, n.2) 89.

7. Roy and John Boulting, 'Why we made *The Guinea Pig*', *The Cinema Studio*, (supplement to *The Cinema*) 14 April 1948, 11.

8. Durgnat, op.cit. (ch.10, n.1) 34.

9. Richards and Aldgate, op.cit. (ch.10, n.2) 95-7.

10. PRO BT 64/4492, enclosure 7. Ranking is based on net box-office income up to 1 April 1950.

11. The opening scenes in the factory bring to mind *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* (dir. Karel Reisz, 1960). Durgnat prefers to draw parallels with *This Sporting Life* (dir. Lindsay Anderson, 1963). Durgnat, op.cit. (ch.10, n.1) 51-2.

12. Montagu Slater, *Once a jolly swagman*, London: John Lane The Bodley Head, 1944.

13. ibid. 53-4.

14. ibid. 8.

15. ibid. 50.

16. ibid. 10.

17. ibid. 47.

18. Marcia Landy, *British genres: cinema and society 1930-1960*, Princeton, NJ, and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 1991, 265.

19. Ross McKibbin, *Classes and cultures: England 1818-1951*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998, 365.

20. Durgnat, op.cit. (ch.10, n.1) 51-2.

21. Weekly return for Gaumont, Sheffield, 19 March 1949. *Once a Jolly Swagman* was paired with the same supporting feature for its run at the Gaumont, Southend-on-Sea.

22. Neither any issue of *Kelley's Directory* for Leeds in the late 1940s, nor the Post Office's *Classified Directory* for Leeds, Bradford and York for the same period lists a speedway in Leeds.

23. Weekly return for Gaumont, Sheffield, 2 July 1949.

24. One writer does single out the actuality footage. See George Perry, *The great British picture show from the 90s to the 70s,* London: Hart-Davis, MacGibbon, 1974, 146-7.

25. The image of men climbing a bleak hillside, dwarfed by their surroundings so that they appear like ants, was to recur in *Hell is a City* (dir. Val Guest, 1960).

26. *Kinematograph Weekly,* 14 April 1949, 20.

27. *Kinematograph Weekly,* 15 April 1948, 7 and 24 June 1948, xxxiii.

28. Durgnat, op.cit. (ch.10, n.1) 122.

# CHAPTER ELEVEN

## Going to the bad: the treatment of the young offender

Crime is generally presented in British films as a battle of wits between the police and the criminal. At least until the 1960s, the police on the winning side. A few films avoid focusing on this battle, examining instead how wrong-doers embark on the path which brings them into conflict with the police, as in *Cosh Boy* (dir. Lewis Gilbert, 1952), or how the penal system deals with offenders, as in *Scum* (dir. Alan Clarke, 1979) and *Scrubbers* (dir. Mai Zetterling, 1982). In practice, the two aspects are often conflated, with the story of the individual in an institution being presented in flashbacks, a notable example being *The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner* (dir. Tony Richardson, 1962). Earlier films are often prescriptive as well as descriptive, showing that in the end the system works, whatever its inadequacies. *I Believe in You* (dir. Basil Dearden, 1952) and *The Weak and the Wicked* (dir. J. Lee Thompson, 1953) exemplify this trend.

Offenders are usually working class. In *The Weak and the Wicked,* a middle-class character played by Glynis Johns does stray into this world, but as the opening section of the film is at pains to make clear, she is the victim of a deception. Mindless crime is working-class crime. Middle-class crime is planned, from *Dear Murderer* (dir. Arthur Crabtree, 1947) to *The League of Gentlemen* (dir. Basil Dearden, 1960).

Those who commit mindless crime are young as well as being working class. Not only does this admit the possibility that they will settle into a better life by learning more acceptable ways, but it allows them to be guided by someone who is older, wiser and in a position of authority. This is usually a (middle-class) probation officer, governor or matron.

In *The White Unicorn* (dir. Bernard Knowles, 1947), Lucy (Margaret Lockwood) is matron of a remand home, euphemistically called a mission for girls. One inmate, Lottie (Joan

Greenwood), is involved in a fight. As Lucy reasons with her, their stories are revealed. Lottie comes from a large family with a violent father. She left home to work in a department store. There she met a wealthy customer, Paul (Paul Dupuis), who seduced her, only to abandon her when she became pregnant. She was forced into cheaper and cheaper accommodation until she was reduced to living in the damp cellar where she tried to gas herself and her baby.

Lucy's story is that she became disillusioned with her marriage to barrister Philip Templar (Ian Hunter). A baby did not make their relationship any closer. When Philip hired a nanny, Lucy felt that she had little say in her daughter's upbringing. She met Richard Glover (Dennis Price) at a party and their relationship deepened as she became estranged from her husband. Matters came to a head after the child was involved in a road accident, for which Philip blamed Lucy. After their divorce, she married Richard in Finland, but their happiness was short-lived: Richard drowned when the ice on a lake broke under him during their honeymoon. After being urged to give something back to life, she took the job of matron.

The judge at Lottie's trial is Philip Templer. Lottie pleads guilty of attempted infanticide. Lucy appears as a character witness, pleading for leniency. Philip accepts her plea. When the trial is over, he allows Lucy to see her daughter after years of denying access.

The two stories run in parallel. Lucy's intention is to show that her own life had not been easy. Whether audiences took this view is another matter. Lucy's previous life was comfortable, albeit tinged with tragedy. Audiences might have considered that the problems in her marriage to Philip — her failure to assert her own wishes and her taking Richard as a lover — were of her own making and contradictory in their motivation. More cynically, they may have interpreted the tribulations of the two women as plot devices, with each character trying to trump the other in the bathos of her story.

The bulk of the film is devoted to Lucy's story rather than Lottie's. Partly as a consequence of this imbalance, Lucy has a psychological complexity denied to Lottie. The inference is that as all Lottie's troubles stem from poverty; with the promise of a job and an allowance for the child (paid for by Lucy), her problems will be solved. Emotional complexity is a prerogative of the

middle class.

If Lottie's troubles are attributable to poverty, there is no hint that this is a problem for society at large. Lucy's response is on an individual level. The other girls in the home never appear after the opening scene. Allied to this studied avoidance of Lottie's social situation is the sketchy and melodramatic portrayal of poverty, reminiscent of a silent film, with Joan Greenwood unconvincing as a slum girl. The result is a showcase for Margaret Lockwood yoked to a sentimentalised view of the poor.

The film met with fair success both in the sample Leeds cinemas and in south-east Essex, being held over for a second week at the Gaumont, Southend-on-Sea (appendix 1, table 8.1). Unusually, there was no advertised supporting feature, in spite of a running time of only ninety-seven minutes. At the Gaumont, Sheffield, *The White Unicorn* attracted the second biggest audience over the four years for which data is available, though it was programmed with the documentary on the royal wedding, which was probably the real draw (see pages 187 and 201). No manager's comments are available to cast light on this. Subsequently, the film has been ignored even by feminist critics.

In *Good Time Girl* (dir. David Macdonald, 1948), the wiser, older person is the chairman of the juvenile court, Miss Thorpe (Flora Robson, reprising her role in *Holiday Camp)*. Here, the problems of Lyla (Diana Dors), the girl she is trying to help, are left unexplored. Instead, she recounts the cautionary tale of Gwen Rawlings (Jean Kent), who leaves home after being beaten by her father. She takes a room in Mrs Chalk's boarding house. A fellow tenant is Jimmy Rosso (Peter Glenville), who finds Gwen a job in the club where he works. When he hits her, the club's owner, Max (Herbert Lom), sacks him. Jimmy takes revenge by knifing Max and contriving to have Gwen convicted for stealing jewellery from Mrs Chalk. The girl escapes from approved school, taking up with rich but crooked Danny Martin (Griffith Jones). After causing a fatal accident with Danny's car, she abandons him. In partnership with two American deserters, she is involved in a string of robberies. During the gang's attempt to steal a car, the driver is shot. He is revealed to be Red Farrell, the musician who befriended her at the club. Gwen is caught and

sentenced to fifteen years in prison. Her fate is enough to make Lyla return home, determined never to get into trouble again. .

Gwen is driven from home by the same circumstances as Lottie in *The White Unicorn:* overcrowding, poverty and a violent father. At Gwen's trial, her father's behaviour comes in for scant comment. What scandalises Miss Thorpe, the magistrate, is that a girl of sixteen should have spent a night in Red Farrell's flat.

The film is rich in spivs, from the down-market Jimmy Rosso to the wealthy Danny Martin, who is involved in race-fixing. Spivs are signified by their clothes: the handkerchief tucked into the breast pocket of the suit with padded shoulders, and the wide, flamboyant tie. There is no such signifier for women, though Gwen flaunts her newly-acquired status when she is with Danny Martin by wearing furs.

Like *It Always Rains on Sunday* (dir. Robert Hamer, 1947). *Good Time Girl* is based on a novel by Arthur La Bern.[1] The film was scripted by Muriel and Sydney Box, together with Ted Willis. Not unexpectedly, the socialist trio take a sympathetic view of Gwen. Jean Kent considers that the character was more balanced in the book, though as Robert Murphy points out, La Bern had already remoulded a 1944 murder case to make Gwen a victim of her environment.[2] The films retains this focus on a girl trying to escape from poverty, though, as in *The White Unicorn,* her domestic life is sketchily represented. She shares a bed with her sister (as so often, an iron bed signifies that the home is impoverished), though being in bed proves no bar to being hit by her father. She is shown as wanting a better life, but being unwilling to work for it — that classic working-class character defect. Like other working-class girls, she uses her looks instead.[3] She leaves home after her father imposes discipline by using his belt on her. In her lodgings, the cycle of violence begins again when Jimmy Rosso hits her.

For Miss Thorpe, what matters is that Lyla should return to her home rather that try to live independently. Domestic violence, overcrowding and poverty appear not to bother her greatly. A different view is expressed at a board meeting of the approved school where Gwen is sent. As the matron pleads for more staff, she explains that the girls have suffered from '. . . bad upbringing,

bad companions or plain bad luck'.[4] Whether she would have tried to persuade Lyla to go home is doubtful.

Murphy is certain of readers' exasperation with middle-class busy-bodies and their sympathy for a girl who just wanted to have a good time.[5] Whether audiences of the 1940s concurred is something which he does not pursue, though evading the issue risks divorcing the film from its social context. Other aspects attracted attention at the time. Gavin Lambert observed that 'To judge from the popular British cinema, the pursuit of luxury in everyday living is either criminal or disastrous.'[6] *Good Time Girl* was one of the films which he cited. It fell foul of the BBFC, as Muriel Box has recorded, though the toning down demanded by the censors failed to dampen controversy.[7] The film was banned to children under sixteen in Manchester, while Leeds City Council sought to ban it outright.[8] Putting the film in the same category as *No Orchids for Miss Blandish* (dir. St John L. Clowes, 1948) hurt Arthur Rank, who regarded it as one of his personal 'darlings'.[9] Doubtless he saw a moral message in Lyla's response to Gwen's fate. He would not have appreciated Landy's view that 'While the film identifies Gwen's struggles as economic, this is belied by the film's preoccupation with the disruptive and violent nature of sexuality set in motion by the female quest for pleasure.'[10] The economic origins of Gwen's problems should not be dismissed too lightly, however. Her 'female quest for pleasure' is initiated by 'borrowing' a brooch from her pawnbroker employer — an act which may equally well be attributed to her low wages. Once she leaves home and has to pay for her lodgings, taking a job at Max's club becomes an economic necessity. At this stage, she is still portrayed in the film as an innocent abroad. Even when she escapes from the approved school, she rejects the overtures of the man who gives her a lift to London (Garry Marsh). It is only when she meets Danny Martin that she explicitly uses her sexuality.[11]

Viv Chaddie is illuminating on the contradiction between the middle-class, reformist stance of the school and the staff's tacit support for an underground power structure in which senior girls use the younger ones. The message, she concludes, is that the pretence of conformity pays dividends.[12] Her approach to the routine of the school is gender based: "The girls are shown

dutifully at work on that most fulfilling of female activities — mopping; they are compulsorily

dressed in the most functional, unfeminine utility dress; inflammatory literature (such as Red's

love letters to Gwen) is carefully censored."[13] An interpretation predicated on class rather than

gender has equal validity. Mopping is a low-status rather than a specifically feminine activity —

in films of service life, it is the province of the humblest recruits, as Brian Rix's role as the

cleaner in *The Night We Dropped a Clanger* (dir. Darcy Conyers, 1959) makes clear. This film

also illustrates that functional clothing is associated with low status: when Rix's character

impersonates an officer, his clothing becomes smarter and more ostentatious. Similarly, the

censoring of letters in *Good Time Girl* is an issue of power, not of gender — there is no

indication that these are love letters and given Red's brief and circumspect relationship with

Gwen in the film, the conclusion that the couple had an affair is difficult to sustain. Similarly,

Chadder prefers to see the message of the film's trailer:

> Whether you Like it or Not, YOU are
> Responsible for the 'GOOD TIME GIRL!'

as an appeal to a male audience to take up the paternal role rather than a straightforward

challenge to audiences to accept blame.[14] Yet Gwen's father does exercise his paternal role — by

using his belt. If his response has failed, does this mean that he should have used his belt more

often (the solution favoured in *Cosh Boy* — see ch.3, n.84)? Accepting the option which Chadder

rejects — a straightforward challenge to accept blame — opens the way to seeing in the film a

more radical approach to crime in which society assumes responsibility for the class position of

Gwen's family and for the attitude of her father which lags behind the theories of child-rearing

espoused by Bowlby.

The attempt to ban the film in Leeds failed, though notoriety hardly made it a runaway

success there (appendix 1, table 8.1). Why it was less successful than *The White Unicorn* is

unclear. Parents may have been deterred from taking children to the film, given its reputation.[15]

Qualities intrinsic to the film may also have counted against it. Apart from lacking romance and

the star appeal of Margaret Lockwood, it has no sympathetic lead characters with the exception

of the musician, Red Farrell: Gwen becomes steadily less appealing as the film progresses.

In south-east Essex, *Good Time Girl* film ran for a week as main feature at the Odeon, Southend-on-Sea, and for a further week at the Rank-owned Ritz cinema nearby. Controversy alone was not sufficient to ensure the film a strong showing in the independents.

A year later, delinquent boys came under scrutiny in *Boys in Brown* (dir. Montgomery Tully, 1949). Jackie Knowles (Richard Attenborough) is already on probation when he is arrested for being involved in a robbery. He is sent to approved school for three years. At first he intends to work for an early release for good conduct. Another inmate, Bill Foster (Jimmy Hanley), is being released and promises to tell Jackie's girlfriend, Kitty (Barbara Murray), that Jackie is well. Bill loses several jobs when his past is discovered. He also falls in love with Kitty, though his feelings are not reciprocated. He ends up back in the school, embittered and willing to take part in an escape. Jackie is persuaded to join in. He is discovered stealing clothes for the breakout and fractures a master's skull in the ensuing struggle. The boys escape, but are soon recaptured. Both Jackie and Bill are shocked by what has happened and resolve to mend their ways.

Montgomery Tully both wrote the script (from a stage play by actor Reginald Beckwith) and directed the film. He had to achieve the delicate balance of providing entertainment without glamorising crime. One way of allowing audiences to relate to unsympathetic characters is to use established stars. In addition to Attenborough and Hanley, the film sports Dirk Bogarde as an inmate with an unlikely Welsh accent, and avuncular Jack Warner as the governor. To emphasise its moral stance, a lengthy series of statistics screened at the end of the film (when most of the audience were likely to be heading for the exit) purports to show the relative success of approved schools in rehabilitating offenders.

Jackie's home establishes his working-class credentials: the early Victorian town house is in an area which has lost its social status. The few location shots place it in the East End of London. There are incongruities between the exterior shots and the set of the interior. The latter fails to echo the former grandeur of the house, showing the front door as opening directly into the

living room. The range is situated in the living room rather than in the basement which was apparent from external shots, though glimpses of the rear of the house as Jackie makes his getaway from the police fail to show any basement. As so often, low status is denoted less by the quality of the furnishings than by the fact that they are out of date.

Most of the action takes place within the approved school. The governor is at pains to point to the new inmates that it is a school rather than a prison. There is nothing to stop them leaving, he assures them, even if the message is belied by the bars across his office window. This inconsistency runs through the film. The panopticon layout and the emphasis on keys create the aura of a prison, yet the staff are masters rather than uniformed warders and most of them are elderly. The escape is planned and executed with the precision of a prison breakout — and prompts a comparable response from the police.

As at the approved school from which Gwen escapes in *Good Time Girl*, work means mopping. This allows plenty of opportunities for the boys to talk amongst themselves. They are working class, the possible exception being Alfie Rawlins (Dirk Bogarde), who also happens to be the most complex character. His responses have a sexual undercurrent unusual for the time. 'If you have a pal, it makes it a bit easier,' he explains to Jackie on their first encounter. 'I could look after you.' Later, in the dormitory, as Bill talks of getting a job, Alfie tells him, 'I reckon you could get anyone to do anything for you — anything you wanted. Without work.' Superficially he is friendly; he is also devious, ensuring that Jackie joins the escape by intimating that Kitty has switched her affections to Bill. Alfie is the planner of the group. The others defer to him, though his relationship with them is always uneasy. When they suspect him of a doublecross, they turn on him.

For the governor, home conditions are seen as contributing to the boys' problems. He carries this belief as far as tracing Bill's natural mother in the hope that she will give the boy a home. She lives comfortably in a large, detached house in a leafy suburb. It comes as no surprise when she refuses to co-operate, not wanting her family to know of the baby she gave up. Quite how home circumstances have contributed in Jackie's case is not made explicit. He appears to have no

brothers or sisters and his mother (Thora Hird) is caring, though no father is in evidence. The audience is left to decide whether the problem is the absence of a father, as in *Cosh Boy*, or simply being working class. Jack Warner's governor takes the middle-class standpoint: the school is intended to make failures into good citizens. It is Alfie Rawlins who voices the unthinkable: 'Of course, those that fail, fail because of something wrong with their character. Something borstal did to their character, I suppose.'

The actors playing the boys were in their twenties, which makes them look incongruous in the shorts which form part of the school's uniform. For Landy, 'The age of the actors, consonant with the film's ending, reveals that, though the pretext of the film may be juvenile delinquency, the film is not concerned with the issue of their youth per se so much as with its disruptiveness and its containment. In this respect, the film betrays that realism often takes a back seat to ideology.'[16] Where Landy writes of youth, being working class might be substituted. The focus is on Attenborough and Hanley, neither of whom convince as working-class delinquents and both of whom are portrayed as being basically decent, but easily led by the rougher elements. The inmate who fails to be contained is Casey (Andrew Crawford), forever refusing to work for nothing more than pocket money and being put in solitary confinement for his stand. He is presented as the least sympathetic character in the film, in contrast to Bogarde's more middle-class Alfie. The moral seems to be that middle-class deviousness is more attractive than working-class rebellion.

Though there was a fascination with crime in the late 1940s and an awareness of the problem of juvenile delinquency, this did not necessarily translate into a box-office success (appendix 1, table 8.1). *Boys in Brown* ran for a week as first feature at the Gaumont, Southend-on-Sea. Either Rank judged that there was insufficient commercial potential for a second week's run in the area, or there was no spare capacity in the Rank cinemas. ABC showed more faith in the film, giving it two three-day runs at the Kingsway. With *Miss Pilgrim's Progress* (dir. Val Guest, 1950) as supporting feature, it came 162nd out of 206 in a ranking by attendance at the Gaumont, Sheffield. The manager reported that 'This programme was received with mixed feeling by most patrons, in most cases the 2nd feature was considered the best.'[17]

An indifferent circuit performance almost exhausted the film's commercial potential. It fared worse than *Good Time Girl* among independents in south-east Essex as well as in the sample Leeds cinemas, though there may have been further runs after 1950. In the verdict on the Rank card, this was good entertainment 'where heavy dramatic fare is wanted'. Perhaps these situations were few and far between.

All the three films considered associate membership of the working class with an acceptance of violence, either in the characters' home circumstances or in their behaviour. Violence leads inexorably to conflict with the law. This scenario does get away from the notion of crime being attributable to individual pathology, though it is not necessarily more useful. The use of a middle class authority figure as a narrator to put forward a model of desired behaviour in *The White Unicorn* and *Good Time Girl* leaves hanging in the air the implication that the real crime is belonging to the working class, even if the message is sugar coated in the case of *The White Unicorn*.[18] In *Boys in Brown,* casting as much as narrative helps to convey a similar message: only characters played by stars who are masquerading as belonging to the working-class can be redeemed, and the ever-reliable Jack Warner is on hand to ensure that it happens. Real working-class characters are different. Bogarde's Alfie is the joker in the pack.

Many British films of the late 1940s involving middle-class crime are set in the past, e.g. *Uncle Silas* (dir. Charles Frank, 1947), *The Mark of Cain* (dir. Brian Desmond Hurst, 1948), *The Spider and the Fly* (dir. Robert Hamer, 1949) and *Madeleine* (dir. David Lean, 1950). If this signalled that times had changed and that now there were other ways of getting what you wanted, the message had yet to permeate to criminals in the lower strata of society.

**Notes**

1. Arthur La Bern, *Night darkens the street,* London: Nicholson & Watson, 1947.

2. Jean Kent in Brian McFarlane, *Sixty voices: celebrities recall the golden age of British cinema,* London: BFI, 1992, 149; Robert Murphy, *Realism and tinsel: cinema and society in Britain 1939-49,* London: Routledge, 1992, 91.

3. La Bern, op.cit. (ch.11, n.1) 16-17. Jephcott's use of the same point has already been noted (see page 150).

4. This is a different matron from the one in the book, who is described as a suppressed sadist. La Bern, op.cit. (ch.11, n.1) 106.

5. Murphy, op.cit. (ch.11, n.2) 91-2.

6. Gavin Lambert, 'Film and the idea of happiness', *Contact*, 1949, no.11, 61.

7. McFarlane, op.cit. (ch.11, n.2) 42.

8. *The Daily Film Renter*, 10 June 1948, 9, and 10 May 1948, 3.

9. Gympson Harman in *Evening News*, 29 April 1948. Rank cuttings file 1945-48 (BFI Library).

10. Marcia Landy, *British genres: cinema and society 1930-1960*, Princeton, NJ, and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 1991, 453.

11. Gwen's sexual adventures are toned down in the film. In the book, she lives with Red and later with a lorry driver.

12. Viv Chadder, 'The higher heel: women and the post-war British crime film', in Steve Chibnall and Robert Murphy (eds.) *British crime cinema*, London: Routledge, 1999, 69-70.

13. ibid. 69.

14. ibid. 70.

15. See pages 187-8 on the screening in Leeds of *No Orchids for Miss Blandish* (dir. St John L. Clowes, 1948).

16. Landy, op.cit. (ch.11, n.10) 447.

17. Weekly return for Gaumont, Sheffield, 18 March 1950.

18. A variant of this device is used in *No Room at the Inn* (dir. Daniel Birt, 1948). In an opening sequence not in the play, a girl who has made good watches a shop-lifter being taken away. This allows her story to be presented as an extended flashback, showing how she might have taken the same route. Stephen Guy, Issues in film history seminar, Institute of Historical Research, 12 June 1997.

# CHAPTER TWELVE

## Echoes of applause: from music hall to celluloid

As a latecomer on the entertainments scene, the film industry drew on established traditions and

expertise. For comedy, this meant reliance on the music hall, with performers such as Charlie

Chaplin, Gracie Fields and George Formby achieving prominence in the new medium. The

music hall reinvented itself as variety, with sufficient success for new theatres to be built in the

1930s.[1]

Although in some respects the cinema and the music hall were in opposition, their fortunes

after the Second World War were similar. Both experienced an initial boom — two northern

entrepreneurs set about converting cinemas into variety theatres at the end of the war.[2] The

cinema's debt to its older partner did not go unacknowledged. The early days of the music hall

were evoked nostalgically in *Champagne Charlie* (dir. Cavalcanti, 1944) and in a string of films

which followed in the 1940s. Both media experienced a reversal in the 1950s, the difference

being that, for the music hall, the decline proved terminal. The last rites were administered in

*Charley Moon* (dir. Guy Hamilton, 1956), *Davy* (dir. Michael Relph, 1957) and *The*

*Entertainer* (dir. Tony Richardson, 1960).

The historiography of the music hall was introduced in chapter two. Academic

interpretations of the medium as an agency for social control have vied with populist approaches

stressing its role as an outlet for popular sentiment. Undeniably, business interests assumed

increasing importance from the late nineteenth century, with halls growing larger, more

specialised and being organised as circuits in the way which was later to happen with cinemas.[3]

This need not preclude artists using the halls as platforms for more subversive views — such an

august institution as the BBC managed to accommodate Tommy Handley, the Goons, Mort Sahl

and punk rock.[4]

In the late 1940s, the cinema's debt to the music hall was evident in the Mancunian comedies and the Old Mother Riley series. Both were distinctive forms of British cinema, though their proletarian character means that they have received scant critical attention.

No history of Film Studios (Manchester) or the grandly named Mancunian Film Corporation has been published.[5] The only tangible monuments to this neglected chapter in British film-making are a handful of surviving films, some forty photographs held by the North West Film Archive and a television documentary made in the 1980s.[6] The latter contains reminiscences by former studio staff, along with contributions from Jeffrey Richards.

The heyday of Mancunian Film Corporation came in the late 1940s, when the studio at Rusholme in Manchester was operating. The studio's output consisted almost entirely of comedies, with stars being recruited from the variety theatre. In the television documentary, Richards suggests that music hall performers were used because they were adept at timing gags and working in single takes. Along with the saving on props (items were often lent by staff and friends) and the lower overheads achieved by working away from London, films could be made on shoestring budgets — a ninety-three minute feature, *Cup Tie Honeymoon* (dir. John E. Blakeley, 1948), was made for £45,000 in fourteen weeks.[7] The scenarios of Mancunian films, the characters of the stars and the low production costs resulted in a unique style of film-making which appealed to northern audiences.[8]

A roster of northern variety stars worked regularly for Mancunian, the most notorious being Frank Randle. Richards describes him as disreputable, subversive, lecherous, drunken and insubordinate — a man who recognised traits in ordinary people which were generally suppressed.[9] James Casey, who wrote for Mancunian films and is the son of comedian Jimmy James, sees Randle as an anarchist, beating authority.[10] The popularity of the stars was reinforced by their stage appearances — summer seasons at the seaside, notably at Blackpool, and pantomimes in the major northern conurbations.

Although made at Riverside Studios in London, *Home Sweet Home* (dir. John E. Blakeley, 1945) is a typical Mancunian product in its casting and scenario. These give scope for stage

business and music to be woven around a romantic storyline (there is room for the pianists Rawicz and Landauer to make an appearance playing Lizst).[11] Frank Randle works for Wright's Pianos as commissionaire and handyman. His wife is about to have a baby. Orphaned evacuee from the Channel Islands, Jacqueline Chantry (Nicolette Roeg), lodges with them and works as chauffeuse for the owner of the company, Colonel Wright (H.F. Maltby). The colonel's son, Eric (Tony Pendrell), wants to marry Jacqueline, but the colonel and his wife are against such an unequal social match. They dismiss her while Eric is in the Channel Islands uncovering her background. When he discovers that she comes from an old French family and is an heiress, his parents change their minds about the marriage. Mrs Wright pays Frank to find Jacqueline. By pretending to be a foreign prince, he gains access to the exclusive London nightclub where she works. He takes her to Eric's home, where the couple are reunited. Frank turns down an improved position at the works in favour of running his own business — charging the public to see the quadruplets to which his wife has given birth.

Class is at the core of the film, most obviously in the romance between Eric and Jacqueline. It also underpins Randle's performance — he reprises his stage persona as the shambling, comedic drunk. Even as a commissionaire he manages not to be subservient, handing his employer the morning post to take to the office. His employer, Colonel Wright, is someone to be outwitted rather than feared or revered. This shows most clearly in the colonel's office, when Randle takes charge of their exchange, reading a book on the desk through the colonel's monocle before helping himself to a packet of cigarettes and a cigar. The obvious solution is to sack him, but as the colonel explains to the manager, 'I've been going to a score of times and then he says he forgives me and behaves as though he were the aggrieved person.' After a Home Guard reunion supper, the ill-matched couple go back to the colonel's house to continue their drinking. This convivial occasion comes to an abrupt conclusion when Randle insults his host, who realises that his drinking companion is an employee.

Randle's clothes symbolise his attitude to convention. They might be ordinary, but he never wears them in an ordinary way. One pocket of his trousers hangs out, as does one side of his

shirt tail; his tie is crooked and needs tightening; one side of his waistcoat is folded in on itself at the back; his army cap is coming apart, with strands hanging down like ribbons. His bowler is respectable enough, but he wears it on inappropriate occasions, such as at home when the vicar and the doctor visit his wife. Yet he is also a kindly family man, prepared to make breakfast for his wife and Jacqueline, to do the ironing and to take in puppies which he is supposed to drown.

Randle is the quintessential working-class hero, living on his wits, disdainful of authority, hard-drinking, yet family-centred (though not above making money out of the quadruplets). He might seem to belong in a Coronation Street world of mean terraces and corner pubs; incongruously, his home in the film is a spacious, middle-class, 1930s semi. Yet despite the trappings of modernity, this is still a traditional world where his workmates live nearby, the policeman wakes residents by giving them an early morning knock and Randle can throw a bottle of milk at the cat. Similarly, the inside of the house abandons modernity in favour of the traditional northern pattern of a kitchen doubling as living room, though it sports an electric cooker as well as a range.

In 1945, *Home Sweet Home* ran for a week as first feature at the Gaumont, Southend-on-Sea, and was brought back for another week as first feature a year later — the only Mancunian film to achieve this distinction. This hardly reduced its audience potential among other cinemas in the area, for it still managed for more screen days among independents than on the circuits, though its ranking was lower (see appendix 1, table 8.1). This confirms the general appeal of the film which has already been noted (see pages 195-6 and 201).

What gave this film its popularity in south-east Essex is a fertile field for speculation. An important factor must be that Randle rebels. This is summed up in a short scene when he tears up his time card and throws the pieces in the air. Many members of the audience must have longed to emulate his gesture after six years of wartime regulation. Yet is it really rebellion when he is anticipating promotion to a salaried job in which he does not have to clock on? Randle manages to side with the traditional working class whilst at the same time harbouring middle-class aspirations — a delicate balancing act which audiences must have struggled with

themselves. What aided the film's popularity was the fortuitous combination of the timing of its release with the easing of wartime regulation, and Randle's rebellious screen persona.[12] The other factor in its favour was the comforting familiarity of the location: houses in the mythical town of Redvale were similar to those which cinema-goers would see on their way home.

After five years of austerity came one of the last of the Mancunian films, *Over the Garden Wall* (dir. John E. Blakeley, 1950). Distribution was aided by a loan from the National Film Finance Corporation and the film was successful enough to be reissued in 1959, albeit with thirty-nine of its ninety-four minutes cut.[13] This ability to undergo savage cutting underlines the episodic character of Mancunian offerings. Storylines are little more than devices for stringing together stage acts. Removing several scenes hardly makes the finished product any less comprehensible.

A telegram throws Fanny Lawton (Norman Evans) and her husband, Joe (Jimmy James), into confusion. Their daughter, Mary, who married a GI and who lives in America, has had a baby and is to visit them. When the couple arrive, the 'baby' turns out to be a dog. Mary visits the factory where her father works and where she was once employed. The owner's son urges her to stay in England so that they might resume their relationship. His present fiancée is jealous. A rift also develops between Mary and her husband, but at the end they are reconciled and go back to the States.

The two stars, Norman Evans and Jimmy James, were well known on stage and radio. The film's title comes from Norman Evans' most famous sketch, a monologue in which he plays a housewife gossiping over the wall to an unseen neighbour. The sketch duly appears towards the end of the film (with Evans eventually falling into the fish pond) and must have caused a ripple of recognition among audiences. Evans' role of Fanny Lawton is in the tradition of pantomime dames, down to the obligatory revealing of layers of underwear as she undresses at night (though the twin beds are an innovation). Norman Evans trying his hand at dentistry and Jimmy James as a drunk are other pieces of stage business inserted none too subtly into the scenario, along with the obligatory musical interludes. Some sections of the film are more cinematic, such

as a drunken Joe Lawton falling into a bath of water, or drying plates by putting them through the mangle. These hark back to the days of silent comedy.[14]

In the factory scenes, the distinction between management and workers is evident in the clothes (clean suits compared with dirty overalls), the accents (received pronunciation vies with northern accents) and the emphasis on time-keeping for shop floor workers — not only are they required to clock on, but a time-keeper watches them doing so. He is firmly in the management camp, reprimanding Joe and his pals for their late arrival. They retaliate by reminding him that they know of his affair with the canteen manageress and his pilfering. Like Frank Randle, these are not workers who are cowed by authority; if anything they exploit its weakness, calling a strike over an argument with the foreman.

The stars belong among ordinary people; the film takes the viewpoint of ordinary people. A traditional working man's world of life on the factory floor is evoked, enlivened by drinking, betting, the closeness of workmates — and with the prospect of being henpecked at home. Norman Evans' Fanny Lawton is a caricature, but the character contains enough elements of truth to be credible. 'What will Mrs Webster say?' she laments, conscious of impression being made on the neighbours as Joe comes home drunk after celebrating Mary's return. Yet, as in *Home Sweet Home,* this is no traditional working-class environment. Home is a 1920s semi-detached cottage of the kind which could be found in a private development or on a council estate influenced by the garden cities movement. The kitchen has a washing machine, which was a rarity in working-class homes in 1950, though hot water for washing up comes from the kettle rather than from the hot tap — an authentic touch given the cost of heating water. Nor should a bathroom be taken for granted — particularly a bathroom as luxurious as this — though it serves as a setting for several pieces of stage business.

The film's release date (May 1950) means that its fortunes in the two areas can only be followed for a few months (appendix 1, table 8.1). It ran for a week as main feature at the Rank-owned Ritz cinema in Southend-on-Sea and was passed on to independents in the area without further circuit screenings.

Both *Home Sweet Home* and *Over the Garden Wall* celebrate the working class without eulogising it. Both contrast its warmth and solidarity with the duplicitous ways of authority represented by a family business — that most traditional means of organising capital and labour. Both show the aim as accommodation with authority rather than its overthrow, though along the way, the pomposity of authority figures is punctured. In both films, a young woman is the agent of social mobility, recalling Powell and Pressburger's *I Know Where I'm Going* (1945). Powell and Pressberger might have developed the theme more elegantly, but for a populist approach, Mancunian takes the honours.

Female impersonation was staple fare in the music hall and Arthur Lucan's Old Mother Riley its most enduring creation on film. For Andy Medhurst,

> The Riley films offered perhaps the most honest solution to problem of reconciling variety traditions and generic credibility: don't bother. The public that liked the act on stage would pay to come and see it on film, and it was the mass paying public that these films were made for. Fretting over their narrative flaws and absence of psychological credibility is, in the final analysis, a waste of time.[15]

Though it is hard to disagree with Medhurst's conclusion, his approach does preempt serious consideration of the films. Class offers a more promising route — and avoids his condescending view of the mass public.

*Old Mother Riley's New Venture* (dir. John Harlow, 1949) was the only one of the fifteen films in the series to get a West End showing.[16] As in the Mancunian films, the plot is little more than a device for introducing stage business and musical numbers.

Old Mother Riley (Arthur Lucan) washes up in the hotel where her daughter, Kitty (Kitty McShane), is a receptionist. The owner is advised by his doctor to go abroad immediately. He entrusts the running of the hotel to the first member of staff who comes through his door. This happens to be Old Mother Riley. The bedroom which she chooses for herself is the one in which the other staff hide jewellery stolen from the guests. Meanwhile, the owner's nephew and his wife suspect Old Mother Riley of murdering their uncle. They have her arrested so that they can take control of the hotel. She escapes from jail and returns to the hotel to clear her name. The owner returns at the same time and she helps him to unmask the real thieves.

Economy is the watchword of the production, with a dozen fairly basic sets and one location sequence as Old Mother Riley makes her way to her tenement flat after escaping from prison.[17] The wallpaper in the flat is heavily-patterned in a style which was in vogue before the First World War. The furniture is dark and heavy. By contrast, the hotel is modern, with wide staircases, large rooms and minimal furnishings in a sophisticated 1930s style. Decoration is equally simple, with patterned wallpaper only appearing in the dado. Old Mother Reilly's excitement on seeing her hotel bedroom is palpable.

Old Mother Riley's clothes give the series its old-fashioned air. The bonnet which holds her wispy white hair in place and her shawl belong half a century earlier, in the heyday of the music halls. The same may be said of the excessively long shoes, so like those of Chaplin. Clothing also helps to chart Old Mother Riley's changing social position. The apron is abandoned as she tries on new dresses, only to be donned again as her status declines.

The film exemplifies the importance of family bonds for the working class. Family is represented by Old Mother Riley and her daughter, Kitty. The only other family bond is that between the owner of the hotel, his nephew and the nephew's wife. In contrast to the Riley's closeness, the middle-class couple are duplicitous, being more interested in gaining control of the hotel than in the uncle's welfare. But upward mobility has its perils. Old Mother Riley's sudden promotion causes resentment on their part, as well as amongst other members of the staff. The moral of her illusory good fortune is that being poor but honest is the best policy.

Though Old Mother Riley's status rises, her habits remain robustly proletarian. A beer bottle and a mug stand on her bedside table at the hotel. Her money is kept beneath a loose floorboard. The dichotomy between status and habits is exploited in an extended sketch in which an Arab potentate and his party seek to adopt English ways of eating by imitating her gestures. The humour might be simple, but it is also surreal.

In Stam's terms, the reflexive element in the film is marked.[18] There is a feeling of playing with the medium, of looking back to the interaction with the audience which was so much a feature of music hall and pantomime. As Old Mother Riley sets eyes on her room in the hotel for

the first time, she tells Kitty, 'It's like a film star's. If I had my time again, I'd be a film star.' Later, as she examines a hair drier in a beauty parlour, she asks, 'What's this? Mine own executioner?' (Anthony Kimmins' film, *Mine Own Executioner,* adapted from the Nigel Balchin novel of the same name had been released two years earlier in 1947.) Most intriguing of all is the closing scene in which everyone joins in throwing custard pies. There is a cut to a film studio, with Harlow himself demanding 'Give me more'. A cinema-literate generation doubtless appreciated the references.

*Old Mother Riley, Headmistress* (dir. John Harlow) was released a year later in 1950. The scenario by John Harlow and Ted Kavanagh allows for the usual quota of music and slapstick. Old Mother Riley is left the laundry where she is a not very efficient employee. When her daughter, Kitty, is sacked from her job as a music teacher in a private school, Old Mother Riley confronts the headmistress, Miss Carruthers (Enid Hewitt). When Miss Carruthers confesses that she has to sell the school, Old Mother Riley offers to buy it, using the laundry as security for a loan. A group of businessmen put in a rival bid, believing that they will be offered generous compensation when a railway is put through the site. They are thwarted by Old Mother Riley and set fire to the school in the hope that she will resell to them. She does — only to discover that the railway is being routed through the laundry instead, meaning that she will receive the compensation.

Other than the interior of the laundry (where all employees are addressed by their numbers), the settings yield few clues to Old Mother Riley's working-class status. Once again, location shooting is minimal, being largely confined to the garden of Victorian mansion which houses the school. Most of the action takes place in the school and, like the earlier film, can be accommodated in a dozen sets. The film received a loan from the National Film Finance Corporation for its production.[19] Wherever the money went, it was not on the sets. Some might have gone into hiring the Luton Girls Choir and George Melachrino and his orchestra for the musical numbers.

Like Randle and Will Hay, Old Mother Riley appears bumbling and out of her depth when

confronting middle-class professionals. Like Randle and Hay, she uses her native shrewdness to win through by sowing verbal confusion. This is apparent in the opening scene, where customers complain about her work. She uses the same strategy when the lawyer asks how she will raise the money needed to buy the school:

> OLD MOTHER RILEY: I've got it all worked out. Now listen. We can pawn the mortgage debt to pay the deposit on the school. Then we can mortgage the school to pay back the deposit on the laundry. Six months after, we could raise more on the school to pay less on the laundry. Then we can do the bank. Then we can do a bunk.

Ted Kavanagh's hand is evident in the punning — he scripted the wartime radio series *ITMA* — yet rather than being merely a display of verbal dexterity, this speech illustrates a distinctively working-class approach to making ends meet. Something similar is encountered in working-class autobiographies about life earlier in the century.[20]

Allied to the working-class concern about money is the importance of material possessions. When Old Mother Riley is wakened by the handyman calling that the school is on fire, her first instinct is to save the things which she owns. The comic potential of the scene is exploited as she throws furniture, ornaments and a potted plant out the window, knocking out the arsonists who are standing below.

As with Randle, Old Mother Riley's working-class status is negotiable. She comes to run a private school and to be rich, though this is wealth acquired by luck — the only possibility open to many working class people. By an inversion of Durgnat's principles (page 220), the middle class is represented by a figure of fun (the lawyer), as well as by businessmen who have no qualms about taking the step from duplicity to illegality by committing arson. The female middle-class characters provide a respectable foil — the headmistress who is forced by lack of money to sell the school and the pupils who want to see fair play for Kitty. Women (including Old Mother Riley herself) are on the side of law, order and fairness. The exception is the French mistress — and in this world of stereotypes, the French are always duplicitous. When Old Mother Riley cheats, as in the egg and spoon race, she does it obviously.

For Landy, the Old Mother Riley films are a parody of female melodramas:

> 'By adopting the persona of an old woman, Lucan usurps cultural images that are threatening to both men and women — the elderly Irishwoman and the mother. He plays with the freedom that age and marginality grant to her to attack prevailing social practices. Since Mother Riley has too little invested in the social order, she can flout middle-class conventions and pretensions.[21]

Whether elderly Irishwomen and mothers are threatening figures is debatable. Given the popularity of Old Mother Riley among the Irish communities of Lancashire, the opposite might be true.[22] She is as incompetent in her work as Randle and displays a similar disrespect for authority, though without his contempt. This makes an emphasis on gender as a key to the humour questionable. The class position of Old Mother Riley is more important, as Landy acknowledges in the final sentence of the quotation.

An alternative approach to the Old Mother Riley films is to explore the familial relationship of mother and daughter. Fisher stresses the protective pride for Kitty, whose shortcomings make Old Mother Riley fierce, fretful and fidgety. He likens the love-hate relationship to that of Harold and Albert Steptoe.[23] This raises the possibility that the Old Mother Riley role might equally well be played as Old Father Riley, though audiences' complicity with the actors in the gender disguise adds an extra dimension to the humour. The stage origins of the character are evident in the use of this theatrical device.

For Richards, Old Mother Riley is a 'comic heroine of titanic dimensions, exaggerated admittedly but rooted in truth.'[24] This is Ang's psychological reality (page 135). A similar blend of exaggeration and truthfulness might be claimed for other music hall characters who reached the screen. Working-class audiences found something to relate to in those stereotypes of the Irish washerwoman, the inebriated husband and the gossiping housewife. It would be illuminating to have middle-class views of these characters, but middle-class critics studiously avoided writing about them. Middle-class audiences could recognise stereotypes and a casual viewing of the films would have served to confirm their prejudices. Had they persevered, they might have discerned values which were not always so different from their own.

Unlike the Mancunian comedies, the appeal of Old Mother Riley was national. Len

England observed in June 1944 that 'Old Mother Riley is the biggest money-maker of all British films. In some parts of England cinemas that nothing else can fill are packed to the doors by Old Mother Riley.'[25] According to *Kinematograph Weekly, Old Mother Riley's New Venture* achieved 'excellent' business on its London release on the Gaumont circuit, particularly in north-east London. The management at Colchester, Essex, claimed that it gave their best business for twelve months. The film also proved successful in Chester, Dover and Cardiff.[26] At the Granada, Tooting, an Old Mother Riley film in a double bill with *A Yank at Oxford* (dir. Jack Conway, 1938) achieved a wartime box-office record.[27]

The popularity of the series as a whole in Leeds and south-east Essex was considered in chapter six (page 195). By the end of 1950, *Old Mother Riley, Headmistress* had hardly reached subsequent-run cinemas after its release on the Gaumont circuit as a supporting feature (appendix 1, table 8.1). *Old Mother Riley's New Venture* did better in being the main feature, but after a week at the Rank-owned Ritz cinema in Southend-on-Sea, its next appearance in the area was in second-run cinemas, where it was an indifferent performer. In Sheffield, the manager of the Gaumont noted that *Old Mother Riley, Headmistress* 'was considered by many Patrons as an insult to their intelligence'.[28] Tastes were changing, perhaps with the shifting age profile of cinema audiences, though other possibilities are that this was a weak example of the series, or that the cinema-goers at the Gaumont, Sheffield, had refined tastes.

For critics of the Roger Manvell school, the very popularity of such films counted against them, as did their rejection of the orthodoxy of realism.[29] This distaste has been difficult to dispel. Judged by other criteria, the films offer their own pleasures. If they were made to please the masses and if they succeeded in this aim, then for the historian they are testimony to the attitudes and interests of large sectors of the population. Culturally they are significant in their knowingness: artifice is glorified, most obviously by harking back to the pantomime dame. This is an approach to film-making far removed from that of David Lean, but with equal validity.

If the films looked back to the music hall, they also presaged new forms of comedy. Their surreal humour was carried into the 1950s by the Goons, transferred to television by Michael

Bentine in the 1960s with *It's a Square World* (BBC TV, 1960-64) and *All Square* (ATV, 1966-67) and achieved cult status in the 1970s with Monty Python.[30] The emphasis on domesticity was even more influential. Richards calls *Over the Garden Wall* a prototype sitcom.[31] Some variety performers made the transition into sitcom on radio and television, notably Ted Ray, Jimmy Clitheroe, Hylda Baker and Jimmy Jewell. Though sitcoms are earnestly pored over for their cultural significance, the proletarian comedies of the 1940s which spanned the traditions of sitcom and variety have for too long been dismissed. Now that commentators such as Richards are according them serious attention, this neglect may be ending. What can still be forgotten and bears reiterating is that the purpose of the films was to make people laugh (see page 198). If they are rescued from obscurity only to be revered as cultural artefacts, it would be both an irony and a disservice to the artists involved.

## Notes

1. G.J. Mellor, *The northern music hall*, Newcastle-upon-Tyne: Frank Graham, 1970, 189-94.

2. ibid. 130, 154, 190 and 197-202.

3. ibid.

4. For Mort Sahl, see Asa Briggs, *The history of broadcasting in the United Kingdom*, vol.5: *Competition 1955-1974*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995, 359.

5. The North West Film Archive holds a copy of Peter Wright, 'Laughter in the dark'. This purports to be a history of the studio, but the author has withheld permission for the manuscript to be read.
   In the 1940s and early 50s, while the Rusholme studio was operating, a theoretical distinction can be made between the producing arm — Film Studios (Manchester) — and the Mancunian Film Corporation, which was the distribution arm. In practice, both were controlled by John Blakeley who previous produced films under the Mancunian banner for distribution by Butcher's Film Service.

6. 'Mancunian Presents . . .' (Tyne Tees Television, 1988) (North West Film Archive). Some of the material reappears in Jeffrey Richards, *Stars in our eyes: Lancashire stars of stage, screen and radio*, Preston: Lancashire County Books, 1994.

7. 'Mancunian Presents . . .' (Tyne Tees Television, 1988). The CEA estimated production costs at £40,000. *Kinematograph Weekly*, 17 March 1949, 9.
   The claim is made in the television documentary that of over twenty-five feature films made by the studio, none lost money. If true, Manchester was unique among British film studios.

8. *Somewhere in Camp* (dir. John E. Blakeley, 1940) and *Somewhere on Leave* (dir. John E. Blakeley, 1942), both starring Frank Randle, were the films which drew the largest audiences in the Majestic, Macclesfield, in 1942 and 1943 respectively. Julian Poole, 'British cinema attendance in wartime: audience preference at the Majestic, Macclesfield', *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television,* 1987, vol.7, no.1, tables 4 and 5.

9. 'Mancunian Presents. . .' (Tyne Tees Television, 1988).

10. ibid. Casey later worked on radio with another Mancunian star, Jimmy Clitheroe, in the long-running *The Clitheroe Kid* — the last gasp of the Mancunian tradition.

11. Dot Stimson, who worked as film editor for Blakeley, recalls that on another of their films, *Holidays with Pay* (1948), the script had blank pages headed BUS [stage business]. 'Mancunian Presents. . .' (Tyne Tees Television, 1988).

12. Randle plays himself rather than a character. How much of his stage persona was carried over into his private life is another matter. One commentator sees strong connections. John Fisher, *Funny way to be a hero,* London: Muller, 1973, 167.

13. *Kinematograph Weekly,* 20 April 1950, 32. The loan was to Mancunian Film Corporation, the distribution arm of Blakeley's empire, rather than to Film Studios (Manchester).

14. Dot Stimson claims that the comedy was after the style of Laurel and Hardy and that Bert Tracey, who had written for the duo, worked on Mancunian films. 'Mancunian Presents . . .' (Tyne Tees Television, 1988).
    Tracey worked with Oliver Hardy in 1914 and was living in the Victoria Park area of Manchester in the late 1940s. A.J. Marriot, *Laurel & Hardy: the British tours,* Blackpool: A.J. Marriot, 6 Gainsborough Road, 1993, 49, n.8, and 72.

