
The British Film Industry and the Market for Feature Films in Britain 1932 – 37

John Sedgwick

LONDON GUILDHALL UNIVERSITY
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This thesis is submitted in partial fulfilment
of the requirements leading to the award
of PhD from London Guildhall University.

February 1995

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Abstract

The regeneration of the British Film Industry after the Cinematograph Act of 1927 was remarkable. On the production side, the industry was transformed from a very low base in the mid-twenties to one which seriously challenged the domestic market share of the Hollywood product a decade later: a process which Jarvie (1992) has recently termed "pushing back". Yet this apparent business success has not been acknowledged by film historians whose foremost conception of film-making in Britain during the Thirties is that of low budget, low quality production, forced on domestic audiences as a consequence of the provisions of the 1927 legislation.

This work tests this orthodoxy and finds it needs revising. In the absence of accounting information concerning box-office grosses, film budgets and rates of return, an Index of Film Popularity (POPSTAT) has been constructed from the exhibition records of approximately 90 leading London West End and provincial city cinemas for the period 1 January 1932 to 31 March 1938. This demonstrates that a body of domestic production - perhaps as many as 60 films a year - was genuinely popular with British audiences. It also draws attention to the high level of popularity associated with films from the Gaumont British-Gainsborough, British and Dominions and London Films studios, at times or throughout, the period of the investigation.

The justification for drawing inferences from a selected and highly unrepresentative sample of cinemas is founded upon the cascade pattern of film diffusion. It is clear from mapping this diffusion amongst cinemas in the sample that films are distributed outwards in time and space from higher to lower order cinemas. Films which appear in higher level cinemas continue to be popular and filter down through a succession of levels, whilst films which first appear in lower level cinemas do not receive exhibition at the higher level. The cascade system is explained in terms of intertemporal and geographical price discrimination practices. These conclusions are confirmed by three additional case studies based upon cinemas outside the sample set; located in Bolton, Dover, and the Chelsea, Kensington, Hammersmith area of West London.

The growing confidence and ambition amongst the leading domestic film-makers resulted in the growth of production facilities and human capital formation. Although there was no shortage of capital available for financing the activities of the industry, much was of a speculative nature, and not tied to corporate financial performance. Further, the difficulty of obtaining widespread distribution on a systematic basis in the American market increased the risks associated with big budget domestic production. The resulting financial crisis in 1936-1937, coupled with changes to the protection afforded the industry through the 1938 legislation, seriously damaged the corporate structure of the industry and ultimately its configuration. Nevertheless, the period was one of substantial achievement, and provided the basis for sustained film production during and immediately after the war.

To Bernard Hrusa Marlow

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Preface

I was fortunate enough to take a Masters course in Economic and Social History at Birkbeck College, London University, between 1981 and 1983. My teachers were Ben Fine, Roderick Floud, Eric Hobsbawm, and Pat Thane. I was particularly taken with two ideas: that theory is implicit in historical reasoning and that counting is an important tool of historical research. My thesis was an exercise in counting as I sought to build a structural framework of the British film industry during its very early years. It was clear that the British film industry struggled from its inception. Through the work, I learned from Channon (1980) that film may be treated as a commodity within a general system of commodity production; that trade journals are a rich source of historical information; and, from Peter Armitage, that computers enable the researcher to count, list and conduct analysis on a scale otherwise inconceivable. Roderick was my supervisor.

Some years later I was able to re-apply these lessons to the period which is the subject of this work. Again, Roderick agreed to supervise my research. In Mike Cowen I have had a very supportive second supervisor. I am indebted to both for the rigour of their criticisms and sensible suggestions concerning structure. Others who have taken a keen interest in the work and who have influenced its final shape are: Len Stafford, who although in poor health has read everything sent to him and made telling and detailed comments which have been greatly appreciated; Ian Jarvie, for his encouragement and important contribution to the literature; David Culbert, who, as editor of the Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television gave me the confidence to think that somebody out there thought my research was worthwhile; and Mark Glancy for allowing me access to his research materials on Warners.

I am fortunate enough to work at the University of North London with a collection of friends who have supported me during the period of this research. To Stuart Archbold, John Curran, Photis Lysandrou, Tony Mananyi, Mike Pokorny, Steve Smith and Martin Topple I would like to say thanks. Mike Pokorny, through criticism and explanation has made a telling contribution to the content of Chapter 8 and helped me to understand the heteroscedastic nature of 'hit' production. Mike Brocklehurst and Margaret Price have also provided constant support and friendship.

I also need to thank the staff at the BFI library and in particular Janet Moat for courteously and effectively dealing with my many requests over the years. Chris Lamb, at the library of the University of North London, has also been tremendously helpful.

My daughter, Martha, already a keen film enthusiast, has not only taken an interest in the developing shape of this thesis, but spent many hours inputting data for me. I am very grateful. As indeed I am to Carole, whose humour has created the domestic space for me to conduct this research, and my other daughter, Rachel, who seems to have accepted my neglect with grace and favour.

Finally, Bernard Hrusa Marlow has been a source of inspiration since our days at Dover Grammar School for Boys. It was he who taught me to understand the intrinsic importance of learning and reasoning and how they can transform lives. Bernard has been an intimate participant in this work at all of its stages and for his help and friendship it is dedicated to him.

Introduction

Measured in terms of paid admissions cinema going was the foremost leisure activity in Britain during the inter-war period.¹ But, following a hesitant start (c 1895-1914) the production side of the British film industry all but collapsed during the 1920s.² There was one month, November 1924, when no film start was recorded at all. The domestic market was completely dominated by films made in Hollywood. Indeed, the dramatic growth of the market during the twenties can be taken as a reflection of the popularity of the Hollywood product. Other contributing factors are likely to have been the growth in real per capita income after 1921 and the gradual reduction in working hours.³ Certainly, long term income elasticities in the United States indicate that cinema attendance, along with other time-using goods was highly responsive to changes in per capita income.⁴

However, was this crisis in the production sector of the domestic industry a problem? For those engaged in production it certainly was: British studio heads mounted a campaign alerting political leaders to the ideological dangers of allowing an important and expanding sector of the media industry to fall into the hands of foreigners. It would appear from the carefully argued case advanced by Dickinson and Street (1985) that the ideological and commercial threat was considered far more important than the immediate economic consequences of the possible closure of the production sector and led to State intervention and protection through the 1927 Cinematograph Act.

However, as far as customers and exhibitors were concerned, there may not have been very much concern about the relative scarcity of the British-made film product. After all, there was a sufficient supply of foreign, predominantly American, films of the requisite quality. The Law of Comparative Advantage, as recently seen in the Uruguay Round of the G.A.T.T. negotiations concerning American objections to legislation which gave protection to the French film industry, can be invoked to demonstrate that there was no compelling reason why the British should engage in production at all, and that the resources absorbed - small as they were - could be put to better use.

Yet, with the advent and passage of the 1927 Act, we can identify significant trends with respect to the centralisation of resources in the British film industry. Both British International Pictures (BIP) and Gaumont British began to metamorphose into vertically integrated corporations and led a rapid expansion of domestic production which continued unabated until 1937. In seeking an explanation for this growth, it is interesting to compare the respective strategies of the five American 'majors' - Fox, Warners-First National, Paramount, MGM, and from 1929, RKO with those of these two British combines. In all seven cases, the major proportion of each firm's assets was invested in the exhibition side of the operation. In making their own films, the American combines sought to reduce the risk associated with dependency on rival firms for product to exhibit, as well as to provide a guaranteed outlet for their own product. Hence, the production side was organised to produce a portfolio of films, with the appropriate star inputs, designed to compete effectively against the products of rival studios. Studio

production was an aspect of a clearly defined business strategy, resourced by and answerable to the exhibition side of the combine. Studio heads received a budget from which to make a portfolio of outputs to satisfy a significant proportion of the booking requirements of the exhibition outlets.⁵

However, in building up a full picture of the competitive framework, the risk averse strategy suggested above needs tempering. For any one combine to exclude from exhibition the films of rival companies which might be expected to yield above average box-office returns, would be injurious to its own financial performance. By contrast, to be forced exclusively to exhibit those films from one's own studios, irrespective of their expected box-office return, would result in a similar outcome. For this reason the vertical links within organisations were operationally flexible and the cinemas of these combines regularly made use of the film products of rival firms.

The two British combines, however, had a somewhat different strategic perspective on film production. Whilst the 1927 Cinematograph Act compelled distributors and exhibitors to handle an increasing proportion of British made films - rising to 30% by 1936 - this nevertheless meant that the major proportion of films being shown at any one time was American.⁶ Accordingly, if the standard of the domestic product was in any way inferior to what else was being exhibited, the customer might be expected to demonstrate a preference for a rival product, at the expense of the domestic producer, distributor and exhibitor alike.

The two British combines need not have made films, as long as there was a supply of American and, following the legislation, British films of the requisite standard. However, given the low production levels and variable quality of domestic production, circa 1927, the combines were in effect faced with a protected infant industry in which transaction networks were poorly formed. Under these circumstances, it made sense for the two combines to enter into film production, but with the caveat that their outputs were of a comparable standard to that of rival film producers. Otherwise, potential audiences would turn away to the attraction of rival films being shown in rival cinemas.

It is important to realise that the Quota, as such, did not guarantee sales for the producer, but rather narrowed the exhibitor's field of choice for a given proportion of screen performances. In effect, this confined market segment heightened the probability that the films of any one domestic producer would be shown.

This artificially created market segment for domestic output encouraged new firms into the industry, a number of which sought to produce quality films which exhibitors could effectively show against rival cinema programmes. Comparable cinematographic standards required comparable production facilities and technical and artistic support. The whole of the expansion in first class production facilities - albeit still on a scale dwarfed by the main Hollywood studios - during the 1930s, with the emergence and/or development of the Elstree, Shepherds Bush, Denham, and Pinewood studios amongst many others, together with the emergence of a human capital infrastructure of cameramen, make-up,

hairdressing and wardrobe technicians, artistic designers can be explained in this light.

A critical distinction between the two sets of combines was the size of their respective domestic and external markets. Whereas the major American Studios, including Universal and Columbia, had established a world-wide system of distribution during the teens and early twenties of this century, British producers had failed to make a significant impact on any overseas market.⁷ Whilst Britain was the most important overseas market for the major Hollywood studios, with each having its own British distribution organisation for most of the period under investigation, it had approximately a third of the population and cinemas of the United States.⁸ The success of American films in the domestic markets did not lead, in general, to reciprocal successes for British films. At different periods during the 1930s, both domestic combines made determined bids to raise the budgets of their leading films and established distribution outlets in the United States. In both cases the operations were short-lived and financially damaging to the protagonists. The failure of British production companies to make any significant impact on the American market meant that they were operating at a much lower potential box-office revenue per film product than their American counterparts. This in turn implied that domestic firms, typically, had to have much lower break-even thresholds. The Dominions and Empire, which provided significant markets for many other British industrial products, failed, in this case to provide adequate alternative markets, owing to: a) the world-wide dominance of the the U.S. product and; b) the small number of

cinemas found in the Empire.⁹

The growth of the production sector of the industry during this period and the nominal increase in market share, as crudely measured by the proportion of British to foreign films registered with the Board of Trade, was undoubtedly influenced by an increase in the level of protection. It is not surprising that in their respective recommendations to the Moyne Committee in 1936, the producers' association proposed increasing the 'Quota' of domestic films to above 50% whilst the Cinema Exhibitors' Association (CEA) and the Renters' Association (KRS) campaigned for a general reduction.

In Rachael Low's view, however, the 1927 Act actually served to hinder the development of the domestic industry by encouraging studios to produce low budget, inferior, films to meet the legal obligations of exhibitors. She writes:

The 1927 quota legislation intended to solve all the industry's problems was a failure. Film production doubled during the thirties, but the increase consisted almost entirely of cheap and inferior films, the famous quota quickies and others not much better, which took advantage of the protected market and went far to ruin the reputation of British production as a whole. (Low 1985, p.xiv)

This dissertation sets out to test Low's hypothesis by recourse to contemporary cinema exhibition records and trade journal film reviews and finds that it requires substantial revision. It also pays tribute to Rowson's 1934 statistical investigation of the industry and gives attention to his claim that this work demonstrated:

....quite conclusively the superior general average attractiveness of British films to British exhibitors and, presumably, British audiences. (Rowson 1934, p.113)¹⁰

Much of this additional research effort has been necessitated by the complete absence of information on the commercial performance of individual film products in Britain. Such information was not systematically collected and published by the trade papers as it was in the United States, and apart from the odd piece of evidence contained in the private papers of film company executives - those for instance held by the British Film Institute - our knowledge is very sparse indeed.

Chapter 1 commences with an analysis of film as a commodity within a system of commodity production. It identifies film as an idiosyncratic investment and describes the peculiar industry structures which emerged to realise its commercial potential. The Chapter is critical of the adoption of the structure-conduct-performance paradigm amongst film historians (e.g. Allen and Gomery (1985)) and proposes a model of industry configuration based upon incumbent and potential entrants' perceptions of market failure, of which transaction costs form an important component. Oliver Williamson's (1975) contribution to our understanding of vertical integration, as a response to transaction costs and market failure, is then reviewed. The Chapter emphasises the importance of the business organisation as a strategic entity in this approach and attempts to synthesise the work of Williamson with that of Hayek to form an analytical framework to explain competitive behaviour. A brief exposition follows, in which the strategic decisions of business organisations are shown to have implications for industry configuration. The distinct pattern of industrial configuration around the functional structures of production, distribution and

exhibition which emerged during this period fits into a broader "systems of provision" framework, recently developed by Fine and Leopold (1993) . A descriptive model of the configuration of British film industry, circa 1935, completes the Chapter.

Chapter 2 places Low's thesis within the wider framework of the historiographical debate concerning the relative failure of the British economy from the late Victorian period. The chapter includes a brief history of the major structural features and developments of the British film industry up to and including the 1927 legislation, principally through a review of the work of Thompson (1985) and Dickinson and Street (1985) and Low (1971,85). This is followed by a detailed account of the 1927 Cinematograph Act. Low, followed by Stead (1981, 1982), maintains that the relatively poor performance of the British Film Industry can be explained by a series of social and institutional factors. Their argument is broadly in keeping with the theses developed by Wiener (1981), Landes (1969), Coleman and Macleod (1986) and Elbaum and Lazonick (1986), with respect to British industry in general. It is interesting to note that a neo-classical approach to industry performance yields similar outcomes to that suggested by the Low thesis, based upon a quite different analytical framework: British entrepreneurs were acting rationally during the 1920's in keeping out of production and rationally during the 30's when entering the protected market. However, it is argued here that the neo-classical approach to industry development is unable to capture the dynamic atmosphere of strategic business decision-making, manifest in the diversity of corporate behaviour, within a business environment of pervasive uncertainty

and rivalry.

Chapter 3 develops an analysis of the evolution of the system of production, distribution and exhibition in Britain during the immediate aftermath of the 1927 legislation, including the major shock involved with the rapid diffusion of sound. This analysis is then extended into the 1930s.

Chapter 4 introduces a measure of relative film popularity: the POPSTAT Index. The index serves as a proxy for gross revenues (box-office receipts) in lieu of the absence of published data during the pre-1939 period. The assumptions behind the index are made explicit and justified. The calculation of the POPSTAT Index is based upon the exhibition records of a sample set of highly unrepresentative London West End and provincial city cinemas: the programmes of which are the subject of Chapter 5. The justification for using this sample is found in the temporal and spatial pattern of domestic film distribution: what is termed the "cascade system". The characteristics of the latter are observed from records of the diffusion of 119 'hit' films between 1932 to 1937: cascading out in time and space from a set of 'flagship' West End cinemas to the remaining cinemas in the sample. From this information it is possible to advance the proposition that films which were successfully exhibited at the most prestigious cinemas in the sample continued to be popular when shown at lower order cinemas. Further, from the information generated, it has been possible to assess the extent to which the cinema chains and, or, vertically integrated combines were able to discriminate between the films of rival producers.

Chapter 6 deals with the objection that the sample cinema set is sufficiently unrepresentative of typical cinema-going venues to question the above proposition and hence invalidate the POPSTAT Index. To counter this, the same 119 films were monitored at cinemas in Bolton, Dover, and the Chelsea/Kensington/Hammersmith area of West London. The evidence that emerges supports the validity of the POPSTAT Index as a measure of relative popularity. Films which proved popular with audiences in London's West End cinemas, and those of the provincial cities' found within the sample set, were also popular with audiences attending lower order cinemas.

The Appendix to the Chapter monitors the distribution of eight 'hit' films from their Pre-General Release runs in the cinemas of London's West End out through the sample cinema set and on to the cinemas of Bolton, Dover and the West London districts.

The POPSTAT results are set out in Chapter 7 in the form of tables which show both the whole period (1932-38) and annual performance of the principal production companies and their respective U.S. and British groupings. The findings show the performance of domestic film producers in a more favourable light than is suggested by orthodox evaluation, best represented in Low's hypothesis.

The findings presented in Chapter 8 are a good deal more tentative. Using partial information on film budgets and box-office revenues, a series of regression equations is presented to establish the degree to which film budgets were a sufficient

explanatory variable of film popularity. Necessary, but not sufficient, appears to be the not very surprising conclusion. An attempt is made to measure the Bette Davis factor using dummy variables, but the conclusion is that the degrees of freedom available to the researcher in attempting to pin down those factors necessary to relative popularity, work against tangible results. On a more positive note, the asymmetrical nature of competition in U.S. and British markets is captured and the pieces of domestic box-office information gathered on many of London Films' pictures broadly confirm the scale of the POPSTAT Index.

Chapter 9, the concluding Chapter, draws attention to Low's depiction of the central problem facing British film-makers: namely the difficulty of matching U.S. film budgets when access to the American market was so restricted. In drawing out this argument an attempt is made to estimate the size of the domestic market and impute box-office returns for all films released in 1934.

The Chapter then returns to the issue of the Quota. The 1927 legislation introduced a quantity control which reduced the uncertainties facing indigenous film producers and resulted in increasing flows of finance capital into both the production and exhibition ends of the industry. The Chapter continues by arguing that over the period a substantial body of 'quality' films was made in British studios, which might well not have been made without the 1927 legislation, with as many as 50-60 films a year performing better than the industry average. The work concludes that the human and physical capital infrastructure in place at

the end of the period enabled the British film industry to respond comfortably to the entertainment and propaganda needs resulting from the transition of Britain to a war economy, in a period often heralded by critics as the "golden age" of British cinema.

Notes:

1. Rowe and Stone (1966, p.81).
2. For detailed statistics of production including import penetration during this pre-1914 period see Thompson (1985); and Sedgwick (1983). Thompson's work continues unto the early Thirties. Low (1971) provides the only detailed account of the British film industry during the twenties.
3. Matthews, Feinstein and Odling-Smee (1982), and Feinstein (1972).
4. Bowden and Offer (1994, p.732).
5. For a discussion of the Hollywood system during its classical period see Bordwell, Staiger and Thompson (1985), Claprat (1985), Gomery (1985, 1992), Greenwald (1950), Huettig (1944), Malby (1981), Staiger (1985).
6. This was particularly the case following the general diffusion of sound. This had occurred in Britain by 1930. The subsequent number of French and German films shown in Britain fell to very low numbers.
7. Thompson *op cit*
8. *Minutes of Evidence* (1936, Tab.2, p.125)
9. *ibid.* Tab.3, p.126. Including Canada, Britain possessed over a half of all cinemas found in the British Empire and its Dominions: estimated in 1934 to be 4,305 from a total - inclusive of British cinemas - of 7,945.
10. See also Aldgate (1985, p.262).

Chapter 1

A NEW APPROACH TO FILM INDUSTRY ECONOMICS

Introduction

This Chapter begins with an analysis of those characteristics which give the commodity "film" its uniqueness. The way in which those characteristics have been commercially exploited has given rise to a generic industry structure based upon distinct and vertically linked functions of production, distribution and exhibition. The manner in which the configuration of the American industry during its "classical" period reflected these functional delineations was probably important in leading Allen and Gomery (1985) to propose that the dominant conceptual framework of industrial economists - the Structure-Conduct-Performance paradigm - was the most appropriate for analysing the structure and competitive practices of the film industry.

In this work, however, that framework is contrasted with a more dynamic view of industrial configuration, explained as the consequence of organisational responses to market failure. It is a view of competition very much influenced by Oliver Williamson's work on business and industrial organisation, although critical of his quasi-static approach to relations between firms, with its rather formalised market-hierarchies taxonomy. A more dynamic approach to competitive behaviour is presented in which entrepreneurs are seen as a heterogeneous group, with a range of beliefs and objectives as well as associations with organisations which have distinct histories and traditions. It is argued that the manner in which these factors coalesce, within the context of a market environment, will largely shape the industrial terrain,

an example of which is presented in the form of the configuration of the British film industry *circa* 1935.

The characteristics of the film commodity.

Film production and consumption in capitalist economies has in great part operated within the complex system of commodity production. In this system the commodity is privately owned and yields an exchange value for its owner and accordingly the prospect of profit. The latter is a critical feature in the cycle of production as it provides the incentive for continued production. As a commodity film exhibits four principal characteristics.

1. Non-diminishable and indefinitely enlargeable nature of the film commodity.

The strips of celluloid - wound in reels - known as the film negative may be likened to an investment good: a good used in the production of other goods. As with all commodities which also serve as investment goods, the profit contribution it makes to a business organisation can be assessed by discounting the expected attributable net revenues generated over its productive life back to a present value.¹ The production of the film negative is the outcome of manifold acts of co-ordination within an organisational framework. However, the negative itself is not consumed by audiences, but rather the screen images which it makes possible. These images have the property of being perfectly non-diminishable: their physical properties are not reduced as a consequence of consumption. It makes no difference to the physical condition of the image-commodity whether it is viewed by one or one million consumers. Further, the image is in principal

capable of indefinite enlargement as well as reproduction . There is, hence, no limit on the potential size of an audience, since physical constraints imposed by cinema architecture and environmental considerations can be overcome through distribution.

The peculiar properties of film require organisational solutions if film is to be effectively exploited as a commodity. For instance, the form of consumer exclusion adopted by the industry from the very beginning of film history - the cinema - represents an organisational solution to the properties of the film image which are discussed above. The cinema allows n customers to enjoy the product simultaneously, whilst excluding potential customers either on the basis of price or seating capacity. Further, the relatively slow diminishability - technical deterioration - of the negative means that the exercise can be repeated the next day, or the next month, without loss of image quality.

It is interesting to note that the introduction of price differences for seats in different parts of the cinema - itself an organisational arrangement to increase revenue based on the willingness of customers to pay a higher tariff to sit in parts of the cinema from which the ordinary price customer was excluded - initially operated on the same principle as in theatres, where seats nearest the screen were more highly priced than those further back. The practice of making the back of the stalls and the circle areas of price exclusion was a learned behaviour and did not become common until some years after the emergence of the cinema.

2. Commodity 'Uniqueness'.

Each film commodity is 'unique' in that it comprises a set of characteristics which differentiates it from other film commodities. These typically include: genre, plot, screenplay, star billing, direction, cinematography, art direction, supporting actors, sets and settings, wardrobe and make-up, music and length. This monopoly of 'uniqueness' constitutes a property right for the owners of the commodity, from which they seek an exchange value. It also serves as a major problem for film production companies. If revenues are based upon the reception of each film by consumers who can make choices between rival 'unique' products, then production managers will be concerned to reduce the degree of uncertainty that 'uniqueness' suggests. That is, they will seek to influence consumer choice and hence film earnings by incorporating certain deliberate design features into the product, the most important of which, historically, have been the star, genre, production studio and director. The bundle of characteristics which defines the 'uniqueness' of the film commodity came to be used to arouse a set of expectations in film-goers. Thus, publicity signalling that Cary Grant was starring in a Columbia screwball comedy, or Jessie Matthews in a Gaumont British musical orientated the consumer in relation to certain pleasure terrains.

We can view this business behaviour as a form of 'branding', where producers of differentiated products invest in order to generate favourable (quality) image perceptions in consumers. The objective of the publicity departments of film production studios was hence, not only to promote each new film, but also

the stars which appeared in it and other tangible qualities associated with it. However, unlike typical commodity production where firms produce standardised products within differentiated product ranges, film production companies could only approximate a set of standards within a differentiated product range based loosely on genre categories. This was because of the limited predictability of the consumer's reaction to the 'artistic' and 'personality' aspect of a film's imagery. 'Sneak previews' with poll-tested audience responses provided some information for revising a finished film, but there always was (and is) an irreducible element of uncertainty.

For the consumer, this created a non-typical set of information conditions. Whilst the film production company attempted to convey assurances to customers that their products would fulfil the desired set of expectations, consumers knew from experience that the 'uniqueness' of each film meant that differences between *ex ante* expectations and *ex post* evaluations were common. This is quite unlike the normal pattern of consumer experience with rigorously standardised products meeting precisely a set of *ex-ante* expectations built upon repeated consumption experience.

Film production companies, then, held a portfolio of 'unique' commodities, each of which was subject to an amortisation schedule: films were commonly written off as having no resalable value in the U.S. market after 12 months during the period 1930-50. The major sellers in the domestic market in the Thirties typically produced a range of different quality commodities which were marketed in categories ranging from "super" to

"regular" productions. The different grades reflected cost differences based upon 'star', 'production' and 'publicity' values. Following the 1927 legislation, which made blind block booking illegal in Britain, these commodities were marketed separately and intended for specific market niches. Yet, as indicated above, as much as the studios attempted to reduce the uncertainties associated with 'hit' production, they were never entirely able to do so. The *ex ante* recipe for box-office success was necessarily elusive - the ingredients of 'star' and 'production' values may have been necessary but were not sufficient conditions for 'hit' production. Accordingly, a portfolio approach to production allowed the studios to pool their risks over a product range, thus reducing the significance of the success, or failure, of individual film commodities.²

3. Rapidly Diminishing Marginal Utility of the Film Commodity.

Given the existence of a plentiful supply of rival film commodities in accessible localities at comparable prices, consumers will tend to consume a particular commodity, once only, since the opportunity cost of a repeat viewing could include the lost opportunity to watch an alternative film. This is not to say that consumers never repeat viewed a particular film, but that the occurrence was comparatively rare. The principle of diminishing marginal utility, and its pace, is a key factor in understanding the rapid amortisation schedules mentioned above, for if a film was unable to cover its costs during the first 12 months following its release it was unlikely to do so at all. Part of the explanation for this rapid consumption of what is a complex product can be explained through the organisation of the characteristics of the film into forms with which the consumer

had prior experience, and could hence codify rapidly.

4. Relatively Slow Physical Diminishability of the Film Commodity.

Unlike the rapid commercial diminishability of the film commodity, the rate of physical depreciation is relatively slow. This characteristic, coupled with the relative ease of making copies, implies (in an era when alternative means of viewing via television licensing and video cassettes did not exist) a potential mismatch between supply and demand-sides of the market for film commodities. Given the limited market for any single film, distribution based upon the exchange of full property rights, would result in a ranked series of seconds markets and a market awash with films of an extensive vintage range.³ Such a market would discourage the production of new films, under conditions where the respective first and seconds markets were not sealed-off from one another and exhibited positive cross-price elasticities.

This can be explained as follows: assume a market which is price sensitive and in which there are two categories of film commodity - new films and old films. Allow the supply of films to increase over time as a consequence of the physical properties of the negative discussed above. The effect of this increase in supply will lower the price of films in the sub-market for old films. Given the changes in relative prices we would expect consumers to shift preferences in favour of old films, causing the demand for new films to fall at prevailing new film prices. Finally, this shift in demand preferences will lower the market price for new films; making them less attractive as profit

vehicles for film production companies.

The organisational solution to this problem was the emergence of distribution companies that regulated the supply of film products onto the market by means of forming rental agreements with exhibitors. Initially, only special event actualities or 'major' new films were distributed by means of restricting exhibitors to limited temporal access. However, the general adoption of the system in the United States following the demise of the MPPC (Motion Picture Patents Company) cartel and the emergence of the longer 'feature' film *circa* (1908-1914) and its parallel development in Britain, brought the existence of seconds markets to an end.⁴

A Transactions Cost Approach to the Economics of Film Industry Structure and Configuration.

In the above section the analysis of the functional structure of the industry has been conducted in terms of organisational solutions to the generic qualities of film as a commodity. The next step is to use the principles outlined above to explain the actual configuration of firms in the film industry at any one moment and its evolution over time.

Industry structure is commonly presented by economists as part of a paradigm, in which structural characteristics of an industry are causally linked to the conduct of the industry incumbents and their subsequent performance, generally represented by some measure of profitability.⁵ The principal structural categories employed are concentration, barriers to entry, product differentiation, vertical integration and conglomeration.

Industries can accordingly be categorised and compared on the basis of measures of these structural characteristics and said to be more-or-less competitive as a consequence. These assessments in turn can form the basis of implementing industrial policy.⁶

The paradigm is a useful device for obtaining a snapshot of an industry at a moment in time and I shall use it in this fashion. However, its attention to structures rather than processes makes it far less useful as a model for capturing the dynamic competitive interplay between incumbents. It further assumes that there is something meaningful and definable in the concept of industry as some form of boundary within which competitive practices are subsumed. Finally, practitioners within this tradition of Industrial Economics have commonly failed to attend to the organisational characteristics of particular industrial configurations. Indeed along with Auerbach (1988) I would wish to argue that industrial structure is not the cause of business behaviour but rather its outcome and that industrial configuration at any moment is the consequence of past business decision-making. He writes:

the firm, or at least its masters, are not inanimate - if they find themselves being the subject of equalisation, they are likely to *do something* about it., (1988, pp.84-5)

and,

The firm....is not simply the passive respondent to the constraints imposed on it from outside. To a greater extent, it creates its own environment. (1988, p.57-59)

We can, however, take the argument a stage further by introducing Williamson's transaction cost framework in maintaining that the peculiar development of business organisations can be explained

as organisational responses to perceptions of market failure. Market failure in this instance is taken to occur when markets are unable to provide a potential buyer with a specific good or service, or are unable to do so on demand at requisite levels of quality without entailing costs associated with contract formulation (adverse selection) and/or verification (moral hazard), at price levels not above those which could be achieved through internal co-ordination.⁷

The prevalence of market failure is likely to be more common in more youthful industries and to lead to vertical integration solutions. As Stigler has written:

Young industries are often strangers to the established economic system. They require new kinds or qualities of materials and hence make their own; they must overcome technical problems in the use of their products and cannot wait for potential users to overcome them; they must persuade customers to abandon other commodities and find no specialised merchants to undertake this task. These young industries must design their specialist equipment and often manufacture it. (1951, p.190)

Oliver Williamson has developed a semi-static economic theory of organisations in which firms operate within a general atmosphere determined by both environmental (uncertainty and actual or potential small numbers exchange) and human factors (bounded rationality, opportunism and information impactedness).

Williamson explicitly rejects Hayek's claim that markets are necessarily efficient, on the ground that prices are not a "sufficient statistic" upon which individual agents and managers can make effective planning decisions under a set of special circumstances. Williamson sets out to describe in theory those conditions under which markets may fail to supply goods because of the difficulties and subsequent costs associated with

writing, executing and enforcing a contingent claims contract.

Where this occurs:

.....the firm may decide to by-pass the market and resort to hierarchical modes of organisation. Transactions that might otherwise have been handled in the market are thus performed internally, governed by administrative processes, instead. (1975, p.9)

As with Ronald Coase (1937), Williamson perceives the firm as a default response to the organisational problems associated with making transactions within and across markets. His conception of market failure is thus very broad:

Only to the extent that frictions associated with one mode of organisation are prospectively attenuated by shifting the transaction, or a related set of transactions, to an alternative mode, can failure be said to exist. (1975, p.20)

The Application of Williamson's Conceptual Framework to the Film Industry.

Although the language developed by Williamson to explain the tensions and frictions implicit in market based transactions has not, in general, been replicated in this work, the insights which stem from it have proved invaluable time and again.

For instance, where a film production organisation holds the term contracts of a set of key factors of production it will be able to command them to perform appropriate tasks and will develop authority structures to this end. An alternative approach to resource co-ordination would be that of the organisation searching for and then specifying appropriate spot contracts in order that a set of idiosyncratic tasks is performed on each occasion it makes a film commodity. Where those resources are scarce, not only as in the case of established "stars", but the

whole set of core workers, this will entail the risk of not being able to find the appropriate resource on demand: it may not exist or may already be under contract to a rival organisation.

However, in circumstances where the resource can be identified, it also may put that resource in an extremely strong negotiating position - giving rise to the problem of small numbers exchange for the potential contractor. The studios in the classic Hollywood system were manifestations of Williamson's insight that organisations exist to economise on bounded rationality and attenuate opportunism in an environment of uncertainty and complexity. Again quoting Williamson:

....internal organisation often has attractive properties in that it permits the parties to deal with uncertainty in an adaptive, sequential fashion without incurring the same types of opportunism hazards that market contracting would pose. (1975, p.25)

The internal co-ordination of resources enabled the studios not only to deploy specific resource inputs at a moment in time, but also to develop those resources over time in a pre-determined fashion. This in turn involved in-house training. A strategic objective of internal organisation was, then, to obtain control of scarce task-idiosyncratic human resources in order to produce film outputs in "an adaptive, sequential fashion". The strategy was intended to yield precious "star" and "technical" inputs for the studio which in turn combined to create unique film commodities which became box-office successes yielding positive net revenue receipts. A further outcome was the emergence of a market for those task-idiosyncratic human resources already under term contracts. Quite regularly core workers from one studio - particularly "stars" - were sought after by rival studios to perform a particular function. Clearly such situations - known as

loan-outs - gave rise to small numbers games which involved the studio which owned the contract of employment demanding a premium above the salary paid to the worker in question.

To put these ideas more formally, assume a case in which all but one production organisation operated on the basis of acquiring idiosyncratic human resources by means of long term rolling contracts. For the sake of argument, also assume that there is no unemployment amongst such workers. Let the exception pursue a strategy - by means of negotiating a set of short-term contracts - of using the market to obtain all factor inputs necessary in the production of single film outputs. The transaction costs for the latter organisation will be greater on two accounts. It will need to make many more contracts with the associated search and contractual costs and to pay rents to those organisations owning the contracts for the required resources. The rent per resource will reflect the uneven bargaining relationship between the two parties and will be in excess of the payments made to the resource by the lessor. Critical to this argument is the question of overheads. Where resources are under long-term contract and fully and appropriately employed, the additional cost of producing an extra film commodity will be less than for the short-term contracting organisation even if all other circumstances are common. Also, the internal organisation may prove itself more adaptive to changing circumstances with alternatives more readily available should unforeseen events occur. Finally, learning by doing may well generate further benefits for the internal organisation as a consequence of the repeated sequencing of activities associated with high throughput

production operations.

However, where contracted resources are not efficiently deployed and enjoy spells of idleness, a new comparison becomes necessary. In this case the fixed overheads are spread amongst fewer films making each relatively more expensive to make, possibly leading to a situation where the cost of producing a film would be lower under short-term contractual conditions. This may well have been an important factor in the growth of small production companies/units, such as Victor Saville Productions - working from established studios in Britain in the late Thirties. Williamson's framework is certainly helpful in explaining the difficulties for Alexander Korda and London Films of efficiently utilising the capacity of the Denham Studios at this same time. (This particular case is developed in Chapter 9.)

A Hayek - Williamson Synthesis

Whilst I do not wish to develop a full critique of Williamson's contribution to our understanding of the relations between; i) the market and the business organisation, and ii) the internal structure of the latter, it is important to explore his stated point of departure with Hayek from which his concept of market failure was derived. In Chapter 1 of *Markets and Hierarchies* Williamson announced:

Given bounded rationality, uncertainty and idiosyncratic knowledge, I argue that prices often do not qualify as sufficient statistics and that a substitution of internal organisation (hierarchy) for market mediated exchange often occurs on this account. (1975, p.5)

Against what McCormick (1992) has termed the *Keynesian*

Avalanche - by which he refers to the new orthodoxy in economics created by Keynes and the younger economists at Cambridge and the LSE during the late 30s, coupled with the exigencies of the governmental command economy imposed in Great Britain during the Second World War - Hayek stood almost alone amongst economists working in Britain. His 1945 paper "The use of knowledge in society" set out to build upon earlier work on the dangers of planning and socialism and provide an intellectual defence of the market as the supreme method of resource allocation.

His argument, put simply, is that there are two categories of economic knowledge. First, he identified scientific knowledge which he took as that knowledge necessary to plan the organisation and distribution of production. This category forms the basis of the claims of planners to be able efficiently to organise the ratio of inputs to outputs, given the productivity of human and physical capital. However Hayek claimed that the greater the scale of this activity the greater the loss of the second form of economic knowledge: namely, "knowledge of the particular circumstances of time and place". For Hayek (1945), the idea that:

.....practically every individual has some advantage over all others because he possesses unique information of which beneficial use might be made, but of which use can be made only if the decisions depending on it are left to him or are made with his active co-operation. (1971, p.20)

This when coupled with his emphasis of the importance and indeed ubiquity of economic change generates a competitive model in which:

the continuous flow of goods and services is maintained by constant deliberate adjustments, by new dispositions made every day in the light of circumstances not known the day before, by B stepping in at once when A fails to deliver. (1971, p.22)

The knowledge upon which these adjustments are made is subjective and liable to lead to mistakes. Collectively, however, they provide the critical dynamic to the market economy as entrepreneurs enter into conflict in their respective efforts to change the competitive terrain in their favour. These perceptions of opportunities for gain are neither collectively knowable nor collectable and hence are unavailable to the central planning authority. Accordingly, any particular bundle of outputs organised by the latter must necessarily be sub-optimal in that its production and the accompanying distribution of resources will be based upon a state of knowledge which is necessarily deficient.

Hayek's conception of the competitive market is radically different from that of the neo-classical theory of perfect competition. For Hayek: "knowledge of particular circumstances of time and place" is subjectively held, rather than universal and objective. Further, products will be differentiated where this matches the entrepreneur's perception of an opportunity to supply effective un-met demand. Hayek maintained that by reducing impediments to the market - such as restrictions on entry or exit along with fetters on the mobility of factors of production - entrepreneurs would be better able to exploit their perceptions of opportunity. Where successful, and their perceptions confirmed, entrepreneurs would earn above standard rates of profit and lead to followship behaviour on the part of rivals. Hayek, therefore like classical theory, employed the concept of the tendency towards the equalisation of profits at the margin. However, in keeping with the Austrian tradition, he argued that

the unsteady dynamic nature of competition within capitalist economies meant that at any moment this tendency was liable to be broken as an entrepreneur perceived a new opportunity and re-directed resources accordingly.

The market economy, for Hayek was a den in which complex networks of relations existed between business organisations and both actual and potential buyers/consumers. The totality of activity which made up the market economy was unknowable. Economists should not deceive themselves by working as though this was not the case. In a scathing attack upon Schumpeter, Hayek maintained:

Any approach, such as that of much of mathematical economics with its simultaneous equations, which in effect starts from the assumption that people's knowledge corresponds with the objective facts of the situation, systematically leaves out what is our main task to explain. (1971, p.30)

However, unlike the information needs required by a central planning authority, the aggregation of this knowledge was unnecessary for the system to work effectively. Along with Adam Smith the "invisible hand of the price mechanism" was sufficient to co-ordinate the effective allocation of resources through changes in relative prices. He wrote:

The marvel is that in a case like that of a scarcity of one raw material, without an order being issued, without more than perhaps a handful of people knowing the cause, tens of thousands of people whose identities could not be ascertained by months of investigation, are made to use the material or its products more sparingly; that is, they move in the right direction. (1971, p.26)

As we have seen Williamson rejected this seamless view of the operation of markets maintaining that markets regularly fail as

co-ordinating mechanisms because of the costs involved in the formation and execution of transactions between two or more parties. Hayek does not appear to have responded to Coase's (1937) seminal paper, even though they were colleagues at the LSE, and gave little attention to business organisation *per se*.

Hayek's competitive framework of market opportunities is transformed by Williamson into one of market failure. The objective of Williamson's theorising is to generate an objective calculus from which we can ascertain the extent of the vertical links within the organisation as well as their optimal organisational structure. And yet, their common appreciation of the precarious nature of economic knowledge leads to a whole set of shared concerns and concepts. "Uncertainty" and "bounded rationality" are clearly critical elements in Hayek's framework as is the idea of economic agents holding idiosyncratic forms of knowledge and behaving in opportunistic patterns. Indeed the whole of the Hayekian framework of competition can be re-written using Williamson's new set of concepts with the crucial exception of the nature of the knowledge and uncertainty. Williamson's quest for an objective calculus for the structure of business organisations is difficult to reconcile with his recognition of the knowledge problems confronting business organisations and particularly with regard to the forms of behaviour that opportunism might or might not lead to. Williamson's conceptual framework leads to a static *ex-post* rationalisation and objectivisation of organisational form. Hayek's subjective framework leaves business decision-makers boundedly rational, but conceives of those bounds as the subject of idiosyncratic perceptions. Hayek helps us to understand the degree of unevenness

in business decision-making, business cultures and structures and competitive configurations. Williamson, on the other hand, recognises that markets do not always function in the seamless fashion pre-supposed by Hayek and that business organisations are liable to be defensive as well as offensive in their dealings with rivals.

A synthesis of these two frameworks yields a conception of competition based upon market failure, conducted between business organisations behaving as opportunistic, self-seeking islands of conscious power in a sea of competition - to paraphrase Robertson's well known analogy. These organisations differ one from another in terms of a series of objective categories - the number and variety of the product range, the degree of vertical integration, market share, potential and actual economies of scale, spatial characteristics of the supply chain, number of production centres and distribution outlets, amongst many others. Their histories and associated corporate cultures will also be to a greater or lesser extent peculiar to themselves. At any moment in time, these factors give rise to an industry configuration, superimposed upon a basic functional structure, such as the production, distribution, exhibition chain of the film industry. Clearly the idiosyncratic forces at play within industries generate "systems of provision" which differ between industries, an approach to industrial form recently championed by Fine and Leopold (1993) who argue:

....(that) different commodities or groups of commodities....(are) distinctly structured by the chain or system of provision that unites a particular pattern of production with a particular pattern of consumption. (p.4)

(And),

Different systems of provision across commodity groups then, are the consequence of distinct relationships between the various material and cultural practices comprising the production, distribution, circulation and consumption of the goods concerned. (p.5)

Towards a Conception of Competition.