15. Andy Medhurst, 'Music hall and British cinema', in Charles Barr (ed.) *All our yesterdays: 90 years of British cinema,* London: BFI, 1986, 177.

16. Fisher, op.cit. (ch.9, n.12) 77. Although the title is not given by Fisher, this was the only film in the series to be released in 1949.

17. At the opening of the film, stock library material is used for establishing shots of well-known London locations. In the BFI's viewing copy, one sequence is reversed, so that road vehicles appear to travel backwards..

18. Robert Stam, *reflexivity in film and literature: from Don Quixote to Jean-Luc Godard,* Ann Arbor, MI: UMI Research Press, 1985.

19. *Kinematograph Weekly,* 20 April 1950, 32.

20. e.g. Rose Gamble, *Chelsea girl,* Bath: Chivers Press, 1980, 58-64.

21. Marcia Landy, *British genres: cinema and society 1930-1950,* Princeton, NJ, and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 1991, 355-7.

22. Fisher, op.cit. (ch.9, n.12) 80.

23. ibid. 76. In these later films of the series, the astringency of the relationship is replaced by a closeness which is less interesting cinematically. This happened as Lucan and McShane's marriage was deteriorating.

24. Jeffrey Richards, *The age of the dream palace: cinema and society in Britain 1930-1939*, London: Routledge, 1989, 298.

25. M-O A: FR 2120 'The film and family life', 13 June 1944, 2.

26. *Kinematograph Weekly*, 5 January 1950, 24.

27. Guy Morgan, *Red roses every night: an account of London cinemas under fire*, London: Quality Press, 1948, 46.

28. Weekly return for Gaumont, Sheffield, 21 October, 1950. The film ran as second feature to *A Ticket to Tomahawk* (dir. Richard Sale, US release 1950). The manager commented that 'It is so many months since we have had so many complaints from all types of patrons about the poor quality of this programme.'

29. For realism, see pages 32-3. Distaste for films on the grounds of their popularity is more difficult to demonstrate. The most telling point is a negative one — critics ignored them (see page 316).

30. Tisi Vahimagi (for BFI), *British Television*, 2nd edn., Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996, 93.

31. Richards, op.cit. (ch.12, n.6) 31.

# CHAPTER THIRTEEN

## The Janus faces of the dance hall

A recurring image in post-war films is the dance hall or palais de danse — a foreign name hints at the exotic world beyond the swing doors. In Britain, little more than a year after the ending of the war, dance halls were visited by an estimated three million people per week paying on average two shillings for admission.[1] By comparison, cinema admissions averaged thirty-one million per week at a price of 1s.5d.[2] A quarter of the six million people aged between sixteen and twenty-four went dancing during any one week, with interest being marked among girls.[3] Whether dancing was class-based is more difficult to determine, though there is evidence of a greater interest among the working class.[4]

The dance hall was an urban phenomenon. In smaller towns, dances were held in the prosaic surroundings of church halls and other multi-purpose buildings. This could only enhance the mystique of the dance hall for girls living away from major population centres.

The appeal of the dance hall is evident in the two Scottish films already considered. In *Floodtide* (dir. Frederick Wilson, 1949) (chapter ten), it is where the apprentice, Tim Brogan, takes new boy, David Shields, as his introduction to the pleasures of Glasgow. It is there that they meet Tim's future fiancée, Rosie, and her friend, Judy. In *The Gorbals Story* (dir. David MacKane, 1950) (chapter eight), Johnnie recounts events after his humiliation by Peter Reilly: 'I went to where there was something of youthful happiness, spontaneous gaiety. It was a dance hall — good band, rhythm, rhythm, cleanliness, light, life, light and colour. My senses fell on someone — whom I don't know — but I kept on searching for sympathy, affection, love.'

The dance hall embodied a host of contradictions. It was both a place for enjoying company and for finding intimacy, for breaking relationships and for making new friends. Though it offered an escape from the workaday world for its patrons, it was run as a business, satisfying a

demand for leisure pursuits in the same way as the cinema. It promised enjoyment, but this was

sanctioned pleasure. Because the dance hall generally had no alcohol licence and because there

was strict supervision of the dancers, it met with the approval of the Quaker Seebohm

Rowntree.[5]

The ambivalence between pleasure and profit goes deeper. In films, the superficial glamour

which represents the public face of the dance hall can conceal something distinctly unpleasant.[6]

This is hinted at in *Waterloo Road* (see chapter nine), in which the art deco Alcazar is a place

where a spiv can take his pickup for the afternoon. When it is raided by the police, a host of

dubious characters tumble out the window of the gents, only to be picked up by the police.

*Appointment with Crime* (dir. John Harlow, 1946) explores this darker side of the dance hall in

greater depth. According to the publicity material, the film was '. . . as typical as the morning

paper headlines and was made as a deterrent to crime'.[7]

Harlow is a forgotten figure. He was a prolific director, making nine low-budget films

between 1944 and 1950, including two of the Old Mother Riley series.[8] *The Dream of Olwen*

(first released in 1947 as *While I Live* and retitled for its 1950 reissue) is his only work whose

title is remembered, and then not for the film itself, but for the theme music by Charles Williams

— a pastiche piano concerto in the grand romantic style popularised by Richard Addinsell's

Warsaw Concerto. Working for British National was the nearest Harlow came to directing for

any of the major production companies.

In *Appointment with Crime*, Leo (William Hartnell) agrees to take part in a smash and grab

raid on a Bond Street jewellers. The organiser is Gus Loman (Raymond Lovell), with Hatchett as

getaway driver. A shutter comes down as Leo breaks the shop window, trapping his hands. His

companions escape, but Leo is captured and undergoes surgery on his wrists.

On his release from prison, Leo survives by committing petty robberies.[9] When he seeks

help from Loman, now the manager of a dance hall, his old boss pulls a gun on him. In the

ensuing struggle, Leo takes the gun, using it later to kill Hatchett. A hostess at the dance hall

Joyce (Carol Dane), unwittingly provides an alibi. Loman looks for support from his own boss,

the wealthy, foreign art dealer Gregory Lang (one of Herbert Lom's shudderingly sinister gallery of villains), who is the registered owner of the gun. Lang's response is to have Loman killed. The task is assigned to Jonah Crackle (Ivor Barnard), a printer with a sideline in torture and murder. But Lang still has to discover where Leo has hidden the gun. He has Leo kidnapped by Jonah Crackle's gang. Leo breaks down when threatened with having his hands crushed in a printing press. He agrees to steal a diamond for Lang. The robbery is successful, but when Leo returns with his haul, he demands more money. In the ensuing fight, Lang is shot dead. Leo makes his getaway by train on the first stage of his journey to the continent, only to discover that Carol has given away his plans to the police. As he tries to escape from the train, he is trapped by his wrists again, this time in the window of the train door.

William Hartnell regularly appeared in British films of the 1940s and 50s. His voice and his body language marked him as working class, though he often found himself in a supervisory role which isolated him from his fellow characters, making him something of a loner. As Billy Hartnell, he was a sergeant in *The Way Ahead* (dir. Carol Reed, 1944). Using his full forename hardly changed his status: he presided over the bar where Johnny (James Mason) sought refuge in *Odd Man Out* (dir. Carol Reed, 1947). In 1949, he was a sergeant again in *The Lost People* (dirs Bernard Knowles and Muriel Box). A decade later, he was still an NCO, training recruits in *Carry on Sergeant* (dir. Gerald Thomas, 1958) and *The Night We Dropped a Clanger* (dir. Darcy Conyers, 1959). It is hard to know whether this was typecasting, or whether something of Hartnell's own personality came out in his characterisations. His final major role as Doctor Who marked an abrupt change of direction.

Whatever contributed to Hartnell's screen persona, working-class fatalism was never evident. In *Appointment with Death,* the pent-up anger is palpable in his strident voice. Leo may be afraid, but he is never cowed. This contributes to the frisson of his scenes with Loman, the dance hall manager, where middle-class superiority buckles in the face of working-class resolution. A more worthy opponent is the wealthy Lang. Loman calls him 'sir'.[10] Leo does not.

Clothes help to delineate the characters' status. Though Leo begins the film wearing the

sharp clothes of a spiv, by the time of his release from prison. he is a colourless figure, merging into the London crowds. As so often in films of the period, a suit denotes that a character is middle-class. This applies to the two detectives, the smartly-dressed Inspector Rogers (Robert Beatty) and the lower-status sergeant, Charlie Weeks (Cyril Smith), who inhabits his suit rather than wears it. The bustling and obsequious little printer-cum-murderer, the Dickensian Jonah Crackle, wears a bowler with his suit and has the neat, old-fashioned demeanour of a small businessmen. Loman wears a suit in keeping with his position as dance hall manager, yet it looks creased and ill-fitting when he confronts the immaculate, upper-class Lang. When Lang is killed, he is wearing a brocade jacket which contrasts with Leo's zipped jacket. Zips were a novelty in the 1940s. For men, they were used by the lower classes, except when leather clothes were worn by flyers and sports car enthusiasts. Leather had yet to acquire high status.

The dance hall is as central to the film as Hartnell himself. Once inside, its commercialism soon becomes evident. On Leo's first visit, Joyce has to explain that he needs to buy a sixpenny ticket from the cashier for each dance with her. The music becomes muffled when he leaves the public areas of the palais to seek out Loman. He moves confidently from the public to the private spaces, with no knocking on doors, no waiting to be sure that he is not seen. This is as much his world as Loman's.

Joyce is presented as a working-class innocent, alone in London and lodging in Shepherd's Bush. She lives off her looks, waiting for a client to choose her rather than one of the other girls. She confides to Leo that the other girls call her 'Chastity Ann'. As her relationship with him deepens, she comes to accept his view of events to the extent of going to Scotland Yard to support his alibi. This makes her rapid conversion to the official view unconvincing when the inspector calls at her lodgings in his hunt for Leo.

Surprisingly for a film released in 1946, there is no reference to the war and no bomb damage is shown in the few location shots. The only indication that there has been a war is the air raid shelter where Leo hides Hatchett's body. Stylistically, the film is of its time in its debt to film noir. This is apparent when Leo attempts to rob a garage. Rather than tracking Leo, the

camera lingers on his shadow stretching across the brightly-lit entrance. The world of officialdom — of prison and of Scotland Yard — operates during the day. Leo's world — the world of crime and of the dance hall — belongs to the night, the brightly-lit interiors contrasting with the surrounding darkness.

Psychiatry came of age during the war, with a bastardised form often helping to prop up an ailing film plot, *Madonna of the Seven Moons* (dir. Arthur Crabtree, 1944) and *The October Man* (dir. Roy Baker, 1947) being notable British examples. The damage to Leo's wrists in *Appointment with Crime* is reminiscent in its effect to the striking of Francesca's hands in *The Seventh Veil* (dir. Compton Bennett, 1945), though more unusual in that the victim is working class. The myth that the poor led psychologically simple lives persisted in fiction as in life.[11] Though not overemphasised, the psychological effect of the damage to Leo's wrists is established in a series of montage shots early in the film as he lies sedated in hospital. It recurs at two key moments — his breakdown when Jonah Crackle threatens to crush his hands, and his final capture by the police when he is again trapped by his wrists. The opening shots hint that Leo has been earning his living by playing in a dance band, which makes his injuries all the more poignant. His repeated cry of 'My wrists!' at the end is genuinely chilling.

Lang's colleague, Noel Penn (Alan Wheatley), is described in the press book as 'an effeminate, simpering dandy'. His role in the story is as ambiguous as his character, which suggests that some of his scenes may have been cut. His voice betrays his public school background. He has a business relationship with Lang, insisting on a higher fee for arranging for Crackle to murder Loman on the grounds that 'expenses are increasing by leaps and bounds', as he sketches a glissando on Lang's grand piano. Yet he is at home in Lang's flat, particularly in the final scenes when the two men await Leo's return with the stolen diamond. While Lang is on edge, Penn is playing Tchaikovsky. Any explicitly sexual relationship between the two men would have fallen foul of the censor — there are no available records to indicate whether the BBFC demanded major changes to the script. Whether even this hint of homosexuality would have been acceptable if the characters were working class is questionable.

*Appointment with Crime* is ambiguous in its morality. The focus is on Leo. Because he is the victim of a double cross and because the characters he confronts are, with the exception of Joyce, uniformly unattractive, the audience's sympathy is with him.[12] He has his own moral standards based on group loyalty. What angers him is not so much that his colleagues abandoned him when the robbery went wrong, but that when he asked for help, Loman 'failed to redeem his pledge'. Leo emphasises this on their second encounter after his release from prison, when he has disarmed Loman and is twisting his wrists:

> LEO:     But what you did to me then was nothing to what you did to me a few days ago.
>
> LOMAN: I didn't do anything.
>
> LEO:     No, that's just it — you didn't do anything. But you told me I was washed up, that I couldn't do another job with these wrists of mine, that I bungled things. There was no room for me in your organisation. That hurt me more than anything else.

His values have little to do with the law. The amorality of those above him fuels his anger. Yet in holding to his own values, he shows a kind of integrity.

As Robert Murphy notes, critics' responses varied according to their attitudes to violence.[13] On the BFI's copy of the press book for *Appointment with Crime*, an unknown hand has written 'Slow by Hollywood standards, but what does it matter. This is London calling, & calling in her own authentic accent.' This seems a fair assessment. More succinct is the verdict on the Rank card: 'Saturday entertainment for strong stomachs'.

The film met with modest success in both Leeds and south-east Essex (appendix 1, table 8.1), including a week as main feature at ABC's Rivoli cinema in Southend-on-Sea. The south-east Essex independents were less sure of their audience's strong stomachs, judging by the meagre ten screen days the film managed. It was hardly family fare.

Leo may be seen as a thug and a murderer who is using Joyce. This is the way in which she comes to regard him. He may also be seen as a misused individual intent on making a new life, which is how he represents himself to her. Whether he really has any feelings for her is left unresolved. If Jephcott's girls saw the film, they had plenty to talk about the next morning.[14]

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There are no such moral ambiguities in *Dancing with Crime* (dir. John Paddy Carstairs,

1947). A demobbed Ted Peters (Richard Attenborough) works as a taxi driver. He meets an old

friend, Dave Robinson (Bill Rowbotham), who lives on the fringes of the law. Ted drives his

friend to Marsh Lane in south-east London — and later discovers Dave's body in the back of the

cab. Ted is dissatisfied with the speed of the police enquiry. He suspects that Dave was visiting a

dance hall in Marsh Lane. When Ted goes there with his girlfriend, Joy (Sheila Sim), she

encounters a show-business friend, Annette (an early character part for Diana Dors), who is

working as a dance hostess. In confirmation of his suspicions, Ted recognises another hostess,

Toni (Judy Kelly), from a photograph found in Dave's room. Joy takes a job alongside her friend

in the hope of discovering information. Toni becomes jealous when the master of ceremonies,

Paul Baker (Barry K. Barnes), pays Joy too much attention. The crooked manager, Gregory

(Barry Jones), poses as a police inspector to discover what Ted knows. Subsequently he arranges

for Ted to be killed and for the gun used to kill Dave to be planted on him, but Ted escapes. In

the dance hall, Joy overhears a plot to raid an Oxford Street store. She has time to telephone Ted

and the police before her true identity is revealed to the gang by Toni. Ted goes to the store, still

believing that Gregory is a policemen, only to be captured by him. When the police arrive,

Gregory escapes. He returns to the dance hall, taking Joy hostage, but Ted rescues her in the

final shootout.

*Dancing with Crime* is a variation on the well-worn theme of the amateur sleuth who rushes

in where policemen fear to tread. The audience can either groan at his foolishness, or bite their

nails as he imperils himself. The film is contemporary in the sense that the war is not long over

— Ted still wears his army uniform. The point is reinforced in the opening conversation between

Ted and Dave, in which they catch up on what they have been doing since serving together at

Tobruk. No location shots of bombsites are used to enhance the sense of period; the film contains

little location shooting of any kind.

Even in black and white, Dave's clothes proclaim that he is a spiv, if his truculent manner

does not give it away. None of the other men is quite so sharply dressed or wears such an

obtrusive tie. Spivery is about display as much as about how money is obtained. To function, it

requires at least a tacit acceptance by the public at large. Joy wants Dave to get a 'proper' job,

but she does not press the point and she shows no hostility towards him. When Ted and Dave are

alone, Dave makes his source of income clear:

> DAVE: Do you want to do yourself a bit of good?
>
> TED:　It all depends.
>
> DAVE: Well this thing I'm in now is money for jam.
>
> TED:　Yer? What is it?
>
> DAVE: This and that. Nice connections, though. Everything the rich man wants and can't get. No cheques, no questions, no coupons. And a very nice sideline in jewellery.

The spiv is of, but not necessarily for, the working class. His entrepreneurial activity is

predicated on scarcity and on satisfying the wants of those who can afford to circumvent the

system and who are likely to be his social superiors. Dave drifted into spivery after serving in the

forces. This was not always the case, as *Waterloo Road* makes clear (chapter nine). His chosen

path is attributable to the war. This is revealed when the police interview Ted and Joy about

Dave's death:

> JOY:　　　Dave was never hard up.
>
> TED:　　　He could think of more ways to earn a couple of bob.
>
> INSPECTOR: Civvy street seems pretty strange to some of the boys.
>
> JOY:　　　Yes — when they come out, they don't know what to do.
>
> TED:　　　Well, sir, it isn't only that. But the job he did before the war seems sort of small after six years.
>
> JOY:　　　Besides, it costs so much more to live now.
>
> INSPECTOR: And Robinson couldn't wait to save the half.
>
> TED:　　　No sir. Whatever old Dave wanted, he had to have. He usually got it, too.

Dave was the loveable rogue rather than a criminal. Even the inspector goes along with the

notion that he was led astray rather than being intrinsically bad.

Class relations in the film are implied rather than stated. In the extract above, the deference of the working-class Ted to the middle-class inspector is evident. Dave's wish to have whatever he wanted is seen as an example of the working-class preference for living for the present (or, from the middle-class perspective of the inspector, a desire for instant gratification). This fatal working-class character defect is something which he shares with Gwen in *Good Time Girl* (dir. David Macdonald, 1948) (chapter eleven).

Bill Rowbotham (better known by his later stage name of Bill Owen) sounds a convincingly working-class Londoner, with a tang of Shepherd's Bush rather than the flatter vowels of south London immortalised by Michael Caine. Richard Attenborough assumes an all-purpose working-class accent which at least contrasts with the middle-class accent and demeanour of the master of ceremonies at the dance hall. Though Joy, Ted and Dave were supposed to have been childhood friends, Sheila Sim's Joy is a more classless creation than the men, both in her speech and in her attitude to the middle-class inspector. In mitigation, Joy's career in show business may have given her a middle-class veneer. Toni and Annette, the other hostesses who figure in the story, show no signs of being anything other than middle class. If Joyce in *Appointment with Crime* has reservations about the status of her work, these girls do not share them. Nor does Ted, who positively encourages Joy to work at the dance hall.

As in *Appointment with Crime*, the dance hall is a den of crime involving everyone from the barman to the manager, with control being exerted downwards through the social system. As so often in films about criminal gangs, the dirty work is delegated to the working-class characters. Though the dance hall manager, Gregory, literally has life or death power over his gang members — Sniffy's penalty for failing to kill Ted is to be killed himself — this power does not extend to controlling the middle-class master of ceremonies, Paul Baker, who is nominally a subordinate. It is Baker who fires at Dave in the alley beside the dance hall, despite Gregory's pleading. No sanctions are applied in this case. The middle class do things differently.

*Dancing with Crime* had modest success in the sample Leeds cinemas (appendix 1, table 8.1). In south-east Essex it did considerably better, running for a week as main feature at the

Odeon, Southend-on-Sea. In the face of competition from American product and from more prestigious British productions, this was a considerable achievement.

On the evidence of what happened in south-east Essex, *Dancing with Crime* gained more exposure on the circuits than *Appointment with Crime*. Variations in the effectiveness of distribution are one explanation for differences in the fortunes of the two films. Casting is another. Neither film had box-office draws of the calibre of James Mason or Anna Neagle. Hartnell was an actor's actor. Attenborough was a rising star whose boyish good looks might have attracted female audiences — later in 1947, he took the lead in *Brighton Rock* (dir. John Boulting), with *The Guinea Pig* (dir. Roy Boulting) following in 1948. A third factor in the enigma of popularity is that one scenario may hold more attraction for audiences than another. Crucially, Ted is likeable, which cannot be said of Leo in *Dancing with Crime*. The relationship between Ted and Joy is uncomplicated in contrast to the bitter taste left by the relationship between Leo and Joyce. There was more for audiences to relate to, or want to relate to, in *Dancing with Crime,* particularly as Attenborough and Sim were husband and wife. The audience also knows a crucial fact denied to Ted, Joy and the police: Gregory, the manager of the dance hall, masterminds the criminal gang in which Dave was involved. This adds a frisson to the scenes in which Ted accepts Gregory as a policeman: when will the villain show his true colours? For all its simplicity of characterisation and plot, *Dancing with Crime* hooks an audience; *Appointment with Crime* makes them think. The puzzle is how both films gained equal exposure on the back streets of Leeds.

The third of the trio of dance-hall films is *Dance Hall* (dir. Charles Crichton, 1950).[15] This has received more critical attention than the other two, in part on the strength of its place in the Ealing canon, but also because of the range of female characters portrayed.[16]

The film follows the fortunes of a group of factory girls for whom the Chiswick Palais is the centre of their social life. The film's structure resembles a repressed version of Max Ophuls' *La Ronde,* released in the same year. Eve (Natasha Parry) has to decide between her dancing partner, the philandering Alec (Bonar Colleano), and the jealous and work-centred Phil (Donald

Houston). Georgie (Petula Clark) and her dancing partner, Peter (Douglas Barr), are intent on winning the dancing championship. Carol (Diana Dors) seeks the man of her dreams and finds him in the silent, hulking Mike (James Carney).

Eve and Phil marry. Eve tires of being left alone in the evenings and drifts back to the dance hall. Phil comes looking for her and picks a fight with Alec. Georgie and Peter fail to win the championship, but become engaged, as do Carol and Mike. Eve and Phil make up.

In *Dance Hall*, the benign side of the palais is portrayed. Dancing and the kaleidoscope of the dancers' relationships are at the core of the film. Most of the action takes place in the classless surroundings of the dance hall — a 1930s building in modernist style — with its incessant background of dance music. This is counterpointed by the girls' work in a factory and by the family-centred life in the tenement blocks where they live. In the factory, they are subservient to the machines, their conversation restricted by the noise and by the glares of the patrolling foreman. Overalls betray the girls' working-class status. Only Carol shows any hint of rebellion.

The tenement rooms are old-fashioned and overcrowded by comparison with the uncluttered, curving lines of the dance hall. Eve has a bed of her own, though she shares a room with her two sisters who sleep in an iron-framed double bed. If the flat has a bathroom, it is never shown. In this traditional, communal world, girls do the washing up and look after younger siblings. It is a world without formality. Carol greets Georgie's parents through the window beside the walkway — and enters the same way.

A telling incident is when Georgie's parents buy her a dress for the championship. The dance hall manager has already hired a far more lavish dress for the night, but Georgie cannot hurt her parents by telling them. Though the suitability of the dress is a generational issue, it is also a class issue: by implication, her parents have inappropriate standards of what is suitable and a level of income which is associated with restricted horizons.[17]

For Melinda Mash, '[the dance hall] is . . . the site through which the characters enter into new patterns of consumption. Yet the desire to escape from a world bounded by "austerity" is

tempered by another boundedness: the lack of means ever to fully escape."[18] Austerity is certainly

in evidence as Eve bewails Phil's profligacy in using up food which is on points. Yet Mash seems

to imply escape in a wider sense: the girls' escape from their economic circumstances, their class,

or their subordinate status as women. What they escape to is unclear. It might entail coming to

terms with new constraints, such as a demanding job or higher material expectations. *Dance Hall*

offers several escape routes, even if they are not innovative. Eve can achieve middle-class status

through her marriage to the aero engineer, Phil. Georgie has her talent as a dancer; marriage may

constrain or liberate her. Carol has her sexuality. The fourth girl, Mary (Jane Hylton), who

harbours a hopeless love for Phil, is the only member of the quartet with no obvious means to

change her life, unless rationality is seen as a means of advancement. She seems destined to be

everyone's auntie, forever dispensing sensible advice as she matures into a Flora Robson figure.

A weakness of the film is the lack of consistency in its class images. Aside from Georgie,

there is little attempt to anchor the girls in their class by exploring their home lives. Gladys

Henson as Georgie's mother was typecast as the working-class mum, forever accepting whatever

life threw at her. Among the girls, only Diana Dors' insouciance is convincingly working class.

As so often in British films of the period, no attempt is made to adopt working-class speech

idioms; both Petula Clark and Natasha Parry sound resolutely middle class.[19]

Alec is the disruptive character in what might otherwise be a cosy suburban drama. He

brings American ways and American sexuality to complement the exoticism of the palais. He is

smartly dressed and independent — a man who is sure of himself. He can take Eve back to his

room in his car and dance with her as they talk of their feelings — something which Phil would

hesitate to do. Though Alec has contacts in the black market — he supplies the fish for Phil's

breakfast — he is a man for the 1950s, more intent on enjoyment than on display and making

money. The spiv of the austerity years, who supplied what the conventional economy failed to

supply, was slipping into history.

The release of *Dance Hall* late in the period under review means that its progress in the

sample areas cannot be charted with any accuracy. It was never shown in the sample Leeds

cinemas by the end of 1950. It ran for a week at the Gaumont, Southend-on-Sea, where it was successful enough to be brought back for a second week at the nearby Ritz cinema owned by Rank. At the Gaumont, Sheffield, the film was 'Well received by [the] younger generation many of whom were disappointed that better use was [not] made of the Bands.'[20] It ranked 132nd out of 206 first features for which data is available.

Segregation by seat price meant that the cinema was not classless. No such distinctions applied in the dance hall. This classless arena might have been exploited in film with a Romeo and Juliet inspired plot involving a boy and girl from different social backgrounds. For an era when social differences were supposed to be dissolving, this theme received scant attention. Instead, the superficial allure of the dance hall was contrasted with the criminal activities which underpinned it. While working-class innocents were seduced by the glamour, working-class villains carried out crimes and shouldered the risks. Middle-class figures spanned both worlds, exercising control and taking the profits. *Dance Hall* does at least acknowledge that not all dance hall managers ran criminal gangs, even if it fails to portray working-class life in any realistic sense.

The decline of the palais was to mirror that of the cinema and the music hall. *Dance Hall* celebrates its heyday. In the film's attempt to eavesdrop on ordinary people rather than to resolve a story, it is possible to discern elements of the working-class soap opera which were to be developed on television in *Coronation Street* (Granada, 1960 — ). The difference a decade made was that by 1960, working-class characters could be presented without self-consciousness.

**Notes**

1. Mark Abrams, 'Britain off duty', *Contact (World off duty* issue) 1947, no.6, 2.

2. Calculated from British Film Producers' Association, 'The film industry statistical digest', no.1, June 1954, 9.

3. Abrams, op.cit. (ch.13, n.1) 2.
    In a survey of the leisure interests of 1,500 ATS recruits, the cinema received 340 mentions

compared with 547 for dancing. J.W. Reeves and Patrick Slater, 'Age and intelligence in relation to leisure interests', *Occupational Psychology,* July 1947, vol.21, no.3, table 1. In was also the most popular activity among 6,000 girls belonging to clubs. J. Macalister Brew, *Club girls and their interests,* London: National Association of Girls' Clubs and Mixed Clubs, [1946], 49-50.

Kesterton's survey of 300 adolescents found that dancing was popular with 45 per cent of girls, but only 10 per cent of boys. Barbara Kesterton, 'The social and emotional effects of recreational film on adolescents of 13 and 14 years of age in the West Bromwich area', PhD thesis, University of Birmingham, 1948, table 26. For similar findings, see University of Bristol, *The welfare of youth: a city survey,* Bristol: University of Bristol, 1945, 20-2. However, the survey of 200 adolescents in Stockton failed to confirm this gender disparity. Stockton-on-Tees Youth Council, *The needs of youth in Stockton-on-Tees,* Stockton-on-Tees: Stockton-on-Tees Youth Council, [1946], 6.Assuming that Kesterton's West Bromwich figures and those from Bristol are correct, girls must have danced with each other, or with older male adolescents. The former seems more likely, or parental opposition would have been evident.

Age was an equally important determinant of attendance at dances. At Tynemouth, there was an increased interest in dancing at fifteen. Tynemouth Youth Council, *Tynemouth youth survey report,* Newcastle-upon Tyne: Tynemouth Youth Council, [1947],18.

4. In Wilfrid Harper's wartime study made in industrial Lancashire and based on 721 diaries and 892 questionnaires, there was little difference in weekday dancing between grammar school pupils and other groups; but on Saturdays, elementary school pupils and working adolescents spent four times as much time in dancing as their grammar school colleagues. Again, girls showed more enthusiasm than boys. Wilfrid Harper, 'The leisure activities of adolescents. An investigation of the psychological function of the various leisure activities of adolescents in a particular town with some special references to the cinema and reading', MA thesis, Victoria University of Manchester, September 1942, tables 1 to 10.

5. B. Seebohm Rowntree and G.R. Lavers, *English life and leisure: a social study,* London: Longmans, Green, 1951, 281.

6. In films made on lower budgets, the night club performed a similar function as a front for more dubious activities. It just required fewer extras. See Terence Davies, 'Guilty pleasures', *Film Comment,* January/February 1996, vol.32, 33, on *The Blue Parrot* (dir. John Harlow, 1953).

7. Press book for *Appointment with Crime* (BFI Library).

8. The BFI's SIFT database contains no information on Harlow. The only reference work to mention him reveals that he was born in 1896 and worked as a music hall artist before turning to films. Leslie Halliwell, *Halliwell's filmgoer's and video viewer's companion,* 9th edn. London: Grafton Books, 1988, 322-3.

9. Aftercare is limited to the governor's comment that 'If you should require assistance, you may apply to the Discharged Prisoners' Aid Society. It's in the phone book.'

10. An unknown hand has written in the BFI's copy of the press book that this is a cliché.

11. The intriguing history of class bias in psychiatry cannot be pursued here. What is evident is that those who had money and could articulate their problems were treated rather differently from the herd. Freud treated those who could pay, which meant that all but the most florid psychiatric problems among the poor were ignored. During the First World War, officers such as Siegfried Sassoon could be treated, while those in the ranks were likely to be shot for taking a similar ideological position. Psychiatric services under the Poor Law system were almost non-existent.

Thomas Hardy and D.H. Lawrence were probably the first major British writers to attribute psychological complexity to the working class. Elsewhere, to extrapolate Durgnat's observation (page 220), in books and plays as much as in films, the poor were subservient, feckless or humorous.

12. The synopsis in the press book seems less sympathetic towards Leo than the film itself. In the film, the scene in which Lang is killed emphasises Lang's double cross of Leo; according to the press book, '. . . the greed of the criminal comes to the fore and he [Leo] tries to extract more money from Lang.'

13. Robert Murphy, *Realism and tinsel: cinema and society 1939-49*, London: Routledge, 1992, 152.

14. 'They not only chat about last night's picture at work but will discuss it at a deeper level with a particular and intimate friend. Two girls at camp retold each other the story of *The Sullivans*. Although they normally never talk about ideas they fumbled to discover the values that this picture had for them.' Pearl Jephcott, *Rising twenty: notes on some ordinary girls*, London: Faber, 1948, 156.

15. A 1941 American film of the same name was in circulation in the late 1940s. Confusingly, the American film was screened in the spring of 1950 at the New Vic, Southend-on-Sea, probably to cash in on the publicity for the forthcoming British release.

16. e.g. Melinda Mash, 'Stepping out or out of step? Austerity, affluence and femininity in two post-war films', in Christine Gledhill and Gillian Swanson (eds.) *Nationalising femininity*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996, 257-63.

17. Clothes in *Dance Hall* are considered in more detail in Pat Kirkham, 'Dress, dance, dreams and fantasy: fashion and fantasy in *Dance Hall'*, *Journal of Design History*, 1995, vol.8, no.3, 195-214.

18. ibid. 260.

19. The same point as been made elsewhere e.g. Peter Stead, *Film and the working class: the feature film in British and American history*, London: Routledge, 1991, 164. It is not completely true, as Stead suggests, that this was only perceived by later critics — the Rank film card notes the unreality of the leading characters.

20. Weekly return for Gaumont, Sheffield, 25 August 1950. The comment is surprising given the number of times the action is held up for musical numbers, though complainants may have been trying to indicate that they wanted better integration.

# CHAPTER FOURTEEN

## The guns fall silent: recollections of war

Though war provided a backdrop to many feature films made in Britain during the war years, the topic was skirted by film-makers in the late 1940s. By Gifford's classification, only twenty war films appeared among almost five hundred British features released between 1945 and 1950 (appendix 1, table 5.16). Of these, twelve were released between 1945 and 1948. Eight of the twelve concern spies and resistance fighters, as though there was a feeling in some quarters that now was time for hidden stories to be revealed. These yield little of interest from a class perspective. Among them is *Against the Wind* (dir. Charles Crichton, 1948), a routine resistance story which proved a commercial failure.[1] It was scripted by T.E.B. Clarke, who wrote in 1974 that it should have come out five to ten years later.[2] This hindsight view illustrates the shift in taste which took place over a relatively short period. By the 1950s, war was back in vogue as a subject for films. Myths were being reinforced, or remade for a new generation. Though this sea change was apparent by 1949, the cut-off date of 1950 means that the fortunes of the new generation of war films cannot be followed with any accuracy in the sample cinemas.

Chronologically, *The Way to the Stars* (dir. Anthony Asquith, 1945) stands apart from other war films of the late 1940s.[3] It was shot before the war ended, so that an opening sequence of a deserted airfield had to be added to prevent the film from seeming dated on its first release.[4] In mood and style, it is the last of the wartime films about war rather than the first of the peacetime treatments of the subject.

A pilot, David Archdale (Michael Redgrave), marries Toddy Todd (Rosamund John), who runs the hotel in Shepley, close to the base. David is killed. A novice pilot, Peter Renrose (John Mills), is drawn to Iris Winterton (Renee Asherson), who is staying in the hotel with her domineering aunt (Joyce Carey), but the uncertainties of wartime make him wary of embarking

on a relationship. When the station is taken over by the American air force, Toddy becomes friendly with Johnny Hollis (Douglass Montgomery), an American pilot. He is killed while attempting to crash land his bomber. When Iris Winterton has a row with her aunt and decides to leave, Toddy urges Peter Penrose not to hesitate any longer. He proposes to Iris and she accepts.

The most obvious social distinction in the film is between officers and other ranks. Pilots are assumed to be officers, and officers are middle class or upper class; other ranks are working class. The schoolmaster, Penrose, soon takes on the speech of the languid, upper-class David Archdale, with whom he shares a room. Working-class characters, are peripheral, reflecting Rattigan's preference for middle-class drama. The comfortably-off Mr Palmer (who might be middle class if he were not played by Stanley Holloway) and the ever-pessimistic fitter are there to provide light relief. In this, the film resembles *Brief Encounter* (dir. David Lean, 1945), which was scripted by that other upholder of middle-class values, Noel Coward.

In *The Way to the Stars*, Peter Penrose's gunner, Nobby Clarke (Bill Rowbotham), is the only working-class character to be treated at all seriously. On the base, he shares a cigarette with Penrose; in the hotel, the two men drink together — the upper-class David Archdale gives them a lift there. In the tradition of war films, social distinctions based largely on accent are apparent, but these are forgotten in the face of a common enemy. Instead, other distinctions emerge — between experienced and inexperienced pilots, between ground crews and operational crews and between Americans and British fliers. These differences can assume greater significance than class.

Children are important to the film. Toddy and David have a child. This gives Johnny Hollis and Toddy a common interest, allowing Johnny to talk about his own family. As local children in the church hall wait for Johnny to entertain them, it falls to one of his crew to explain that Johnny cannot be there. Implicit throughout is the sense that hope is invested in the next generation.

*The Way to the Stars* was the British feature scoring the greatest number of screen days over the period 1945 to 1950 both in the sample Leeds cinemas and in the circuit cinemas of

south-east Essex (appendix 1, tables 6.4, 6.6, and 8.1). The film's success has already been noted (pages 194-5). This popularity with audiences seems to have been widespread.[5] It was generally endorsed by the critics, though the Robsons detected a pathological obsession with lavatories which eluded everybody else.[6] Subsequent critical interest in the film has been less enthusiastic. Raymond Durgnat sees it as a 'poignant lightweight', while for Charles Drazin, the joins between Rattigan's two stage plays which formed the basis of the script are too obvious.[7] Feminist critics have emphasised the passive role of women.[8] For Sue Harper,

> This ethic [of impassivity], though it has been "argued up" into a national characteristic by male historians and critics, is based on weakness rather than strength: there is nothing inherently praiseworthy about emotional inexpressivity. But *The Way to the Stars* mounts a forcible argument in favour of such repression, and the performance of the actresses is probably a testament to their compliance in the face of forceful direction.[9]

Nor is there anything inherently praiseworthy about overt emotional expressivity. Deploring its absence seems ahistorical. Whatever its later connotations, emotional reticence has to be accepted as a facet of British wartime films. Nor is inexpressiveness necessarily the same as reticence. If critics have accepted that the performances are neither lifeless nor stolid, then emotional responses, however muted, are being successfully conveyed.

Why emotional reticence should be deemed an English characteristic is a separate question. There is a case for saying that it distinguishes the upper middle and upper classes. It implies exercising a degree of self-control which is also a hallmark of deferred gratification. Public school stories rely on it, as *The Guinea Pig* demonstrates (chapter ten). From an upper-class viewpoint, the working class cannot exercise control, or they would have saved enough and studied enough to achieve (lower) middle-class status. The converse of this lack of control is that the working class can both express their emotions more easily and enjoy themselves uninhibitedly. Such proletarian amusements as the music hall and the fun fair are not noted for emotional reticence; nor were the films of George Formby and Frank Randle.

The lack of emphasis on class in *The Way to the Stars* means that a class perspective gives little clue as to why the film struck a chord with so many audiences, including those in working-class Leeds. Paradoxically, the revelation of emotions in the film provides a key to understanding

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its popularity, notwithstanding Harper's accusation of emotional inexpressivity. Although by 1945 there was little taste for fighting (which is never shown in the film), audiences could respond to the film's psychological reality in a way which transcended class. Every member of the audience had been touched by war. There was too much time in which to contemplate the fate of a loved one who might be on the other side of the world. Emotions could be rehearsed to the point where bad news no longer came as a surprise. This is exhausted emotion rather than repressed emotion. It is the sense of getting on with things because there is no alternative which the film captures, giving audiences the opportunity to empathise with the characters' ways of coping. The film functions as emotional catalyst. As C.A. Lejeune put it, 'Again and again the audience is left to resolve its own tensions: an operation that is painful, unusual and good for the soul.'[10]

Drazin eloquently sums up Puffin Asquith's acceptance of his failure as a musician: 'To know the sublime, yet to live without it — Puffin had learnt this lesson from an early age.' This serves as a key to Toddy's character: she knows the sublime, yet she has to live without it when her husband and then Johnny join the litany of the missing and the dead which stalks the film. The contrast is with Peter Penrose, who survives his missions (because he is cautious as a flier?) and who takes no emotional risks. Toddy has the conviction to persuade him that his chosen course is wrong. The overt display of emotion when he proposes to Iris is all the more powerful for the careful buildup. Writer, director and actors judge the pace to perfection.[11]

An aspect of service life which appeals to film-makers and which is exemplified in *The Way to the Stars* is the opportunity to bring together a disparate group of men. A variant of this is the prison camp movie. The dilemma for film-makers is that given a camp full of male prisoners, the result is apt to be a man's film in the same way as the western. One way of overcoming this difficulty is presented in *The Captive Heart* (dir. Basil Dearden, 1946). The film begins with a series of flashbacks which establish the men's civilian lives. By alternating the action between the families they have left behind and life in the camp, together with the use of letters, two worlds are shown to the audience. When the men eventually return home, the two worlds come together.

The film focuses on the home lives of five men. Dai Evans (Mervyn Johns) and Corporal Horsfall (Jack Warner) represent the working classes. In civilian life, they work together as builders. Dai's wife dies in childbirth while he is away; when he returns home, his daughter is four years old and is being looked after by Mrs Horsfall. David Lennox (Gordon Jackson) loses his sight in action. He does not reveal this to his fiancée, Elspeth, when he writes to break off their engagement. When he is repatriated, she is waiting for him, having been told of his blindness by his mother. Pianist Stephen Hartley (Derek Bond) receives a letter telling him that his wife is having an affair. When he gets back, he discovers that the letter was malicious.

The story given most attention is that of Karel Hasek (Michael Redgrave), who has escaped from a concentration camp by assuming the identity of the dead Captain Mitchell. To avoid arousing suspicion among the camp authorities, Hasek has to keep up a correspondence with Mitchell's wife. In doing so, he falls in love with her, creating problems when he is repatriated.

The military hierarchy is maintained by camp inmates, though conditions are the same for officers and men. In spite of the maintenance of distinctions of rank, an emphasis on pulling together is apparent. Dai leads the choral singing, that symbol of unity which finds its way into *The Blue Lamp* (chapter eight). Dissident figures are assimilated into the community of the camp. It is the burglar, Matthews (Jimmy Hanley), who risks his life so that Hasek can escape detection by the German authorities. Yet changes are coming. As the senior officer, Major Ossy Dalrymple (Basil Radford), admits, 'I'm a social parasite — the sort we're fighting to get rid of.'

Dearden seems happier with the middle-class characters and their emotional turmoils than with their working-class colleagues. Jack Warner reprises his stalwart cockney, his wife on this occasion being Gladys Henson. All that can be said of their relationship is that it is taken up where it left off. Di is given equally cursory treatment, except that he leaves a loving wife and comes home to a loving daughter. One missed opportunity is to explore how a parent and child who have been kept apart by the war negotiate their relationship. This topic was barely touched by the cinema until *The Divided Heart* (dir. Charles Crichton, 1954). The most interesting working-class character in *The Captive Heart* is the burglar, Matthews, who declares early on

that 'only suckers work'. His life prior to the war is not explored, though after being reformed by his prison camp experiences, he is offered work with Di and Corporal Horsfall in their building partnership as a sign of his integration into society.

Pat Kirkham and Janet Thumim detect a feminising effect of camp life on the men.[12] This assumes that the gender roles of the characters are distinct and underwent change in the camp — something which is difficult to demonstrate without knowing more about the life of the men prior to their incarceration. Did they help with the housework or push the pram? Any feminising effect needs to be demonstrated by its applicability to particular scenes and characters. If it is apparent, some differential effects might be expected between classes, with working-class characters clinging determinedly to traditional roles. This is hard to find.

Nationally, the film was a commercial success.[13] This was echoed in south-east Essex, but not in the sample Leeds cinemas (appendix 1, table 8.1). This might be a consequence of how the film was distributed, though it may also be indicative of regional or class differences. Alan Burton emphasises the film's reliance on Ealing's stock pattern of realism and on stock character types.[14] These may have reduced interest in the film among audiences who found little to relate to in Ealing's notion of working-class life. *The Captive Heart* is an unconventional story given a conventional treatment.

A variant on the prison camp theme is *The Hasty Heart* (dir. Vincent Sherman, 1949), set in a military hospital in Burma. The enemy in this case is disease, with the prickly Scotsman, Lachlan McLachlan (Richard Todd), coming to accept the friendship of the other men in his hut when he realises that he is dying. His companions are assorted nationals, including Yank (Ronald Reagan), Kiwi and Digger. The absence of names emphasises the characters' symbolic status. Though the dialogue implies that Lachlan is working class — his impoverished background is emphasised — his class is unimportant compared to his Scottishness. Inevitably, the Englishman in the group is called Tommy. This cockney role seems made for Jack Warner, but this was an ABPC film and Warner was a Rank man. His substitute was Howard Marion Crawford, playing against type — Crawford's speciality was blustering, upper-class establishment characters. The

other patient in the hut is the Negro, Blossom (Orlando Martins), though as he cannot speak English, his involvement in the story is limited. In practice, the film is a three-hander between Lachlan, Yank and Sister Margaret (Patricia Neal), with the other characters assuming subsidiary roles. There are personality clashes aplenty, but the dimensions of class and nationalism are never really exploited.

For his performance, Todd was voted best actor in the 1950 *Picturegoer* and *Daily Mail* polls, with *The Hasty Heart* being voted best film in the latter (see appendix 1, table 6.10, and pages a 86-8). This degree of success is surprising given that the leading character, Lachlan, is so unsympathetic, the film boasts no major stars (Todd's previous work was in the theatre) and its origins as a stage play are all too obvious. The film achieved moderate exposure in the sample Leeds cinemas and in south-east Essex (appendix 1, table 8.1).

The emotional subtlety of *The Way to the Stars* becomes apparent when comparison is made with *They Were Not Divided* (dir. Terence Young, 1950). This film came at the beginning of the 1950s boom in war films which had its emphasis on fighting rather than feelings. *They Were Not Divided* follows men from initial training to action in an armoured division of the Welsh Guards. Two who become officers and stay in the same unit are upper middle-class Philip (Edward Underdown) and the American, David (Ralph Clanton). The film concentrates on their stories. After D Day, their unit pushes through France. The two men are killed while on reconnaissance in the Ardennes.

Turning civilians into fighters had already been used as the scenario of another Two Cities film, *The Way Ahead* (dir. Carol Reed, 1944). *They Were Not Divided* adds nothing new to the subject. Initial training takes up the first third of the film, the rest being devoted to the progress of the tanks through France. Although rank is not stressed, particularly among the Americans, the distinction between officers and men is clear on the British side. As in *The Way to the Stars,* other distinctions become apparent: between Americans and British, and between Welsh and Scots. As usual, the Welsh contingent emphasises its solidarity with choral singing.

The film achieves a documentary feel by the use of actuality footage and by the jerky

camerawork during the scenes involving the tanks. A third factor is the avoidance of stars, which obviates the problem of sustaining credibility when a familiar face appears. At the same time, verisimilitude creates an interesting dilemma. Whether intentionally or unintentionally, the dialogue among the officers takes on the stilted quality familiar from wartime documentaries which used amateur actors. This is notable in the speech of the divisional commander, Major Bushy Noble (Michael Trubshawe). The sense of watching a documentary is enhanced, but realism is left behind.

Changes are detectable from films about fighting which were produced during the war. Burying the dead did not figure in the earlier films. The characters also have licence to question the rationale for war, though the opportunities come rarely. One is a brief home visit by Philip shortly before his death, when he explains to his wife:

> You get such an odd, sort of superficial slant on the war, being in an armoured division. You're always moving over places and people. They're the ones who really see and feel the war — the people who are fought over. Perhaps in the infantry it's different. Maybe their feelings are more profound about it all. They have a worse time than we do. But then, you see, the things that you remember are all the wonderful, funny things that happened, not any of the horrors and unhappy things at all. I think that's how wars occur over and over again: because of what you don't remember.

As in *The Way to the Stars*, class is not a dominant issue, though the film follows the convention that officers are upper or upper middle class. Any possibilities opened up by *Waterloo Road* for exploring the motivations of working-class soldiers were forgotten. The assumption is that only officers lead interesting emotional lives. But because the emphasis on fighting means that the private lives of Philip and David are so little explored, their deaths are less moving than those of the fliers in *The Way to the Stars*. Instead, Anglo-American unity is stressed, recalling wartime films from *Mrs Miniver* (dir. William Wyler, US release 1942) to *A Canterbury Tale* (dirs Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger, 1944) and *Journey Together* (dir. John Boulting, 1945). In the final frames, miniatures of the Stars and Stripes and the Union Jack planted on the heroes' snow-covered graves lean together. With the Cold War and a conflict looming in Korea, the alliance needed reinforcing.

*They Were Not Divided* was released in February 1950. On 25 June 1950, North Korean

forces crossed the 38th Parallel. The fact that the film was never shown in south-east Essex or in the sample Leeds cinemas by the end of the year suggests that it was overtaken by events. This was not the moment for films about fighting which ended with the leading characters being killed. That comes when film-makers are confident of being on the winning side.

The same year, 1950, saw the release of *The Wooden Horse* (dir. Jack Lee). With its emphasis on the mechanics of escape, this became a prototype for prison camp films from *The Colditz Story* (dir. Guy Hamilton, 1954) to *Escape to Victory* (dir. John Huston, US release 1981). There is no place for women in *The Wooden Horse*, nor for working-class characters. The story is set in a camp for RAF prisoners-of-war. Following the convention that only the middle and upper classes became pilots, these populate the camp. Presumably working-class aircrew were sent elsewhere. The result is that the film sometimes resembles a public school story, with the escape attempt dwindling into a series of jolly japes in the dorm. Landy rightly contrasts this with the populist orientation of war films made during the war.[15]

Whatever cavils might be made, the film was a box-office success.[16] Although it had reached second-run cinemas in south-east Essex by the end of 1950, it had not appeared in the sample Leeds cinemas (appendix 1, table 8.1).