A market may be defined as an arena in which participating firms - each with its separate and unique histories, cultures, objectives and strategies - pursue their perception of self interest in the search for custom. Relations between firms within industries will generally be rivalrous - this does not, however, necessarily exclude co-operative practices from surfacing - and may take the form of outright conflict. The market economy, *in toto*, consists of an interlocking complex of such arenas across which business organisations are engaged, in one or more contests, in the pursuit of profit.

As we know from the literature, markets and industries are notoriously difficult to delineate, leading Lerner to reject the instrument of a market/industry demand curve on the grounds that:

In calling the same thing at at different places different commodities, we have rejected the criteria of physical similarity as a basis for the recognition or classification of commodities and have put in its place the principle of substitutability at the margin. (1934, p.171)

Although he maintained that the concept of market demand and associated market elasticities was not meaningful, Lerner did not believe this to be the case at the level of the firm, as business organisations had a very clear idea of the price and cross-price elasticities affecting their products. However, even for the business organisation, the terrain (arena) is forever changing

its dimensions. It may be growing or declining in volume, or metamorphosing into a different, albeit related, form. The points of competition between the players may also be shifting as may the points of tangency with other products in different but related markets.

The market, then, is being portrayed as a social phenomena built upon the shifting sands of the subjective perceptions of both producers and consumers. It is a human construct and represents the outcome of economic behaviour. Markets do not buy, sell, substitute, gamble, invest, save, innovate, follow, enter, exit, merge. People do!, and the consequences of their behaviour - usually within the confines of a particular business organisation - are industrial configurations which in turn carry "systems of provision" and which, although subject to change, may at times lend themselves to stochastic observation.

Market failure, then, provides the conceptual key to competitive practice and subsequent outcome. The following definition has been adopted:

Market failure occurs where for a given set of incumbent firms which, following Lerner, may be pragmatically termed 'the industry', an individual business organisation is unable, for a variety of reasons other than that of earning a rate of profit which is less than "normal", to transact with either upstream suppliers or downstream customers, or both. A possible consequence of this situation is that the business organisation will resolve the problem through the internalisation of the provision of the externally unachievable transactions.

The principal types of failure alluded to above are:

i) after Hayek (1945), poor market intelligence or indolent incumbent behaviour, leading businesses to neglect market opportunities;

ii) after Stigler (1951), the absence of intermediate suppliers and customers: often the case in embryo and infant industries;

iii) after Williamson (1975), the existence of serious impediments to the formulation and execution of the terms of a transaction contract.

Category iii) clearly represents Williamson's thesis concerning the difficulties associated with transactional relations between parties. In the case of category ii), there are often few alternatives to the internalised organisation of upstream and/or downstream transactions. For example, the severe shortage of film subjects during the first years of the film industry propelled a number of instrument-makers - amongst them Paul, Williamson and Butchers in Britain - into film production in order to promote their principal investments: the camera and film projector.⁸

Category i) deserves the more detailed explication at this juncture. A form of market failure is implicit when an entrepreneur acts upon an idiosyncratic body of knowledge - "of the particular circumstances of time and place" - and creates a transaction network. The failure of the market is explained in terms of the inability of the set of incumbent industry firms to identify the opportunity represented by the idiosyncratic body of knowledge, before the moment it becomes manifest in the entrepreneurial act. The entrepreneur, accordingly, is responding to his/her perception of market failure - the failure of other business organisations to have previously identified and/or acted upon the opportunity - through enlarging the scope of internal organisation. It may be objected that one could hardly expect business organisations to act upon knowledge which they did not possess. However, the case needs to be made that this aspect of

the market terrain is precisely as much a point of competition between rivals as any other and focuses explicitly upon the human act of entrepreneurship within the context of business organisation rivalry.

For Hayek the entrepreneurial act is an example of the continuous change which is so successfully communicated through the market mechanism: as such, it scarcely deserves the label "failure". Nevertheless, the absence of transaction networks is of critical importance in understanding the behaviour of firms, either as initiators or followers, and the subsequent evolution of "systems of provision". To repeat, it is the contention of this argument that the actual configuration of firms engaged in competitive behaviour within a "system of provision" represents the historical evolution of their collective responses to market failure. A converse argument would entail a system of perfect markets in which perfectly distributed information and objective knowledge, given the absence of bounded rationality, prevented firms from behaving opportunistically. In such a conceptual framework businesses would adopt similar if not identical strategies and the points of competition between firms would be minimal.

From Competition to Configuration.

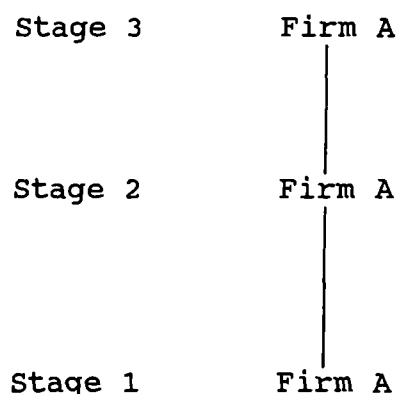
All firms can be viewed as collections of co-ordinated, adaptive and sequential activities and are thus, to a greater or lesser extent vertically integrated. The outcome of this activity as suggested earlier is commodity production, where any one product is the consequence of a particular cluster of sequential

activities. Firms operate in competitive environments with other vertically integrated firms. Competition, within pragmatically defined industries prevails at those points where firms produce similar outcomes from similar clusters of sequential activities. Firms may compete at more than one point depending on the extent and direction of vertical integration. However, competition also takes place between firms across industries and markets (inter-industry) as consumers make substitution decisions at the margin. The competitive environment is, hence, conceived as a complex, uneven and shifting terrain in which the co-ordinating activities of firms may only partially overlap at specific competitive points. It is also these qualities which make the task of industry definition so problematic, although in the case of the film industry during the Thirties this is less so, since the form of the feature film commodity, the "systems of provision" which delivered it and its relative popularity remained largely unchanged.

If a pre-requisite for intra-industry competition requires the existence of at least two co-ordinators of similar clusters of sequential activities, competition also implies that rival firms can acquire the commodity through the market mechanism - they needn't produce it themselves. Accordingly, the very existence of vertically integrated firms is a testament to an implicit judgement by their owners/managers not to use the market as a source of supply.

In the case of a new industry where there are no rival producers, a firm at Stage 1 of a production chain will need to produce at Stage 2 in order to supply final customers at Stage 3. Figure 1.1

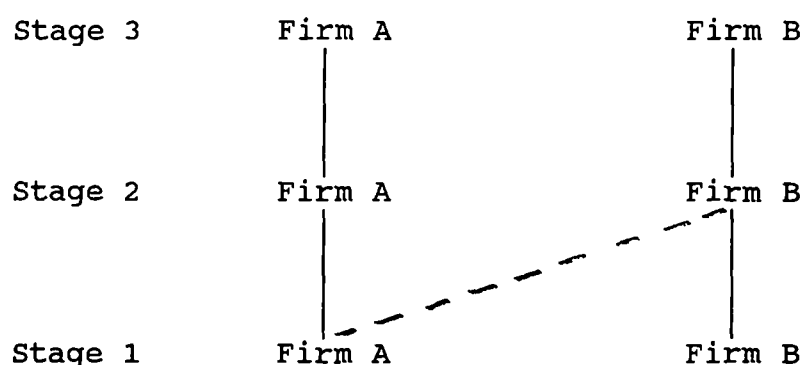
Figure 1.1: Simple Upstream Vertical Integration.



shows that the market is supplied by a single producer at all three stages of the production chain. The absence of an alternative supplier to the market would seem to imply market failure given the absence of transactions and yet the existence of demand. The same would be true in the case of an entrepreneur establishing a new network of transactions in an existing market, up to that moment in which the competitive advantage obtained brought about a response on the part of incumbent and/or entrant firms in pursuit of profit. In both cases the entrepreneur has responded to perceived market failure through internal organisation.

The moment other producers enter the market the picture becomes more complex. In a duopoly industry in which there are two firms which are integrated upstream from the base of Stage 1, both firms currently reject the market solution to acquiring Stage 2 products, preferring instead to continue to internalise the activity. They do so irrespective of the reasons which led to the initial decision to internalise. This is shown in Figure 1.2, where at Stage 1 Firm A, given the vertical operations of Firm B,

Figure 1.2: Simple Upstream Vertical Integration as in the case of a duopoly industry in which the incumbent firms choose either internal or market solutions to Stage 2 output.



can either transact with B for Stage 2 production or produce it itself and vice-versa. This simple exposition can, of course, be shown to operate equally well where the duopolists are based at Stage 2 and decide to integrate downstream to Stage 1. The existence of other suppliers to the market implies that a firm's decision not to use the market is deliberate and strategic.

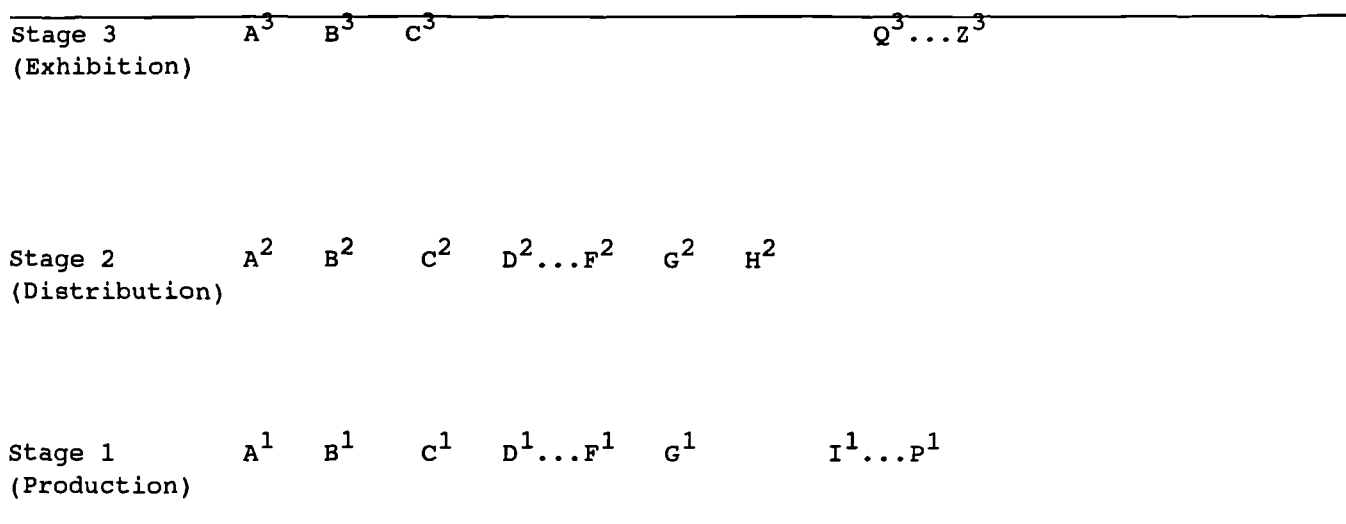
Remaining with the example above, if Firm A were to establish a vertical chain before that of its rival, Firm B, it may well have secured first-mover advantages. Where these are coupled with the production of idiosyncratic products which have no alternative uses outside the sphere of activity in which A and B are engaged, Firm B may well be the object of opportunistic behaviour. This may be sufficiently severe to prevent Firm B from entering into a long term contract with its rival because of the absence of trust. In such circumstances B may choose to internalise the transaction. However, if Firms A and B are joined by a set of rival firms C....Z at Stage 2, then given low levels of asset-specificity and as a consequence insubstantial first-mover advantages, Firm B will likely perceive a quite different

competitive environment and may decide that there are no competitive advantages to be obtained from internalising the transaction.

To take the matter further. In Figure 1.3 below a hypothetical film industry is depicted in which there are three clusters of sequential activity, termed Stage 1 (production), Stage 2 (distribution) and Stage 3 (exhibition). Each stage represents a point of competition between rival firms A...Z. Whilst firms A...B are engaged in all three stages of production, Firms D...G operate at Stages 1 & 2, Firm H at Stage 2 only, whilst Firms I...P only co-ordinate at stage 1, and Firms Q...Z at stage 3. Accordingly Firms I...P will need to transact with firms A...H in order to have their films distributed. Meanwhile, whilst Firms A...B are assured of some supply from within their respective organisations, Firms Q...Z will depend on Firms A...H for their supply. The picture is further complicated by the fact that: i) the scale of the sequential activities at each point of competition differs in quality and quantity between firms, resulting in complex market concentration information and ii) each firm will have distinct business strategies designed to achieve some appropriate measure of profitable performance.

This model can be taken as a general depiction of the configuration of the British film industry in the mid-Thirties, where Firms A...C represent the ABPC and Gaumont-British combines, as well as the Paramount organisation which had a series of large first run cinemas in London and the major cities of Britain, D...F the set of US majors, excluding Paramount, - MGM, Warner Brothers-First National, RKO, Fox (20th Century Fox

Figure 1.3: The configuration of the British Film Industry circa 1935



from 1935), Universal, and Columbia - G, a small number of domestic companies, such as British Lion, Twickenham and Butchers, which had both production and distribution sections to their organisations, H the United Artists organisation, I...P the set of British and US independent producers, some tied more closely than others to distribution and exhibition outlets, such as London Films association with United Artists and the emerging Odeon cinema circuit, and Q...Z the set of smaller circuits and independent cinema owners.

Conclusion

From the above industry configuration it is apparent that the principal American players in the U.S. market were also prominent in Britain. Moreover, during the Twenties they were able to establish a transactions contractual framework which mirrored U.S. practices. The British industry was run along American lines. The reasons for this lay in the market power wielded by the American distributors. During this decade each of the major American combines distributed their films through an in-house renting company. The ubiquity and quality of their product gave

renting company. The ubiquity and quality of their product gave the U.S. distributors a very powerful base from which to negotiate with domestic exhibitors and represents a classic example of Williamson's transaction cost approach to markets and internal organisation. Indeed, the 1927 Act outlawed the common practice of post dated 'blind booking': surely a case of 'adverse selection' resulting from the the demand of exhibitors for frequent and highly transactions-specific feature film commodities and the opportunistic behaviour of the American principals knowing that they were operating in a small numbers game.

The emergence in the late 1920s of two large British combines can be viewed as a consequence of the attenuation of the market power of the American distributors brought about by legislation designed to guarantee domestic films *per se* an increasing share of the domestic market. Market power also helps explain why most American distributors saw no compelling advantage in significant direct cinema ownership in Britain during the 1920s. Even after the 1927 Act, although Fox made a determined effort to acquire Gaumont British, only Paramount decided to extend its cinema base out of the London West End during the following decade, and then this amounted to no more than a string of large centrally-sited cinemas in the largest provincial cities.

Notes:

1. See Vogel (1986, ch.4) for a full treatment of film industry finance.
2. *ibid.* A fuller treatment of these aspects of film finance and economics is to be found in Chapter 8.
3. As new films are added to the stock of vintage films so the

latter will increase, after a lag, as long as the rate of new additions exceeds the rate of deterioration. Clearly, at the point at which these two rates converge, the stock of films will remain stationary.

4. See Channon (1980) and Sedgwick (1983) for a discussion of the emergence of film renting companies in Britain in the period before 1910.

5. See Waterston (1984) for a good account of this paradigm.

6. See Cowling (1982) for a discussion of industrial policy from a radical perspective, but one not incompatible with the S-C-P paradigm. On this latter point see Sedgwick (1991).

7. For my express purposes I assume that product and factor markets are bereft of externalities so that the private and social domains are one and the same with respect to commodity production. I further wish to ignore the $P = MC$ condition of market allocative efficiency on the grounds that its realisation or absence is of no importance for the individual players in the market: it has no effect upon their behaviour. However, this is not the same as saying that the behaviour of business organisations may not be affected by the knowledge that other firms are able to set prices above marginal costs - where above normal profits are also earned.

8. See Channon *op cit*; Sedgwick *op cit*.

CHAPTER 2

THE EMERGENCE OF A BRITISH FILM INDUSTRY

Introduction

The relative failure, or otherwise, of the British film industry can be viewed within the framework of a broader debate, concerning the development of British capitalism after 1870.

Rachael Low (1948a with Roger Manvell, 1948b, 1950, 1971, 1985) in her pioneering history of the industry since 1896, develops a consistent story of neglect, lack of professionalism, poor organisation, and social stigma, as the setting for its inability effectively to dominate the domestic market. Strong similarities can be detected between Low's history of a small sector of the economy and one side of a fierce historiographical argument concerning the efficacy of British business organisations and their leaders. As will become evident, the debate is as much about methods of investigation as outcomes.

Historiographical debate concerning the relative retardation of the British economy.

At its most basic, this has become a debate between 'instrumental' as opposed to 'realist' methodologies. The former are represented by the school of 'cliometricians',¹ - a group of economic historians which has used the models of neo-classical economics and the devices of econometrics to tackle economic issues of the past. For this school, the behaviour of agents is scrutinised for evidence of irrationality - of them not pursuing self interest within the bounds of the given historical situation. If this can be established a case can be made for 'failure'. Otherwise, expectations of contrary behaviour are

unrealistic. The contribution of the cliometricians to the debate concerning British economic performance in the modern period has been to challenge the 'failure' label attached to the British economy and to require that historians be explicit about the assumptions and causality implicit in their theorising. Against them range a host of opponents who reject this approach to theorising and methodology on the grounds of 'spurious' objectivity. For them the fact of retardation can be explained by a variety of causes, which cannot be captured adequately in econometric models. These include: the 'failure' of British institutional arrangements; the unwillingness of its entrepreneurs to transcend constraints; and the idiosyncrasies of the British class system and its propagation of amateur values.

The 'cliometricians' would *ex hypothesi* object to the assessment of Burnham and Hoskins (1943) in their *Iron and Steel in Britain 1870-1930*, that "if a business deteriorates, it is no use blaming anyone except those at the top"² on the grounds that the argument has been improperly specified. Supple has argued that entrepreneurial failings are but one of many possible explanations for poor industrial performance. To demonstrate entrepreneurial failure the investigator would need to show:

....that available technology, existing resources, realistically attainable market prospects etc., all provided opportunity for faster growth or higher productivity which were systematically neglected. Businessmen are only to be judged feeble businessmen when they fail to do things which successful businessmen might reasonably be expected to do in the same circumstances. (1977, p.13)

Crucially important to the assessment of whether or not businessmen behaved rationally is the assumption that they exhibit only limited powers of foresight. Sandberg puts it this

way:

An inevitable difficulty is that such a measure cannot rely exclusively on hindsight, and a judgement must sometimes be made as to whether an entrepreneur should reasonably have been able to foresee later developments in technology or market conditions. (1981, p.102)

In this context McCloskey and Sandberg write:

....in applying the criterion of the profitability of imitating foreign methods, the new work has distinguished carefully between prospective and retrospective opportunities for profit. (1981, p.64)

It is this issue of foresight which provokes the criticism of Coleman and Macleod. They argue:

By its very nature, it (neo-classical economics), takes no cognizance of the longer-run, dynamic implications of not adopting new techniques whilst competitors were so doing. It assumes, on the part of the businessman, possession of the requisite information on costs and the market, knowledge of the available techniques, and deliberate choice, on economic grounds, to continue with the status quo. Consequently, it does not distinguish rationality from inertia, ignorance or complacency. It takes no heed of one essential element in business decision-making: the willingness to take risks. (1986, p.598)

The foregoing critique requires some explanation. Neo-classical economics generally assumes that the business decision-maker has at his/her disposal perfect knowledge of: a) the relative prices of factor inputs, b) the state of technology, c) efficiency and scale parameters, and d) the behaviour of all those that constitute the market. This information enables the decision-maker to arrive at optimal output/sales outcomes. In this 'state of nature' business irrationality results in lower profits. However, there appears to be no room for entrepreneurial activity since all agents not acting irrationally must be behaving in an optimising fashion. The moment the assumption of perfect information is dropped, the theory becomes untenable. Knight in 1921 introduced the concepts of insurable and un-insurable

uncertainty into the mainstream of economics thinking; a modern statement of the implications of which is given by Koutsoyiannis:

Later it was recognised that firms have no perfect knowledge of their costs, revenues and their environment and they operate in a world of uncertainty. They assumed that firms have perfect knowledge only up to a probability distribution of all outcomes..... These probabilities are assumed known to the firm subjectively (but will be) influenced by the time horizon, the risk attitude and the rate of change of the environment. Thus businessmen's expectations cannot come close to objective reality. Different firms will form different assessments of future events. Consequently firms will respond differently to the same conditions of the environment. (Koutsoyiannis 1979, p.261)

It is on these grounds that neo-classical model building activities are at their weakest and where the social horizons of those taking the the decisions enter the argument.

Wiener (1981) is the most implacable of opponents in maintaining that the prevailing culture of Britain was such that in order to elevate themselves socially, businessmen needed to acquire the trappings of being gentlemen and amateurs. He writes:

...in industry, attainment of the gentlemanly status was more difficult and normally required a greater degree of detachment from one's economic roleIndustry after industry exhibited the pattern of gentrification accompanied by changes in strategy and structure that hampered future growth. (1981, pp.145-46)

In attacking McCloskey and others in the neo-classical school Wiener counsels that:

...in the analyses of these 'Cliometricians', social institutions, values and sentiments played no part... Cliometricians were virtually indifferent to - almost contemptuous of - any evidence merely qualitative. (1981, p.169)

He is impatient with the economist's concept of market imperfections arguing that:

When this obscure category is opened to the light, it turns out to be a pathway back to the social world enveloping economics. (1981, p.170)

For Wiener it is precisely those attitudes to business which are manifest in the the 'uncertainty' of the decision-making process, which cause businessmen to come to different decisions in different parts of the capitalist world at roughly compatible stages of development. He writes disparagingly of the industrial capitalist in modern British history:

The natural environment of the gentleman-industrialist, of the industrialist as imitation of civil servant, was a conservative one, where pervasive regulation and control (from government and from within) substituted for innovation, where the over-riding aims were the maintenance of the status quo, the ensuring of equity, the securing of stability, and the preservation of psychological space for non-business activities. It was an environment in which lip-service was paid to competition, enterprise, innovation, invention, and salesmanship, while the disruptive and time-consuming consequences of these were feared. (1981, p.151)

There are two main problems with this argument. First, the universal picture of relative backwardness in industrial and commercial behaviour is misconceived: there are numerous examples of successful commercial and industrial practice during the years leading to the First World War and the inter-war period.³ Second, Wiener provides no explanation of historical change. Coleman and Macleod are highly critical of Wiener on this account, maintaining that he is inconsistent in this matter of historical continuity. They argue that if it is recognised that those qualities of individualism and enterprise were important causal factors in the industrialisation of Britain up to 1850, then continuity requires that they remain embedded in the culture at a later date.

Just as today's new technique embodies the experience of the past, so today's response cannot be divorced from yesterday's understanding. (1986, p.598)

For Coleman and Macleod, it is those very qualities of individualism and enterprise which proved to be so unsuited to the emerging methods and organisation of mass-production.

Precisely because it arose from spontaneous and unco-ordinated efforts of small businessmen creating a structure of many small businesses, the British industrial revolution gave rise to powerful currents of individualism in business behaviour. They continued to be manifest in some of the attitudes of the business community after the 1860s. An unwillingness to make standard components; a pride in being able to produce a multiplicity of different wares to suit a variety of markets from the local town to overseas Empire; a pervasive, secretive and obstinate individualism: such continuing qualities proved ill-suited to the competitive environment emerging in the twentieth century and peculiarly antipathetic to mass production. (1986, p.600)

Although Coleman and Macleod share with Wiener a view that there existed strong anti-industrial tendencies in British society they maintain "that this is a long way from assuming that they represented a total cultural climate which prompted a decline in industrial virility". Rather, their case is one of degree, arguing that these currents:

....had long and tenacious historical roots. Any attempt to understand them must take cognizance of the continuity of attitudes stemming from the British industrial revolution and the particular relations between capital and labour associated with it. (1986, p.610)

Both the neo-classical paradigm and Wiener's thesis have been the subject of a critique developed by Lazonick and Ebaun and Lazonick. Taking the latter, the essence of their argument is that, in its quest for scientific rigour, the neo-classical method of abstraction and simplification from the complex forms of socio-economic development discriminates against those qualitative factors which explain the uneven nature of that development. They write:

As neo-classical economic historians have emphasised

(McCloskey, 1971; McCloskey and Sandberg, 1973; Floud, 1981; Sandberg, 1981), British businessmen may in general have performed well by the test of cost minimisation subject to prevailing constraints. Britain's problem, however, was that economic decision-makers, lacking the individual or collective means to alter existing constraints, in effect took them as 'given'. (1986, p.2)

However, along with Coleman and Macleod, Elbaum and Lazonick have also found fault with the 'cultural conservatism' story proposed by Wiener and Landes (1969), pointing out that:

Britains's distinctiveness derived much less from the conservatism of its cultural values *per se* than from a matrix of rigid institutional structures that reinforced these values and obstructed individualistic as well as collective efforts at economic renovation. In such countries as the United States, Germany, and Japan, successful economic development in the twentieth century has been based upon mass production methods and corporate forms of managerial co-ordination. Britain, however, was impeded from adopting these modern technological and organisational innovations by the legacy associated with atomistic, nineteenth century economic organisation. Entrenched institutional structures - in industrial relations, enterprise and market organisation, education, finance, international trade and state-enterprise relations - constrained the transformation of Britain's productive system. (1986, p.2)

Both sets of work can very much be seen within a tradition established by Alfred Chandler - first applied to Britain by Leslie Hannah - in which the development of 20th century business organisations and its attendant competitive structures and relations with finance, is portrayed as being relatively retarded, particularly in comparison with the United States.⁴

Complementing Coleman and Macleod's argument, Elbaum and Lazonick maintain that:

To meet the international challenge, British industries required transformation of their structures of industrial relations, industrial organisation, and enterprise management. Vested interests in old structures, however,

proved to be formidable obstacles to the transition from competitive to corporate modes of organisation. Lacking corporate management skills and opportunities, British industrialists clung to family control of their firms. (1986, p.5)

A business sector, coupled with a banking sector which "lacked direct involvement in industry", an educational system which failed "to provide appropriately trained managerial and technical personnel", and an industrial relations arrangement based upon nineteenth century technologies and work practices, led to a situation in which:

...British firms sought refuge in higher quality and more specialised product lines, where traditional craftsmanship and organisation could still command a competitive edge... Unfortunately for the British, in a world of expanding markets, the specialised product of today all too often turned out to be the mass production item of tomorrow. (1986, p.7)

How should historians judge what Coleman and Macleod have termed "today's response"?

The approach to competition outlined in Chapter 1 offers a basis for understanding what Coleman and Macleod have termed "today's response". In explicating the context within which business decision-makers operate it is possible to distinguish between economic and non-economic factors. The economic will include supply-side factors such as the quality and quantity as well as the relative prices of available factor inputs, the prevailing technology, and the extent to which costs have been 'sunk' in particular production systems and thus the imputed cost of replacement. On the demand side, factors such as the size, growth and composition of the market are likely to feature strongly. However, because of the prevalence of uncertainty and opportunistic behaviour, the business decision-maker operates under conditions of bounded rationality. What knowledge of the

present and foresight into the future can this person be expected to have? For both temporal 'states' it seems not unreasonable to suppose that the business decision-maker can be expected to be aware of the diversity of: a) organisational structures, b) methods and systems of production, c) sales practices, d) distribution networks, e) market structures, as well as having an active hypothesis as to how these are likely to develop in the near to middle future. These would then form the basis of strategic planning activity.

In the absence of non-economic factors, business decision-makers will adopt that strategy which best captures perceptions of that knowledge, including rival firm behaviour. The extent to which decision-makers, in general, adopt or forgo business opportunities will both be a reflection of the prevailing business culture as well as a determinant of that culture at some point of time in the future. Factors included in the non-economic category are those social institutions and attitudes together with businessmen's perceptions about the personality/psychology of rivals, both intra and inter-firm, which give each culture its uniqueness. Where the non-economic factors influence the business culture in such a way as to constrain business decision-makers from taking full advantage of the opportunities available to them, the economic development of the culture will be retarded in relation to associated cultures in which those opportunities are being more fully exploited.

The Early History of the British Film Industry.

The poor performance of the British film industry during the silent era is widely recognised, and can be dated from the end of

the embryonic and pioneering period, circa 1907/08. Recently published statistical work from Thompson (1985) demonstrates that domestic producers took as little as 10% of the domestic market during the period immediately leading to the 1927 legislation.⁵ This record of failure is difficult to reconcile with the fact that: a) Britain was the single largest market outside North America for moving pictures and b) its international trading networks were unsurpassed.⁶ Indeed, the extensive international networks developed by the Pathe Freres company of France in the pre-1914 years and the 'new' American film companies after 1915 can be taken as an indication of the extent of international opportunities. These two factors appear to work against the conventional explanation for the initial 'failure' of the British industry, which maintains that the formation of Edison-led cartel (1908-1913) effectively cut British firms off from the American market, thereby preventing them from amortising their products.⁷

From the very beginning, the film industry was international in scope. (It is interesting to think how the industry might have developed had the technology of 'talking pictures' been available from the start.) Accordingly, any analysis of the domestic industry should be conscious of developments elsewhere. The most thorough treatment of the international dimension of the industry in the silent period is Krystin Thompson's *Exporting Entertainment*, in which the author sets out to show how the American industry achieved world hegemony by the late 1910s. Her work is supported by previously untapped American customs statistics as well as extensive use of American (Moving Picture

World) and British (Bioscope) trade manuals. Thompson's thesis is that:

.... long-term American dominance came about not only because American firms were able to export more film during the war itself, but because they instituted new distribution procedures abroad; rather than selling primarily through agents in London, they opened their own offices in a variety of countries.(1985, p.x)

Thompson set out to explain why it took American companies as long as it did to achieve dominance in international markets. She maintains that the very size of the American market encouraged the growth of European production and that American ascendancy in the pre-war period:

....thus involved two movements: one to reduce the foreign share of the U.S. market, the other to establish agents and subsidiary offices abroad for the sale of American films.
(1985, p.2)

Thompson views the emergence of the Moving Picture Patents Company (MPPC) in the Autumn of 1908 as coming "in the wake of the great merger movement of the decade 1895-1904."⁸ Although for a time successful, she argues, the Edison-led cartel ultimately failed to control the American market because the technical conditions for oligopoly did not exist - the cost of technology and the economies of scale weren't sufficient to act as entry barriers and the absolute cost barriers based on the pooling of patent rights failed to prevent the rise of the 'independent movement' from 1909.⁹ The exclusion of all foreign firms from the cartel (with the important exception of Pathe Freres) had a dramatic effect upon their profits during 1909. Thompson quotes Sadoul's claim that over three-quarters of the big European producers' profits came from the American market.¹⁰ Not only were British firms excluded from the MPPC but also from the rival

distribution syndicate -the Motion Picture Distribution and Sales Company (MPDSC) - formed in 1910 and including many of the leading European film makers. By way of explanation Thompson states that "British films had acquired a reputation for poor quality."¹¹ The MPDSC broke up in 1912. However, the factor which had the most important impact on market structure and on the subsequent demise of the Edison-led cartel was the emergence of a new form of film product - the feature film - and new sets of companies that built their reputations upon it. Thompson argues that even if the MPPC had not restricted imports and the war had not occurred:

.....a new and more lasting oligopoly was beginning to take shape in 1912-1915: Universal, Paramount-Famous Players Lasky, Loew's and Fox were all in the early stages of formation. (1985, p.27)

Most American companies (with the exception of Vitagraph) based their European and world selling operations in London from 1909-1916. Britain was attractive to American companies for three reasons: first, until 1915 there was no tariff on film imports; second, Britain was America's biggest foreign market, with American films taking a 50 - 60% market share in the years immediately before 1914, and thirdly, the British shipping system was extremely extensive and "British business people had knowledge of international commerce and could cope with the different currencies, languages and other special problems involved."¹² For Thompson, the existence of this pre-war trading infrastructure enabled British distributors and renters to act:

as a the re-exporter for America and other foreign films, dispatching them to all parts of the globe...until the war intervened.

The consequences appear clear:

By down playing production in favour of distribution and exhibition, the British firms left the field open for foreign films; with so little screentime being devoted to native production, it became increasingly difficult to interest investors in making British films. (1985, pp.29-30)

The speed at which the American producers were able to dominate world markets outside Europe was undoubtedly influenced by the effects of the First World War which brought about "the breakdown of European production."¹³ Another important factor in this process was the ending of the re-exporting system based on London. Thompson takes issue with Low's explanation that this was caused by higher tariffs and attributes the turn-about largely to new commercial strategies being pursued by the "new independents" based on direct selling. International direct selling required global distribution networks, which is exactly what the major American producers undertook during the latter half of the 1910s.¹⁴

Towards the end of the war the American company Essanay started a process which ended with the complete destruction of the open distribution system in Britain. Using the market power of their Chaplin films, the company issued nothing but exclusive contracts to individual exhibitors. Over the next five years from 1916:

Britain went from being one of the most flexible open markets in the world to one of the most rigid closed ones. The system perpetuated the American firms' advantage, since it kept the theatres tied to their larger outputs, eliminating open play dates into which other countries' films might slip. (1985, p.83)

American firms' share of the domestic market rose from around 75% of new film output during the war years to close to 90% during the twenties. The British market was worth approximately

35% of all overseas revenue to American producers.¹⁵

In setting out to explain the hegemony of the Hollywood product in international markets, Krystin Thompson has concentrated upon the structure breaking and forming behaviour of a new breed of American film production companies. The historian of the British industry conversely needs to explain why British studios at first failed to match and subsequently challenge foreign film makers in the domestic market. Rachael Low in her monumental seven volume history of the British industry between 1896-1939,¹⁶ echoed many of the arguments put forward by Wiener in the previous section. Speaking generally of Britain she maintained that:

The bustling enterprise which had once led the world was also the first to become set in its ways. There was a strong class structure, in which those who succeeded in industry and trade tended to become traditionalists themselves, and adopt the ways of the upper classes. (1971, p.302)

Social prejudice worked against talented individuals entering the industry. Indeed, even as late as the late twenties:

....the social traditions which had by now relaxed sufficiently to accept certain leading members of the theatrical profession as respectable members of society stood fast when it came to the cinema, and many actors regarded their film work simply as an embarrassing necessity. (1971, p.302)

Low maintains that until the advent of the 1927 Act the British film industry was seriously under-funded. Writing about the period immediately before 1914 she observes:

If in conclusion some explanation of the disappointing state of the British film at this time should be attempted, it can be said that the central commercial defect seems to have been the insufficiency of capital. From this, it can be argued, stemmed the attendant defect in the artistic sphere of paucity of first-class talent, or original and creative vitality. One is left with the impression that in Britain the film had to overcome a resistance of a particularly inelastic social and intellectual pattern. In France and

Italy the film might be a younger sister of the arts, in America art itself. In England it was a poor relation, and, moreover, not a very respectable one. (1948b, p.137-8)

As for the effect of the First World War on the industry, she maintained:

In general the key people in British production were not affected by mobilisation. The greatest difficulty likely to be suffered by a luxury producing industry of this nature in time of war is a shortage of capital. But the shortage of capital for British film production, its fundamental weakness, dated from before the war. There is no reason whatever to suppose that, had there been no war, British production would have been able to withstand the irresistible growth of the American output. (1950, p.49)

Under-capitalisation resulted in small production companies, making films of little merit on parsimonious budgets:

....run by men of little imagination, who were reluctant to back anything unusual or unproved. (1971, p302)

Of these industry leaders she wrote scathingly:

All that we can say is that because of the poor quality of commercial leadership in the film industry at this time the surrender to mediocre professionalism was widespread, and many of those who were allowed play the largest part in making the British films of the day were hacks. (1971, p.309)

Charles Pathe had made a similar observation about the quality of British film industry entrepreneurs in an interview in Bioscope in 1914, quoted by Low:

I am afraid that the trouble is due to lack of enterprise. There is no continuity of effort among your producers. They work too hastily and in too small a way. (1950, p.64)

British film production companies made poor investment prospects:

The reluctance of banks to finance production, frequently deplored and contrasted with with the happy situation in America, was hardly unreasonable in view of the poor prospects of the investment. (1971, p.302)

Further, there appeared to be social prejudices against talented individuals entering the industry. Films were often made by "hacks" and production companies run by second rate businessmen who were unable to overcome either economic or non-economic constraints. Indeed, all the ingredients of the wider historiographical debate presented earlier are exemplified in Low's depiction of the British film industry before the Thirties, leading her to the sour conclusion:

The vicious circle of bad quality and lack of money resulting from the basic conditions of the country's climate, size and history made the British film industry less and less able to stand up to American competition. (1971, p.302)

The extent to which the industry was able to transform itself from this moribund state during the Thirties is the subject of this thesis. The configuration of the industry *circa* 1935 set out in Chapter 1 is testament to the power wielded by the five American and two British vertically integrated combines. The dramatic transformation of the British industry after the 1927 legislation is manifest in the scale of capital market resourcing, infrastructural investment and output at levels unknown in Britain to that date. Although on a smaller scale than that of the "major" Hollywood studios, Gaumont British and British International Pictures - later to become ABPC - adopted the mantle of twentieth century business organisations and sought to compete effectively with their Hollywood rivals - at least in the domestic market. What is interesting is that the basic "conditions" of climate, size and history referred to by Low cannot be said to have been substantially different during the two periods. This leaves us with the 1927 Act, and its effect

upon business perceptions of opportunities within the market for feature films in Britain.

The Stead versus Aldgate/Richards Debate.

During the early eighties a large amount of written work appeared on the subject of British cinema in the 1930s, culminating in the Richards (1984) and Low (1985) books. With the exceptions of Aldgate (1983) and Richards (1984, 1994), these contributions to scholarship portray British films as mostly second rate and, with the occasional exception, barely comparable to those emanating from Hollywood's studios. Low's (1971, 1985) assessment of the reasons for the retardation of the domestic industry has already been discussed at length above. However, it will be useful to conclude the Chapter with an account of a debate between this dominant viewpoint and an alternative perspective advanced separately by Aldgate and by Richards. To do this, Peter Stead's (1981, 1982) influential essays serve as a fresh statement of the orthodox position.

Stead's Account of the Failure of Film Making in Britain.

In his 1982 paper Stead maintains that the historian of the British cinema during the 1930s must face the question:

....why were there so few good British films.....? (Stead 1982, p.86)

His answer involves a grouping of cultural and commercial factors which, he claims, combined to prevent the emergence of a truly 'British cinema' together with the continual dominance of Hollywood films in the domestic market.

....for who could doubt that it was the Americans who made the best films. (Stead 1982, pp.81-82)

Stead's argument is worth repeating because of his powerful insight into British cultural life during the Thirties and its effect upon the idiosyncratic development of a national cinema. At the same time reservations need to be voiced concerning the absence of an empirical methodology to substantiate impressionistic claims concerning the performance and/ or merit of domestic production; this is something certainly not peculiar to Stead's work alone. To take a single example, Stead makes the statement:

British films were unpopular (with the notable exceptions of those made by the ex-music hall comedians) because they sounded so awful, a stilted language was spoken in 'posh' accents and that high pitched twang, which reproduced so badly, was interrupted only by the interventions of provincial caricatures in the form of servants and policemen. (Stead 1982, p.90)

Stead's argument may be presented as follows. The pace and scale of the diffusion of cinema-going during the twenties had by the early Thirties:

caught intellectuals, critics, politicians and social leaders napping. There was a distinct element of haste about their attempts to evaluate this social, technological and artistic revolution and their sociology and criticism were always to be well behind public taste. (Stead 1982, p.80)

The leaders of British culture - whether on the left or right - tended to view with great suspicion the predilection of the masses for entertainment films. The issue of social control was paramount. For those on the left, at least during the early Thirties, the success of the Hollywood product and its aping by British studios distracted British workers from the reality of social conditions and by implication, the political awareness necessary to cause social change. Right wing thinkers appeared more concerned about the growing American hegemony of British

popular culture and its threat to British institutions.¹⁷ Stead comments:

The response to film was an integral part of a very distinct chapter in that story of how British elites have reacted to popular developments in society in the era since the industrial revolution. (Stead 1982, p.84)

Stead rejects the left's conception of American Thirties' films. He maintains that it was the heightened sense of reality of the latter which made them both good films and popular with the masses. In contrast, the failure of domestic films to relate meaningfully to the everyday day experiences of domestic audiences relegated them to a secondary role in the entertainment of Britain at this time. He writes:

In American films they (British audiences) saw their own reality....Above all American films did not patronise in the same way as so many British films....The American cinema had created individual heroes and heroines whose point of view the audiences were asked to share or at least understand. (Stead 1982, p.93-94)

In contrast:

British films in the thirties did not come to terms with reality and largely responsible for that failure was the inability of film makers to realise that social reality can only be meaningfully interpreted through individual experiences.(Stead 1982, p.94)

Stead quotes with approval Raymond Durgnat's phrase:

...that American movies sometimes came nearer the actual attitudes of British audiences than most British ones. (Stead 1982, p.82)

By the end of the decade, critics on the left had come to recognise and applaud the social realism prevalent in many Hollywood social commentary films. However, these type of films were not being made in Britain. Rather, British studios, during what Stead somewhat disdainfully terms the 'Korda era', were attempting to replicate the technical qualities of American films

and dominant commercial (ie. star-making) and industrial strategies. The absence of a distinctive mode of film making led Stead to refer to the British industry as having a "colonial or Banana Republic infrastructure". He writes:

The British, of course, emulated Hollywood and went for opulence. But the emulation went much further than this and amounted to nothing short of an attempt to develop in a number of London suburbs replicas of what had become concentrated in one suburb of Los Angeles. The outcome really was the disappearance of anything that could be termed 'British cinema' and the rise of what Rotha called a scintillating galaxy of talent from Europe and Hollywood. (Stead 1982, p.87)

Why did Britain fail to create a truly 'national' cinema? Stead maintains that British films were produced in what he terms a "cultural vacuum". In particular, British directors appeared to be unable to transcend a cultural malaise in which suburban values dominated.