Class has limited usefulness as a means of analysing war films made in the aftermath of the Second World War. Some class-related conventions are observed by the makers, but these are implicit — working-class commissioned officers are never portrayed, because this would disrupt the social hierarchy. War is presented as a middle-class affair, in which the working class play a supporting role, yet explicit class distinctions between officers and men are not apparent. The socially divided world of *In Which We Serve* (dirs Noel Coward and David Lean, 1942) seems far away. Coward's failure to perceive the social changes is again apparent in his script for *This Happy Breed* (dir. David Lean, 1944), which is set resolutely in the past. This failure of vision is chronicled by Andrew Higson, although he fails to indict Lean on the same charge.[17]

By the 1950s, different social attitudes prevailed. National service was finding its way into films like *Private's Progress* (dir. John Boulting, 1956) and *Carry on Sergeant* (dir. Gerald

Thomas, 1958). This enforced melding of the classes broke down the traditional equivalence of 'other ranks' with 'working class', while service life was treated with a degree of ridicule which would have been unthinkable a few years earlier. Films which looked back to the heroics of the war, notably *The Dam Busters* (dir. Michael Anderson, 1954), maintained implicit social distinctions, but were not reactionary in their social attitudes in the same way as the films scripted by Coward.

War films provide a barometer of social change, not in an obvious sense of mirroring contemporary attitudes, but by the tension between attitudes held when the film is made and those thought to be held during the Second World War. Assumptions about the latter are inevitably coloured by films made during and after the war. National servicemen learned how soldiers should behave by watching war films.[18] In this way, myths are not only sustained, but evolve incestuously, the stilted speech of the officers in *They Were Not Divided* being a case in point. The more years which elapse since the making of the film, the more difficult it becomes to disentangle the strands of myth and reality.

## Notes

1. See ch.8, n.10. Of the 206 first features screened at the Gaumont, Sheffield, for which data is available, *Against the Wind* ranked 161st.

2. T.E.B. Clarke, *This is where I came in,* London: Joseph, 1974, 157-8.

3. As Robert Murphy notes, the film has similarities in its subject matter with *I Live in Grosvenor Square* (dir. Herbert Wilcox, 1945). Robert Murphy, *Realism and tinsel: cinema and society in Britain 1939-49,* London: Routledge, 1992, 113.

4. Charles Drazin, *The finest years: British cinema of the 1940s,* London: Deutsch, 1998, 194; Rosamund John in Brian McFarlane, *Sixty voices: celebrities recall the golden age of British cinema,* London: BFI, 1992, 142.

5. *The Way to the Stars* was named the most outstanding film by 73 per cent of respondents to the Bernstein Film Questionnaire, putting it above the other 35 films listed, British and American. Sidney Bernstein, *The Bernstein film questionnaire 1946-7,* London: [Granada Theatres], 1947, 17. It also won the Daily Mail National Film Award for 1946 (see page a 72). The managing director of Raymond Stross Theatres (a circuit of nine cinemas based in Norfolk, but with outposts in Belfast and Wales) named it as one of the top British successes. *The Cinema,* 1 January 1947, 59. This view was echoed elsewhere in the trade press: the film had the

unique distinction of being reissued before it had completed its initial bookings. *Showmen's Trade Review*, 18 January 1947, 83.

6. C.A. Lejeune's favourable review is typical of critical responses. C.A. Lejeune, *Chestnuts in her lap 1936-1946*, London: Phoenix House, 1947, 150-2. By 1951, *The Way to the Stars* was included in a list of films everyone should see. Andrew Buchanan, *Going to the cinema*, 2nd edn, London: Phoenix House, 1951. For the Robsons' views, see E.W. and M.M. Robson, *The world is my cinema*, London: Sidneyan Society, 1947, 115-16.

7. Raymond Durgnat, *A mirror for England: British movies from austerity to affluence*, London: Faber, 1970, 14; Drazin, op.cit. (ch.14, n.4) 194.

8. e.g. Antonia Lant, *Blackout: reinventing women for wartime British cinema*, Princeton, NJ, and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 1991, 53-7; Marcia Landy, *British genres: cinema and society 1930-1960*, Princeton, NJ, and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 1991, 171.

9. Sue Harper, 'The years of total war: propaganda and entertainment', in Christine Gledhill and Gillian Swanson (eds.) *Nationalising femininity*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996, 201.

10. *Observer*, 10 June 1945. Cited in Murphy, op.cit. (ch.14, n.3) 71.

11. *The Way to the Stars* gives the lie to David Thomson's bilious assessment of Asquith as 'a dull journeyman supervisor of the transfer of proven theatrical properties'. David Thomson, *A biographical dictionary of film*, rev.edn., London: Deutsch, 1994, 27.

12. Pat Kirkham and Janet Thumim, 'Men at work: Dearden and gender', in Alan Burton, Tim O'Sullivan and Paul Wells (eds.) *Liberal directions: Basil Dearden and postwar British film culture*, Trowbridge, Wilts.: Flicks Books, 1997, 97.

13. *The Captive Heart* came third in popularity among the 36 films included in the Bernstein questionnaire, with 56 per cent of respondents rating it as 'outstanding' and 35 per cent as 'good'. Bernstein, op.cit. (ch.14, n.5) 17. It came eighth in the *Daily Express* public opinion poll for the best films of 1946. *The Cinema*, 5 March 1947, 57.

14. Alan Burton, 'Love in a cold climate: critics, film makers and the British cinema of quality — the case of *The Captive Heart*', in Burton et al. (eds.) op.cit. (ch.14, n.12) 119.

15. Landy, op.cit. (ch.14, n.8) 174.

16. Durgnat, op.cit. (ch.14, n.7) 125; Jack Lee in Brian McFarlane, *Sixty voices: celebrities recall the golden age of British cinema*, London: BFI, 1992, 158.

17. Andrew Higson, *Waving the flag*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, Clarendon Press, 1995, 246-58.

18. Macdonald Hastings, *Night Waves*, BBC Radio 3, 14 April 2000. Macdonald was himself called up for national service.

# CHAPTER FIFTEEN

## The working class in British films of the forties

The films considered have contemporary or near-contemporary settings and, with the exception of those with wartime themes, have working-class characters in leading roles. These glimpses of class perceptions are filtered through the sensibilities of film-makers, but this is no worse than the distortions of memory or the bias of written sources. Providing film is set beside other sources and checked against them, it can yield unique insights.

The class model may not always be the most appropriate means of analysis. War films do not easily fit within its parameters. Films with historical settings present particular problems in disentangling the values and attitudes of the period being portrayed, those derived from the novel which often provides the source and those current when the film is made. Other films including *The Third Man* (dir. Carol Reed, 1949) have little to say about class. In the latter case, teasing out every last class nuance is possible, but not necessarily useful.

The characteristics outlined in chapter seven provide a way of grouping the conclusions.

*(i) Place in the authority structure.* Although workers know their place, authority can be challenged *(Chance of a Lifetime*, dir. Bernard Miles, 1950), infiltrated (*Vote for Huggett*, dir. Ken Annakin, 1949) or guyed (any film involving Old Mother Riley or Frank Randle). Infiltration seems more successful than challenge, though at no time is the authority structure seriously threatened. Where workers do achieve a better class position, it is through individual effort, as in *Blue Scar* (dir. Jill Craigie, 1949), rather than through collective effort. Nor is it without cost.

In films of service life, where overt authority structures are evident, differences in rank are often not stressed once individuals are socialised into the institution by initial training, though

they are implicit in the convention that officers are upper or middle class. *They Were Not Divided* (dir. Terence Young, 1950) illustrates this. The authority of rank is stressed more explicitly in the police force, notably in *The Blue Lamp* (dir. Basil Dearden, 1950), than in the armed services, as though the latter have been tested and transformed by war, while the police force is little changed since the 1930s.

(ii) *Cohesion/fragmentation within the working class.* There is little sign of a coherent working-class community in any of the films. Landladies often signify the respectable working class, whose world is disrupted by such rougher elements as Gwen in *Good Time Girl* (dir. David Macdonald, 1949). Crime fragments the community in *The Blue Lamp,* with police, spivs, 'real' criminals and the rough working-class pursuing separate agendas. Yet the final scenes of the film tell another story. A serious crime such as murder can override differences, encouraging cohesion, This process is also seen at work in *London Belongs to* Me (dir. Sidney Gilliat, 1948). A *Boy, a Girl and a Bike* (dir. Ralph Smart, 1949) comes nearest to presenting a coherent community interest — and that in a small town with a dominant industry which harks back to an earlier stage of industrial development.

*(iii) Internalised values.* Nationalisation makes little difference to the attitudes of management or workers in *Blue Scar.* Elsewhere, attitudes are changing. This applies particularly to the younger generation where there is a stress on education in *Waterfront* (dir. Michael Anderson, 1950) and *Floodtide* (dir. Frederick Wilson, 1949) as much as in *The Guinea Pig* (dir. Roy Boulting, 1948). It is also noticeable in the initiative of the children making election posters for Joe Huggett in *Vote for Huggett.* In inter-war days, activities of this kind would have been the province of upper middle-class children such as Arthur Ransome's characters, rather than children from the upper working class or lower middle class. The Huggett films show other social changes. It is difficult to imagine Joe Huggett contemplating emigration without his wartime experience of life abroad. Even taking his family to a holiday camp marks a break with

tradition. The contrast between Joe and the feckless father in *Waterfront* shows how the working-class father had evolved. There is also the assumption in the Huggett films that a girl can have a good education and a career — something which was unusual in working-class homes a generation earlier. Surviving from the earlier generation is the working-class mother whose life is bounded by the home — that most conservative of figures who appears in *Waterloo Road* (dir. Sidney Gilliat, 1945) and *Once a Jolly Swagman* (dir. Jack Lee, 1948), as well as the Huggett films. Yet her qualities should be acknowledged, notably her devotion to her family. Nor can she hold back the social changes which her children are embracing.

Not unexpectedly after the war, liberty was more than an abstract ideal. Working-class characters such as Joe Huggett had been liberated — a process which the education system might have achieved along with other social reforms, but which was accelerated by the war. The paradox was that in parallel with this new freedom came the burden of an expanded bureaucracy. There were more rules for the unwary to infringe, as Joe Huggett discovered when he built his garage without planning permission.

*(iv) The built environment.* The homes of the Huggetts and of Frank Randle in *Home Sweet Home* (dir. John E. Blakeley, 1945) are a product of the speculative building boom which created inter-war suburbia. Jim and Tillie in *Waterloo Road* aspire to this 'housing class', even if they end the film still sharing Jim's parental home. The post-war housing shortage means that Sam and Susie in *A Boy, a Girl and a Bike* are willing to take whatever is available.

Internally, respectable working-class homes are often signified by their outdatedness and lack of space rather than by their obvious impoverishment. Limited resources are implicit: furniture cannot be replaced and a larger home cannot be bought. This means that the rooms are cluttered, the furnishings and decorations Victorian. The living-room is seen most often, reflecting the working-class pattern of one-room living. The mantelshelf is covered by a runner and adorned with vases, if display can be afforded; an ornate clock is prized, most obviously by the Jossers in *London Belongs to Me*. The coal-fired range is a standard fitment even where a

cooker is installed, as in *Home Sweet Home*, though in reality, the back boiler had ousted the

range in working-class houses by the 1930s. In older houses, the living room is still used for

bathing, notably in *It Always Rains on Sunday* (dir. Robert Hamer, 1947). When friends drop in,

a line of washing might be left hanging over the range, as in *The Blue Lamp*. Where the family

are on their own, heat cannot be wasted: a clothes-horse draped with washing is likely to stand in

front of the range. Even in relatively modern homes like that of the Huggetts, the back room is

still the locus of family life, with the front room being reserved for special occasions and for

receiving visitors.

Film-makers often had a problem in matching interior and exterior shots. Inside quite

modern houses or houses which once had higher status, the layout reverts to the traditional

pattern of one-room living. This is noticeable in *Home Sweet Home*, in the Huggetts' house and

in Jackie's home in *Boys in Brown* (dir. Montgomery Tully, 1949)..

*(v) Signifiers of class, notably speech, hair-styles and clothing.* Working-class speech was a

stumbling block for film-makers in the 1940s. It had to be intelligible for audiences, which ruled

out strong regional accents. It also had to be bowdlerised for acceptability by censors and

audiences. Though older male actors such as Jack Warner or William Hartnell achieved

acceptable working-class personas with anglicised cockney accents, the conventions of drama

school imposed received pronunciation on younger players, particularly on girls. The result is

often an uneasy compromise which becomes apparent in family scenes.[1] Only in Mancunian

films and a few isolated productions such as *The Gorbals Story* (dir. David MacKane, 1950) and

*Blue Scar* can authentic regional and working-class voices be heard.

There is no clear distinction between formal and informal clothes, or between the clothes

worn by younger and older men. Generational differences are apparent in women's dress (*It*

*Always Rains on Sunday* provides good examples), with older women being more likely to wear

hats. These conclusions apply across the classes, though the clothes of working-class men can

lag behind the times. The exception is the spiv, who, though aspiring to the trappings of the good

life, is placed firmly among the working class by his desire for instant gratification and by his speech. He is distinguished most obviously by his clothing, which typically comprises a dark shirt, ostentatious tie and a well-cut suit with padded shoulders, set off by a handkerchief tucked into the breast pocket. Though spivs existed before the war, the black market which arose as a response to rationing gave them more opportunities to make money and greater public exposure.

For men, this was the age of Brylcreem, as the immaculate hair styles in *The Wooden Horse* (dir. Jack Lee, 1950) reveal. Although the fashion was common across all ages and classes, it is particularly notable among upwardly mobile young men like Bogarde's Bill Fox in *Once a Jolly Swagman* and spivs like Bill Rowbotham's Dave Robinson in *Dancing with Crime* (dir. John Paddy Carstairs, 1947). Class-based distinctions in dress become less sustainable when all classes have equal access to cosmetics and stylish clothing of good quality. As a consequence, speech and deportment assume more importance as signifiers of class, though this was to become more apparent in films of the 1950s.

Common to many of the films is their reliance on stock characters including the landlady, the policeman, the violent father and the teenage tearaway. The limited roster of actors available to take on working-class parts accentuated the problem of how to portray ordinary people and led to typecasting. Gladys Henson provides a convenient and enduring image of the respectable, caring, working-class mum of the 1940s, always busying herself making tea or preparing meals for reliable Jack Warner, while daughter Susan Shaw is forever looking for love — usually with an unsuitable man. The limited number of actors does not provide a full explanation for these pre-conceived notions of working-class behaviour, however. Military officers were also stereotyped. This is indicative of shared values, so that a non-verbal shorthand could be used, as in Bernstein's restricted code. A few films like *The Gorbals Story* and *Blue Scar* broke free from stereotypes — a process which was helped by using actors who were not household names — but these films failed to find an audience.[2] Their lack of success is attributable in part to distribution difficulties, but these resulted from the circuits' booking departments determining,

rightly or wrongly, that the films had limited commercial potential. Despite the risk of stereotyping, the presence of familiar names in advertising material served a dual function. It could attract fans of a star such as Margaret Lockwood. It also signalled to potential audiences the nature of the film which was on offer. The name of Frank Randle left them in little doubt that they were going to see visual comedy in which the upper classes would get their come-uppance. Transgressing stereotypes carried risks, an example being *Against the Wind* (dir. Charles Crichton, 1948), in which Jack Warner played the agent who was shot for his treachery. The scriptwriter, T.E.B. Clarke, later admitted that this was gross miscasting.[3] In the mind of the public, Warner was the dependable father figure of the respectable working-class family epitomised by the Huggetts. He could be the villain in a comedy such as Crichton's earlier *Hue and Cry* (1947). He could be shot doing his duty as George Dixon in *The Blue Lamp*, but shooting him as a traitor was too much. His foray into being a criminal on the run in *My Brother's Keeper* (dirs Alfred Roome and Roy Rich, 1948) was no more successful at the box office than *Against the Wind*: in spite of the lowest production costs of the thirty-two Rank films for which data is available, it still made a loss.[4]

If the familiar attracted audiences, this encouraged the industry to play safe. If the artifice of the stereotype is part of the attraction for audiences, this is inimical to realism. In later years, T.E.B. Clarke saw the comparative failure of *Against the Wind* as attributable to the decision to concentrate on realism, as opposed to the romanticism and predictable roles of wartime British films.[5] In looking back on Stewart Granger's performance in *Waterloo Road,* Sidney Gilliat considered that there was no school of realistic acting.[6] Against these latter-day views detecting a lack of realism in films made during the war, Norman Swallow, writing in 1947, complained that the wartime lessons in sociological drama had been forgotten as 'We are once more offered the old list of colourful escapism: *An Ideal Husband, Uncle Silas* and *Bonnie Prince Charlie.*'[7] Other critics endorsed his view.[8] *It Always Rains on Sunday* and *Brighton Rock* (dir. John Boulting, 1947) were both castigated for their imposed realism.[9] The quest for realism has been noted (pages 32-3), yet the concept is nebulous enough for diverging definitions to become

apparent. This is not simply a matter of definitions changing over time. The opposing views are summed up in Basil Wright's study of Carol Reed's films: a mine owner considered *The Stars Look Down* (1939) to be 'a film that lacks completely any feeling of reality', while a Durham miner said it was 'the most successful attempt to present to the public the life of mining folk'[10]. Realism is in the eye of the beholder. It signifies something beyond camera technique, affecting the representation of working-class people on film. Working-class audiences of the 1940s were in a better position to judge this than the critics, however much the latter enjoyed the vicarious experience of slumming. Somehow, the term 'realism' was never bandied about when upper-class characters were portrayed.

Rather than being considered as an orthodoxy, realism should be seen as one of a competing range of perspectives. In the 1940s, film-makers as diverse as John Harlow and Michael Powell chose to explore other routes. Though Anthony Asquith used non-actors and improvised dialogue in *The Way to the Stars* (1945), he appreciated the skills of the actor, who could 'give something "more real" than the real thing. That is to say, he will express more of the man's inner personality, show us more facets of his character, present us, in fact, with a more living figure.'[11] This is an expression of Ang's psychological reality (page 135). Whatever the faults of *It Always Rains on Sunday,* Hamer sought psychological as well as physical veracity. The risk in abandoning any pretence of realism was the sentimentality which afflicted *The White Unicorn* (dir. Bernard Knowles, 1947).

Among the thirty-two films considered, the success of *The Way to the Stars* is beyond question (appendix 1, table 8.1). This can be attributed to the quality of the film rather than to its entertainment value or to clever marketing. Given the meagre number of screen days achieved in the sample Leeds cinemas by most of the films in which working-class characters were prominent, these is no evidence that working-class audiences were attracted to stories about working-class characters on the basis of their comparable class position. *Waterloo Road* was the most successful of the working-class films. Possible reasons for its appeal are the presence of Stewart Granger, his role as a spiv, which was new to the cinema; and the structure of the film,

which resembles a western with two adversaries confronting each other in *High Noon* fashion in the last reel. In south-east Essex, *Waterloo Road* was unusual in being markedly more successful among independent cinemas than on the circuits. It had enough commercial potential to merit repeated programming by the independents, while circuit cinemas were committed to screening more recent releases. The only working-class film which rivalled it in popularity was *Holiday Camp* (dir. Ken Annakin, 1947). This came close to portraying post-war life as many people knew it — the upheavals of the annual holiday, the teenage son being lured into gambling and the problems of the young widow struggling to bring up a child on her own. The screenwriters contrived to combine these elements in an amiable comedy with a dark undercurrent. One problem which did not appear was the complaining mother-in-law, though this deficiency was remedied in the subsequent Huggett series.

The name of Ted Willis keeps recurring as scriptwriter. Though his leadership of Unity Theatre ended in acrimony and recrimination, his continuing sympathy with working people shines through the films on which he worked, even if cosiness crept into George Dixon's television reincarnation at Dock Green.[12] For Durgnat 'Too many of Ted's nice people are just visiting from the middle-class.'[13] This undervalues Willis's achievement in bringing the working class to the screen. Though his vision can seem all-pervasive given the number of scripts in which he had a hand, the likely alternative was that ordinary people were marginalised in favour of more home counties dramas about middle-class couples.

Do the films support Durgnat's dictum, referred to in chapter seven, that a middle-class cinema only acknowledges the working-class insofar as they are subservient to middle-class ideals, they shade into the feckless or criminal, or they are presented humorously?[14] The Huggetts are edging into the middle class, even if Ethel remains staunchly working class. The feckless and the criminal working-class are there aplenty, though criminal masterminds belong to the higher echelons of society. Humourous working-class characters are much in evidence. They appear in the comedies of Frank Randle and Old Mother Riley which are derived from the music hall, though Durgnat may have had in mind those working-class characters who lurk in middle-

class comedies like *The Perfect Woman* (dir. Bernard Knowles, 1949). Yet in *Once a Jolly Swagman, Chance of a Lifetime* and *A Boy, a Girl and a Bike,* the working class are taken seriously. Durgnat's generalisation is just that — a generalisation.

## Notes

1. The compromise was not always satisfactory. A cockney-born actor complained that even East End audiences could not understand what cinematic 'cockneys' were saying. Gerald Young, 'The voice of the people', *Film Quarterly,* 1946-47, vol.1, no.2, 46. Willie Gallacher declared to his fellow MPs that when a British film was shown in Scotland, scarcely any of the audience could understand a word that was said. *Parliamentary Debates (Commons),* 5th series, 1945, vol.415, 2564.

2. Ironically, Edgar Anstey complained about the stereotyped acting and dialogue in *Blue Scar.* Edgar Anstey, 'The year's work in the documentary film', in Roger Manvell (ed.) *The year's work in the film 1949,* London: Longmans, Green (for British Council), 1950, 34.

3. T.E.B. Clarke, *This is where I came in,* London: Joseph, 1974, 158.

4. Production costs of *My Brother's Keeper* were £113,585, with a loss by 24 December 1949 of £9,400. PRO BT 64/4490 schedules 2 and 6.

5. loc.cit.

6. Geoff Brown, *Launder and Gilliat,* London: BFI, 1977, 110.

7. Norman Swallow, 'Social realism in film and radio: a comparative analysis', *Sight & Sound,* winter 1947-48, vol.16, no.64, 170-1.

8. Harking back to wartime films which 'meant something', Milton Schulman lamented the absence on the screen of real people doing real things. *Evening Standard,* 4 June 1948. On the left, Joan Lestor also looked back to wartime films portraying real people with real problems. *Reynolds News,* 25 April 1948. Both items in 'British films 1948' cuttings file (BFI Library).

9. D.A.Yerrill, 'The technique of realism', *Sight & Sound,* spring 1948, vol.17, no.65, 24.

10. Basil Wright, 'A study of Carol Reed', in Manvell , op.cit. (ch.15, n.2) 16.

11. Anthony Asquith, 'Realler than the real thing', *Contemporary Cinema,* 1948, vol.2, no.1, 10.

12. For Willis's days at Unity Theatre, see Colin Chambers, *The story of the Unity Theatre,* London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1989, 231-89 passim.

13. Raymond Durgnat, *A mirror for England: British movies from austerity to affluence,* London: Faber, 1970, 61.

14. ibid. 48.

PART FOUR

# CHAPTER SIXTEEN

## The looking-glass world of the cinema

The hypothesis being tested is that in the years immediately following the Second World War,
British films could offer working-class audiences reinforcement of their values and attitudes.
This final chapter is a consideration of how the varying approaches contribute to testing the
hypothesis and examines how film functions both for the individual and for society.

In part one, competing definitions of working-class culture were examined. The most
acceptable position for the historian is to follow the relativist line of going along with how
contemporaries defined the working class. Though many facets of working-class life after the
war remained unaltered from the 1930s, greater spending power, demographic change and wider
cultural influences resulting in large measure from wartime experiences and exposure to the
media meant that working class aspirations were greater.

In part two, quantitative evidence was assessed. In methodological terms, a novel approach
was employed, using the number of days on which a film was screened as a measure of its
popularity in working-class Leeds, in south-east Essex and on the circuits, while surveys on
cinema-going conducted over fifteen years were brought together for the first time.

Age was the major determinant of cinema-going among all classes, with attendance
declining after adolescence. Class-based evidence on cinema-going is scanty, though the type of
secondary school attended proved a good predictor of cinema-going habits, with secondary
modern pupils visiting the cinema more frequently than their grammar school brethren and
continuing to do so into adult life.

In larger population centres, a distinction was possible between local cinemas which were
mainly independent, and central area cinemas which were likely to be controlled by the major
circuits. In both south-east Essex and working-class Leeds, four out of five films screened in

independent cinemas were American (appendix 1, table 6.2). For regular attenders — including a disproportionately large number of children — any impression made by British films had to overcome this overwhelming American influence. In the face of the blandishments of American culture in films, on records, on the radio and given substance by the presence of GIs, the survival in post-war Britain of a distinctively working-class culture is a testament to its resilience — and suggests that audiences had no trouble in distinguishing between films and real life. This casts doubt on the proposition that film reinforced values and attitudes inherited from the working-class culture of the 1930s. Nor can it be assumed that national interests predominated over class interests. For a working-class audience, the values of the Bowery Boys, from the rough end of the American working class, might have seemed more familiar than those of the British aristocracy in a film like *Women Hater* (dir. Terence Young, 1948).[1] This casts doubt on the assumed dichotomy between American and British cultural influences. Class loyalties may have exerted a stronger pull on audiences' affections than national loyalties.

If the cinemas of south-east Essex were any guide, there was no substantial difference in the proportion of British titles screened on the circuits and by independents. Differences were evident in the selection of titles and the length of runs, with the circuits able to exploit the commercial potential of the more popular British films before releasing them to other cinemas. The consequence was that patrons of circuit cinemas were more likely to see newer British films than their fellow cinema-goers who rarely strayed beyond the local independent. These circuit cinema patrons were likely to be mainly young people — the most avid cinema-goers — along with middle-class cinema-goers (see chapter five and page 172). If the youthful cinema-goers were predominantly working-class, this was because the working class had a numerical superiority in the population as a whole.

In part three, the portrayal of working-class characters in films of the period was examined using a five-dimensional sociological model. The conclusions were summarised in chapter fifteen. One of the films considered in some detail was *The Way to the Stars* (dir. Anthony Asquith, 1945). Its popularity was notable even among the British films with a middle-class

ethos which received repeated screenings in working-class Leeds (appendix 1, table 6.7). This success hardly supports the notion that films reinforced working-class values. Yet why should working-class audiences show a preference for films about the middle class? Durgnat poses the conundrum and offers a possible solution:

> Since the working class and below account for between 55 per cent and 70 per cent . . . of the population, it's surprising, on the face of it, that film-makers didn't from the beginning stake everything on intensively appealing to it by portraying its standards and customs. On closer examination, reasons become apparent. Daydream and wishfulfilment are satisfied with more obvious ease by 'identification upwards'. Moreover, the middle- and lower-middle-classes shade only gradually and confusingly into the upper-working-classes. Thus it's natural and easy for many working-class people to take middle-class characteristics as their ego ideal.[2]

The success of Mancunian films and of the Old Mother Riley series means that Durgnat's solution needs to be qualified. The failure of such films to achieve West End releases certainly suggests an absence of identification downwards: the middle class were little influenced by the values of the working class until the youth culture phenomenon of the 1960s. The working class could identify upwards, but given the opportunity, at least some sectors (probably including older cinema-goers) could equally well identify with their own class. The trouble was that, at least in films, they were rarely given the opportunity. Too often, films were about the working class rather than of the working class. Working-class characters were safely contained within the trappings of a middle-class morality story, notably in *Good Time Girl* (dir. David Macdonald, 1948), with the status quo being accepted and the values of the working class community being ignored. This failure of vision may be ascribed to the upper middle-class outlook both of censors and of dominant figures in the industry including Michael Balcon and J. Arthur Rank.[3] It did not help that the proportion of film directors coming from public schools rivalled the proportion of cabinet ministers educated there. Whatever socialism meant, it was not control by the working class; whatever constituted an indigenous British cinema, it was not a cinema stemming from the concerns of the working class.

The same points may be conceptualised sociologically. For Kenneth Roberts, the mass society theory, in which mass movements present a threat to order, is tainted by aristocratic

pessimism towards the lower orders.[4] The solutions which he offers are paternalism or participation.[5] The late 1940s can be seen as a time when both options were being tested and the tensions between them were being exposed, notably in nationalisation and in the setting up of the welfare state.

The cinema could provide the working class with desirable role models: in this paternal aspiration, the censors and J. Arthur Rank were in agreement. But participation is linked inexorably to affluence. The working class were experiencing relative affluence and as Durgnat points out, 'Affluence is double-edged. To some extent it exposes working-class warmth to middle-class "refainment" . . . . But at the same time it enables the working-classes to pay the piper, and call more of his tunes.'[6] In the longer term, Durgnat's economic logic seems inescapable — the spending power of the working class gave them the ability to make their demands heard — but the period 1945 to 1950 was not the long term and British film production was not attuned to its market. By the end of 1950, a quarter of all British films released between 1945 and 1949 had not been shown in the sample Leeds cinemas or in the circuit cinemas of south-east Essex (appendix 1, table 6.13), while Rank's film production arm — the country's largest film producer — was making losses.[7] If workers were calling for different tunes in the late 1940s, the piper was not always listening.

The nature of the mass media as distinct from its associations with violence became a matter for academic study in America during the post-war years. In 1950, David Riesman saw popular culture as a training in group adjustment and consumer orientation.[8] Popular culture stressed the dangers of aloneness and the virtues of the group, so that peer group pressure became the measure of all things.[9] In this exposition of a characteristic feature of the youth movement of the following decades, Riesman was prescient, though his viewpoint does not preclude other functions of popular culture.

The strain theory elaborated by Clifford Geertz a generation later is another way of conceptualising how the cinema functions in society. For Geertz, ideological tools such as films may have a **cathartic** function, acting as a safety valve (almost any comedy illustrates this); they

may deny **morale** to groups such as state enemies (*49th Parallel*, dir. Michael Powell, 1941) or legitimise it in terms of higher values such as those of the struggling artist (*The Gorbals Story*, dir. David MacKane, 1950); they may also enhance **solidarity** as in many films made during the war.[10] In common with other societal models, the problem lies in elaborating the precise mechanisms by which an ideology becomes incorporated in a film, or as Geertz puts it, how emotions find symbolic outlets or become attached to appropriate symbols.[11] In *Millions Like Us* (dirs Frank Launder and Sidney Gilliat, 1943), which was made with the backing of the Ministry of Information, the ideological purpose is obvious.[12] In a post-war film such as *Holiday Camp* (dir. Ken Annakin, 1947), where the commercial imperative was evident, a model predicated on the assumed benefits for society becomes less easy to apply.

Demonstrating that an ideology is incorporated into a film is not enough to validate Geertz's strain theory. As Geertz accepts, any leisure activity carries a symbolic meaning. The differences in status between Rugby League and Rugby Union, or between greyhound racing and horse racing, attest to this. Meaning has to be elucidated, which implies that differing viewpoints are possible. The meaning for the individual as against the function for society comes to assume increasing importance. The contrasting attitudes towards *The Stars Look Down* (dir. Carol Reed, 1939) adopted by miners and mine owners (page 353) make this clear.

A sociological approach to leisure developed by Stanley Parker is apposite here. Parker's focus is on the relationship between leisure and work. Leisure is perceived as an extension of work by professionals with fulfilling jobs, in opposition to it by those with tough jobs who adopt a love-hate attitude to work, or neutral by those who detach leisure from work.[13] Individuals from each group might come to a film with differing ideological agendas as to what can be gained from it. Parker's approach has some loose ends, notably the place of women and of the neutrals. Crucially, though, the model is predicated on class differences: people with tough jobs, who are presumably working class, cannot get the fulfilment from work enjoyed by (middle-class) professionals. Setting leisure in opposition to work means that, at least for the working class, leisure is perceived rightly or wrongly as an escape.

Escapism is a word used by almost all interviewees. It could apply to the experience of being in the cinema as much as to the fantasy world conjured by the films.[14] The notion was also fostered in the films themselves.[15] Yet escapism lacks academic respectability. As Paul Swann observes:

> Films were regarded, in the words of Leavis and Thompson, as 'substitute living', a seductive form of shallow but unsatisfying escape which they felt had come to dominate industrial culture . . . . This kind of position was responsible in large part for the emergence of the documentary impulse in British film-making and literature in the 1930s and 1940s, which can be viewed as a concerted attempt to make the viewer 'face reality'.[16]

Shadows of an earlier prescriptive force, the Protestant work ethic, hang over the Leavisite approach. If the influence of Leavis has waned, escapism has not been rehabilitated. Something of Parker's distaste for escapism colours his view that the influence of education is not to increase the opportunity to participate (presumably in activities which might be oppositional), but to increase the awareness of and desire for a wider range of possibilities.[17] The very process of 'reading' a film implies that escapism is an inadequate response. Reading implies a second, deeper level of meaning which is denied to somebody who is merely carried along by the story. Reading requires consideration of the film as embodiment of ideas rather than as simply a medium for enjoyment, to be taken at its face value — a duality present in the mode of thinking into which the middle-class child is socialised.[18] The paradox is that, like many of life's pleasures, escapism derives its power from being experienced rather than intellectualised. Star quality is a factor which distinguishes the cinema from other media and which contributes to its power to make the audience forget the everyday world. Yet in trying to analyse the mystique of the star, the danger is that its essence is lost, just as pinning a butterfly to a card does not so much fix its fleeting beauty as destroy it. Richard Dyer wrestles with this conundrum in his study of stardom, though whether he resolves it is debatable.[19]

Feminist critics have had more success in squaring the circle of how to analyse something which cannot be put into words. Jackie Stacey finds wanting such stratagems as decoding, which attempt to shift the problem rather than to resolve it. Her preferred solution is a 'bottom up'

approach of getting people to offer experiences in their own words.[20] This process has since been carried further, notably by Joanne Lacey in her use of the film memories of working-class women in Liverpool.[21]

The approach does have its antecedents. Hoggart trod a similar path in trying to discover how material was received, albeit with less emphasis on oral testimony:

> Helped by Orwell and C.S.Lewis, I became more and more drawn to the question of what people might make of that material [from popular culture], by the thought that obviously poor writing might appeal to good instincts, that the mind of a reader is not a *tabula rasa* but has been nurtured within a social setting which provides its own forms and filters for judgments and resistances, that one had to know very much more about how people used much of the stuff which to us might seem merely dismissable trash, before one could speak confidently about the effects it might have.[22]

The work of Stacey, Lacey and others has gone some way to addressing Annette Kuhn's concern, expressed in the 1980s, that a gulf was opening between textual analysis and contextual enquiry.[23] It has also helped to strip escapism of its pejorative connotations. The concept needs to be taken seriously. As well as embodying what many interviewees feel about cinema-going, it offers a means of analysing the experience. The heuristic value is at its clearest in Sally Mitchell's discussion of popular reading in the nineteenth century: 'Escape reading gives us a clue about what is being escaped from; it may reflect a reverse image of the tone of the times.'[24] Escapist films such as the American musicals of the 1930s can be approached in the same way: when a girl from a poor background is plucked from the chorus line and becomes a star, what does this say about a world in which opportunities were so conspicuously lacking for most of her class that even aspiring to the chorus line was something which only happened in dreams?

A similar perspective, this time directed towards archetypes, is adopted by the oral historian Luisa Passerini, whose ideal is to allow individual responses to prevail over collective responses. The interest for Passerini lies in the differences between individual responses. 'People could have gone in other directions, could have decided to cherish other myths or to alter them, could have interpreted a certain myth in an alternative or new way.' The result is the construction of single mythbiographies 'using a choice of resources, that include myths, combining the new and ancient in unique expressions.'[25] In Passerini's terms, cinema audiences combine images from a film with

images from the memory store of other films, from other media and from their own life experiences to produce expressions which are unique to the individual.

Passerini's use of the concept of the archetype as a base from which individual mythbiographies are constructed recalls Michael Denning's allegoric mode of reading and its applicability to the cinema (pages 184-5). It brings a phenomenological dimension to the subject without precluding insights derived from traditional, structural approaches, including those employed in social psychology. As an instance of the latter, Elihu Katz and David Foulkes conclude that though a drive may be escapist, this need not apply to its fulfilment.[26] Evidence may be sought in sub-cultural attitudes to fashion and hair styles, often derived from films. Echoing Riesman's terms (page 360), these attitudes encourage conformism within the group, though other groups such as teachers interpret them as oppositional.[27]

But there are other possibilities. In Geertz's terms, conformist values and attitudes can potentially be transmitted, but crucially there is an unpredictability about reception. Audiences need not derive the intended values from a film, a notorious example being the furore over copycat violence associated with *A Clockwork Orange* (dir. Stanley Kubrick, 1971), which led to the film's withdrawal from circulation in Britain until Kubrick's death. The working-class audience in Rochester who laughed at the preview of *Brief Encounter* (dir. David Lean, 1945) (page 169) were making a similar point: the nature of their response could not be taken for granted. Though the portrayal of the higher echelons of society in inter-war films may have been intended to bolster the status quo, working-class youth, which comprised a large sector of audiences, could consider the characters to be hypocrites, lazy, boring, snobbish and deserving of pity.[28]

As if acknowledging this variability in reception, not all British films of the 1940s are prescriptive in the attitudes and values which they espouse. *It Always Rains on Sunday* (dir. Robert Hamer, 1947) gives audiences a choice of role models, not all of which would have met with Balcon's approval. *Holiday Camp* condones sex outside marriage (so long as the offending couple, Valerie and Michael, eventually get married) and cheating at cards (so long as Joe

Huggett teaches the card sharps a lesson). Similar moral ambiguity is to be found in *Good Time Girl* and *A Boy, a Girl and a Bike* (dir. Ralph Smart, 1949). *The Blue Lamp* (dir. Basil Dearden, 1950) is closer to the Ealing tradition of offering a stark choice between good and evil, embodied in the characters played by Hanley and Bogarde, though Andy Medhurst, for one, finds it a one-sided contest.[29] Pat Kirkham discerns in *Dance Hall* (dir. Charles Crichton, 1950) a choice between respectability and temptation, but the girls offer audiences a variety of options between these two poles as ways of reconciling their dreams with reality.[30]

Mention was made in the previous chapter of the prevalence of stock characters and stereotypes in British films of the 1940s (pages 351-2). This accords with the view of Paul Lazarsfeld, that founding father of media research: 'In general, . . . people look not for new experience in the mass media but for a repetition and an elaboration of their old experiences into which they can more easily project themselves.'[31] By this view, people seek the comfortingly familiar as a backdrop against which they can see their own problems rehearsed. Mitchell sees such identification as a characteristic of open-ended light fiction as distinct from tightly-constructed major fiction in which every event is sequential, inevitable and related to the character's psychology within an artistically complete plot. Yet defining quality in terms of the form of construction has its problems, leading Mitchell to classify *Jane Eyre* as light fiction.[32] Different forms of construction can be accepted without having to be ranked in terms of quality. Because jazz is open-ended, it is not necessarily inferior to a sonata with its clearly defined structure.

Lazarsfeld's approach implies that films have a conservative role, helping to reinforce values and maintain the status quo, though the elaboration of old experiences allows for evolutionary change. This is broadly the line taken by Raymond Williams in seeing a key to the popularity of *Coronation Street* (Granada, 1960 — ) in the engagement by audiences with the sense of continuity of human lives.[33] The Huggett films and the Old Mother Riley series offered audiences a similar elaboration of experiences by familiar characters, and lend support to the hypothesis. One reason for the success of *The Way to the Stars* with its emphasis on women

waiting at home and on children must be its powerful sense of the continuity of human life as experienced even when coming to terms with death — an impulse which transcends class.

A phenomenological approach to escapism is not necessarily in opposition to Lazarsfeld's model. The cinema can elaborate experience as Lazarsfeld proposes, while still providing an escape. A bridge between the two perspectives is provided by Karlheinz Stierle, for whom a distinctive feature of fiction is its ability to articulate a system of perspectives providing experiences which are radically different from those in ordinary life. Though this is akin to escapism, Stierle echoes Lazarsfeld in noting how this system prestructures for the reader potential paradigms of experience.[34] Stierle is referring to the printed word, but his viewpoint is equally applicable to the feature film. Frank Randle and Old Mother Riley offered the escapism of preposterous plots involving larger-than-life characters. They rehearsed attitudes to employers which audiences would have loved to emulate. If audiences never tried, they could at least leave the cinema with a healthy cynicism towards middle-class pomposity.

'[The mass media] must roughly show us as we at present are. But their mirror image progressively distorts. Clever shifts of angle and deceptions of lighting can slowly bring about a change; we begin to believe what the mirror says and do not notice its subtle alterations.'[35]

Richard Hoggart's metaphor is seductive. Its emphasis on the distorting power of the media is noteworthy, but leaving aside its aptness (a mirror is passive, while the media project points of view), the fact that the debate on the moral effects of the cinema has raged for a century suggests that the internalisation of values derived from films is less certain than Hoggart implies.

In the late 1940s, Lazarsfeld and the circle of sociologists which grew up around him at Columbia University conducted the largest investigation into mass communication and popular taste since the Payne Fund studies of 1933 (page 39). They concluded that the mass media could affect social norms to an extent, but they could also function as a social narcotic.[36] Subsequent research has not substantially changed these findings, which allow film to have a spectrum of functions and meanings. This seemingly cautious conclusion opens up a range of research options. Often the problem is giving them enough precision to make them testable. Fortunately, a

range of specific examples of the effect of film can be found. Jim Wolveridge, an East End costermonger born in 1920, records that rhyming slang was hardly used in the 1930s and would have died out if it had not been taken up by the professional cockney comedians of stage and radio. He also provides an interesting example of social change by an unexpected route, maintaining that the portrayal in films of the working class as dim-witted clowns was hated by the younger generation of East Enders, causing a lot of young people to try to improve their speech as a way of proving that they were not the oafs they were made out to be. 'Resentment did what education couldn't.'[37] Arthur La Bern noted how the popularity of names like Shirley and Deanna in the East End of London, ' . . . for in these days the all-pervading influence of the cinema plays its part in the choice of names for back-street offspring . . . '[38] Jerry White cites a 1934 newspaper which reported how young people in an Islington cafe adopted American styles of speech and clothing copied from movies.[39] Coming up to date, Italian police raiding Mafia premises expect to find a video of *The Godfather* (dir. Francis Ford Coppola, US release 1972). Marlon Brando's character provides a model of behaviour.[40]

If reading a film is to be more than an exercise in aesthetics, it has to be seen in the context of the social experience of cinema-going: which cinemas people preferred, how often they visited them and with whom, whether they dressed up for the occasion and which films they saw. This thesis seeks as a first step to uncover what working-class audiences watched in the 1940s, though necessarily its geographical scope is limited. Research into patterns of screening in other town and cities is needed before trends can be discerned. Determining what the films meant to audiences is more difficult, though clues can be gleaned from oral testimony and from written sources ranging through fan magazines to the anthropological studies of Pearl Jephcott and others. One starting point for further research is the sort of specific observation noted in the preceding paragraph which can generate testable hypotheses. Research has hardly begun, yet it is not without urgency. The passing of time may bring objectivity, but the patina of nostalgia for the recent past and for the war and its aftermath may prove harder to penetrate as the attitudes and mores of working-class communities of fifty years ago pass into history.

Yet this is to skate too lightly over the practical problems of recapturing the cinema-experience. The tension of providing verifiable detail while seeking to recapture the excitement of belonging to a working-class audience runs through this thesis. The thrill of walking on a fitted carpet when such a thing was unknown in working-class homes, or eating an ice cream in the days when owning a refrigerator was beyond the realms of possibility are sensations which were integral to going to the pictures. Though the sense of wonderment they engendered is as evanescent as childhood, if it is ignored, then the meaning of cinema-going for audiences slips away. Viewing the films is not enough to bring it back.

A second line of tension arises from seeking to adopt an interdisciplinary approach. There is a danger of resorting to the safety of disciplinary blinkers and the tried and trusted techniques which a discipline offers. At the other extreme, concepts can be treated in cavalier fashion — like the tools in somebody else's toolbox — without their potential or their limitations being fully appreciated. As Geertz cautions, the symbolic state can be obscured by reifying it.[41] But the risks are worth taking in the effort to achieve an understanding of cinema-going in which aesthetic issues can be related to the economics of film distribution, or demographic shifts to changes in working-class culture. It would be possible to encompass these issues within an approach such as Marxism, providing this does not mean shedding the disciplinary blinkers only to don an ideological straightjacket. To minimise the dangers, a freer approach has been adopted here, emulating exhibitors as far as possible by keeping in mind the viewpoint of the audience. This does not mean that the resulting work stands outside ideological or disciplinary constraints. Any such claim leaves it open to the criticism that its ideological or disciplinary origins are being concealed. This thesis should be seen as an exercise in breaking down academic boundaries rather than an attempt to conceal them.

Considering the recent past presents particular hazards and constitutes the third line of tension. The distant past can be approached with relative dispassion, except in a few situations such as Northern Ireland or the Balkans. By contrast, the recent past carries an emotional resonance which can arouse passions or require containment by legal controls. An ancient

skeleton presenting signs of violent death is archaeological evidence; a recent one is forensic evidence and has implications for the surviving family. Art history has criteria for assessing Renaissance art; Nazi art is judged politically as much as artistically. The recent past is where disciplines fight over territory — a battle which spills into everyday life as Holocaust survivors seek reparations and medical services are judged against the ideals of the NHS. Films of the 1940s cannot stand outside this process, as issues of quality, realism, nationalism and class are contested. John Ellis employs definitions of quality from the 1940s in a polemic on British cinema in the 1970s (see pages 193-4). Realism in the cinema today, as in the 1940s, is apt to be yoked to violence which is perceived as being presented too realistically. The work of Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger, which eschews conventional notions of realism, has only been reevaluated in the last decade. The withdrawal from circulation in Britain until 1952 of the American *Objective Burma!* (dir. Raoul Walsh, US release 1945), in which Errol Flynn recaptures Burma, illustrates British sensibilities towards America's role in the war.[42] Class in 1940s films has the power to arouse emotions in a later generation: Durgnat's middle-class audience in the 1960s broke into angry laughter at *Brief Encounter* rather than merely being amused by it (ch.1, n.23). Though the dividing line between the distant past and the recent past can be vague, the effect of the distinction on attitudes is real enough.

A related issue is the inability of a researcher to stand aside from the culture of the present. The past might be another country, but the recent past is not a distant country where people necessarily do everything differently. Our closeness to the 1940s can make distinguishing the values of the time from those of today a problematic exercise, particularly for people whose lives span the two eras. *The Perfect Woman* (dir. Bernard Knowles, 1949) presented censors with the dilemma of how male characters should undress a robot in the guise of a woman, when the audience knew that the characters were being hoodwinked by a real woman.[43] From a different starting point, feminist critics of today might have similar qualms. This difficulty reinforces the need to begin from how critics, censors and audiences of the time responded. With this determined, an attempt can be made to analyse why a film elicited a particular reaction.

The final source of tension lies in the definition of traditional working-class culture. What does the term embrace and what period is being looked to? The problem gets an unusual slant from Ross McKibbin: 'The traditional working class of the 1940s was traditional only in the sense that economic circumstances permitted it to behave for the first time in the way people — not least the working men and women — assumed that the "traditional" working class should behave.'[44] Why they should want to look backwards given the improvement in their economic circumstances is not clear. In the absence of corroborative evidence, this tortuous interpretation has to be set aside. Yet the problem of what is traditional remains, and will continue to tantalise researchers. Trying to pin it down is ultimately a futile task. Elements of traditional working-class life in the 1940s such as the housing and diet of a large sector of the population survived from the late nineteenth century, albeit with modifications. The emphasis on leisure evident from the enthusiasm for the cinema, the dance hall and the holiday camp was inherited largely from the inter-war years, when it was charted by Mass-Observation.[45] Social, economic and technological change are inextricably linked, finding expression in an ever-evolving culture.[46] Tradition offers a way of maintaining cultural continuity in the face of change, yet tradition itself adapts and evolves along with the culture, so that a Christmas television screening of *White Christmas* (dir. Michael Kurtiz, US release 1954) has become almost as traditional as that other recent tradition, the Christmas turkey.

The hypothesis stated at the opening of this chapter must remain 'not proven'. Almost inevitably, the evidence on cultural change is impressionistic and open to varying interpretations. Rather than reinforcing class attitudes, film (and particularly American film) could expose audiences to wider frames of reference both in class and nationalistic terms. What audiences made of these influences must remain an open question. Working-class life in the 1940s can be seen as on the brink of fundamental and rapid change. Film was one medium which helped people to prepare for the social and economic transformations of the fifties and sixties, though this is to approach history with the benefit of hindsight.