The sad truth would seem to be that commercial cinema in Britain never recruited individuals with the artistic confidence to stand up to the entrepreneurs and that the metropolitan and cosmopolitan film world with its emphasis on technical excellence and commercial success was allowed to smother genuine artistic freedom. (Stead 1982, p.88)

The barriers to artistic success were made even more daunting by structural features, including the dominant 'cultural' position and spatial proximity of London's West End legitimate theatres focal point - so different from the vast geographical separation of Hollywood from Broadway which poses a 'one-or-the-other career question to most American actors - and the system and process of censorship. Designed to eliminate controversy and criticism of British institutions, the system of censorship had a straight-jacket affect upon film scripts making it near to impossible to follow Hollywood's depiction of social reality. For Stead there was an absence of political will on the part of film makers and

their studios to challenge Establishment structures and practices.

Protest was what was needed and it would have taken a body of film makers closely connected to a deeply concerned political movement to change the ethics of the British film world. (Stead 1982, p.90)

To conclude, Stead is arguing that a lack of social reality in British films is a key point of difference from their American counterparts, and provides the chief explanation of the success of the latter and the relatively poor reception of the former. This failure on the part of domestic film makers needs to be seen within a wider cultural context in which what Stead terms the leaders of British culture were still coming to terms with the urbanisation of British society. Film makers (outside of the Documentary Movement) were not close to sources of critical and social thought and had no mission to change the world. The closeted world of the British film studios further removed them from social reality, where the combination of a cosmopolitan atmosphere coupled with suburban middle class values led to the production of safe films in which "people were far too neatly packaged". (Stead 1982, p.94)

Aldgate's Revisionism.

Most observers, historians and film historians alike, agree that if the 'institution of cinema' attracted a considerable following during the 1930s, it was hardly on account of any British films which might have been shown in that period. (Aldgate 1983, p.258-59)

Aldgate sets out to show that the argument that the popularity of cinema-going in Britain cannot be explained by the quality of domestic film production, coupled to the twin assumptions concerning the colonisation of the domestic market and the

constraining and debilitating influence of the censorship system, is in need of modification.

Whilst not wishing to play down the importance and popularity of American films with domestic audiences, Aldgate maintains:

Yet, the argument that American films were dominant is by no means as clear cut as all that. (Aldgate 1983, p.260-61)

As does Sedgwick (1994a), Aldgate treats the quantitative evidence and subsequent analysis presented by Rowson (1936) with the greatest respect.¹⁸ In particular, Aldgate suggests that the evidence that not only did British films exceed their quota distribution levels but that on average in 1934 a British film received 7,630 separate domestic screenings compared with 6,900 for foreign films - principally American in origin - indicates that accounts which consign domestic films to the artistic or popularity rubbish-bins need to be sceptically received.^{19,20} For Aldgate there is no question that a process which Jarvie (1992) has termed "pushing back"²¹ occurred during this period.

The undoubted popularity of American films, then, should not be allowed to blind one to the existence of an essentially British cinema.

Yet as he admits:

It is difficult to determine with confidence the relative 'popularity' of British and American films with British audiences of the day. This is a problematic area: the evidence is scanty and invites speculation and generalisation. (Aldgate 1983, p.263)

Conclusion

In this Chapter it is shown that the debate between film historians about the performance of the domestic film industry has strong parallels in the historiographical debate concerning

the relative failure of the British economy. There are a number of strands in the dominant 'failure' school with respect to the film industry. The Chapter contrasts Low's institutional and structural approach to, and Stead's cultural explanation for, poor quality domestic production, with Aldgate's revisionist arguments which are supported elsewhere by Richards (1984). The remainder of this work sets out to respond to Aldgate's legitimate anxiety concerning the absence of empirical information about the relative popularity of British films with domestic audiences. It is clear that a firmer framework for debate would exist if historians had, as a basis for discussion, a well-founded measure of what people actually went to see.

Notes

1. See McCloskey (1971, 1981) for accounts of the methodology and practice of the cliometric tradition.
2. Quoted in Sandberg (1981).
3. Coleman and Macleod make this point. After citing Shell, Courtaulds and ICI as counter examples, they argue that: "Numerous other instances could obviously be provided to demonstrate that some British businessmen adopted a more positive and welcoming attitude to new techniques than might be at first supposed." (1986, p.566)
4. The subjects of retardation include: the emergence of the M-Type organisation with its managerial hierarchies; management control of work methods and production standards; mass organisation of inputs, throughputs and distribution of outputs; systematic R&D; and vertical structures and trading networks.
5. See Thompson (1985), appendices 1,2,& 3 pp.194-230. The assessment is based upon new film output in what Thompson has termed the entertainment genres-comedies, dramas, melodramas etc.
6. *ibid.* p.127.
7. *ibid.* pp.1 & 19-20.
8. *ibid.* p.13.
9. *ibid.* pp.13-15.

10. *ibid.* p.20.
11. *ibid.* p.24.
12. *ibid.* p.2
13. *ibid.* p.49.
14. *ibid.* pp.71-73.
15. *ibid.* p.83.
16. Nine volumes if the two volumes on non-feature film production in Britain during the Thirties are included.
17. Jarvie (1992) makes the following general argument in support of this distinction between 'high' and 'popular' culture.

Mass culture, unlike traditional or high culture, was not the unique product of artisans or of a cottage industry; its items were produced on a large scale, part of a consumption-orientated economic system driven to expand its markets and its controls over markets, regardless of national boundaries. Mass culture did not claim to offer disembodied and timeless aesthetic experience but rather delivered concrete pleasure to suit the quotidian life and fantasies of ordinary people. Such materials responded to, and reflected, the expectations of their audiences. Thus mass cultural commodities contained popular self-representation of the originating society. (Jarvie 1992, pp.1-2)
18. Aldgate (1983, pp.261-63); Sedgwick (1994a, pp.15-16).
19. Rowson (1936, p.107); Sedgwick (1994a, p.18)
20. Rowson *op.cit.*, pp.113-15; *Minutes of Evidence* (1936, p.9)
- 21 Jarvie *op.cit.*, p.8.

Chapter 3

THE 1927 CINEMATOGRAPH ACT AND ITS IMMEDIATE EFFECT ON THE BRITISH FILM INDUSTRY

Introduction

The events leading up to the 1927 Cinematograph Films Act have been extensively chronicled by Low (1971) and Dickinson and Street (1985). Both accounts suggest that the introduction of protection during a period in which Free Trade was still predominant was the consequence of two factors: a) the very low market shares achieved by British films in domestic and foreign markets alike; and b) the perception in Government circles that film was an important means of conveying a favourable national image. It was widely believed that the world-wide success of American films worked against British commercial interests in world markets. Dickinson and Street (1985) maintain:

The films legislation was clearly conceived of in the framework of commercial policy....Cultural arguments were therefore invoked to justify the quota....Yet the criteria chosen for determining whether a film was 'British' had relatively little to do with cultural characteristics: the main factor was the proportion of labour costs paid to British nationals. (1985, p.2)

And again,

The Board of Trade's perspective was that legislation for the film industry, despite all of the rhetoric to the contrary, was primarily a commercial matter. (1985, p.20)

The main conditions of the Act were as follows:

- i) exhibitors in the year commencing 1 October 1928 were to show "at least" 5% British films - both short and long - rising to 20% by the year 1935-36;
- ii) renters in the year commencing 1 April 1928 were to distribute "at least" 7.5% British films, rising to 20% by the year 1935-36;
- iii) a British film was defined as one produced by a British subject and made by a British production company -

itself defined as one in which the majority of directors had to be British. The film, further, had to be shot in a studio located within the British Empire and 75% of its labour costs - excluding copyright costs and the salary of one actor/actress, or director - had to be paid to British subjects, or persons living in the Empire;

iv) The Act was to remain in force for ten years. It was to be administered and policed by the Board of Trade who were responsible for keeping a register of all films that were to be commercially distributed and exhibited. The operation of the Act was to be overseen by an Advisory Committee consisting of eight members of the trade and five independent observers, one of whom was to be chair.

Neither Dickinson and Street nor Low thought that the Act properly served the interests of the British film industry. For the former:

Although the Films Act was formulated in a context of heightened official awareness and concern about the propaganda of film and its general importance in national life, the mechanism adopted to combat the 'Hollywood invasion' was not really appropriate as a means of establishing a flourishing British film industry which would be independent of American economic and cultural influence. (1985, p.33)

Low, as we have seen, is even more damning, claiming the Act had "a disastrous effect on production as a whole, whilst failing to stop block booking." (Low 1985, p.33) She maintains - a view which is supported by both Rowson (1936) and the Moyne Report (1936) - that in response to a legal obligation to handle a minimum quota of British films, the major American renters in conforming to the letter of the law:

...were making, sponsoring or acquiring an entirely new type of film made solely for quota, as cheaply and quickly as possible. (1985, p.34)

However, both histories acknowledge that the legislation had a major impact on industry structure and configuration. Whilst being careful not to contradict her aforementioned case

concerning the quality of domestic production, Low does admit that:

Certainly the quota did make room on the screens for British films of a sort, and thus did bring capital into the production industry, both directly and also indirectly by stimulating the vertical combination which organised organised distribution outlets. (1971, pp.105-6)

Dickinson and Street take this idea one step further by maintaining that:

The optimism created by the prospect of quota legislation accelerated the trend towards vertical integration. (1985, p.34)

In the remainder of this chapter the argument advanced is that the 1927 legislation not only stimulated the formation of the production side of the domestic industry, but did (contrary to the negative impressionistic analysis of Low and Dickinson and Street) enhance the production of 'quality' British films to levels which could not reasonably have been expected had the legislation not been enacted. By the mid-1930s domestic production took place on an industrial scale for the first time. It made possible, through the deliberate policy of guaranteeing a domestic outlet for British films, a set of external economies which Alfred Marshall maintained were of critical importance in the establishment of industrial production.¹ Initially these economies were manifest in the greater readiness of film production companies to acquire finance to develop a production capacity, coupled with a greater readiness for institutions and individuals to finance this development. The rapid formation of the two vertically integrated combines of Gaumont British and British International Pictures, can be traced directly to the changed commercial atmosphere brought about by the Act. Whilst

the Act may have encouraged the mushrooming of small production companies most of which, as we shall see, produced one or two films only, it also provided, through protection, an incentive for the larger groupings of capital to make films at the quality end of the market. The reason for this has already been outlined in the introduction: although distributors and exhibitors were compelled to take a proportion of 'British' made films, the choice of film was not actually prescribed. Accordingly, it was in the exhibitor's box-office interests to show films which were attractive to their potential customers. If British films had to be taken, it was likely to be advantageous to the exhibitor to include them in cinema programmes which competed effectively against rival cinema screenings.

In taking this story forward to the post-silent period of the industry, a number of important indicators will be highlighted and analysed. By employing the rather simple device of counting output, it is possible to gauge the growth in production studio activity and obtain an output measure of market share. Doing this for the period 1927-32 yields an unmistakable upward trend. Yet, if film output is the object of film production activity, industrial structure and configuration is the consequence of the interactive set of decisions taken by business organisations engaged in one or more of the functional branches of industry - production, distribution and exhibition. The flow of capital into the industry, the formation of new companies, the rate of liquidation/ bankruptcy, the growth of exhibition circuits all yield important information about the dominant competitive practices and subsequent shape and direction of the industry.

The analysis below concentrates on qualitative and quantitative assessments of film production expansion, before briefly describing changes to industrial structure.

Domestic Film Production Levels 1927-32.

In the six year period 1927-32, domestic production of 'long' films - generally known as feature films - grew from 13 to 153 per annum. Table 3.1 charts this development. It is possible to detect two distinct phases of expansion: an almost seven-fold increase in the number of films marketed in 1928 compared to the 1927 baseline figure, and a steady rise from 1929 onwards.

A somewhat modified picture emerges if a distinction is made between short 'long' and long 'long' films: films whose length fell within the range given by the minimum 3,000 feet laid down by the Act and 6,000 feet, and those whose length was greater than 6,000 feet.² The purpose of this exercise is to conjecture that films of less than 6000 feet - with a running time of less than 66.67 minutes - were unlikely to form the main attraction of a cinema programme. This is not to suppose that length is a necessary condition for such billing status, but rather, that it is a likely manifestation, and may be a useful first step in identifying those films tainted with the appellation 'quota quickie'.

As can be seen in Table 3.1, the growth in films with a running time of more than 66.67 minutes is somewhat less than for all films: an expansion from 13 to 96 over the period. It is clear that the proportion of films in this category declines markedly

Table 3.1: British Film Output Statistics, 1927-32^a

	1927	1928	1929	1930	1931	1932	Total
1. Films > 33 mins. ^b	13	89	83	121	136	153	595
2. Films > 66 mins. ^c	13	80	65	74	84	96	412
3. Row 2 as % Row 1	100	90	78	61	62	63	
4. No.Silent Films. ^d	12	87	50	25	2	0	176
5. Row 4.with sound added.	1	2	21	12	1	3	40
6. Total Silent Made Films	13	89	71	37	3	3	216
7. Sil.as % of All Films	100	100	86	31	2	2	
8. Ave.running time of Sil.	83	80	75	66	54	65	
9. No.Sound Films. ^e	0	0	12	84	133	150	379
10. Snd.as % of All Films.	0	0	14	69	98	98	
11. Ave running time of Snd.	0	0	73	74	68	68	

Sources:

Board of Trade Journals (1928-32), Kine Year Books (1927-33), Gifford (1973), Low (1971,1985), Wood (1986).

Notes:

a. Output consists of those films registered with the Board of Trade on 1.4.28. and thereafter, or trade shown prior to the 1927 legislation coming into effect. Following Gifford's convention, Films made in the Empire, such as India and Australian films have been excluded whilst joint ventures with French and German companies, which break the Quota rules, have been included. See Appendix 3.1 for a complete listing of film numbers by production company.

b. A running time of 33.33 minutes is the equivalent of a film with a length of 3000 feet.

c. A running time of 66.67 minutes is the equivalent of a film with a length of 6000 feet.

d. Where the silent footage differs from that of the length after sound was added, the former is used.

e. This includes all films made as talkies, irrespective of whether silent versions were distributed to cinemas not wired for sound.

during the period, reflecting both a downward trend in the length of films, accentuated by the typically shorter running times of 'talkies' and the number of films marketed by new small scale production companies. Nevertheless, given an unchanging cinema programme length of approximately 150 minutes, there is a clear growth in the number of films with the potential for occupying prime billing status in cinema programmes. There was also a clear growth in the number of shorter 'long' films, constituting approximately 40% of domestic output over the years 1931-32.

The growth in sound film production is no less dramatic. Of course the success of American 'talkies' was evident. By 1929 all major US productions shown in Britain were sound films.

Accordingly, the main London and provincial cinemas were wired. It follows that if British producers wished to exhibit films in major domestic cinemas they would need to produce sound films. Further, the risk of doing so was far less than it had been for the American 'majors' at the innovatory stage of sound films (1926-28) in the United States, given the dominance which sound films had achieved by 1929 in the American market.³ Conversely, the risk of not adopting the new commodity form by 1929 was considerable. Table 3.1 shows that the initial expansion in film production was rooted in the silent cinema. However, from a peak of 87 silent films marketed during 1928 - of which 80 had running lengths in excess of 66 minutes - silent production had fallen to two by 1931 and zero the following year. The strong growth in film output from 1929 coincides with the rapid diffusion of 'talkies' as a commodity.

Domestic Film Production by Production Company.

A fuller picture of the nature of the expansion of domestic film production can be obtained through an analysis of the output records of British production companies. Table 3.2 charts the output levels of the principal domestic producers. Perhaps the two most dramatic observations are: a) the extent to which British International Pictures (BIP) dominated domestic production during the period and b) the very large number of domestic producers who produced less than 10 films over the period. Producing out of their own studios at Elstree, BIP established themselves by the end of the 1920s as the leading domestic production company. The growth in output to around 30 feature length films per annum was founded upon an optimistic

Table 3.2: British Studio Output Statistics, 1927-32

Film Company	1927	1928	1929	1930	1931	1932	Total	MShare ^a (%)
British International	0	14	16	31	28	28	117	19.66
Gainsborough ^b	4	6	6	7	18	7	48	8.07
British and Dominion	0	2	6	6	8	13	35	5.88
Gaumont British	2	12	2	5	6	4	31	5.21
British Instructional	1	4	7	4	2	5	23	3.87
Twickenham	0	0	0	4	8	8	20	3.36
British Lion ^c	0	3	2	5	2	4	16	2.69
Warners British	0	0	0	1	0	13	14	2.35
Assoc. Talking Pictures	0	0	0	2	4	6	12	2.02
Nettlefold (Archibald)	0	6	2	3	1	0	12	2.02
Real Art	0	0	0	0	2	9	11	1.85
Remaining 116 Studios	6	42	42	53	57	56	256	43.03
Total	13	89	83	121	136	153	595	100.00

Sources: Board of Trade Journals (1928-32), Kine Year Books 1927-33, Gifford (1986), Low (1971, 1985), Wood (1986).

Notes:

a. Market share is based on domestic production levels only. For a complete picture of domestic production see Appendix 3.1.

b. Includes three Gainsborough/British Lion productions registered in 1929, a Gainsborough/Felner&Somlo (German) production registered in 1929, a Gainsborough/Greenbaum (German) production registered in 1930, a Gainsborough/Piccadilly production registered in 1927, and a Gainsborough/Tiffany (USA) production registered in 1930.

c. Includes two British Lion/Gainsborough productions registered in 1932.

reading of both domestic and international prospects for its films. With the exception of 10 films marketed between November 1929 and April 1931, BIP, along with the Gaumont British and Gainsborough studios, was the only major domestic production company not to produce films for American distributors in search of domestic product to meet quota obligations. The emergence and growth of a new domestic sector of film production, where films were distributed by domestic renters for British audiences, can be traced to the changing circumstance brought about by the 1927 legislation.

The very low levels of film output achieved by the majority of

domestic companies yield a highly skewed frequency distribution of production activity, resulting in the mode and median number of films per production company being equal to one (Table 3.3). Again, as with the major domestic producers, the emergence of this quasi workshop sector of industrial production can be accounted for by the changed commercial environment brought about by the Films Act. The perception of a guaranteed market for domestic films encouraged small-scale entrepreneurial activity in the film production sector. There appears to have been no shortage of funds available for large and small scale ventures alike. Yet many of these newly formed production companies may have functioned on opportunistic short run objectives. This view is supported by the high bankruptcy rates. As a consequence many of the new investors in the industry made capital losses.

Table 3.3 Frequency Distribution of Domestic Producers' Output, 1927-32

Class No.of Films	No.of Production Companies
1	64
2	19
3	13
4	7
5	3
6-10	10
11-20	6
21-30	1
31-40	2
41-50	1
51-120	1
Total	127

Sources: Board of Trade Journals (1928-32), Kine Year Books (1927-33), Gifford (1973), Low (1971,1985), Wood (1986).

Of the 127 companies which produced at least one film for the domestic market between 1927-32, 116 of them made less than 10 films, which nevertheless constituted 43% of domestic production (256 films). Of these titles, 113 were distributed by the major American distributors⁴ and the remaining 143 by domestic renters. These 256 films will serve as a first indicator of the volume of quota production.

Whilst admittedly 'rule of thumb', this estimate of 'quota' production avoids the need for a definition requiring non-existent budgetary information: for instance the commonly used bench mark of £1 per foot. Rather 'quota' production can be considered as a quantity of film outputs which served one of two not necessarily exclusive objectives: films which enabled American renters to meet their quota obligations and films which, owing to the commercial bias given to domestic production through the 1927 Cinematograph Act, might earn an economic rent from a small capital outlay. The implicit counterfactual argument is thus: these films would not have been made had the Films Act not been enacted.

This conjecture concerning the number of 'quota' productions is supported by the records set out in Table 3.4 below of the 16 most active distributors: each of which, with the exception of Universal⁵, distributed more than 10 films during the 1927-32 period. Between them they handled 502 of the 595 marketed films. By again using the distinction drawn in Table 3.2 between those 11 production companies, each of which made over 10 films during these years and the remaining 116 companies, it is possible to obtain a profile showing which distributors handled the outputs

Table 3.4: Distribution Records of the Major Domestic Film Distributors, 1927-32

Distribution Companies (1)	Films (2)	Own Films (3)	Col3/ Col2 (4)	Big 11 Prods. ^a (5)	Small 116 Prods. ^b (6)	Col5/ Col6 (7)
British Lion	11	8	0.73	8	3	2.67
Butcher's	22	4	0.18	11	11	1.00
First National	24	7	0.29	16	8	2.00
Fox	33	1	0.03	7	26	0.30
Gaumont British	40	32	0.80	32	8	4.00
Ideal	36	0	0.00	27	9	3.00
GM/JMG	24	0	0.00	8	16	0.50
Paramount ^c	37	9	0.26	5	32	0.17
Pathe	15	0	0.00	12	3	4.00
PDC	21	8	0.38	5	16	0.31
Radio	13	0	0.00	13	0	0.00
UA	17	0	0.00	1	16	0.06
Universal	7	0	0.00	0	7	0.00
Wardour	106	96	0.91	102	4	5.50
WB	23	7	0.30	15	8	1.88
W&F	73	1	0.01	65	8	8.13
Total	502			327 ^d	175	

Sources: Board of Trade Journals (1928-32), Kine Year Books (1927-33), Gifford (1986), Low (1971,1985), Wood (1986).

Notes:

a. Big 11 refers to the 11 domestic production companies listed in Table 3.2

b. Small 116 refers to the 116 domestic production companies referred to in Table 3.2 and listed in Appendix 3.1.

c. Paramount is credited with two films distributed by Famous Lasky in 1927-28.

d. Twelve of these films were not distributed by the distributors listed in the first column.

of the smaller, and often short-lived, domestic production ventures.

The major 16 distributors marketed 327 of the 339 films (97%) made by the 11 principal domestic companies, but only 175 of the 256 films (68%) from the smaller producers. The latter proportion falls to 22% if we deduct those 113 films produced by the 116 smaller producers but handled by the major American renting houses. Clearly the American distributors were a major source of business for the myriad of small domestic film production companies, while the major domestic renting houses, by and large, distributed the films of the major British production companies.

Table 3.5: Distribution Arrangements of the Leading 11 Domestic Producers

Producers	Domestic Distributors									
	Wardour	Ideal	Gau- mont	W&F	Butch- er's	Pathe	PDC	BL	Others	Total
ATP				1			2			3
BIF	6			1		1	1		9	18
BIP	96					11				107
BL		4		1			1	8		14
B&D		1		29						30
Gainsborough		20	3	24					1	48
Gaumont Br.		1	29	1						31
Nettlefold					11					11
Twickenham		1		8			1		2	12
Total ^a	102	27	32	65	11	12	5	8	12	274

	American Distributors								
	FOX	MGM	RADIO	PAR	UA	UNIV	WB-FN	OTHERS	TOTAL
ATP			9						9
BIF	3	2							5
BIP		1		1			8		10
BL		1					1		2
B&D		1		4					5
Real Art	4	3	3				1		11
Nettlefold					1				1
Twickenham			1				7		8
WBBR							14		14
Total	7	8	13	5	1	0	31	0	65

Sources: Board of Trade Journals (1928-32), Kine Year Books (1927-33), Gifford (1986), Low (1971, 1985), Wood (1986).

Notes:

a. The Distributor's totals do not necessarily sum to Column 2 of Table 3.4 but will correspond to Column 5 of that table.

This conclusion is reinforced by the information contained in Table 3.5., which, if taken in conjunction with the information presented in Tables 3.2 and 3.4, demonstrates that 274 of the 339⁶ domestic films (81%) produced by the 11 most active production firms were distributed by domestic renters and only 65 films (19%) by their American counterparts. The large domestic renters and exhibitors handled British-made films not because

they had to but because they wanted to⁷. Otherwise there is no sensible explanation for these large numbers.

The Principal American Distributors 1927-32 and their response to the obligations of the 1927 Cinematograph Films Act.

Fox

Fox established its own domestic production company Fox-British in 1932 and distributed its first film **After Dark** towards the end of that year. Prior to that, with the exception of Real Art and British Instructional (3 films), the remaining 25 films distributed were made by the quasi-workshop sector, such as Film Engineering, for whom Michael Powell directed five films between 1931-32.⁸

MGM

The British rental arm of this organisation was known as Jury Metro Goldwyn (JMG) until 1930. Apart from 3 films made by Real Art and one by BIP, MGM took films from the quasi-workshop sector of domestic film production.

Paramount

Paramount British was established in 1931, but unlike its counterpart at Warners, it rented studios from British and Dominion at Elstree. The rental company took 9 films from its domestic production arm between 1931-32 and contracted 4 films out to British and Dominion. The remaining 24 films were made by quasi-workshop sector.

RKO

Radio, the distribution wing of RKO, took films from three

sources during the years 1930-32: Real Art(3 films), ATP(9 films) and Twickenham (1 film), all of which feature in the tail of the largest 11 film production companies.

United Artists

Prior to its contract with London Film Productions and British and Dominions in 1933, United Artists appear to have pursued a very down-market strategy with respect to domestic producers. Only one of the films handled -**Two-Way Street** (Nettlefold) - was made by one of the larger production organisations.

Universal

A similar story can be told about Universal. All but one of the seven products handled by its distribution wing were made by small-scale domestic companies. The exception, **Loves of Ariane**, was a Franco-German production made in Paris, which Gifford has listed as British because there was an English language version and sufficient British personnel involved in its production.

Warners

Warners opened the re-equipped Teddington studios in July 1931 and immediately began a production schedule which supplied the distribution wing of the domestic company with 14 films by the end of 1932. The merger of Warners with First National in the United States led to both companies sharing the same London offices from October 1931, but maintaining their separate trading identities. Prior to that Warners took seven Twickenham films whilst First National distributed eight BIP pictures.

Comparison between Domestic and Foreign - principally Hollywood - production activity.

The total number of feature length films registered with the Board of Trade between 1928 and 1932 varied annually between 608 and 696. As can be seen from Table 3.6 the rising number of domestic productions, given the commencement of the Exhibitors'

Table 3.6: Comparison of the Numbers of British and Foreign Films Registered in Britain, 1928-32^a

	Quota % ^b	British Films ^c	Major Hollywood Studios ^d	French & German ^e Films	Total Films	Col(2) as % Col(5) (6)	Col(3) as % Col(5) (7)
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)		
1928	7.5	89	285	83	696	12.8	40.9
1929	10.0	83	221	68	608	13.7	36.3
1930	10.0	121	342	48	696	17.4	49.1
1931	12.5	136	335	26	647	21.0	51.8
1932	15.0	153	305	18	615	24.9	49.6

Sources: Board of Trade Register of Films, Kine Year Books 1928-33, Kine Weekly 1928-32, Woods(1985).

Notes:

a. As explained in fn.1 of Table 3.1, British films exclude films made in the British Empire and Dominions and include joint productions, mostly with French and German companies. This likewise affects the number of films counted under the foreign label.

b. The Renter's Quota has been used. Because this ran from 1 April to 31 March of each year, the above year on year presentation - 1 January to 31 December - of information therefore slightly over estimates the volume of domestic output required to satisfy Quota requirements. Furthermore, the above presentation differs from that specified by the legislation in that the Renters' and Exhibitors' Quotas were measured in feet and foot-screenings respectively rather than film outputs, presumably to forestall the possibility of cynical renters contracting for just the requisite number of 3,000 feet length films.

c. See Table 3.1

d. Listed as Columbia, First National, Fox, MGM, Paramount Famous Lasky, (known as Paramount from 1930), RKO, Universal, and Warner Brothers. See Table 3.7 for details.

e. German speaking films would include films made in Austria. Overall 50 French and 193 German films were registered with the Board of Trade.

Quota in October 1928, implies that domestic producers were increasing their share of the British market: from roughly one eighth in 1928 to a quarter by 1932. What is more, the Quota levels laid down by the 1927 Act were consistently exceeded by a significant margin. However, it is interesting to note that the

72% growth in domestic film output during the period was not at the expense of the principal Hollywood studios, whose share of the domestic market, measured by the crude indicator of film output, increased from approximately 40-50%. Consequently, the revival, if not birth, of a British Film Industry structured on industrial lines coincided with the increased concentration of market power in the hands of a small number of American renters. The principal casualty was the market for French and German film productions - particularly with the onset of sound - and those of the smaller independent American companies distributed by British renters.

Table 3.7: Film Output of the Major Seven Hollywood Studios Marketed in Britain, 1928-32

Film Company	1928	1929	1930	1931	1932
Columbia	21	16	27	44	45
FNP	29	42	44	47	42
Fox	46	38	45	47	42
MGM	38	31	67	43	39
PFL/Paramount ^a	70	40	48	72	57
RKO	-	4	39	44	36
Universal	57	27	33	27	31
WB	24	23	39	28	30
Total	285	221	342	335	305
BIP	14	16	31	28	28

Sources: Board of Trade Register of Films, Kine Year Books 1928-33, Kine Weekly 1928-32, Woods(1985)

Note:

a. The split between Paramount Famous Lasky and Paramount during 1930 was 25 and 23 respectively. Before 1930 all films were marketed under the former.

Table 3.7 supports this point by demonstrating that by far the largest domestic producer of films during the period - BIP - produced, in aggregate, fewer films than any of the major Hollywood studios: although its output levels were comparable

with those of Universal for the years 1931-32. As argued above, while by 1932 the production side of the domestic film industry had been transformed from its pre-Films Act state, it would appear that the hold of the principal American renters on domestic exhibition was even greater than before.

Qualitative Assessment of Domestic Film Production

The foregoing argument concerning the growth and viability of British film production has been conducted with reference to simple quantitative data: how many domestic films were made, who made them, and who distributed them? The logic of the argument developed rests on the assumption that film distribution companies rented, and cinemas exhibited, films on the basis of anticipated demand, based upon past evidence of effective demand. The effect of the 1927 legislation may have been to introduce a distortion into the market, so that rental companies and exhibitors felt compelled to take particular films in order to comply with the legislation rather than upon their assessment of how these films might fit into a prevailing business strategy. This is the argument of Low et al. The evidence presented above suggests that such practices were prevalent amongst the American distributors, but not the four principal British distributors - Wardour, Ideal, W&F and Gaumont British who distributed the films of the four leading domestic production companies - BIP, Gaumont British, Gainsborough and British and Dominion⁹. The information presented in Tables 3.1 - 3.5 suggests that British distributors chose to handle British films in preference to those foreign films - primarily from minor American studios such as Chesterfield, Monogram, Tower, Golden Arrow etc. - not

distributed by the principal U.S. rental companies. And as suggested above, the growth in the quality end of domestic production can be attributed in part to the changing risk environment brought about by the Cinematograph Act, which guaranteed an expanding presence for domestic films in the domestic market for a 10 year period.

This argument can be supported by qualitative evidence derived from the contemporary reception of films. Although film reviewing became established in the 'quality' papers and 'weeklies' during the 1930s¹⁰, the principal source of information used here is derived from the exhibitors' trade papers and in particular, the Kine Weekly. Both the Cinema Exhibitors' Association Review and the Kine Weekly summarised their reviews in terms of an assessment of box-office potential. This methodology was adopted by Rowson (1936, p.111) to establish "the relative values of the British and foreign pictures respectively offered by the various companies." As he states:

Advantage has been taken of the "markings" published by the Cinematograph Exhibitors Association each week, by means of which exhibitors are advised of the relative merits of the pictures which have been tradesown in the previous week. (1936, p.112)

The Cinematograph Exhibitors' Association (CEA) marked in quarter marks out of a maximum of 10, although almost all of the marks fell into the range 7 - 9. In comparing review scores with the text of the review the following pattern emerges:¹¹

CEA Score	Summary of Review Text
7.0	"Indifferent Entertainment".
7.25	"For unsophisticated audiences". "Mild second feature entertainment".
7.5	"Very moderate light entertainment".

	"Ordinary".
7.75	"Average second feature for the masses". "Moderate entertainment for the masses".
8.0	"Good safe booking for most halls". "Good entertainment for industrial districts".
8.25	"Good entertainment with special appeal to..".
9.0	"Excellent entertainment for all classes".

The details of text and scores listed above provide clear benchmarks for the qualitative assessment of films, particularly with respect to their likely box-office performance. Rowson (1936) used this assessment system to analyse the full set of films marketed during 1934¹². It is particularly useful in distinguishing between "poor", "average", "good" and "excellent" box-office propositions.

The Kine Weekly adopted a more-or-less identical system of film review. Each film trade-shown in London during the previous week was reviewed under a number of categories. A summary of each review was charted under the heading "Box-Office Angle". Although the Kine Weekly did not use a system of assessment scores, the summary review consistently took a form which mirrored that found in the CEA Review, and provides a basis for converting the content of the Kine Weekly Reviews into the numerical classification used by the CEA reviewers.

Of the 595 domestic films registered with the Board of Trade between 1 April 1928 - or obtaining a general release during the previous 14 months - and 31 December 1932, it has been possible

to locate 567 film reviews in the Kine Weekly¹³. The arithmetic mean score is 7.84 and the frequency distribution is presented in Table 3.8 below. Although a rough and ready guide to a qualitative assessment of domestic production, the Kine Weekly summaries rated 239 films or 42.1% as good or better, whilst only 127 (22.4%) fell into the bottom two categories and would have included the bulk of the "Quota Quickies." This leads to a quite different evaluation of the consequences of the 1927 legislation from that developed by Low and set out earlier in the Chapter. As

Table 3.8 Frequency Distribution of the Box-Office Potential of British Films, 1927-32

Box-Office Potential	Box-Office Score	Number of Films
Excellent	9 and over	46
Very Good	8.5 & 8.75	73
Good	8.0 & 8.25	120
Average to Fair	7.5 & 7.75	229
Mediocre to Moderate	7.0 & 7.25	93
Very Poor	less than 7.0	6
		<hr/> 567

Source: Kine-Weekly 1927-32

we have seen, there was a radical increase in the number of British films made during the period, which, if the information in Table 3.8 is sound, was matched by the volume of quality productions. The most revealing statistic about the developing British Film Industry during these years is the large number of its films that the professional reviewers of the cinema owners' trade journal believed would draw audiences.

Table 3.9 charts these qualitative developments on an annual basis. In volume terms there appears to be a clear upward trend

Table 3.9: The Qualitative Development of British Films 1927-32.

Box-Office Score	1927-8	1929	1930	1931	1932
8 or More	40	31	42	53	73
(% of Annual Total)	(41)	(40)	(39)	(41)	(48)
7.5 - 7.75	44	28	37	59	61
(% of Annual Total)	(45)	(36)	(34)	(45)	(40)
Less than 7.5	13	19	30	18	19
(% of Annual Total)	(13)	(24)	(28)	(14)	(12)
Total	97	78	109	130	153
Films not found	5	5	12	6	0
Total as Table 3.1	102	83	121	136	153

Source: Kine Weekly 1927-32

in the production of films expected to perform successfully, whilst the number of films in the bottom category remains more-or-less unchanged, forming a declining proportion of the whole.

An analysis of quality by production studio is the subject of Table 3.10. Here, it is evident that the major domestic studios made the most marketable films, both in absolute and proportional terms, with British International and British and Dominion producing very high proportions of high box-office-rated films. By 1932 the major four British film studios had become serious players in the domestic market for feature films.

Equally as interesting is to apply the same qualitative investigation to the distribution companies. It will be recalled from the analysis based on Table 3.5 that, for the most part, the major American distributors handled the films of small domestic producers for Quota purposes only. Accordingly, we would expect the qualitative rating of British films distributed

Table 3.10: A Qualitative Evaluation of British Studio Output, 1927-32.

Film Company	Films	Mean Box-Of Score ^a	Films (%) ≥8.0	Films (%) ≥8.5	Films (%) ≥9.0
BIP	117	8.1	72 (62)	37 (32)	19 (16)
Gainsborough	48	7.9	26 (54)	18 (38)	6 (13)
B&D	35	8.3	25 (71)	17 (49)	7 (20)
Gaumont British	31	8.0	16 (51)	8 (26)	3 (10)
Br.Instr.	23	7.9	8 (35)	5 (22)	4 (17)
Twickenham	20	8.0	12 (60)	5 (25)	2 (10)
British Lion	16	7.6	5 (31)	2 (13)	2 (13)
Warners British	14	7.6	2 (14)	0 (0)	0 (0)
ATP	12	8.0	7 (58)	3 (25)	1 (8)
Nettlefold	12	7.8	4 (33)	1 (8)	0 (0)
Real Art	11	7.7	2 (18)	1 (9)	0 (0)
Remaining 116 Studios	256				

Source: Kine Weekly 1927-32.

Notes:

a. The arithmetic mean does not include those films not found and thus box-office score given.

by the principal domestic renters to be significantly greater than that of the American renters. Table 3.11 shows this to be the case, with both Wardour and W&F in particular handling high proportions of highly rated British films.

Qualitative Analysis of Foreign Films Marketed in Britain.

3,260 foreign feature films were registered with the Board of Trade during the 1928-32 period, most of which were American. From a random sample of 449 (13.7%) of these films, it would appear that 87.5% of foreign films were American in origin, with approximately 6.7% emanating from Germany and half that proportion from France. Adopting the same qualitative test as previously applied to British films, Tables 3.12 and 3.13 detail sample mean Box-Office scores for films classified by country of

Table 3.11: A Qualitative Evaluation of the British Films handled by Distribution Companies, 1927-32

Distributor.	Films	Mean Box-Off Score ^a	Films (%) ≥8.0	Films (%) ≥8.5	Films (%) ≥9.0
British Lion	11	7.6	4 (36)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Butcher	22	7.8	7 (32)	2 (9)	0 (0)
FNP	24	7.8	8 (33)	4 (17)	1 (4)
Fox	33	7.6	4 (12)	1 (3)	1 (3)
Gaumont British	39	7.9	18 (46)	7 (18)	2 (5)
Ideal	36	7.9	17 (47)	10 (28)	3 (8)
MGM	24	7.4	4 (17)	1 (4)	0 (0)
Paramount	37	7.5	9 (24)	3 (8)	0 (0)
Pathe	15	7.7	5 (33)	1 (7)	1 (7)
PDC	20	7.5	5 (25)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Radio	13	7.9	5 (38)	3 (23)	1 (8)
United Artists	17	7.5	3 (18)	0 (0)	0 (0)
Wardour	106	8.1	67 (63)	36 (34)	19 (18)
WB	12	7.5	5 (41)	3 (25)	1 (8)
W&F	73	8.2	49 (67)	32 (48)	14 (21)
Total	482				

Source: Kine Weekly 1927-32.

Note:

a. The derivation of the arithmetic mean is explained in footnote a Table 3.10.

origin and U.S. studios respectively. From Table 3.9, approximately 40% of Domestic production was marked as being of a "good" standard or better. However, this indicator should be assessed alongside the 53% of American films similarly rated. An interesting element in Table 3.13 is the qualitative marking of German films with seven of the 13 in the sample being reviewed as either very good or excellent. Of these **Atlantide** (Nero), **Immortal Vagabond** (UFA), **Love Waltz** (UFA), and **War is Hell** (Resco), were talkies.

The superior reception of American films is explained by the quality and ubiquity of feature films from the principal Hollywood studios. Table 3.13 dramatically indicates the

Table 3.12: A Qualitative Evaluation of Foreign Films Marketed in Britain, 1927-32, based upon a 14% Random Sample of Films Registered with the Board of Trade^a

Nationality	Sample No. of Films	Mean Box-Of Score ^b	Films (%) ≥8.0	Films (%) ≥8.5	Films (%) ≥9.0
USA	393	8.0	207 (53)	105 (27)	42 (11)
Germany	30	8.0	13 (43)	7 (23)	4 (13)
France	15	7.4	2 (13)	0 (0)	0 (0)
USSR	3				
Sweden	3				
Australia	2				
Italy	2				
India	1				
Total	449				

Source: Kine Weekly 1927-32.

Note:

a. Figures in parenthesis are sample sizes.

b. The mean Box-Office score was calculated as a sample mean.

qualitative differences between the films of these major Hollywood studios and those of the smaller-scale production companies.

The sample data convincingly place the quality of MGM output significantly ahead of its rivals, with 87% of its output being classified as "good" or better. All but Universal achieved 60% ratings under this heading. Clearly the median MGM film rating was "very good" with almost 40% of MGM films being marked as "outstanding" box-office prospects. Paramount's results closely match those of the best performing domestic company - B&D - with respect to quality ratings, with just under half its films being assessed in the "very good" class¹⁵. The contrast with the small American studios which made 122 (31%) of the sample population films is very marked. Studios such as Tower, Chesterfield, Tiffany collectively produced box-office

Table 3.13: A Qualitative Evaluation of Foreign Studio Output, 1927-32.

Film Company	Sample Mean No. of Box-Of Films ^a Score	Films (%) ≥8.0	Films (%) ≥8.5	Films (%) ≥9.0
Columbia	30 7.9	16 (53)	3 (10)	1 (3)
First National	28 8.2	20 (71)	11 (40)	4 (14)
Fox	47 8.1	31 (66)	15 (32)	5 (11)
MGM	38 8.5	33 (87)	26 (68)	15 (39)
Paramount	47 8.3	37 (79)	22 (47)	11 (23)
RKO	20 8.0	12 (60)	5 (25)	0 (0)
Universal	31 7.9	17 (55)	5 (16)	2 (6)
Warners	30 8.0	18 (60)	10 (33)	2 (7)
Remaining Studios	122 7.6	23 (19)	8 (7)	2 (2)

Total 393

Tiffany	22 7.7	4 (18)	2 (9)	0 (0)
BIP	117 8.1	72 (62)	37 (32)	19 (16)

Source: Kine Weekly 1927-32.

Notes:

a. The mean Box-Office score was calculated as a sample mean.

assessments which are weaker than all but Real Art and Warners British of the leading domestic studios listed in Table 3.11. Perhaps the largest of these was the Tiffany studio from which 22 titles were collected in the sample trawl, making its output of films by volume comparable to that of BIP. It is apparent that the studio was producing films which domestic reviewers found "moderate/average" for the most part. Approximately 850 films between 1928-32 were marketed in Britain from these minor American studios; a figure which dwarfs aggregate domestic production of 596 films. However, the majority of films from this source was found by domestic reviewers to be less promising as a means of revenue generation than domestic films from the leading set of domestic producers.

Structural Changes to the Exhibition Sector of the Domestic Market.

In this final section to the chapter, an account of the changing structural face of the industry's exhibition sector between 1927-32 is briefly presented. The intention is to provide a basic guide to the state of the industry in 1932, rather than a detailed account of specific developments. This section draws heavily upon the statistics collected by Wood (1985) and her team for the British Film Institute.