Two methodological issues arise from this failure to support the hypothesis. First, is the

hypothesis an appropriate device for this form of academic enquiry? Historians have generally been content to articulate a topic of interest, though for scientists, social and otherwise, this can smack of imprecision. Yet the historian's caution may be justified when the source material is diffuse and fragmentary as in this case. Secondly, should the working class really be seen as a coherent social group given the diversity of its membership? How much of a commonality of interest should be inferred between a shipbuilder nearing retirement in Glasgow and a young, female factory worker in Plymouth? Pearl Jephcott's work may be impressionistic, but it does bring out the cultural differences between girls in London and County Durham, even though her subjects are similar in age and belong to the same social class.[47] In spite of occasional condescension, she shows more empathy with her subjects than J.P. Mayer, whose two sociological works on the cinema might otherwise have become cornerstones for research into audiences of the 1940s.[48]

The term 'working class' is a convenient generalisation, but like all generalisations, it needs treating with caution. More appropriately, the working class may be conceptualised as existing at the lower end of a socio-economic continuum in any area. Its members' relative position on the continuum will be similar in Glasgow and Plymouth. The cultural expression of this position may show variation, though people in both places would doubtless find common cause in such matters as the desire for better housing and a rising income.

Two caveats are in order. One is pinpointed by Andrew Davies:

> Tracing the formation of social consciousness is one of the most difficult and sensitive of the tasks undertaken by the social historian, and care must be taken in discussing the ways in which the attitudes of young people were formed. However, undue emphasis upon the role of the cinema can easily obscure the importance of experiences at home, on the streets and at work, in forging young people's outlooks.[49]

Even among leisure pursuits, cinema-going was but one of a range of options (appendix 1, tables 5.17 and 5.26). The craze for the Lambeth Walk is well documented.[50] The film *The Lambeth Walk* (dir. Albert de Courville, 1939) doubtless reached more people than the stage show, yet Mass-Observation found that broadcasting the hit song was by far the most important means of popularising the dance.[51] Interdependence between media is difficult to demonstrate and is apt to

be avoided for this reason, but it would be at best misleading and at worst wrong to see the cinema as the dominant cultural influence. Though the work of W.D. Wall et al. at Birmingham University in the late 1940s produced invaluable data for later researchers (data which has yet to be fully exploited) a weakness of the project is its very concentration on cinema-going to the exclusion of other media. The same might be said of the Payne Fund studies in America. It is difficult to gain an idea of the relative influence of the cinema in the middle years of the twentieth century, though the fact that it did influence adolescents is indisputable.

The other danger is put starkly by Walter Brandis and Dorothy Henderson:

> In a work concerned with comparative socialisation within a society, there is always a danger that the differences such studies reveal will be transformed into statements of 'better' or 'worse'. . . . Once such judgements are made, implicitly or explicitly, that one form of socialisation is 'better' than another, it is but a short step to consider how we can transform the 'worse' into the 'better'. Can we transform the working-class into the middle-class? This question is based upon the dubious premise that socialisation within contemporary middle-class strata and the education we offer in schools represents the acme of three quarters of a million years of civilisation. It equally and inevitably leads on to a view of the child as a deficit system, his parents as inadequate and their culture deprived.[52]

Several researchers whose work is touched on in this chapter, including both Parker and Mitchell, do not avoid this pitfall. Though some sectors of the working class suffered material deprivation, this should not be taken as evidence that their culture, or that of the working-class as a whole, lacked richness. It was merely different. Books might have been less in evidence than in middle-class households and formal education may not always have been held in the same esteem, but was this such a loss if the family ties and social contacts vividly evoked by both Jephcott and Hoggart were more extensive and so much more intense? Lack of financial security meant that the working-class adolescent had no alternative but to face the world with realism, while acquiring the sophistication to walk between two cultures. As one of Jephcott's girls put it:

> I used to love College films . . . where they were always having fun and doing about two hours' work a day. You talk about a picture for days after at work, and go over special scenes. You envy the glamour and the big houses make you discontented. You try to copy their ways of dress, talk and walk, or in going for a job. By 18 you know that a lot of it was more or less lies.[53]

One of my interviewees saw things the other way around: dissatisfaction with life made the

cinema seem more real.[54] What the two views have in common is that what was seen on the screen was compared with real life — and real life was the loser. The cinema might have been a distorting mirror, but at least it was a mirror. In reflecting the hopes and aspirations of audiences, it allowed people to make sense of their own lives in a communal setting which could not be achieved by reading a book.

In his study of working-class youth in Manchester during the inter-war years, Andrew Davies concludes that although the cinema might be seen as favouring consensus, audiences were too cynical for attitudes to be channelled by Hollywood.[55] It is easy to underestimate working-class audiences. As a Manchester researcher concluded in 1932, working-class youth made up a critical audience, quick to recognise poor films and with a strong idea of the types of films which they preferred: those with excitement, humour, or good music and singing, while they disliked 'impossible' (unrealistic), dull or boring films.[56] Roger Manvell, that high priest of the film as aesthetic experience, could hardly have quibbled. Nor is there reason to suppose that war made working-class cinema-goers any less critical. If anything, the opposite might be expected as new experiences and greater prosperity expanded their range of cultural references. Yet in spite of this, the working class were still at the bottom of the social hierarchy and still realistic about their life chances. The difference was that they had more opportunity of being heard.

## Notes

1. The same sentiment about working-class audiences of half a century later was expressed at a seminar by Bill Boyes, producer of *Girls' Night* (dir. Tim Hurran, 1997). '*Girls' Night*: script to screen', Leeds International Film Festival, 23rd October, 1997.

2. Raymond Durgnat, *A mirror for England: British movies from austerity to affluence*, London: Faber, 1970. 46-7.

3. For a censor's discouraging view of a film about a working-class football pool winner, *Easy Money* (dir. Bernard Knowles, 1948), see BBFC scenario notes, 14 August 1947. The comments appear in Sue Harper, *Picturing the past: the rise and fall of the British costume film*, London: BFI, 1994, 150.

4. Kenneth Roberts, *Contemporary society and the growth of leisure*, London: Longman, 1978, 42-3. Though towns provided the concentration of labour necessary for the industrialisation, it was the concentration which made the masses a political threat. Though not expressed in Marxist terms, similar fears were expressed in the 1840s when the Reverend Pollen could write of Leeds that the congregation of large numbers of the working class in mills promoted their moral debasement. Steven Burt and Kevin Grady, *The illustrated history of Leeds*, Derby: Breedon Books, 1994, 155.

5. Roberts, op.cit. (ch.16, n 4) 49.

6. Durgnat, op.cit. (ch.16, n.2) 54

7. See page 255. Out of thirty Rank films for which details are available, only eight were showing a profit as of 24 December 1949. PRO BT 64/4490 schedule 6. *Holiday Camp* and *Easy Money* (see ch.16, n.3) were among them.

8. David Riesman, with Nathan Glazer and Reuel Denney, *The lonely crowd: a study of the changing American character*, New York: Doubleday Anchor Books, [1960?], 184.

9. ibid. 183 and 103.

10. Clifford Geertz, *The interpretation of cultures: selected essays*, London: Fontana Press, 1993, 204-5.

11. ibid. 207.

12. Geoff Brown, *Launder and Gilliat*, London: BFI, 1977, 108.

13. Stanley Parker, *The sociology of leisure*, London: Allen & Unwin, 1976, 66-72.

14. Memories of individual films were hazy. For a similar point, see Ashley Franklin, *A cinema near you: 100 years of going to the pictures in Derbyshire*, Derby: Breedon Books, 1996, 88.

15.     MARGARET: Mick, let's get out of here — let's go to the pictures.

        MICHAEL:     Okay. Suits me.

        MARGARET: Come on then. Quick.

        MICHAEL:     We've missed the beginning. I don't suppose the film will be any good, anyway.

        MARGARET: Never mind. Escape — the foundation of all entertainment.

        MICHAEL:     Get your Keating's — it's a flea-pit.

    *The Holly and the Ivy* (dir. George More O'Ferrall, 1952). The characters in this case are upper middle class.

16. Paul Swann, *The Hollywood feature film in postwar Britain*, New York: St Martins Press, 1987, 21.

17. Parker, op.cit. (ch.15, n.13) 92.

18. Walter Landis and Dorothy Henderson, *Social class, language and communication,* London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1970, 47. In the authors' view, middle-class children show greater concern with making explicit the classification and differentiation of persons, states and objects.

19. Richard Dyer, *Stars,* London: BFI, 1979.

20. Jackie Stacey, *Star gazing: Hollywood cinema and female spectatorship,* London: Routledge, 1994.

21. Joanne Lacey, 'Seeing through happiness. Class, gender and popular film: Liverpool women remake the 50's film musical', PhD thesis, University of London, 1997. See esp. pages 153-6.

22. Richard Hoggart, *Life and times,* vol.2: *A sort of clowning 1940-59,* London: Chatto & Windus, 1990, 135.

23. Annette Kuhn, 'Women's genres', *Screen,* January-February 1984, vol.25, no.1, 19-20.

24. Sally Mitchell, *The fallen angel: chastity, class and women's reading 1835-1880,* Bowling Green, OH: Bowling Green University Popular Press, 1981, 92.

25. Luisa Passerini, 'Mythology in oral history', in Raphael Samuel and Paul Thompson (eds.) *The myths we live by,* London: Routledge, 1990, 59.

26. Elihu Katz and David Foulkes, 'On the use of the mass media as escape: clarification of a concept', *Public Opinion Quarterly,* fall 1962, vol.26, no.3, 381.

27. The Birmingham University studies tried to measure these tangible manifestations of the effects of film, e.g. W.D. Wall and W.A. Simpson, 'The effects of cinema attendance on the behaviour of adolescents as seen by their contemporaries', *British Journal of Educational Psychology,* 1949, vol.19, no.1, 53-61. This approach needs to be seen in the wider context of the socialisation which media and leisure industries can provide.

28. A. Fielder, ' Adolescents and the cinema: report of an enquiry', Dip. Social Studies thesis, University of Manchester, 1932, 28, cited in Andrew Davies, *Leisure, gender and poverty: working-class culture in Salford and Manchester 1900-1939,* Buckingham: Open University Press, 1992, 95.

29. Andy Medhurst, 'Dirk Bogarde', in Charles Barr (ed.) *All our yesterdays: 90 years of British cinema,* London: BFI, 347.

30. Pat Kirkham, 'Dress, dance, dreams and fantasy: fashion and fantasy in *Dance Hall',* *Journal of Design History,* 1995, vol.8, no.3. 195-207.

31. Paul F. Lazarsfeld, 'Audience research', in Bernard Berelson and Morris Janowitz (eds.) *Reader in public opinion and communication,* New York: Free Press of Glencoe, 1953, 343.

32. Mitchell, op.cit. (ch.16, n.24) 165-7.

33. Stephen Heath and Gillian Skirrow, 'An interview with Raymond Williams', in Tania Modleski (ed.) *Studies in entertainment: critical approaches to mass culture,* Bloomington and Indianapolis, IN: Indiana University Press, 1986, 6.

34. Karlheinz Stierle, 'The reading of fictional texts', trans. Inge Crosman and Thelka Zachrau, in Susan R Suleiman and Inge Crosman (eds.) *The reader in the text: essays on audience and interpretation,* Princeton, NJ, and Guildford, Surrey: Princeton University Press, 1980, 100.

35. Richard Hoggart, *Speaking to each other*, vol.1: *About society*, London: Chatto & Windus, 1970, 33.

36. Wilber Schramm, *Men, messages and media: a look at human communication*, New York and London: Harper & Row, 1973, 238.

37. Jim Wolveridge, 'Ain't it grand', in Venetia Murray, *Echoes of the East End*, London: Viking: 1989, 134 and 137.

38. Arthur La Bern, *It always rains on Sunday*, Leeds and London: Morley-Baker, 1969, 7.

39. *Islington and Highbury Post*, 7 April 1934, cited in Jerry White, *The worst street in north London: Campbell Bunk, Islington, between the wars*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1986, 166. The possibility that the reporter took a jaundiced view of Islington's young people cannot be overlooked.

40. Joe Farrell, *Turning World*, BBC Radio 4, 13 December 1999.

41. Geertz, op.cit. (ch.16, n.10) 10-11.

42. Ian Jarvie, 'The Burma campaign in film: *Burma* (1945), *The Stilwell Road* (1945) and *Burma Victory* (1945)', *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television*, 1988, vol.8, no.1, 68.

43. BBFC scenario notes no.2, 24 January 1949.

44. Ross McKibbin, *Classes and cultures: England 1818-1951*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998, 161.

45. For Mass-Observation's Blackpool study see Gary S. Cross (ed.) *Workers at Blackpool: Mass-Observation and popular leisure in the 1930s*, London: Routledge, 1990.

46. A persuasive study of the relationship of technology to economic and social change is Richard Wilkinson, *Poverty and Progress: an ecological model of economic development*, London: Methuen, 1973.

47. Pearl Jephcott, *Rising twenty: notes on some ordinary girls*, London: Faber, 1948.

48. J.P. Mayer, *Sociology of film: studies and documents*, London: Faber, 1946; id. *British cinemas and their audiences: sociological studies*, London: Dobson, 1948.

49. Davies, op.cit. (ch.16, n.28) 96-7.

50. Mass-Observation, *Britain*, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1939, 142-74.

51. ibid. 163.

52. Brandis and Henderson, op.cit. (ch.16, n.18) 121-2.

53. Jephcott, op.cit. (ch.16, n.47) 156.

54. Interview with June McDowell, Southend-on-Sea, 2 March 1997.

55. Davies, op.cit. (ch.16, n.28) 96.

56. ibid. 95.

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*Bookworm*, BBC TV, 20 November 1998

*Cathy Come Home*, BBC TV, 1966

*Coronation Street*, Granada, 1960 —

*Dad's Army*, BBC TV, 1968-77

*A Day Out*, BBC TV, 1972

*Frontline Females*, BBC Radio 4, 19 April 1998

*It's a Square World*, BBC TV, 1960-64

*Last of the Summer Wine*, BBC TV, 1973 —

*Lena, Oh My Lena*, BBC TV, 1960

*Mancunian Presents . . .* , Tyne Tees Television, 1988 (North West Film Archive)

*Night Waves*, BBC Radio 3, 14 April 2000

*Omnibus — Jack the Lad*, BBC TV, 23 June 1997

*On This Day*, BBC Radio 4, 13 December 1997

*Plotlands*, Wall to Wall, for BBC TV, 1996

*Seaforth*, Initial, for BBC TV, 1994

*Ready to Wear*, BBC TV, 18 May 1999

*Turning World*, BBC Radio 4, 13 December 1999

Interviews

b = date of birth   f = father's occupation   o = interviewee's occupation (all now retired from paid work). Date of interview in brackets

Ashington, Alf, Bradford, b. 1924, o. cinema projectionist (31 July 1997)

Barber, John, Leeds, b. 1930, f. factory worker, o. stage doorkeeper (28 July 1997)

Bassett-Read, Marion, Witham, Essex, b. 1933, f. engineer, o. civil servant (4 December 1997)

Betts, Doreen, Bradford, b. 1936, f. asbestos mill manager, o. laboratory technician (13 October 1999)

Brownson, Victor, Southend-on-Sea, b. 1932, f. bus driver, o. cinema projectionist (24 January 1997)

Catto, Derek, Southend-on-Sea, b. 1931, f. cinema doorman, o. cinema projectionist (31 January 1997)

Black, Simon, Bradford, b. 1931, f. textile worker, o. carpenter (31 July 1997)

Buttons, Dora, Southend-on-Sea, b. 1914, f. gardener, o. teacher (24 March 1997)

Crossley, Mick, Bradford, b. 1922, f. wool merchant, o. sales rep. (24 October 1997)

Field, Michael, Southend-on-Sea, b. 1936, f. cashier, o. banker (19 January 1997)

Harvey, Irene, Leigh-on-Sea, Essex, b. 1911, f. printer, o. housewife (5 January 1999)

Harrison, Jean, Guiseley, W. Yorkshire, b.1920s, f. colliery deputy, o. housewife (26 October 1997)

Halle, George, Benfleet, Essex, b. 1921, f. cinema proprietor, o. cinema proprietor (1 April 1997)

Harris, Jack, Westcliff-on-Sea, b. 1916, f. shop worker, o. cinema manager (17 January 1997)

Herd, Ian, Leeds, b. 1928, f. builders' merchant, o. buyer (28 July 1997)

Jeffrey, David, Southend-on-Sea, b. 1938. f. wood merchant, o. local government officer (7 February 1997)

McCalla, Frank, Paignton, Devon, b. 1920s, o. cinema projectionist (23 September 1997)

McDowell, June, Southend-on-Sea, b. 1920, f. teacher, o. teacher (2 Marc h 1997)

Nugent, Cyril and Doris, Leigh-on-Sea, Essex, b. 1919 (both), f. (Doris) civil servant, (Cyril) local government officer), o. (Doris) housewife, (Cyril) local government officer (19 January 1997)

Popman, Margaret, Cowlands, Mid Glam., b. 1936, f. engineer, o. housewife (31 March 1999)

Proctor, Jean, Bradford, b. 1938, f. coal merchant, o. housewife (31 July 1997)

Rudd, Kath, Leeds, b. 1933, f. soldier (mother a cinema usherette), o. housewife (30 July 1997)

Samuelson, Sydney, London. b. 1925, f. cinema distributor, o. British cinema commissioner (23 January 1997)

Smith, Andre, Leigh-on-Sea, Essex, b.1914, f. magician, o. cinema projectionist (9 April 1997)

Smith, Betty, Southend-on-sea, b. 1915, f. docker, o. usherette (4 February 1997)

Thorpe, Bill, Southend-on-Sea, b. 1928, f.. tea buyer, o. cinema projectionist (7 April 1997)

Titherley, Fred, Leigh-on-Sea, Essex, b. 1916, f. linotype operator, o. cinema projectionist (11 April 1997)

Tranded, Michael, Westclff-on-Sea, Essex, b. 1936, f. chef, o. projectionist (24 January 1997)

Trumper, Ernest, Southend-on-Sea, b. 1913, f. hairdresser, o. cinema manager (10 February 1997)

Turner, Enid, Bradford, b. 1914, f. mill worker, o. housewife (30 July 1997)

Urquart, George, Southend-on-Sea, b. 1932, f. ship's officer, o. cinema projectionist (3 February 1997)

White, Barry, Otley, W. Yorkshire, b. 1941, f. tailor, o. manual worker (30 July 1997)

Wise, Shirley, Otley, W. Yorkshire, b. 1934, f. baker, o. teacher (29 July 1997)

Wilson, Mary, Leigh-on-Sea, Essex, b. 1930, f. civil servant, o. housewife (2 February 1997)

Woodley, Dick, Southend-on-Sea, b. 1937, f. packer, o. cinema projectionist (1 April 1997)


## SELECT FILMOGRAPHY

Date of release is that given by Denis Gifford. pr. = production company, dist. = distributor on first release, d. = director, p. = producer, s. = screenplay, so. = source, 1. = leading actors

*Appointment with Crime*, 1946, pr. British National, dist. Anglo-American, d. & s. John Harlow, p. Louis H Jackson, so. Michael Leighton, Vernon Sewell, 1. William Hartnell, Robert Beatty, Joyce Howard, Raymond Lovell, Herbert Lom

*The Blue Lamp*, 1950, pr. Ealing, dist. General Film Distributors, d. Basil Dearden, p. Michael Balcon, s. T.E.B. Clarke, Alexander Mackendrick, so. Jan Read, Ted Willis, 1. Jack Warner, Jimmy Hanley, Dirk Bogarde, Robert Flemyng, Peggy Evans

*Blue Scar*, 1949, pr. Outlook, dist. British Lion, d. & s. Jill Craigie, p. William MacQuitty, 1. Emrys Jones, Gwyneth Vaughan

*A Boy, a Girl and a Bike*, 1949, pr. Gainsborough, dist. General Film Distributors, d. Ralph Smart, p. Ralph Keene, s. Ted Willis, 1. John McCallum, Honor Blackman, Diana Dors, Leslie Dwyer, Patrick Holt

*Boys in Brown*, 1949, pr. Gainsborough, dist. General Film Distributors, d. & s. Montgomery Tully, so. (play) Reginald Beckwith, l. Jack Warner, Richard Attenborough, Jimmy Hanley, Dirk Bogarde

*Brief Encounter*, 1945, pr. Independent Producers-Cineguild, dist. General Film Distributors, d. David Lean, p. Noel Coward, s. David Lean, Ronald Neame, so. (play) Noel Coward, l. Trevor Howard, Celia Johnson

*The Captive Heart*, 1946, pr. Ealing, dist. General Film Distributors, d. Basil Dearden, p. Michael Balcon, s. Angus Macphail, Guy Morgan, so. Patrick Kirwan, l. Michael Redgrave, Mervyn Johns, Jack Warner, Basil Radford, Jimmy Hanley

*Chance of a Lifetime*, 1950, pr. Pilgrim Pictures, dist. British Lion, d. Bernard Miles, p. Bernard Miles, John Palmer, s. Bernard Miles, Walter Greenwood, l. Basil Radford, Bernard Miles, Julian Mitchell, Geoffrey Keen

*Dance Hall*, 1950, pr. Ealing, dist. General Film Distributors, d. Charles Crichton, p. Michael Balcon, s. E.V.H. Emmett, Diane Morgan, Alexander Mackendrick, l. Petula Clarke, Natasha Parry, Diana Dors

*Dancing with Crime*, 1947, pr. Coronet-Alliance, dist. Paramount, d. John Paddy Carstairs, p. James A. Carter, s. Brock Williams, so. Peter Fraser, l. Richard Attenborough, Sheila Sim, Barry K. Barnes, Barry Jones

*Fame Is the Spur*, 1947, pr. Two Cities, dist. General Film Distributors, d. Roy Boulting, p. John Boulting, s. Nigel Balchin, so. (novel) Howard Spring, l. Michael Redgrave, Rosamund John

*Floodtide*, 1949, pr. Aquila, dist. General Film Distributors, d. Frederick Wilson, p. Donald B. Wilson, s. George Blake, Donald B. Wilson, so. George Blake, l. Gordon Jackson, Rona Anderson, Jack Lambert

*Good Time Girl*, 1948, pr. Triton, dist. General Film Distibutors, d. David Macdonald, p. Sydney Box, Samuel Goldwyn jr, s. Muriel & Sidney Box, Ted Willis, so. (novel) Arthur La Bern, l. Jean Kent, Flora Robson, Dennis Price, Herbert Lom

*The Gorbals Story*, 1950, pr. New World, dist. Eros, d. David MacKane, p. Ernest Gartside, s. David MacKane, so. (play) Robert McLeish, l. Howard Connell, Betty Henderson, Russell Hunter, Roddy McMillan

*The Guinea Pig*, 1948, pr. Pilgrim, dist. Pathe, d. Roy Boulting, p. John Boulting, s. Warren Chetham Strode, Bernard Miles, Roy Boulting, so. (play) Warren Chetham Strode, l. Richard Attenborough, Cecil Trouncer, Robert Flemyng

*The Hasty Heart*, 1949, pr. ABPC, dist. AB Pictures, d. & p. Vincent Sherman, s. Ronald MacDougall, so. (play) John Patrick, l. Richard Todd, Ronald Reagan, Patricia Neal

*Here Come the Huggetts*, 1948, pr. Gainsborough, dist. General Film Distributors, d. Ken Annakin, p. Betty Box, s. Mabel & Denis Constanduros, Peter Rogers, Muriel & Sydney Box, l. Jack Warner, Kathleen Harrison, Jane Hylton, Susan Shaw, Petula Clark

*Holiday Camp*, 1947, pr. Gainsborough, dist. General Film Distributors, d. Ken Annakin, p. Sydney Box, s. Muriel & Sydney Box, Peter Rogers, Mabel & Denis Constanduros, Ted Willis, so. Godfrey Winn, l. Jack Warner, Kathleen Harrison, Hazel Court, Flora Robson, Esma Cannon

*Home Sweet Home*, 1945, pr. Mancunian, dist. Butchers, d. & p. John E. Blakeley, s. Roney Parsons, Anthony Toner, l. Frank Randle, Tony Pendrell, H.F. Maltby

*The Huggetts Abroad*, 1949, pr. Gainsborough, dist. General Film Distributors, d. Ken Annakin, p. Betty Box, s. Mabel & Denis Constanduros, Ted Willis, Gerard Bryant, l. Jack Warner, Kathleen Harrison. Susan Shaw, Petula Clark, Dinah Sheridan

*It Always Rains on Sunday*, 1947, pr. Ealing, dist. General Film Distributors, d. Robert Hamer, p. Michael Balcon, s. Robert Hamer, Henry Cornelius, so. (novel) Arthur La Bern, l. Googie Withers, John McCallum, Jack Warner

*London Belongs to Me,* 1948, pr. Independent Producers-Individual, dist. General Film
    Distributors, d. Sidney Gilliat, p. Frank Launder and Sidney Gilliat, sc. Sidney Gilliat and
    J.B. Williams, so. (novel) Norman Collins, l. Richard Attenborough, Alastair Sim, Susan
    Shaw, Joyce Carey
*Love on the Dole,* 1941, pr. British National, dist. Anglo-American, d. & p. John Baxter,
    s. Walter Greenwood, Barbara K Emery, Rollo Gamble, so: (novel) Walter Greenwood,
    l. Deborah Kerr, Clifford Evans
*Old Mother Riley's New Venture,* 1949, pr. Harry Reynolds, dist. Renown, d. John Harlow,
    p. Harry Reynolds, John Gilling, s. Con West, Jack Marks, John Gilling, so. Con West, Jack
    Marks, l. Arthur Lucan, Kitty McShane, Chilli Bouchier
*Old Mother Riley, Headmistress,* 1950, pr. Harry Reynolds, dist. Renown, d. John Harlow, s.
    John Harlow, Ted Cavanagh, so. Con West, Jack Marks, l. Arthur Lucan, Kitty McShane
*Once a Jolly Swagman,* 1948, pr. Pinewood-Wessex, dist. General Film Distributors, d. Jack
    Lee, p. Ian Dalrymple, s. Jack Lee, William Rose, Cliff Gordon, so. (novel) Montagu Slater,
    l. Dirk Bogarde, Renee Asherton, Bill Owen, Bonar Colleano
*Over the Garden Wall,* 1950, pr. Film Studios Manchester, dist. Mancunian, d. & p. John E.
    Blakeley, s. Harry Jackson, so. Anthony Toner, l. Norman Evans, Jimmy James
*They Were Not Divided,* 1950, pr. Two Cities, dist. General Film Distributors, d. & s. Terence
    Young, p. Herbert Smith, l. Edward Underdown, Ralph Clanton
*Vote for Huggett,* 1949, pr. Gainsborough, dist. General Film Distributors, d. Ken Annakin,
    p. Betty Box, s. Mabel & Denis Constanduros, Allan Mackinnon, l. Jack Warner, Kathleen
    Harrison, Susan Shaw, Petula Clark
*Waterfront,* 1950, pr. Conqueror, dist. General Film Distributors, d. Michael Anderson, p. Paul
    Soskin, s. John Brophy, Paul Soskin, so. (novel) John Brophy, l. Robert Newton, Kathleen
    Harrison, Susan Shaw, Richard Burton, Avis Scott
*Waterloo Road,* 1945, pr. Gainsborough, dist. General Film Distributors, d. & s. Sidney Gilliat,
    p. Edward Black, so. Val Valentine, l. John Mills, Stewart Granger, Alastair Sim, Joy
    Shelton
*The Way to the Stars,* 1945, pr. Two Cities, dist. United Artists, d. Anthony Asquith, p. Anatole
    de Grunwald, s. Terence Rattigan, Anatole de Grunwald, so. Terence Rattigan, Richard
    Sharman, l. Michael Redgrave, John Mills, Rosamund John, Douglass Montgomery
*The White Unicorn,* 1947, pr. John Corfield, dist. General Film Distributors, d. Bernard
    Knowles, p. Harold Huth, s. Robert Westerby, A.R. Rawlinson, so. (novel) Flora Sandstrom,
    l. Margaret Lockwood, Joan Greenwood, Dennis Price
*The Wooden Horse,* 1950, pr. British Lion-Wessex, dist. British Lion, d. Jack Lee, p. Ian
    Dalrymple, s & so. Eric Williams, l. Leo Genn, David Tomlinson, Anthony Steel

APPENDICES

APPENDIX ONE

Tables and charts

Chapter Three

Table 3.1 *Social classes in Great Britain, 1951 (excluding retired/unemployed)*

| Social class | | Percentage by head of household |
|---|---|---|
| I | Professional, managerial | 3.3 |
| II | Intermediate managerial, shopkeepers | 18.3 |
| III | Skilled, clerical, personal service | 49.5 |
| IV | Semi-skilled, agricultural labourers | 16.5 |
| V | Unskilled and 'other ranks' in forces | 12.4 |
| | Total | 100 |

Source: G.D.H. Cole, *Studies in class structure*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1955, table 1

Table 3.2 *Age structure of Great Britain, 1938 and 1949*

| Age | Percentage of total, 1938 | Percentage of total, 1949 | Difference |
|---|---|---|---|
| 0-4 | 6.9 | 8.5 | 1.6 |
| 5-14 | 14.8 | 13.3 | -1.5 |
| 14-24 | 16.1 | 13.9 | -2.2 |
| 25-34 | 16.6 | 15.0 | -1.6 |
| 35-44 | 14.5 | 15.5 | 1.0 |
| 45-54 | 12.3 | 13.0 | 0.7 |
| 55-64 | 10.2 | 10.2 | - |
| 65+ | 8.9 | 10.6 | 1.7 |
| Total | 100 | 100 | |

Sources: Mark Abrams, *The condition of the British people 1911-1945*, London: Gollancz, 1945, 27; id. *The home market*, London: Allen & Unwin, 1950, table 1

Table 3.3 *General fertility rate, 1900-48*

|  | 1900-2 | 1910-2 | 1920-2 | 1930-2 | 1935-8 | 1945-8 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Births per 1,000 women, 15-44 | 115 | 98 | 91 | 64 | 61 | 81 |

Source: Abrams, *The home market,* 12

Table 3.4 *Standardised fertility rate of married women by social class, 1931 and 1951*

| Year | Social class | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | I | II | III | IV | V | All |
| 1931 | 79 | 84 | 94 | 108 | 124 | 100 |
| 1951 | 90 | 93 | 96 | 110 | 123 | 100 |

Source: Constance Rollett and Julia Parker, 'Population and family', in
A.H. Halsey (ed.) *Trends in British society since 1900: a guide to the
changing social structure of Britain,* Basingstoke, Hants., and London:
Macmillan, 1972, table 2.38. (As the tables in Halsey, op.cit. are often
derived from an amalgam of sources, original sources are not cited here or
in subsequent tables.)

Table 3.5 *Household size in England and Wales, 1921-51 (per cent)*

|  | Persons in household | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8-9 | 10+ |
| 1921 | 6.0 | 17.7 | 20.8 | 18.6 | 13.9 | 9.4 | 6.0 | 5.7 | 1.9 |
| 1931 | 6.7 | 21.9 | 24.1 | 19.4 | 12.4 | 7.3 | 4.1 | 3.2 | 0.9 |
| 1951 | 10.7 | 27.7 | 25.3 | 19.0 | 9.6 | 4.3 | 1.9 | 1.2 | 0.3 |

Source: A.M. Carr-Saunders, D. Caradog Jones and C.A. Moser, *A survey of social conditions in
England and Wales as illustrated by statistics,* London: Oxford University Press, 1958, table 4.2

Table 3.6 *Geographical distribution of the population of Great Britain, 1951*

|  | Percentage of population | Population increase 1931-51 (per cent) |
|---|---|---|
| South East | 31.1 | 12.7 |
| North | 27.9 | 4.1 |
| W. Midlands & SW | 15.7 | 16.3 |
| E. Midlands & East | 9.6 | 12.1 |
| Wales | 5.3 | - 0.04 |
| **England & Wales** | **89.6** | **7.8** |
| Scotland | 10.4 | 5.2 |
| Total | 100 | 100 |

Source: Rollett and Parker in Halsey, op.cit. tables 2.11, 2.12

Table 3.7 *Dwellings occupied by private households in England and Wales, 1951*

|  | No. of dwellings (000s) | | | No. of households (000s) | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | 1921 | 1931 | 1951 | 1921 | 1931 | 1951 |
| 1 private household | 7,007 | 8,284 | 11,281 | 7,007 | 8,284 | 11,281 |
| 2 private households | 598 | 660 | 656 | 1,196 | 1,320 | 1,311 |
| 3+ private households | 155 | 179 | 143 | 536 | 629 | 526 |
| Total | 7,760 | 9,123 | 12,080 | 8,739 | 10,233 | 13,118 |

Source: Carr-Saunders, op.cit. table 4.4

Table 3.8 *Owner occupation in England and Wales by weekly income, 1948-49*

|  | <£3 | £3 - £5 | £5 - £7.10s | £7.10s - £10 | £10+ |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Percentage of owner-occupiers | 26 | 21 | 24 | 40 | 65 |

Source: W.F.F. Kemsley and David Ginsburg, *Consumer expenditure series: expenditure on repairs and alterations to domestic property, on gardens, removals and domestic service.* Social Survey NS 704/3, [1950], table 3.

Table 3.9 *Major causes of death of men aged 20 to 64 in England and Wales, 1950*

| Social class I | SMR[a] | Social class V | SMR[a] |
|---|---|---|---|
| Diabetes | 167 | Bronchitis | 172 |
| Hypertension | 164 | Pneumonia | 157 |
| Leukaemia | 153 | Respiratory TB | 149 |
| Coronary artery disease | 150 | Stomach ulcer | 144 |
| SMR for class | 97 | SMR for class | 118 |

[a] Standardised mortality rate (100 for cohort comprising all classes)

Source: adapted from Carr-Saunders, op.cit. table 16.4

Table 3.10 *Number of children aged eight to seventeen found guilty of indictable offences in England and Wales, 1938–49 — all courts*

| Year | Boys | | | | Girls | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Number of offenders | | Number per 100,000 of the population of boys in the age group. | | Number of offenders | | Number per 100,000 of the population of boys in the age group. | |
| | 8-13yrs | 14-17yrs | 8-13yrs | 14-17yrs | 8-13yrs | 14-17yrs | 8-13yrs | 14-17yrs |
| 1938 | 14,724 | 11,645 | 798 | 1,131 | 835 | 912 | 46 | 90 |
| 1939 | 16,724 | 12,281 | 930 | 1,248 | 941 | 889 | 53 | 91 |
| 1940 | 23,167 | 16.071 | 1,304 | 1,674 | 1,449 | 1,500 | 83 | 158 |
| 1941 | 23,083 | 17,000 | 1,324 | 1,824 | 1,530 | 1,981 | 89 | 214 |
| 1942 | 20,382 | 14,691 | 1,184 | 1,613 | 1,563 | 1,913 | 93 | 212 |
| 1943 | 21,058 | 14,212 | 1,234 | 1,591 | 1,666 | 1,827 | 100 | 206 |
| 1944 | 22,525 | 14,625 | 1,330 | 1,654 | 1,558 | 1,846 | 94 | 211 |
| 1945 | 22,922 | 17,349 | 1,361 | 1,967 | 1,500 | 1,732 | 92 | 199 |
| 1946 | 19,912 | 14,347 | 1,175 | 1,638 | 1,433 | 1,396 | 87 | 162 |
| 1947 | 19,567 | 13,027 | 1,140 | 1,515 | 1,591 | 1,509 | 96 | 178 |
| 1948 | 24,684 | 15,980 | 1,433 | 1,902 | 2,043 | 1,727 | 123 | 212 |
| 1949 | 23,164 | 14,126 | 1,351 | 1,708 | 1,717 | 1,423 | 104 | 177 |

Source: Home Office and Ministry of Education joint circular, *Juvenile Delinquency*, HO 99/1953, Min. of Ed. 265/1953, 20 July 1953, 6

a 4

Chapter Five

Abbreviations used:
        m   male
        f   female
        PS   primary school
        GS   grammar school
        SM   secondary modern school
        TS   technical school
        SS   secondary school (analogous to grammar school from 1945)
        SR   senior elementary school (analogous to secondary modern school from 1945)
        SE   any secondary school, i.e. any school offering post-primary education

All studies are nationwide unless otherwise stated. Where non-responders are indicated in surveys, these are excluded from the percentages where possible.

Table 5.1 *Frequency of cinema-going by adults*

| Source | Year | No. in sample | Age | Never go now (per cent) | Once weekly (per cent) | 2+ weekly (per cent) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Lush, 1941, 1-2, 80-81 (S. Wales) | 1937 | 500 | 18-25 | | 33 | 21 |
| Cameron et al., 1943, 3-4 and 104 (Cardiff, Liverpool and Glasgow) | 1937 | 1,561 | 18-23 | | 60 | 20 |
| Gallup, 1976, 7 | 1938 | | | 3[a] | 47[b] | 12 |
| Cantril, 1951, 486 | 1941 | | | 21 | 27 | 12 |
| Chapman, 1943, 25 (Scottish housewives) | | 2,376 | 19+ | 32[a] | 29 | 19 |
| Moss and Box, 1943, 1 and tables 1 and 4 | 1943 | 5,639 | 14+ | 30 | 20 | 12 |
| Hutchinson, 1946, 59 and 93 (Scottish miners and their wives) | 1945? | 3,164 | 20+ | 21 | 24 | 33 |
| M-O, *Kine Weekly*, 20 December 1945 | 1945 | | | 0 | 46 | 38 |
| Box, 1946, 1 and tables 1 and 2 | 1946 | 3,132 | 16+ | 27 | 19 | 13 |
| *Daily Express*, 15 February 1946 | 1946 | | | | 35 | 32 |
| M-O A: FR 2467, 1947, 8 (Birmingham) | | | | | 22 | 17 |

Table 5.1 (cont.)

| Source | Year | No. in sample | Age | Never go now (per cent) | Once weekly (per cent) | 2+ weekly (per cent) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Abrams, *Hulton*, 1947, 4, 38 and 48 | 1947 | 10,199 | 16+ | 13 | 25 | 19 |
| Gallup, 1976, 161-2 | 1947 | | | 12 | 14c | |
| Hutchinson, [1948], 50 (Willesden) | 1946-7 | 3,076 | | 18 | 33 | 13 |
| Abrams, 1948, 4, 9 and 48 | 1948 | 12,614 | 16+ | 18 | 24 | 18 |
| Gallup survey 169, 1948 | 1948 | | 21+ | 20 | 26 | 10 |
| Gallup survey 174, 1948 | 1948 | | 18+ | 17 | 22 | 14 |
| Abrams, 1949, 4, 9 and 48 | 1949 | 13,000 | 16+ | 17 | 24 | 17 |
| Gallup, 1976, 214 | 1949 | | | 14 | 26 | 16 |
| Abrams, 1950, 4, 9 and 48 | 1950 | 13,000 | 16+ | 20 | 23 | 15 |
| Hayes, 1953, 7 and table 12[b] | 1950-1 | 412 | | 32 | 31c | |
| BFPA, 1954, 15 | 1953 | | | 26 | 20 | 14 |
| Cauter and Downham, 1954, 297 and table 36 (Derby) | 1953 | 1,200 | 16-69 | 23 | 30c | |

[a] Includes those seldom going to cinema
[b] Those attending every 7-10 days
[c] Combined figure of those attending one or more times a week

| | Number | Minimum value | Maximum value | Range | Mean | Standard deviation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Never go now | 19 | 0 | 32 | 32 | 19.16 | 8.61 |
| Weekly | 20 | 19 | 60 | 41 | 29.25 | 10.64 |
| More often | 20 | 10 | 38 | 28 | 18.25 | 7.62 |

Table 5.2 Cinema-going of adults by socio-economic group

| Source | Date | No. in sample | Economic groups in sample | Never go now (per cent) | | | Once weekly (per cent) | | | 2+ weekly (per cent) | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | Lower | Middle | Upper | Lower | Middle | Upper | Lower | Middle | Upper |
| Moss and Box, 1943, 1 and table 6 | 1943 | 5,639 | 3 | 32 | 25 | 27 | 21 | 17 | 15 | 14 | 8 | 4 |
| Box, 1946, 1 and table 3 | 1946 | 3,137 | 3 | 42 | 23 | 22 | | | (26 | 36 | 30)[a] | |
| Abrams, *Hulton*, 1947, 4, 38 and 48 | 1947 | 10,199 | 3 | 15 | 9 | 9 | 25 | 27 | 23 | 22 | 14 | 9 |
| Abrams, 1948, 4, 9 and 48 | 1948 | 12,614 | 3 | 19 | 15 | 14 | 24 | 24 | 22 | 21 | 14 | 8 |
| Gallup survey 169, 1948 | 1948 | | 4[b] | 17 | 18 | 18 | 28 | 27 | 19 | 12 | 7 | 1 |
| Gallup survey 174, 1948 | 1948 | | 4[b] | 14 | 12 | 14 | 25 | 22 | 14 | 15 | 12 | 9 |
| Abrams, 1949, 4, 9 and 48 | 1949 | 13,000 | 3 | 19 | 14 | 15 | 24 | 24 | 20 | 19 | 13 | 8 |
| Abrams, 1950, 4, 9 and 48 | 1950 | 13,000 | 3 | 21 | 17 | 16 | 24 | 23 | 21 | 17 | 11 | 8 |
| Cauter and Downham, 1954, xvii and table 36 (Derby) | 1953 | 1,200 | 2 | 23 | 22 | | | (34 | | 21)[a] | | |
| BFPA, 1954, 15 | 1953 | | 3 | 27 | 24 | 22 | 21 | 18 | 16 | 16 | 7 | 5 |

[a] Attending one or more times weekly

[b] The third group — lower — is used for comparative purposes. The fourth group — the very poor — is likely to include a preponderance of pensioners who would be unlikely to attend the cinema regularly

Table 5.2 (statistical summary)

| | Economic group | Number | Minimum value | Maximum value | Range | Mean | Standard deviation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Never go now | Lower | 10 | 14 | 42 | 28 | 22.90 | 8.66 |
| | Middle | 10 | 9 | 25 | 16 | 17.90 | 5.47 |
| | Upper | 9 | 9 | 27 | 18 | 17.44 | 5.43 |
| Once weekly | Lower | 8 | 21 | 28 | 7 | 24.00 | 2.27 |
| | Middle | 8 | 17 | 27 | 10 | 22.75 | 3.69 |
| | Upper | 8 | 14 | 23 | 9 | 18.75 | 3.37 |
| More often | Lower | 8 | 12 | 22 | 10 | 17.00 | 3.46 |
| | Middle | 8 | 7 | 14 | 7 | 10.75 | 3.01 |
| | Upper | 8 | 1 | 9 | 8 | 6.50 | 2.88 |

Table 5.3 *Percentage of men and women going to the cinema one or more times a week*

| Sources | Date | Sample size | Age | Men (per cent) | Women (per cent) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Moss and Box, 1943, 1 and table 2 | 1943 | 5,639 | 14+ | 28 | 34 |
| Chapman, 1943, 25 (Scottish housewives) | | 2,376 | 19+ | | 48 |
| Hutchinson, 1946, 59 and 93 (Scottish miners and their wives) | 1945? | 3,164 | 20+ | 59 | 55 |
| Box, 1946, 1 and table 1 | 1946 | 3,132 | 14+ | 27 | 35 |
| M-O, *Puzzled people*, 1947, 1 and 123[a] | | 500 | | 62 | 63 |
| Abrams, *Hulton*, 1947, 4, 38 an 48 | 1947 | 10,199 | 16+ | 42 | 46 |
| Abrams, 1948, 4, 9 and 48 | 1948 | 12,614 | 16+ | 41 | 43 |
| Gallup survey 169, 1948 | 1948 | | 21+ | 33 | 39 |
| Gallup survey 174, 1948 | 1948 | | 18+ | 36 | 38 |
| Abrams, 1949, 4, 9 and 48 | 1949 | 13,000 | 16+ | 40 | 41 |
| Abrams, 1950, 4, 9 and 48 | 1950 | 13,000 | 16+ | 39 | 37 |
| BFPA, 1954, 15 | 1953 | | | 35 | 32 |
| Cauter and Downham, 1954, 297 and table 36 (Derby) | 1953 | 1,200 | 16-59 | 32 | 28 |

[a] Those attending in the week prior to the survey

| | Number | Minimum value | Maximum value | Range | Mean | Standard deviation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Men | 12 | 27 | 62 | 35 | 39.50 | 10.93 |
| Women | 13 | 28 | 63 | 35 | 41.46 | 9.66 |

Wilcoxon matched-pairs signed-ranks test for the size of the differences between two sets of scores: 4 - ranks, 8 + ranks, $Z$ = -1.024, significance 0.306 (2-tailed), i.e. across the twelve surveys providing data on both men and women attending the cinema one or more times a week, there is no significant difference at the 0.05 level between the results for the two groups.

a 9

Chart 5.1 *Cinema-going by age-group: percentages of those who went to the cinema at least once a week*

Chart data (by source, bars left to right):

- (i): 79, 43, 27, 17, 5
- (ii): 69, 57, 35, 28, 22, 11
- (iii): 77, 53, 44, 29
- (iv): 46, 41, 27, 17
- (v): 29, 25, 12, 9
- (vi): 72, 50, 39, 32, 15
- (vii): 67, 35, 25, 20, 13
- (viii): 69, 42, 30, 22, 12

Axis labels: (i) (ii) (iii) (iv) (v) (vi) (vii) (viii)

Legend: Youngest age group    Oldest age group
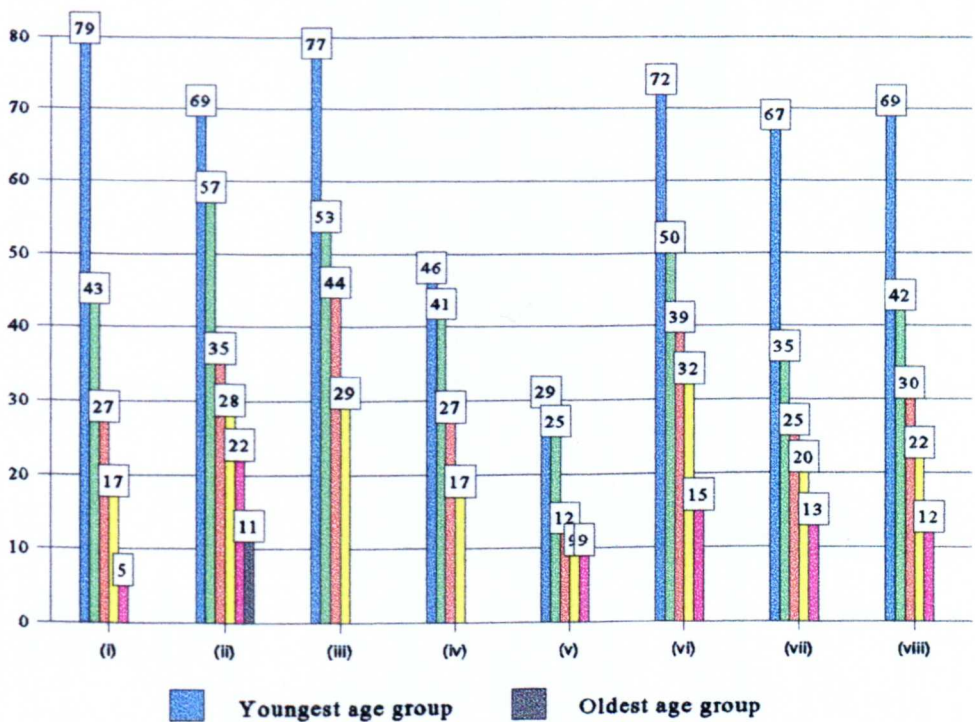
Sources:
(i)     Moss and Box, 1943, table 3
(ii)    Box, 1946, table 2
(iii)   Abrams, 1947-8, 156
(iv)    Gallup survey 169, 5 July 1948
(v)     Gallup survey 174, 1 November 1948
(vi)    Browne, 1950, table 63b
(vii)   Cauter and Downham, 1954, table 36
(viii)  BFPA, 1954, 15

Table 5.4 *Adults who never went to the cinema: youngest and oldest groups compared*

| Source | Date | Total sample size | Age | Never go now (per cent) | Age | Never go now (per cent) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Chapman, 1943, 25 (Scottish housewives) | | 2,376 | 19-35 | 17[a] | 51+ | 49 |
| Moss and Box, 1943, 1 and table 3 | 1943 | 5,638 | 14-17 | 2 | 66+ | 69 |
| Box, 1946, 1 and tables 1 and 2 | 1946 | 3,134 | 16-19 | 2 | 60+ | 61 |
| Abrams, 1947, 4, 38 and 48 | 1947 | 10,199 | 16-24 | 2 | 45+ | 22 |
| Abrams, 1948, 4, 9, and 48 | 1948 | 12,614 | 16-24 | 3 | 65+ | 45 |
| Gallup survey 169, 1948 | 1948 | | 21-29 | 7 | 66+ | 43 |
| Gallup survey 174, 1948 | 1948 | | 18-20 | 0 | 65+ | 41 |
| M-O A: FR 3067, 1948, 16 | 1948 | 2,040 | 16-25 | 6 | 45+ | 39 |
| Abrams, 1949, 4, 9 and 48 | 1949 | 13,000 | 16-24 | 3 | 65+ | 43 |
| Abrams, 1950, 4, 9 and 48 | 1950 | 13,000 | 16-24 | 4 | 65+ | 45 |
| BFPA, 1954, 15 | 1953 | | 16-24 | 4 | 65+ | 55 |
| Cauter and Downham, 1954, 297 and table 36 (Derby) | 1953 | 1,200 | 16-24 | 1 | 55-69 | 40 |

[a] Includes those seldom going to the cinema

| | Number | Minimum value | Maximum value | Range | Mean | Standard deviation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Youngest group | 12 | 0 | 17 | 17 | 4.25 | 4.47 |
| Oldest group | 12 | 22 | 69 | 47 | 46.00 | 11.87 |

Wilcoxon matched-pairs signed-ranks test for the size of the differences between two sets of scores: 12 + ranks, $Z = -3.061$, significance 0.002 (2-tailed), i.e. across the twelve surveys, the differences between the two sets of scores are significant at the 0.005 level.