Concentration in the pattern of cinema ownership changed markedly during this period. The first row of Table 3.14 establishes that there was just under a threefold increase in the number of cinemas run by the 10 largest circuits. However, even this statistic fails adequately to reflect the dominant position taken by the two principal chains; ABC and Gaumont. If we include the cinemas listed under the Scottish Cinema and Variety Cinemas chain - owned by the British International Pictures organisation - with the ABC group, and those of PCT - controlled (from 1929) and subsequently owned by the Gaumont British organisation with the cinemas of that group - then the two largest players owned or controlled some 460 cinemas by 1932. Whilst this is approximately 10% of the total, this simple aggregation is unlikely to represent the true extent of their market power in relation to smaller competitors, given their ability to negotiate more favourable supply contracts with distributors. These advantages manifested themselves in:

- i) lower percentage of box-office grosses going to distributors;
- ii) earlier access to key films following release;
- iii) spatial monopoly of exhibition;

- iv) prime site locations;
- v) higher admission prices.

Table 3.14 shows that there is a significant fall in the number of single independently owned cinemas during the period: from over 3900 to less than 3200, caused by the coincidence of the substantial investment costs of wiring cinemas for sound with a severe economic recession and intense competition.

Whilst it is clear that there was an increase in the number of cinemas organised into the largest chains - Gaumont and ABC - these only amounted to around 10% of all cinemas during the early part of the Thirties, rising to above 15% towards the end of the decade, with the consolidation of the Odeon chain of cinemas.¹⁶ It would appear that there was a substantial increase in

Table 13.14: Concentration of Cinema Ownership In Britain, 1927-32

	1927	1928	1929	1930	1931	1932
Cinemas in largest 10 circuits	232	274	441	485	564	635
Estimated total cinemas ^a	4800	4800	4800	4800	4806	4500
Unwired cinemas	4800				1313 ^b	
Cinemas in circuits < 10	595	676	659	663	686	637
Cinemas in circuits 11-20	146	182	117	159	169	176
Cinemas in circuits 21-100	121	187	104	138	94	108
Cinemas in circuits > 100	0	0	279	288	414	461
Independent cinemas ^c	3938	3755	3641	3552	3443	3118

Source: Wood (1985), Kine Year Books 1928-33.

Notes:

- a. Estimated from the Western Electric survey of 1931, excluding Irish cinemas in both the Free State and Ulster.
- b. Derived from the Western Electric survey of 1931 found in Wood (1985, p.120)
- c. Derived by deducting the sum of cinemas found in chains from the estimated number of cinemas.

concentration at a time in which cinemas were being wired for sound, but thereafter, through to the end of the Thirties, no

significant statistical change occurred, even given the emergence of the Odeon circuit.¹⁷

Conclusion

Over the six years 1927-32 British film production had transformed itself. With associated developments in distribution and exhibition it was possible to speak of an industry with a domestic production base. This was not the case in 1927. The key factor in this development was the 1927 Cinematograph Films Act which changed the element of risk associated with production for domestic producers.

Undoubtedly the 1927 legislation encouraged the formation of the two principal domestic combines. Through the requirement that distributors and exhibitors must take a growing proportion of non-prescribed domestic films, both BIP and Gaumont British were encouraged to invest in making films which could not only compete effectively with other domestic productions, but further, might compare not unfavourably with the portfolios emanating from the Hollywood studios.

This chapter has presented both quantitative and qualitative evidence of the expansion of domestic production aspirations during these years. Table 3.2 demonstrates that following the Gaumont British take-over of the Gainsborough in 1929, the production wings of the two domestic combines dominated domestic production figures, being responsible for approximately 30% of domestic films. This figure is particularly striking given that some 43% of domestic production came from the 116 firms

collectively termed the quasi-workshop sector. Typically, the latter consisted of companies which produced fewer than five films - most produced one! - and which entered and left the market within a span of two years. However, the volume of domestic production continued to be dwarfed by the output of the major Hollywood studios, which between 1930 and 1932, made 50% of all films marketed in Britain

The qualitative analysis based upon the critical reception of almost all domestic and a random 14% of all foreign films marketed in Britain, suggests that that the principal domestic producers - BIP, Gaumont British and Gainsborough, British and Dominion - produced at least 50% of films classified as "good" or better (Table 3.11). Further, the mean box-office scores of BIP and British and Dominion compare favourably with those of the major Hollywood studios (Table 3.13).

The dominant pattern discernible in the distribution sector over the period was that of the principal domestic and American renters monopolising the distribution of the films of their production wings - with the exception of Columbia, whose films were distributed by United Artists. However, a significant number of films fall outside this classification. These include films:

- i) made by the domestic production arms of the major American companies, eg. Warners British producing from their Teddington studios;
- ii) made by domestic firms on commission for an American renter, e.g. Film Engineering for Fox;
- iii) acquired from a spot market of domestic productions;
- iv) acquired by contract by domestic renters from minor US studios; e.g. Gaumont's distribution of World-Wide Pictures.

The statistics of concentration in the exhibition sector (Table 3.14) suggest a marked increase in concentration during 1929 as cinemas were being wired for talkies and the two domestic combines were expanding at a precipitous rate. Thereafter, the sector appears to settle to a steady state which was not greatly affected by the growth of the Odeon circuit during the mid to late 30s.

It was John Maxwell, Managing Director of BIP - rather than the authorities quoted by Low, who understood the commercial dimension of the 1927 legislation and, of course acted upon it. In an article published by the Nation on 26 February 1927¹⁸, Maxwell makes it clear that the principle behind protecting the film industry was akin to that which saw the Sugar Beet Industry protected by the Trade Facilities Act. He argued that:

The Bill does no more than clear the ring for such a film production business to get going with a chance to paying its way...

and claims the support of J.M.Keynes, coincidentally appearing on the same page of the paper, in the creation of employment opportunities in "new home industries".

Although it would be going too far to claim that the relatively small volume of domestic production was *in toto* qualitatively comparable with that of the major Hollywood studios, it is possible to make out a case for the existence, by 1932, of a domestic industry , which included an established production sector as well of those of distribution and exhibition. The dynamic development of a new production sector was based upon the emergence of new firms and production facilities together with

the rationalisation and modernisation of some existing ones. As we have seen earlier in the chapter, the amount of new sustainable activity in this sector was significant and trending upwards. These investments in physical infrastructure were founded upon an optimistic reading of the future of this 'new' industry at a time of severe recession. The contrast with the period leading up to 1927 is dramatic, where it is doubtful whether the descriptor 'industry' could realistically be ascribed to the activities of the domestic production sector.

Notes:

1. See Prendergast (1993).
2. The criteria of 'long' film used here was introduced by the 1927 legislation for registration purposes. All films longer than 3,000 feet in length were categorised in this way.
3. See Gomery (1992)
4. The major American distributors were: Fox, MGM, RKO Radio, Paramount, United Artists, Universal, and Warners-First National. Columbia films were distributed by United Artists during this period. Warners-First National are treated as a single entity: they merged into a single company in 1929.
5. Universal has been included because of the status of its parent Hollywood production company.
6. Arrived at by deducting the 215 films produced by the 116 quasi-workshop film production companies from the 595 domestic films registered during the 1927-32 period.
7. The fact that by 1932 the four principal domestic distributors - Wardour, Ideal, Gaumont-British and W&F - were part of the BIP and Gaumont-British organisations, and further, the most obvious distribution route was through their respective cinema chains, doesn't invalidate this assertion. Had these films not been able to hold cinema audiences, the cinema chains would have looked elsewhere for supply, leading to an inevitable decline in the production and distribution wings of the vertically integrated organisations.
8. See Powell (1986, p.215).
9. British and Dominion films were also distributed by Paramount although, as we shall see, these tended to be less successful than those distributed by their W&F outlet, suggesting that the Paramount contract was primarily aimed at meeting their Quota requirement.

requirement.

10. See the account in Barr (1986).

11. The Cinematograph Exhibitors' Association printed its film reviews and scores on perforated sheets which could be detached from the volume. Unfortunately, in all but two editions held by the British Library - editions dated 6.1.34 and 29.12.34 - these sheets have been removed. The list of text and scores are taken from these two editions.

12 See Sedgwick (1994a, pp.25-28)

13. It would appear that 26 films were not trade shown at all in London. The only film generally released, but not located in the Kine Weekly, was Ghost Train which was made by Gainsborough at the Islington Studios in 1927.

14. See footnote 10.

15. There was a significant quantitative disparity, however with 1 in 7 sample ratio collecting 47 Paramount films, in contrast to the 35 films made by B&D over the whole period.

16. Wood (1985) tabs.pp.119-20.

17. A more detailed analysis of market power in the exhibition sector of the industry would need to establish the extent to which cinema groupings were able to make choices between films. This is an important feature of this work from Chapter 4 onwards.

18. The Quotation appears in Wood (1985, p.7).

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Chapter 4
THE POPULARITY INDEX (POPSTAT)

Introduction

Richards (1984) likens the cinema to the church and the pub as a focal point of leisure activities, particularly for the working class, during the inter-war period. The extent of its dominance over other entertainment industries in Britain has been recorded by Stone and Lowe (1966) who were able to use Browning and Sorrell's (1954) estimates of cinema attendance, based upon Entertainment tax returns, to estimate expenditure on other entertainmnet activities in Britain for the 1937-38 financial year. They found that 64.4% of expenditure in this sector was accounted for by cinema admissions, with Theatres taking 12.8%, Racing 5%, Football 4.3%, Cricket 0.2%, and other categories 13.3%.¹

There are numerous testaments to the popularity of cinema. Amongst these are the many social investigations conducted during the Thirties, summarised by Jeffrey Richards (1984): The Social Survey of Merseyside (1934), The Rowntree Study of York (1939), The Carnegie Trust Studies of Unemployed Youths in Glasgow, Cardiff and Liverpool (1936-39), Baake's study of Greenwich (1931) - as well as the wartime surveys of June and July 1943 reported in Mayer (1948). The prominence in which cinema-going features in these surveys leads him to argue:

One must conclude therefore that while a large proportion of the population at large went to the cinema occasionally, the enthusiasts were young, working class, urban and more often female than male. (1984, p.15)

(And again)

All evidence, then, indicates that in Britain in the Thirties cinema going was regular and habitual, assuming a dominant role in the life of the young and an increasingly important part in middle class leisure. The neighbourhood cinema had come to assume a place in the life of the community analogous to those other prime foci of leisure activities , the church and the pub. (1984, p.18)

The scale of cinema attendance was first given by Rowson (1936) who estimated, from Customs and Excise returns from the Entertainments Tax (introduced in 1932), that in 1934 there were 963 million cinema admissions. A subsequent revision by Browning and Sorrell (1954) reduced this figure to 903 million, which in turn lowers Rowson's calculation of attendance per head of population during the year from 22 visits to 19 - these figures translating respectively to 30 and 28 for the population aged 15 and over.² On average each member of this age group of approximately 32 million people attended the cinema more than once a fortnight.

Table 4.1: Estimates of Cinema Admissions and Gross Takings, 1934-39^a

Year	Admissions (millions) (1)	Gross Takings (£m) (2)	Real Gross Takings (1930£s) (3)	Entertain- ment Duty (£m) (4)	Net Takings (£m) (5)	Average Admission Price (d.) (6)	Admission Price (1930d.) (7)
1934	903	38.8	43.6	6.4	32.4	10.3	11.6
1935	907	38.7	42.8	5.8	32.9	10.2	11.3
1936	917	38.6	41.5	5.2	33.4	10.1	10.9
1937	946	39.9	40.7	5.4	34.5	10.1	10.3
1938	987	41.5	42.0	5.5	36.0	10.1	10.2
1939	990	41.7	40.9	5.6	36.1	10.1	9.9
% Growth							
Rate p.a.	1.54	1.42	-1.06	1.82			

Sources: Browning and Sorrell (1954, p.134), Feinstein (1976, Tab.65).

Note:

a. Values in Columns 2 and 7 are expressed in constant 1930 prices.

Table 4.1 demonstrates a steady growth in attendances, and gross and net revenue exhibition earnings from 1934 onwards, whilst prices remained virtually unchanged. However, when measured in 1930 prices, the small annual increase in box-office takings turns into a negative figure. As can be seen in Table 4.1 the increase in admissions is more than matched by the decrease in real admission prices over the period as a whole. Given the growth rates achieved in other 'new industry' sectors of the economy, the overall box-office performance of the exhibition sector is surprisingly sluggish over these years.³ Clearly, the aggregated information does not capture changes taking place within the sector, particularly with regard to the growth of new cinemas and the strengthening of concentration at the top end of the market. Nevertheless, the low (negative) growth rates in earnings (real earnings) suggest that profit margins were tight and not, on the surface at least, particularly encouraging for film makers. The proliferation of new production and distribution companies and the consequent growth in domestic film output does not fit squarely with the demand information presented above and suggests instead that over-production was a general feature of the industry.

The Nature of the Investigation

The quantitative analysis of the British Film Industry up to this point has been based upon the simple procedure of counting film titles. Implicit in such an approach is the treatment of film as an homogeneous commodity. However, this method is contrary to the spirit of the analysis on the commodity characteristics of film found in Chapter 1 and the unified system of production, distribution and exhibition outlined in the Introduction. It was

argued there that the unique nature of each film output in effect invited each of the functional branches of the industry to exploit its monopoly qualities. For this reason an account of the activity of both demand and supply sides of the industry which fails to reflect the distinctiveness of films and hence the differences between them is necessarily limited. To overcome this problem, specifically in addressing Low's hypothesis that the reputation of domestic films had been seriously damaged by the growth of the "quota" film production, it is necessary to find a measure of the popularity of films which also serves as a proxy commercial measure of film performance. By capturing the differential exhibition performance of all films marketed in Britain between 1 January 1932 and 31 March 1938⁴, it is possible to test Low's hypothesis quantitatively. This approach to measuring film popularity entails an empirically based analysis of audience preferences, founded not on their stated preferences - as is partially recorded through social investigations of the time, as well as questionnaire surveys conducted by both the Bernstein and Korda organisations - but on what they actually saw.

The General System of Distribution

The system of film distribution in Britain was similar to that of the United States⁵ and can be explained in terms of price discriminatory practices, whereby films were entered at the highest perceived feasible point in the exhibition hierarchy and subsequently filtered down over time through clearly demarcated cinema "runs". The critical factor in this system is the economic rent earned from individual films at each

point of exhibition.

This can be formally illustrated by means of the following rather simple example. Assume an environment in which there is a monopoly distributor who rents films to a set of 100 cinemas, each of which is independently owned, has a single admission price of one shilling and a weekly exhibition capacity of 10,000 seat screenings. Further, assume that all exhibition programmes consist of a single-billed film that runs simultaneously (Generally Released) throughout this environment for a week and that all cinemas experience identical attendance figures of 50% capacity. Also, suppose that the monopolist renter is dedicated to the objective of maximising box-office take and accordingly imposes a rental contract which has both fixed and variable rate components. The former is intended to guarantee the renter an absolute revenue whilst the latter is designed to gain a share in the economic rent derived from the revealed preferences of audiences. Accordingly, the distributor will use market power to secure higher marginal rates where expectations of film popularity are high.

The General Release system of distribution will generate a gross revenue of 500,000 shillings, prior to the respective shares of the renter and exhibitor being taken. However, the monopolist is also aware that by selecting from the set a small number of cinemas, with a more luxurious ambience, and allowing these to exhibit the same film at an earlier date, the cinema owner will be able to charge higher admission prices. The monopolist knows this to be the case because market research has indicated that a body of customers manifests a temporal preference utility

function which implies that they would be willing to pay a premium price to see films prior to their general consumption. Accordingly, the distributor designates five cinemas as pre-General Release first-run houses and sets the single price of three shillings, whilst designating a further five cinemas as pre-General Release second-run cinemas with a two shilling admission price. Clearly, the former will exhibit their films at an earlier date than those of the pre-General Release second-run houses. Assuming an identical set of attendance figures, box-office revenue has now risen to 575,000 shillings. Given that both fixed and variable rates remain unchanged both the distributor and owners of the ten designated cinemas are better-off whilst none of the remaining ninety cinema owners is worse-off. What may be termed the Cascade system of distribution is preferred to the General Release system.

The above story demonstrates the logic behind the Cascade system as far as the renter is concerned. Simultaneously, the exhibitor also seeks to maximise box-office revenue, given a set of film rental costs. Under a system of film rental contracts with both fixed and variable elements, the exhibitor could not be expected to take a film where the fixed charge element exceeded the box-office takings net of cinema operation costs. This may provide a limiting factor to the distribution of films, as cinemas at the bottom end of the Cascade, which tended to be smaller than the mean cinema size and charged very low admission prices (e.g. regularly as little as 2d.), might not be expected to cover the fixed rental fees associated with films of the principal distributors. Under such conditions the cinema programmes of

lower tier cinemas might vary from those of higher order cinemas.

Conversely, higher order cinemas with their greater capacity and operating costs needed to attract audiences and fill capacity by exhibiting films which competed effectively with rival cinemas. Films which were unlikely to generate sufficient box-office returns so as to cover rental costs would be less likely to receive such widespread exhibition than those that did. This is not to say that films which were not as widely shown were not financially successful. Indeed it is clear from the author's work (Sedgwick 1994b, 1995) on the profit and loss ledgers of RKO and Warners during this period that lower budget films tended to generate higher and more stable rates of return than those of the studios' major releases.

As a general rule a pre-release cinema would exhibit films at an earlier date than a general release first-run cinema, which in turn would have the exhibition opportunity before second-run houses. The scale of prices dropped very rapidly as a film was distributed downwards and outwards through the various "runs". The details of this system, as it operated in Britain during the Thirties, are examined in detail in the following Chapter.

It has been established in Table 4.1 that nominal cinema prices were largely stable between 1932 and 1939. They were also invariant between the respective programmes of individual cinemas, although intra-cinema price discriminatory practices were evident as it was common practice for cinemas at all levels to charge lower admission prices for matinee screenings and

higher prices for Saturday evening shows. Whereas the renter was able to set premium rates for those films expected to be highly popular with audiences - charging between 25-60% of box-office grosses for major features - the exhibitors, mindful of the extent of local competition, maintained their price structure irrespective of the film being shown⁶. The distributor and exhibitor were engaged in a zero-sum game where, for any given film, the relative gains of one party were at the expense of the other. Yet, clearly, both exhibitor and distributor had an interest in handling popular films, with the exhibitor receiving a windfall gain where the distributor underestimated audience interest.⁷ As a general rule it was in neither the distributor's, nor the exhibitor's, interest to handle films of an inferior quality, given the existence of discriminating audiences, and the supply of alternative film programmes available within localities at similar prices.⁸

The Index of Film Popularity - POPSTAT

In building up a measure of film popularity, I have taken the exhibition records of between 81 and 92 leading London and provincial cinemas, listed in the Kine Weekly during the period 1 January 1932 - 31 March 1938. The changing sample numbers reflect the entry and exit of cinemas from the Kine Weekly lists and/or the market. Where the Kine Weekly records are incomplete, or questionable, London and provincial city based newspapers have been used as an additional source of information. A full list of cinemas used is listed along with their owners, seating capacity, mid-range price and weights in Appendix 4.1. The choice of period represents the industry at a stage in which: a) both major

domestic combines had achieved a dominant market position; b) the transformation of the industry from silent to sound technology had been accomplished and c) the operations of the industry were bounded by a common set of administrative rules laid down by the 1927 Act⁹.

From Appendix 4.1 it is clear that cinemas were of unequal size. Further, their commercial status, manifest in their ability to obtain films from the major distributors before, at, or after the date of general release, significantly affected the prices they could charge. It follows, then, that their gross and net box office revenue capacity differed considerably. In order to represent these differences each cinema in the sample has been given a weighting based upon its potential gross revenue capacity obtained by multiplying its mid-range ticket price by the number of seats and expressed as a proportion of the mean potential gross revenue of all cinemas in the sample¹⁰. The weights hence reflect the relative commercial status of sample cinemas, indicating that the revenue capacity of the Empire Leicester Square was, for example, approximately twice that of the Davis cinema Croydon, four times that of the Piccadilly Manchester, and eight times that of the Regent Glasgow. As the sample varied slightly over the period, so the weights of each cinema were marginally affected, details of which are listed in Appendix 4.1. The record of each film is thus given as:

$$\text{POPSTAT}_{it} = \sum_{j=1}^n a_{jt} * b_{it} * l_{ijt}$$

Where POPSTAT = Popularity statistic,
t = time period
i = ith film
j = jth cinema
n = number of cinemas in the sample set

- a = the weighting of the cinema around a mean value of 1.
- b = the weighting of the exhibition status of a film where 0.5 represents a shared and 1 equals a single billing.
- l = the length of exhibition at each cinema in weeks and half-weeks.

The Sample Cinema Set.

Rowson calculated that there were 4,305 wired cinemas in operation in Britain in 1934, whilst returns from Western Electric suggest 4,205 in 1933, 4383 in 1934, 4,471 in 1935 and 4582 in 1936¹¹. The sample size of between 81 and 92 cinemas, represents a tiny proportion of the overall cinema population. Further, as mentioned earlier, it is skewed to the top-end of the market. Table 4.2 shows that throughout the period of the investigation, cinemas in the sample set were almost twice as large as the average size cinema as calculated by Rowson¹² - approximately 1700 seats compared with 900. They were also much more expensive with the sample mid-range price of approximately 2/- being over twice the average cinema admission price for all cinemas¹³.

However, it is possible to maintain with some confidence that the sample cinema set adequately captures the exhibition characteristics of the top end of the market for films. Using price as a yardstick, it has only been possible to count six cinemas - one in London, one in Newcastle, and four in Liverpool - which might have been added to the list of cinemas whose exhibition programme featured weekly in the Kine Weekly¹⁴. This is of considerable significance to the argument, since if it can be shown that the cascade nature of distribution was such that films which were exhibited at the pre-General Release and first-

Table 4.2: Summative Sample Data Featuring the Two Principal Domestic Cinema Chains^a

	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	193738
1.Cinemas	82	81	85	86	87	92
2.Seats	140400	138826	146007	147677	149551	157030
3.Ave Cinema Size ^a	1712	1714	1719	1717	1719	1707
4.Ave Mid-price ^b	2.05	2.03	1.99	1.97	1.97	1.93
5.Rev Cap(£) ^c	14324	14244	14979	15189	15074	15370
6.ABC Cinemas	13	12	15	14	13	14
7.ABC Seats ^d	23097	21663	25522	24868	22887	25787
8.ABC Rev Cap.(£)	2024	1924	2373	2181	2004	2004
9.ABC Seats (%) ^e	16	16	17	17	15	13
10.ABC Rev (%) ^f	14	14	16	14	13	13
11.GB Cinemas ^g	28	28	28	29	28	28
12.GB Seats	48979	48979	48979	48979	47419	47419
13.GB Rev Cap.(£)	5433	5355	5355	5355	5004	5004
14.GB Seats (%) ^h	36	36	34	34	34	33
15.GB Rev (%) ⁱ	38	38	37	38	36	36

Key:

Rev Cap = Revenue Capacity

Sources: Kine Weekly, Kine Year Books 1932-1939, Eyles(1993), Eyles and Skone(1991).

Notes:

a. The full list of cinemas making up the sample is found organised under years in Appendix 4.1.

b. This is obtained by weighting the mid-range price for each cinema by its relative size and summing for all cinemas.

c. This represents the revenue potential for each cinema for each programme show. An estimate of the revenue potential for the year would then require scaling up the result by a coefficient representing the mean proportion of seats occupied per exhibition, multiplied by the mean number of shows each week multiplied by the number of weeks the cinema was open - normally 52.

d. Includes cinemas in the Scottish Cinemas and Variety Theatres Chain.

e. Obtained by: (Row 7/Row 2) * 100

f. Obtained by: (Row 8/Row 5) * 100

g. Includes cinemas in the APPH, Denman, GTC, and PCT chains.

h. Obtained by: (Row 12/Row 2) * 100

i. Obtained by: (Row 13/Row 5) * 100

run General Release cinemas of the sample cinema set would later be similarly popular at subsequent-run cinemas, and that the POPSTAT Index is an efficient measure of relative popularity, then it must follow that the latter provides an objective means of comparing the relative popularity of films marketed in Britain during the period.

Approximately half of the cinemas in the sample were owned or

controlled by the two leading British combines, with ABPC's share of seating varying between 16 to 18% and that of Gaumont British between 33 and 36%¹⁵ A similar set of proportions emerges from the calculation of gross revenue potential, with APBC's share ranging from 12 to 15% and that of Gaumont British between 36-38%. These proportions are considerably in excess of the respective shares of the two vertically integrated organisations with respect to the total population of cinemas, of which ABPC had 200 and Gaumont British 324 in 1934.¹⁶

The geographical dispersion of the sample cinema set is strongly biased towards London's West End cinemas. They make up approximately 20% of the sample cinemas but account for 40% of the potential revenue capacity, owing to the average mid-range price of West End cinemas being over twice that of the sample mean, whilst their seating capacity was only slightly larger than the mean.

A full breakdown of the geographical characteristics of the sample cinemas can be found in Appendix 4.2. However, Table 4.3 provides a summary; the most notable element, apart from the importance of the London cinemas, is the rough similarity between the provincial cities, none of which generates as much as 10% of the aggregate revenue sample.

Conclusion

This chapter sets out to explain the methodology behind the investigation into the performance of entertainment films in the domestic market, measured at the point of consumption. It does so

Table 4.3: Summative Sample Data Featuring the Geographical Distribution of Cinemas 1932 - 38

	Ave. ^a No.of Cinemas	Ave. No.of Seats	Ave. Revenue Capacity (£)	Ave. Mid-Range Price (sh.)	Ave. Cinema Size	% of Seats	% of Revenue
All Cinemas	85.5	147,212	14,845	2.02	1,721	100	100
London	16.5	31,024	6,153	3.98	1,885	21	41
Birmingham	5.2	6,903	635	1.84	1,338	5	4
Bristol	8.7	14,494	912	1.26	1,671	10	6
Croydon	1.0	3,712	334	1.80	3,712	3	2
Edinburgh	8.0	13,873	889	1.28	1,734	9	6
Glasgow	10.2	18,977	1,386	1.46	1,868	13	9
Leeds	7.7	13,317	1,041	1.56	1,736	9	7
Liverpool	8.0	11,970	813	1.36	1,495	8	5
Manchester	8.5	14,001	1,265	1.80	1,645	10	9
Newcastle	5.0	8,787	722	1.64	1,757	6	5
Sheffield	7.0	10,159	630	1.24	1,451	7	4

Sources: Kine Weekly, Kine Year Books 1932-1939, Eyles(1993), Eyles and Skone(1991).

Note:

a. All averages are wighted arithmetic means.

b. The programmes of the massive Davis, Croydon (with a seating capacity second only to the 4200 seater Green's Playhouse, Glasgow - also in the sample) were listed under London West End Cinemas in both the Kine Weekly and London Evening Standard.

after testament to the absolute scale of attendance based upon the statistics collected by Rowson (1936) and Browning and Sorrell (1954), and Richards' (1984) review of contemporary empirical investigations. The proposed index of film popularity (POPSTAT) draws upon the programmes of an unrepresentative sample of cinemas featured in the Kine Weekly over the period January 1932 to March 1938. The data collected, thus, cannot be subject to the battery of inferential statistical tests - of either parametric or non-parametric type - based upon the assumption of random sampling, since it is not possible to infer a probability distribution associated with any of the statistics drawn from the sample and their correspondence to the actual population. However, whilst not claiming a scientific association between the sample cinema set and the population of cinemas in Britain over

this period, the Cascade pattern of film distribution identified within the sample cinema set suggests a replication of exhibition patterns at subsequent-run cinemas: the subject of further investigation in Chapters 5 and 6. The analysis of the sample data is taken to offer broad support to the validity of the POPSTAT statistic as a measure of film popularity.

Notes.

1. Stone and Lowe (1966, p.81)
2. Rowson (1936, pp.68-71), Browning and Sorrell (1954, pp.133-34)
3. Foreman-Peck (1994) has written: "Manufacturing output expanded from the trough of the depression at a remarkable pace. By 1937 output was 70% higher than five years earlier".
4. See pp.106-107 in this chapter for an explanation of these dates.
5. See Greenwald (1950), Huettig (1944), Maltby (1981).
6. Minutes in Evidence (1936, p.9).
7. Low (1985, pp.3-4) maintains that the commercial odds were firmly stacked in favour of the distributor who received a minimum flat rate plus variable percentage on box-office takings, depending on the renters' assessment of the film's popularity.
8. Rowson *op cit.*, p.77 wrote: "It is probable indeed that one of the most valuable contributions to the exceptional popularity of the cinema is the existence of a power of selection among alternative programmes in various accessible houses." Browning and Sorrell *op cit.*, p.135) explain that the "extremely high rate (of cinema attendance) for Britain is due to the high concentration of population ... so that a cinema can be provided within comfortable reach of nearly every household." Leslie Halliwell (1986) in his memoir of cinema-going as a child in Bolton during the 30s describes the number and proximity of cinemas in Bolton and the reasons for his mother and himself preferring one programme to another. See Richards (1984, pp.25-26 and (1994, p.153) for further evidence on audience preferences in Thirties' Bolton.
9. A new Act of Parliament with an amended administrative framework came into force from 1 April 1938.
10. The mid-range price has been calculated by taking the mid-point of the price range for each cinema, as given in the

Cinema admission price was largely invariant during these years, falling from an average of 10.3d. in 1934 to 10.1d. in 1939 according to the calculations of Browning and Sorrell (1954, p.134). The latter derived the average admission price from Customs and Excise returns following the imposition of an Entertainment Tax on cinema admissions in 1932 on all admissions to seats greater than 6d. The fact that cinema prices did not rise as a consequence suggests that the exhibitors absorbed the tax burden.

11. Rowson *op cit.*, p.76; Wood (1986, p.120). Note these figures are exclusive of cinemas in The Irish Free State and Northern Ireland.

12. Rowson *op cit.*, p.78; Kine year Books 1934-1935.

13. Rowson *op cit.*, p.70. Rowson estimated the arithmetic mean admission price as 10.25 pence in 1934.

14. Indeed, of these six, three had programmes listed for part of the period, meaning that there were only three sets of records not included in the sample set at some stage. The six cinemas were: the Cameo (Independent) Bear Street, London West End, and listed until April 1932, the Century Theatre (Gaumont British), Liverpool; the Olympia (ABC), Liverpool, listed for 1937-38; the Plaza (Gaumont British), Liverpool; the Prince of Wales (ABC), Liverpool, listed for 1932-33; and the Haymarket (ABC), Newcastle listed from August 1936. These cinemas have been identified by having mid-range prices significantly in excess of one shilling for the provincial city cinemas and three shillings for the London West End cinema. The source of this information is the listings of cinemas in England and Scotland in the Kine Year Books 1933-39.

15. Gaumont British ran the GTC, PCT, and Denman chains, as well as the string of Gaumont cinemas.

16. Rowson *op cit.*, p.83. These figures are greater than those given by Woods *op cit.*, p.119, where the two groups are listed as having 147 and 302 cinemas respectively.

Chapter 5

The 'Flagship' Cinemas

Introduction

The first-run pre-General Release cinemas were either owned or leased by the exhibition or distribution sides of the major players in the domestic market. They were perceived as "flagship" cinemas in which the films of the parent company or distributor could be presented in the full glare of publicity. These cinemas also acted as tradeshow venues. However, not all major distributors were formally tied in with such exhibition venues. Until the late Thirties only MGM (with the Empire), Paramount (with the Capitol and Plaza) and United Artists (with the Leicester Square Theatre and London Pavilion from 1934) of the American majors, maintained a direct link between distribution and exhibition. To put this differently, Columbia (after it terminated its distribution agreement with United Artists in 1932), Fox (20th. Century Fox from 1936), RKO, Universal, and Warners-First National all required pre-release exhibition access to cinemas under the control of rival companies.¹

Perhaps surprisingly, there is a varied pattern of exhibition amongst these premier cinemas: single feature, double feature, weekly change, occasional extra week holdovers, and multi-week runs can all be observed in the programme details described below. Eyles and Skone (1991) suggest that some of the cinemas attracted a regular and loyal audience - for instance the Plaza. It certainly would appear that the management of individual cinemas (or their owners) had distinct exhibition policies, based upon operational and strategic factors such as location, size,

price structure, number of friendly cinemas in the group, and the behaviour of rival managements.

Take for example the Empire's increasing recourse to double bill programmes over the period, chiefly explained by the need to conform to the Quota levels set down by the 1927 legislation. To this end many MGM lesser "A" features were shown with minor British studio films acquired by the parent company's British distribution arm. In 1932 the Empire showed just three British films - **Two White Arms** (Cinema House), **Diamond Cut Diamond** (Cinema House), **Last Coupon** (BIP). Thereafter, with the exception of 1935, the management exhibited over 10 British films a year - 15 in 1933, 11 in 1934, 4 in 1935, 11 in 1936 and 22 between 1 January 1937 and 31 March 1938. Of these, only the first two aforementioned films in 1932, in addition to **Perfect Understanding** (Gloria Swanson Productions) in 1933 and **This'll Make You Whistle** (Herbert Wilcox) in 1937, played as single features. Of the remaining 63 films all except **Mimi** (BIP) were listed second on the billing with **Southern Roses** (Capitol-Grafton) the only British film of the entire set to run for a second week - second billed with **Love on the Run** (MGM) in February 1937.²

Another example of this commercial focus can be seen in the criteria which determined the length of run any one film received. This is clearly of great importance to cinema management. For the Empire, in what appears to be the sole surviving example of such data for a British cinema, Eyles (1989) lists the cinema's complete programmes 1928-61 together with an

almost complete set of attendance figures. During the Thirties, it appears that a weekly audience in excess of 40,000 would generally be sufficient to warrant a further week's exhibition. For example, the exhibition record of **Mutiny on the Bounty** reads:

Period	Attendance	Notes
First day	11,094	Opened on 26 December 1935.
Next seven days	73,894	
Second week	65,584	
Third week	59,488	Closed 21 January 1936. Death (6 days) of George No matinee on 28 January 1936. George V's funeral
Fourth week	40,472	
Fifth week	43,492	
Sixth week	38,532	

The chief characteristics of these 'flagship' cinemas are detailed in the section below.

Capitol, Haymarket

This 1700 seat cinema was part of the GTC circuit, which had been under the ownership of Gaumont British since May 1928. The cinema was closed for refurbishment on 18 January 1936 and opened again on 1 February 1937 as the Gaumont, Haymarket (1328 seats). From April 1933 until its closure in 1936 it specialised in the Pre-release exhibition of one week double bill programmes. Overall, approximately 78% of its programmes consisted of shared billings. The major studios represented in exhibition were Fox (23%), Universal (13%), Columbia (12%), British Gaumont-Gainsborough (10%), Warners-First National (9%) and RKO (8%). Its principal attractions during the period under investigation were:³

Goodnight Vienna (B&D) - seven weeks from 28 March 1932;
 Love On Wheels (Gainsborough) - six weeks from 9 May 1932;
 Good Companions (Gaumont British) - five weeks from 27 February 1933;
 Foreign Affaires (Gainsborough) - four weeks from 23 December 1935.
 Lloyds of London (20th Century Fox) - four weeks from 12 April 1937 after it had become the Gaumont Haymarket.

Carlton, Haymarket

Owned by Paramount, this 1159 seat cinema was used to premiere its principal films. Across the possible 325 weeks of the sample only 72 programmes were seen of which 13 were shared billings. Not surprisingly, the programme profile was dominated by films of the parent company, with the 51 Paramount films occupying two-thirds of all possible screenings. This was a cinema which specialised in lengthy runs with the average Paramount film running for over four weeks. However, as can be seen below, prominent films from other studios were also shown at the Carlton. The most extensive runs were:

Shanghai Express, (Paramount) - twelve weeks from 21 March 1932;
One Hour With You (Paramount) - eight weeks from 4 July 1932;
Devil and the Deep (Paramount) - six weeks from 29 August 1932;
Movie Crazy (Harold Lloyd) - six weeks from 10 October 1932;
Trouble in Paradise (Paramount) - six weeks from 19 December 1932;
Sign of the Cross (Paramount) - eight weeks from 30 January 1933;
Bedtime Story (Paramount) - six weeks from 22 May 1933;
Bitter Sweet (B&D) - six weeks from 21 August 1933;
I'm No Angel (Paramount) - eleven weeks from 27 November 1933;
One Night of Love (Columbia) - thirteen weeks from 24 September 1934;
The Lives of a Bengal Lancer (Paramount) - eighteen weeks from 28 January 1935;
The Crusades (Paramount) - six weeks from 26 August 1935;
Top Hat (RKO) - fourteen weeks from 7 October 1935;
The Milky Way (Paramount) - six weeks from 2 March 1936;
The General Died at Dawn (Paramount) - six and a half weeks from 12 October 1936;
The Charge of the Light Brigade (Warners) - eight weeks from 29 December 1936;
I Met Him in Paris (Paramount) - nine and a half weeks from 14 June 1937;
The Life of Emile Zola (Warners) - nine and a half weeks from 18 October 1937;
The Buccaneer (Paramount) - seven weeks run from 31 January 1938.

One interesting aspect of the exhibition profile of the Carlton is the small number of domestic, and absence of MGM productions screened during these years. My estimates of screenings suggest that the cinema failed to meet its Quota obligation as defined by the 1927 Act for all years except for Quota year 1932-33 in which **Bitter Sweet** played for a six week period. ⁴

Empire, Leicester Square

Opened in November 1928, the Empire (3226 seats) was MGM's "flagship" cinema. Given its size, coupled to the principle of rapidly diminishing marginal utility established in Chapter 1, it is not surprising that the length of run achieved by prominent films was considerably less than that of the Carlton, which had about a third of the Empire's seating capacity. Similarly, the Empire's exhibition profile was dominated by films from the parent company.⁵ Of the 311 films that were shown there during the investigation period 209 (67%) carried the MGM trade mark. Unlike the Carlton, the Empire ran a significant number of double bills, the great majority of which teamed U.S. parent company productions with British films made from minor domestic production companies. Altogether 78 of the 233 (33%) programmes were double features. Another dissimilarity from the Carlton appears to be the management's attitude to the Quota legislation: 67 of the 311 (22%) films were British. By aggregating the weekly exhibition records for all films shown at the Empire during the 325 week period: the 67 domestic productions convert to 74.5 (18%) of the total 411 weeks recorded.⁶

Of the 209 MGM films exhibited at the Empire, 120 (57%) were single billed MGM films. Overall, parent company films occupied 296.5 of the 411 (72%) aggregate exhibition weeks: the mean run being less than 1.5 weeks. The major attractions during the period were:

Hell Divers (MGM) - three weeks from 21 March 1932;
Queen Christina (MGM) - four weeks from 19 February 1934;
Riptide (MGM) - three weeks from 16 April 1934;
The Barretts of Wimpole Street (MGM) - three weeks from 15 October 1934;
Merry Widow (MGM) - three weeks from 26 November 1934;
The Painted Veil (MGM) - three weeks from 31 December 1934;

China Seas (MGM) - three weeks from 16 September 1935;
Anna Karenina (MGM) - three weeks run from 7 October;
Broadway Melody of 1936 (MGM) - three weeks run from 9 December 1935;
Mutiny on the Bounty (MGM) - six weeks run from 30 December 1935;
A Tale of Two Cities (MGM) - four weeks run from 13 April 1936;
Libelled Lady (MGM) - three weeks run from 16 November 1936;
Camille (MGM) - four weeks run from 8 March 1937;
Captains Courageous (MGM) - three weeks run from 10 May 1937; and

The management of the Empire rarely promoted the major films of rival producers, although a small number of films from Universal, RKO, Columbia, and latterly 20th Century-Fox were exhibited, primarily as supporting features to the main MGM bill. Only **She Married Her Boss** (Columbia) - shown from 18 November 1935 for two weeks; **Mary of Scotland** (RKO) - from 30 August 1936 for two weeks; and **The Road to Glory** (20th Century-Fox) - from 2 November 1936 for two weeks - played as single features with runs exceeding one week.

Leicester Square Theatre

For a period in 1932 - between March and July - the cinema was known as the Olympic and was run by County Cinemas. It then closed not to open again until September 1933 under the United Artists banner.⁷ From late September 1933 until July 1937 the Leicester Square Theatre acted, along with the London Pavilion, as United Artists' premier run cinema. As such it featured the films of London Film Productions - whose Managing Director, Alexander Korda became a full owner-director of United Artists in 1935 - British and Dominions, 20th Century and Goldwyn. The films of the first of these companies were particularly prominent in the programme. Altogether, the twelve London Films productions played for 72 weeks or approximately a third of the playing time. The 1760 seat cinema specialised in extensive runs. Indeed,

between November 1933 through to the end of the period under investigation the cinema played a mere 55 programmes, of which only six were double bills. Principal attractions were:

The Private Life of Henry VIII (LFP) - nine weeks from 27 November 1933;
Catherine the Great (LFP) - seven weeks from 12 February 1934;
Roman Scandals (Goldwyn) - ten weeks from 16 April 1934;
Nell Gwyn (B&D) - seven weeks from 17 September 1934;
The Scarlet Pimpernel (LFP) - nine weeks from 24 December 1934;
Sanders of the River (LFP) - nine weeks from 1 April 1935;
Cardinal Richelieu (20th. Century) - seven weeks from 24 June 1935;
The Ghost Goes West (LFP) - ten weeks from 16 December 1935;
Things to Come (LFP) - nine weeks from 24 February 1935;
Showboat (Universal) - nine weeks from 15 June 1936; and
Garden of Allah (Selznick) - six weeks from 14 December 1936.

From September 1937 the cinema became the leading West End house of General Film Distributors. During this period **Victoria the Great** (Imperator) had a nine and a half weeks run from 13 September 1937 and **100 Men and a Girl** (Universal) sustained an eleven week run from 6 December 1937.

London Pavilion

From 5 September 1934 the newly refurbished London Pavilion served as a second United Artists' showcase pre-release cinema. Seating 1209 customers, the cinema again was principally an extended-run single billing house. Between February 1935 and March 1938 only five of the 54 programmes were double billed. However, the runs were considerably shorter and film production company representation more evenly spread than that of her sister cinema, the Leicester Square Theatre. The most frequent studio representation was Goldwyn, seven films of which were exhibited over the period, taking up almost 20% of screen time. Amongst the other production companies distributed by United Artists were British and Dominions, 20th. Century (USA), Reliance (USA), Criterion, Selznick (USA), Pickford (USA), London Films,

Trafalgar Films, Saville Films, Wanger (USA), and Grafton. The most notable film runs were:

Kid Millions (Goldwyn) - six weeks run from 28 January 1935;
Escape Me Never (B&D) - ten weeks from 8 April 1935;
Strike Me Pink (Goldwyn) - six and a half weeks from 16 March 1936;
Little Lord Fauntleroy (Selznick) - five and a half weeks from 27 April 1936;
Dreaming Lips (Trafalgar) - five weeks from 1 February 1937;
Knight Without Armour (London Films) - six weeks from 27 September 1937; and
Nothing Sacred (Selznick) - five weeks from 7 February 1938.

Marble Arch Pavilion

Seating 1189 customers, the Marble Arch Pavilion according to Eyles and Skone (1991) "...came to be on the small side and a little remote, taking films on transfer from bigger, more central cinemas." The latter is certainly borne out by its exhibition record. Owned by the Gaumont British organisation, only two first runs of any significance were recorded during these years:

FP1 (UFA of Germany) - six weeks from 3 April 1933; and
Jack of All Trades (Gainsborough) - four weeks from 17 February 1936.

Otherwise the cinema specialised in exhibiting films which had transferred from more centrally sited West End cinemas. Six notable examples were:

Cavalcade (Fox) - twelve weeks from 12 June 1933, following a sixteen week run at the Tivoli;
Catherine the Great (LFP) - five weeks from 2 April 1934, following a seven week run at the Leicester Square Theatre;
It Happened One Night (Columbia) - four weeks from 28 May 1934, following a four week run at the Tivoli;
The 39 Steps - eight weeks from 15 July 1935, following a five week run at the New Gallery;
Modern Times (Chaplin) - for twelve weeks following a thirteen week run at the Tivoli; and
Mutiny on the Bounty (MGM) - for four weeks from 3 August 1936, following a six week run at the Empire.
Lost Horizon (Columbia) - six weeks from 23 August 1937, following an eighteen week run at the Tivoli.

However, more characteristic were shorter runs of films produced by the production wings of the parent company (Gaumont British or Gainsborough) after a premier run at either the New Gallery or

Tivoli cinemas. Films which fall into this category were **Rome Express**, **I Was a Spy**, **Aunt Sally**, **The Constant Nymph**, **The Man of Aran**, **Evergreen**, **The Tunnel** and **OHMS**.

Altogether 35 of the 91 films shown at the Marble Arch Pavilion were made at either the Gaumont British or Gainsborough studios, whilst 58 were distributed by the parent company's distribution organisation. Finally both Fox and 20th Century-Fox released or transferred minor "A" pictures (with the exception of **Cavalcade**) to the cinema, exhibiting thirteen films over the period.

New Gallery

Owned by the Gaumont British organisation, the New Gallery, with a seating capacity of 1450, premiered many films from its parent company's production wing. Notable runs were recorded by:

Soldiers of the King (Gainsborough) - four weeks from 20 March 1933;
A Cuckoo in the Nest (Gaumont British) - four weeks from 30 October 1933;
Man of Aran (Gainsborough) - six weeks from 23 April 1934;
Evergreen (Gaumont British) - four weeks from 4 June 1934;
The Camels are Coming (Gainsborough) - six weeks from 29 October 1934;
The Man Who Knew Too Much (Gaumont British) - four weeks from 12 October 1934;
The 39 Steps (Gaumont British) - five weeks from 10 June 1935;
The Clairvoyant (Gainsborough) - four weeks from 5 August 1935;
The Guv'nor (Gaumont British) - four weeks from 23 December 1935 with **Baxter's Millions** (Universal);
Pot Luck (Gainsborough) - four weeks from 6 April 1936 with **It Happened in Hollywood** (RKO).

Altogether films from the parent company's stable occupied over 40% of the screen time during this period. Also, as at the Marble Arch Pavilion, Fox and 20th Century-Fox had a significant exhibition representation, occupying approximately 10% of the screen time, again with predominantly minor "A" pictures on a shared billing. Warners had an even more significant exhibition presence at the cinema, securing approximately 20% of the screen space. As with those of Fox, most of the Warner films were in the

minor "A" category and shown on a shared billing, although **The Green Pastures** (Warners) was premiered at the cinema and achieved a five week run, from 30 November 1936.

Other notable attractions at the cinema were two New World Productions: **Wings of the Morning** and **Under the Red Robe**, both of which secured four week runs in 1937; and at the beginning of the period: **A Night Like This** (British and Dominions) - five and a half weeks from 14 March 1932; and **The Bowery** (20th Century) - four weeks from 25 December 1933.

The Odeon(Leicester Square)

Seating 2116, and contractually tied to United Artists, the Odeon Leicester Square opened in October 1937 with a five week run of Selznick's **The Prisoner of Zenda**. Its brief spell of operation during the period of this enquiry saw an exclusive programme of United Artists releases including: **Hurricane** (Goldwyn) - six weeks from 31 January 1938; and **The Goldwyn Follies** which premiered from 14 March 1938.

Plaza

Eyles and Skone (1991) have described the programming policy of the 1896 seater Paramount owned Plaza as follows:

When Paramount took over the smaller Carlton Haymarket, that was used for extended runs of the company's more prestigious pictures and (sic) the Plaza played the other releases, usually with weekly changes, cultivating a regular audience.⁸

Certainly the programming of the cinema was dominated by the films of the production wing of its American parent which

occupied over 60% of screen time. Most of these ran for a single week as part of a double bill programme. The only other notable studio representation was the films of RKO which attained approximately a 12% share of screenings. Those films which had single billing runs of three or more weeks were:

Blonde Venus (Paramount) - three weeks from 31 October 1932;
Spitfire (RKO) - three weeks from 11 June 1934;
Ruggles of Red Gap (Paramount) - four weeks from 18 March 1935;
Follow the Fleet (RKO) - five weeks from 13 April 1936;
The Plainsman (Paramount) - four weeks from 8 February 1937;
Farewell Again (Pendennis) - three and a half weeks from 3 May 1937;
Souls at Sea (Paramount) - four weeks from 6 September 1937; and
True Confession (Paramount) - three weeks from 20 December 1937.

The cinema's management appear to have shown no more than the number of domestic films required by the 1927 legislation. Through the period of investigation only approximately 14% of screen space was occupied with British made films, rising towards the end of the period with the increasing quota requirement.⁹

Regal, Marble Arch

This large cinema with a seating capacity of 2400 was the showcase theatre of the ABC chain during the Thirties. Perhaps because of its size and its westward location from the Leicester Square heartland of London's West-End, only a few films achieved a run greater than three weeks, with the remaining programme mixed between weekly change double bills and single billed features. Those that did were:

42nd Street (Warners) - four weeks from 1 May 1933;
The Affairs of Voltaire (Warners) - four weeks from 1 January 1934;
Little Women (RKO) - four weeks from 29 January 1934;
G Men (Warners) - four weeks from 17 June 1935;
Mr Deeds Goes to Town (Columbia) - six weeks from 24 August 1936;
Swing Time (RKO) - four weeks from 26 October 1936;
Theodora Goes Wild (Columbia) - four weeks from 15 February 1937;
Shall We Dance (RKO) - four weeks from 17 May 1937; and
Stage Door (RKO) - four weeks from 3 January 1938.

None of the above were produced by the production wing of the parent company. In general, the films of British International were not as prominent at the Regal as those of Gaumont British and Gainsborough were at the New Gallery, Tivoli, and Marble Arch Pavilion, only occupying approximately 15% of screen time. The studio most represented in the programmes at the Regal was Warners with just under 40% of screen time. Fox and 20th Century-Fox, RKO and Columbia with approximately 16%, 12% and 10% respectively of screen time were also important exhibitors.

Rialto Coventry Street

Before becoming an ABC cinema in January 1934, the 700 seat Rialto specialised in premiering major French and German productions. **A Nous La Liberte**, **Blue Angel**, **The Blue Light**, **Il Est Charment**, **Le Million**, **L'Ordonnance**, and **Poil de Carotte**, were all introduced to domestic audiences at the Rialto. Thereafter, the cinema specialised in weekly change double billings featuring either films from its parent company's production studio at Elstree or films other than these acquired by Wardour - predominately from minor United States studios such as Liberty, Majestic, and Peerless. The only BIP runs of any significance were **Lucky Girl** which played for eleven weeks from 15 August 1932 with the UFA film **Back to Nature** - this was before it became an ABC cinema - and **Forgotten Men** which received a ten week run as a single feature from 12 December 1934. Towards the end of 1936 and throughout 1937 the cinema began operating as a second-run Pre-General Release cinema offering more obviously commercial films from the major Hollywood studios. For example, **Mr Deeds Goes to Town** had an eleven weeks run from 12 October 1936 and

Swing Time (RKO) played for seven weeks from 28 December 1936 as part of a double feature with **Grand Jury** (RKO), both having premiered at the Regal Marble Arch.

Tivoli

Listed in the Kine Year Books as seating more than 2000 ¹⁰, the Tivoli was the second of the Gaumont British showcase cinemas in the London West End, prior to the opening of the Gaumont Haymarket in February 1937. Even more than its counterpart, the New Gallery, the Tivoli was a single bill multi-week run cinema. Only 26 of the 325 weeks of the investigation saw double-bill programmes. Some of the runs were very long indeed as can be gauged from the list below; with an average run of single billed programmes of over four weeks. The most notable runs were:

Arrowsmith (Goldwyn) - seven weeks from 28 March 1932;
Jack's the Boy (Gainsborough) - ten and a half weeks from 20 June 1932;
Cavalcade (Fox) - sixteen weeks from 20 February 1933;
I Was A Spy (Gaumont British) - six weeks from 4 September 1933;
The House of Rothschild (20th. Century) - twelve weeks from 28 May 1934;
Jew Suss (Gaumont British) - six weeks from 8 October 1934;
The Iron Duke (Gaumont British) - seven and a half weeks from 26 November 1934;
Roberta (RKO) - five weeks from 27 May 1935;
On Wings of Song (Columbia) - seven weeks from 2 September 1935;
Modern Times (Chaplin) - thirteen weeks from 10 February 1936;
Lost Horizon (Columbia) - eighteen weeks from 19 April 1937;
A Star is Born (Selznick) - eight weeks from 13 September 1937; and
Tovarich (Warners) - six and a half weeks from 24 January 1938,
one of which was shared with The Radio Murder Mystery (Warners).

Again, the films of Gaumont British-Gainsborough feature prominently, taking up approximately 30% of the cinema's screen time. Of the other studios the films of RKO occupied approximately 20%, Fox 17%, and Columbia 11% of screen time, with the remaining studios achieving less than 10%.

West End Theatres

Finally, a number of 'legitimate' West End theatres - the Adelphi, Alhambra, Coliseum, London Hippodrome, His Majesty's and the Palace - doubled as cinemas for periods during these years. MGM in particular used the Palace, Hippodrome and His Majesty's to premiere some of their major releases before subsequent runs at the Empire. Major premieres included:

Grand Hotel (MGM) - fourteen weeks from 3 September 1932 at the Palace;
Dinner at Eight (MGM) - twelve weeks from 4 September 1933 at the Palace;
David Copperfield (MGM) - eight weeks from 4 March 1935 at the Palace;
The Good Earth (MGM) - twelve weeks from 24 March 1937 at the Palace;
The Kid from Spain (Goldwyn) - ten weeks from 20 March 1933 at the Adelphi;
King Kong (RKO) - eight weeks from 17 April 1933 at the Coliseum;
Damaged Lives (Columbia) - seven weeks from 4 September 1933 at the Coliseum;
The Great Ziegfeld (MGM) - seven weeks from 31 August 1936 at His Majesty's followed by seven weeks at the London Hippodrome from 12 October 1936; and
Romeo and Juliet (MGM) - nine weeks at His Majesty's from 12 October 1936.

Conclusion

The purpose of this Chapter has been to describe the programming activity of the principal London West End cinemas. These cinemas were of vital importance to renters as show cases for their product, before general release through the cascade system. Not only did films which had had extended runs at these cinemas generate a substantial box-office revenue, but the degree of popularity greatly assisted the renter in determining the percentage charge for any particular property. In the course of this description, 126 films have been identified as having exceptional West End exposure. These films form the basis of a further investigation into the cascade system of distribution found in Chapter 6.

Notes.

1. Warners-First National flagship cinema, the Warner Leicester Square, opened in October 1938 - just beyond the investigation

period.

2. See Eyles (1989, p.32)

3. All dates for cinema exhibitions are taken from the Monday of the first week, following the practice established in the Kine Weekly.

4. The Exhibition quota ran from 1 October to 30 September. My calculations for the Carlton are as follows:

Exhibition Quota Years

	1932-3	1933-4	1934-5	1935-6	1936-7
British Films	2	0	0	2	2
Total Films	13	18	10	12	15
% British	15	0	0	17	13
Br. Film Weeks	7	0	0	6.5	3
Total Film Weeks	52	52	52	52	52
% British ^a	13	0	0	13	6
Quota Minimum (%)	12.5	15	15	20	20

Sample Period 1 Jan. 1932 - 31 March 1938.

British Films	8
Total Films	72
% British	11
Br. Film Weeks	19.5
Total Film Weeks ^b	337
% British	6

Sources: Kine Weekly.

Notes:

a. This row represents a first approximation of the screen time as defined by the 1927 legislation. A fuller estimation would require information about the length of the films as well as the number of their screenings.

b. This figure exceeds the 325 weeks covered by the sample because of a small number (12) of double billings.

5. The feature length films of Laurel and Hardy were premiered at the Empire. Although popular, none of the nine films played for more than a week. Their films were produced by Hal Roach and distributed by MGM and as such have not been recorded or counted as MGM films.

6. The aggregate weekly exhibition record would equal 325 weeks a cinema in which all films shown were single billed. Cinemas such as the Carlton where film programmes were typically single features would record an aggregate a little above 325 whereas most cinemas in the sample characterised by double feature programmes with a weekly change would record an aggregate twice that.

7. Eyles and Skone (1991, pp.68-9)

8. *ibid* p.47. Michael Powell (1986) would appear to lend this statement some contemporary support when writing: "For four years we were inseparable....Working, playing, hunting girls, gossiping, biting, scratching, creating, going to the Plaza

cinema every Saturday to see the new Paramount movie....."

9. For instance, during the exhibition year 1936-37, 50 films were shown at the Plaza, of which 36 were Paramount, and 9 British; probably just sufficient to meet the 20% required screenings quota.

10. Eyles and Skone *op cit.*, p.44 maintain that after its acquisition of the cinema in November 1928, Provincial Cinematograph Theatres - itself acquired by Gaumont British in December 1928 - replaced the 1543 existing stalls and circle seats with 1553 new seats and closed down the balcony. The figure given in the Kine Year Book of 2092 seats clearly includes the balcony listed in Eyles and Skone as holding 572 seats. The Kine Year Book figure has been used in the POPSTAT model.

Chapter 6

THE CASCADE SYSTEM OF DISTRIBUTION

Introduction

In Chapter 4 it has been argued that the unrepresentative nature of the sample set of cinemas does not invalidate the statistical exercise of establishing an index of film popularity, since the latter is drawn from the upper levels of a system of distribution which replicates itself, albeit at a greater level of volume, as films move out in time from pre-release to general release dates and from higher to lower status cinemas. Implicit in this argument is the assumption that distributors chose to enter films at the highest possible level of exhibition, thereby enhancing a film's chances of big gross box-office success. It is further assumed that a film which received extended circulation at the higher exhibition levels enjoyed widespread distribution at the second, third and other-run levels of exhibition. Conversely, a film which failed to secure a pre-General Release distribution in London's West End cinemas would be expected to generate much poorer box-office results than those that did¹. The objective of this chapter is to provide further evidence for these assertions and in doing so demonstrate the validity of POPSTAT as a measure of film popularity.

The Cascade System of Distribution in Practice

In the course of the previous analysis of London's West End "flagship" cinemas, 126 films were listed as having extended single bill - for the most part - runs. If the above propositions concerning the cascading nature of distribution are substantially correct, the expectation is that these 126 films would continue

to show extensively in lower status cinemas during the course of their exhibition history.

An idea of the cascading pattern of distribution may be obtained from within the sample cinema set. In monitoring the exhibition profile of these 126 films within the sample set of cinemas, it has been possible to rank the cinemas in which they were shown simply on the basis of exhibition dates. Setting the highest rank equal to 1, an earlier exhibition date for any given film will secure a higher ranking for the cinema showing it. The cinemas presented in Table 6.1 are listed on the basis of their weighted arithmetic mean ranking, irrespective of either the number of specific exhibitions or the average length of exhibition. The results demonstrate a marked distinction between the cinemas in the sample with regard to their ability to secure these 126 'hit' productions as well as their position in the pecking order of exhibition dates. In selecting those films which had considerable pre-release West End exposure and may accordingly be thought to have been desirable acquisitions for the exhibitor, it is possible to show that the cascade effect claimed for the population of cinemas in Britain as a whole is captured in the sample cinema set. Amongst the sample cinemas there is a clear manifestation of those characteristics typical of the distribution system in general which in turn supports the claim that the POPSTAT Index is able adequately to capture the relative popularity of films shown in all cinemas in Britain over the period.

The results in Table 6.1 reflect a marked variation in both the

Table 6.1: Temporal Ranking of Sample Cinemas based on the Exhibition Records of 126 films which had extended runs in the principal London West End Cinemas

CINEMA	CITY	(1) FilmsRank 1	(2) Rank 2-5	(3) Rank 6-10	(4) Rank 11-15	(5) Rank 16-20	(6) Rank 21-25	(7) Rank 26-30	(8) Rank 31-36	(9) Rank 37-40	(10) Weighted Mean Rank
ADELPHI	LON	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1.0
HIS MAJESTY'S	LON	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1.0
LEICESTER SQ	LON	13	13	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1.0
LONDON PAVILION	LON	7	7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1.0
NEW GALLERY	LON	17	17	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1.0
ODEON	LON	3	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1.0
PALACE	LON	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1.0
REGAL	LON	9	9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1.0
TIVOLI	LON	18	17	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1.1
CARLTON	LON	22	19	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	1.1
PLAZA	LON	10	8	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	1.2
EMPIRE	LON	24	20	3	1	0	0	0	0	0	1.3
RITZ	LON	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2.0
METROPOLE	LON	20	0	17	3	0	0	0	0	0	3.2
DOMINION	LON	73	0	62	8	2	1	0	0	0	3.6
COLISEUM	LON	3	2	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	3.7
NEW VICTORIA	LON	80	0	67	8	4	1	0	0	0	3.7
ASTORIA	LON	30	0	24	4	2	0	0	0	0	3.7
MARBLE ARCH	LON	51	2	43	4	1	0	1	0	0	3.8
PARAMOUNT	NEW	27	0	17	10	0	0	0	0	0	5.1
CAPITAL	LON	7	4	2	0	0	0	0	1	0	5.7
COLISEUM	GLA	21	0	11	7	3	0	0	0	0	5.9
REGAL	GLA	22	0	10	9	3	0	0	0	0	5.9
PARAMOUNT	LEE	36	0	18	16	2	0	0	0	0	6.0
PARAMOUNT	LON	4	0	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	6.0
PARAMOUNT	MAN	37	0	18	14	3	2	0	0	0	6.4
PARAMOUNT	BIR	5	0	3	1	1	0	0	0	0	6.6
PARAMOUNT	GLA	24	0	12	7	4	1	0	0	0	6.6
PARAMOUNT	LIV	19	0	8	10	1	0	0	0	0	6.6
CALEY	EDI	8	0	5	1	2	0	0	0	0	6.9
PRINCE OF WALES	LIV	2	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	7.0
GAUMOUNT	MAN	22	0	10	8	1	3	0	0	0	7.0
PICTURE HOUSE	GLA	58	0	22	26	7	3	0	0	0	7.3
ALHAMBRA	LON	3	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	7.7
FUTURIST	BIR	40	0	13	19	5	2	1	0	0	7.7
HIPPODROME	LON	2	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	8.0
FORUM	BIR	24	0	9	6	7	2	0	0	0	8.0
REGENT	BRI	61	0	20	22	18	1	0	0	0	8.1
KINGS	BRI	29	0	8	12	5	3	1	0	0	8.8
GAUMOUNT	BIR	47	0	10	23	11	1	2	0	0	8.9
TROCADERO	LIV	51	0	15	16	16	3	1	0	0	9.0
WHITELADIES	BRI	26	0	7	10	5	3	1	0	0	9.2
BEDFORD	GLA	10	0	4	2	2	1	0	1	0	9.6
NEW VICTORIA	EDI	63	0	11	30	10	11	1	0	0	9.9
RUTLAND	EDI	26	0	3	11	8	4	0	0	0	10.0
NEW SAVOY	GLA	39	0	5	18	11	5	0	0	0	10.1
QUEENS	NEW	55	0	14	18	13	7	3	0	0	10.2
NEW PICTURE HO	EDI	56	0	9	25	10	9	3	0	0	10.6
NEW PALACE	BRI	29	0	7	9	3	9	1	0	0	10.9
PLAYHOUSE	EDI	32	0	5	11	8	5	3	0	0	11.3
THEATRE ROYAL	MAN	11	0	1	4	4	1	1	0	0	11.4

FORUM	LIV	28	0	2	9	12	4	1	0	0	11.4
LA SCALA	GLA	20	0	6	3	6	3	0	2	0	11.5
MARKET ST	MAN	18	0	6	3	3	4	1	1	0	11.8
NEW OXFORD ST	MAN	18	0	6	3	3	4	1	1	0	11.8
MAJESTIC	LEE	41	0	2	15	13	9	2	0	0	11.9
RITZ	LEE	18	0	4	3	4	6	1	0	0	11.9
RIALTO	LEE	13	0	3	4	2	2	2	0	0	12.0
SYNOD(POOLES)	EDI	6	0	2	1	1	0	2	0	0	12.0
RIALTO	LIV	35	0	7	8	9	6	4	1	0	12.1
WEST END	BIR	31	0	5	7	9	7	1	2	0	12.1
HIPPODROME	BRI	21	0	7	2	6	2	2	2	0	12.2
PAVILION	NEW	36	0	7	13	6	2	6	2	0	12.2
ST ANDREWS	EDI	25	0	2	8	8	3	4	0	0	12.5
ROYAL HIPPO	LIV	26	0	6	7	4	3	5	0	1	12.8
STOLL	LON	105	0	13	26	38	16	6	4	2	12.8
DAVIS	CRO	61	0	7	14	22	13	3	0	2	13.0
SCALA	LEE	15	0	0	6	4	2	3	0	0	13.2
CINEMA	SHE	17	0	3	3	3	6	2	0	0	13.3
CENTRAL	SHE	32	0	3	7	10	9	3	0	0	13.6
OLYMPIA	LIV	8	0	0	1	4	3	0	0	0	14.5
REGENT	SHE	60	0	3	13	19	13	9	3	0	14.7
REGENT	GLA	34	0	4	5	7	13	3	2	0	14.7
EMBASSY	BRI	29	0	4	2	7	12	3	1	0	14.8
STOLL	NEW	14	0	4	0	3	3	3	0	1	15.0
NEW WESTGATE	NEW	24	0	2	6	2	8	4	2	0	15.2
GREENS	GLA	11	0	0	2	7	0	0	1	1	15.5
PICCADILLY	MAN	30	0	2	4	8	9	6	1	0	15.5
ASSEMBLY	LEE	45	0	0	9	9	16	7	4	0	16.1
FUTURIST	LIV	34	0	1	8	5	10	7	3	0	16.2
HIPPODROME	SHE	26	0	0	2	10	9	4	1	0	16.3
SCALA	BIR	43	0	1	6	12	14	6	4	0	16.4
GAIETY	MAN	10	0	0	0	5	3	1	1	0	16.7
PALACE	EDI	42	0	3	5	13	7	9	2	3	16.8
DEANS_GATE	MAN	22	0	2	0	8	5	3	4	0	16.9
CRANSTON	GLA	47	0	0	7	10	18	4	4	4	17.6
EMPIRE	BRI	21	0	1	3	3	7	5	2	0	18.1
UNION	SHE	4	0	0	0	1	3	0	0	0	18.3
TRIANGLE	BRI	23	0	1	2	4	8	6	2	0	18.3
STOLL	BRI	34	0	1	0	6	18	6	1	2	18.7
SCALA	LIV	14	0	0	1	3	6	2	1	1	18.9
COLISEUM	LEE	15	0	0	3	3	2	2	5	0	18.9
TOWER	LEE	38	0	0	1	9	15	6	6	1	19.1
GRAND	GLA	14	0	0	0	4	4	5	1	0	19.4
REGAL	MAN	9	0	0	0	3	2	3	1	0	19.9
ELECTA	SHE	23	0	0	0	4	9	8	1	1	20.3
PALAIS DE LUXE	LIV	26	0	0	0	4	11	7	3	1	20.3
ALBERT HALL	SHE	14	0	0	1	2	1	5	5	0	21.6

n = 98, Average weighted mean = 10.9

BIR = Birmingham, BRI = Bristol, EDI = Edinburgh, GLA = Glasgow, LEE = Leeds, LIV = Liverpool, LON = London, MAN = Manchester, NEW = Newcastle, SHE = Sheffield

Sources: Kine Weekly supplemented by provincial city daily and evening newspapers.

number of the 126 films shown by the respective sample cinemas and the order in which the films were distributed. Columns 2-9 group the exhibition records of the ninety-eight cinemas

(including the 'legitimate' London West End theatres) on the basis of a ranking order derived from exhibition dates, while Column 10 lists their weighted mean rank.

If an extended run at a Pre-General Release London West End cinema can be considered to be a proxy indicator of gross box-office success, then it is apparent from Table 6.1 that cinemas in the sample set have quite different records in obtaining them. For instance the Stoll Kingsway (London), whilst certainly not a Pre-Release cinema - with a weighted mean ranking of 12.8, well above the sample mean of 10.9 - showed 105 of the sample 126 films (82%), whilst the Caley of Edinburgh, - a small independently owned cinema - showed only eight of these films over the same period. The frequency distribution of the selected sample of films amongst the sample cinema set is shown in Table 6.2. A list of the most popular cinemas based upon the largest number of distinct programmes in which films from the 126 selection appeared would necessarily exclude London's 'flagship' cinemas: clearly, a weekly change cinema will run many more programmes than one in which extended runs are the norm. The frequency distribution shown in Table 4.5 demonstrates a skewed pattern in which only 12 (13%) cinemas feature more than 50 (39%) of the 128 films, whilst over half the cinemas (55) showed fewer than a fifth (25) of the films in the selection.

The cinemas exhibiting the greatest number of the 126 selection of films were the London cinemas - Marble Arch Pavilion, New Victoria, Dominion and Stoll; the huge London suburban Davis (Croydon, with 3712 seats); and the following provincial city

Table 6.2: Frequency Distribution of the 126 Selection of Popular Films amongst the Sample Cinema Set

No. of Films from the 126	No. of cinemas	Cumulative Frequency. of Cinemas.
1-5	12	12
6-10	10	22
11-15	10	32
16-20	9	41
21-25	14	55
26-30	12	67
31-35	7	74
36-40	6	80
41-45	4	84
46-50	2	86
51-55	3	89
56-60	3	92
61-65	3	95
66-70	0	95
71-75	1	96
76-80	1	97
81-85	0	97
86-90	0	97
91-95	0	97
96-100	0	97
101-104	1	98

n = 98

median = 22.5

mode = class interval 21-25

mean = 26.1

Source: Table 6.1

cinemas: the Regent (Bristol), the Regent (Sheffield), the Picture House (Glasgow), the New Victoria and New Picture House (Edinburgh), the Queens Theatre (Newcastle), Trocadero (Liverpool), and Gaumont (Birmingham). One interesting aspect of this list, which ties in with the earlier discussion concerning the ownership pattern of the sample cinemas set, is that apart from the Stoll and Davis cinemas, they all belonged to the Gaumont British organisation.

An examination of the frequency distribution of the sample cinemas' weighted arithmetic mean ranking status based on the

Table 6.3: Frequency Distribution of the Weighted Ranked Mean of Cinemas in Sample Set based on the Exhibition Records of the 126 Selection of Popular Films

Weighted Ranking Mean of Cinemas ^a	No.of Cinemas	Cumulative Frequency
1	8	8
>1-2	5	13
>2-3	0	13
>3-4	6	19
>4-5	0	19
>5-6	6	25
>6-7	6	31
>7-8	5	36
>8-9	5	41
>9-10	3	44
>10-11	5	49
>11-12	10	59
>12-13	8	67
>13-14	3	70
>14-15	5	75
>15-16	3	78
>16-17	7	85
>17-18	1	86
>18-19	6	92
>19-20	3	95
>21-22	2	97
>22-23	1	98

n = 98

median = 11.05

mode = >11-12

mean = 10.9^b

Source: Table 6.1

Note.

a. As mentioned earlier, a number of the London exhibition venues listed were in fact Theatres dedicated to live performance, showing films only on rare occasions. The Adelphi, His Majesty's, Palace, Hippodrome, Coliseum and Alhambra all fall into this category. All of the remaining venues listed in Table 6.1 were cinemas.

b. Taken from Column 10, Table 6.1.

exhibition records of the selected 126 films, found in Table 6.3, reveals a bi-modal distribution in which the London cinemas - other than the Stoll Kingsway - are grouped around first and second ranks, whilst the mode rank for the provincial city cinemas is twelfth, with the median cinema having a ranking mean of 11.05. The arithmetic mean of the set is estimated at 10.9.

Earlier in the Chapter it was argued that a clear distinction existed between London first and second-run Pre-Release cinemas. Typically, the flagship cinemas - Leicester Square Theatre, London Pavilion, New Gallery, Odeon Leicester Square, Regal (Marble Arch), Tivoli (Strand), Carlton Haymarket, Plaza (Jermyn Street), and Empire Leicester Square - premiered films three to five months prior to their General Release. These films were then shown a second time in London before going on General Release, generally as part of a weekly change double bill programme, at one of a set of Pre-General Release second-run cinemas: the Metropole (Victoria), Dominion (Tottenham Court Road), New Victoria (Victoria), Astoria (Charing Cross Road), Marble Arch Pavilion, Capitol (Haymarket) and Paramount (Tottenham Court Road). The proportion of the 126 films shown by the Dominion, New Victoria and to a lesser extent the Marble Arch Pavilion is notable - see Table 6.1 for details. These cinemas typically exhibited major releases two to four weeks before going on General Release.

Amongst the principal provincial Pre-General Release cinemas the Paramount cinemas in Birmingham, Glasgow, Leeds, Liverpool, Manchester and Newcastle, were dedicated to the exhibition of Paramount's principal films prior to wider distribution. This bias explains why these cinemas do not feature prominently in terms of the number of the 126 films exhibited.

The Coliseum and Regal Glasgow and Kings and Whiteladies Bristol were the only provincial city ABC cinemas with mean rankings above the sample mean. In all four cases they exhibited between a

sixth and fifth of the 128 films in the selection. Clearly, the performance of ABC cinemas in terms of their access to films was influenced by the failure of any British International Productions films to secure lengthy runs, even in their London 'flagship' cinemas - the Regal Marble Arch and the smaller Rialto Coventry Street.

Many of the Gaumont British owned cinemas achieved a mean ranking above that of the sample mean as well as a higher proportion of films from the 126 selection than those of their ABC rivals. The Gaumonts of Birmingham and Manchester, Picture House and New Savoy Glasgow, Regent and New Palace Bristol, Trocadero Liverpool, New Victoria, New Picture and Rutland Edinburgh, and Queens Newcastle all had above average mean rankings.

Taken in descending order in Table 6.1 the non-zero entries in Columns 2 and 3 decline relative to those in columns 4 onwards, highlighting cinemas which are lower in the cascade-like distribution process. Cinemas such as Cranstons in Glasgow, the Palais Liverpool, Stoll Bristol, or the Electra Sheffield, would typically exhibit major releases four to six weeks after their first exhibition in the respective cities in cinemas such as the Picture House, Trocadero, Regent or Cinema House.

A re-working of the information, by city, indicates a temporal pattern of release in which audiences in some cities saw films consistently before those in other cities. These results, given in Table 6.4 below, partially explain why the ranking order given in Table 6.1 clusters cinemas in Leeds and Sheffield in the lower half of the frequency distribution.

Table 6.4: The Temporal Pattern of Release Amongst Provincial City Cinemas

City	Cinemas in Sample	Mean Rank
Birmingham	5	11
Bristol	9	13
Edinburgh	8	12
Glasgow	11	11
Leeds	8	14
Liverpool	10	13
Manchester	9	12
Newcastle	5	11
Sheffield	7	16

Source: Table 6.1

The Cascade System Beyond the Sample Cinema Set: Bolton, Dover and West London.

It may be objected that the claims made so far concerning the Cascade system of distribution are founded upon the **assumption** that the pattern of exhibition described and analysed amongst the sample set of cinemas is replicated as films move outwards in time and space from their premieres. The previous section provided evidence of the distribution system within the sample set, but what if the pattern of exhibition outside of the sample set were significantly different from that of the sample set?

Rather than take a random sample of cinema exhibitions throughout Britain during the period, of sufficient size to be confident, within bounds, that each order of cinema (i.e. first, second, third,...nth-run) was fully represented, the work presented below is based upon three longitudinal case studies of cinema-going in three geographically and and culturally diverse parts of Britain. It is thought that this approach may better capture any regional differences in film exhibition.

The three urban centres chosen are the Lancashire Borough town of Bolton with a population of approximately 180,000, the Kent coastal town of Dover with a population of approximately 40,000 and the London districts of Chelsea, Kensington, Fulham, Hammersmith and Shepherds Bush. Specifically, the diffusion of the 126 films featured in Chapter 5 -the distribution of which within the sample cinema set is discussed above - to the cinemas these three urban centres has been examined. It is expected, in keeping with the *modus operandi* of the Cascade system, that the 126 "hit" films of the Selection will not only be shown, but also percolate through the respective local exhibition systems.

In choosing each of the population centres, attention has been given to different aspects of urban life in Britain during the Thirties. Although all located in England, their location, size, population, employment profiles and traditions, are varied. As a consequence, there is every chance that were the replication assumption to be unwarranted, evidence would be forthcoming from the cinemas of these centres: that is the exhibition records of the 126 film Selection would be patchy. In addition, the selection of Bolton was favoured because of a rich vein of work which exists on cinema-going in the Borough during the Thirties.

Of the three urban centres, the exhibition records of the Bolton cinemas, captured in the daily Bolton Evening News, provide both the scale and scope to investigate more fully the Cascade pattern of distribution. Neither Dover, because there were fewer cinemas, nor West London, both because of its proximity to the West End and hence the likely prevalence complex substitution factors, and

the patchiness of the advertising records of cinemas in the weekly West London and Kensington Gazette, provide such a comprehensive coverage. However, exhibition records from the latter two centres do effectively serve to supplement the Bolton findings and provide useful points of contrast.

Bolton

The cinema-going activities of the people of Bolton during the 1930s have been chronicled more than most. It was the subject of a study by Mass-Observation in 1939 of audience preferences, based upon questionnaire, which has been described and analysed in detail by Jeffrey Richards (1987, 1994). It was also the subject of a personal history by Leslie Halliwell (1985) who recalls from memory both the cinemas of the Borough and many of the programmes he watched, almost always with his mother during these years, starting from the mid-Thirties. Halliwell has written:

For a film fanatic, Bolton was almost like Mecca. At one time there lay within my easy reach no fewer than forty-seven cinemas of varying size, quality and character. None was more than five miles from Bolton's town hall and twenty eight were in the boundaries of the borough. (1986, p.28)

His map of Bolton cinemas of the Thirties lists 22 cinemas in the town, all of which placed advertisements with the Bolton Evening News.² Table 6.5 below adds some rather more mundane details to the vivid descriptions of these cinemas found in Halliwell's book. Of interest is the absence of the Gaumont British organisation from the town, whilst the ABC chain boasted two cinemas - the Capitol and the Regal. There is confirmation that most cinema admissions cost less than a shilling. The higher

Table 6.5: Characteristics of the Bolton Cinemas, 1932-38.

Cinema	In operation in 1932? or date of opening	Programmes per week	Seats	Price Range	Owners
Belle ^a	Yes	2	580	4d-9d	Ind.
Capitol ^b	Yes	1	1642	7d-1/6	ABC
Carlton	Yes	2	1000	4d-1/-	Bolton Cine
Crompton ^c	10.12.34	2	1200	3d-1/3	A.Hall
Embassy	2.5.34	2		6d-1/-	Ind.
Empire	Yes	2	472	3d-6d	Ind.
Gem	Yes	2	1050	4d-1/-	Ind.
Grand ^d	Yes	2	1200		Ind.
Hippodrome	Yes	1	1086	6d-1/4	Moorhouse
Imperial ^e	Yes	2	550	6d-1/-	Deansgate
Lido	Early 1937	1			
Majestic	Yes	2	1913	4d-1/-	Bolton Cine
Odeon	21.8.37	1	2534	6d-1/6	Odeon
Palace	Yes	2	1021	4d-7d	Ind.
Palladium ^f	Yes	2	1238	4d-1/-	A.Hall
Plaza ^g	Yes	2	650	4d-9d	Ind.
Queens	Yes	1	1480	6d-1/6	Rialto-Bolton
Regal	1933	2	2380	4d-9d	ABC
Rialto	Yes	1	1147	6d-1/-	Rialto-Bolton
Ritz	1936	2	750	3d-6d	Ind.
Royal	Yes	2	761	5d-1/-	Ind.
Theatre Royal ^h	Yes	1	1700	6d-1/6	Universal
Tivoli	28.2.38	2	1200	4d-1/-	A.Hall

Sources:

Kine Year Books 1933-39, Eyles (1993), Halliwell (1986) and Richards and Sheridan (1987).

Notes:

- a) Changed owners in 1937 and reduced seating capacity to 470 seats.
- b) Became an ABC cinema on 26.7.1935. Prior to this it was independently owned.
- c) Halliwell (1986, p.122) asserts that the Crompton opened in 1937. This is repeated twice by Richards in Richards and Sheridan (1987, p.32) and Richards (1994, p.151) but contradicted by him in Richards and Sheridan (1987, p.27). The cinema occasionally had a single weekly programme: David Copperfield w/c 25.11.35, Modern Times w/c 9.11.36 and Little Lord Fauntleroy w/c 1.2.37 are examples.
- d) Functioned as a Variety Theatre. For instance George Formby appeared w/c 8.1.34.
- e) Closed down in 1934.
- f) Opened in 1919 according to Richards in Richards and Sheridan (1987) - Eyles (1993) has it as 1922 - becoming an ABC cinema when taken over in 1930. Subsequently leased to the Regent Circuit 1933-35 and the sold to Mr A. Hall in 1935 - owner of the Crompton in 1935 and later the Tivoli when opened in 1938.
- g) Changed its name to Windsor in 1937.
- h) Taken over by new owners in 1936 and became part of the Moorhouse Circuit.

price range cinemas were those showing a once weekly change

programme. As will become apparent from Table 6.7 these cinemas were also Bolton's first-run houses. The bottom end of the price range reminds one of Orwell's observation in his 1937 book "Road

to Wigan Pier" that:

That - keeping warm - is almost the sole preoccupation of a single unemployed man in winter. In Wigan a favourite refuge was the pictures, which are fantastically cheap there. You can always get a seat for fourpence, and at the matinee you can even get a seat for twopence. Even people on the verge of starvation will readily pay twopence to get out of the ghastly cold of a winter afternoon. (1962, p.72)

The principal first-run cinemas in Bolton during the Thirties were the Capitol, Hippodrome, Queens, Rialto, and Theatre Royal, with the addition of the Lido and Odeon in 1937. All 126 films which received extended West End runs were exhibited in Bolton, and almost all had their local premiere in these cinemas³. The subsequent discussion, however, is confined to the 119 films which were put into General Release before the end of this investigation's time period - 31 March 1938⁴. Thirty four of these (over a quarter) opened in two cinemas simultaneously and **Sanders of the River** managed the distinction of opening in three - Queens, Rialto and Embassy during w/c 23.12.35. Typically these films premiered as single bill entertainments and played for one week⁵. Following their premiere, the films from this Selection generally returned to one of the twice weekly change cinemas listed in Table 6.5 for a second-run approximately four weeks later - commonly with a gap of a three to four weeks between any subsequent runs. However, it should be added that a significant number of films played on a single bill weekly programme for their third (25 films) and in the case of **Captains Courageous**, **Lost Horizon**, **Mutiny on the Bounty**, and **One Night of Love**, fourth runs in the town.

In his recorded interview for Mass-Observation, Mr. Hull, the manager of the Embassy cinema, refers to occasions in which

7
exceptional films went on to play again and again in the town⁶. He specifically mentions **Rosalie** - seventh run, and **The Firefly** and **Maytime** - both eighth run films. He also quotes **The Divorce of Lady X** and **Bluebeard's Eighth Wife** as examples of big budget films which did poorly on their second and third runs. Certainly, this investigation confirms his testimony to differences in the popularity of films, as measured by the number of separate performances in Bolton cinemas. Table 6.6 below lists the thirty films from the Selection which recorded six or more distinct appearances in Bolton's cinemas: they were amongst the most popular films shown in the town during the 1932-38 period.

An interesting development to film-going during the latter part of the period was the emergence of re-released films on cinema programmes. Whilst this had been an occasional event during the summer months, when cinema audiences were traditionally at their lowest, there appears to have been a dramatic increase during the late spring and summer of 1938. Twenty seven of the 119 films from the Selection were re-released during the period, playing on 43 separate programmes. The extent of the revival in 'old' films can be gauged by the fact that over half of these performances (22) took place in 1938. A possible explanation for this may have been the consequence of the domestic crisis in production in 1937 which resulted in a greatly diminished supply of domestic films marketed in 1937 and 1938. Re-released films may well have relieved the supply pressures on renters and distributors alike.