Table 5.5 *Frequency of cinema-going by older, mainly working teenagers*

| Source | Year | Age | No. in age group | Never go now (per cent) | Once weekly (per cent) | 2+ weekly (per cent) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Cameron, et al., 1943, 3-4 and 104 (Cardiff, Liverpool and Glasgow) | 1937 | 18-23 | 1,561 | | 60 | 20 |
| Harley, in Fowler, 1995, 116-17 | 1937 | | 109 | | 60 | 30 |

Table 5.5 (cont.)

| Source | Year | Age | No. in age group | Never go now (per cent) | Once weekly (per cent) | 2+ weekly (per cent) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Lush, 1941, 1-2, 80-1 (S. Wales) | 1937 | 18-25 | 500 | | 33 | 21 |
| Farr, [1939], 1 and 4 | 1939 | 14-18 | m c825 | 21 | 36 | 40 |
| | | | f c825 | | 44 | 29 |
| BFI, 1943, 7-8 | | 16-21 | 1,000 | | 49 | 36 |
| Moss and Box, 1943, 1 and table 3 | 1943 | 14-17 | 303 | 2 | 36 | 43 |
| Box, 1946, 1 and table 2 | 1946 | 16-19 | 116 | 2 | 69[a] | |
| Youth Council, [1946], preface and 6 (Stockton-on-Tees) | | 16-17 | 200 | 10 | 44 | 47 |
| Youth Council, 1947, 19-20 (Tynemouth) | | 14-21 | | 12 | 30 | 47 |
| Abrams, 1947, 4, 38 and 48 | 1947 | 16-24 | 1,484 | 2 | 31 | 46 |
| Abrams, 1948, 4 9 and 48 | 1948 | 16-24 | 1,182 | 3 | 31 | 42 |
| Hutchinson, [1948], table 35 (Willesden) | 1946-7 | 18-29 | 635 | | 39 | 26 |
| Gallup survey 174, 1948 | 1948 | 18-20 | | 0 | 33 | 29 |
| Abrams, 1949, 4, 9 and 48 | 1949 | 16-24 | 1,850 | 3 | 32 | 40 |
| Abrams, 1950, 4 9 and 48 | 1950 | 16-24 | 1,231 | 4 | 33 | 37 |
| Westhill, 1950, 23 and tables 9-12 (Birmingham) | | 14-20 | 1,004 | 1 | 36 | 43 |
| Jephcott, 1954, 9-10 and table 5b (London and Nottingham) | 1950-2 | 14-18 | 269 | 35[b] | 32 | 40 |
| Wilkins, 1955, 1 and tables 119 and 120 | 1950 | 15-19 | 1,950 | 10[b] | 31 | 42 |
| BFPA, 1954, 15 | 1953 | 16-24 | | 4 | 33 | 36 |
| Cauter and Downham, 1954, 297 and table 36 (Derby) | 1953 | 16-24 | 175 | 1 | 67[a] | |
| Barclay, 1961, 2 and table 3 | 1960 | 16-18 | | | 30 | 25 |

[a] Combined figure of those attending one or more times a week
[b] Includes those who seldom went to the cinema

| | Number | Minimum value | Maximum value | Range | Mean | Standard deviation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Never go | 15 | 0 | 35 | 35 | 7.33 | 9.51 |
| Weekly | 20 | 30 | 60 | 30 | 27.65 | 9.23 |
| More often | 20 | 20 | 47 | 27 | 35.95 | 8.57 |

Chart 5.2 *Adults' cinema-going analysed by economic group, 1943*



| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Sample | 74 | 20 | 5 |
| Enthusiasts | 80 | 15 | 3 |
| Population | 75 | 20 | 5 |
| Audience | 81 | 16 | 3 |

■ Lower ■ Middle ■ Upper
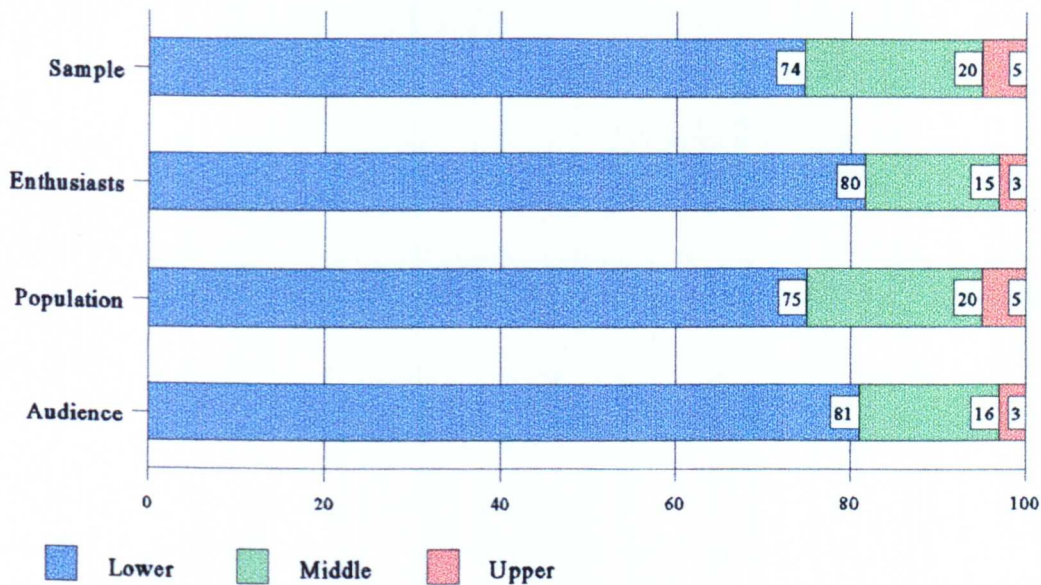
Source: Moss and Box, 1943, tables 15 and 25

Table 5.6 *Adult audience analysed by economic group, 1949 and 1950*

| Class (usual income level of head of household per annum) | Percentage of economic group in population[a] | Percentage of economic group in Abrams' samples[b] | Percentage of economic group in audience, 1949 (Abrams, 1949, 9 and 48) | Percentage of economic group in audience, 1950 (Abrams, 1950, 9 and 48) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| A/B: well-to-do and middle class ( £650 and over) | 11 | 18 | 8 | 9 |
| C: lower middle class (£400 to £649) | 17 | 27 | 16 | 16 |
| D/E: working class and poor (£399 and under) | 72 | 55 | 76 | 75 |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| Size of sample | | | 13,000 | 13,000 |

[a] Abrams, 1949, 8 (the same population is used for both years)
[b] Calculated from Abrams 1949, 9; Abrams 1950, 9 (the composition of the sample is almost identical in both years)

Chart 5.3 *Adult audience analysed by occupation*

Audience (1943) — factory 34 | other manual 16 | clerical/distributive 20 | professional/managerial 4 | housewives 24 | retired/unemployed 2

Population (1943) — factory 25 | other manual 17 | clerical/distributive 16 | professional/managerial 6 | housewives 31 | retired/unemployed 5

Audience (1946) — factory 18 | other manual 23 | clerical/distributive 14 | professional/managerial 5 | housewives 38 | retired/unemployed 6

Population (1946) — factory 11 | other manual 22 | clerical/distributive 11 | professional/managerial 6 | housewives 41 | retired/unemployed 9

Scale: 0  20  40  60  80  100

Legend:
- factory
- other manual
- clerical/distributive
- professional/managerial
- housewives
- retired/unemployed

Sources: Moss and Box, 1943, table 25; Box, 1946, 7. (Moss and Box's percentages are adjusted to exclude children aged five to fourteen, who made up 16 per cent of the population and 20 per cent of the audience.)

Table 5.7 *Adult cinema audience analysed by sex*

| | Richards and Sheridan, 1987, 41-135 | Moss and Box, 1943, tables 3 and 25[a] | | Box, 1946, 6 and table 1 | | Abrams, 1950, 48 | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| | Bolton audience aged 15+ (1938) | Adult civilian audience aged 14+ (per cent) | Adult civilian population aged 15+ (per cent) | Adult civilian audience aged 16+ (per cent) | Adult civilian population aged 16+ (per cent) | Audience, aged 16+ (per cent) | Population aged 16+ (per cent)[b] |
| Men | 53 | 40 | 44 | 38 | 46 | 48 | 46 |
| Women | 47 | 60 | 56 | 62 | 54 | 52 | 54 |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| Sample | 515 | 5,639 | | 3,137 | | 13,000 | |

[a] Percentages recalculated to exclude children
[b] Calculated from Geoffrey Browne, *Patterns of British Life*, London: Hulton Press, 1950, tables 11a and b

Table 5.8a *Age profile of cinema audience, 1943*

| Age group | Civilian cinema audience (per cent) | Civilian population (per cent) |
|---|---|---|
| 5-14 | 20 | 16 |
| 14-17 | 11 | 5 |
| 18-40 | 46 | 36 |
| 41-65 | 8 | 11 |
| over 65 | 15 | 32 |
| Total | 100 | 100 |

Source: Moss and Box, 1943, table 25

Table 5.8b *Age profile of adult cinema audience, 1946*

| Age group | Adult cinema audience (per cent) | Adult civilian population (per cent) |
|---|---|---|
| 16-19 | 9 | 7 |
| 20-29 | 28 | 17 |
| 30-39 | 25 | 21 |
| 40-49 | 20 | 19 |
| 50-59 | 11 | 16 |
| 60+ | 7 | 20 |
| Total | 100 | 100 |

Source: Box, 1946, 7

Table 5.8c *Age profile of those attending the cinema one or more times weekly, 1943*

| Age group | Civilian frequent attenders (per cent) | Whole sample (per cent) |
|---|---|---|
| 14-17 | 13 | 5 |
| 18-40 | 57 | 42 |
| 41-45 | 11 | 13 |
| 46-65 | 17 | 30 |
| over 65 | 1 | 8 |
| unclassified | 1 | 1 |
| Total | 100 | 100 |
| Sample | 1,771 | 5,639 |

Source: Moss and Box, 1943, table 13

Table 5.8d *Age profile of adults attending the cinema one or more times weekly, 1947 and 1949*

| Age group | 1947 survey | | 1949 survey | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Frequent attenders (per cent) | Nonpatrons (per cent) | Frequent attenders (per cent) | Nonpatrons (per cent) |
| 16-24 | 25 | 2 | 26 | 2 |
| 25-34 | 25 | 9 | 24 | 10 |
| 35-44 | 22 | 16 | 20 | 16 |
| 45+ | 28 | 73 | 30 | 72 |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |

Sources: Abrams, 1947-48, 157; Abrams, 1949-50, table 5

Table 5.9 *Marital status of adults attending the cinema one or more times weekly, 1943*

| Status | Frequent attenders (per cent) | Whole sample (per cent) |
|---|---|---|
| Married or widowed | 56 | 74 |
| Single | 44 | 26 |
| Total | 100 | 100 |
| Sample | 1,771 | 5,639 |

Source: Moss and Box, 1943, table 14

Table 5.10  *Cinema-going of adults by region*

| Region | Moss and Box, 1943, table 18 | | | Gallup survey 169, 1948 | Browning & Sorrell, 1954, table 6 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | *Frequent attenders[a] (per cent) a* | *Whole sample (per cent) b* | *Difference (a-b)* | *Frequent attenders as percentage of sample living in region (per cent)* | *Admissions per person, April 1950- March 1951[b]* |
| Scotland | 11 | 11 | - | 38 | 36 |
| North | 8 | 6 | 2 | ⎤ | 37 |
| E.& W. Ridings | | | | | 34 |
| North East | 8 | 9 | -1 | 37 | 37 |
| North West | 17 | 14 | 3 | ⎦ | 36 |
| North Midlands | 5 | 7 | -2 | ⎤ | 25 |
| Midlands | 11 | 9 | 2 | 34 ⎦ | 26 |
| Wales | 5 | 6 | -1 | 46 | 28 |
| East Anglia | 4 | 6 | -2 | ⎤ | 17 |
| South | 4 | 6 | -2 | | 20 |
| South West | 4 | 7 | -3 | 31 | 19 |
| South East | 4 | 4 | - | ⎦ | 26[c] |
| London | 18 | 15 | 3 | 35 | 34 |
| Total | 100 | 100 | | | |
| Sample | 1,771 | 5,639 | | | |

[a] Attending one or more times weekly
[b] Includes children
[c] Includes County of London

Table 5.11  *Cinema-going habits of adults*

|  | M-O, _Kine Weekly_, 30 December 1945 (per cent) | Box, 1946, table 10[a] (per cent) | Bernstein, 1947, 14 (per cent) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Go to same cinema regularly | 37 | 23 | 15 |
| Choose among different cinemas | 58[b] | 48 | 49 |
| Go to same cinema only if wanting to see particular film |  | 10 | 21 |
| Only go to cinema to see particular film |  | 19 | 21 |
| Total | 95 | 100 | 106[c] |
| Sample |  | 1,206 |  |

[a] Percentage of those attending the cinema once a month or more frequently
[b] 43 per cent regularly went to two or three local cinemas; 15 per cent shopped for their films
[c] Some respondents made more than one choice

Table 5.12  *Cinema-going habits of those attending the cinema one or more times weekly by age, 1946*

|  | 16-24 (per cent) | 25-35 (per cent) | 35-44 (per cent) | 44-54 (per cent) | 55+ (per cent) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Go to same cinema regularly | 19 | 20 | 23 | 23 | 31 |
| Choose among different cinemas | 63 | 50 | 43 | 38 | 34 |
| Go to same cinema only if wanting to see particular film | 6 | 6 | 15 | 14 | 12 |
| Only go to cinema to see particular film | 12 | 23 | 19 | 24 | 23 |
| Total | !00 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| Sample | 294 | 289 | 316 | 291 | 109 |

Source: Box, 1946, table 11

Table 5.13 *Factors influencing adults' choice of films*

| Source | Date | Age | Number | Trailer/go to same cinema (per cent) | Newspaper (per cent) | Radio (per cent) | Magazine (per cent) | Other people (per cent) | Star (per cent) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Bernstein, 1937, 25 | 1937 | [a] | 159,000 | | | 42 | | | |
| BFI, 1943, 6 and 9 | Wartime | 16-21 | 1,000 | 2 | | | (74)[b] | | 44 |
| M-O, *Kine Weekly*, 20 December 1945 | 1945 | | | | 90 | 38 | | | 63 |
| *Daily Express*, 15 February 1946 | 1946 | | | | 22 | | | 13 | |
| Bernstein, 1947, 15 | 1946 | | | | | 69 | | | |

[a] Sample includes some schoolchildren
[b] Combined figure for radio and magazine

Table 5.14 *Cinema-going habits of occupational groups attending the cinema one or more times weekly, 1946*

|  | Factory operatives (per cent) | Other manual (per cent) | Clerical/ distributive (per cent) | Professional/ managerial (per cent) | Housewives (per cent) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Go to same cinema regularly | 26 | 22 | 13 | 18 | 25 |
| Choose among different cinemas | 54 | 47 | 58 | 45 | 37 |
| Go to same cinema only if wanting to see particular film | 8 | 13 | 8 | 2 | 16 |
| Only go to cinema to see particular film | 12 | 16 | 21 | 35 | 22 |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| Sample | 366 | 192 | 238 | 62 | 315 |

Source: Box, 1946, table 12

Table 5.15 *Types of films preferred by adults*

| Source | Date | Age | No. in sample | Preferred types of film | Per cent (where given) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Kuhn, [1997?], table 13[a] | 1930s | | 186[b] | Adaptation<br>Musical<br>Historical/Adventure | 73<br>43<br>36 |
| Bernstein, 1937, 14 | 1937 | <21<br><br>21-60 | total 159,000[c] | Thriller-adventure<br>Musical<br>Comedy<br>Thriller-adventure<br>Society drama<br>Musical | |
| M-O, in Richards & Sheridan, 1987, 41-135 (Bolton) | 1938 | | m 304[b]<br><br>f 225[b] | Musical romance<br>Drama and tragedy<br>Crime<br>Musical romance<br>Drama and tragedy<br>History | 74<br>51<br>46<br>97<br>48<br>27 |
| Farr, [1939], 1 and 5 | 1939 | 14-18 | m c875<br><br>f c875 | Crime<br>Adventure<br>Historical<br>Historical<br>Musical<br>Crime | 19<br>15<br>14<br>17<br>16<br>14 |
| BFI, 1943, 7 and 11 | | 16-21 | 1,000 | Comedy<br>Romance<br>Adventure | |

cont.

Table 5.15 (cont.)

| Source | Date | Age | No. in sample | Preferred types of film | Per cent (where given) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Cameron, et al., 1943, 3-4, 105 (Cardiff, Liverpool & Glasgow) | 1937 | 18-23 | 1,561 | Adventure Musical/Romance | |
| M-O, *Kine Weekly*, 20 Dec 1945 | 1945 | | | Modern drama<br>Musical<br>Crime | 39<br>27<br>21 |
| *Daily Express*, 15 February 1946 | 1946 | | | Human interest<br>Thriller<br>Society drama | 42<br>11<br>10 |
| Brew, [1946], 17 and 32 | | f 14-19 | 6,000[c] | Romance<br>Thriller<br>Crime | |
| Bernstein, 1947, 5 | 1946 | | | Drama<br>Adventure<br>Crime | 66<br>49<br>48 |
| Youth Council, [1947], 20 (Tynemouth) | | m 14-21<br><br>f  14-21 | [d] | Thriller/Crime<br>Musical<br>Romance/Musical<br>Thriller/Crime | 36<br>22<br>20<br>17 |
| Gallup Survey 157, 1948 | 1948 | | | Drama<br>Romance<br>Historical | 9<br>8<br>6 |
| M-O A: FR 3067, 1948, 11-16 | 1948 | m<br><br><br>f | total 2,040[e] | Thriller/Crime<br>Ordinary Life<br>Comedy<br>Ordinary life<br>Thriller/Crime<br>Musical | 21<br>13<br>12<br>23<br>15<br>8 |
| Brew, 1949, table 20 | | m 16-20+ | 2,178[d] | Thriller<br>Crime<br>Adventure | 71<br>70<br>61 |

[a] Retrospective study made in 1990s
[b] Includes schoolchildren
[c] *Kinematograph Weekly*, 23 January 1947, 4. Survey taken in cinema. Likely to include schoolchildren
[d] Likely to include adolescents still at school
[e] 17 per cent gave no answer

Table 5.16 *Classification of British films released 1945-50 by genre*

| Genre | Number | per cent |
|---|---|---|
| Adventure | 23 | 5 |
| Children's | 13 | 3 |
| Comedy | 93 | 19 |
| Compilation | 6 | 1 |
| Crime | 135 | 28 |
| Drama | 75 | 15 |
| Fantasy | 22 | 4 |
| History | 13 | 3 |
| Horror | 1 | <1 |
| Musical | 34 | 7 |
| Religion | 1 | <1 |
| Revue | 9 | 2 |
| Romance | 42 | 8 |
| Sport | 3 | 1 |
| War | 20 | 4 |
| Unclassified | 1 | <1 |
| Total | 491 | 100 |

Source: Denis Gifford, *The British film catalogue 1895-1985*, Newton Abbot, Devon: David & Charles, 1986

Table 5.17 *Adults' leisure activities by preference (P) or time spent (T)*

| Source | Place | Date | P/T | No. in sample | | Age | Principal leisure activity[a] | Cinema ranking[b] |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Bevington, et al., 1939, 67 and table 1 | Ipswich Slough | | T T | | | 15+ 15+ | Reading Cinema | 2nd |
| James and Moore, 1940, 135-140 | Manchester | 1939 | T | | 535[c] | 14-21 | Talking | 2nd |
| Harper, 1942, 12, 63 | Manchester | 1941-2 | T | m f | 22[d] 51[d] | 15-17 | Social activity (37) ditto (25) | 6th (7) 6th (7) |
| BFI, 1943, 7-9 | | | | | 1,000[e] | 16-21 | Reading (37) | 3rd |
| University of Bristol, 1945, 6, 8 and 20 | Bristol | 1944 | | m f | 46[e] 75[e] | 16 16 | Sport (30) Reading (49) | 5th (11) 2nd (36) |
| Brew, [1946], 49 | | | P | f | 250[e] | 14-19 | Dancing | |
| Hutchinson, 1946, 59 and 92 | Scotland (miners & wives) | 1945? | f | | 3,164 | 20+ | Cinema (79) | 1st |
| Atkins, 1947, 38-9 | | | P | | | teens | Cinema | 1st |
| Reeves and Slater, 1947, 112 and table 1 | | | P | | 1,500 | to 24 | Sport (18) | 7th (7) |
| M-O A: FR 3067, 1948, 10 | | 1948 | | | 2,040 | | Cinema/ Reading (26) | 1st |
| Brew, 1949, 8 and 26 | | | P | m | 3,000[e] | <15-20+ | Dancing (57) | |
| M-O A: FR 3150, 1949 | London | 1949 | | f | 200 | teens | Sport (46) | 3rd (36) |
| Rich, 1951, table 18 | Birmingham | 1949 | T | | 273 | 18+ | Being visited (17) | 4th (14) |
| Westhill, 1950, 23 and tables 9-12 | Birmingham | | T | | 1,004[g] | 14-20 | Cinema | 1st |
| Jephcott, 1954, 9-10 and table 5a | Nottingham | 1950-2 | T | m f | 55 62 | 14-18 | Cinema Cinema | 1st |
| Wilkins, 1955, 1 and table 112 | | 1950 | P | m f | 1,390 451 | 15-19 | Sport (33) Reading/ Hobbies/ Dancing (15) | 3rd (11) 2nd (13) |

[a] Preferences by rank, with percentages in brackets where given
[b] Percentage in brackets, where given
[c] Total sample of adolescents 12-21. Preferences shown are for working adolescents
[d] Working and not going to evening classes. Principal leisure activity based on preference rather than time spent. By latter criterion, cinema-going ranks first for both groups. Harper, 1942, 63
[e] Likely to include some adolescents still at school
[f] Judged by number of times visited
[g] A fifth of adolescents at school

a 23

Table 5.18 *Frequency of cinema-going by schoolchildren*

| Source | Place | Year | No. in sample | Age | Never (per cent) | Once weekly (per cent) | 2+ weekly (per cent) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *TES*, 18 May 1935 | London | | 160 | 12-14 | | 49 | 29 |
| Clarkson, 1938, 5 and tables 1-5 | West Lothian | 1937 | 8,003 | 9-18 | 6 | 36 | 25 |
| Millington, 1938, 3-4 and 59 | not given | | 137 | 11-15 | 11 | 40 | 17 |
| Farr, [1939], 1 and 4 | | 1939 | c750 | 14-18 | | | |
| | | | m | | 2 | 40 | 30 |
| | | | f | | 1 | 48 | 21 |
| Struthers, 1939, 17, 135 and table 15 | Middx | | 169 | 11-16 | <24 | 35 | 7 |
| Midlothian Educ. Comm., 1943, in McIntosh, 1945, 4 | Midlothian | | 1,146 | 16 | 12 | 45 | 43 |
| Moss and Box, 1943, 1 and table 19 | | 1943 | 1,013 | 5-14 | 22 | 28 | 16 |
| McIntosh, 1945, tables 5 and 6 | Scotland | | 36,149 | | 20[a] | 43 | 37 |
| Box, 1946, 1, 4 and table 6 | | 1946 | 715[b] | to 15 | 34 | 25 | 18 |
| Camden Training College, 1946, 3 | not given | | 189 | to 14 | 17[c] | 36 | 27 |
| Midlesbrough Head Teachers' Assn., [1946], graph B | Middles-brough | 1946 | 15,817 | | | 40 | 30 |
| Mayer, 1946, 134 | London | | 42 | 10 | 0 | 81 | 19 |
| Youth Council, [1946], preface and 6 | Stockton-on-Tees | | 200[d] | 16-17 | 10 | 44 | 47 |
| WEA, [1947], 6 and Nutt, 1950, 51[e] | Ilford | 1946 | 3,036 | 11-14+ | | 53 | 23 |
| Barclay, 1951, tables 1 and 13 | Edinburgh | 1947 | 2,944 | 6-14 | e | 45 | 22 |
| Youth Council, [1947], 19-20 | Tynemouth | | f | 14-21 | 12 | 30 | 47 |
| Ward, 1948, table 34 | | 1947 | 1,679 | 5-15 | 19 | 33 | 10 |
| Nutt, 1950, 24, 67 and 72 | London, Peterboro' Horsham | 1947 | 1,254 | 12-18 | 5 | 28 | 13 |
| Stewart, 1950, 11 and table 6 | Ilford | 1947 | 4,200 | 11-15+ | 8 | 47 | 19 |
| Eid, 1948, tables 14 and 25 | not given (urban/rural) | | 180 | 13&16 | | 43[g] | |
| Hughes, 1950, 4 and table 1 | London | 1948 | 14,500 | 5-14 | 6 | 37 | 27 |
| Home Dept., 1950, table 9 | Wales[h] (urban) | 1948 | | | | 33 | 34 |

Table 5.18 (cont.)

| Source | Place | Year | No. in sample | Age | Never (per cent) | Once weekly (per cent) | 2+ weekly (per cent) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Kesterton, 1948, 36 and 46 | West Bromwich | | 300 | 13-14 | 2 | 38 | 42 |
| Ward, 1949, 3 and 11 | | 1948 | 1,879 | 5-15 | 12 | 33 | 21 |
| Pieris, 1949, 83-4 and table 23 | London & Leics. | 1948-49 | 200 | 14-16 | 5 | 46 | 19 |
| Woodhouse, 1949, 35-7 | Leeds | | 253 | 7-15 | | | 83 |
| Brown, 1950, 63 and table 24 | West Ham | 1949-50 | 139 | 13-15 | | 33 | 25 |
| Home Dept., 1950, table 1 | | | 1,039[h] | 5-9 | 14 | 25 | 13 |
| Home Dept., 1950, table 8 | Wales[i] | | 65,000 | | 11 | 26 | 23 |
| Westhill, 1950, 27 and tables 9-12[d] | Birmingham | | 1,004 | 14-20 | 1 | 36 | 43 |
| Barclay, 1961, 1, 2 and table 2 | Edinburgh | 1960 | 5,320[f] | 14-18 | 1 | 36 | 14 |

[a] Nil weekly attendance rather than never attending; may attend irregularly
[b] Includes 32 children over fifteen but still at school, and 231 children aged four and under
[c] Percentages exclude visit to weekly junior cinema club, amongst whose members the survey was conducted
[d] Only approximately a fifth of the children were still at school
[e] Sample weighted by age and sex by Nutt
[f] Sample comprised mainly of working adolescents
[g] Combined figure for those attending one or more times a week
[h] See comments in appendix 2 regarding this data and that of Ward, 1949
[i] Includes Monmouthshire

| | Number | Minimum value | Maximum value | Range | Mean | Standard deviation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Never go | 23 | 0 | 34 | 34 | 10.04 | 8.36 |
| Weekly | 30 | 25 | 81 | 56 | 38.97 | 10.92 |
| More often | 31 | 7 | 83 | 76 | 27.23 | 14.97 |

Table 5.19 *Schoolchildren's cinema-going by age*

| Source | Place | Year | No. in sample | | Age | One visit weekly (per cent) | Two + visits weekly (per cent) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Clarkson, 1938, 5 and tables 1-3 | West Lothian | 1937 | | 4,850 | 9-12 | 37 | 24 |
| | | | | 2,822 | 12-15 | 35 | 27 |
| | | | | 331 | . 15-18 | 41 | 11 |
| Millington, 1938, 3-4 and 59 | not given | | | 61 | 12-13 | 39 | 13 |
| | | | | 48 | 13-14 | 46 | 17 |
| | | | | 28 | 14-15 | 32 | 25 |
| Jenkinson, 1946, 8, 95 and 237 | | pre 1940 | SRm | 634 | 12 | 38 | 24 |
| | | | | | 13 | 31 | 28 |
| | | | | | 14 | 40 | 31 |
| | | | SSm | 936 | 12 | 35 | 14 |
| | | | | | 13 | 31 | 11 |
| | | | | | 14 | 31 | 17 |
| | | | | | 15 | 36 | 7 |
| | | | SRf | 611 | 12 | 37 | 25 |
| | | | | | 13 | 42 | 20 |
| | | | | | 14 | 32 | 34 |
| | | | SSf | 719 | 12 | 25 | 11 |
| | | | | | 13 | 33 | 7 |
| | | | | | 14 | 29 | 11 |
| | | | | | 15 | 31 | 11 |
| McIntosh, 1945, tables 5 and 7 | Scotland | | | 36,149 total | Infant | 48 | 25 |
| | | | | | PS | 43 | 36 |
| | | | | | SE | 39 | 45 |
| Box, 1946, 1, 4 and table 7 | | 1946 | | 231 | 0-4 | 6 | 7 |
| | | | | 248 | 5-9 | 31 | 18 |
| | | | | 265 | 10+ | 37 | 28 |
| Barclay, 1951, table 12[a] | Edinburgh | 1947 | | 717 | <10 | 44 | 17 |
| | | | | 685 | 10-11 | 45 | 20 |
| | | | | 527 | 12-15 | 47 | 16 |
| Ward, 1948, table 33 | | 1947 | | 481 | 5-7 | 24 | 6 |
| | | | | 616 | 8-10 | 38 | 10 |
| | | | | 581 | 11-15 | 34 | 15 |
| Nutt, 1950, 24 and 67 | London, Peterborough, Horsham | 1947 | | 967 | 12-14 | 29 | 15 |
| | | | | 287 | 15-18 | 24 | 8 |
| Stewart, 1950, 11 and table 5 | Ilford | 1947 | | 1,476 total | 11 | 32 | 7 |
| | | | | | 12 | 28 | 5 |
| | | | | | 13 | 32 | 7 |
| | | | | | 14 | 30 | 6 |
| | | | | | 15 | 29 | 4 |
| Eid, 1948, tables 14 and 25 | not given (urban/ rural) | | | 180 total | 13 | 36 | |
| | | | | | 16 | 38[b] | |

cont.

Table 5.19 (cont.)

| Source | Place | Year | No. in sample | Age | One visit weekly (per cent) | Two + visits weekly (per cent) |
|--------|-------|------|---------------|-----|------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Hughes, 1950, 4 and table 1 | London | 1948 | 14,500 total | 3-4 | 12 | 5 |
| | | | | 5-7 | 32 | 14 |
| | | | | 8-10 | 41 | 31 |
| | | | | 11-14 | 38 | 31 |
| | | | | 15-16 | 41 | 22 |
| Ward, 1949, 3 and 11 | | 1948 | 1,879 total | 5-9 | 29 | 12 |
| | | | | 10-15 | 38 | 32 |
| Dudley, 1951, tables 1 and 31[e] | West London | | 85 | 11 | 28 | |
| | | | 93 | 12 | 35 | |
| | | | 86 | 13 | 20 | |
| | | | 88 | 14 | 51[b] | |
| Barclay, 1961, 1, 2 and table 2[d] | Edinburgh | 1960 | 5,320 total | 14 | 35 | 15 |
| | | | | 15 | 37 | 9 |
| | | | | 16 | 36 | 14 |
| | | | | 17 | 37 | 18 |
| | | | | 18 | 37 | 20 |

[a] Excludes visit to weekly junior cinema club, amongst whose members the survey was conducted
[b] Combined figures for those attending one or more times weekly
[e] Attendances on Saturday, Sunday, Tuesday and Thursday
[d] Includes some working adolescents

Table 5.20 *Percentage of boys and girls attending the cinema one or more times weekly*

| Source | Place | Year | No. in sample | | Age | Boys (per cent) | Girls (per cent) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *TES*, 18 May 1935 | London | | | 160 | 12-14 | 79 | |
| Millington, 1938, 3-4 and 59 | not given | | SSm SSf | 83 54 | 12-15 | 64 | 46 |
| Farr, [1939], 1 and 4 | | 1939 | m f | c875 c875 | 14-18 | 70 | 69 |
| Struthers, 1939, 17, 135 and tables 12 and 13 | Middx | | m f | 90 79 | 11-16 | 39 | 47 |
| Jenkinson, 1946, 8, 95 and 237 | | pre-1940 | SSm SSf | 936 719 | 12 13 14 15 | 49 42 48 45 | 36 40 39 43 |
| | | | SRm SRf | 634 611 | 12 13 14 | 62 59 71 | 62 62 66 |
| Midlothian Edn. Com., 1943, in McIntosh, 1945, table 4 | Midlothian | | m f | 584 562 | 16 | 89 | 87 |
| Box, 1946, 1, 4 and table 6 | | 1946 | m f | 373 342 | to 16 | 45 | 42 |
| WEA, [1947], 6 and 21 | Ilford | 1946 | m f | | 13 14 | 83 | 74 |
| Barclay, 1951, tables 1 and 14 | Edinburgh | 1947 | m f | 1,232[a] 697[a] | 6-14 | 63 | 64 |
| Youth Council, [1947], 20[b] | Tynemouth | | | | 14-21 | 74 | 82 |
| Wall, 1948, 30 and table 1 | Midlands | 1947[c] | GS SM/TS total | 1,250 | 13-16 13-16 | 55 85 | 45 79 |
| Ward, 1948, table 33 | | 1947 | m f | 858 820 | 5-15 | 44 | 41 |
| Nutt, 1950, 24 an 58 | London Peterborough Horsham | 1947 | m f | 222 462 | 12-14 | 48 | 50 |
| Stewart, 1950, 11 and table 6 | Ilford | 1947 | m f | 2,158 2,042 | 11-15+ | 68 | 64 |
| Eid, 1948, tables 14 and 25 | not given (urban/rural) | | m f | 93 87 | 13&16 | 28 | 60 |
| Kesterton, 1948, 46 | West Bromwich | | m f | 150 150 | 13-14 | 79 | 81 |
| Ward, 1949, 3 and 11 | | 1948 | m f | 1,012 867 | 5-15 | 58 | 48 |

Table 5.20 (cont.)

| Source | Place | Year | No. in sample | | Age | Boys (per cent) | Girls (per cent) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Pieris, 1949, 83-4, table 23 | London and Leics. | 1948-9 | f | 200 | 14-16 | | 64 |
| Brown, 1950, 63 and table 24 | West Ham | 1949-50 | m | 139 | 13-15 | 58 | |
| Westhill, 1950, 27 and tables 9-12[d] | Birmingham | | m f | 500 504 | 14-20 | 79 | 78 |
| Dudley, 1951, tables 1 and 32 | West London | | SMm SMf | 84 82 | 11-14 | 51[e] | 19[e] |
| Barclay, 1961, 1, 2 and table 2 | Edinburgh | 1960 | m f | 2,526 2,794 | 14-18 | 54 | 47 |

[a] Excludes visit to weekly junior cinema club, amongst whose members the survey was conducted
[b] Sample comprised mainly of working adolescents
[c] For date see Wall and Smith, 1949, 121- 2
[d] Schoolchildren make up a fifth of the sample
[e] Percentages of pupils attending the cinema on weekdays and at weekends are given separately by Dudley. Those who attended at both times may be double counted

| | Number | Minimum value | Maximum value | Range | Mean | Standard deviation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Boys | 28 | 28 | 85 | 57 | 59.61 | 14.76 |
| Girls | 27 | 19 | 87 | 68 | 58.85 | 17.00 |

Wilcoxon matched-pairs sign-rank test for the size of the differences between two sets of scores: 18 - ranks, 7 + ranks, 1 tie,. $Z = -1.683$, significance 0.092 (2-tailed), i.e. among surveys in which data is available on both boys and girls attending the cinema one or more times a week, there are no significant differences in the sets of scores for the two groups at the 0.05 level.

Table 5.21 *Percentage of children attending the cinema one or more times weekly by type of school*

| Source | Place | Date | No. in sample | | Age | Grammar (per cent) | Sec. modern (per cent) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Millington, 1938, 3-4 and 59 | not given | | | 137 | 12-15 | 57 | |
| Struthers, 1939, 17, 135 and table 14 | Middx | | | 169 | 11-16 | 42 | |
| Jenkinson, 1946, 8, 95 and 237 | | pre-1940 | SSm SRm | 936 634 | 12 13 14 15 | 49 42 48 45 | 62 59 71 |
| | | | SSf SRf | 719 611 | 12 13 14 15 | 36 40 39 43 | 62 62 66 |

cont.

Table 5.21 (cont.)

| Source | Place | Date | Number | | Age | Grammar (per cent) | Sec.modern (per cent) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| McIntosh, 1945, tables 5, 7 and 8 | Scotland | | 36,149 | | | 84 | 98 |
| Wall, 1948, 36 and table 1 | Midlands | 1947[a] | m | | 13-16 | 55 | 85 |
| | | | f | | | 45 | 79 |
| Nutt, 1950, 24 and 67 | London Peterboro' Horsham | 1947 | GS SM | 736 518 | 12-18 | 31 | 55 |
| Stewart, 1950, 11 and table 6 | Ilford | 1947 | GS SM | 1,164 3,036 | 11-15+ | 36 | 78 |
| Ward, 1948, 37 and 53 | | 1947 | m f | 357 325 | | 56 50 | 66 73 |
| Hughes, 1951, table 1 | London | 1948 | | | 15-16 | 54 | |
| Kesterton, 1948, 46 | West Bromwich | | GS SM/TS | 100 200 | 13-14 | 75 | 83[b] |
| Ward, 1949, 3 and table 7 | | 1948 | GS SM | 187 265 | | 51 | 72 |
| Brown, 1950, 63 and table 24 | West Ham | 1949-50 | m | 139 | 13-15 | 58 | |
| Dudley, 1951, tables 1 and 32 | West London | | GSm SM | 92 172 | 11-14 | 19[c] | 35[c] |
| Barclay, 1961, 1, 2 and table 3 | Edinburgh | 1960 | m f | | 16-18 | 42 34 | 65 56 |

[a] For date see Wall and Smith, 1949, 121-2
[b] Includes technical school pupils
[c] Percentages of pupils attending the cinema on weekdays and at weekends are given separately by Dudley. Those who attended at both times may be double counted Male and females not distinguished for secondary modern pupils

| | Number | Minimum value | Maximum value | Range | Mean | Standard deviation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Grammar . | 24 | 19 | 84 | 65 | 47.13 | 13.61 |
| Sec. modern | 18 | 35 | 98 | 63 | 68.17 | 13.92 |

Wilcoxon matched-pairs sign-rank test for the size of the differences between two sets of scores:
18 + ranks, $Z = -3.726$, significance 0.000 (2-tailed), i.e. for the eighteen surveys in which data on both types of school is available, the differences between the two sets of scores are significant at the 0.0005 level.

Table 5.22  Children's cinema-going by socio-economic group

| Source | Date of survey | No. In sample | Age | Never go now | | Once weekly | | 2+ weekly | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | Lower (per cent) | Middle/ higher (per cent) | Lower (per cent) | Middle/ higher (per cent) | Lower (per cent) | Middle/ higher (per cent) |
| Moss and Box, 1943, 2, 14 and table 20 | 1943 | 1,013 | 5-14 | 20 | 27 | 31 | 19 | 16 | 12 |
| Box, 1946, 1 and table 8 | 1946 | 759 | <16 | 34 | 34 | | (46 | 41)[a] | |
| Ward, 1948, table 35 | 1947 | m 858 f 820 | 5-15 | 18 16 | 20 20 | 29 29 | 34 32 | 22 12 | 11 9 |
| Ward, 1949. 3 and table 8 | 1948 | 1,241 | 5-11 | 19 | 18 | 35 | 28 | 15 | 11 |

[a] Those attending one or more times weekly

| | Economic group | Number | Minimum value | Maximum value | Range | Mean | Standard deviation |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Never | Lower | 5 | 16 | 34 | 18 | 21.40 | 51.80 |
| | Middle/higher | 5 | 18 | 34 | 16 | 23.80 | 44.20 |
| Weekly | Lower | 4 | 29 | 35 | 6 | 31.00 | 8.00 |
| | Middle/higher | 4 | 19 | 34 | 15 | 28.25 | 44.25 |
| More often | Lower | 4 | 12 | 22 | 10 | 16.25 | 17.58 |
| | Middle/higher | 4 | 9 | 12 | 3 | 10.75 | 1.58 |

Table 5.23 *Last school attended by adults who visit the cinema one or more times weekly*

| Source | Date | No. in sample | Secondary level (per cent) | Elementary (per cent) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Moss and Box, 1943, 1 and table 7 | 1943 | 5,339 | 30 | 33 |
| Box, 1946, 1 and table 4 | 1946 | 3,103 | 31 | 32 |

Table 5.24 *Types of films preferred by schoolchildren*

| Source | Place | Date | No. in sample | | Age | Preference | Boys[a] | Girls[a] |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *TES*, 18 May 1935 | London | | | 160 | 12-14 | Thriller | 25 | |
| | | | | | | Crime | 21 | |
| | | | | | | War | 14 | |
| Millington, 1938, 3-4 and 60 | not given | | SSm | 91 | 12-15 | Thriller | 44 | 27 |
| | | | SSf | 55 | | War | 24 | 0 |
| | | | | | | Comedy | 5 | 16 |
| | | | | | | Romance | 3 | 22 |
| | | | | | | Serial | 14 | 9 |
| | | | | | | Musical | 1 | 11 |
| Farr, [1939],1 and 4[b] | | 1939 | m | c875 | 14-18 | Crime | 22 | 13 |
| | | | f | c875 | | Adventure | 17 | 13 |
| | | | | | | Comedy | 14 | 12 |
| | | | | | | Historical | 14 | 17 |
| | | | | | | Musical | 7 | 15 |
| Ford, 1939, 109 | | | | 142 managers | | Western | 21 | |
| | | | | | | Adventure | 19 | |
| | | | | | | Animal | 18 | |
| | | | | | | Comedy | 17 | |
| | | | | | | Historical | 13 | |
| | | | | | | Musical | 6[c] | |
| Struthers, 1939, 17, 137 and tables 12 and 13 | Middx | | SSm | 90 | 11-16 | Cartoon | | |
| | | | | | | Adventure | | |
| | | | | | | Newsreel | | |
| | | | | | | War | | |
| | | | SSf | 79 | | Adventure | | |
| | | | | | | Historical | | |
| | | | | | | Adaptation | | |
| Brew, [1946], 32-33[b] | | | f | 6,000 | 14-19 | Romance | | |
| | | | | | | Thriller | | |
| | | | | | | Crime | | |
| *Boy's Own Paper (Birmingham Mail, 1 Nov. 1946)* | | | | | | Animal | 50 | |

cont.

Table 5.24 (cont.)

| Source | Place | Date | No. in sample | | Age | Preference | Boys | Girls |
|--------|-------|------|------|------|-----|-----------|------|-------|
| Camden Training College, 1946, 3 and 4 | not given | | | 189 | to 14 | Comedy Adventure Western Animal Historical | | |
| Mayer, 1946, 134-6[d] | London | | | 42 | 10 | Western | 20 | 12 |
| | | | | | | Crime | 17 | 21 |
| | | | | | | Ghost | 15 | 37 |
| | | | | | | Cartoon | 6 | 27 |
| | | | | | | Romance | 0 | 24 |
| Bernstein, 1947, in Miller, 1948, 371 | | 1947 | | 50,000[e] | 7-15 | Historical Comedy Cartoon | | |
| Youth Survey Report, [1947], 20[b] | Tynemouth | | | | 14-21 | Thriller | 27 | 15 |
| | | | | | | Crime | 27 | 15 |
| | | | | | | Musical | 16 | 18 |
| | | | | | | Romance | 4 | 18 |
| Ward, 1948, 37 | | 1947 | m | 405 | 11-15 | Thriller | 48 | 33 |
| | | | f | 387 | | Comedy | 27 | 19 |
| | | | | | | Adventure | 23 | 13 |
| | | | | | | Musical | 5 | 24 |
| Wall, 1948 and 49, 36 and table 4 | Midlands | 1947[f] | | 1,000 | 13-14 | Animal | 27 | 20 |
| | | | | | | Adventure | 24 | 9 |
| | | | | | | War | 21 | 9 |
| | | | | | | Adaptation | 5 | 20 |
| | | | | | | Musical | 5 | 9 |
| | | | | | | Romance | 5 | 14 |
| Wall and Smith, 1949, 121 and table 2a | Midlands | 1947 | GSm | 127 | 13-16 | Animal | 24 | 19 |
| | | | GSf | 108 | | Drama | 20 | 25 |
| | | | | | | War | 16 | 13 |
| | | | | | | Adventure | 12 | 5 |
| | | | SM/TS | | 13-16 | War | 22 | 1 |
| | | | m | 548 | | Adventure | 15 | 5 |
| | | | f | 196 | | Animal | 14 | 7 |
| | | | | | | Comedy | 7 | 11 |
| | | | | | | Melodrama | 6 | 10 |
| | | | | | | Drama | 4 | 33 |
| Stewart, 1950, 11 and table 7 | Ilford | 1947 | m | 675 | 11-15+ | Crime | 61 | 39 |
| | | | f | 801 | | Cartoon | 48 | 22 |
| | | | | | | Western | 44 | 18 |
| | | | | | | Musical | 18 | 50 |
| | | | | | | Comedy | 14 | 7 |
| | | | | | | Adaptation | 3 | 22 |

Table. 5.24 (cont.)

| Source | Place | Date | No. in sample | | Age | Preference | Boys | Girls |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Eid, 1948, tables 25 and 28 | not given (urban/rural) | | m<br>f | 93<br>87 | 13&16 | Crime<br>Comedy<br>Adventure<br>History<br>Romance | 32<br>26<br>21<br>9<br>2 | 14<br>14<br>24<br>11<br>28 |
| Kesterton, 1948, 69 | West Bromwich | | m<br>f | 240<br>240 | 13-14 | Animal<br>Adventure<br>War<br>Drama<br>Musical<br>Romance | 27<br>24<br>21<br>5<br>3<br>3 | 20<br>9<br>9<br>20<br>9<br>9 |
| Stacey, 1948, 35 and table 9 | not given | | f | c425 | 11-15 | Adaptation<br>Thriller<br>Musical | | 25<br>23<br>15 |
| Ward, 1949, Table 30 | | 1948 | m<br>f | 439<br>304 | 10-15 | Western<br>Crime<br>Thriller/Comedy<br>Mystery/ Ghost<br>Musical | 25<br>25<br>13<br>12<br>2 | 13<br>8<br>7<br>13<br>22 |
| Hughes, 1950, 4 and 13 | London | 1948 | PS<br><br>SEm<br>f<br>total 14,500 | | <br><br><br>14+ | Western<br>Adventure<br>War<br>Crime/Adventure<br>Romance | | |
| Scunthorpe Grammar School, in Field, 1954, 29 | Scunthorpe | 1948 | m<br><br>f | | | Comedy<br>Thriller<br>War<br>Comedy<br>Thriller<br>Musical/<br>Romance | | |
| Pieris, 1949, 83-4 and table 24 | London & Leics. | 1948-49 | f | 200 | 14-16 | Thriller<br>Romance<br>Crime<br>Sport | | 65<br>60<br>50<br>36 |
| Brew, 1949, table 20[b] | | | m | 814 | <16 | Thriller<br>Crime<br>Adventure | 75<br>72<br>72 | |
| Brown, 1950, 63 and 335 | West Ham | 1949<br>1950 | m | | 13-15 | Comedy<br>Historical/<br>Adaptation<br>Western | 34<br><br>25<br>17 | |

Table 5.24 (cont.)

| Source | Place | Date | No. in sample | | Age | Preference | Boys | Girls |
|--------|-------|------|-----|------|-----|------------|------|-------|
| Barclay, 1961, 1, 2 and table 10[b] | Edinburgh | 1960 | m | 2,526 | 14-18 | War | 64 | 28 |
| | | | f | 2,794 | | Comedy | 62 | 61 |
| | | | | | | Horror | 39 | 30 |
| | | | | | | Western | 36 | 27 |
| | | | | | | Romance | 16 | 48 |
| | | | | | | Musical | 14 | 47 |
| | | | | | | Adaptation | 17 | 33 |

[a] Preferences by rank, with percentages where given
[b] Sample includes working children
[c] Data for boys and girls combined
[d] First to third preferences weighted
[e] For sample size see also *Kinematograph Weekly*, 18 December 1947. Same rankings by boys and girls
[f] For date of survey, see Wall and Smith, 1949, 121-2. 15 per cent of boys and 19 per cent of girls showed preference for 'miscellaneous' films

Table 5.25 *Factors influencing the choice in films of children and adolescents*

| Source | Place | Date | Number | Age | School/ sex | Trailer go to same cinema (per cent) | Newspaper (per cent) | Radio (per cent) | Magazine (per cent) | Other people (per cent) | Pictures outside cinema (per cent) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| BFI, 1943, 7-9 | | War-time | 500 | 16-21 | | 2 | not given | 74[a] | | not given | not given |
| Kesterton, 1948, 22 and 54 | West Bromwich | | 300 total | 13-14 | GSm | 86 | 20 | 32 | 8 | 34 | 20 |
| | | | | | GSf | 72 | 26 | 32 | 36 | 30 | 16 |
| | | | | | SM/TSm | 70 | 31 | 15 | 6 | 22 | 21 |
| | | | | | SM/TSf | 78 | 24 | 24 | 19 | 31 | 21 |
| Wall, 1948, 35 and table 4 | Midlands | 1947[b] | 1,250 total | 13-16 | GSm | 75 | 34 | 27 | 17 | 33 | 19 |
| | | | | | GSf | 76 | 40 | 37 | 21 | 32 | 12 |
| | | | | | SM/TSm | 74 | 30 | 21 | 21 | 21 | 15 |
| | | | | | SM/TSf | 81 | 32 | 30 | 20 | 15 | 5 |
| Ward, 1949, 3 and table 16 | | 1948 | 439 | 10-15 | m | 54 | 31 | not given | 4 | 8 | 10 |
| | | | 384 | | f | 50 | 28 | | 12 | 12 | 7 |

[a] Combined figure for radio and magazine
[b] See Wall and Smith, 1949, 121-2 for date

Table 5.26 *Schoolchildren's leisure activities by preference (P) or time spent (T)*

| Source | Place | Date | P/T | No. in sample | | Age | Principal leisure activity[e] | Ranking of cinema[b] |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Struthers, 1939, 17 and tables 12, 13 20, 22 & 23 | Middx | | P | SSm | 90 | 11-16 | Sport | 3rd |
| | | | | SSf | 79 | | Animals | 5th |
| | | | T | SSm | 90 | | Reading (9) | 7th (3) |
| | | | | SSf | 79 | | Reading (8) | 7th (2) |
| James and Moore, 1940, 135-40 | Manchester | 1939 | T | SRm/f | | 12-14 | Play | 2nd |
| | | | | SSm | | 12-16 | Play/Cinema | 1st |
| | | | | SSf | | | Cinema | 1st |
| | | | | total | 535 | | | |
| Harper, 1942, 3, 19 and tables 1-18 | Manchester | 1941-42 | T | GSm | 171 | 11-17 | Social activity | 5th |
| | | | | GSf | 180 | | Social activity | 5th |
| | | | | SRm | 95 | 11-13 | Social activity | 5th |
| | | | | SRf | 91 | | Social activity | 4th |
| Brew, [1946], 49[c,d] | | | | f | 6,000 | 14-19 | Dancing | |
| Stewart, 1950, table 11[e] | Ilford | 1947 | P | GSm | 594 | | Cricket (67) | 9th (8) |
| | | | | GSf | 570 | 11-15+ | Swimming (71) | 7th (15) |
| | | | | SMm | 1,564 | | Football (78) | 9th (13) |
| | | | | SMf | 1,472 | | Reading (58) | 6th (24) |
| Ward, 1948, table 50[c] | | 1947 | P | GSm | 139 | | Football (35) | |
| | | | | GSf | 114 | 11-15 | Reading (28) | |
| | | | | SMm | 218 | | Football (43) | |
| | | | | SMf | 211 | | Outdoors (22) | |
| Eid, 1948, tables 8, 9 and 11 | not given | | P | m | 93 | 13&16 | Reading (34) | 2nd (21) |
| | | | | f | 87 | | Reading (42) | 2nd (18) |
| Kesterton, 1948, 36 and 41 | West Bromwich | | T | | 300 | 13-14 | Radio (60) | 4th (43) |
| Stacey, 1948, 35 and table 7 | not given | | P | f | c425 | 11-15 | Reading (31) | 4th (8) |
| Ward, 1949, 3 and table 39 | | 1948 | P | m | 447 | 10-15 | Sport (30) | 3rd (13) |
| | | | | f | 393 | | Cinema (16) | 1st |
| Pieris, 1949, 83-4 and table 18 | London and Leics. | 1948-49 | P | f | 200 | 14-16 | Reading (42) | 9th (14) |
| Brew, 1949, 8, 26 and 42 | | | P | m | 3,000[d] | <15-20+ | Dancing (57) | |
| M-O A: FR 3150, 1949[f] | London | 1949 | | | 200 | teens | Sport (46) | 3rd (36) |
| Westhill, 1950, 23 and tables 9-12 | Birmingham | | T | m | 500 | 14-20 | Cinema | 1st |
| | | | | f | 504 | | Cinema | 1st |
| Dudley, 1951, figs 1-6 and table 1 | W. London | | T | | 352 | 11-14 | Visits/Play | |
| Jephcott, 1954, 9-10 and tables 5a and b | Nottingham | 1950-52 | | m | 55 | 14-18 | Cinema | 1st |
| | | | | f | 62 | | Cinema | 1st |

cont.