It is not the purpose of this exercise to analyse the film

Table 6.6: Films from the 126 (119) Selection which played at Six or more Bolton Cinemas, 1932-38^a

Title	Production Company	Bolton Premiere Date	Number of 1st-Release Exhibitions	Number of Re-Release Exhibitions
GOOD COMPANIONS	GAU	23-Oct-33	9	5
LIVES OF A BENGAL LANCER	PAR	05-Aug-35	9	2
ONE NIGHT OF LOVE	COL	11-Feb-35	9	1
39 STEPS	GAU	17-Feb-36	9	0
CAPTAINS COURAGEOUS	MGM	04-Apr-38	9	0
ROMAN SCANDALS	GOLDWYN	01-Oct-34	8	1
LIBELLED LADY	MGM	31-May-37	8	0
IT HAPPENED ONE NIGHT	COL	22-Oct-34	8	0
SCARLET PIMPERNEL	LFP	07-Oct-35	7	0
TALE OF TWO CITIES	MGM	30-Nov-36	7	0
PLAINSMAN	PAR	12-Jul-37	7	0
HELL DIVERS	MGM	28-Nov-32	7	0
CHARGE OF THE LIGHT BRIGADE	WB	04-Oct-37	7	0
WINGS OF THE MORNING	NWP	13-Sep-37	7	0
SANDERS OF THE RIVER	LFP	23-Dec-35	7	0
DEVIL AND THE DEEP	PAR	20-Mar-33	6	3
42ND STREET	WB	02-Oct-33	6	2
RUGGLES OF RED GAP	PAR	12-Aug-35	6	2
SOLDIERS OF THE KING	GAINS	14-Aug-33	6	1
JACKS THE BOY	GAINS	25-Dec-32	6	1
MUTINY ON THE BOUNTY	MGM	05-Oct-36	6	0
JACK OF ALL TRADES	GAINS	10-Aug-36	6	0
HOUSE OF ROTHSCHILD	20	24-Dec-34	6	1
BEDTIME STORY	PAR	04-Dec-33	6	0
DINNER AT EIGHT	MGM	30-Apr-34	6	0
LOST HORIZON	COL	31-Jan-38	6	0
GENERAL DIED AT DAWN	PAR	29-Mar-37	6	0
THEODORA GOES WILD	COL	28-Jun-37	6	0
QUEEN CHRISTINA	MGM	01-Oct-34	6	0
AFFAIRS OF VOLTAIRE	WB	02-Apr-34	6	0

Source: Bolton Evening News

Notes:

a) Seven films have been excluded from analysis because their General Release Dates fall outside of the period under investigation. See footnote 4 of this Chapter.

preferences of Boltonians during these years and to contrast with results found elsewhere. Clearly, the pattern of distribution uncovered is not that which would emerge if a random sample of films was taken. The bulk of the population of films would not have had a first run release in one of Bolton's principal cinemas but would have entered the system at a lower level, as part of a double bill programme at a twice weekly change cinema. It is also

clear that those films listed in Table 6.6, which repeatedly return to the town's cinemas, are exceptional. This of course is the point of the exercise: those films which have exceptional runs in the London West End not only get a single billing status in a weekly change Bolton cinema but continue to work their way through the system of provision. Less popular films enter the Cascade system at a lower level cinema.

Table 6.7 below illustrates this phenomenon. The weighted average rank of the first seven cinemas is either 1.0 or very close to it. As stated earlier in this section, these cinemas acted as first-run houses and premiered the great proportion of the leading feature films of the period. Perhaps more interesting is the varied evidence concerning the remaining cinemas. Broadly speaking it is possible to divide these into cinemas which exhibited a good volume of 'hit' productions and those that did not. Of those that did we can further distinguish on the basis of rank. Accordingly, whilst the Gem, Belle and Royal showed a very high proportion of the 119 film Selection they typically did so after these films had been shown in cinemas such as the Palladium, Crompton, Regal, and Regent, or to a lesser extent the Majestic and Embassy. Some cinemas showed very few films from the Selection. The Ritz, Tivoli, and Empire barely showed any at all and the Majestic, Palace and Plaza (Windsor from 1937) not many more.

Conclusion

The pattern of cinema-going in Bolton conforms to those expectations set down earlier when elaborating the

Table 6.7: Ranking of Bolton's Cinemas, 1932-38, based on Order of Exhibition Run

Cinema	1st Run	2nd Run	3rd Run	4th Run	5th Run	6th Run	7th Run	8th Run	9th Run	Total Plays	Prop. of 119 Films ^a	Weighted Ave. Rank ^b
Odeon	7									7	0.06	1.00
Lido	2									2	0.02	1.00
Rialto	26	1								27	0.23	1.04
Queens	33	2								35	0.29	1.06
Capitol	36			1						37	0.31	1.08
TheatreRoyal	11	2								13	0.11	1.15
Hippodrome	28	2	2							32	0.27	1.19
Regal	4	17	1							22	0.18	1.86
Imperial		4	3		1					8	0.07	2.75
Ritz		2	1	1						4	0.03	2.75
Palladium	3	11	8	5	1		1			29	0.24	2.79
Crompton		5	19	7	1	2				34	0.29	3.29
Majestic	1	9	4	1	2	2			1	20	0.17	3.30
Carlton		3	7	7	2					19	0.16	3.42
Embassy	3	5	9	2	2	1		2		24	0.20	3.33
Palace		1	7	4	2	1				15	0.13	3.67
Regent		12	12	5	4		4		2	39	0.33	3.74
Tivoli			2	1	1					4	0.03	3.75
Gem		3	15	20	13	3	1	1		56	0.47	4.09
Belle		3	11	22	16	13	2	1		68	0.57	4.51
Royal		3	10	7	9	4	4	1	1	39	0.33	4.56
Plaza/Windsor	1	5	5	1	2			1	1	16	0.13	4.44
Empire			1	1	1		2			5	0.04	5.20
Total	154	86	117	89	56	28	14	6	5	555		

Source: Bolton Evening News

Notes:

a) The participation rate is obtained by dividing the number of distinct programmes containing films from the Selection by the total number (119) of these films.

b) The weights used record the respective exhibition runs of the films showing in the respective cinemas.

characteristics of the cascade system of distribution. It is further supported by the exhibition records of the cinemas of Dover and the Chelsea, Kensington, Fulham, Hammersmith and Shepherds Bush districts of West London. Of the 119 films from the Selection investigated none but **Damaged Lives** and **Green Pastures** failed to obtain at least one booking in Dover; there were no exceptions in West London⁷. Whilst a similarly detailed analysis of the pattern of distribution based upon film popularity could be conducted for these two urban centres,

the results would broadly repeat those already presented for Bolton and not serve to add significantly to the understanding of the Cascade system.

In essence, those films which played for extended runs in London's West End, and continued to receive a wide distribution amongst the cinemas in the sample set also continued, in both time and space, to receive extended exhibition beyond their General Release date. Put alternatively, the Bolton analysis does not present any evidence to invalidate the pattern of popularity - measured by the POPSTAT index - which emerges from the exhibition records of the cinemas in the sample set, set out in the following Chapter. Further, the results from all three centres strengthen the idea of a discriminating public which was served by exhibitors both sufficiently aware of and responsive to their preferences. Alas, the restricted scope of this investigation does not lead to a verdict upon the particular cinema preferences and idiosyncrasies of Boltonians during this period. Accordingly, it is neither possible to confirm nor reject Richards' hypotheses on the subject. However, it would appear that if distinct regional preferences can be identified they did not seem to operate at the expense of those 'hit' productions which emanated from London's West End.

Notes.

1. Sedgwick (1994a, p.19 & footnote 33, p.31) found that 74 films registered with the Board of Trade between 1 September 1933 and 31 August 1934 failed to obtain a showing in the sample set of cinemas during the course of 1934, representing approximately 10% of the films available for distribution. Box-office success here refers to a absolute scale of popularity rather than a relative scale which might be measured by rates of return to a specific film investment. For a discussion of rates of return of films

shown in the US. during the 1930s see Sedgwick (1994b and 1995)

2. See Halliwell (1986, p.29) for the map. The Hippodrome Moses Gate, and Empire Farnworth have not been counted.

3. The exceptions were **42nd. Street** - opening at the Regal and Palladium w/c 2.10.33, **Damaged Lives** - Palladium from w/c 11.12.33, and **Green Pastures** - Embassy from 10.5.37.

4. This does not include the seven films which received their General Release after 31.3.38 but does include exhibitions of the remaining 119 films which might have been shown after this date. The excluded films are, **Maria Walewska**, **Stage Door**, **True Confessions**, **Tovarich**, **Hurricane**, **Buccaneer**, **Nothing Sacred**, and **Goldwyn Follies**.

5. The exceptions were **Captain Blood** which played for 1.5 weeks at the Theatre Royal, from w/c 3.8.36, **Damaged Lives** - 2 weeks at the Palladium from w/c 11.12.33 and **Sign of the Cross** - 2 weeks at the Rialto from w/c 9.10.33. A few films opened as the leading part of a double bill programme. These were **Affairs of Voltaire** with **Smithy** - Hippodrome w/c 2.4.34, **Dreaming Lips** with **The Gap** - Lido w/c 25.10.37, **Painted Veil** with **Bon Voyage** - Capitol w/c 15.7.35, **Road to Glory** with **Grand Jury** - Capitol w/c 26.4.37 and **Souls at Sea** with **She's No Lady** - Capitol w/c 14.3.38.

6. Worktown Box 29E, Mass Observation, published in Richards and Sheridan (1987, pp.27-30).

7. Both films appeared to have specialist audience interest which may explain why they were not shown in Dover. In the case of **Damaged Lives** the film may not have obtained a local licence, although this conjecture is unsubstantiated.

Appendix to Chapter 6:

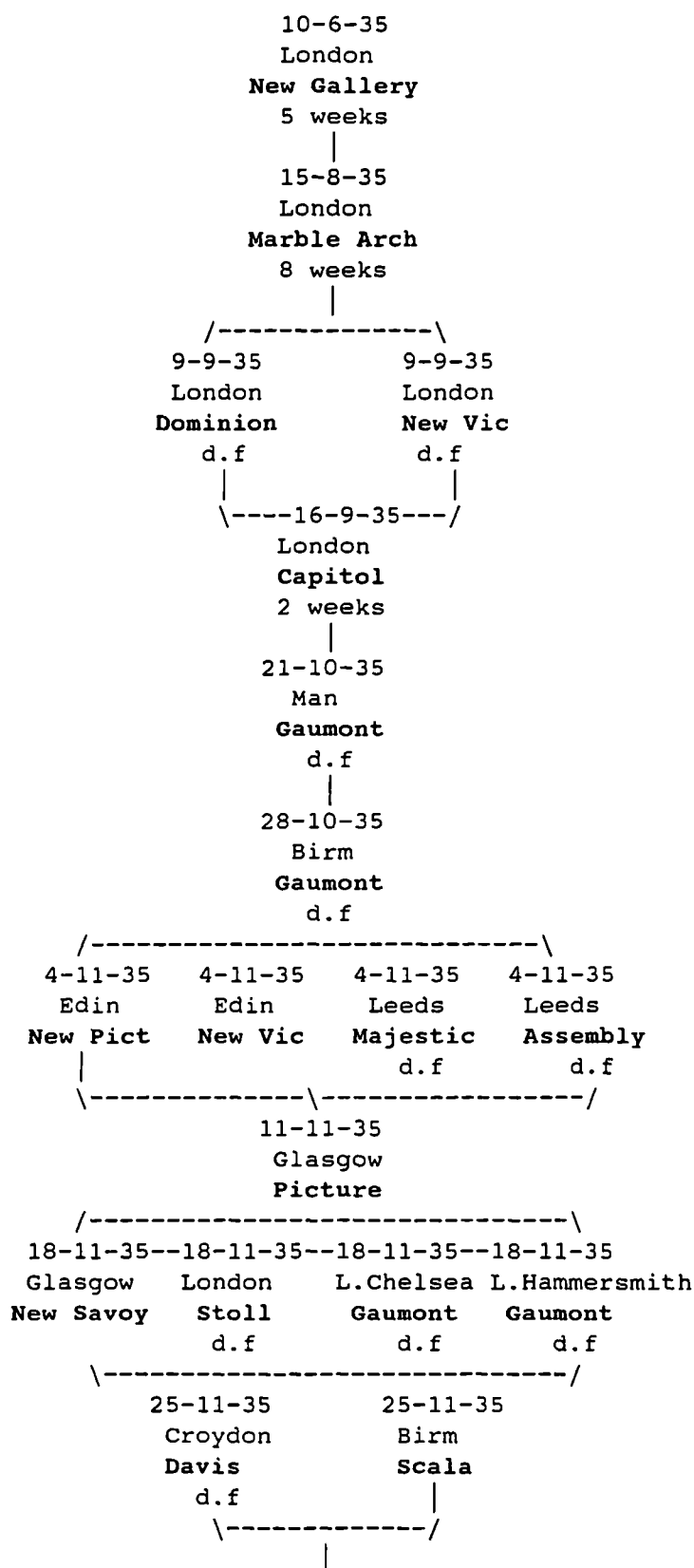
8 Distribution/Exhibition Case Studies

This Appendix to the Chapter investigates the exhibition records of eight films from the 126 selection which played in the sample cinema set and the Bolton, Dover and West London locations. The information is presented in detail in tables 6.8 to 6.15. The films have been chosen for illustrative purposes and are drawn from the major production studios and spread over the period of the investigation. The intention is to complement the general pattern of distribution which has emerged during this chapter with a series of brief film distribution/exhibition profiles.

The 39 Steps (Gaumont British) was registered with the Board of Trade in late June 1935, but opened at the New Gallery a few weeks earlier. Following a five week run it then moved to the Marble Arch Pavilion for an eight week run from week commencing 15 July 1935. The film then played at two of the London second-run pre-release houses - the Dominion and New Victoria - during week commencing 9 September 1935. Up to this point **The 39 Steps** had played in Gaumont British owned cinemas.

This practice largely continued as the film went onto General Release from 18 November 1935, having had further pre-General Release exhibitions at the Gaumont Birmingham and New Victoria and New Picture Edinburgh. Of the twenty three cinemas in the sample cinema set at which it played, only the Stoll London, Davis Croydon, Scala Birmingham, Cranstons Glasgow, Tower Leeds, Piccadilly Manchester, Embassy Bristol, and Palais Liverpool were

Table 6.8: Exhibition Record of The 39 Steps (Gaumont British)
Board of Trade Registration: w/c 27 June 1935



02-12-35	02-12-35	02-12-35	02-12-35	02-12-35	02-12-35
Dover	Liv	Liv	New	New	Bristol
Regent	Rialto	Trocadero	Pavilion	Queens	Regent
d.f					

\-----/

09-12-35	09-12-35	09-12-35
Glasgow	Leeds	L.Kensington
Cranstons	Tower	Kensington
		d.f

\-----/

/-----\

16-12-35	23-12-35
Man	Man
Piccadilly	Regal
d.f	

|

12-30-35	12-30-35
Bristol	Shef
Embassy	Regent
d.f	d.f

\-----/

01-13-36

Liv

Palais

/-----\

17-2-36	2-3-36	16-3-36	13-4-36	11-5-36
Bolton	Bolton	Bolton	Bolton	Bolton
Th.Royal	Majestic	Palace	Gem	Belle
.5 Weeks	.5 Weeks	.5 Weeks	.5 Weeks	.5 Weeks

\-----/

15-6-36

L.Chelsea

Kings

d.f .5wks

/-----\

7.9.36	4-1-37	4-1-37	6-2-37
Bolton	Bolton	Bolton	Bolton
Crompton	Palladium	Regent	Royal
.5 weeks	.5 weeks	.5 weeks	.5 weeks

df = double feature

Sources: Kine Weekly supplemented by provincial city daily and evening newspapers.

Note:

Unless stated otherwise all films ran as single features for one week. Re-releases are not included

not in the Gaumont British stable. The intense period of distribution was the seven week spell between late October and mid-December 1935 during which it was shown at the Gaumonts of Chelsea and Hammersmith during w/c 18 November 1935 and in Dover at the Regent for w/c 1 December 1935 as well as cinemas from the sample set. The film was not shown in Bolton until February 1936 where over the next 12 months it received eight distinct exhibitions.

Table 6.9: Exhibition Record of Cavalcade (Fox)
Board of Trade Registration: w/c 2 March 1933

02-20-33								
London								
Tivoli								
16 Weeks								
12-6-33								
London								
Marble Arch								
12 Weeks								
28-8-33								
Birm								
Gaumont								
2 weeks								
/-----\								
4-9-33	4-9-33	4-9-33	4-9-33	4-9-33	4-9-33	4-9-33	4-9-33	
Edin	Edin	Glasgow	Leeds	Liv	New	Dover		
New Pict.	New Vic.	Picture	Majestic	Trocadero	Queens	Kings		
				2 Weeks				
/-----\								
11-9-33	11-9-33	11-9-33	11-9-33	11-9-33	11-9-33	11-9-33		
Bristol	Edin	Edin	Leeds	Man	Birm			
Regent	Rutland	St Andrews	Scala	Piccadilly	West End			
				4 Weeks				
/-----\								
18-9-33	18-9-33	18-9-33	18-9-33	18-9-33	18-9-33	18-9-33	18-9-33	18-9-33
London	London	Bristol	Glas	Leeds	Leeds	Liv	Liv	New
Dominion	NewVic	NewPal	NewSav	Assembly	Coliseum	Rialto	RHippo	NewWest
/-----\								
25-9-33				25-9-33				
New				Shef				
Pavilion				Regent				
				2 weeks				
2-20-33								
Man								
Regal								
/-----\								
9-10-33				9-10-33				
L.Chelsea				L.Kensington				
Kings				WestKen Super				
16-10-33								
Croydon								
Davis								
d.f								
/-----\								
30-10-33		30-10-33		5-11-33		29-1-34		
Bolton		Bolton		Dover		Bolton		
Queens		Rialto		Kings		Imperial		
				d.f				

d.f= double feature.

Sources: Kine Weekly supplemented by provincial city daily and evening newspapers.

For the most part **The 39 Steps** was screened as a single feature programme, but on those few occasions in which it played as the leading film in a double-bill programme it is difficult to discern a pattern of partnership, with the shared films coming from Paramount, Universal, Fox, RKO, Chesterfield and 20th Century.

Cavalcade (Fox) opened during week commencing 20 February 1933 with a 16 week run at the Tivoli followed by 12 weeks at the Marble Arch Pavilion. It was still playing at the latter after its distribution to other London and provincial pre-release cinemas during week commencing 4 September 1933. (It also played at the Kings Dover as a single feature during this week). Over the course of the next five weeks it played to 28 cinemas from the sample set - with two week runs at Gaumont Birmingham and Piccadilly Manchester. It was put on General Release on 9 October 1933 and played at the Kings, Chelsea and West Kensington Super during this week. The film did not arrive at Bolton until the end of October 1933 where it opened jointly as a single feature at the Queens and Rialto. In all but three cases in the cinemas set, **Cavalcade** played in Gaumont British owned cinemas. In all cases bar one from the entire set of cinemas listed in Table 6.9 it played as a single feature.

The Charge of the Light Brigade (Warners) played at the Paramount owned Carlton for eight weeks from week commencing 29 December 1936. The Paramount connection was continued during the period immediately before and just after its General Release on 6 September 1937 (after two weeks at the Marble Arch Pavilion and

**Table 6.10: Exhibition Record of The Charge of the Light Brigade
(Warners)**

Board of Trade Registration: w/c 14 January 1937

29-12-36						
London						
Carlton						
8 weeks						
17-5-37						
London						
Marble						
2 Weeks						
/-----\						
12-7-37					12-7-37	
London					London	
Dominion					New Victoria	
d.f					d.f	
26-7-37						
London						
Rialto						
3 Weeks						
15-7-37						
Dover						
Regent						
/-----\						
23-8-37	23-8-37 ^a	23-8-37	23-8-37	23-8-37	23-8-37	
Leeds	Liv	Man	New			
Paramount	Paramount	Paramount	Paramount			
2 Weeks	2 Weeks	d.f 2 Wks	d.f			
/-----\						
6-9-36					6-9-37	
L.Hammersmith					Birm	
Broadway					Paramount	
d.f						
13-9-37					13-9-37	
L.Kensington					Birm	
Kensington					Futurist	
d.f					d.f	
/-----\						
20-9-37	20-9-37	20-9-37	20-9-37	20-9-37	20-9-37	20-9-37
Bristol	Bristol	Edin	Edin	Leeds	Man	Shef
Kings	Whiteladies	Palace	Playhouse	Tower	Royal	Central
d.f	d.f					2 Weeks
/-----\						
27-9-37					27.9.37	
Shef					Glasgow	
Cinema					Paramount	
d.f 2Wks						

/-----\			
4-10-37	4-10-37	4-10-37	
Bristol	Bristol	Bolton	
Empire	Triangle	Odeon	
d.f	d.f		
29-11-37	29-11-37	29-11-37	
Bolton	Bolton	Glasgow	
Regent	Crompton	Grand	
		.5 Weeks	
/-----\			
10-1-38	31-1-38	12-2-38	28.2.38
Bolton	Bolton	Bolton	Bolton
Carlton	Belle	Majestic	Empire
d.f .5wks	d.f .5wks	d.f .5wks	d.f .5wks

d.f= double feature.

Sources: Kine Weekly supplemented by provincial city daily and evening newspapers.

shared single week billings at both the Dominion and New Victoria, London), when it was exhibited at all the Paramount cinemas in the sample set. The film played at both Dover and West London cinemas around the time of its General Release but did not open at the Odeon, Bolton until w/c 4 October 1937. It also played at five ABC cinemas: four in Bristol (Kings, Whiteladies, Empire and Triangle) and the Theatre Royal Manchester.

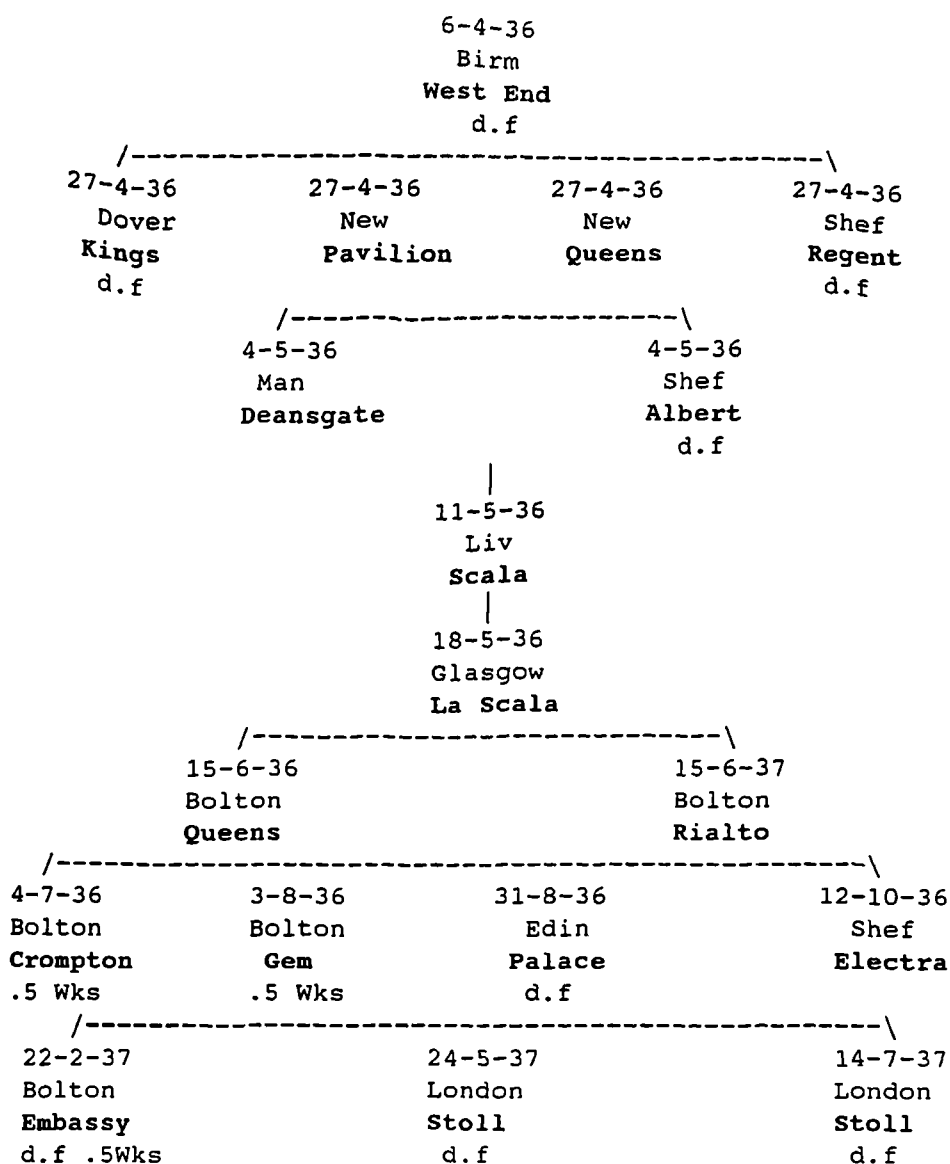
The Charge of the Light Brigade shared the programme at nine venues within the sample cinema set, combining with **The Girl from Scotland Yard** (Paramount) at the Manchester, Newcastle and Liverpool Paramounts; **Night of Mystery** (Paramount) and Paramount Glasgow; **Clarence** (Paramount) at the Kings and Whiteladies Bristol; **Holiday's End** (B&D) and **Girl Overboard** (Universal) respectively at the Empire and Triangle Bristol.

The Ghost Goes West (London Film Productions) played at thirty four cinemas in the sample set - just under 40 % of the sample population. The film premiered at the Leicester Square Theatre from mid December 1935 for ten weeks. Thereafter it appeared at

Table 6.11: Exhibition Record of The Ghost Goes West (LFP)

Board of Trade Registration: w/c 23 January 1936

16-12-35					
London					
Leicester Square					
10 Weeks					
/-----\					
3-2-36		3-2-36		3-2-36	
Bristol		Edin		Edin	
Regent		New Vic		Rutland	
d.f					
10-2-36					
Bristol					
New Palace					
d.f					
17-2-36					
Liv					
Trocadero					
d.f					
/-----\					
24-2-36	24-2-36	24-2-36	24-2-36	24-2-36	24-2-36
Glasgow	Liv	Liv	Man	London	London
Picture	Rialto	RHippo	Gaumont	Dominion	New Vic
	d.f	d.f	d.f 2Wks	d.f	d.f
2-3-36					
Glasgow					
New Savoy					
d.f					
/-----\					
9-3-36	9-3-36	9-3-36	9-3-36	9-3-36	9-3-36
London	Leeds	L.Kensington	L.Chelsea	L.Hammersmith	
Stoll	Majestic	Kensington	Gaumont	Gaumont	
d.f	d.f	d.f	d.f	d.f	
/-----\					
16-3-36			16-3-36		
Croydon			Leeds		
Davis			Scala		
d.f			d.f		
/-----\					
23-3-36		23-3-36		23-3-36	
Bristol		Bristol		Leeds	
Empire		Triangle		Assembly	
d.f		d.f		d.f	
30-3-36					
Birm					
Gaumont					
d.f					



d.f= double feature.

Sources: Kine Weekly supplemented by provincial city daily and evening newspapers.

almost all the Gaumont owned cinemas as well at a number of independent cinemas - the Stoll London on two occasions, once sharing the bill with **Top Hat** (RKO), Greens Glasgow, Davis Croydon, Deansgate Manchester, Palace Edinburgh, and Electra Sheffield. It also played at two ABC venues - Empire and Triangle Bristol. The film 's initial distribution was comparatively very rapid with engagement in fifteen sample set cinemas prior to its general Release date of 9 March 1936. It was seen at three West London cinemas during that week - The Kensington, and the

Gaumonts at Chelsea and Hammersmith - but did not reach Dover until the end of April 1936 (at the Kings) and Bolton until mid-June (at the Queens and Rialto)

For the greater part the film featured as the leading element in a shared programme, but had single billing status in a number of cinemas other than the Leicester Square Theatre. No pattern emerges amongst those films sharing billing status. After the film's early flourish the temporal pattern of distribution appears less intense than that of the three previous films. The film's diffusion to the provincial cinemas from week commencing 3 February 1936 took place over three months: almost twice as slow as **Cavalcade**. A further point of interest is the very short first-run pre-release period. The film was only in its eighth week at the Leicester Square Theatre when it went out to the Regent Bristol and New Victoria and Rutland Edinburgh.

It Happened One Night (Columbia) had a more conventional diffusion. Registered with the Board of Trade during w/c 29 March 1934, the film was distributed to the provincial pre-release cinemas during week commencing 10 September 1934, after a four week run at the Tivoli followed by separate one and three week appearances as a single feature at the Marble Arch Pavilion and single week double billed appearances at the Dominion and New Victoria cinemas - appearing with **Journal of a Crime** (First National) and **Good Girl** (Paramount) respectively. Although the General Release date was given as 1 October 1934, it appeared at the principal provincial city cinemas a little earlier, playing in eighteen of the sample set cinemas between w/c 10 September

Table 6.12: Exhibition Record of It Happened One Night (Columbia)

Board of Trade Registration: w/c 23 January 1936

30-3-34						
London						
Tivoli						
4 Weeks						
28-5-34						
London						
Marble Arch						
25-6-34						
London						
Marble Arch						
3 Weeks						
/-----\						
9-7-34			9-7-34			
London			London			
Dominion			New Vic			
d.f			d.f			
/-----\						
10-9-34			10-9-34			
Leeds			Leeds			
Assembly			Majestic			
d.f			d.f			
/-----\						
17-9-34	17-9-34	17-9-34	17-9-34	17-9-34	17-9-34	17-9-34
Dover	Birm	Bristol	Edin	Edin	Glasgow	
Granada	Gaumont	Regent	New Pict	New Vic	Picture	
d.f	d.f	d.f	d.f	d.f		
/-----\						
24-9-34	24-9-34	24-9-34	24-9-34	24-9-34	24-9-34	24-9-34
Liv	Liv	Man	Man	New	New	Shef
Rialto	RHippo	Deansgate	Gaiety	Pavilion	Queens	Regent
	d.f		2 Weeks			
/-----\						
1-10-34			1-10-34			
London			Croydon			
Stoll			Davis			
d.f			d.f			
/-----\						
8-10-34			8-10-34			
Birm			Glasgow			
Scala			Cranstons			
/-----\						
22-10-34		22-10-34			22-10-34	
Bolton		Bristol			Bristol	
Queens		Empire			Triangle	
		d.f			d.f	

/-----\			
19-11-34	19-11-34	3-12-34	
Bolton	Bolton	Bolton	
Majestic	Palladium	Palace	
.5 Weeks	.5 Weeks	.5 Weeks	
/-----\			
7-1-35	14-1-35	28-1-35	25-2-35
Bolton	Bolton	Bolton	Bolton
Belle	Crompton	Royal	Embassy
.5 Weeks	.5 Weeks	.5 Weeks	.5 Weeks

d.f= double feature.

Sources: Kine Weekly supplemented by provincial city daily and evening newspapers.

1934 and 8 October 1934, as well as the Granada Dover. The film did not arrive at Bolton until w/c 22 October.

Within the sample cinema set, the majority of cinemas at which the film was shown were owned by the Gaumont British organisation: the film did not appear in any of the Paramount cinemas in the sample set and only two ABC cinemas - the Empire and Triangle Bristol. In eight of the Gaumont British cinemas the film appeared on a double bill programme with **The Crime of Helen Stanley** (Columbia), otherwise playing twice with **Identity Parade** (Columbia) and twice with **The 30 Day Princess** (Paramount).

The Lives of a Bengal Lancer (Paramount), in comparison with the preceding films of this case study, had a restricted distribution in the sample cinema set playing at only eighteen of the cinemas in the sample set. However, this observation must be tempered by the fact that it was used mainly as a single feature and played at the large Paramount provincial city cinemas in late April 1935, following its London pre-Release - in three cases (Glasgow, Manchester and Newcastle) securing two week runs. The film also received two week premiere runs in Birmingham (Futurist), Bristol (Kings and Whiteladies) and Sheffield

Table 6.13: Exhibition Record of Lives of a Bengal Lancer (Paramount)

Board of Trade Registration: w/c 7 February 1935

28-1-35 London Carlton 18 Weeks				
/-----\				
22-4-35	22-4-35	22-4-35	22-4-35	22-4-35
Birm	Glasgow	Leeds	Man	New
Futurist	Paramount	Paramount	Paramount	Paramount
2 Weeks	2 Weeks		2 Weeks	2 Weeks
28-4-35 Dover Plaza d.f				
/-----\				
6-5-35	6-5-35	6-5-35	6-5-35	
Bristol	Bristol	Edin	Edin	
Kings	Whiteladies	New Pict	New Vic	
2 Weeks	2 Weeks			
13-5-35 Shef Hippo ^a 2 Weeks				
/-----\				
3-6-35		3-6-35	3-6-35	
Dover		London	London	
Regent		Astoria	New Vic	
d.f				
/-----\				
10-6-35	10-6-35	10-6-35	10-6-35	
London	L.Hammersmith	L.Chelsea	L.Kensington	
Stoll	Broadway	Gaumont	Kensington	
d.f	d.f	d.f	d.f	
22.7.35 Shef Electra				
/-----\				
5-8-35	5-8-35	5-8-35		
Bolton	Croydon	Bolton		
Hippo	Davis	Capitol		
	d.f			
2-9-35 Glasgow Regent				

/-----\					
7-10-35	16-11-35	6-1-36	6-1-36	20-1-36	20-1-36
Bolton	Bolton	Bolton	Bolton	Bolton	Bolton
Crompton	Palladium	Gem	Regent	Belle	Royal
	.5 Weeks	.5 Weeks	.5 Weeks	.5 Weeks	.5 Weeks
		27-1-36			
		London			
		Stoll			
		d.f			
		4-7-36			
		Bolton			
		Majestic			
		.5 Weeks			

d.f= double feature.

Sources: Kine Weekly supplemented by provincial city daily and evening newspapers.

Note:

a. d.f for the 2nd week of the run.

(Hippodrome). During this period it was also exhibited at the Plaza Dover.

The film was premiered at the Carlton Haymarket in late January 1935, sustaining an 18 week run. Interestingly, the film was not exhibited in the London second-run Pre-General Release cinemas - in this case the the Astoria and New Victoria - until six weeks after its appearance in the provincial Paramount cinemas, probably a consequence of its extended Carlton run. Of the West London cinemas it played at the Broadway Hammersmith, Gaumont Chelsea and the Kensington immediately afterwards. Again, the diffusion of the film to Bolton took another two months with the film opening there at the Hippodrome w/c 5 August 1935.

Mutiny on the Bounty (MGM) premiered at the Empire Leicester Square, running for six weeks from late December 1935. It did not then surface for seven months until it appeared for four weeks on a single bill at the Marble Arch Pavilion from w/c 3 August

Table 6.14: Exhibition Record of Mutiny On the Bounty (MGM)
Board of Trade Registration: w/c 2 January 1936

30-12-35 London Empire 6 Weeks				
/-----\				
3-8-36 London Marble Arch 4 Weeks			3-8-36 Dover Granada	
24-8-36 Glasgow Picture 2 Weeks				
/-----\				
31-8-36 London Dominion	31-8-36 London New Vic	31-8-36 Liv Trocadero 2 Weeks	31-8-36 Man Gaumont 2 Weeks	
/-----\				
7-9-36 Bristol Regent		7-9-36 Glasgow New Savoy		
/-----\				
14-9-36 Bristol New Palace	14-9-36 Liv Rialto	14-9-36 Liv RHippo		
/-----\				
21-9-36 L.Walton Grn Red Hall	21-9-36 London Stoll d.f	21-9-36 L.Chelsea Gaumont	21-9-36 L.Kensington Super	
/-----\				
28-9-36 Croydon Davis	28-9-36 Glasgow Regent	28-9-36 Man Gaiety	28-9-36 Bristol Embassy	
/-----\				
5-10-36 Edin New Picture 2 Weeks	5-10-36 Edin New Vic 2 Weeks	5-10-36 New Queens 2 Weeks	5-10-36 Bolton Queens	5-10-36 Bolton Rialto
/-----\				
12-10-36 Leeds Majestic	12-10-36 Leeds Scala	12-10-36 Shef Regent 2 Weeks	12-10-36 Birm Gaumont	12-10-36 Edin St Andrews
/-----\				
19-10-36 Birm West End 2 Weeks		19-10-36 New New Westgate		

/-----\				
26-10-36	26-10-36	26-10-36	26-10-36	26-10-36
Glasgow	Leeds	Leeds	New	Bolton
Cranstons	Assembly	Coliseum	Pavilion	Crompton
/-----\				
7-12-36	8-2-37	8-3-37	24.5.37	
Bolton	Bolton	Bolton	Leeds	
Embassy	Gem	Belle	Tower	
	.5 Weeks	.5 Weeks	.5 Weeks	

d.f= double feature.

Sources: Kine Weekly supplemented by provincial city daily and evening newspapers.

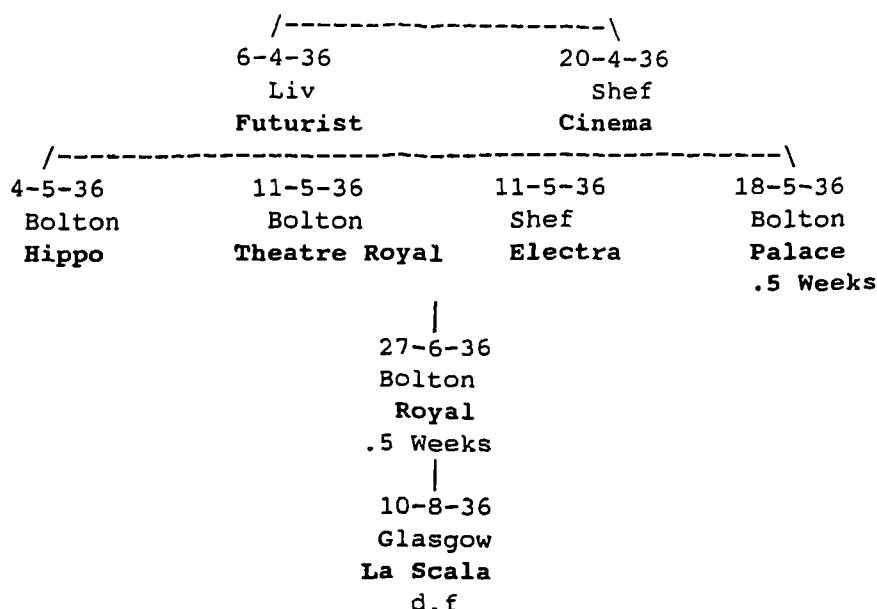
1936, before going on a pre-General Release run at the end of August 1936. The film did not go to General Release until 21 September 1936 by which time it had appeared at five provincial city cinemas as well as opening at the Granada Dover on 2 August 1936. Its appearance at three West London cinemas, the Gaumont Chelsea, Red Hall Walton Green and West Kensington Super coincided with the General Release date.

As with so many hit productions, the film played at the Dominion and New Victoria, London during this pre-release period. After its run at the Empire Leicester Square, the film played almost exclusively in the Gaumont British cinemas of the sample set with the exception of a small number of appearances in a small number of independents - Davis Croydon, Stoll London, Gaiety Manchester, Embassy Bristol, and Cranstons Glasgow. It played for two weeks on a single bill programme at the Picture House Glasgow, Trocadero Liverpool, Gaumont Manchester, New Picture and New Victoria Edinburgh, Regent Sheffield, and West End Birmingham - all Gaumont British owned cinemas.

Finally in this series of cases, **Top Hat** (RKO) appeared at the Carlton Haymarket, for a 13 week run from the beginning of

Table 6.15: Exhibition Record of Top Hat (RKO)
Board of Trade Registration: w/c 3 October 1936

7-10-35 London Carlton 14 Weeks			
/-----\			
20-1-36	20-1-36	20-1-36	20-1-36
London	London	Glasgow	Man
Dominion	New Vic	Paramount	Paramount ^a
d.f	d.f	d.f 2 Wks	2 Weeks
/-----\			
27-1-36	27-1-36	27-1-36	
Leeds	London	New	
Paramount	Marble Arch	Paramount	
	2 Weeks	d.f	
	3-2-36		
	Birm		
	Futurist ^b		
	2 Weeks		
/-----\			
10-2-36	10-2-36	10-2-36	
London	L.Chelsea	L.Kensington	
Stoll	Gaumont	Kensington	
d.f	d.f	d.f	
/-----\			
17-2-36	17-2-36	17-2-36	
Croydon	Liv	Man	
Davis	Paramount	Deansgate	
d.f	2 Weeks		
/-----\			
24-2-36	24-2-36	24-2-36	
Edin	Edin	Leeds	
New Pict	New Vic	Tower	
/-----\			
2-3-36	9-3-36		
Glasgow	London		
Regent	Stoll		
d.f	d.f		
/-----\			
23-3-36	23-3-36		
Bristol	Glasgow		
Hippo	Cranstons		
2 Weeks			
	29-3-36		
	Dover		
	Granada		
	d.f		



d.f= double feature.

Sources: Kine Weekly supplemented by provincial city daily and evening newspapers.

Notes:

a. d.f for the first week of the run.

b. d.f for the first week of the run.

October 1935, playing at the provincial city Paramount cinemas and the Dominion and New Victoria cinemas in London, before going out on General Release on 10 February 1936. Thereafter, like **Mutiny on the Bounty** the film showed in a mixture of Gaumont British and independent cinemas, on both a single and double billing basis. It opened at the Gaumont Chelsea and the Kensington during the films General Release week, not arriving in Dover until w/c 30 March 1936 at the Granada, and reaching Bolton some five weeks later in early May 1936 at the Hippodrome.

Summary

Several interesting observations emerge from this detailed look at the distribution pattern of these eight cases. Firstly, the cinemas of the ABC chain do not feature prominently. Of the 203 separate programmes in which these films appeared only twelve were registered with ABC cinemas. This is consistent with the

evidence presented in Tables 6.1 and 6.3 from which no ABC cinema in the sample set scores above the mean number of programmes featuring the 126 films in the selection. Conversely, cinemas from the Gaumont British stable dominate the exhibition records of these films. Secondly, with the exception of the **Ghost Goes West**, the other seven films in this case study had extensive lags (four to seven months) between their first pre-General Release showing and General Release. A comparison of exhibition records and General Release dates indicates that cinemas which feature in the top half of Table 6.1 generally showed films prior to General Release. As suggested already, the Dominion and New Victoria London seem to have acted as a conduit through which most of the popular films passed on their way out to the principal provincial city cinemas - all eight cases played at the New Victoria and seven at the Dominion. Thirdly, the Paramount organisation was able to secure the exhibition of popular non-Paramount films in its cinemas. The significance of this lies in the degree of openness in the market for films in Britain. Clearly as shown, Paramount fully exploited its own hit productions such as the **Lives of the Bengal Lancers**, but this neither precluded other exhibition chains from obtaining the film or prevented it from showing the films of rival companies - with the exception of MGM. This likewise pertains to the Gaumont British organisation, principally in terms of its need to acquire hit productions from production companies other than its own production wing.