Table 5.26 (cont.)

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[a] Preferences by rank, with percentages in brackets where given
[b] Percentage in brackets, where given
[c] Cinema not shown amongst preferences
[d] Total includes some working adolescents
[e] Data for secondary modern pupils taken from WEA, [1947]
[f] Preferred activity on Saturday afternoons

Table 5.27 *Public library membership by children and young people*

| Source | Place | Date | No. in sample | Age | Male (per cent) | Female (per cent) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Clarkson, 1938, 5, 9 and 15 | West Lothian | 1937 | 8,003 | 9-18 | <10-76[ab] | |
| Millington, 1938, 3 and 53 | not given | | 171 | 12-15 | 70[b] | |
| Struthers, 1939, 115 and table 14 | Middx | | 169 | 11-16 | 39[c] | 37[c] |
| Cameron, et al., 1943, 3-4 and 102 | Glasgow Liverpool Cardiff | 1937 | 1,561 | 18-23 | 6 | |
| Youth Council, [1946], preface and 5 | Stockton-on-Tees | | 200 | 16-17 | 58 | 56 |
| Stacey, 1948, 35 and table 13 | Not given | | GS c425 | 11-16 | | 77[c] |
| Ward, 1948, Table 42 | | 1947 | 581 | 11-15 | 40[b] | |
| Brew, 1949, 8, 18 and 42 | | | 6,000 | <15-20+ | 30[d] | |
| Pieris, 1949, 83-4 and table 21 | London & Leics. | 1948-9 | SE 200 | 14-16 | | 62[e] |
| Jephcott, 1954, 59 | London Nottingham | 1950-2 | 159 129 | 14-17 14-17 | 15[b] 29[b] | |

[a] Only percentages for schools at the top and bottom of the range given
[b] Combined figure for male and female
[c] Percentages are those using public library as a source of reading material rather than membership. Use of school library is higher.
[d] Only given as 'library membership'
[e] Excludes school libraries, but includes subscription libraries

Table 5.28 *Children's and adolescents' reading preferences*[a]

| Source | Date | Place | No. in sample | Age | Adventure (per cent) | Thriller/Crime (per cent) | School (per cent) | Classics (per cent) | Romance (per cent) | Home life (per cent) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Clarkson, 1938, 16 | 1937 | West Lothian | 8,003 | 9-18 | | 1st | | | | |
| Millington, 1938, 4 and 54 | | not given | 171 | 12-15 | 45 (31) | 42 (22) | 23 (12) | | 0 (12) | |
| Struthers, 1939, 17 and 126 | | Middx | 169 | 11-16 | 38 (25) | 23 (21) | 10 (19) | 14 (23) | | |
| Jenkinson, 1946, 8, 16 and 237[b] | pre-1940 | | SS<br>SR<br>total 2,900 | | 40 (22)<br>53 (19) | 15 (11)<br>7 (0) | 9 (17)<br>12 (25) | | 7 (14)<br>0 (8) | 9 (23)<br>9 (27) |
| Brew, [1946], 9 and 26-7 | | | 6,000 | 14-19 | (2nd) | (3rd) | | | (1st) | |
| Youth Council, [1946], preface and 5 | | Stockton-on-Tees | m 100<br>f 100 | 16-17 | | 1st<br>(2nd) | | | (1st) | |
| Abrams, *Contact*, 1947, 3[c] | | | | 14-18 | (2nd) | (3rd) | | | (1st) | |
| Eid, 1948, 91-93, table 23 | | not given (urban/rural) | m 93<br>f 87 | 13-16 | 45 (40) | | 0 (12) | | | 8 (30) |
| Stacey, 1948, 35 and table 12 | | not given | GS 425 | 11-16 | (16) | (15) | 22 | | (8) | (14) |
| Brew, 1949, 8 and 18 and table 9 | | | m 3,000 | to 20+ | 65 | 68 | | | 37 (inc. travel) | |
| Pieris, 1949, 83-4 and table 22 | 1948-9 | London and Leics. | 200 | 14-16 | (25) | (40) | (34) | | (44) | |

cont.

Table 5.28 (cont.)

| Source | Date | Place | No. in sample | Age | Adventure (per cent) | Thriller/crime (per cent) | School (per cent) | Classics (per cent) | Romance (per cent) | Home life (per cent) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Wilkins, 1955, 1 and table 115[d] | 1950 | | m 1,390 f 451 | 15-19 | 19 (6) | | | 4 (11) | | |
| Dudley, 1951, 1 and table 50 | | West London | 352 | 11-14 | 52 (45) | 20 (12) | 5 (18) | | | 0 (6) |

[a] Girls' preferences shown in brackets. Preferences by rank, with percentages where given
[b] Data is given by age. That shown here is the mean for each type of school
[c] Ranking cited may be that of Brew, [1946]
[d] Last book read (romances and crime stories included under 'other fiction'). All adolescents working

a 40

Table 6.1 *Leeds and Southend-on-Sea compared, 1951*

|  |  |  | Leeds | Southend-on-Sea |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| a | Population | | 505,219 | 151,806 |
| b | Percentage increase since 1931 | | 4.6 | 17.0 |
| c | Percentage population increase by births and deaths in district since 1931 | | 5.4 | 2.1 |
| d | Age structure: (percentage of total population) | 0-14 | 21.8 | 20.4 |
| | | 15-24 | 12.2 | 10.9 |
| | | 25-44 | 30.5 | 27.9 |
| | | 45-64 | 25.4 | 25.8 |
| | | over 65 | 10.1 | 15.0 |
| e | Life expectancy of child aged one year (1950-52) | | 68.3 | 70.7 |
| f | Social class (percentage of occupied/retired males over 15) | I | 2.7 | 5.4 |
| | | II | 13.5 | 22.0 |
| | | III | 57.5 | 53.5 |
| | | IV | 12.8 | 9.2 |
| | | V | 13.5 | 9.9 |
| g | Percentage of occupied population up to 24 with terminal education age of under 15 | | 53.7 | 43.4 |
| h | Occupations (percentage of total occupied labour force) | manufacturing | 51.6 | 27.0 |
| | | service industries | 35.0 | 54.8 |
| | | retail | 9.2 | 15.1 |
| i | Percentage of women in labour force | | 30.8 | 36.6 |
| j | Percentage of households sharing a dwelling | | 5.8 | 25.4 |
| k | Percentage of persons in overcrowded dwellings | | 7.4 | 4.6 |
| l | Percentage of households with no fixed bath | | 28.0 | 16.1 |
| m | Items per household: | telephones | 0.35 | 0.39 |
| | | cars | 0.10 | 0.12 |
| | | radio licences | 1.17 | 1.13 |
| | | TV licences | <0.01 | 0.09 |
| n | Cinema-going (1950-51) | Population per seat (number) | 8.7 | 9.0 |
| | | Admissions per seat ('000) | 383 | 285 |
| | | Admissions per person ('000) | 44 | 31 |

Table 6.1 (cont.)

Sources: General Register Office, *Census 1951, England and Wales county reports: Yorkshire West Riding*, London: HMSO, 1954, table 2 (a) and (b), table 19 (c), table 21 (d), table 27 (f), table 25 (g), table 12 (j), table 13 (l)

General Register Office, *Census 1951, England and Wales county reports: Essex*, London: HMSO, 1954, table 2 (a) and (b), table 19 (c), table 21 (d), table 27 (f), table 25 (g), table 12 (j), table 13 (l)

C.A. Moser, *British towns: a statistical study of their social and economic differences*, Edinburgh and London: Oliver & Boyd, 1961, 116-17 and 146-9 (e), (h), (i), (k)

Cecil Chisholm (ed.) *Marketing survey of the UK*, London: Business Publications, 1951, 100-1 (m).

H.E. Browning and A.A. Sorrell, 'Cinemas and cinema-going in Great Britain', *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society*, 1954, series A, general, vol.117, pt.2, table 6 (n).

Table 6.2 *Programming of US films in sample cinemas 1945-50*

| | a | b | c | d |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | No. of changes of programme advertised | No. of screenings of films in programmes at (a)[1] | No. of US main features in (a) | No. of US films screened in (b) |
| Leeds | 6,652 | 8,415 | 5,479 (82%) | 7,093 (84%) |
| S-E Essex circuit cinemas | 2,439 | 4,698 | 1,772 (73%) | 3,577 (76%) |
| S-E Essex independents | 7,394 | 14,391 | 5,528 (75%) | 11,622 (81%) |

[1] Distinguished from number of titles screened, i.e. any title may be counted several times if repeatedly programmed

Sources: *Yorkshire Evening Post; Southend Standard;* Denis Gifford, *The British film catalogue 1895-1985,* Newton Abbot, Devon: David & Charles, 1986

If the proportion of US films screened in selected Leeds cinemas (d) to the total number of films screened there (b) is taken as the proportion expected in the other groups:
chi-square test for goodness of fit for selected Leeds cinemas and S-E Essex circuit cinemas: 214.9874; chi-square test of goodness of fit for selected Leeds cinemas and independent cinemas in S-E Essex: 114.6232. Critical value 3.84 at the 0.05 level (1-tailed). Yates' correction applied.

Neither result is significant at the 0.05 level i.e. the proportion of US films screened in neither group of S-E Essex cinemas can be predicted from the proportion screened in the sample Leeds cinemas.

Table 6.3  *Genres of British films screened in sample cinemas 1945-50*

| | Leeds | | S-E Essex circuit cinemas | | S-E Essex Independents | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Programme changes | Percentage | Programme changes | Percentage | Programme changes | Percentage |
| Adventure | 45 | 3 | 49 | 4 | 89 | 3 |
| Cartoon | - | | 4 | <1 | 2 | <1 |
| Children | - | | 7 | 1 | 19 | 1 |
| Comedy | 282 | 21 | 200 | 18 | 650 | 24 |
| Compilation | 4 | <1 | 5 | <1 | 7 | <1 |
| Crime | 335 | 25 | 243 | 24 | 603 | 22 |
| Documentary | 32 | 2 | 145 | 13 | 180 | 7 |
| Drama | 170 | 13 | 138 | 12 | 344 | 13 |
| Fantasy | 41 | 3 | 44 | 4 | 98 | 4 |
| History | 23 | 2 | 28 | 3 | 62 | 2 |
| Musical | 117 | 9 | 62 | 6 | 220 | 8 |
| Revue | 8 | 1 | 4 | <1 | 17 | 1 |
| Romance | 124 | 9 | 100 | 9 | 205 | 8 |
| Sport | 15 | 1 | 5 | <1 | 27 | 1 |
| War | 108 | 8 | 71 | 6 | 175 | 6 |
| Unclassified | 11 | 1 | 6 | 1 | 9 | <1 |
| Total | 1,315 | 100 | 1,111 | 100 | 2,688 | 100 |

* Programme changes as in table 6.7 *(a)*, i.e. any title may be counted several times if repeatedly programmed

Sources: *Yorkshire Evening Post, Southend Standard,* Denis Gifford, *The British film catalogue 1895-1985,* Newton Abbot, Devon: David & Charles, 1986

Comparison of frequency of screenings of British films by genre in three groups of cinemas as measured by Kendall's tau-b. Possible range of values is -1 to +1, with increasing absolute values indicating stronger relationship.

| | Leeds | S-E Essex circuits | S-E Essex indies |
|---|---|---|---|
| Leeds | 1.000 | 0.796* | 0.846* |
| S-E Essex circuits | 0.796* | 1.000 | 0.807* |
| S-E Essex indies | 0.846* | 0.807* | 1.000 |

*Correlation significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Table 6.4 *Titles shown most often in south-east Essex circuit cinemas ranked by number of days screened with comparative rankings among south-east Essex independents and sample Leeds cinemas, 1945-50*

| | | S-E Essex circuits ranking | | | Leeds ranking | | | S-E Essex independents ranking | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| The Way to the Stars (1945) | B | 1st | (33) | | 3rd | (33) | | 23rd | (20) |
| The Upturned Glass (1947) | | 2nd | (32) | | 27th | (6) | | 23rd | (20) |
| A Matter of Life and Death (1946) | | 3rd | (30) | | 24th | (9) | | 31st | (12) |
| The Royal Wedding (1947) | B | 3rd | (30) | B | 2nd | (36) | B | 1st | (55) |
| Madonna of the Seven Moons | B | 4th | (29) | | 6th | (27) | | 25th | (18) |
| The Red Shoes (1948) | | 4th | (29) | | 30th | (3) | | 18th | (25) |
| Great Expectations (1946) | | 5th | (26) | | 24th | (7) | | 15th | (28) |
| Holiday Camp (1947) | | 6th | (25) | | 15th | (18) | | 19th | (24) |
| The Man Within (1947) | | 6th | (25) | | 24th | (9) | | 23rd | (20) |
| Ceylon, the New Dominion (1948) | | 7th | (24) | | - | | | - | |
| Black Narcissus (1947) | | 8th | (23) | | 27th | (6) | | 28th | (15) |
| Captain Boycott (1947) | | 8th | (23) | | 27th | (6) | | 27th | (16) |
| The Jolson Story (1946) | | 8th | (23) | | 2nd | (36) | | 2nd | (50) |
| The October Man (1947) | | 8th | (23) | | 21st | (12) | B | 18th | (25) |
| The Overlanders (1946) | | 8th | (23) | | 30th | (3) | | 17th | (26) |
| A Song to Remember (1944) | | 8th | (23) | | 15th | (18) | | 23rd | (20) |
| Dancing with Crime (1947) | | 9th | (22) | B | 21st | (12) | B | 14th | (29) |
| Dear Ruth (1947) | | 9th | (22) | | 24th | (9) | B | 24th | (19) |
| Laura (1944) | | 9th | (22) | | 18th | (15) | B | 26th | (17) |
| London Town (1946) | | 9th | (22) | | 27th | (6) | | 18th | (25) |
| The Rake's Progress (1945) | | 9th | (22) | | 24th | (9) | | 9th | (34) |
| The Wicked Lady (1945) | | 9th | (22) | | 18th | (15) | | 12th | (31) |
| The Seventh Veil (1945) | | 10th | (21) | | 4th | (30) | | 3rd | (42) |
| Annie Get Your Gun (1950) | | 11th | (20) | | - | | | 31st | (12) |
| Blue Skies (1946) | | 11th | (20) | | 9th | (24) | | 28th | (15) |
| Caesar and Cleopatra (1946) | | 11th | (20) | | - | | | 24th | (19) |
| The Dancing Years (1950) | | 11th | (20) | | - | | | 37th | (6) |
| Duel in the Sun (1946) | | 11th | (20) | | 27th | (6) | | 37th | (6) |
| Home Sweet Home (1945) | | 11th | (20) | | 16th | (17) | B | 22nd | (21) |
| Maytime in Mayfair (1949) | | 11th | (20) | | 24th | (9) | | 19th | (24) |
| Odette (1950) | | 11th | (20) | | - | | | 37th | (6) |
| Quiet Weekend (1946) | | 11th | (20) | | 21st | (12) | B | 29th | (14) |
| Spring in Park Lane (1948) | | 11th | (20) | | 18th | (15) | | 9th | (34) |

cont.

Table 6.4 (cont.)

| | S-E Essex circuits ranking | | Leeds ranking | | S-E Essex independents ranking | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Stage Fright (1950)** | **11th** | **(20)** | - | | **31st** | **(12)** |
| **They Were Sisters (1945)** | **11th** | **(20)** | 6th | (27) | **15th** | **(28)** |
| **Women in Our Time (1948)** | **11th** | **(20)** | - | | - | |
| Best Years of Our Lives (1946) | 12th | (19) | 15th | (18) | 22nd | (21) |
| **The Blue Lagoon (1949)** | **12th** | **(19)** | - | | **34th** | **(9)** |
| **The Chiltern Hundreds (1949)** | **12th** | **(19)** | 30th | (3) | **28th** | **(15)** |
| **Green for Danger (1946)** | **12th** | **(19)** | 23rd | (10) | **15th** | **(28)** |
| Inspector General (1949) | 12th | (19) | - | B | 34th | (9) |
| Marked Man | 12th | (19) | 26th | (7) | 29th | (14) |
| **Scott of the Antarctic (1948)** | **12th** | **(19)** | - | | **34th** | **(9)** |
| **Shadow of the Ruhr** | **12th** | **(19)** | - | | - | |
| **Treasure Island (1950)** | **12th** | **(19)** | 27th | (6) | **37th** | **(6)** |
| Twelve o'Clock High (1949) | 12th | (19) | 30th | (3) | 31st | (12) |
| | out of 30 ranks | | out of 32 ranks | | out of 42 ranks | |

\* 'B' indicates ranking achieved by including screenings wholly or partly as second feature. **Bold** indicates British film. Number of screen days appears in brackets.

Sources: *Yorkshire Evening Post, Southend Standard*, Denis Gifford, *The British film catalogue 1895-1985*, Newton Abbot, Devon: David & Charles, 1986

Number of British titles screened by circuit cinemas in S-E Essex as a proportion of all titles screened there: 519 out of 3,284 (15.8%). Expected number of British titles out of top 43 titles screened by circuits as shown above: 15.8% of 43 = 7. Actual number of British titles screened = 35

Comparison of rankings of above titles in three groups of cinemas as measured by Kendall's tau-b. Possible range of values is -1 to +1, with increasing absolute values indicating stronger relationship.

| | S-E Essex circuits | Leeds | S-E Essex indies |
|---|---|---|---|
| S-E Essex circuits | 1.000 | 0.083 | 0.281* |
| Leeds | 0.083 | 1.000 | -0.150 |
| S-E indies | 0.281* | -0.150 | 1.000 |

\* Correlation significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Table 6.5 *Titles shown most often in independent cinemas in south-east Essex ranked by number of days screened, with comparative rankings in south-east Essex circuit cinemas and sample Leeds cinemas, 1945-50ª*

| | | S-E Essex independents ranking | | Leeds ranking | | | S-E Essex circuits ranking | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| The Royal Wedding | B | 1st | (55) | B | 2nd | (36) | B | 3rd | (30) |
| The Jolson Story | | 2nd | (50) | | 2nd | (36) | | 8th | (23) |
| The Seventh Veil | | 3rd | (42) | | 4th | (30) | | 10th | (21) |
| The Third Man | | 3rd | (42) | | 27th | (6) | | 18th | (13) |
| No Orchids for Miss Blandish | | 4th | (40) | | 15th | (18) | | - |
| Ghost Catchers | | 5th | (39) | | 30th | (3) | B | 21st | (10) |
| The Bandit of Sherwood Forest | B | 6th | (37) | | 6th | (27) | | 14th | (17) |
| Caravan | | 7th | (37) | | 15th | (18) | | 17th | (14) |
| 29 Acacia Avenue | | 8th | (35) | | 12th | (21) | | 24th | (7) |
| Here Comes the Sun | B | 8th | (35) | | 21st | (12) | B | 14th | (17) |
| Strawberry Roan | B | 8th | (35) | | 24th | (9) | B | 28th | (3) |
| Candlelight in Algeria | B | 9th | (34) | | 23rd | (10) | | 24th | (7) |
| The Rake's Progress | | 9th | (34) | | 24th | (9) | | 9th | (22) |
| Spring in Park Lane | | 9th | (34) | | 18th | (15) | | 11th | (20) |
| The Virginian | B | 9th | (34) | | 21st | (12) | | 28th | (3) |
| The Winslow Boy | | 9th | (34) | | 21st | (12) | | 21st | (10) |
| The Years Between | | 9th | (34) | | 15th | (18) | | 17th | (14) |
| The Fallen Idol | | 10th | (33) | | 15th | (18) | | 21st | (10) |
| The Fifth Chair | | 10th | (33) | | 26th | (7) | | 20th | (11) |
| Odd Man Out | | 10th | (33) | | 15th | (18) | | 17th | (14) |
| This Happy Breed | | 10th | (33) | | 30th | (3) | B | 18th | (13) |
| 2,000 Women | | 11th | (32) | | 9th | (24) | | - |
| Bless 'em All | | 11th | (32) | | 27th | (6) | | 30th | (1) |
| Man's Castle | | 11th | (32) | | 30th | (3) | B | 28th | (3) |
| Murder at the Windmill | | 11th | (32) | | 24th | (9) | B | 26th | (6) |
| My Darling Clementine | | 11th | (32) | | 19th | (14) | | 24th | (7) |
| Don't Take It to Heart | | 12th | (31) | B | 25th | (8) | B | 26th | (6) |
| Eternally Yours | | 12th | (31) | | | - | | 30th | (1) |
| My Learned Friend | | 12th | (31) | B | 27th | (6) | B | 17th | (14) |
| Sun Valley Serenade | | 12th | (31) | | 23rd | | | 13th | (18) |
| The Wicked Lady | | 12th | (31) | | 18th | (15) | | 13th | (18) |
| Moon over Miami | | 13th | (30) | | 27th | (6) | | 24th | (7) |
| Something for the Boys | | 13th | (30) | | 15th | (18) | | 24th | (7) |
| Bedelia | | 14th | (29) | | 15th | (18) | | 23rd | (8) |

Table 6.5 (cont.)

| | S-E Essex independents ranking | | | Leeds ranking | | | S-E Essex circuits ranking | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A Bell for Adano | 14th | (29) | | 21st | (12) | | 24th | (7) |
| Bulldog Drummond Strikes Back | 14th | (29) | | 15th | (18) | | 24th | (7) |
| **Dancing with Crime** | 14th | (29) | B | 21st | (12) | B | 9th | (22) |
| The Doctor Takes a Wife | 14th | (29) | | | - | B | 24th | (7) |
| **George in Civvy Street** | 14th | (29) | | 12th | (21) | | 26th | (6) |
| **Hatter's Castle** | 14th | (29) | | 18th | (15) | B | 23rd | (8) |
| Jitterbugs | 14th | (29) | B | 15th | (18) | B | 20th | (11) |
| Kentucky | 14th | (29) | | 21st | (12) | B | 23rd | (8) |
| **The Man in Grey** | 14th | (29) | | 15th | (18) | | 24th | (7) |
| Rebecca | 14th | (29) | | 18th | (15) | | 26th | (6) |
| Striptease Lady | 14th | (29) | | | - | | 30th | (1) |
| **Wanted for Murder** | 14th | (29) | | 21st | (12) | | 18th | (13) |
| | out of 42 ranks | | | out of 32 ranks | | | out of 30 ranks | |

*B indicates ranking achieved by including screenings wholly or partly as second feature. **Bold** indicates British film. Days screened appear in brackets.

Sources: *Yorkshire Evening Post, Southend Standard,* Denis Gifford, *The British film catalogue 1895-1985,* Newton Abbot, Devon: David & Charles, 1986

Number of British titles screened by independent cinemas in S-E Essex as a proportion of all titles screened there: 839 out of 4,905 (17.1%). Expected number of British titles out of top 46 titles screened by independents as shown above: 17.1% of 46 = 8. Actual number of British titles screened = 28

Comparison of rankings of above titles in three groups of cinemas as measured by Kendall's tau-b. Possible range of values is -1 to +1, with increasing absolute values indicating stronger relationship.

| | S-E Essex indies | Leeds | S-E Essex circuits |
|---|---|---|---|
| S-E Essex indies | 1.000 | - 0.020 | 0.308* |
| Leeds | -0.020 | 1.000 | 0.115 |
| S-E Essex circuits | 0.308* | 0.115 | 1.000 |

* Correlation significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Table 6.6 *Titles shown most often in sample cinemas in Leeds ranked by number of days screened, with comparative rankings among south-east Essex circuit cinemas and independents, 1945-50*[a]

| | | Leeds ranking | | | S-E Essex circuits ranking | | | S-E Essex independents ranking | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Up in Arms | | 1st | (42) | B | 21st | (10) | | 28th | (15) |
| The Jolson Story | | 2nd | (36) | | 8th | (23) | | 2nd | (50) |
| The Princess and the Pirate | | 2nd | (36) | | 15th | (16) | | 31st | (12) |
| **The Royal Wedding** | B | 2nd | (36) | B | 3rd | (30) | B | 1st | (55) |
| State Fair[b] | | 2nd | (36) | | 15th | (16) | | 21st | (22) |
| **The Way to the Stars** | | 3rd | (33) | B | 1st | (33) | | 23rd | (20) |
| Nob Hill | | 4th | (30) | | 15th | (16) | | 24th | (19) |
| **The Seventh Veil** | | 4th | (30) | | 10th | (21) | | 3rd | (42) |
| The Secret Life of Walter Mitty | | 5th | (28) | | 21st | (10) | | 34th | (9) |
| The Bandit of Sherwood Forest | | 6th | (27) | | 14th | (17) | | 6th | (37) |
| The Bells of St Mary's | | 6th | (27) | | 17th | (14) | | 20th | (23) |
| **Madonna of the Seven Moons** | | 6th | (27) | B | 4th | (29) | | 25th | (18) |
| **Old Mother Riley at Home** | B | 6th | (27) | B | 24th | (7) | | 35th | (8) |
| Road to Utopia | | 6th | (27) | | 18th | (13) | | 34th | (9) |
| **They Were Sisters** | | 6th | (27) | | 11th | (20) | | 15th | (28) |
| Black Magic | B | 7th | (26) | B | 24th | (7) | B | 28th | (15) |
| Spiral Staircase | | 7th | (26) | | 24th | (7) | B | 21st | (22) |
| Prince of Thieves | | 8th | (25) | B | | - | B | 27th | (16) |
| **2,000 Women** | | 9th | (24) | | 30th | (1) | B | 11th | (32) |
| Blue Skies | | 9th | (24) | | 11th | (20) | | 28th | (15) |
| Bullfighters | B | 9th | (24) | B | 23rd | (8) | B | 30th | (13) |
| City for Conquest | | 9th | (24) | | 24th | (7) | | 33rd | (10) |
| The Dolly Sisters | | 9th | (24) | | 14th | (17) | | 21st | (22) |
| Going My Way | | 9th | (24) | | | - | | 24th | (19) |
| **I See a Dark Stranger** | | 9th | (24) | | 18th | (13) | | 24th | (19) |
| I Wonder Who's Kissing Her Now | | 9th | (24) | | 21st | (10) | | 31st | (12) |
| If You Knew Susie | | 9th | (24) | | 25th | (6) | | 34th | (9) |
| The Kid from Brooklyn | | 9th | (24) | | 21st | (10) | | 31st | (12) |
| Leave Her to Heaven | | 9th | (24) | | 13th | (18) | | 25th | (18) |
| The Macomber Affair | | 9th | (24) | | 20th | (11) | | 37th | (6) |
| Money for Jam | B | 9th | (24) | B | 21st | (10) | | 38th | (3) |
| Nothing but Trouble | B | 9th | (24) | B | 16th | (15) | | 38th | (3) |
| Notorious | | 9th | (24) | | 18th | (13) | | 24th | (19) |
| The Spanish Main | | 9th | (24) | | 17th | (14) | | 34th | (9) |

cont.

Table 6.6 (cont.)

| | Leeds ranking | | | S-E Essex circuits ranking | | | S-E Essex independents ranking | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Tomorrow Is Forever | 9th | (24) | | 18th | (13) | | 34th | (9) |
| Diamond Horseshoe | 10th | (23) | | 15th | (16) | | 30th | (13) |
| Tarzan and the Leopard Woman | 10th | (23) | | 21st | (10) | | 31st | (12) |
| They Got Me Covered | 10th | (23) | B | 21st | (10) | B | 20th | (23) |
| **Waterloo Road** | **10th** | **(23)** | B | **22nd** | **(9)** | | **15th** | **(28)** |
| | out of 32 ranks | | | out of 30 ranks | | | out of 42 ranks | |

ᵃ B indicates ranking achieved by including screenings wholly or partly as second feature. **Bold** indicates British film. Days screened appear in brackets.
ᵇ All screenings assumed to be of the 1945 remake rather than the 1933 version.

Sources: *Yorkshire Evening Post, Southend Standard,* Denis Gifford, *The British film catalogue 1895-1985,* Newton Abbot, Devon: David & Charles, 1986

Number of British titles screened by sample Leeds cinemas as a proportion of all titles screened there: 519 out of 3,284 (15.8%). Expected number of British titles out of top 39 titles screened by sample Leeds cinemas as shown above: 15.8% of 39 = 6. Actual number screened = 9

Comparison of rankings of above titles in three groups of cinemas as measured by Kendall's tau-b. Possible range of values is -1 to +1, with increasing absolute values indicating stronger relationship.

| | Leeds | S-E Essex circuits | S-E Essex indies |
|---|---|---|---|
| Leeds | 1.000 | 0.268* | 0.221 |
| S-E Essex circuits | 0.268* | 1.000 | 0.276* |
| S-E Essex indies | 0.221 | 0.276* | 1.000 |

* Correlations significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Chart 6.1 *Percentage frequency of screenings of British films in sample cinemas 1945-50*



Days screened (percentages for each group are shown in graph)

■ 1 - 6    ■ 7 - 12    ■ 13 - 18    □ 19 - 24    ■ 25 +

Sources: *Southend Standard, Yorkshire Evening Post,* Denis Gifford, *The British film catalogue 1895-1985,* Newton Abbot, Devon: David & Charles, 1986

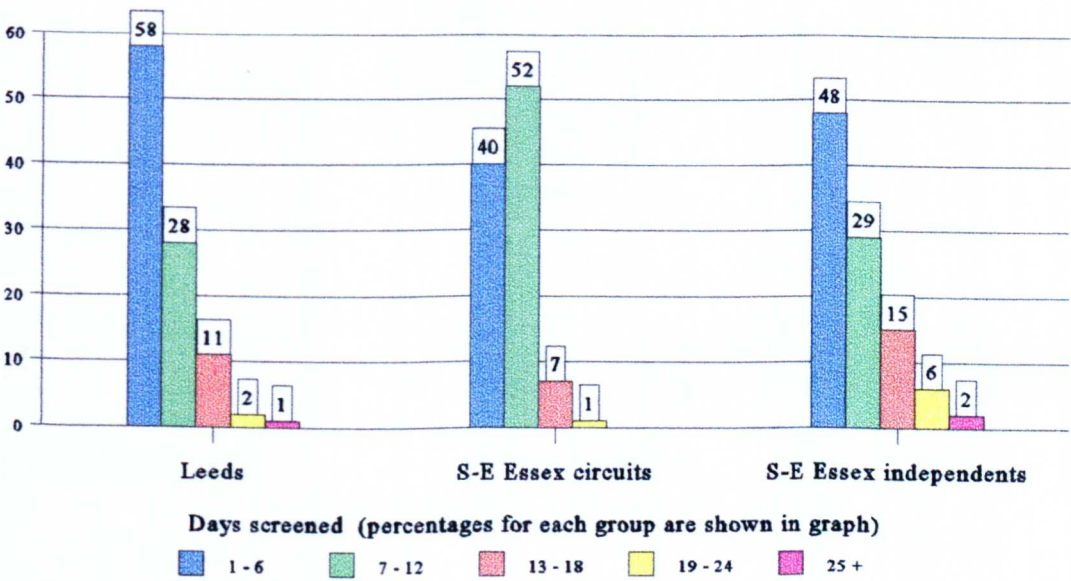Table 6.7 British features receiving the most screenings in the sample cinemas 1945-1950[a]

| Leeds cinemas | | | S-E Essex circuit cinemas | | | S-E Essex independents | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| The Way to the Stars | | 3rd (33) | The Way to the Stars | B | 1st (33) | The Seventh Veil | B | 3rd (42) |
| The Seventh Veil | | 4th (30) | The Upturned Glass | B | 2nd (32) | The Third Man | B | 3rd |
| Madonna of the Seven Moons | | 6th (27) | A Matter of Life and Death | | 3rd (30) | No Orchids for Miss Blandish | | 4th (40) |
| Old Mother Reilly at Home | B | 6th | Madonna of the Seven Moons | B | 4th (29) | Caravan | B | 7th (36) |
| They Were Sisters | | 6th | The Red Shoes | | 4th | 29 Acacia Avenue | B | 8th (35) |
| 2,000 Women | | 9th (24) | Great Expectations | | 5th (26) | Here Comes the Sun | B | 8th |
| I See a Dark Stranger | | 9th | Holiday Camp | | 6th (25) | Strawberry Roan | B | 8th |
| Waterloo Road | | 10th (23) | The Man Within | | 6th | Candlelight in Algeria | | 9th (34) |
| 29 Acacia Avenue | | 12th (21) | Black Narcissus | B | 8th (23) | The Rake's Progress | | 9th |
| Demobbed | | 12th | Captain Boycott | B | 8th | Spring in Park Lane | | 9th |
| Fanny by Gaslight | | 12th | The October Man | | 8th | The Winslow Boy | | 9th |
| George in Civvy Street | | 12th | The Overlanders | B | 8th | The Years Between | | 9th |
| Piccadilly Incident | | 12th | White Cradle Inn | | 8th | The Fallen Idol | | 10th (33) |
| So Well Remembered | | 12th | Dancing with Crime | B | 9th (22) | Odd Man Out | | 10th |
| Bedelia | | 15th (18) | London Town | B | 9th | This Happy Breed | | 10th |
| Caravan | | 15th | The Rake's Progress | | 9th | 2,000 Women | B | 11th (32) |
| The Fallen Idol | | 15th | The Wicked Lady | | 9th | Bless 'em All | B | 11th |
| Holiday Camp | | 15th | The Seventh Veil | | 10th (21) | Murder at the Windmill | B | 11th |
| Hotel Reserve | | 15th | Caesar and Cleopatra | | 11th (20) | Don't Take It to Heart | | 12th (31) |

cont.

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Table 6.7 (cont.)

| *Leeds cinemas* | | | *S-E Essex circuit cinemas* | | | *S-E Essex independents* | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| I Didn't Do It | | 15th (18) | The Dancing Years | B | 11th (20) | My Learned Friend | B | 12th (31) |
| I Know Where I'm Going | | 15th | Home Sweet Home | B | 11th | The Wicked Lady | B | 14th (29) |
| Just William's Luck | B | 15th | Maytime in Mayfair | | 11th | Bedelia | | 14th |
| Love Story | | 15th | Odette | | 11th | Dancing with Crime | B | 14th |
| The Man in Grey | | 15th | Quiet Weekend | | 11th | George in Civvy Street | B | 14th |
| No Orchids for Miss Blandish | | 15th | Spring in Park Lane | | 11th | Hatter's Castle | B | 14th |
| Odd Man Out | | 15th | Stage Fright | | 11th | The Man in Grey | B | 14th |
| A Place of One's Own | | 15th | They Were Sisters | | 11th | Wanted for Murder | B | 14th |
| The Thief of Baghdad | | 15th | | | | | | |
| The Years Between | | 15th | | | | | | |
| | | out of 32 ranks | | | out of 30 ranks | | | out of 42 ranks |

* 'B' denotes title programmed wholly or in part as second feature. Rankings given are those for all films, including American. Days screened are given in brackets.

Sources: *Yorkshire Evening Post, Southend Standard*, Denis Gifford, *The British film catalogue 1895-1985*, Newton Abbot, Devon: David & Charles, 1986

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Table 6.8 *Genres of features in Table 6.7*

| | Leeds | S-E Essex circuit cinemas | S-E Essex independents |
|---|---|---|---|
| Adventure | - | 2 | - |
| Comedy | 7 | 4 | 6 |
| Crime | 8 | 5 | 8 |
| Drama | 4 | 4 | 6 |
| Fantasy | 2 | 1 | - |
| History | - | 2 | - |
| Musical | - | 4 | 2 |
| Romance | 9 | 3 | 3 |
| War | 3 | 2 | 2 |
| No. of titles | 29 | 27 | 27 |

Sources: *Yorkshire Evening Post, Southend Standard,* Denis Gifford, *The British film catalogue 1895-1985,* Newton Abbot, Devon: David & Charles, 1986

Table 6.9 *Actors appearing most frequently in the features listed in Table 6.7*

| Leeds | No. of films | S-E Essex circuit cinemas | No. of films | S-E Essex independents | No. of films |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Male* | | | | | |
| James Mason | 7 | Marius Goring | 3 | James Mason | 5 |
| Stewart Granger | 4 | Stewart Granger | 3 | Stewart Granger | 2 |
| Michael Redgrave | 2 | James Mason | 3 | Robert Newton | 2 |
| | | Michael Wilding | 3 | | |
| *Female* | | | | | |
| Phyllis Calvert | 4 | Anna Neagle | 3 | Anne Crawford | 3 |
| Anne Crawford | 4 | Jean Simmons | 3 | Margaret Lockwood | 3 |
| Margaret Lockwood | 4 | Phyllis Calvert | 2 | Phyllis Calvert | 2 |
| Patricia Roc | 4 | Joan Greenwood | 2 | Jean Kent | 2 |
| | | | | Patricia Roc | 2 |

Sources: *Yorkshire Evening Post, Southend Standard, Halliwell's film and video guide,* 13th edn., John Walker (ed.). London: HarperCollins, 1997

Table 6.10 *Poll results of best British stars and films, 1945-50, with rankings of the films in sample Leeds cinemas (out of 32)*

| | *Best actress (with film where specified)* | *Leeds rank* | *Best actor (with film where specified)* | *Leeds rank* | *Best film* | *Leeds rank* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Picturegoer, 1945* | Phyllis Calvert *(Fanny by Gaslight)* | 12 | James Mason *(Fanny by Gaslight)* | 12 | | |
| *Daily Mail, 1946* | | | | | *The Way to the Stars* | 3 |
| *Picturegoer, 1946* | Ann Todd *(The Seventh Veil)* | 4 | Laurence Olivier *(Henry V)* | 30 | | |
| *Daily Express, 1946* | Margaret Lockwood | | James Mason | | *The Seventh Veil* | 4 |
| *Bernstein, 1947* | Margaret Lockwood | | James Mason | | *The Way to the Stars* | 3 |
| *Daily Mail, 1947* | Margaret Lockwood | | James Mason | | *Piccadilly Incident* | 12 |
| *Picturegoer, 1947* | Anna Neagle *(Piccadilly Incident)* | 12 | Michael Redgrave *(The Captive Heart)* | 27 | | |
| *Daily Mail, 1948* | Margaret Lockwood | | John Mills | | *The Courtneys of Curzon Street* | 21 |
| *Picturegoer, 1948* | Anna Neagle *(The Courtneys of Curzon Street)* | 21 | John Mills *(Great Expectations)* | 24 | | |
| *Daily Mail, 1949* | Anna Neagle | | Michael Wilding | | *Spring in Park Lane* | 18 |
| *Picturegoer, 1949* | Anna Neagle *(Spring in Park Lane)* | 18 | Laurence Olivier *(Hamlet)* | 30 | | |
| *Daily Mail, 1950* | Jean Simmons | | Richard Todd | | *The Hasty Heart* | 18 |
| *Picturegoer, 1950* | Margaret Lockwood *(Madness of the Heart)* | 30 | Richard Todd *(The Hasty Heart)* | 18 | | |
| *Daily Mail, 1951* | Anna Neagle | | John Mills | | *Odette* | - |
| *Picturegoer, 1951* | Anna Neagle *(Odette)* | - | Alec Guinness *(The Mudlark)* | - | | |

Table 6.11 *Frequency of the appearance of features by selected directors in table 6.7*

|  | Leeds | S-E Essex circuit cinemas | S-E Essex independents |
|---|---|---|---|
| Anthony Asquith | 2 | 1 | - |
| David Lean | - | 1 | 1 |
| Michael Powell* | 2 | 3 | - |
| Carol Reed | 2 | - | 3 |
| No. of films in table 6.7 | 29 | 27 | 27 |

* Co-director

Sources: *Yorkshire Evening Post, Southend Standard,* Denis Gifford, *The British film catalogue 1895-1985,* Newton Abbot, Devon: David & Charles, 1986

Table 6.12 *Number of days of screening of selected comedy films in the three groups of cinemas, 1945-50*

| | Total of screen days (all films) | Old Mother Riley | | Mancunian* | | George Formby | | Will Hay | | Post-war Ealing comedies | | Marx Brothers | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Screen days | % of total screen days | Screen days | % of total screen days | Screen days | % of total screen days | Screen days | % of total screen days | Screen days | % of total screen days | Screen days | % of total screen days |
| Sample Leeds cinemas | 23,937 | 91 | 0.38 | 125 | 0.52 | 104 | 0.43 | 20 | 0.08 | 9 | 0.04 | 31 | 0.13 |
| S-E Essex circuit cinemas | 20,726 | 24 | 0.12 | 45 | 0.22 | 42 | 0.2 | 38 | 0.18 | 60 | 0.29 | 16 | 0.08 |
| S-E Essex independents | 41,542 | 173 | 0.42 | 66 | 0.15 | 241 | 0.58 | 79 | 0.19 | 52 | 0.13 | 29 | 0.07 |

* Excludes *Boots, Boots* and *Off the Dole*, which are counted among the Formby films

Sources: *Yorkshire Evening Post, Southend Standard*, Denis Gifford, *The British film catalogue 1895-1985*, Newton Abbot, Devon: David & Charles, 1986

Number of titles found in both groups of cinemas in south-east Essex compared with the number expected on the basis of the proportion screened in the sample Leeds cinemas. Comparison by chi-square test for goodness of fit with Yates' correction, critical value 3.84 (1-tailed) at the 0.05 level:

| | Old Mother Riley | Mancunian | George Formby | Will Hay | Post-war Ealing comedies | Marx Brothers |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| S-E Essex circuit cinemas | 37.7420 | 36.3585 | 24.3997 | 24.7409 | 331.6593 | 4.0886 |
| S-E Essex independent cinemas | 1.1506* | 104.0142 | 21.2213 | 62.7848 | 70.3014 | 11.1302 |

* Correlation significant at the 0.05 level, i.e. the number of Old Mother Riley films screen in S-E Essex independents may be predicted from the number screened in the sample Leeds cinemas.

Table 6.13 *Numbers of British features released between 1945 and 1949 which were not screened in each group of cinemas*

| | Released | Percentage | Not screened in sample Leeds cinemas | Percentage | Not screened in S-E Essex circuit cinemas | Percentage | Not screened in S-E Essex independents | Percentage |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Adventure | 15 | 4 | 5 | 5 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 3 |
| Children | 10 | 3 | 10 | 9 | 5 | 5 | 4 | 6 |
| Comedy | 73 | 19 | 21 | 23 | 22 | 22 | 17 | 26 |
| Compilations | 5 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 3 |
| Crime | 106 | 27 | 19 | 17 | 29 | 29 | 15 | 23 |
| Drama | 57 | 15 | 12 | 11 | 11 | 11 | 6 | 9 |
| Fantasy | 21 | 5 | 9 | 8 | 5 | 5 | 2 | 3 |
| History | 11 | 3 | 2 | 2 | - | - | 2 | 3 |
| Musical | 30 | 8 | 8 | 7 | 10 | 10 | 4 | 6 |
| Religion | 1 | <1 | 1 | <1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Revue | 7 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 7 | 7 | 3 | 5 |
| Romance | 36 | 9 | 11 | 11 | 1 | 1 | 5 | 7 |
| Sport | 3 | 1 | - | - | 1 | 1 | - | - |
| Unknown | 1 | <1 | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| War | 16 | 4 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 3 |
| Total | 392 | 100 | 109 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 65 | 100 |
| Percentage of total releases | | | | 28 | | 26 | | 17 |

Sources: *Yorkshire Evening Post, Southend Standard,* Denis Gifford, *The British film catalogue 1895-1985,* Newton Abbot, Devon: David & Charles, 1986

Table 6.14 *Rankings of British features in other areas*[a]

| Majestic, Macclesfield | | Patrons | | | Gaumont, Sheffield | | Patrons | | | Empire, Leicester Square | | Patrons | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| a | b | c | d | e | f | g | h | i | j | | k | l | m |
| 1 | The Wicked Lady | 13,520 | 1 | 15 | Great Expectations (1946) | 77,427 | 1 | 24 | Perfect Strangers (1945) | | 151,289 | 9 | 21 |
| 2 | They Were Sisters | 12,063 | 5 | 6 | The White Unicorn (1947) | 73,749 | 2 | 18 | A Matter of Life and Death (1946) | | 130,556 | 10 | 24 |
| 3 | Caravan | 11,864 | 8 | 15 | Oliver Twist (1948) | 71,628 | 3 | 27 | Spring in Park Lane (1948) | | 126,539 | 12 | 18 |
| 4 | Love Story | 11,617 | 11 | 15 | Spring in Park Lane (1948) | 69,223 | 5 | 18 | The Fallen Idol (1948) | | 112,487 | 15 | 15 |
| 5 | The Seventh Veil | 11,590 | 12 | 4 | The Upturned Glass (1947) | 37,341 | 13 | 27 | Mine Own Executioner (1947) | | 106,421 | 19 | 27 |
| 6 | Home Sweet Home | 11,251 | 14 | 16 | The Red Shoes (1948) | 35,569 | 16 | 30 | A Yank at Oxford (B) (1938) | | 102,878 | 21 | 20 |
| 7 | Madonna of the 7 Moons | 11,134 | 15 | 6 | Circus Boy (B) (1947) | 34,482 | 18 | - | Maytime in Mayfair (1949) | | 98,729 | 24 | 24 |
| 8 | The Way to the Stars | 11,065 | 16 | 3 | When the Bough Breaks (1947) | 34,482 | 18 | 27 | The Miniver Story (1950) | | 96,049 | 26 | - |
| 9 | The Years Between | 10,938 | 17 | 15 | Hungry Hill (1947) | 33,381 | 19 | 24 | Courtneys of Curzon St (1947) | | 81,567 | 32 | 21 |
| 10 | Bedelia | 10,543 | 24 | 15 | The Root of All Evil (1947) | 32,927 | 20 | 27 | I Live in Grosvenor Square (1945) | | 67,394 | 43 | 18 |
| 11 | He Snoops to Conquer | 10,263 | 27 | 21 | Odd Man Out (1947) | 31,067 | 22 | 15 | Piccadilly Incident (1946) | | 63,808 | 45 | 12 |
| 12 | Perfect Strangers | 10,242 | 28 | 21 | Loyal Heart (B) (1946) | 30,742 | 23 | 27 | My Brother Jonathan (1948) | | 60,767 | 52 | 21 |
| 13 | Caesar and Cleopatra | 10,035 | 31 | - | It Always Rains on Sunday (1947) | 30,283 | 24 | 24 | The Small Back Room (1949) | | 47,367 | 63 | 30 |
| 14 | I'll Be Your Sweetheart | 9,833 | 36 | 18 | Easy Money (1948) | 29,694 | 26 | 27 | Night Beat (1948) | | 40,655 | 71 | 24 |
| 15 | Waltz Time | 9,165 | 37 | - | Master of Bankdam (1947) | 29,456 | 28 | 12 | A Man about the House (1947) | | 37,556 | 77 | 27 |
| 16 | I Live in Grosvenor Sq | 9,632 | 40 | 18 | The Magic Bow (1946) | 29,335 | 29 | 24 | Meet the Navy (1946) | | 36,437 | 78 | 21 |
| 17 | For You Alone | 9,620 | 41 | 18 | A Matter of Life and Death (1946) | 29,216 | 30 | 24 | Bonnie Prince Charlie (1948) | | 35,441 | 81 | 24 |
| 18 | I Didn't Do It | 9,337 | 50 | 18 | Here Come the Huggetts (1948) | 28,709 | 32 | 30 | The Glass Mountain (1949) | | 27,973 | 94 | 21 |
| 19 | Theirs is the Glory | 9,165 | 54 | 24 | Diamond City (1949) | 28,479 | 34 | - | Night Boat to Dublin (1946) | | 21,896 | 106 | 24 |

cont.

Table 6.14 (cont.)

| a | b | c | d | e | f | g | h | i | j | k | l | m |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | Majestic, Macclesfield | Patrons |  |  | Gaumont, Sheffield | Patrons |  |  | Empire, Leicester Square | Patrons |  |  |
| 20 | Waterloo Road | 8,389 | 61 | 15 | The October Man (1947) | 28,364 | 37 | 21 | Quiet Weekend (1946) | 13,207 | 141 | 21 |
| 21 | A Place of One's Own | 8,131 | 64 | 27 | Good Time Girl (1948) | 28,207 | 39 | 27 | Great Day (1945) | 11,967 | 143 | 21 |
| 22 | I Know Where I'm Going | 8,073 | 66 | 10 | Holiday Camp (1947) | 28,033 | 42 | 15 | Last Days of Dolwyn (1949) | 11,028 | 147 | 27 |
| 23 | Medal for the General | 7,787 | 73 | 15 | Green for Danger (1946) | 27,899 | 43 | 23 | This was a Woman (1948) | 10,997 | 148 | 27 |
| 24 | Henry V | 7,716 | 77 | 15 | Morning Departure (1950) | 27,623 | 45 | 30 | Mrs Fitzherbert (1947) | 9,732 | 150 | 24 |
| 25 | Blithe Spirit | 7,518 | 80 | 21 | Broken Journey (1948) | 27,546 | 46 | 30 |  |  |  |  |
| 26 | Brief Encounter | 7,442 | 82 | 30 | The Secret Tunnel (B) (1947) | 27,437 | 47 | - |  |  |  |  |
| 27 | Champagne Charlie | 5,197 | 95 | 27 | Captain Boycott (1947) | 27,436 | 48 | 27 |  |  |  |  |
| 28 | Dead of Night | 4,997 | 96 | 24 | Secret Mission (B) (1942) | 27,388 | 49 | 27 |  |  |  |  |
| 29 | They Knew Mr Knight | 4,888 | 97 | 21 | Look Before You Love (1948) | 26,303 | 56 | - |  |  |  |  |
| 30 |  |  |  |  | Dear Octopus (B) (1943) | 26,252 | 57 | 27 |  |  |  |  |
| 31 |  |  |  |  | Marry Me (1949) | 26,252 | 57 | 30 |  |  |  |  |
| 32 |  |  |  |  | So Long at the Fair (1950) | 26,073 | 59 | - |  |  |  |  |
| 33 |  |  |  |  | Trottie True (1949) | 26,063 | 60 | - |  |  |  |  |
| 34 |  |  |  |  | A Song for Tomorrow (1948) | 25,807 | 63 | - |  |  |  |  |
| 35 |  |  |  |  | The Brothers (1947) | 25,443 | 65 | 30 |  |  |  |  |

cont.

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Table 6.14 (cont.)

*Daffodil, Cheltenham*

| n | o | Revenue | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | p | q | r |
| 1 | Black Narcissus | 298 | 1 | 27 |
| 2 | Great Expectations | 254 | 3 | 24 |
| 3 | Jassy | 245 | 4 | 14 |
| 4 | Frieda | 228 | 5 | 21 |
| 4 | Bush Christmas (B) | 228 | 6 | 24 |
| 5 | Men of Two Worlds | 209 | 6 | - |
| 6 | Quartet | 166 | 7 | - |
| 6 | Panic at Madam Tussaud's (B) | 166 | 7 | 24 |
| 7 | London Belongs to Me | 158 | 8 | 27 |
| 7 | A Gunman Has Escaped (B) | 158 | 8 | 30 |
| 8 | Take My Life | 155 | 10 | 22 |
| 9 | Portrait from Life | 149 | 12 | 30 |
| 9 | Good Morning, Boys (B) | 149 | 12 | - |
| 9 | The Weaker Sex | 149 | 12 | 30 |
| 10 | My Brother's Keeper | 145 | 13 | 24 |
| 11 | 2,000 Women | 129 | 19 | 9 |
| 12 | Strange Boarders (B) | 125 | 20 | - |
| 13 | Mr Perrin and Mr Traill | 119 | 23 | - |
| 14 | A Sister to Assist 'er (B) | 119 | 23 | - |
| 14 | White Cradle Inn | 117 | 24 | 27 |
| 15 | Woman Hater | 106 | 26 | - |

* 'B' indicates film wholly or partly programmed as second feature.
a and n: ranking of British features; d: ranking among all features at the Majestic, Macclesfield (out of 96); e, .i, m and r: comparative ranking in sample Leeds cinemas (all films); h: ranking of all features at the Gaumont, Sheffield (out of 201); l: ranking of all features at the Empire, Leicester Square (out of 153); q: ranking of all features at the Daffodil, Cheltenham (out of 42).

Sources: Julian Poole, 'British cinema attendance in wartime: audience preference at the Majestic, Macclesfield, 1939-1946', *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television*, 1987, vol.7, no.1, Tables 7 and 8; returns from the Gaumont, Sheffield (photocopies held by Theatre Cinema Association) Allen Eyles, 'Hits and misses at the Empire', *Picture House*, summer 1989, no.13, 38-41; box-office records of the Daffodil, Cheltenham (courtesy of Mark Stephens)

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Table 8.1 *Rankings of films shown in the three groups of cinemas discussed in chapters eight to fourteen, 1945-1950, with screen days shown in brackets*

| | Leeds cinema rankings | | S-E Essex circuit cinema rankings | | S-E Essex independents rankings | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| It Always Rains on Sunday (1947) | 24th | (9) | 15th | (16) | 20th | (23) |
| London Belongs to Me (1948) | 27th | (6) | 15th | (16) | 22nd | (21) |
| The Gorbals Story (1950) | 30th | (3) | | - | 34th | (9) |
| Chance of a Lifetime (1950) | 30th | (3) | 24th | (7) | 37th | (6) |
| The Blue Lamp (1950) | 30th | (3) | 13th | (18) | 26th | (17) |
| Holiday Camp (1947) | 15th | (18) | 6th | (25) | 19th | (24) |
| A Boy, a Girl and a Bike (1949) | | - | 24th | (7) | | - |
| Waterloo Road (1945) | 10th | (23) | 22nd | (9) | 15th | (28) |
| Here Come the Huggetts (1948) | 30th | (3) | 18th | (13) | 28th | (15) |
| Vote for Huggett (1949) | 30th | (3) | 15th | (16) | 31st | (12) |
| The Huggetts Abroad (1949) | | - | 18th | (13) | 31st | (12) |
| Waterfront (1950) | | - | 24th | (7) | 40th | (3) |
| Fame Is the Spur (1947) | 30th | (3) | 21st | (10) | 30th | (13) |
| The Guinea Pig (1948) | 18th | (15) | 18th | (13) | 25th | (18) |
| Once a Jolly Swagman (1948) | 30th | (3) | 21st | (10) | 28th | (15) |
| Floodtide (1949) | 30th | (3) | 24th | (7) | 40th | (3) |
| Blue Scar (1949) | 30th | (3) | 24th | (7) | 34th | (9) |
| The White Unicorn (1947) | 18th | (15) | 14th | (17) | 25th | (18) |
| Good Time Girl (1948) | 27th | (6) | 18th | (13) | 31st | (12) |
| Boys in Brown (1949) | 30th | (3) | 18th | (13) | 40th | (3) |
| Home Sweet Home (1945) | 16th | (17) | 11th | (20) | 22nd | (21) |
| Over the Garden Wall (1950) | 27th | (6) | 25th | (6) | 36th | (7) |
| Old Mother Riley's New Venture (1949) | 21st | (12) | 25th | (6) | 21st | (22) |
| Old Mother Riley, Headmistress (1950) | 30th | (3) | 24th | (7) | | - |
| Appointment with Crime (1946) | 21st | (12) | 21st | (10) | 33rd | (10) |
| Dancing with Crime (1947) | 21st | (12) | 9th | (22) | 14th | (29) |
| Dance Hall (1950) | | - | 18th | (13) | 34th | (9) |
| The Way to the Stars (1945) | 3rd | (33) | 1st | (33) | 23rd | (20) |

cont.

Table 8.1 (cont.)

| | Leeds cinema rankings | | S-E Essex circuit cinema rankings | | S-E Essex independents rankings | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| The Captive Heart (1946) | 27th | (6) | 15th | (16) | 15th | (28) |
| The Hasty Heart (1949) | 18th | (15) | 18th | (13) | 25th | (18) |
| They Were Not Divided (1950) | - | | - | | - | |
| The Wooden Horse (1950) | - | | 18th | (13) | 37th | (6) |
| | out of 32 ranks | | out of 30 ranks | | out of 42 ranks | |

Sources: *Yorkshire Evening Post, Southend Standard,* Denis Gifford, *The British film catalogue 1895-1985,* Newton Abbot, Devon: David & Charles, 1986

Comparison of rankings of above titles in three groups of cinemas as measured by Kendall's tau-b. Possible range of values is -1 to +1, with increasing absolute values indicating stronger relationship.

| | Leeds | S-E Essex circuits | S-E Essex indies |
|---|---|---|---|
| Leeds | 1.000 | 0.140 | 0.221 |
| S-E Essex circuits | 0.140 | 1.000 | 0.272* |
| S-E Essex indies | 0.221 | 0.272* | 1.000 |

* Correlation significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

APPENDIX TWO

Audience surveys and ballots

This appendix is by way of an annotated bibliography of audience surveys and ballots, ordered by year of publication. Relevant conclusions made by the authors or evident from the data but not included in the tables in appendix 1 are bulleted. No attempt is made at reanalysis except for calculating percentages from tables. Page numbers are given in brackets. Surveys are assumed to have taken place in the year of publication unless otherwise noted.

A considerable quantity of Mass-Observation material from the 1930s and the wartime period has been published in Jeffrey Richards and Dorothy Sheridan (eds.) *Mass-Observation at the movies,* London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1987. This is not duplicated here, though two general surveys and two surveys of reactions to post-war films are noted.

Audience surveys and ballots conducted between 1935 and 1944

**Korda questionnaire, 1935.** A national poll organised by Alexander Korda. It appeared in the *Daily Mail,* the findings being based on the first 10,000 replies received by the paper. Findings are summarised in Linda Wood (ed.) *British films 1927-1939,* London: BFI, 1986, 134. The largest number of respondents (22.4 per cent) were in the 'business and clerical' category (ibid. 134).

**'What boys think of film and wireless: some opinions gathered in Finsbury by a correspondent',** *Times Educational Supplement,* **18 May 1935.** A survey of 160 boys aged between twelve and sixteen conducted in the Finsbury district of London.
- Favourite star was Gracie Fields.
- 22% of respondents preferred British films to American films.

**Sidney Bernstein, 'The Bernstein film questionnaire', 1937 (BFI Library).** Valid questionnaires returned totalled 159,000.[1] The survey was held in Granada cinemas. Some findings such as respondents' views on film critics in individual newspapers were withheld, presumably because they were deemed commercially sensitive.
- 79.5 per cent of respondents preferred two big pictures rather than one big picture and a

short film (20).

- One British male star and four British female stars were in the top sixteen of their respective groups (5).
- Women had a distaste for comedy, shown by their dislike of comedy stars (6).
- 76.5 per cent of respondents liked stage shows to be included in cinema performances (21).

**H.K. Clarkson, *A survey of the leisure time of West Lothian school children*, Edinburgh: Educational Institute of Scotland, 1938.** A survey made by a questionnaire issued to all schools in West Lothian in January 1937. 4,850 senior pupils aged nine to twelve responded, along with 2,822 intermediate or advanced pupils of twelve to fifteen and 311 post-intermediate pupils of fifteen to eighteen (5 and 9).

- Cinema attendance four or more times a week declined with age (9-11).

**Gallup survey, January 1938,** in George H. Gallup (gen.ed.) *The Gallup international opinion polls: Great Britain 1937-1975*, vol.1: 1937-1964, New York: Random House, 1976, 7. The first of the Gallup polls on cinema-going. The Gallup organisation failed to use a standardised frequency of cinema-going, so their polls cannot always be compared. Additional responses in this case are given in Hadley Cantril, *Public opinion 1935-1946*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1951, 486. Many Gallup surveys in Britain were carried out by in association with the British Institute of Public Opinion.

- In January 1938, 15 per cent of respondents had been to the cinema within the previous 3 days, a further 26 per cent within the last week and 43 per cent within the last month. (Cantril, 1951, 486).

**Mass-Observation, The Bolton questionnaire, 1938.** A total of 559 questionnaires were completed in three cinemas. The replies are reproduced and analysed in Jeffrey Richards and Dorothy Sheridan (eds.) *Mass-Observation at the movies*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1987, 32-136.

**Norman F. Millington, 'Homework and leisure time activities', MA thesis, University of Birmingham, 1938.** A study made by questionnaire, returned anonymously, of 103 boys and 68 girls aged between twelve and fifteen mostly from 'the better kind of artisan class home'. The school was 'selective, with a technical bias'. (2-4 and 14).

**S.M. Bevington, J.H. Blaksley, J.R. Jennings and J. Tyrwhitt,** *Leisure pursuits outside the family circle,* **London: National Institute of Industrial Psychology, 1939.** A survey of two towns made by observation, questioning and a questionnaire (ii). Limited data on cinema-going in Slough and Ipswich is included.

- Reading was the major weekday leisure activity in Ipswich, taking up 160,000 person-weekday evenings per month amongst adults. Cinema-going was the dominant leisure activity for adults outside the home, accounting for more than half the time spent outside the family circle at 130,000 person-weekday evenings per month, summer and winter. Following cinema-going was tennis at 16,860 person-weekday evenings per month in summer. No data is provided for Saturday evenings (12-16).

- In Slough, data for reading is not given, though as the county library was staffed by volunteers, presumably reading was considered less important (102). Cinema was the dominant weekday activity, occupying 108,000 person-weekday evenings per month all the year round. Second was greyhound racing (9,500 person-weekday evenings per month), with billiards third. Dancing occupied 8,000 person-weekday evenings per month in winter and 1,500 in summer (67-8).

**W. Farr, 'Analysis of questionnaire to adolescents 14-18 years', [1939] (BFI Library).** A nationwide survey by questionnaire of about 3,500 young people, organised by the BFI and covering both working adolescents and those still at school. The questionnaire was completed in May and June, 1939 (1 and 2). Frequency of cinema-going is based on the number of visits to the cinema made during the preceding week.

- Top stars were Deanna Durbin (more popular with girls), Errol Flynn (more popular with schoolchildren) and Spencer Tracy (more popular with working adolescents) (12).

- Romances were least popular with males and slapstick comedies with females (7).

- *[The Adventures of] Robin Hood* (dirs William Keighley and Michael Curtiz, US release 1938) and *Pygmalion* (dirs Anthony Asquith and Leslie Howard, 1938) were the most popular films (8).

**Richard Ford,** *Children in the cinema,* **London: Allen & Unwin, 1939.** As well as drawing on studies from the early 1930s, Ford called on 142 cinema managers to provide data on children's cinema-going, particularly at children's matinees (55-6).

- Peak age range for children attending children's matinees was eleven to fourteen (42).

- Shirley Temple was the favourite star (134).

**J. Struthers, 'A study of the leisure activities of secondary children in a Middlesex secondary (mixed) school', MA thesis, University of London, 1939.** A study of 420 boys and girls aged eleven to eighteen in a county school (analogous to the post-war grammar school), conducted by means of questionnaires and diaries (17 and 44). 70 per cent of the parents earned less than £200 per annum (22) Though no year is given, at least part of the study was conducted in November (56).

- Given a choice of activities on free evenings in winter, 5 per cent of boys and 3 per cent of girls chose the cinema (ranked sixth and eighth respectively out of ten). Reading was ranked first by 24 per cent of boys and 38 per cent of girls (table 10).

- Main motives for cinema-going were interest in the story (42 per cent of boys and 37 per cent of girls) and interest in the stars (17 per cent of boys and 40 per cent of girls) (136).

- Cinema-going was predominantly an activity for Saturdays. For boys, 60 per cent of the time devoted to cinema-going was on Saturdays; for girls the figure was 62 per cent (calculated from table 23).

**H.E.O. James and F.T. Moore, 'Adolescent leisure in a working-class district',** *Occupational Psychology,* **1940, vol.14, no.3, 132-45; and 1944, vol.18, no.1, 24-34.** A study made in Hulme, Manchester. Diaries were used to record the leisure activities of 535 adolescents in the summer of 1939. They was supplemented by questionnaires. The adolescents' ages ranged from twelve to twenty-one (1940, 135-6).

- While cinema-going remained at a steady level for girls on starting work, the amount of time devoted to talking increased (1940, 140).

- From fifteen or sixteen, dancing became increasingly important for both sexes, but especially for girls, occupying 10 per cent of their time at twenty-one and outranking the cinema in importance on weekdays (1940, 139-40).

- The authors detected a preference for casual activities, the circumstances of the respondent's lives discouraging purposiveness and readiness to accept responsibility (1944, 33).

**A.J. Jenkinson,** *What do boys and girls read? An investigation into reading habits with suggestions about teaching literature in secondary and senior schools,* **London: Methuen, 1940; 2nd edn. 1946** (page references are to the second edition.). A survey by questionnaire of 3,000 children drawn from secondary schools and senior schools. The children's ages ranged from twelve to fifteen (8). (Secondary schools were analogous to post-war grammar schools, senior schools to post-war secondary modern schools.)

- Amongst boys, there was a strong appetite for 'bloods', especially in senior schools, though it fell away at fifteen (64).
- Girls read more than boys, though Dickens was a favourite author with both sexes (50-2, 172, and 202-4).

**Gallup survey, January 1941,** in George H. Gallup (gen ed.) *The Gallup international public opinion polls: Great Britain 1937-1975,* vol.1: 1937-1964, New York: Random House, 1976, 39. The survey also appears in Hadley Cantril, *Public opinion 1935-1946,* Princeton, NJ: Princteon University Press, 1951, 486.

**A.J. Lush,** *The young adult in south Wales: being a report prepared in co-operation with young men in Cardiff, Newport and Pontypridd, under the auspices of the Carnegie United Kingdom Trust,* **Cardiff: University of Wales Press Board (for South Wales and Monmouthshire Council of Social Service Inc.), 1941.** A survey made in south Wales of 500 unemployed men aged between eighteen and twenty-five. Interviews were conducted in the spring and summer of 1937 and in October 1938. 70.8 per cent of those interviewed were unskilled (1-10).
- Cinema-going was the most important activity on Saturdays (79).

**Wilfrid Harper, 'The leisure activities of adolescents: an investigation of the psychological function of the various leisure activities of adolescents in a particular town with some special references to the cinema and reading', MA thesis, Victoria University of Manchester, September 1942.** A survey conducted in Middleton, Manchester, of boys and girls aged from eleven to seventeen, some working and some at school (3). Data was obtained between November 1941 and February 1942 by means of 721 confidential diaries kept over a week, 892 questionnaires and 219 interviews (12-19).
- Reading occupied more time than other interests, except on Saturdays when cinema-going predominated (62).
- 90 per cent of informants liked cinema-going 'much' or 'very much', though there was a falling off in all groups after the age of seventeen (69).
- Cinema-going was a matter of habit (73).
- Except among grammar school streams, dancing became more popular with increasing age and amounted to a passion (79).

**British Film Institute,** *The film in national life, being the proceedings of a conference held by the British Film Institute in Exeter, April, 1943.* **London: BFI, [1943].** J. Macalister Brew,

Education Secretary of the National Association of Girls' Clubs, presented a paper detailing the results of a survey of 500 young people aged between sixteen and twenty-one in youth organisations and 500 of the same age with no affiliation, the two groups balanced according to occupation. The survey was made by questionnaire which was returned anonymously (6-7). From internal evidence, the survey was made during the war (8).

- 15 per cent of adolescents in organisations and 17 per cent of those with no affiliation went to the cinema three or more times weekly (8).

- Most favoured days for cinema-going were Saturday, Sunday or on the day off. Going straight from work was less popular — respondents preferred to wash and change first (9).

- 20 per cent of respondents would have gone more often if they had the money (9).


C. Cameron (ed.) A. Lush, and G. Meara, *Disinherited youth: a report on the 18 plus age group prepared for the trustees of the Carnegie United Kingdom Trust.* Edinburgh: T. & A. Constable, 1943. A survey by interview of 1,561 unemployed youths in Glasgow, Liverpool and Cardiff, conducted in 1937 (3 and 4).

- American films were preferred (105).

- 45 per cent of respondents read regularly, most using tuppenny libraries (102).


Dennis Chapman, *The location of dwellings in Scottish towns: an inquiry into some of the factors relevant to the planning of new urban communities made for the Department of Health for Scotland,* Wartime Social Survey NS 34, September 1943. A survey of 859 housewives (23).

- Rates of cinema-going showed little difference by town size or zone, except that more people in the inner zone of Glasgow went one or more times a week (23-5).


Louis Moss and Kathleen Box, *The cinema audience,* Wartime Social Survey NS 37b, 1943. A survey by interview of 5,639 civilians conducted in June and July, 1943, and referring specifically to cinema-going at that time of year. Data was also obtained from mothers about 1,182 children between the ages of five and fourteen (1, 2 and 23). The aim was to discover 'what sections of the civilian public could be reached by various publicity media' (1). The survey also appears in an appendix to J.P. Mayer, *British cinemas and their audiences: sociological studies,* London: Dobson, 1948.

- The lower economic group attended the cinema more frequently, but bought fewer books and magazines and read fewer newspapers (table 26).

- Newspaper reading and the buying of books and magazines increased with the length of education, while the opposite was true for cinema-going (table 26).

- Cinema-going increased with the density of population, being lowest in rural areas and highest in large towns (table 24).

**Mass-Observation, Directive on favourite films, 1943.** Details are contained in Jeffrey Richards and Dorothy Sheridan (eds.) *Mass-Observation at the movies,* London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1987, 220-98.

**M. Fitzgerald (for Manchester University Settlement),** *Ancoats: a study of a clearance area. Report of a survey made in 1937-1938.* **Manchester: Manchester University Settlement, 1945.** A study by interview of 476 families (introduction). Details of cinema-going are given, but for families rather than for individuals. It is not clear whether cinema-going by children is included. For this reason, the data is excluded from the tables in appendix 1.

- Of 317 families, 17 per cent went to the cinema two or more times a week, 32 per cent went once weekly, 33 per cent went less frequently and 17 per cent never went (49).

- Families in which the eldest child was under fourteen went to the cinema more frequently than other groups (72 per cent went one or more times a week). Where the oldest child was under ten, 48 per cent of families went one or more times a week. Where there was nobody under twenty in the family, 38 per cent of families went one or more times a week (49). This group was likely to have been older.

**British Institute of Public Opinion survey, September 1946.** In Hadley Cantril, *Public opinion 1935-1946,* Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1951.

- In September 1946, 62 per cent of higher status respondents were reading a book compared with 38 per cent of lower status respondents (53).

**Annette Kuhn, 'Cinemagoing in the 1930s: report of a questionnaire survey', University of Glasgow, Department of Theatre, Film and Television Studies, [1997?].** Although filtered through memory and relying on a self-selecting sample who were likely to be particularly keen on the cinema, this oral history project involving 186 people does offer corroborative evidence on cinema-going.

- 93 per cent of respondents went to the cinema one or more times a week (table 8).

- Stars were the most important factor in the choice of films, being mentioned in 75 per cent of cases (table 10).

- Comfort, luxury and modernity were keywords for 91 per cent of respondents (table 11).

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- Films of books or plays were the most popular category, being mentioned by 73 per cent of informants (table 13).
- 52 per cent of respondents terminated their education at fourteen (table 4).

**University of Bristol,** *The welfare of youth: a city survey,* **Bristol: University of Bristol, 1945.** A survey conducted in July 1944 by youth service students directed by Elizabeth Yeo and Mr Seath (3). Interviews were held with 46 boys and 75 girls aged sixteen who had failed to join or take part in youth organisations. Questionnaires were completed by 28 of each group. The school and employment records of 53 of the interviewees were examined (6-8).

- The strongest aspiration was a desire to travel (26 out of 33 replies) (17).
- Non-members of organisations went to the cinema more frequently than members (22).

<u>Audience surveys and ballots conducted between 1945 and 1950</u>

**Dennis Chapman,** *A social survey of Middlesbrough: an inquiry into some of the factors relevant to the planning of urban communities made for the Ministry of Town and Country Planning,* **Social Survey NS 50, 1945.**

- 25 per cent of housewives wanted more cinemas, 71 per cent did not (19).
- 77 per cent of housewives preferred going to a nearby cinema (19).

**Survey of Edinburgh cinema patrons,** *Kinematograph Weekly,* **15 February 1945, 11.** A survey of twenty Edinburgh patrons.

- Four respondents went knowing neither the film nor the stars.
- Four always went to the same cinema.

**Douglas M. Mackintosh,** *Attendance of school children at the cinema,* **Research publication no.1, Glasgow: Scottish Educational Film Association, 1945.** A study of the cinema-going habits of 36,149 children in Ayrshire, Edinburgh, Fife and Glasgow conducted by questionnaire (5-6).

- 10 per cent of Glasgow children never went to the cinema regularly, compared with 23 per cent in Edinburgh (table 6).
- The frequency of cinema-going was greater amongst handicapped children and those living in poorer social conditions (10).

**Mass-Observation, 'The voice of the kinema-goer: a guide to the public's taste in film entertainment',** *Kinematograph Weekly,* **20 December 1945, 71-2.** A survey commissioned by

*Kinematograph Weekly.* No details are given of how the survey was conducted beyond the comment that 'A widely varied group of people was selected'.

- 80 per cent of respondents went to the cinema for an outing. Of these, 63 per cent tried to see their favourite stars and 23 per cent tried to see a particular film.
- 57 per cent preferred super-cinemas.
- James Mason and Margaret Lockwood were the two British actors mentioned among the five favourite stars.

*Picturegoer* **Annual Film Award 1945,** *Picturegoer,* **7 July 1945, 11.** The leading performances during 1944-45:

- Leading actress: Bette Davis in *Now Voyager* (dir. Irving Rapper, US release 1942) with 14 per cent of votes cast. Leading British actress: Phyllis Calvert in *Fanny by Gaslight* (dir. Anthony Asquith, 1944) in 5th position with 9.2 per cent of votes cast. Leading actor: Bing Crosby in *Going My Way* (dir. Leo McCarey, US release 1944) with 24.4 per cent of votes cast. Leading British actor: James Mason in *Fanny by Gaslight* in 2nd position with 14.1 per cent of votes cast.
- Three British actresses and four British actors appearing in British films were in the top ten of their respective groups.

**Kathleen Box,** *The cinema and the public: an enquiry into cinema-going habits and expenditure.* **Social Survey Report NS 106, 1946.** Quota sampling was used to select 5,151 civilian adults nationwide who were interviewed in March and October 1946 (1 and appendix 1). Questions on frequency of cinema-going were qualified by 'at this time of year'.

- Respondents in the lower economic group (income up to £4 per week) were least likely to have read a newspaper the previous day or to visit the cinema one or more times a week (16).

*Boy's Own Paper* film questionnaire, 1946. Although *Boy's Own Paper* is not in the British Library's holdings, the main findings of the questionnaire were reported as being in the 'current issue' by the *Birmingham Mail,* 1 November 1946. The market for *Boy's Own Paper* was probably middle class, like that of its counterpart, *Girl's Own Paper,* which subsidised it.[2]

- A British film was voted as favourite by 65 per cent of respondents; there were no entries for westerns, thrillers or cartoons.
- The film gaining the most votes was *Caesar and Cleopatra* (dir. Gabriel Pascal, 1946); second was *Henry V* (dir. Laurence Olivier, 1945).
- Of the twenty-one films scoring the highest votes, ten were British.

J. Macalister Brew, *Club girls and their interests*, London: National Association of Girls' Clubs and Mixed Clubs, [1946]. A survey by questionnaire of 6,000 girls with an age range of fourteen to nineteen (8-15). Frequency of cinema-going is not given. Most questions concern what interested girls rather than what they did.

- Ballroom dancing received the highest score amongst desired leisure activities, though it was less popular with shop girls of eighteen and nineteen (49-50).[3]

- At nineteen, half the factory girls and the shop girls were learning a foreign language, though at younger ages, girls in offices showed more interest in languages (43).


Camden Training College, 'Children's cinema clubs: an investigation by students of the Camden Training College, NW1', 1946 (BFI Library). Visits were made by observers to twenty cinema clubs, where a combination of observation and 313 interviews with members and non-members were used to test the critical findings of a *Times Educational Supplement* article, 'Films for children — the role of cinema clubs', dated 5 January 1946 (1-2).

- The average age of the club member was probably under twelve (3).

- The children spoke in glowing terms of *Henry V* (dir. Laurence Olivier, 1945) (4).

- There was a desire among the children for more films based on the books they read at school, including *Robinson Crusoe* and *Treasure Island* (4).


Daily Express Centre of Public Opinion Investigation. *Daily Express*, 15 February 1946 (Cutting in statistics file, BFI Library). Respondents were 'a representative cross-section of the British public', though how they were selected is not specified.

- 66 per cent of people claimed that colour was not something which made them want to see a film.


*Daily Mail* National Film Award 1946. Details are contained in Maud Miller (ed.) *Winchester's film encyclopaedia*, London: Winchester Publications, 1948, 213. See also *Today's Cinema*, 26 April 1946, 9. Voting for the award was held annually from 1946, with the ballot for 1946 taking place on 24 December 1945. It was for the best British film and the favourite stars in British films released between 3 September 1939 and 3 September 1945. Ballot papers were accepted at two thousand cinemas or by post. 600,000 votes were cast.

- Best film: *The Way to the Stars* (dir. Anthony Asquith, 1945). Best actor: James Mason. Best actress: Margaret Lockwood.

**Bertram Hutchinson,** *Scottish mining communities: an inquiry by the Social Survey for the Department of Health for Scotland, the Clyde Valley Planning Advisory Committee and the Central and SE Scotland Planning Advisory Committee,* **Social Survey NS 61, 1946.** A survey of 1,713 Scottish miners and 1,451 miners' wives. Ages were twenty and over. The survey was conducted by interview using a structured questionnaire (5-7). Internal evidence suggests that the survey was made during wartime (59).

- Age and the quality of housing were the factors which most influenced the willingness to move, both by miners and their wives (53 and 56).
- 84 per cent of housewives and 77 per cent of miners never visited dance halls (96).
- 75 per cent of housewives and 69 per cent of miners never visited a library (97).[4]


**J.P. Mayer,** *Sociology of film: studies and documents,* **London: Faber, 1946.** A survey by questionnaire conducted in August 1945 of 42 children aged ten in a Paddington school (134).

- Though all but one of the children went to the cinema at least once a week, 36 of them wanted to go more frequently.
- In all except one case, the children had to ask their parents' permission to attend.


**Mass-Observation Archive, 'Questionnaire on** *London Town',* **1946, Film topic collection, box 15.** For adolescents' responses to the film, see Wall and Simpson, 1950 and 1951.


**Middlesbrough Head Teachers' Association,** *Children and the cinema: report of an investigation carried out in Middlesbrough in June 1946,* **[Middlesbrough: Middlesbrough Head Teachers' Association, 1946].** Findings are also detailed in British Film Institute, *Children and the cinema: a report of a conference organised by the British Film Institute and National Council of Women,* London: BFI, 1946. (References below are to the original pamphlet.) A survey of the cinema-going habits of 15,817 schoolchildren in Middlesbrough (graph A). No information is given about survey methods.

- 28.1 per cent of children in Middlesbrough went to Saturday morning cinema clubs, nine to ten being the age range most frequently found there (graph A).
- The most favoured time for attending regular performances was 4.15 p.m. to 7.30 p.m., with 32.3 per cent of visits taking place then (calculated from graph D).


*Picturegoer* **Annual Film Award 1946,** *Picturegoer,* **6 July 1946, 7.**
- Leading actress: Ann Todd in *The Seventh Veil* (dir. Compton Bennett, 1945) with 18.2 per cent of votes cast. Leading actor: Laurence Olivier in *Henry V* with 19.1 per cent of votes cast.

- Six British actresses appeared in the top ten of their group for work in British films. Five British actors appeared in the top ten of their group for work in British films.

**Stockton-on-Tees Youth Council,** *The needs of youth in Stockton-on-Tees,* **[Stockton-on-Tees: Stockton-on-Tees Youth Council, 1946].** A survey by questionnaire of 100 boys and 100 girls of sixteen and over, a fifth of whom were still at school and half of whom were in youth organisations. The sample comprised 10 per cent of adolescents in the sixteen to seventeen age group in Stockton (preface).

- 91 per cent of respondents went to the cinema at least once a week.[5] This compares with 54 per cent who went to dances with the same frequency (6).

**M.A. Abrams (director) with J.W. Hobson and H. Henry,** *Hulton readership survey,* **London: Hulton Press, 1947-56.** An annual publication which includes cinema-going data in addition to the readership of newspapers and periodicals. The sample in the first year comprised 10,000 adults, which was doubled by 1950, with weightings to make the sample as representative as possible.

**Mark Abrams, 'Britain off duty',** *Contact* **(***World off duty* **issue) 1947, no.6, 1-3.** A compendium of facts and figures about leisure activities. Sources are not cited.

- Film-goers visited the cinema week after week and were not representative of the adult population: twenty-seven million tickets were bought by twenty million of the thirty-six million adults in the country (1).
- Cinema managers had to appeal to teenagers and to young housewives: of £121 million spent at the box office, £40 million was spent by the sixteen to twenty-four age group and £30 million by the twenty-five to thirty-four age group (1).

**John Atkins, 'Industrial teenagers',** *Pilot Papers,* **December 1947, vol.2, no.4, 32-44.** Though not specifically on cinema-going, this survey does include the uses of leisure by working-class teenagers.

- Atkins noted the lack of interest in anything outside the teenagers' personal sphere (34).
- 100 per cent of the sample retained their childhood ambition to marry and their interest in sport (39).

**Sidney Bernstein,** *The Bernstein film questionnaire 1946-7,* **London: [Granada Theatres], 1947.** Although over 500,000 forms and 2,000 'special forms' were issued in December 1946, it is not clear how many completed forms were returned.[6] (From internal evidence in his article,

Gordon Rattray Taylor was one of the organisers: Gordon Rattray Taylor, 'What the public wants', *New Statesman and Nation*, 28 February 1948, 171-2.)

- 96 per cent of respondents felt that British films had improved since 1939 (8).
- Favourite stars were James Mason and Margaret Lockwood (2-3).

*Daily Express* **poll of public opinion for the best films of 1946.** Reported in *The Cinema*, 5 March 1947, 57.

- First three positions were occupied by *The Seventh Veil, The Wicked Lady* (dir. Leslie Arliss, 1945) and *Brief Encounter* (dir. David Lean, 1945). Leading actress: Margaret Lockwood. Leading actor: James Mason.
- Of the top ten films, seven were British.

*Daily Mail* **National Film Award 1947,** *Daily Mail,* **12 April 1947,** *Daily Mail* cuttings file (BFI Library). Covers films released September 1945 to September 1946, with 2,204,539 votes cast. Ballot forms appeared in two film magazines and were distributed in cinemas, as well as appearing in the *Daily Mail*.[7]

- Best film: *Piccadilly Incident* (dir. Herbert Wilcox, 1946). Best actor: James Mason. Best actress: Margaret Lockwood.

**Gallup survey into the public attitude towards the new tax on American films, 1947.** A survey first published in the *News Chronicle* and reported in *Kinematograph Weekly*, 2 October 1947, 4. The public were asked 'If the tax on American films means that we get no more American pictures . . . should the tax remain or be removed?'

- 58 per cent of respondents favoured retention and 24 per cent were against, the remainder being undecided.
- The desire for the new tax was greater amongst higher income groups.

**Gallup survey, September 1947,** in George H. Gallup (gen.ed.) *The Gallup international opinion polls: Great Britain 1937-1975*, vol.1: 1937-1964, New York: Random House, 1976, 161-2. Respondents were asked how many times they went to the cinema in September.

- 61 per cent of respondents went to the cinema one or more times in the month.

**Mass-Observation Archive FR 2467, 'Saturday evening', April 1947.** The material also appears in Mass-Observation, 'Saturday night', *Contact* (*World off duty* issue), no.6, 1947, 5-11.

- Reference is made to a Birmingham survey in which 22 per cent of adults went to the cinema once a week and 17 per cent twice weekly. (FR 2467, 14; 'Saturday night', 8).

Mass-Observation (for Ethical Union), *Puzzled people: a study in popular attitudes to religion, ethics, progress and politics in a London borough,* London: Gollancz, 1947. A survey by interview of 500 people. Respondents were asked, amongst other things, whether they had been to the cinema in the previous six months (123).

- 62 per cent of men and 63 per cent of women had been to the cinema in the previous week (loc.cit.).

- 73 per cent of younger respondents and 48 per cent of older respondents had attended in the last week (loc.cit.).

- 57 per cent of those whose education finished at elementary school had attended the cinema in the last week, compared with 65 per cent of those who had received secondary education (loc.cit.).

Mass-Observation Archive, 'Cinema count', 1947. Film topic collection, box 15, file H. A survey of audiences for *The Two Mrs Carrolls* (dir. Peter Godfrey, US release 1947) at the Forum, Kentish Town.

Emanuel Miller, 'Report on the Bernstein film questionnaire for children', 1947. Though the report is untraced, details appear in *Kinematograph Weekly,* 18 December 1947, 177, and Maud Miller (ed.) *Winchester's film encyclopaedia,* London: Winchester Publications, 1948, 371-5. Questionnaires were given to 50,000 children aged between seven and fifteen attending Saturday morning matinees at Granada cinemas (ibid. 371).

- Roy Rogers was the favourite star, though girls disliked westerns. James Mason came second and Bing Crosby third (loc.cit.).

- 19 per cent of the boys (but one in four of seven-year-old boys) and 66 per cent of girls liked love scenes (loc.cit.).

- 43 per cent of boys and 51 per cent of girls disliked films in which people were hurt, the figure decreasing with age, particularly amongst boys (ibid. 373).

*Picturegoer* Annual Film Award, 1947, *Picturegoer,* 19 July 1947, 6-7.

- Leading actress: Anna Neagle in *Piccadilly Incident* (dir. Herbert Wilcox, 1946) with 18.1 per cent of votes cast. Leading actor: Gregory Peck in *Spellbound* (dir. Alfred. Hitchcock, US release 1945) with 15.1 per cent of votes cast. Leading British actor: Michael Redgrave in *The Captive Heart* (dir. Basil Dearden, 1946), second with 14 per cent of votes cast.

- Five of the top ten actresses were British and starring in British films. For actors, the comparable figure was seven out of ten.

**J.W. Reeves and Patrick Slater, 'Age and intelligence in relation to leisure interests',** *Occupational Psychology,* **July 1947, vol.21, no.3, 111-24.** A sample of 1,500 female ATS recruits for other ranks aged from under twenty to over twenty-five, selected across the ability range. Data was drawn from their application forms and supplemented by interviews (112).

- Non-competitive sport was the most popular leisure activity (mentioned by 17.79 per cent), followed by dancing (mentioned by 10.72 per cent) and general reading (10.39 per cent). Cinema-going (6.67 per cent) was ranked below constructional hobbies, competitive sport, knitting and crochet (117-18 and table 1).

- 8.35 per cent of the under-twenties mentioned cinema-going, as did 6.13 per cent of those aged twenty to twenty-four and 5.58 per cent of the over twenty-fives (tables 2-4).

- Those scoring lowest in intelligence tests mentioned the cinema most often (120).


**Tynemouth Youth Council,** *Tynemouth youth survey report,* **Newcastle-upon Tyne: Tynemouth Youth Council, [1947].** A survey of young people with an age range of fourteen to twenty-one. The number of interviewees is not given, though the forward claims that there was 'a deliberate attempt to survey a truly representative cross-section of young people'.

- Interest in dancing generally commenced at fifteen, with girls attending more than boys. By the age of twenty, 79 per cent of females were attending (18).

- The musical was the most popular type of film until the age of eighteen. By twenty, crime became the most popular genre with both sexes (21).


**Workers' Educational Association,** *The leisure activities of schoolchildren: a report based upon an enquiry into the leisure activities of Ilford schoolchildren conducted by adult students under the direction of their tutor Mary Stewart.* **London: WEA, [1947]**[8] (University of North London Learning Centre). A survey by questionnaire, returned anonymously, of the leisure interests of 3,036 senior schoolchildren from eleven to over fourteen. It was carried out in the spring and summer of 1946 by WEA students under the direction of Mary Stewart (see Stewart, 1950) (5 and 6). The tables have not survived, but some data is included in the narrative and in Stewart, 1950, and Nutt, 1950.

- Around three-quarters of the children belonged to organisations. Cinema clubs were the most popular, though membership waned by the age of fourteen (9).

- Bloods were the most popular reading, though this declined with age. The *Daily Mirror* was the newspaper read most frequently (13 and 16).

- 29.7 per cent of children went to the cinema two or more times a week in families with four or more siblings For only children, the comparable figure was 21.1 per cent. However, more girls from large families were non-attenders (22)

**Mark Abrams, 'The British cinema audience',** *Hollywood Quarterly,* **winter 1947-48, vol.3, no.2, 155-8.** The data was taken from id. *Hulton readership survey 1947,* which was carried out by Abrams' company.

- Those who went to the cinema frequently read more newspapers and periodicals offering human interest stories. The *Daily Mirror* was read by 27 per cent of those who went to the cinema at least once a week, compared with a readership of 17 per cent among the rest of the population (157).

- Regular cinema-goers were more likely to gamble: 45 per cent of males who were regular cinema-goers sent in football-pool coupons compared with 31 per cent of non-attenders (158).

- 18 per cent of women who went to the cinema regularly used no cosmetics, compared with 60 per cent who used three cosmetic products (158).

*The Cinema* **poll 1947-48,** *The Cinema,* **22 December 1948, 3.** A poll of bookings in independent cinemas (including some in the Republic of Ireland) between 1 October 1947 and 30 September 1948. 1,400 votes were cast for the most successful films and the losers.

- The most successful British films were *The Courtneys of Curzon Street* (dir. Herbert Wilcox, 1947), *Holiday Camp* (dir. Ken Annakin, 1947), *Jassy* (dir. Bernard Knowles, 1947), *Frieda* (dir. Basil Dearden, 1947), *Spring in Park Lane* (dir. Herbert Wilcox, 1948), *My Brother Jonathan* (dir. Harold French, 1948).

*Daily Mail* **National Film Award 1948,** *Daily Mail,* **11 April 1948,** *Daily Mail* **cuttings file (BFI Library).** See also *The Cinema,* 7 April 1948, 13, and 14 April 1948, 22. 2,781,751 votes were recorded. Voting took place in the foyers of 2,000 cinemas. Voting forms were also issued in the *Daily Mail, Picturegoer and Picture Show.*

- Best film: *The Courtneys of Curzon Street.* Best actress: Margaret Lockwood. Best actor: John Mills.

**[N.D. Dodman], 'The adolescent and the cinema',** *Education,* **19 November 1948, no.12, 889-92.** A résumé of the work of Kesterton (1948) and Wall (1948) (q.v.). A useful summary of findings on children's attendance at 'A' films.

**N. Eid, 'An investigation into the out-of-school activities of a group of adolescents', MA thesis, University of London, 1948.** An examination of the leisure interests of 87 girls and 93 boys aged thirteen to over sixteen drawn from secondary modern, grammar and mixed schools in urban and rural locations (91-3). The survey was conducted by questionnaire with seasonal

activities distinguished (appendix 2).

• There was no significant difference between urban and rural students in the ranking of cinema-going, both placing it second to reading (table 10).

• A free evening would be spent on sports by 40 per cent of the sample and on cinema-going by 7 per cent (table 12).

• There were no significant differences in the types of films preferred by grammar school pupils aged between thirteen and sixteen (table 29).

• There was a significant difference between urban and rural students in their preference for crime films (31 per cent compared with 11 per cent), being top preference for urban students, but ranked fourth by rural students, after cartoons, adventure stories, romances and history (table 27).

**Gallup Organisation, 'The cinema-going habits of the British', surveys 157 (10 May 1948), 169 (5 July 1948) and 174 (1 November 1948 — for BIPO) (BFI Library).** Adults over twenty-one were interviewed for survey 169, and over eighteen for survey 174. No details of age are given for survey 157, which only details preferences for particular films/genres, the two being combined in one table. Respondents for the other two surveys were divided into four economic classes, the numbers interviewed not being given. The question on frequency of attendance refers to cinema-going 'at this time of year'. There is a separate analysis of cinema-going over the previous three weeks (not included in the tables in appendix 1 of this thesis). Summaries are given in George H. Gallup (gen.ed.) *The Gallup international opinion polls: Great Britain 1937-1975*, vol.1: 1937-1964, New York: Random House, 1976, 178 and 186. A comparison of the published results of the July 1948 survey and the typescript reveals ambiguity about how the non-responders were treated.

• 51 per cent of men and 59 per cent of women had been to the cinema in the previous three weeks, the highest percentages being found among younger people, the lower economic group, the unmarried and those living in Wales (survey 169).

**Bertram Hutchinson, *Willesden and the new towns*, Social Survey report NS 88, [1948].** A survey of 3,076 adults in Willesden made in the winter of 1946-47 (50).

• 23 per cent of single respondents went to the cinema two or more times a week compared with 12 per cent of their married counterparts (table 34).

**Barbara Kesterton, 'The social and emotional effects of the recreational film on adolescents of 13 and 14 years of age in the West Bromwich area', PhD thesis, University of Birmingham, 1948.** A study of 300 children of thirteen and fourteen drawn from every type of

school. Information was obtained by questionnaires, returned anonymously. Additionally, group interviews were conducted with 150 children and 500 children produced essays on 'My favourite film and why' (22-3).

- Homework occupied a significant portion of leisure time, except among secondary modern school pupils (26).
- Preferred day for cinema-going was Saturday (27 per cent), followed by Friday and Wednesday. Comparison is made with West Bromwich adults who preferred Saturday, Monday and Wednesday (49 and 50).
- James Mason was the favourite male star amongst girls; boys chose Betty Grable as their favourite female star (209).
- 71 per cent of children read the book or play of the film they had seen (38).

**Mass-Observation Archive FR 3067, 'A report on work and leisure', November 1948.** A national survey of 2,040 people.

- Nearly half of people in the sample had been to the cinema in the last week and a further 19 per cent within the last month (16).
- 8 per cent spontaneously mentioned that they liked British films, while only 2 per cent mentioned American films (16).