Finally, cinemas in Dover appeared to be able regularly to acquire films before their General Release date; this being the case for five of the eight films in this case study. Conversely,

Bolton cinemas generally did not exhibit these films until six to eight weeks following this date. The West London cinemas tended to open them on or around the General Release date. In itself the slow pace at which films were diffused to Bolton would not have been important to either the exhibitors of the town or their distributors if little in the way of audience leakage took place to cinemas in nearby centres such as Manchester, where it would have been possible to see the films at an earlier date. The descriptions of the town which emerge from Halliwell and Richards suggest that Boltonians would have been content to await the big features and the significant number of runs achieved by films from the Selection suggest that any leakage factor was negligible.

Chapter 7

THE PERFORMANCE OF FILMS AND FILM COMPANIES IN THE BRITISH MARKET 1932-37

Introduction

The commercial life of a feature film during the Thirties was typically brief. Even those films in the 126 Selection of West End hits whose exhibition records were tracked in Chapters 5 and 6 from the prestigious 'flagship' cinemas to the humblest of Bolton cinemas, had for the most part completed their passage within 12 months. Less popular films, of course, experienced much shorter exhibition spans. Although re-releases became more common towards the end of the period under investigation, they were never an important element in pre-Second World War film-going and hence not a significant source of box-office receipts.

This brief life cycle was reflected in the amortisation schedules used by the major Hollywood studios in assessing the profitability of their outputs. Greenwald described the application of the principal of amortisation to film as:

Even though the physical condition of a film may remain the same, the entire value of a film can be eliminated leaving no residual value. The obsolescence of films is frankly noted in a film's inability to bring any additional income and is recognised by a fast depreciation. (1950, p.107)

The schedules for 1935 are repeated in Table 7.1 below. Although similar information has not yet been uncovered for the British studios of the time, and given that there was no tendency for domestic films to differ significantly from their Hollywood counterparts with respect to their circulation characteristics, the general implication of the American schedules is clear: films

were expected to recover their costs in little more than 12 months after General Release. Any film which failed to do so made a loss. What is perhaps as startling is the approximate geometric nature of the schedules with all studios - with the exception of Universal - expecting to meet at least half the production costs of any one film within twelve weeks of release. The significance of the sample cinema set, from which the POPSTAT Index of film popularity has been constructed, is that the constituent cinemas would have expected to screen films within three months of release.

Table 7.1: The Film Amortisation Schedules of the Major Hollywood Studios in 1935^a

Weeks	Loew's (MGM)	Paramnt	Warners	20th Cent Fox	RKO	Columbia	Universal
4	15.0	35.0		14.0	17.0	9.0	10.8
8	36.0			35.0	37.5	28.0	25.5
12	51.0	80.0	51.5	50.0	52.25	50.0	39.5
16	60.27	89.0		60.0	62.75	67.5	50.0
24	67.6			72.5	73.75	84.0	63.8
26		95.9	73.0	75.5		86.5	66.8
52	88.75	100.0	93.75	94.5	95.0	98.0	97.0
65	100.0						

Source: Greenwald (1950, Table VI-2).

Note:

It is not clear from Greenwald's account whether these schedules include foreign sales. In his Table VI-3 he lists the types of amortisation schedules practised by the studios with respect to foreign sales. He identifies four main conventions: 1) all films written-off in the domestic market - USA and Canada; 2) All films written-off in the world market (including domestic) at the same rate; 3) all films written-off with different rates for the domestic and foreign market; 4) all films written-off with different rates for the domestic market and different rates for the U.K. and other foreign markets.

Characteristics of the Sample Data

In establishing an index of popularity for feature films marketed in Britain between 1 January 1932 and 31 March 1938, those films released in 1931 which continued to be shown during 1932 and those released up to the end of the period have been included. The POPSTAT score in each case is lower than expected

since their full distribution amongst the sample set has not been captured. In the case of 1931 releases this is simply because 1931 exhibitions have not been recorded. At the other end of the spectrum those films released from approximately September 1937 onwards are also unlikely to have had their distribution fully recorded, given the normal clearance period between the London West End and General Release and the subsequent period in which films continued to be shown within the sample cinema set.¹

These factors are apparent in the annual POPSTAT results shown in Table 7.2. In particular the lower mean for 1937 suggests that care should be taken when comparing the popularity of individual titles of that year.

Table 7.2: General POPSTAT Characteristics of the Sample Data

	Films Released	Mean POPSTAT (x)	Standard Deviation (s)	Coefficient of Variation (v = s/x)
1931 ^a	325	3.38	3.81	1.13
1932	647	6.11	6.53	1.07
1933	648	6.00	7.47	1.24
1934	664	6.21	7.10	1.14
1935	700	6.34	7.83	1.24
1936	743	6.29	8.15	1.30
1937 ^b	803	4.93	7.43	1.51
1938 ^c	221	1.03	2.81	2.73

Notes:

a. Only includes those films which appeared in at least one of the cinemas in the sample set in 1932.

b. The POPSTAT results will not reflect a full distribution record for those films released from approximately September 1937 onwards, hence the lower POPSTAT mean.

c. Includes all films released during the first three months of 1938. These films will not have had a sample set of cinemas before the end of this period.

Three particular points of interest arise from Table 7.2.

Firstly, there is the upward drift in the number of films marketed: counted as all titles registered with the Board of Trade together with a small number of commercially popular

documentaries - a category excluded from the requirements of the Quota legislation. The annual rate of growth in titles is 3.6% for the period 1932-37. Secondly, as would be expected, the mean annual POPSTAT score remains fairly stable for the complete years 1932-36, the variation being explained by: a) the small increase in the number of cinemas in the sample set; b) changes to the mean revenue potential of cinemas in the cinema set and hence their respective weights as a consequence of the entry and exit of cinemas into and from the sample set and changes to the prices at individual cinemas; and c) changes in the numbers of films competing for exhibition amongst the sample set of cinemas. Thirdly, the standard deviation, and consequently the coefficient of variation, is also stable, suggesting a repetitive frequency distribution of POPSTAT scores for the period.

POPSTAT Frequency Distribution

This last point is evident from the frequency distributions presented in Tables 7.3 and 7.4 below. All are "C" shaped, sloping downwards from left to right and indicating a distribution in which the modal value is either 0 or less than 1 for all years and thereafter falls away gradually leaving only a small proportion of films achieving high POPSTAT scores. As the POPSTAT statistic is in effect a relative measure of box-office performance it means that the most popular films of each year earned upwards of 60 times that of those films falling into the modal classification and 10 times the arithmetic mean.² It is clear that only a small number of films could expect to become 'hits', with approximately 65% of films earning less than average box-office receipts. At the other end of the distribution only approximately 10% of films earned more than twice the revenue of

Table 7.3: POPSTAT Frequency Distribution of Films Marketed in Britain between 1 January 1932 and 31 March 1938

POPSTAT Classification	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937
= 0	62	72	80	99	131	200
>0 - 1	68	89	69	61	74	104
>1 - 2	48	51	41	58	67	67
>2 - 3	56	55	50	55	34	65
>3 - 4	56	47	56	72	49	65
>4 - 5	67	53	59	49	64	34
>5 - 6	40	36	53	46	50	37
>6 - 7	52	36	46	35	42	39
>7 - 8	29	37	41	38	38	33
>8 - 9	26	29	26	21	27	21
>9 - 10	26	27	24	26	13	22
>10 -11	26	22	22	25	23	16
>11 -12	20	15	10	24	18	7
>12 -13	7	15	11	14	14	10
>13 -14	4	3	13	3	7	13
>14 -15	11	12	4	12	14	6
>15 -20	24	18	27	27	42	30
>20- 30	19	23	22	18	20	20
>30- 40	5	4	5	9	7	8
>40- 50	2	2	4	5	6	5
>50- 60	1	1	0	2	2	0
>60- 70	0	0	1	1	0	0
>70- 80	0	0	0	0	0	0
>80- 90	0	0	0	0	1	1
>90- 100	0	1	0	0	0	0
Total	647	648	664	700	743	803

films at the arithmetic mean and only 2% of films with scores more than two standard deviations above the mean.

The skewed nature of the distribution was important information to studio heads in devising, and allocating resources to, annual production portfolios. 'Hit' production was an inherently risky activity and clear evidence exists that the major Hollywood studios compensated for the variance in those rates of return associated with big budget vehicles with the more reliable earning power of smaller budget products.³ Such strategic thinking contrasts with that adopted by Goldwyn Studios and

Table 7.4: POPSTAT Cumulative Percentage Frequency Distribution of Films Marketed in Britain between 1 January 1932 and 31 March 1938

POPSTAT Class	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937
= 0	9.6	11.1	12.0	14.3	17.6	24.9
>0 - 1	20.0	24.8	22.4	23.0	27.6	37.9
>1 - 2	27.4	32.7	28.6	31.2	36.6	46.2
>2 - 3	36.1	41.2	36.1	39.1	41.2	54.3
>3 - 4	44.7	48.5	44.6	49.4	47.8	62.4
>4 - 5	55.0	56.6	53.5	56.3	56.4	66.6
>5 - 6	61.2	62.2	61.4	62.9	63.1	71.2
>6 - 7	69.2	67.7	68.4	67.9	68.8	76.1
>7 - 8	73.7	73.5	74.5	73.3	73.9	80.2
>8 - 9	77.7	77.9	78.5	76.3	77.5	82.8
>9 - 10	81.7	82.1	82.1	80.0	79.3	85.6
>10 -11	85.7	85.5	85.4	83.6	82.4	87.5
>11 -12	88.8	87.8	86.9	87.0	84.8	88.4
>12 -13	89.8	90.1	88.6	89.0	86.7	89.7
>13 -14	90.4	90.6	90.5	89.4	87.6	91.3
>14 -15	92.1	92.4	91.1	91.2	89.5	92.0
>15 -20	95.8	95.2	95.2	95.0	95.2	95.8
>20- 30	98.8	98.8	98.5	97.6	97.8	98.3
>30- 40	99.5	99.4	99.2	98.9	98.8	99.3
>40- 50	99.8	99.7	99.8	99.6	99.6	99.9
>50- 60	100.0	99.8	99.8	99.9	99.9	99.9
>60- 70	100.0	99.8	100.0	100.0	99.9	99.9
>70- 80	100.0	99.8	100.0	100.0	99.9	99.9
>80- 90	100.0	99.8	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
>90- 100	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Korda's London Film Productions (after its profitable success with **The Private Life of Henry VIII** in 1933), where annual production, in both cases, consisted of a small number of big budget films. As King writes:

Looking at the global level of activity, we find that every season produces its hits, but that no particular producer can be absolutely certain of monopolising the 'hit' product. What this means is that any season of releases resembled, at first sight, a zero sum game with some producers having a time-dated monopoly of the total available market, theoretically speaking, since their film or films are the most popular. (1986, p.162)

It has been argued earlier that even the presence of vertically integrated combines doesn't necessarily upset this view in that

the popular success of Film A produced by company X will lead to a gain for company Y where it is able to exhibit A in its own cinemas. Thus:

What the lucky producer has, therefore, is a monopoly (copy) right to a film which will give his company access to his competitor's screen time for a price. (King 1986, p.162)

Zero POPSTAT Rated Films.

From Tables 7.3 and 7.4 it is clear that not only does the number of zero rated films increase in absolute terms, but also proportionately to the total population of films, even allowing for the small increase in the number of cinemas in the sample set.⁴ Details of the national origins and principal production companies of zero-rated films are given below in Table 7.5. What becomes clear from the data is that other than those British and Dominion films made for Paramount, the British producers of zero-rated films were small occasional concerns. Their American counterparts specialised in portfolios of low budget films: westerns for the greater part. If these films were not showing in the sample cinema set then where were they playing? The Kine Weekly reviews of such films suggest that they were likely to play to 'industrial audiences' in 'industrial halls' and be particularly attractive to juveniles.⁵ Many of the French, German and Soviet films which failed to secure circulation within the sample cinema set, on the other hand, were films of 'artistic' importance and imported primarily for exhibition at Film Societies.⁶

Table 7.5. The National Origin and Principal Producers of Zero POPSTAT-Rated Films, 1932-38

	1932 ^a	1933 ^b	1934 ^c	1935 ^d	1936 ^e	1937 ^f
Australia	0	4	3	2	0	2
Britain	17	34	27	25	29	46
France	1	1	6	6	9	4
Germany/Austria	4	4	4	7	8	8
USA	33	29	38	52	70	133
USSR	3	0	0	1	4	3
Others	4	0	2	7	11	5
Total	62	68	80	100	131	200

Notes:

a. Most prolific zero POPSTAT-rated producers in 1932 were; Equity(BR.) 3 films, Kent(USA) 4 films, Monogram (USA) 4 films.

b. In 1933 were; Freuler (USA) 3 films, Monogram (USA) 5 films, Sound City (BR.), Warners British (BR.) 8 films.

c. In 1934 were; Big Four (USA) 4 films, British and Dominions (BR.) 4 films, British International Pictures (BR.) 3 films, Hoffberg (USA) 4 films, Monogram (USA) 10 films, Reliable (USA) 3 films.

d. In 1935 were; British and Dominions (BR.) 3 films, Columbia (USA) 3 films, Monogram (USA) 10 films, Reliable (USA) 3 films, Superior (USA) 8 films, Universal (USA) 3 films.

e. In 1936 were; British and Dominions (BR.) 3 films, Diversion (USA) 3 films, Guarantee (USA) 3 films, Majestic (USA) 6 films, Puritan (USA) 5 films, Reliable (USA) 12 films, Republic (USA) 5 films, Superior (USA) 3 films and Universal (USA) 5 films.

f. In 1937 were; Ace (BR.) 3 films, Beacon (USA) 3 films, Beaumont (USA) 7 films, Berke (USA) 4 films, British and Dominions (BR.) 3 films, Columbia (USA) 8 films, Fox British (BR.) 5 films, Grand National (USA) 6 films, Hackel (USA) 8 films, Hoffberg (USA) 4 films, Principal (USA) 3 films, RKO (USA) 8 films, Republic (USA) 14 films, Universal (USA) 14 films, and Warners (USA) 5 films.

Market Shares in the British Market

Table 7.6 ranks American and British production companies according to market share, measured in terms of the POPSTAT Index. An immediate observation is the relatively low levels of industrial concentration in the market. This is to say that market shares are fairly widely dispersed, with the eight leading players - counting Fox and 20th Century-Fox as a single firm - taking a 70% share of demand over the period. Between them, those companies listed under USA(A) and BR(A) generate a Herfindahl Index of only .068.⁷ As will become evident, a number of prominent producers co-existed during the period. Beyond them and the dozen or so firms which achieved at least a 1% share of

Table 7.6: Summary Production Company POPSTAT for Films marketed in Britain between 1 Jan 1932 and 31 March 1938

Production Company	Films Released	Agg. POPSTAT	Supply Share (%)	Market Share (%)	Mean POPSTAT	Top50 Films	Top100 Films
<u>USA(A)</u>							
Paramount	414	3731.77	8.71%	14.14%	9.01	33	103
MGM	291	3189.51	6.13%	12.09%	10.96	55	97
WB-FNP	380	2687.324	8.00%	10.18%	7.07	18	53
RKO	304	1907.50	6.40%	7.23%	6.27	16	33
Fox	216	1561.02	4.55%	5.92%	7.23	13	28
Columbia	302	1558.21	6.36%	5.91%	5.16	12	19
Universal	243	1101.82	5.11%	4.18%	4.53	8	12
20Cent Fox	103	783.78	2.17%	2.97%	7.61	8	21
Goldwyn	27	588.03	0.57%	2.23%	21.78	13	20
20Century	17	387.47	0.36%	1.47%	22.79	9	15
Monogram	120	199.09	2.53%	0.75%	1.66	0	0
Republic	91	171.76	1.92%	0.65%	1.89	0	0
Selznick	5	148.55	0.11%	0.56%	29.71	4	4
Reliance	7	112.60	0.15%	0.43%	16.09	3	7
Wanger	6	73.27	0.13%	0.28%	12.21	2	3
Chesterfield	24	68.81	0.51%	0.26%	2.87	0	0
Mascot	15	56.72	0.32%	0.21%	3.78	0	0
Invincible	23	55.44	0.48%	0.21%	2.41	0	0
Majestic	23	53.33	0.48%	0.20%	2.32	0	0
World Wide	17	34.71	0.36%	0.13%	2.04	0	0
USA(A)	2628	18470.69	55.32%	70.00%	7.03	194	415
<u>BR(A)</u>							
GB-Gains	121	1843.04	2.55%	6.98%	15.23	48	77
BIP/ABPC	131	750.10	2.76%	2.84%	5.73	4	13
B&D	106	695.05	2.23%	2.63%	6.56	16	22
London Films ^a	32	608.31	0.67%	2.31%	19.01	14	20
Twickenham ^b	48	250.36	1.01%	0.95%	5.22	1	3
WBBR	102	225.78	2.15%	0.86%	2.21	0	0
ATP	28	207.45	0.59%	0.79%	7.41	2	5
British Lion	40	206.30	0.84%	0.78%	5.16	0	1
Wilcox ^c	15	157.31	0.32%	0.60%	10.49	1	5
Capitol ^d	12	138.88	0.25%	0.53%	11.57	3	4
Real Art	45	131.30	0.95%	0.50%	2.92	1	1
ParamountBr	10	69.42	0.21%	0.26%	6.94	1	1
Criterion	4	58.35	0.08%	0.22%	14.59	1	3
FoxBr	52	52.23	1.09%	0.20%	1.00	0	0
New World	3	38.23	0.06%	0.14%	12.74	1	2
BR(A)	749	5432.103	15.77%	20.59%	7.25	93	157
USAall	3230	19562.14	68.03%	74.14%	6.06	200	427
USA(A)% ^e	81.36%	94.42%			116.05%		
BR all	1296	6489.87	27.30%	24.60%	5.01	96	167
BR(A)%	57.79%	83.70%			144.83%		
TotalUSA&BR	4526	26052.01	95.32%	98.73%		296	594
AllFilms ^f	4748	26386.30	100.00%	100.00%		300	600
OtherFilms	222	334.30	4.67%	1.27%		4	6

Notes:

- a. Includes as well: Denham Films, Pendennis Films and Saville Productions.
- b. Includes as well: JH Productions and St. Margaret's Films
- c. Includes as well: Imperator Films.
- d. Includes as well: Cecil Films, Grafton Films, and Trafalgar Films.
- e. represents the % contribution of (A) listed producers to the the USAall row above. This is repeated for British producers. f. Films which made the Top 100 POPSTAT category of their year but were produced by production companies other than those listed above under USA(A) and BR(A) were: Congress Dances (UFA-Germany), Age of Love (Caddo-USA), Movie Crazy (Lloyd-USA), Tell Me Tonight(F&S-Germany), Sky Devils (Caddo-USA), Blue Light (Sokal-Germany), Scarface (Caddo-USA), Mr Robinson Crusoe (Elton-USA), A Nous La Liberte (Tobis-France), Congorilla (Johnsons-USA), Rain (Feature-USA), Corsair (Art Cinema-USA), Baroud (Ingram), FP1 (UFA) Dick Turpin (John Stafford Productions-BR), Prince of Arcadia (Nettlefold-Fogwell-BR), Battle (Liono-Anglo-French), Cats Paw (Lloyd-USA), 18 Minutes (Allied-BR), Love Affair of the Dictator (Toeplitz-BR) Becky Sharp (Pioneer), Song of Freedom (Hammer-BR), As You Like It (Interallied-BR), Modern Times, Chaplin-USA), Gay Desperado (Pickford-USA), Sky's The Limit (Buchanan-BR), and Thunder in the City (Atlantic-BR).

demand was a myriad of firms whose individual performance was negligible by industry standards, but who between them contributed some 25% of market supply.

Annual Trends in Market Performance

The information found in Table 7.6 may be profitably disaggregated to yield annual set of performance indicators. This information is presented in the form of a series of subset tables - Tables 7.6.1 to 7.6.7. In the first of these, the aggregate and mean POPSTAT statistics are recorded for each year of the investigation. As has been explained earlier in the Chapter, the films captured under the 1931 and 1938 release periods are incomplete leading to lower POPSTAT values. Also the POPSTAT values for 1937 are biased downwards, since many of those films released during the latter part of 1937 will not have completed their distribution amongst sample set cinemas before 31 March 1938.

Further, to assist the subsequent analysis of the industrial configuration observable in Table 7.6, production companies have

Table 7.6.1: Annual Aggregate and Mean POPSTAT for Films Exhibited between 1 Jan 1932 and 31 March 1938

	1931	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938
Films	325	646	648	663	700	743	802	221
AvePOPST	3.38	6.14	6.00	6.22	6.34	6.29	4.94	1.03
POPSTAT	1097.91	3966.49	3889.99	4123.56	4444.03	4676.45	3959.90	227.98

been grouped into a number of broad categories based on output volumes and POPSTAT performance.

The Hollywood Giants

The seven high volume Hollywood production companies - again treating Fox and 20th Century-Fox as a single entity - between them contributed almost a half of market supply for the period but achieved a market share of over 60% . Further, the films of Paramount, MGM, Warners and Fox/20th Century-Fox achieved significantly higher Mean POPSTAT scores than the population means set out in Table 7.2 and 7.6.1: this being particularly notable for Paramount and MGM. This evidence is supported by Top 50 and Top 100 information contained in the last two columns of Table 7.6 which sum to 163 and 366 respectively for the seven studios. If it is assumed that the Top 50 category consists of the 'hit' productions for the years 1932-37 in which complete release records have been collected, then the major Hollywood studios between them account for 54.33% of notable screen successes with Paramount and MGM between them producing 88 'hit' films - just under 30% of all films in this category. It would appear from the information collected in Table 7.6.2 that the films of RKO, Columbia and Universal were, in general, less popular with British audiences.

One of the most important aspects of any analysis of film consumption during the 1930s is not just the pre-eminence of the major Hollywood studios, both in terms of the weight of output and its general quality, but also their apparent permanence. With the exception of Universal these studios - including Fox and 20th Century-Fox as a single operation - in general made over 40 films per annum. Further with the exception of Columbia's decision to distribute its own films from 1933 and Universal's to disband its own distribution operation in 1937 in favour of the newly formed British firm General Film Distributors (GFD), institutional arrangements remained unchanged during the period. This stability is further emphasised in the pattern of market shares which emerge, which if the less reliable shares for 1931 releases exhibited in 1932, and 1938 releases are omitted, show the following ranges:

Paramount	13 - 16%
MGM	11 - 13%
Warners	9 - 12%
RKO	6 - 8%
Fox	6 - 11%
Columbia	5 - 7%
Universal	4 - 5%

Not only do annual market shares reflect stability but so too does the average popularity of films from the respective studios. The POP:POP row in Tables 7.6.2 to 7.6.7 is the ratio of the mean annual POPSTAT (AVEPOP) recorded for each studio expressed as a proportion of the overall mean POPSTAT (found in Table 7.6.1) for that year. Accordingly values greater than 1 reflect higher than average popularity per film and less than 1, lower than average popularity. Of the major Hollywood studios, the results suggest that MGM films were the most popular with audiences: the

Table 7.6.2: Annual Market Performance of Paramount, MGM, Warners, RKO, Fox and 20th Century Fox, Columbia and Universal, 1932-38

	1931	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938
<u>Paramount</u>								
Films	46	54	58	57	53	70	62	14
POPSTAT	195.10	586.89	608.31	528.61	611.71	609.75	553.41	37.96
MS	0.18	0.15	0.16	0.13	0.14	0.13	0.14	0.17
AVEPOP	4.24	10.87	10.49	9.27	11.54	8.71	8.93	2.71
POP:POP	1.26	1.77	1.75	1.49	1.82	1.38	1.81	2.63
TOP 50	14	9	7	4	6	3	4	
TOP 100		20	20	14	19	14	16	
<u>MGM</u>								
Films	28	39	39	41	43	48	44	9
POPSTAT	140.72	492.06	417.91	514.30	477.85	620.80	501.19	24.68
MS	0.13	0.12	0.11	0.12	0.11	0.13	0.13	0.11
AVEPOP	5.03	12.62	10.72	12.54	11.11	12.93	11.39	2.74
POP:POP	1.49	2.05	1.79	2.02	1.75	2.05	2.31	2.66
TOP 50	6	11	6	11	6	10	11	
TOP 100		18	17	18	12	15	17	
<u>Warners</u>								
Films	37	53	50	54	56	51	68	11
POPSTAT	105.69	387.70	467.57	428.74	458.78	403.28	410.79	24.78
MS	0.10	0.10	0.12	0.10	0.10	0.09	0.10	0.11
AVEPOP	2.86	7.32	9.35	7.94	8.19	7.91	6.04	2.25
POP:POP	0.85	1.19	1.56	1.28	1.29	1.26	1.22	2.18
TOP 50	2	1	7	2	2	3	3	
TOP 100		8	12	10	10	8	5	
<u>RKO</u>								
Films	34	37	46	46	41	43	48	9
POPSTAT	102.87	275.06	272.05	339.66	340.02	356.43	219.33	2.09
MS	0.09	0.07	0.07	0.08	0.08	0.08	0.06	0.01
AVEPOP	3.03	7.43	5.91	7.38	8.29	8.29	4.57	0.23
POP:POP	0.90	1.21	0.99	1.19	1.31	1.32	0.93	0.23
TOP 50	2	4	2	3	3	3	1	
TOP 100		7	3	6	7	6	4	
<u>FOX</u>								
Films	29	43	41	44	41	18		
POPSTAT	103.63	319.59	388.23	307.86	275.90	165.80		
MS	0.09	0.08	0.10	0.07	0.06	0.04		
AVEPOP	3.57	7.43	9.47	7.00	6.73	9.21		
POP:POP	1.06	1.21	1.58	1.12	1.06	1.46		
TOP 50	5	3	4	1	2	3		
TOP 100		4	9	8	3	4		
<u>20th Century Fox</u>								
Films					2	30	54	17
POPSTAT					26.13	314.46	423.78	19.40
MS					0.01	0.07	0.11	0.09
AVEPOP					13.07	10.48	7.85	1.14
POP:POP					2.06	1.67	1.59	1.11
TOP 50					0	3	5	
TOP 100					1	7	13	

<u>Columbia</u>								
Films	24	45	37	44	39	41	42	30
POPSTAT	74.44	236.14	176.65	285.18	267.69	278.35	239.75	0
MS	0.07	0.06	0.05	0.07	0.06	0.06	0.06	0
AVEPOP	3.10	5.25	4.77	6.48	6.86	6.79	5.71	0
POP:POP	0.92	0.85	0.80	1.04	1.08	1.08	1.16	0
TOP 50	6	1	1	3	2	3	2	
TOP 100		4	1	3	4	5	2	

<u>Universal</u>								
Films	12	32	32	44	35	28	49	11
POPSTAT	34.43	167.72	166.85	169.17	166.44	206.31	181.24	9.66
MS	0.03	0.04	0.04	0.04	0.04	0.04	0.05	0.04
AVEPOP	2.87	5.24	5.21	3.84	4.76	7.37	3.70	0.88
POP:POP	0.85	0.85	0.87	0.62	0.75	1.17	0.75	0.85
TOP 50	1	1	2	0	0	2	3	
TOP 100		2	2	0	2	3	3	

studio making a portfolio of films which consistently secured a mean annual POPSTAT rating twice that of the population mean. Only in 1935 (when MGM's ratings lapsed slightly) did Paramount score marginally higher on this relative scale of popularity.

Attention has previously been drawn to the pre-eminent position of Paramount and MGM - rivalled only by Gaumont British-Gainsborough - in producing films in the Top 50 and 100 POPSTAT categories. As a proportion of films marketed, MGM had between 41% - 74% of its output placed in the Top 100 classification, compared with the 24% - 53% range achieved by Paramount. The respective proportions for the other major Hollywood studios were: 11% - 38% for Warners; 10% - 29% for RKO; 16% - 38% for Fox/20th Century-Fox; 5% - 20% for Columbia; and 0% - 17% for Universal. The variance in the proportion of Top 100 successes is an important point of comparison between these companies, and the intra-firm annual variance is an important indicator of the risks associated with 'hit' production.

A further point of interest which emerges from Table 7.6.2 is the

remarkable constancy in the number of films from these producers achieving Top 100 status. The details are set out below:

	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937
Top 50	30	29	24	21	30	29
Top 100	63	64	59	58	62	60

It would appear that the leading Hollywood players neither improved nor retarded their competitive position during the Thirties. Between them inter-firm competition took a zero-sum form, where relative gains on the part of one studio detracted from the performances of films produced by rival studios.⁸

The Principal British Volume Producers.

Gaumont British-Gainsborough, British International Pictures which marketed under its corporate name ABPC from 1937 - and British and Dominions were the principal domestic volume producers, each making over 100 films during the period. It is clear that the performance of British Gaumont-Gainsborough studios under the supervision of Michael Balcon was exceptional. Also British and Dominions achieved some notable successes during the period, better reflected in the Top 50 and 100 columns than by its mean POPSTAT. British International Pictures along with the smaller volume companies of ATP, Twickenham and British Lion, for the most part made supporting pictures and only occasionally achieved significant commercial success with their outputs. Undoubtedly the relative success of films from these studios is partly explained by the Quota legislation which put equivalent American films at a competitive disadvantage with exhibitors. The less successful films of British and Dominions, ATP, Twickenham and British Lion were handled by the distribution arms of the

major Hollywood studios - and were undoubtedly 'Quota' productions.

Perhaps the most remarkable set of results to emerge from Table 7.6 is the performance of the Gaumont British-Gainsborough studio. Although it produced between approximately a quarter and a third of the feature film output of major Hollywood producers over the duration, rising to approximately half in its most productive spell (1934-35), its record of Top 50 hit production was second only to that of MGM. Table 7.6.3. unveils a pattern of growth in production up to 1935 which falls back in 1936 and 1937. Of the volume producers marketing films in Britain during the Thirties, films from the Gaumont British stable were the most popular for each of the years 1932-37 with an annual mean POPSTAT two to three times that of the population mean. Undoubtedly this popularity, as measured by the POPSTAT Index, can be partially explained by the ready access of the product to the largest chain of cinemas in Britain, which is in turn well represented in the sample cinema set.⁹ The account of the Cascade system of exhibition in Chapter 5, based upon the distribution records of 119 films which had extended runs in the London West End, draws attention to the extent to which successful Gaumont British-Gainsborough pictures played in company cinemas. Nevertheless, had the films emanating from the Shepherd's Bush and Islington studios - later from Pinewood - truly not been popular with audiences, they would have played to smaller audiences than might have otherwise have been the case if rival films had been substituted. There is no evidence to suggest that this happened, whilst there is evidence to indicate that Gaumont-British-Gainsborough films were popular with and exhibited by the

Table 7.6.3: Market Performance of Gaumont British-Gainsborough, BIP/ABPC and British and Dominions, 1932-38

	1931	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938
<u>Gaumont-Gains</u>								
Films	10	12	19	21	22	19	15	3
POPSTAT	56.80	237.55	312.43	375.86	391.02	276.86	192.00	0.52
MS	0.05	0.06	0.08	0.09	0.09	0.06	0.05	0.00
AVEPOP	5.68	19.80	16.44	17.90	17.77	14.57	12.80	0.17
POP:POP	1.68	3.22	2.74	2.88	2.80	2.32	2.59	0.17
TOP 50	3	6	9	13	10	4	6	
TOP 100		9	14	16	15	13	10	
<u>BIP/ABPC</u>								
Films	19	33	18	28	14	6	9	4
POPSTAT	51.91	145.93	102.35	198.94	128.73	41.58	80.66	0
MS	0.05	0.04	0.03	0.05	0.03	0.01	0.02	0
AVEPOP	2.73	4.42	5.69	7.11	9.20	6.93	8.96	0
POP:POP	0.81	0.72	0.95	1.14	1.45	1.10	1.82	0
TOP 50	1	0	0	2	2	0	0	
TOP 100		3	1	4	3	0	2	
<u>B&D</u>								
Films	6	14	22	21	17	16	9	1
POPSTAT	29.74	198.95	196.88	82.57	139.11	34.24	12.51	1.05
MS	0.03	0.05	0.05	0.02	0.03	0.01	0.00	0.00
AVEPOP	4.96	14.21	8.95	3.93	8.18	2.14	1.39	1.05
POP:POP	1.47	2.31	1.49	0.63	1.29	0.34	0.28	1.01
TOP 50	2	7	4	1	4	0	0	
TOP 100		8	8	2	4	0	0	

owners of the independent cinemas in the sample set.

The contrast with films made by the ABPC organisation is marked. Although it produced a similar volume of films over the period, the company's commitment to film making on the kind of scale sufficient to furnish its own cinemas with a significant number of programme features had ended by 1936. (The high production number for 1932 include films from both British Instructional Films and Pathe Pictures - the latter being newly established at the Welwyn studio.) What is most striking about these results is that, given the size of its cinema chain, films from the studio did so poorly in terms of distribution. Not only were BIP films not widely shown in independent cinemas, they were not

necessarily shown in ABPC owned cinemas either! The POPSTAT results would appear to confirm the studio as one producing lower budget support features as deliberate strategy; although there seems to be some improvement in POPSTAT and Top 50/100 performance up to and including 1935.

British and Dominion was a major domestic player between 1932 and 1935. Its output of films was divided between cheap Quota productions made for Paramount which did very poorly amongst the sample cinema set and bigger budget productions distributed by United Artists, which conversely did very well, securing 16 Top 50 'hits' over the four year period mentioned above. The performance of the films released in 1936 differs dramatically from the preceding years, and release levels in 1937 are less than half those of the peak years.

It is apparent that these three studios, which dominated the supply share of the domestic film industry during the years up to and including 1935, with Gaumont British-Gainsborough and British and Dominions supplying upward of 75% of all domestic Top 50 productions released during these same years, were in decline during the latter part of the period. This is most evident in the lower release levels and market shares during the 1936-37 seasons, with Gaumont British-Gainsborough's hold on the domestic market slipping back from the 9% peak achieved with its 1934 and 1935 releases.

Low Volume 'Hit' Producers.

A number of studios operated a commercial strategy based upon the

production of a small number of big budget films, intended as principal screen attractions and for wide-spread distribution. The production teams of Goldwyn, Selznick, Twentieth Century (before its assimilation with Fox into 20th Century Fox in 1935), Reliance and Wanger in the United States and London Films (including productions marketed under the Denham, Pendennis and Saville labels), Wilcox (including the Emperor label), Capitol (including the Cecil, Grafton, and Trafalgar labels), Criterion and New World in Britain, between them only produced 128 films - less than 3% of releases (2.69%) - but accounted for 8.76% of demand as measured by the POPSTAT statistic, and significantly, secured over a sixth of Top 50 places (51) over the period. All of the above production companies achieved mean POPSTAT scores of over 10 with the principal studios in this category - Goldwyn, 20th Century, and London Films achieving twice that.

All but two of the 25 films released by Goldwyn and shown in Britain between 1932 and 1937 achieved Top 100 status with 13 (not counting 1931) registering as Top 50 productions. This success is reflected in a annual mean POPSTAT which varied between three to five times that of the population mean and was rivalled only by London films.

The opening of the Denham Studios in 1936 caused Alexander Korda to expand his producing activities beyond London Films in order to spread the overhead costs. Those films made in 1936 and 1937 under the production labels of Denham, Pendennis and Saville were closely associated with the Korda organisation in terms of sharing key production staff on top of the more routine studio facilities and services. As such it seems sensible to group them

Table 7.6.4 Market Performance of Goldwyn, Twentieth Century, Selznick, Reliance, Wanger, London Films, Wilcox, Capitol, Criterion and New World, 1932-38

	1931	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938
<u>Goldwyn</u>								
Films	3	3	3	3	4	5	4	2
POPSTAT	53.98	60.73	82.47	76.95	108.09	114.35	62.37	29.10
MS	0.05	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.13
AVEPOP	17.99	20.24	27.49	25.65	27.02	22.87	15.59	14.55
POP:POP	5.33	3.30	4.58	4.12	4.26	3.63	3.16	14.11
TOP 50	3	1	3	2	3	3	1	
TOP 100		2	3	3	4	5	3	
<u>Twentieth Century</u>								
Films			2	9	6			
POPSTAT			38.22	180.90	168.35			
MS			0.01	0.04	0.04			
AVEPOP			19.11	20.10	28.06			
POP:POP			3.18	3.23	4.43			
TOP 50			1	3	5			
TOP 100			2	7	6			
<u>Selznick</u>								
Films						2	2	1
POPSTAT						66.33	73.82	8.40
MS						0.01	0.02	0.04
AVEPOP						33.17	36.91	8.40
POP:POP						5.27	7.48	8.14
TOP 50						2	2	
TOP 100						2	2	
<u>Reliance</u>								
Films				3	3	1		
POPSTAT				52.05	40.98	19.57		
MS				0.00	0.01	0.00		
AVEPOP				17.35	13.66	19.57		
POP:POP				2.79	2.15	3.11		
TOP 50				2	0	1		
TOP 100				3	3	1		
<u>Wanger</u>								
Films							5	1
POPSTAT							69.91	3.36
MS							0.02	0.01
AVEPOP							13.98	3.36
POP:POP							2.83	3.26
TOP 50							2	
TOP 100							3	
<u>London Films+Denham, Saville and Pendennis</u>								
Films		3	5	2	3	7	10	2
POPSTAT		17.57	76.21	59.22	109.15	159.96	170.85	15.35
MS		0.00	0.02	0.01	0.02	0.03	0.04	0.07
AVEPOP		5.86	15.24	29.61	36.38	22.85	17.08	7.68
POP:POP		0.95	2.54	4.76	5.74	3.63	3.46	7.44
TOP 50		0	1	1	2	4	6	
TOP 100		1	1	2	3	5	8	

<u>Wilcox+Imperator</u>			
Films	5	8	2
POPSTAT	56.91	98.61	1.79
MS	0.01	0.02	0.01
AVEPOP	11.38	12.33	0.90
POP:POP	1.81	2.50	0.87
TOP 50	0	1	
TOP 100	3	2	

<u>Capitol+Cecil+Grafton+Trafalgar</u>			
Films	8	4	
POPSTAT	78.99	59.89	
MS	0.02	0.02	
AVEPOP	9.87	14.97	
POP:POP	1.57	3.03	
TOP 50	1	2	
TOP 100	1	3	

<u>Criterion</u>			
Films	3	1	
POPSTAT	44.87	13.48	
MS	0.01	0.00	
AVEPOP	14.96	13.48	
POP:POP	2.38	2.73	
TOP 50	1	0	
TOP 100	2	1	

<u>New World Productions</u>			
Films		3	
POPSTAT		38.23	
MS		0.01	
AVEPOP		12.74	
POP:POP		2.58	
TOP 50		1	
TOP 100		2	

together as a body of work. The success of **Private Lives of Henry VIII** is commonly used to explain Korda's subsequent success in raising the substantial capital to finance his production ambitions, including building Denham, and certainly POPSTAT and Top 50/100 information suggests that from the set of 1934 releases the studio's films were very popular with domestic audiences, with annual mean POPSTAT scores comparable to those of the Goldwyn studio.

The remaining production companies listed in Table 7.6.4 were also geared to making films which appeared as principal box-

office attractions. 20th Century became the prime mover in the formation of the 20th Century Fox Corporation after a string of hits with films released between 1933 and 1935. Towards the end of the period Reliance, Wanger, and notably Selznick, made significant contributions to 'hit' production.

In Britain the lacuna left by the decline of BIP/ABPC and British and Dominions was partly filled by the emergence of a new set of smaller companies, established to raise short term capital to finance small scale but expensive production plans. The instability amongst domestic producers towards the end of the Thirties has been knowledgeably covered by Low (1985) and contrasts markedly with the market presence of the major Hollywood corporations. Undoubtedly the emergence in 1936 of new first rate production facilities at Denham and Pinewood stimulated the growth in what Low has termed "tenant producers". The production companies associated around Max Schach (Capitol, Cecil, Grafton and Trafalgar) and Herbert Wilcox (Wilcox and Imperator), as well as those previously discussed under London Films, fit this category as does the attempt by the Fairbanks to establish themselves in production in Britain in the form of Criterion Films. New World Pictures represents the first example of one of the major Hollywood studios producing at the quality end of the domestic industry: in this case 20th Century Fox, but soon to be followed by MGM and Columbia.