***Picturegoer* Annual Film Award 1948, *Picturegoer*, 3 July 1948, 6-7.**

- Leading actress: Anna Neagle in *The Courtneys of Curzon Street* with 14.8 per cent of votes cast. Leading actor: John Mills in *Great Expectations* (dir. David Lean, 1946) with 12.1 per cent of votes cast.
- Among the top ten actresses, six appeared in British films, while five of the top ten actors appeared in British films.

**Mary N. Stacey, 'An enquiry into the stability of attitudes and interests of a group of adolescent girls', MA thesis, University of London, 1948.** A study by questionnaire of some 400-460 girls aged between eleven and sixteen in an urban grammar school (2 and 35-42). A coefficient of attraction was calculated for each activity as a means of comparing interests (76).

- Cinema-going was ranked fourth amongst preferred leisure activities (coefficient of attraction 1.21). Reading took first place (4.74), followed by swimming (1.79) and cycling (1.45) (table 7).
- Films of novels were ranked first amongst cinema preferences (coefficient of attraction 2.43), followed by thrillers (2.22), musicals (1.50) and films in which a favourite star appeared (1.41). Farces were ranked lowest of ten options (0.16) (table 9).

**W.D. Wall, 'The adolescent and the cinema',** *Educational Review,* **October 1948, vol.1, no.1, 34-46 and February 1949, vol.1, no.2, 119-30.** A survey by general questionnaire of 1,250 girls and boys with an age range of thirteen to almost seventeen in urban areas of the west midlands. Additionally, 1,000 adolescents wrote anonymously on 'My favourite film'; 2,000 adolescents were sent questionnaires a week after current releases were seen by adult observers; 300 adolescents from each of the three types of school completed questionnaires and were interviewed in small groups; 480 secondary modern pupils in Birmingham answered questionnaires on cinema attendance habits; and the book choices of 2,000 adolescents were studied. The study was begun in 1946-47 (1948, 35-6). Other results from the same enquiry appear in Wall and Simpson, 1949, 1950 and 1951, and Wall and Smith, 1949.

- The usual price paid for admission to a cinema was 1s. to 1s.6d. (5p. to 7.5p.), with girls paying more than boys and grammar school pupils paying more than secondary modern pupils. The price children were willing to pay was not determined by frequency of attendance (1948, 39).

- At thirteen, more boys than girls admitted to experiencing fright in the cinema. This situation was reversed later, but there was an absolute decline in being frightened in both groups (1949, 121-2).

- Both boys and girls agreed that boys were less suggestible. Only in speech did more than half of both groups see boys as imitative of what they saw in the cinema. Amongst girls, 80 per cent thought that girls were influenced in their hair styles by what they saw in films (1949, 123).

**Joy C. Ward,** *Children out of school: an enquiry into the leisure interests and activities of children out of school hours carried out for the Central Advisory Council (England) in November-December 1947,* **Social Survey NS 110, June 1948.** A survey of schoolchildren aged between five and fifteen. Interviewers questioned 1,678 mothers. 784 children of eleven to fifteen were also questioned (52-3). In tabulating preferences amongst leisure activities, the cinema was omitted (tables 46, 49 and 50). This makes comparison of the cinema with other leisure preferences impossible.

- 46 per cent of urban children went to the cinema one or more times weekly compared with 28 per cent of rural children (table 34).

- The previous Saturday evening, hobbies provided the major activity for children of eleven to fifteen, being pursued by 29 per cent of boys and 37 per cent of girls. 21 per cent of boys and 16 per cent of girls went to the cinema or theatre (table 58).

- Grammar school pupils mentioned historical and topical films more often among their genre preferences (38).

J. Macalister Brew, *Hours way from work: boys in mixed clubs — a study of interests,* London: NCSS (for Mixed Club Committee, National Association of Girls' Clubs and Mixed Clubs), 1949. A survey by questionnaire, returned anonymously, of 3,000 boys, 70 per cent of whom were between fifteen and nineteen (8). As with Brew's companion work on girls (Brew, [1946]), frequency of cinema-going is not given. In the listing of things the boys would like to do, cinema-going is not included as an option in the questionnaire (28).

- Film preferences was the topic on which most answers were received (36).
- Activities preferred by boys were dancing (57 per cent), billiards and snooker (jointly 56 per cent) (table 15).

*Daily Mail* National Film Award 1949, *Daily Mail,* 23 April 1949, *Daily Mail* cuttings file (BFI Library). See also *Kinematograph Weekly,* 28 April 1949, 33. 1,244,738 votes were cast.

- Best film: *Spring in Park Lane* (dir. Herbert Wilcox, 1948) with 29.5 per cent of votes cast. Best actress: Anna Neagle with 40.15 per cent of votes cast. Best actor: Michael Wilding with 37.09 per cent of votes cast.

Gallup survey, December 1949, in George H. Gallup (gen.ed.) *The Gallup international opinion polls: Great Britain 1937-1975,* vol.1: 1937-1964, New York: Random House, 1976, 214.

Mass-Observation Archive FR 3150, 'A report on teenage girls', August 1949. A survey of 200 teenage girls made in London in July 1949.

- The previous Saturday, shopping was the most common activity (26 per cent), with the cinema taking second place (21 per cent).

*Picturegoer* Annual Film Award 1949, *Picturegoer,* 23 July 1949, 6-7.

- Leading actress: Anna Neagle in *Spring in Park Lane,* with 35 per cent of votes cast. Leading actor: Laurence Olivier in *Hamlet* (dir. Laurence Olivier, 1948) with 37.5 per cent of votes cast.
- Among the top ten actors, the top seven were nominated for roles in British films. Among actresses, eight of the top ten were nominated for roles in British films.

Hilda E. Pieris, 'A comparative study of the interests of adolescent girls in certain urban and rural schools', MA thesis, University of London, 1949. A study of 100 girls in London and 100 in Leicester, half from grammar schools and half from secondary modern schools. Their

ages ranged from fourteen to sixteen years. The study was undertaken in December 1948 and January 1949. Questionnaires, returned anonymously, were used, together with essays on interests, autobiographies, discussions with parents and teachers, and observation. (75-84).

- In rank order of the ten most popular activities, the cinema came tenth for the urban group and ninth for the rural group. Knitting, reading and cycling occupied the first three positions for both groups (table 18).

- 58 per cent of the urban group and 70 per cent of the rural group went to the cinema at least once a week (table 23).

- The main motives for cinema attendance were entertainment, interest in film and relaxation (table 25).

- 86 per cent of girls in rural areas went to the cinema with friends compared with 7 per cent who went with their family. Among girls in urban areas, 55 per cent went with friends. compared with 40 per cent who went with their family. (table 26).

**W.D. Wall and W.A. Simpson, 'The effects of cinema attendance on the behaviour of adolescents as seen by their contemporaries',** *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, **1949, vol.19, no.1, 53-61.** A study by questionnaire, returned anonymously, of 1,261 boys and 899 girls going to various types of midlands schools and with an age range from thirteen to almost seventeen (54-55). This was part of a larger study made in 1947 by the University of Birmingham (see Wall, 1948 and 1949; Wall and Smith, 1949, Wall and Simpson, 1950 and 1951).

- Girls' hair styles were considered as being influenced by the cinema by 73.1 per cent of grammar school boys, 87.5 per cent of grammar school girls, 77.8 per cent of girls at other schools and 65.5 per cent of boys at other schools (tables 2a and 2b).

- 72 per cent of girls not at grammar school and 76.6 per cent of grammar school girls thought girls imitated the dress of stars (tables 2a and 2b).

**W.D. Wall and E.M. Smith, 'The film choices of adolescents',** *British Journal of Educational Psychology*, **1949, vol.19, no.2, 121-36.** This was part of a larger study made in 1947 at the University of Birmingham (see Wall, 1948 and 1949; Wall and Simpson, 1949, Wall and Simpson, 1950 and 1951). 2,000 children were studied.

- Judged by recent attendance, drama was most popular with all groups except boys from grammar schools who saw more comedies. In essays, a similar preference for drama was shown by girls; grammar school boys preferred animal films, while boys at other schools preferred war and adventure films (table 2b).

- Excitement was the quality mentioned most by boys in their essays, though it was

mentioned less as they got older. Star appeal was the factor mentioned most often by girls (26 per cent) (129 and table 4).

- Crime in films was the topic mentioned least in essays (table 4).

- Part of the enjoyment was the opportunity for self-identification (131).


**J.C. Ward, *Children and the cinema*, Social Survey NS 131, April 1949.** A survey of 2,000 children chosen by random sample and conducted in the autumn of 1948. Children of ten to fifteen were interviewed, as were the mothers of children aged five to nine. An additional sample of Scottish children was taken (3).

- 58 to 59 per cent of children of all ages went to the cinema between 4 p.m. and 7 p.m., over 60 per cent going with adults (table 15).

- The cinema-going habits of children aged five to eleven reflected those of their mothers (5).

- The favourite actor amongst boys was Roy Rogers with 62 mentions, James Mason being the favourite amongst girls, also with 62 mentions. Margaret Lockwood was the favourite actress of both groups with 67 mentions amongst boys and 121 amongst girls (43).

- Children in Scotland went to the cinema most frequently, followed by those in the north of England (5).


**M.T. Woodhouse, 'Children's film judgments', *Researches and studies*, December 1949, no.1, 33-45.** A survey by questionnaire of the cinema-going habits of 253 children aged from seven to fifteen in an inner-city industrial area of Leeds. The results were checked by interviews. The same questionnaire was completed by 158 boys and 128 girls in a secondary modern school in a middle-class area of the city (35-7).

- 83 per cent of the inner-city children went to the cinema at least twice weekly, few being accompanied by parents (36).

- Children of low intelligence went to the cinema more frequently and had no other leisure interests (36).

- Of sixty listed films shown in Leeds over the previous eighteen months, *Fun and Fancy Free* (Disney cartoon, US release 1947) was the film seen by most inner-city boys (78 per cent) as well as by 61 per cent of inner-city girls. 75 per cent of the girls had seen *I Wonder Who's Kissing Her Now* (dir. Lloyd Bacon, US release 1947) (37).

- In the industrial area and among secondary modern school children, the average number of films seen was roughly the same (37).

- In the secondary modern group, *Dick Barton [Special Agent]* (dir. Alfred Goulding,

1948) was the film seen by most boys (75 per cent of cohort). *Jassy* (dir. Bernard

Knowles, 1947) was the film seen by most girls. *Oliver Twist* (dir. David Lean, 1948)

was second with both boys and girls (37).

- There was no great measure of agreement about stars, though Alan Ladd was favourite among boys and Margaret Lockwood among girls. Below the age of twelve, stars mattered less than the film's theme (37).

- 60 per cent of the girls possessed autographed photos of stars or letters from them (38).

**Mark Abrams, 'The British cinema audience 1949',** *Hollywood Quarterly,* **1949-50, vol.4, no.3, 251-5.** A follow-up of Abram's 1947-48 article, again drawing upon Hulton survey data, for which Abram's company, Research Services Ltd., collected the data. The survey was conducted in the first four months of April 1949, with a sample of 13,000 adults (251-2). The article complements M.A. Abrams, *Hulton readership survey,* London: Hulton Press, 1949 and Browne, 1950 (q.v.)[9]

- The decline in cinema-going did not disturb the fundamental structure of the audience (255).

**British Institute of Public Opinion, 'Factors guiding the audience in its choice'.** Published in the *News Chronicle.* Details are given in British Film Academy, *The film industry in Great Britain: some facts and figures,* [London: British Film Academy and F.W. Kahn, 1950], 28. The date of publication in the newspaper is not recorded.

- Factors noted in choosing a film were the story (37 per cent), who was in it (34 per cent), reviewers' opinions (19 per cent), the title (16 per cent), the cinema (9 per cent), friends' recommendations (2 per cent) and 'It's British' (1 per cent).

**Morveen S. Brown, 'A sociological study of a grammar school in a working-class community', PhD thesis, University of London, 1950.** A study by interview, questionnaires and observation of the life of grammar school boys in Plaistow, a docklands district of West Ham. There is an error in the data on cinema-going (table 24): the figure for boys attending three or more times a week is likely to be 2 per cent rather than 25 per cent.

**Geoffrey Browne,** *Patterns of British life: a study of certain aspects of the British people at home, at work and at play, and a compilation of some relevant statistics,* **London: Hulton Press, 1950.** An expanded version of the *Hulton readership survey,* 1949 (see Abrams 1947, and 1949-50). A survey conducted in the first quarter of 1949, involving a quota sample of 6,003 men and 6,997 women aged sixteen and over. Respondents were graded into five classes,

A to E, according to a blend of income and social background (87). Although a range of data is provided such as the number of women having permanent waves (table 59), cinema-going is only analysed by class and age (table 63).

**Daily Mail National Film Award 1950,** *Daily Mail,* **25 May 1950,** *Daily Mail* cuttings file (BFI Library). The ballot covered British films released from September 1948 to September 1949. 1,441,482 votes were cast in the foyers of over 2,000 cinemas and by post.

- Best film: *The Hasty Heart* (dir. Vincent Sherman, 1949), Best actor: Richard Todd. Best actress: Jean Simmons.

**Gallup survey, October 1950,** in George H. Gallup (gen.ed.) *The Gallup international opinion polls: Great Britain 1937-1975,* vol.1: 1937-1964, New York: Random House, 1976, 227. Respondents were asked when they last went to the cinema. The way replies are categorised makes this survey difficult to compare with others.

- 44 per cent of respondents had visited the cinema within the previous two weeks, 14 per cent within two to four weeks, 9 per cent within five to eight weeks and 33 per cent more than eight weeks previously.

**Secretary of State for Home Department, Minister of Education and Secretary of State for Scotland,** *Report of the departmental committee on children and the cinema,* **Cmd 7945, May 1950. Chairman: K.C. Wheare.** The report presents data suppled both by local education authorities and by the Social Survey. It is not clear whether the latter is Joy Ward's 1949 study (q.v.): though the number of children appears the same in both surveys (tables 1 and 2), the frequency of cinema-going shows discrepancies.

**Bertram Hutchinson,** *Audience reaction to the film 'The Undefeated',* **Social Survey SS 164, 1950.** Although *The Undefeated* was a documentary — it concerned the problems of disabled ex-servicemen — it was screened in thirteen ABC cinemas. The survey stemmed from the fear that people would find the topic unacceptable, affecting recruitment for the services. The sample comprised 161 patrons from four cinemas (1 and 2).

- 92 per cent of respondents approved of the film (2).

**Mass-Observation, 'Why do they go — or not go?'** *The Daily Film Renter,* **10 July 1950.** A survey of 500 people in Hammersmith commissioned by *The Daily Film Renter* in response to the loss of audiences.

- 36 per cent of respondents, particularly those with an income under £3 a week, went to the cinema less because they had less money to spend or because the seats were too dear.

- Of the seven films which received more than one favourable mention, all were British with the exception of *Mrs Miniver* (dir. William Wyler, US release 1942).

- 22 per cent of respondents said they had less time to spare than previously. Looking after a baby was the reason frequently given.

- 18 per cent of respondents, particularly men and those from higher income groups, mentioned the poor quality of films as the chief reason for decreased attendance.

- Amongst incentives to visit the cinema more frequently, 38 per cent of respondents said they would go more often if films were to their taste, 22 per cent if they could afford to, and 12 per cent if they had more time.


**Mass-Observation, 'Do you cry in the dark?'** *Mass-Observation reprint*, **December 1950, vol.1, no.19b.** Analysed in Sue Harper and Vincent Porter, *Weeping in the cinema in 1950: a reassessment of Mass-Observation material*, Mass-Observation Archive occasional paper no.3, Brighton: University of Sussex Library, 1995.

- Although Harper and Porter concede that the survey has little statistical value and has little to say about working-class preferences, they do detect clear gender differences in film preferences (Harper and Porter, 1-8 and 14-18).


**J.F. Nutt, 'The attitude of secondary school children to the cinema', MA thesis, University of London, 1950.** A survey by questionnaire, carried out in June/July 1947, of 1,279 schoolchildren aged between ten and sixteen plus in twelve different secondary schools. Results were checked by charting the cinema attendance of 104 of the children over 75 days and by follow-up testing in 1949 (24-35). The data is used to compile an attitude scale. A critique of earlier studies is included.

- Cinema-going had increased since the LCC study of 1931 (74).

- Town children attended the cinema more frequently than country children (74).

- Children who liked the cinema most were more likely to come from poor homes, to be of low intelligence and to show an interest in the opposite sex (136-7).


*Picturegoer* **Annual Film Award 1950,** *Picturegoer,* **1 July 1950, 7.**

- Leading actress: Jane Wyman in *Johnny Belinda* (dir. Jean Negulesco, US release 1948). Leading British actress: Margaret Lockwood in *Madness of the Heart* (dir. Compton Bennett, 1949). Leading actor: Richard Todd in *The Hasty Heart*.

- Among the top twelve actresses, four were British and nominated for British films.

Among the twelve top actors, six were British and nominated for British films.

**Mary Stewart, 'Leisure activities of grammar school children',** *British Journal of Educational Psychology,* **February 1950, vol.20, no.1, 11-34.** A survey by questionnaire conducted in the spring term of 1947, involving 675 boys and 801 girls in grammar schools in Ilford and Wanstead. The total included 300 children of fifteen and over who were excluded from statistical comparisons with secondary modern school pupils (11). The study complements the WEA study of leisure activities in Ilford schools (WEA, [1947]), from which comparative data on secondary modern pupils was taken.

- Average family size was 1.2 siblings for grammar school pupils, 2.2 for secondary modern school pupils (11).

- By fourteen, the reading of bloods and comics was decreasing, having been given up by 42 per cent of grammar school boys and 55 per cent of grammar school girls, compared with 35 per cent of secondary modern boys and 49 per cent of secondary modern girls (table 2).

**W.D. Wall and W.A. Simpson, 'The emotional responses of adolescent groups to certain films',** *British Journal of Educational Psychology,* **November 1950, vol.20, no.3, 153-63, and June 1951, vol.21, no.2, 81-8.** A study by questionnaire, returned anonymously, of the responses to twelve films by 476 boys and 379 girls aged between thirteen and seventeen (1950, 153-4 and 161). The study was made in 1947 (see also Wall, 1948 and 1949, Wall and Simpson, 1949, Wall and Smith, 1949).

- Among 116 boys, 53 per cent identified with the hero, 29 per cent with the star. This difference was less marked among girls: of 97 girls, 38 per cent identified with the heroine and 30 per cent with the star (1951, 85).

- Fright was a rare response (1950, 162, and 1951, 88).

- The variety of responses led to the admission by the authors that their questions did not get to the heart of the matter (1950, 160-1).

**Westhill Training College (for the Edward Cadbury Charitable Trust),** *Eighty thousand adolescents: a study of young people in the City of Birmingham,* **London: Allen & Unwin, 1950.** A survey by questionnaire of 500 males and 504 females aged between fourteen and twenty and living in Birmingham. Some were at school, some were working and some were in the services. They were divided into those attached to youth organisations and those who were unattached. A representative sample of 1,004 adolescents were interviewed (7 and 23).

- Average cinema attendance was between 1.1 times per week for girls attached to a youth

organisation and 1.5 times per week for unattached girls, with boys' attendance falling between these figures (table 8).

- Almost all informants read a Sunday newspaper, though film magazines did not figure among the popular reading (44-5).

- Girls not attached to organisations were the most regular readers, 45 per cent having read a book within the week prior to the survey compared with 33 per cent of attached girls (45).

**J.B. Barclay,** *Edinburgh report on junior cinema clubs,* **Glasgow: Scottish Educational Film Association, 1951.** A survey by questionnaire, made in 1947, of Saturday morning cinema clubs in Edinburgh and Motherwell. Details of the individuals were checked against school records where possible. 1,972 questionnaires were returned in Edinburgh and 1,018 in Motherwell (7, 11 and 17). The main findings on children who went to cinema clubs are summarised on page 24 of the study:

- Boys outnumbered girls by five to three.

- The average age of the children was 10.5 years.

- Many travelled long distances to the clubs.

- 43 per cent only attended occasionally.

- Club members had a mean IQ of 104 (above average) and an above average record of school attendance and performance.

- Of 1,929 children returning questionnaires, 63 per cent attended the ordinary cinema one or more times a week, and in over a third of cases without their parents (tables 12 and 16).

*Daily Mail* **National Film Award 1951,** *Kinematograph Weekly,* **19 April 1951, 15.** For a listing of eligible films see *Daily Mail,* 21 January 1951. The award covers outstanding British films issued September 1949 to September 1950. 1,379,849 votes were cast in 2,000 theatres.

- Most popular film: *Odette* (dir. Herbert Wilcox, 1950). Most popular actress: Anna Neagle. Most popular actor: John Mills.

**Owen Dudley, 'The leisure of secondary school children', MA thesis, University of London, 1951.** A comparison of leisure activities among London grammar school pupils (at Latymer Upper School and Godolphin and Latymer School), and those in secondary modern schools in Ealing, Wembley and Harrow (27-9). A diary was kept by 352 participants throughout one December, the year not being given (30-1). A seasonal comparison was made possible by having 332 pupils (not always from the same schools) complete a June diary (157-8).

- With both parents working, secondary modern boys in particular were involved in getting meals without this being considered unmanly (57 and 60).

- Grammar school pupils spent a mean of 5 minutes in the cinema on weekdays compared with a mean of 19 minute spent by secondary school pupils (table 29).

- Cinema-going by secondary modern school boys was greater in December compared with June, the pattern being reversed with grammar school girls, though otherwise there were few seasonal variations (218 and tables 77 and 80).

- In terms of time spent, cinema-going was not a major activity except for older secondary modern school boys (figures 1-6).

**A.G. Hughes, *Children at the cinema*, London: London County Council, 1951.** An enquiry conducted in 1948 by the London County Council's Chief Inspector of Schools. It involved 14,500 children aged between three and fourteen spread over 55 schools (4).

**Mass-Observation, 'Film and public: *Chance of a Lifetime*', *Sight and Sound*, January 1951, new series. vol.19, no.9, 349-50.** A survey of 100 London cinema-goers' views on *Chance of a Lifetime* (dir. Bernard Miles, 1950). Although teenagers made up a large proportion of the audience, they were excluded from the survey (349).

- 29 per cent of respondents attended because they had nothing else to do. This was the reason most frequently given for seeing the film (350).

- Half of those interviewed thought it a better film than they usually saw, though one in ten disliked it (349-50).

*Picturegoer* **Annual Film Award 1951, reported in *Kinematograph Weekly*, 17 May 1951, 10.** The leading performances in 1950 with percentage of votes cast:

- Leading actress, Anna Neagle in *Odette* (19.44 per cent). Leading actor, Alec Guinness in *The Mudlark* (dir. Nunnally Johnson, 1950) (6.87 per cent).

**Doris Rich, 'Social relationships in leisure time: a study of adult behaviour in a Black Country community', PhD thesis, University of Birmingham, 1951.** A study of leisure in Coseley, a working-class district on the outskirts of Birmingham. A random sample of 112 households was selected along with nine clubs, informal and semi-structured interviews taking place from January to May 1949 (17-29). Of the men, at least 63 per cent were manual workers in the metal industry; 84 of the 93 whose income was known earned less than nine pounds a week (tables 10 and 12). 27 per cent of female informants worked full-time (calculated from tables 1 and 11). Three-quarters of informants had lived in Coseley for over fifteen years (table 7).

- There was a decline of cinema-going among men after the age of forty-four and among women after fifty-four. Women of forty-five to fifty-four spent more time out of the home when they were freed from looking after children (73-4).

- For men, the pub and the club dominated social life outside the home (55 per cent of visits outside the home for the most socially active group, 42 per cent for the less active group). The cinema and theatre took up 13 and 14 per cent of visits for the most active and less active social groups respectively (79).

- Of married women, 62 per cent of the time they spent in the cinema was with other women (96).


**J.P. Hayes, 'Convenience and selectivity, and the planning of neighbourhood units'. Part of 'Coventry Sociological Survey', 1953 (Coventry City Libraries).** A study made in the Stoke area of Coventry between late 1950 and the summer of 1951. 445 people were chosen at random in three neighbourhood areas and interviewed using a structured questionnaire. There was a follow-up survey of 225 interviews (7-11). 64 per cent of heads of household were manual workers, the remainder being clerical or supervisory (table 7). No distinction was made between children and adults, which makes the presence of a children's cinema club in area 1 a distorting factor (13).

- There were more non-attenders of cinemas in area 1 (46 per cent), where the standard of education of family heads was lower than in areas 2 and 3 (with 27 and 28 per cent non-attenders respectively) (13).

- 20 per cent of family heads used commercial libraries compared with 23 per cent using public libraries. The remaining 57 per cent were non-borrowers (calculated from tables 15a and 15b).

- 68 per cent of interviewees went to the cinema. This was higher than the use of clubs (52 per cent), pubs (47 per cent) and libraries (43 per cent) (table 16).

- 48 per cent of pub users mainly went to local pubs (calculated from table 13), compared with 55 per cent of cinema-goers who only used the nearest cinema (calculated from table 12).[10]


**Leslie J. Wilkins, *The adolescent in Britain*, Social Survey SS 148(P), July 1955.** A nationwide survey made in 1950 of 1,400 civilian males and 450 females aged between fifteen and nineteen, most of whom were working (1). National service may have affected the representativeness of the sample of male adolescents. It is not always clear which data is abstracted from Ward, 1949.

- 84 per cent of adolescents went to the cinema one or more times weekly, the frequency being greatest among those who changed jobs most frequently (table 75).

- A higher frequency of job-changing was associated with a lower educational standard (64 and 67).

- Cinema and theatre-going was the favoured way of spending a Saturday evening (48 per cent of civilian male adolescents and 41 per cent of female adolescents) (table 104).


Surveys relevant to the post-1950 period


**British Film Producers Association,** *The film industry statistical digest,* **no.1, London: British Film Producers Association, June 1954.** This pamphlet contains retrospective data culled from a variety of sources including the Hulton surveys (see Abrams, 1949-50 and Browne, 1950).[11] Much of the data is available from these sources and from Cauter and Downham, 1954 (see below).


**H.E. Browning and A.A. Sorrell, 'Cinemas and cinema-going in Great Britain',** *Journal of the Royal Statistical Society,* **1954, series A, general, vol.117, pt.2, 133-65.** The authors relied mainly on Board of Trade and Hulton survey data. Although no audience profile is provided, the work offers considerable detail on regional patterns of distribution and cinema-going.

- Cinema admissions in Britain in 1952 were 28 per person — the highest of any principal countries (the US figure was 23 per person) (136).


**T. Cauter and J.S. Downham,** *The communication of ideas: a study of contemporary influences on urban life,* **London: Chatto & Windus (for Reader's Digest), 1954.** A random sample of 3,015 people in Derby between the ages of sixteen and sixty-nine were interviewed and 1,205 completed questionnaires. The survey took place between February and April 1953 (295-8). The discussion on the cinema includes comparisons with national data taken from other sources including the Hulton survey for 1953.

- 39 per cent of skilled manual workers went to the cinema at least once a week compared with 34 per cent of semi-skilled and unskilled workers and 22 per cent of the unemployed (table 36).

- 34 per cent of the sixteen to twenty-four age group attended dances at least once a month (table 40).


**Pearl Jephcott,** *Some young people,* **London: Allen & Unwin, 1954.** A survey conducted in 1950-52 among 939 boys and girls with an age range of fourteen to seventeen, with the aim of

discovering why more adolescents did not belong to youth organisations. Four areas were selected, the two urban, working-class areas being in central London and Nottingham (9 and 10).

- Sport was the major interest of boys in Camdington (Camden) (57).

**J.B. Barclay, *Viewing tastes of adolescents in cinema and television,* [Edinburgh]: Scottish Educational Film Association and Scottish Film Council, 1961.** A survey by questionnaire, conducted in March 1960, of 5,320 Edinburgh adolescents aged between fourteen and eighteen, the sample being drawn mainly from schools, further education institutes and youth organisations (1-2).

- 50 per cent of adolescents went to the cinema one or more times a week (about the same as in the Edinburgh Cinema Enquiry, 1933). 48 per cent seldom or never went (table 4).
- The type of film was the predominant reason for attending the cinema for 79 per cent of adolescents, while 65 per cent of boys and 82 per cent of girls went because of the star. Only 5 per cent of adolescents professed to go out of habit (9-10).
- Boys had no marked preference for whether a film was American or British. Among girls of fourteen, 72 per cent preferred American films, the percentage dropping to 50 per cent at eighteen (table 15).
- 59 per cent of girls admitted that the cinema influenced their taste in dress compared with 37 per cent of boys (table 16).
- The most notable effect of films on social attitudes was that 78 per cent of boys and 85 per cent of girls felt that films gave a glamourised view of foreign countries (table 16).

## The ones that got away

**Joan L. Harley, 'Report of an enquiry into the occupations, further education and leisure interests of girl wage-earners from elementary and central schools in the Manchester district', M.Ed thesis, University of Manchester, 1937.** This thesis is cited in Andrew Davies, *Leisure, gender and poverty: working-class culture in Salford and Manchester 1900-1939,* Buckingham: Open University Press, 1992, and David Fowler, *The first teenagers: the lifestyle of young wage-earners in interwar Britain,* London: Woburn Press, 1995. It is now missing from the John Rylands Library at the University of Manchester.

**Midlothian Education Committee, *A survey of the sixteens,* Midlothian: Midlothian Education Committee, 1943.** Extensive enquiries by Midlothian Library Service have failed to locate a copy of this item. A few findings are reported in Douglas M. Mackintosh, *Attendance of*

*school children at the cinema*, Research publication no.1, Glasgow: Scottish Educational Film Association, 1945 (q.v.).

**John Hilton, *Rich man, poor man*, London: Allen & Unwin, 1944.** In this work, originating from lectures made in 1938, Hilton cites a national survey estimating that 40 per cent of the population went to the cinema at least once a week; of these, two-thirds (around 25 per cent of the total population) went two or more times weekly. No source is given. A garbled version of the statistics appears in two recent works.[12]

**Emery Circuit questionnaire, 1946. Reported in *Kinematograph Weekly*. 4 April 1946, 17.** The northern-based Emery circuit conducted its own survey covering, amongst other things, frequency of visiting the cinema, the attraction of the cinema and how people found out what was being shown. The questionnaire was completed by managers after discussion with patrons. An earlier version asked about the type of films liked. The general manager was 'greatly surprised by the facts which came to light', though 'I cannot be expected to give a detailed account of the findings for they are our work and we are benefiting from them. It will not surprise the trade, however, to learn that war films are definitely "out".'

**Gallup survey of British audiences, 1947.** The *Kinematograph Weekly* of 19 June 1947, 7, reported that the Gallup survey had been completed. Which survey is not made clear.

**Sales Research Services survey of audiences, 1947.** This was reported in the *Kinematograph Weekly*. 18 September 1947, 38. Initially the survey was to run for two years and to involve 7,000 people chosen at random. They were to be asked which members of the family had been to the cinema over the last week. 'Sales Research Services' was likely to have been Abrams' Research Services Ltd. (see Abrams, 1947-56, 1947-48 and 1949-50), the work being undertaken for the *Hulton readership survey*. Another possibility is that it was connected with the Motion Picture Association of America cinema census, 1947 (see below).

**K.P. Chandhury, 'A study of interest in relation to the needs of children', MA thesis, University of London, 1948.** An analysis of the nature of interest, using sport as a case study. Questionnaires were given to 30 boys and 30 girls aged between fifteen and seventeen who attended grammar schools. Although frequency of cinema-going was included amongst the questions, the discussion of the nature of interest and its measurement is theoretical, with the survey results not being given.

M. Chazan, 'The interests, social attitudes and social status of 25 boys in the first year at the grammar school', MA thesis, University of Manchester, 1950 or 1951. This item is listed in *Index to theses 1950-1.* as no.248. Unfortunately neither John Rylands Library at the University of Manchester nor the department concerned retain MA theses of this date.

An enquiry, made in November 1948, into the cinema-going habits of pupils of Scunthorpe Grammar School. Details of film preferences are given in Mary Ward, *Children and films: a study of boys and girls in the cinema*, Dunfermline, Fife: Carnegie United Kingdom Trust, 1954, 28. Scunthorpe Central Library holds the school archives, but the 1948 enquiry is not among them. Neither the British Library nor the BFI holds a copy.

D.J. Kibblewhite, 'Interest trends in adolescents: a study of interest patterns and their stability in a group of grammar school children', MA thesis, University of London, 1953. A study by questionnaire of the interests of 27 sixth-form children (58). One of the questions asked was on cinema-going. As with Chandury, 1948, the focus of the study is on the measurement of interests rather than substantive findings. Results are not given.

The might-have-beens

Box office enquiry by the Film Council, 1937. This was announced in *World Film News*, February 1937, vol.1, no.11, 7. It was 'the aim. . . which the Film Council have selected as their next task and for which they hope to obtain the whole-hearted collaboration of as many exhibitors as possible.' Judging by the ensuing silence, whole-hearted collaboration was not forthcoming.

Motion Picture Association of America cinema census, 1947. This was announced in 1946 as a census of every cinema in the world, with grosses and box-office records.[13] It was still being trailed in July 1947, when it was reported that the Gallup organisation would conduct the surveys.[14] Addison Durland was appointed to Britain to further this enterprise in 1947.[15] As no subsequent mention appears, the project was likely to have fallen foul of the endemic secrecy in the British industry and/or Anglo-American hostility consequent upon the ad valorem duty imposed on American films. At all events, the American studios must have had a shrewd idea of the state of British exhibition from how their own product fared in British cinemas.

Fabian Society statistical survey of the cinema trade. At the February 1946 General Council Meeting of the CEA, exhibitors were asked to help in the Fabian Society's survey.[16] This was a

more modest effort than it might seem. Local branches were asked to complete surveys giving seat prices and current programmes.[17] Though the Board of Trade was approached for statistics, it refused to allow their publication.[18] No audience surveys were conducted, Box's 1946 data being used instead (q.v.).[19]

## Notes

1. *Kinematograph Weekly*, 23 January 1947, 4 and 20.

2. Penny Tinkler, *Constructing girlhood: popular magazines for girls growing up in England 1920-1950*, London: Taylor & Francis, 1995, 62-6.

3. The figure of 16 per cent of schoolgirls aged seventeen interested in ballroom dancing (50) is incorrect according to the analysis on the preceding page of Brew's work: 96 per cent seems the more likely figure.

4. It is not clear whether the question refers only to public libraries.

5. The answers are in response to the question 'How many nights a week do you go to the pictures?' The only alternative was 'None'. This may have created ambiguity for respondents who went to the cinema less than once a week.

6. *Kinematograph Weekly*, 23 January 1947, 4 and 20, contains a discussion of how the survey was organised.

7. *Cinema and Theatre Construction*, June 1947, vol.14, no.1, 34.

8. There are varying opinions on the date of publication. It is given as '1947' by Stacey, 1948, 96-7, and by Stewart, 1950, 11. Nutt, 1950, 49, quotes '1946', though he may be referring to the date of the survey rather than its publication. The publication is undated.

9. There is a discrepancy in how social classes are defined in Abrams' article, though it may have been adjusted for an American audience: cf. Abrams, 1949-50, 253, n.4, with Abrams, *Hulton readership survey*, 1949, 8; Browne, 1950, 87.

10. There is an error in table 12 which contains data on the frequency of cinema-going: 'one to three visits per week' should read 'one to three visits per month'.

11. The frequency of cinema attendances for 1950 shown by the BFPA corresponds to the 1949 frequency given by Browne, 1950.

12. John Stevenson and Chris Cook, *The slump: society and politics during the depression*, London: Cape, 1977, 27; John Stevenson, *British society 1914-45*, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1990, 396.

13. *Kinematograph Weekly*, 29 August 1946, 1.

14. 'Audience probes', *Cinema & Theatre Construction*, July 1947, vol.14, no.2, 27-9. See also *Kinematograph Weekly*, 30 January 1947, 6; Robert Shaw, 'The Gallup method of measuring the box-office value of films', *Kinematograph Weekly*, 1 May 1947, 6. These probably refer to the same project.

15. *Kinematograph Weekly.* 30 January 1947, 7.

16. *Kinematograph Weekly.* 21 February, 1946, 13.

17. These are extant, but not very revealing. Fabian Society archives, 'Home research: Films Group completed questionnaires 1946,' K36/3 (BLPES)

18. Fabian Society archives, K 37/1 47, minute dated 11 September 1947.

19. Fabian Society archives, K 37/2 85.

# APPENDIX 3

## Cinemas in Leeds and south-east Essex

### The ten Leeds cinemas selected

The cinemas form a ring around the city centre. They are described in a clockwise sequence, starting from the east and moving south.[1] All the cinemas changed their programmes twice weekly. Seat prices and seating capacity, where given, as well as management, are as published in the 1948 edition of the *Kinematograph year book*. 1s.0d. is equivalent to 5 pence.

**Harehills Cinema, Harehills.** Opened: 1912. Seating: 780. Management: Cansfield and Sons (a small local circuit). Prices: 9d.- 2s.0d. Closed: 1959. Demolished.

    Working-class Harehills is adjacent to middle-class Roundhay. A 1938 super cinema, the Clock, was across the road, on the middle-class side of Harehills Lane.

**Hillcrest, Harehills.** Opened: 1920. Seating: 1,101. Management: independent. Prices: 9d.- 1s.9d. Closed: 1963. Demolished.

    Close to Harehills cinema.

**Crescent, Beeston.** Opened: 1921. Seating: 1,406 in stalls and balcony. Management: Associated Tower Cinemas (a small Leeds-based circuit). Prices: 1s.0d.- 1s.9d. Closed: 1968. Now empty.

    In silent days the Crescent boasted a resident orchestra. Although the lowest seat price was relatively high, the cinema was in a solidly working-class district of terraced and back-to-back houses, with Middleton Colliery to the south. The Gaumont-owned Pavilion cinema was nearby. The city centre Gaumonts barred the Crescent (with five cinemas in the area, the Gaumont circuit had the capacity for first and second runs), while the Crescent barred twelve cinemas including two in this sample — the Beeston Picture House and the Strand.[2]

**Strand, Holbeck.** Opened: 1931. Seating: 1,140. Management: independent. Prices: 6d.- 1s.0d. Closed: 1961. Demolished.

    The Strand was in Jack Lane, adjacent to Richard Hoggart's school.

**Beeston Picture House, Beeston.** Opened: 1920. Seating: 822. Management: independent. Prices: 8d.- 1s.6d. Closed: 1959.

This end of Beeston was less developed. To the south was the municipal Belle Isle estate; to the east the older working-class housing of Beeston.

**Crown, Wortley.** Opened: 1919. Seating: 958. Management: Leeds and District Picture Houses. Prices: 6d.- 1s.6d. Closed: 1968. The building survives.

Wortley is an outlying district in south-west Leeds. The Crown was its only cinema.

**Clifton, Bramley.** Opened: 1939. Seating: 1,312. Management: Cansfield and Sons. Prices: 10d.- 1s. 9d. Closed: 1961. The building survives.

By the 1940s, the outlying village of Bramley to the east of Leeds was linked to the Armley district by ribbon development. This was its second cinema. Programming at the Clifton was not linked to that of Harehills cinema which was in the same group (see above).

**Abbey Picture House, Kirkstall.** Opened: 1913. Seating: 400. Management: independent. Prices: 9d.- 1s.9d. Closed: 1960. Demolished.

The cinema was on a main road and surrounded by working-class housing, though there was middle-class housing nearby.

**Burley Picture House, Burley.** Opened: 1913. Seating: 557. Management: independent. Prices: 6d.- 1s.6d. Closed: 1959. Demolished.

There were benches at the front instead of tip-up seats. The Burley had a reputation as a bug hutch: respectable people stayed away.[3]

**Lyceum, Burley.**[4] Opened: 1913. Seating: 812 on one level. Management: independent. Prices: 9d.- 1s.6d. Closed: 1968. Demolished.

The cinemas of south-east Essex

The cinemas operating in the late 1940s and advertising in the *Southend Standard* are briefly described, moving through the area from east to west.[5]. Town centre cinemas — the Odeon, Ritz, Gaumont, Rivoli, Strand and Garons — changed their programmes weekly; the rest generally changed their programmes twice weekly. Seat prices and seating capacity, where given, as well as management, are as published in the 1948 *Kinematograph year book*.

**Palace, Shoebury.** Opened: 1913. Seating: 360 in stalls and a balcony. Management: London and Provincial Cinemas Ltd. Prices: 10d.- 2s.6d. Closed 1955. The building survives as a camping equipment showroom.

Shoebury Garrison was nearby, which gave the cinema a rough reputation.

**Plaza, Southchurch.** Opened: 1929. Seating: 1,225 on one level. Management: Emery Circuit. Prices: not given. Closed: 1959. Now a church.

As well as a small car park, the Plaza had stage facilities with two dressing rooms. From 1948 until the early 1950s, a theatre company leased the building — Stratford Johns, Patricia Driscoll and Peter Vaughan began their careers there — with film shows on Sundays. The area is a lower middle-class suburb developed between the 1890s and 1920s.

**Strand, Southend-on-Sea.** Opened: 1928 after fire destroyed an earlier cinema on the site. Cafe attached. Seating: 1,550 on one level. Management: independent. Prices: 9d.- 2s.3d. Closed: 1960. Demolished.

During the late 1940s, talent competitions were held weekly as part of the Strand's programme.

**Civic News Theatre, Southend-on-Sea.** Opened: 1938. Tea-room and writing room attached. Seating: 292. Management: independent. Prices: 6d.- 1s.0d. Closed: 1959. Demolished.

In the 1920s, the auditorium began as a function hall above the newly-built Talza shopping arcade, becoming a repertory theatre in 1933. Feature films were screened increasingly during the late forties. In 1950, under new management, there was a name change to the New Vic, offering an eclectic mix of continental films.

**Odeon, Southend-on-Sea.** Opened: 1935 as the Astoria. It was renamed in 1944. Cafe attached. Seating, 2,750 in stalls and a balcony. Prices: 1s.0d.- 2s.9d. Closed: 1997.

The largest and most prestigious cinema in the area. The Odeon had full stage facilities.

**Ritz, Southend-on-Sea.** Opened: 1935 to a design by Robert Cromie. Cafe attached. Seating: 2,225 in stalls and a balcony. Management: Built for County Cinemas, the Ritz was absorbed into the Rank chain in 1944. Prices: 1s.0d.- 2s.9d. Closed: 1972 as a cinema. Demolished 1981.

The cinema's position, just off the less busy end of the High Street, put it at a disadvantage compared with the Odeon. As well as reruns and rereleases, the Ritz screened new Gaumont releases when a film was held over at the Gaumont.

**Gaumont, Southend-on-Sea.** Opened: 1934. Seating: 1,588 in stalls and two balconies. Prices: 6d.- 2s.9d. Closed: 1956. Demolished.

Originally the Hippodrome variety theatre of 1909, designed by Bertie Crewe. It was never entirely successful as a cinema, the projection room being awkwardly placed, with a steep rake. The Gaumont was the first Rank cinema in the area to be closed, in spite of its central position.

**Garons, Southend-on-Sea.** Opened: 1911 to a design by Bertie Crewe. Seating: 916 on a single level. Management: independent. Prices: 1s.0d.- 1s.3d. Closed: 1963. Demolished.

The auditorium was behind the High Street frontage of Garon's tea shop. The ballroom above the auditorium was added in 1929.

**Rivoli, Southend-on-Sea.** Opened: 1920. Seating: 1,369 in stalls and two balconies. Management: Associated British Cinemas. Prices: not known. Closed: 1998 as cinema, reopening as the New Empire Theatre.

The Rivoli was converted from a theatre built in 1896. It was unusual in having its projection room at the front of the lower balcony. This was the only ABC cinema in central Southend. In an attempt to overcome the relatively small capacity, there were more screenings than in other cinemas — often five daily.

**Mascot, Westcliff-on-Sea.** Opened: 1912 and enlarged by the addition of a balcony and a cafe in 1932. Seating: 1,223. Management: the Mascot, along with the other Westcliff cinema (the Metropole) and the two Leigh cinemas were run at the end of the war by the Godfrey circuit. In November 1945, J E Pearce took over all four cinemas. Prices: 9d.- 2s.3d. Destroyed by fire in 1964.

The auditorium was notable for its jazz-inspired decor, though by the 1950s the predominant hue was nicotine brown. During the war, a mix of films and variety acts from London were presented: Tommy Trinder appeared there in 1945. From 1946, the Mascot was used almost exclusively as a cinema for the remainder of the decade. Programmes often alternated between the Westcliff and Leigh cinemas. Audiences were drawn from the adjoining working-class estate and from more affluent housing to the south.

**Metropole, Westcliff-on-Sea.** Opened: 1939. Seating: 1,200 in stalls and balcony. Management: the Godfrey circuit and subsequently J.E. Pearce (see Mascot entry, above). Prices: 9d.- 2s.3d. Closed: 1991. Demolished.

The area's prosperity in the late 1930s was shown by the provision of a large car park. The Metropole was the most prestigious cinema in the area outside the major circuits. It screened

mainly second runs, though it secured the first release of films which were not taken up by the major circuits. These were mainly the output of smaller American studios. A week devoted to Disney cartoons was a regular attraction during school holidays. The older Mascot was almost opposite.

**Corona, Leigh-on-Sea.** Opened: 1929. Cafe attached. Seating: 1,429 on one level. Management: the Godfrey circuit and subsequently J.E. Pearce (see Mascot entry, above). Prices: 1s.0d.- 2s.3d. Closed: 1959. The building is now a snooker centre.

The audience was drawn from Leigh's mixture of lower middle-class and upper middle-class housing.

**Coliseum, Leigh-on-Sea.** Opened: 1914, enlarged with a balcony in 1930 and remodelled by George Coles in 1936. Seating: 991. Management: the Godfrey circuit and subsequently J.E. Pearce (see Mascot entry, above). Prices: 1s.0d.- 2s.3d. Closed: 1965. Now empty.

The Coliseum benefited a more central position than the Corona, though the audience was drawn from the same area. In 1950, a policy of art house films was tried, but this was soon abandoned and the cinema reverted to a programme of family entertainment.

**Kingsway, Hadleigh.** Opened: 1936. Cafe attached. Seating: 1,400 in a stadium auditorium. Management: leased from local owners by ABC. Prices: not known. Closed: 1970. Demolished.

Hadleigh is a small township just beyond the Southend borough boundary. ABC used the Kingsway for screening second runs of successful ABC circuit releases as well as other product. Audiences came from Leigh and from ribbon development to the west.

**Regal, Rayleigh.** Opened: 1937, replacing a smaller cinema on the same site. Seating: 800 on one level. Management: JHL Theatres. Prices: 10d.- 2s.3d. Closed: 1973. Demolished.

Rayleigh is a market town four miles from Southend. The area was predominantly lower middle class.

**Broadway, Pitsea.** Opened: 1930s. Cafe attached. Seating: 600 on one level. Management: independent until it was taken into the local Radion Cinemas circuit in the late 1940s. Prices: 10d.- 2s.3d. Closed: 1970. Now a bingo hall.

The Broadway was built to serve the settlers in the ribbon development and plotlands which vanished under Basildon New Town in the 1950s.

**Radion, Laindon.** Opened: 1929. Seating: 680. Management: Radion circuit. Prices: 10d - 2s.9d. Closed: 1969. Demolished.

The Radion served the plotland community which was to disappear when Basildon New Town was built. The cinema had stage facilities.

**Carlton, Wickford.** Opened: 1937. Seating: 600. Management: independent until incorporated in the Radion circuit in the late 1940s. Prices: 10d.- 2s.9d. Closed: 1950s. Demolished.

Wickford was an area of plotland bungalows, small-holdings and ribbon development.

## Notes

1. Data is taken from: the *Kinematograph year book 1948;* Robert E. Preedy, *Leeds cinemas remembered,* Leeds: published by author, 1980; John R. Broadley, 'A life in Leeds cinemas,' *Picture House,* 1987-8, no.11, 7-13; id. 'The film trade in Leeds,' *Picture House,* August 1988, no.12, 25-9; id. 'A life in Leeds cinemas 3: facing the fifties,' *Picture House,* spring, 1990, no.14-15, 31-8. Preference is given to the primary source where there is any discrepancy

2. Broadley, 'A life in Leeds cinemas,' 9; id. 'The film trade in Leeds,' 26 and 28. Broadley is contradictory on whether the Gaumont-British Pavilion barred the Crescent, or vice versa.

3. Interviews with Barry White and father, Otley, 29 July 1997, and with Kath Rudd, Horsforth, Leeds, 30 July 1997; Alan McDonald (for Burley Local History Group), *Early Burley.* Leeds: Burley '88, 1992, 51.

4. For a description of the Lyceum in 1953, see Broadley, 'A life in Leeds cinemas 3: facing the fifties,' 36 and 37.

5. Data is taken from the *Southend Standard,* 1945-1950; *Kinematograph year book 1948;* Roy Dilley, *The dream palaces of Southend,* Birmingham: Mercia Cinema Society, [1984?]; Bob Grimwood, *The cinemas of Essex,* Wakefield: Mercia Cinema Society, 1995. Preference is given to primary sources where there is any discrepancy.