The situation towards the end of the Thirties contrasts with that at the beginning of this investigation, when the best production facilities were owned by the three principal domestic volume

producers - Gaumont British-Gainsborough, BIP and B&D at Islington and Shepherds Bush in the case of the former, and separately at Elstree for the other two - who expected to take up studio capacity with their in-house production plans. As explained earlier, the logic of owning a studio with capacity greater than intended output schedules - in the short run at least - is to share the overhead costs amongst other tenant production companies. This will be likely not only to entail substantial transaction costs for the studio manager in the form of search and contractual expenses, but also lead to difficulties associated with forming and policing a long term contingency claims contract with a set of companies whose financing is of a short term nature. Such a recipe introduces considerable scope for opportunistic behaviour. As Low (1985) has argued, the combination of the uncertainties associated with the form of the forthcoming Films Act in 1938 coupled with the financial scandal unearthed in 1937, surrounding the Schach group of companies and the Aldgate Trust, led to a crisis in production in Britain in 1937 as film finance became scarce. This in turn saw the demand for studio space decline and subsequently led to the removal of Korda as studio head at Denham, the merger of the Denham and Pinewood companies and the closure of Pinewood in 1938.¹⁰

Domestic Low Volume, Middle Quality Producers

The films Of Associated Talking Pictures (ATP), Twickenham - including later variants in the form of JH Productions and St. Margaret's Productions - and British Lion form a residual category in that whilst they can hardly be described as 'hit' producers, they nevertheless made films which often achieved a respectable distribution within the sample set, as is evident in

Table 7.6.5: Market Performance of ATP, British Lion and Twickenham, 1932-38

	1931	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938
<u>ATP</u>								
Films	3	6	2	4	4	5	3	1
POPSTAT	7.63	38.05	6.78	42.61	27.96	51.48	31.89	1.05
MS	0.01	0.01	0.00	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.00
AVEPOP	2.54	6.34	3.39	10.65	6.99	10.30	10.63	1.05
POP:POP	0.75	1.03	0.56	1.71	1.10	1.64	2.15	1.01
TOP 50		0	0	1	0	1	0	
TOP 100		1	0	2	0	1	1	
<u>British Lion</u>								
Films		3	9	10	8	7	3	
POPSTAT		20.32	53.06	36.02	45.93	35.52	15.46	
MS		0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.00	
AVEPOP		6.77	5.90	3.60	5.74	5.07	5.15	
POP:POP		1.10	0.98	0.58	0.91	0.81	1.04	
TOP 50		0	0	0	0	0	0	
TOP 100		0	1	0	0	0	0	
<u>Twickenham+JH Productions+St Margarets Productions</u>								
Films		8	4	9	12	7	7	1
POPSTAT		54.51	39.90	37.10	61.35	46.03	11.48	0
MS		0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.00	0
AVEPOP		6.81	9.97	4.12	5.11	6.58	1.64	0
POP:POP		1.11	1.66	0.66	0.81	1.04	0.33	0
TOP 50		0	1	0	0	0	0	
TOP 100		1	2	0	0	0	0	

Table 7.6.5.

As with B&D, a clear distinction can be made between those films made for the principal Hollywood renters for Quota purposes and those distributed by their respective in-house rental arms. In the case of ATP, several Top 50 hits were recorded and the releases of 1934, 1936 and 1937 generated a mean annual POPSTAT above 10. The films of the other two companies in general fared less well recording mean annual POPSTAT scores a little below those of the population mean and certainly not owning the contracts of performers as popular as ATP stars Gracie Fields and George Formby.

Low Quality Producers

The remaining studios listed in Table 7.6 and set out in detail in Table 7.6.6, as well as those not listed, made films which received only a marginal distribution, if any at all, amongst the sample cinema set. Monogram and later Republic in the United States and Warners British in Britain put out large numbers of films - over 300 between them - but failed to attain a single Top 100 ranking for any of the years during the period. The films of the British companies in this category were again generally handled by the major Hollywood distributors and made for Quota purposes. Those of their American counterparts, for the most part, were made by companies specialising in the genre form of the western. The outputs of Universal and Columbia also consisted in large numbers of westerns. As can be seen in Table 7.6.6 the POPSTAT performance of companies in this classification is poor. In the earlier section of the Chapter on 'zero-rated' POPSTAT films and those companies which made them, it was suggested such films had a limited distribution amongst 'industrial audiences' in 'industrial halls'. This account can be repeated for the American films in the just above zero-rating classification. For the British films in this category the story is complicated by the effect of the Quota on domestic production, which caused films to be made which otherwise would not have been.

Films of Continental Origin

The final row in Table 7.6 indicates that less than 5% of the supply share and only a little over 1% of the market share can be attributable to films not of an Anglo-American origin. The bulk of these films were made in either France or Germany/Austria

Table 7.6.6: Market performance of Monogram, Chesterfield, Invincible, Majestic, Republic, World-Wide and Mascot films from the USA and Real Art, Paramount British, Warners British and Fox British in Britain, 1932-38

	1931	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938
<u>Monogram</u>								
Films		26	19	32	28		8	7
POPSTAT		46.91	33.50	57.56	48.17		11.63	1.32
MS		0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01		0.00	0.01
AVEPOP		1.80	1.76	1.80	1.72		1.45	0.19
POP:POP		0.29	0.29	0.29	0.27		0.29	0.18
TOP 50		0	0	0	0		0	
TOP 100		0	0	0	0		0	
<u>Chesterfield</u>								
Films			6	5	9	2	2	
POPSTAT			18.17	20.93	26.51	3.20	0	
MS			0.00	0.01	0.01	0.00	0	
AVEPOP			3.03	4.19	2.95	1.60	0	
POP:POP			0.50	0.67	0.46	0.25	0	
TOP 50			0	0	0	0	0	
TOP 100			0	0	0	0	0	
<u>Invincible</u>								
Films			6	5	7	4	1	
POPSTAT			14.93	16.93	18.92	4.66	0	
MS			0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0	
AVEPOP			2.49	3.39	2.70	1.16	0	
POP:POP			0.41	0.54	0.43	0.18	0	
TOP 50			0	0	0	0	0	
TOP 100			0	0	0	0	0	
<u>Majestic</u>								
Films			8	1	7	6	1	
POPSTAT			34.59	6.92	11.82	0	0	
MS			0.01	0.00	0.00	0	0	
AVEPOP			4.32	6.92	1.69	0	0	
POP:POP			0.72	1.11	0.27	0	0	
TOP 50			0	0	0	0	0	
TOP 100			0	0	0	0	0	
<u>Republic</u>								
Films					5	35	45	6
POPSTAT					11.63	113.95	46.18	0
MS					0.00	0.02	0.01	0
AVEPOP					2.33	3.26	1.03	0
POP:POP					0.37	0.52	0.21	0
TOP 50					0	0	0	
TOP 100					0	0	0	

World Wide

Films	17
POPSTAT	34.71
MS	0.0036
AVEPOP	2.04176
POP:POP	0.34012
TOP 50	0
TOP 100	0

Mascot

Films	14	1
POPSTAT	53.69	3.03
MS	0.01	0.00
AVEPOP	3.83	3.03
POP:POP	0.60	0.48
TOP 50	0	0
TOP 100	0	0

Real Art

Films	9	16	12	8
POPSTAT	27.61	45.13	26.26	32.31
MS	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01
AVEPOP	3.07	2.82	2.19	4.04
POP:POP	0.50	0.47	0.35	0.64
TOP 50	0	1	0	0
TOP 100	0	1	0	0

Paramount British

Films	3	7
POPSTAT	19.21	50.20
MS	0.02	0.01
AVEPOP	6.40	7.17
POP:POP	1.90	1.17
TOP 50	1	
TOP 100	1	

Warners British

Films	13	23	21	12	13	16	4
POPSTAT	25.45	25.34	25.35	41.18	42.67	64.00	1.79
MS	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.02	0.01
AVEPOP	1.96	1.10	1.21	3.43	5.11	4.00	0.45
POP:POP	0.32	0.18	0.19	0.54	0.81	0.81	0.43
TOP 50	0	0	0	0	0	0	
TOP 100	0	0	0	0	0	0	

Fox British

Films	5	14	10	16	7
POPSTAT	3.01	26.07	15.26	7.90	0
MS	0.00	0.01	0.00	0.00	0
AVEPOP	0.60	1.86	1.53	0.49	0
POP:POP	0.10	0.29	0.24	0.10	0
TOP 50	0	0	0	0	
TOP 100	0	0	0	0	

supplemented with a small number of Soviet and Australian imports. Most of these films were not distributed within the sample cinema set, although some may have been played to Film Societies. Of the four German and one French film listed in Table 7.6 (fn.e) which were placed in the Top 100 category of their release year, **Congress Dances**, **Tell Me Tonight** and **FP1** were widely distributed. The remaining two **The Blue Light** and **A Nous la Liberte** both had extended runs at the Rialto, Coventry Street prior to its becoming an ABC cinema in 1934, but little further circulation within the sample cinema set.

The Relative Performance of British Film Makers

One interesting result which emerges from the summative rows at the bottom of Table 7.6 and presented in annual form below in Table 7.6.7 is that the films of those British companies listed under the BR(A) label, account for less than 60% of domestic supply, although some 84% of registered demand for domestic productions. As all the volume producers are listed this implies that approximately 40% of indigenous film production was made by short-lived small scale companies. The proportion of American films not accounted for by firms in the list in Table 7.6 is much smaller, at less than 20%, taking up only 6% of demand registered for films of American origin in the sample cinemas set.

The films of USA(A) and BR(A) companies generate almost identical mean POPSTAT results. This leads to the conclusion that British films made by the major producers were on average as popular as their American counterparts with domestic audiences. The results also imply that the great bulk of the 40% or so of domestic output not represented by firms in the the BR(A) list

Table 7.6.7: Market Performance of American and British Film Production Companies, 1932-38

	1931	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938
<u>USA(A)</u>								
Films	213	332	364	388	393	385	435	118
POPSTAT	810.86	2572.80	2754.17	2985.76	3112.68	3280.27	2723.50	157.39
MS	0.74	0.65	0.71	0.72	0.70	0.70	0.69	0.69
AVEPOP	3.81	7.75	7.57	7.70	7.92	8.52	6.26	1.33
POP:POP	1.13	1.26	1.26	1.24	1.25	1.35	1.27	1.29
TOP 50	39	31	33	31	29	36	34	
TOP 100	0	65	69	72	71	70	68	0
<u>USALL</u>								
FILMS	246	445	445	455	466	485	553	136
%US(A)	0.87	0.75	0.82	0.85	0.84	0.79	0.79	0.87
USPOPSTA	853.07	2891.10	2886.85	3106.39	3212.48	3518.42	2918.42	175.41
%US(A)PO	0.95	0.89	0.95	0.96	0.97	0.93	0.96	0.92
MS	0.78	0.73	0.74	0.75	0.72	0.75	0.74	0.77
<u>BR(A)</u>								
Films	41	108	118	133	114	106	104	25
POPSTAT	165.30	816.14	858.06	886.95	1002.81	884.36	796.94	21.55
MS	0.15	0.21	0.22	0.22	0.23	0.19	0.20	0.09
AVEPOP	4.03	7.56	7.27	6.67	8.80	8.34	7.66	0.86
POP:POP	1.19	1.23	1.21	1.07	1.39	1.33	1.55	0.84
TOP 50	6	14	16	18	18	11	16	
TOP 100	0	24	28	26	25	25	29	
<u>BRALL</u>								
FILMS	71	164	175	186	193	220	219	68
%BR(A)	0.54	0.66	0.67	0.72	0.59	0.47	0.47	0.37
POPSTAT	218.87	938.76	938.48	1001.92	1209.82	1145.33	1018.49	34.02
%BR(A)PO	0.67	0.87	0.91	0.89	0.83	0.74	0.78	0.63
MS	0.20	0.24	0.24	0.24	0.27	0.24	0.26	0.15

were very poorly received since their inclusion lowers the mean POPSTAT from 7.26 to 5.01 for all domestic producers in Table 7.6.

Market share information captured in Table 7.6.7 confirms a stable overall picture with USA(A) firms holding around 70% of the domestic market for all years other than 1932, with all American firms holding approximately 75% share between them.¹¹ On the British side, domestic producers listed under BR(A) held a 22% market share in 1934, 1935 and 1936, whilst overall British

producers held around 25% share.

Evidence Presented to the Moyne Committee on British Film Performance.

Further support for the comparable general standard of domestic production of the major producers may be obtained from evidence presented to the *Board of Trade Committee on Cinematograph Films* which met under the chair of Lord Moyne in 1936 to hear evidence and make recommendations concerning the replacement of the 1927 Cinematograph Act.

The distribution records for 1933-34 and 1934-35, listed in Table 7.7, show that the major American renters, with the exception of United Artists,¹² distributed very little more than the legally defined minimum amount of British film footage. This suggests that, had the quota legislation not existed, these films would not have been made. For 1934, as 102 of the 186 British films registered during 1934 were distributed by the major American distributors (excluding United Artists), it would appear that well over half of domestic production of that year owed its existence to protection legislation.¹³ Of the remaining 84 films, over half (49) were produced and distributed by the two principal vertically integrated combines.

In his evidence to the Committee, a Board of Trade official, Mr. R. D. Fennelly, drew attention to the qualitative differences between domestic films distributed by British and U.S. controlled renters. Using the Cinematograph Exhibitors' Association markings, Mr Fennelly produced statistics to

Table 7.7 Distribution records of major American and British Renters in 1933-34 and 1934-35^a

	Quota Minimum (000s feet) (1)	Actual Dist. (000s feet) (2)	Columns (2)/(1) (3)
<u>American renters</u>			
United Artists	86	142	1.65
Columbia	105	105	1.00
First National	94	95	1.01
Fox	134	135	1.01
MGM	187	187	1.00
Paramount	205	206	1.00
RKO-Radio	176	178	1.00
Universal	113	113	1.00
Warner Brothers	96	97	1.01
<u>British renters</u>			
ABFD	61	110	1.80
APD	10.5	39	3.71
British Lion	23	81	3.52
Butchers	24	71	2.96
Gaumont British	91	416	4.57
Pathe	70	72	1.02
Wardour	49	229	4.67

Source: Moyne Committee Report (1936)

Notes:

a. The distribution year as defined by the 1927 legislation ran from 1 April to 31 March.

indicate that 62% of domestic production distributed by British renters scored sufficient points to be considered "good" or better¹⁴, whereas this same mark applied to only 13% of domestic films distributed by American controlled renters.¹⁵

A consequence of this arithmetic, and one to which Mr. Fennelly alluded, is that given the Exhibitors' quota of 15% - rising to 20% in 1935-36 - there was a shortage of "good" domestic films relative to demand. As explained in Chapter 4, the normal exhibition practice throughout the Thirties was that of a double "long" film programme changed twice a week.¹⁶ However, almost all of the cinemas in the sample set, and by implication first-run cinemas, ran a once weekly programme, which was

either double or single-billed depending on the box-office strength of the respective films. The discriminating independent exhibitor at the top end of the market, deprived of access to the films of the two combines - at least at the first-run stage - was restricted to approximately 35 "good" British films. A first-run cinema screening a once weekly double-bill programme would require approximately 15 domestically produced films in 1934 increasing to 20 by 1936 in keeping with the Quota requirements. Given renter's insistence upon zoning and barring - so as to establish both geographical and temporal exclusive rights over the product - the degree of freedom with respect to choosing programmes which met the Quota specifications, was severely constrained. This may well have led some exhibitors to show "inferior" British films, not out of choice, but out of necessity. However, the evidence uncovered by Rowson, and repeated by Mr Fennelly, suggests that renters considerably exceeded their Quota obligations with respect to British films. It would appear that the relative shortage of "quality" domestic productions, partially caused and certainly fuelled by the Quota legislation requirements, contributed to the expansion in "quality" production detected in Table 7.6. If this is the case, then far from being the disaster that Low claims, the legislation was instrumental in leading to the production of British films which competed successfully with American films in the domestic market, in terms of quality and box-office returns.

Both Rowson (1936) and Mr Fennelly made much of the system of marking classifications adopted by the Cinematograph Exhibitor's Association (CEA), in its weekly review of releases. To predict

the scale of box-office returns, films were given a mark out of ten, with a base below seven for "very poor" films moving upwards in quarter mark steps to "outstanding" productions scoring nine or more. A benchmark of 8 was used for those films that constituted "good" entertainment.¹⁷ Rowson suggested that the relationship between the rating and quality was non-linear, arguing:

How much a picture marked 8 is better than one marked 7 is probably unknowable and certainly unknown, but it is intended to imply, and it is probably true that it is a better one, that in general it will have cost more to produce, and certainly that, in the opinion of the viewers of the film, it should earn the exhibitor a larger sum. (1936, p.112)

How much larger? Rowson suggested that the growth in revenue which accrued as a result of a film earning extra fractions up to 7 or 8 would be "extremely slow", but "thereafter until a ten mark is reached the resumed progression of values is very rapid."¹⁸ He proposes the following model for films reviewed in 1934:

$$z = \log^{-1}(ax + b) - c$$

$$\text{where } a = .2, b = .05, c = 9$$

Although Rowson fails both to explain how he derives the weights and to produce a table of "z" values, he offers a table of mean "x" values found below in Table 7.8, which was reproduced under Mr. Fennelly's evidence to the Board of Trade Committee.¹⁹

This scoring system was used by Mr. Fennelly to analyse British films according to distributor and to show that those handled by the major domestic renters scored significantly higher than those

Table 7.8: Estimated Weighted Average Marking of Films marketed in Britain in 1934

Registered by	British Films	Foreign Films
British Companies	8	7.25
Foreign Companies	7	8

Source: Rowson (1936)

handled by American renters.²⁰ A disappointing aspect of this investigation was the decision not to present detailed results for American and other foreign films. In order to fill this gap, a 20% sample of all films released in Britain during 1934 has been taken, and in the absence of a full set of results from the CEA Review, a set of marks generated based upon the above scoring system, from the review and box-office advice given to exhibitors in the Kine Weekly trade journal. The results for domestic films are comparable to those reported for British films to the Moyne Committee for the calendar year 1934.²¹ Table 7.9 below reports these findings. It is apparent, for 1934 at least, that the perceived box-office potential of films produced by the main domestic producers was broadly the same as that of US films produced by the major Hollywood studios. The lowest scoring category confirmed domestic films produced for American renters to fulfil their quota obligations - the so-called "quota quickies". However the weighted average for these films lies only slightly lower than that of those films produced by minor American studios which were for the most part distributed by British producers. As has been observed in the POPSTAT results minor British film producers did not have a monopoly of "poor" film production.

Table 7.9: A Qualitative Comparison of USA and British Films Marketed in Britain in 1934

	Sample Mean ^a	CEA Mean ^b
A British Films produced by major British Studios and distributed by their own organisation or United Artists. ^c	8.68(18)	8.25(59)
B British Films produced British studios and distributed by domestic renters not found in A above. ^d	7.75(9)	7.59(22)
C British Films distributed by US owned Renters. ^e	7.35(32)	7.23(101)
D US Films produced by major US producers. ^f	8.33(108)	
E US films distributed by British renters + 4 films from minor US studios distributed by Universal. ^g	7.72(27)	

Sample = 199 (The sample represents approximately 20% of those films registered for release from May 1933 to 31 December 1934, and hence 20 % of all films released during 1934).

Sources: Minutes in Evidence (1936), Kine Weekly editions for 1934.

Notes:

a) Represents a weighted average of films in each of the categories. Figures in parenthesis represent the sample number of films by category.

b) As in (a) above. Information on the CEA marking of US films was not presented to the Moyne Committee. Figures in parenthesis represent those films trade shown in 1934.

c) Includes films made by Gaumont-British-Gainsborough, BIP, B.L. Twickenham and ATP films distributed by their respective distribution arms and B&D and LFP distributed by UA.

d) Includes films made by Pathe, Butchers, Equity-British, International Productions, Zenifilms, and Production Distribution Company.

e) Includes films distributed by Columbia, Fox, MGM, Paramount, RKO-Radio, Universal, WB-FN.

f) Includes films made by those major US producers listed in (e) above.

g) Includes films distributed by Pathe, Wardour, Gaumont British, Butchers, Equity-British, PDC, B&N, and Universal.

The results presented in Table 7.9 suggest that the supply share of the domestic market held by domestic companies not making films to enable American renters to meet their "Quotas", was approximately 20%: a result which thus confirms the magnitudes established earlier in the Chapter. Given that the domestic share of the supply of films onto the market in 1928 was 4%, this indicates a substantial performance improvement over six years. However, cognizance must be taken of the

importance of Gaumont British-Gainsborough in these computations. If the results of this company were removed then the mean annual POPSTAT results, market share and the number of British films ranked in the TOP50/100 would fall dramatically.

Conclusion

In his 1936 paper to the Royal Statistical Society Rowson maintained that for the year 1934 he had demonstrated "...quite conclusively the superior general average attractiveness of British films to British exhibitors, and presumably British audiences." This Chapter has set out to test this proposition. It has concentrated on the top end of the exhibition market and justified this by maintaining that the controlled cascade mode of distribution from pre-release and first-run cinemas meant that films appearing at the sample set of cinemas would later appear at second, third and fourth-run venues. Films that failed to receive an exhibition in these cinemas would not have received a wide-spread release and would not have contributed substantially to market share. The performance results as measured by the POPSTAT statistic indicate that the major British producers, albeit working at much lower output volumes, achieved performance results per film product comparable with those of their more renowned Hollywood counterparts. This conclusion is reinforced by the qualitative analysis conducted from Kine Weekly reviews of trade shown films during 1934.

Finally, during the period 1932-37, 96 domestic films achieved Top 50 status with 167 altogether making the Top 100 classification. This constitutes a substantial body of work for an industry that had been regarded as moribund 6 years earlier.

It is these films that should form the basis of evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of the British Film Industry.

Landy in her revisionary work on British popular genres 1930-60 argues:

My examination of British genres suggests that whether the British critics wished to acknowledge it or not, Britain did in fact have a viable national cinema".(1991, p.485)

From a completely different line of investigation this research finds ample evidence to support this contention.

Notes:

1. Most films will have cleared those cinemas of the sample set within six months of their premiere. This will be true even for films receiving a premiere in one of London West End's "flagship" cinemas, where they would typically be Pre-released three months prior to General Release. As suggested on page 181 if films typically played to cinemas in the sample set within a three month period, the assumption of a six month clearance is warranted.
2. This probably is a serious under-estimation since films scoring less than the arithmetic mean POPSTAT were likely to have been rented at a small flat rate tariff, whilst main features took up to a 60% share of the box-office take.
3. See Glancy (1992, 1995), Jewell(1994) and Sedgwick (1994b, 1995).
4. The number of zero rated films for 1937 is likely to be exaggerated owing to the the probability that some films released towards the end of the year would have obtained a listing in at least one of the sample cinema set after 31 March 1938.
5. The Worktown questionnaires suggests that the 'western' genre was more popular amongst audiences at the least prestigious of the three surveyed cinemas - the Palladium - which Richards describes as "frankly a 'fleapit'"and where "more action" in film programmes was a demand, than at the Odeon or Crompton. See Richards (1987, pp.32-39).
6. Among which may be included: Released in 1932; Westfront 1918 (Germany); in 1933, Emil Und Die Detektive (Germany); in 1934, Liebelei (Austria); in 1935, Lac Aux Dames (France), Merluse (France) and Die Ewige Maske (Austria); in 1936, Battleship Potemkin (USSR) and October (USSR); and in 1937, Zero de Conduite (France) and Les Bas-Fonds (France).
7. A Herfindahl Index is a measure of industrial concentration commonly used by Industrial Economists which takes the form:

$$\sum_{i=1}^n s_i^2$$

where s_i = market share of the i th firm.

The purpose of the power in the equation is to derive a summation measure which does not equal 1. Powers greater than 1, such as the Herfindahl power 2, exaggerate the contribution to industrial concentration of those firms with relatively large to those with relatively small market shares. For any one industry the greater the market share of the leading firms relative to the remainder the greater the Herfindahl Index and the nearer it will be to 1, such that a true monopoly industry will generate an Index = 1. Accordingly, for many Industrial Economists the Herfindahl Index is an important indicator of market power within the j th industry and between m industries.

8. This draws further attention to King's (1986) depiction of the competitive process. See pp.6-7 of this Chapter.
9. See Chapter 4 for a detailed explanation.
10. See Low (1985), pp.199-208, for a full account of this story.
11. During 1932 a number of films from Germany as well as films made by occasional American production companies - Harold Lloyd and Caddo - were successful, causing the USA(A) market share calculation to be lower than at any other time during the investigation. (See Table 7.6 footnote f.)
12. United Artists was unlike the other major American operators in the British market in that it had no backward integration linkage to film production. It also distributed the films of two of the leading independent producers - London Film Productions and British and Dominions.
13. Low *op.cit.*, p.35: "Cinemas showed American owned quota films because they had to and British quality films because they wanted to." See also Dickinson & Street (1985, pp.67-8).
14. Minutes in Evidence (1936), pp.8, 11, 26-27.
15. Most of these were distributed by United Artists. See footnote 12 above.
16. Rowson (1936), p.115.
17. Rowson, *ibid*, p.112 and Minutes in Evidence, *op cit.*, p.27.
18. Rowson, *ibid.*, p.112
19. Rowson, *ibid.*, p.112; Minutes in Evidence *op cit.* Table F, p.8.
20. Minutes in Evidence *op cit.*, Table L p.11; and *idem* Appendix VI pp. 26-27.
21. Minutes in Evidence, *op cit* p.27.

Chapter 8

EVIDENCE CONCERNING 'HIT PRODUCTION' AND 'GENRE' DIFFERENTIATION

Introduction

There is little hard evidence concerning audience preferences during the Thirties. Both the Bernstein and Korda organisations undertook questionnaire surveys as a first step in market research.¹ Jeffrey Richards (1987, 1994) has used the Mass Observation Study into cinema-going in Worktown (Bolton) to document gender differences between audiences at three cinemas. Although valuable, especially given the paucity of such evidence, all three investigations suffer from being narrowly conceived. For instance the Worktown enquiry had 559 respondents, was organised over a short period (March) in 1938 and was confined to just three of Bolton's numerous cinemas, albeit selected to reflect status differences. Whilst a case can be made for regional differences in film preferences, on the basis of the Worktown study, conjectures of this nature require a comparative methodology if they are to be more convincing. The accessing of cinema programme records enables us to avoid the partial nature - even more the case where respondents are self selecting - of the questionnaire approach. If we really wish to know what people saw, the programmes they paid to watch are a more reliable source of information concerning their preferences, particularly where this can be captured in a systematic fashion.

Film Commodity Differentiation

At an institutional level, competition within the market for films took the form of renting organisations attempting to secure bookings for their set of films at the expense of rival

organisations. This argument was developed at length in Chapter 4. The structure of the industry imposed constraints on the free movement of films. For example, from the exhibition records of the sample cinema set it would appear that BIP films rarely, if at all, played to audiences in Gaumont British owned cinemas and vice versa. The same is also true of MGM films appearing in Paramount owned cinemas. Indeed, Rachael Low has argued that the undoubted collective strength of the principal American renters - organised through the Kinematograph Renters Society - enabled them to dictate terms to the body of exhibitors, including subjecting them to the illegal practice of block booking.² Yet, given the supply of films put onto the British market by producers without own-firm exhibition outlets, cinema programme records show that sufficient movement took place between renters and exhibitors to warrant the supposition that the market for films was competitive. As a general rule, exhibitors at the top end of the market at least (including all cinemas in the sample cinema set), irrespective of scale, did not wish to be excluded from showing films from any particular source.

The points of competition between film commodities lay in their perceived qualities, the most notable categories of which are: production values, technical qualities, the screenplay, genre, personnel (stars), directorial influence and length. Lancaster's (1966) approach to demand may be useful here. Perceiving commodities as bundles of characteristics, Lancaster sought to locate them within a conceptual space with the same number of dimensions as characteristics. Thus competition between commodities which shared two characteristics would occur within a

two dimensional space, three characteristics within a three dimensional space and so on. Lancaster maintained that the smaller the number of commodity characteristics the greater the substitutability of one commodity for another - what he termed 'near neighbour' effects.

Given a set of consumer preferences, the position occupied by a commodity in characteristics (market) space is critical. For instance if a studio specialised in the Horror genre whilst audiences preferred Musicals, its films would be positioned away from the most popular section of the market and therefore would experience relatively low levels of demand. The trivial nature of this example indicates the complexities involved in attempting to analyse inter-film competition. The major Hollywood studios annually marketed portfolios of forty and more films which can be differentiated according to those characteristics listed above. Studios produced films across a range of genres, each with a distinct story line and with a few exceptions, a unique casting mix. Perhaps most importantly, these films can be re-classified into distinct budgetary groups, indicating the investment risk strategy of the production company. Certainly, this last classification cut across all but the genre characteristic. Bigger budgets brought higher production values, greater technical qualities, more popular 'stars', (perhaps) better writers and resulted in longer films. Studio heads also expected them to bring greater popularity and hoped that they might be profitable.

Production Budgets and Popularity

Yet, as argued earlier, 'hit' production was an inherently risky

business because whilst big budget films could be expected to be more popular than smaller budget films, they might not have been sufficiently popular to warrant the extra production and consequent promotional expenditures. In other words they may have generated a negative rate of return for the studio. In my analysis of the rates of return on RKO films 1930-41 based upon the accounting information presented by Jewell (1994), I found that 29 of the 51 films, costing upwards of \$600,000 released by the studio during these years made losses, generating an arithmetic mean rate of return of just 1% compared with the studio population arithmetic mean of 7%.³ An investigation of accounting information from the Warners studio collected and presented by Glancy (1995) yielded similar results.⁴

Adopting individual film budgets as a proxy variable for the associated characteristics of production and 'star' values, technical sophistication, writing qualities, directorial influence and length, the following model can be specified in which film popularity is functionally related to production budgets. To what extent did the size of film budget determine a film's popularity?

$$POP_i = b_0 + b_1 BUDGET_i + u_i$$

where, POP = Popularity as measured by the POPSTAT statistic,
 i = ith film = 1,2,...n
 BUDGET = Production Budget in \$000s
 u = error term
 b₀,b₁ = constants

The major problem in making this model operational is the absence of systematic information concerning studio costs of production

and subsequent distribution, including promotional, costs. Whilst limited cost information has been published for the MGM, RKO and Warners studios, there has been little similar scholarship associated with British production companies. The London Film Productions Special Collection housed at the British Film Institute Library contains some budgetary information which will be used later in this investigation, but nothing on this or other domestic studios has been published. Accordingly, the accounting information available is very partial indeed and at best the results which follow must be thought of as tentative.

From the cost of production details found in the William Schaefer Ledger for the complete set of Warners-First National films released during the period of this investigation, it is possible to obtain a preliminary idea of the importance of the scale of film budgets to general levels of success.⁵ Clearly, a fuller picture would emerge if the budgetary records of all of the films of all of the leading studios were available. Nevertheless, the results published below in Table 8.1 suggest a scenario which is coherent and in general terms, likely to be applicable industry-wide. (The annual regression results are presented in Appendix 8.1)

A first observation from Table 8.1 is that the Film Budget coefficients are positive and have associated standard errors which pass the 95% confidence test: they are statistically significant. The model suggests that for the release years 1932-37 an additional \$1,000 spent at Warners on production budgets yielded on average \$1,127 extra box-office revenue in the American market, whilst in Britain the same expenditure

Table 8.1: The Relation between Production Budgets and i) US Box-Office Grosses and ii) POPSTAT Scores for Warners' Feature Films released in the United States using OLS Regression techniques^{a,b,c}

i) Regression of US Box-Office Grosses (Y) on Production Budgets (X).

Constant	103.115
Film Budget	1.127 (0.055)
R Squared	0.557
No. of Observations	331

ii) Regression of POPSTAT Scores (Y) on Production Budgets (X).

Constant	3.548
Film Budget	0.016 (0.001)
R Squared	0.297
No. of Observations	331

Source: Glancy

Notes:

- a. There was little lag between the respective release dates in either country.
- b. The numbers in parentheses are the standard errors of the Film Budget co-efficient estimates.
- c. Film budgets and box-office grosses are measured in \$000s.

generated on average an increased POPSTAT of 0.016: it required an additional \$100,000 expenditure on a film budget to generate on average an additional POPSTAT score of 1.6. The capacity of production budgets to explain the success or otherwise of Warners' releases is given by the coefficient of determination (R^2). It is clearly higher in the United States: from Appendix 8.1 this is shown for each year of the study, with a low of 0.37 in 1932, reaching the high explanatory levels of 0.7 and above, in 1936 and 1937. Production budgets clearly mattered in a film's success, but why apparently more so in the United States? The answer is to be found in the distribution asymmetry between the two markets: that is to say, whilst the films of the major

American studios were assured of widespread distribution in Britain the converse was not the case. Accordingly, the degree of success of Warners' films in the British market was influenced by the relative success of British films in this same market, a factor that was not nearly so important in the American market.

Although the regression results presented in Table 8.1 and Appendix 8.1 indicate that the coefficient values for Film Budgets meet the 95% confidence interval test it would be surprising, given what has been said about the substantial financial risks, particularly at the higher budgetary levels, associated with film production, if these values were a reliable guide to the precise relation between budgets and popularity. This is to say, that while it might be suspected that higher budgets tended to induce higher levels of popularity, they also generated greater variation in popularity: higher budgets implied greater risks and as a consequence the error term associated with the Film Budget coefficient may be expected to be heteroscedastic. Where this occurs the standard error estimate is invalid, which in turn casts doubt upon the significance test associated with the co-efficient values. Figures 8.1 and 8.2 below illustrates the point being made. It is clear that irrespective of whether U.S. box-office grosses, or POPSTAT measures of popularity are used, the data points fan out as film budgets are increased. Tests show that heteroscedasticity exists. Analysis suggests that it is an important feature of the data. However, experimenting with alternative functional forms by taking the logs and square roots of the dependent variables in order to stabilise the variance of Y_i has little effect upon the R^2

Figure 8.1: The Relation between U.S. Box-Office Grosses (Y) and Film Budgets (X) for Warners' Films 1932-37.

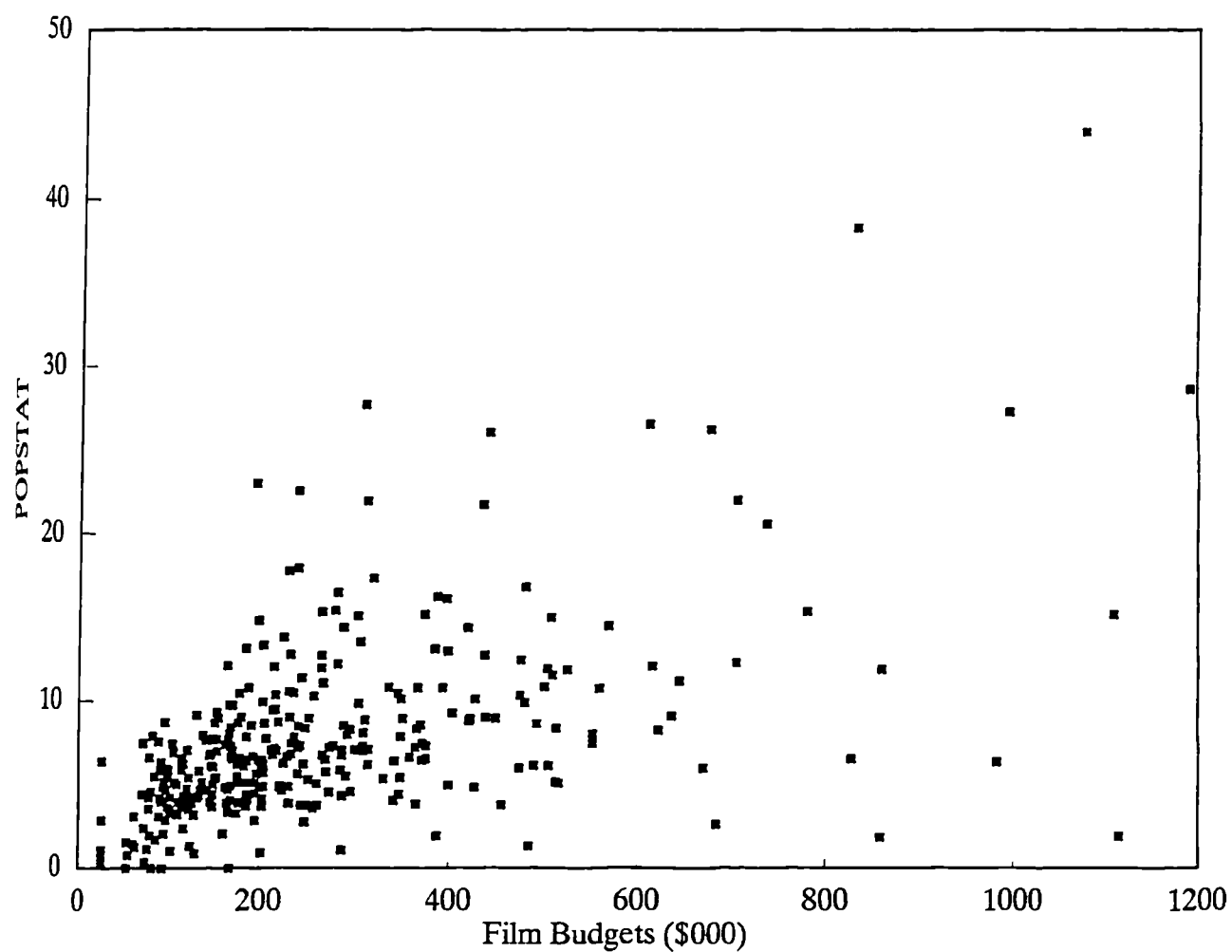
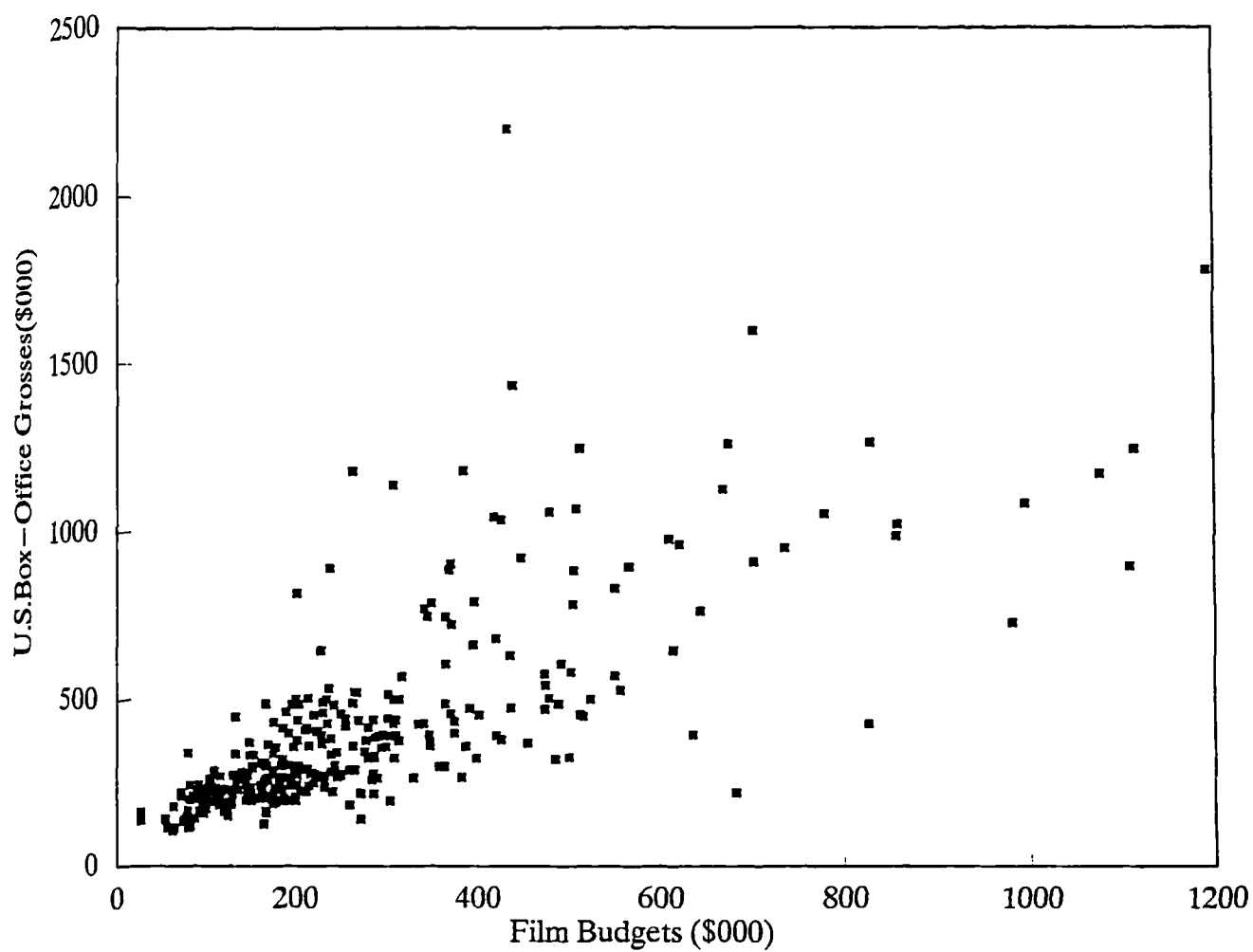


Figure 8.2: The Relation between POPSTAT scores (Y) and Film Budgets (X) for Warners' Films 1932-37.



statistic and, more importantly, the co-efficient estimates still remain significant. Clearly the reliability of the X coefficient is questionable, although an order of magnitude is obtained and the R^2 results are encouraging.

The use of production budgets as a proxy for production, artistic and 'star' inputs is insensitive to the unique contributions of the contracted workforce to the finished product. It is this intangible element which makes film making such a risky activity. Certainly, the R^2 results confirm the earlier analysis concerning the risks involved in 'hit' production, with overall 44% of box-office performance in the US explained by factors other than the film budget. Undoubtedly, the model is simplistically specified. It may well be possible to get closer to the particular relative qualities of film outputs through deconstructing the proxy variable to take into account, for example, 'star' qualities, directorial contributions, in attempting to measure, for instance, the Bette Davis factor in Warners' films of the period. (An initial attempt to measure a 'Bette Davis effect' over and above that reflected in the budgets of the films she worked on - which of course would, in turn, reflect the growing salary she was able to command - through the use of a dummy variables generated results which proved insignificant.)

Bette Davis may have made half a dozen or so films annually at Warners before 1938. In doing so she worked with different sets of actors, producers, directors, on screenplays produced by different writers - even though as an emerging 'star' she attempted to exert influence on the choice of personnel working

with her. She also worked under studio heads whose judgments were often at odds with her own concerning the qualities of a particular film property or treatment, and so on. These variations make any attempt to model her impact on box-office a daunting proposition; as indeed it was for studio bosses to predict with any certainty the box-office potential of any particular grouping of human and technical inputs. The problems associated with model specification and measurement reflect the complexity of the phenomenon, yet, the large sample size provides scope for the future exploration of those factors which go to make up relative popularity, without running into problems associated with degrees of freedom.

Although a broad association has been established with respect to film production budgets and popularity, by examining evidence from the Top 50 POPSTAT category for the releases of 1932-37, it is possible to discover whether this association is stronger or weaker for 'hit' films. If those films which score approximately one standard deviation and more above the annual arithmetic mean POPSTAT are termed 'hits', then to what extent is the size of the film budget a factor in affecting their respective popularity score in this population?

The 300 most popular films released in Britain between 1932-37, organised into annual TOP 50 lists are found in Appendix 8.2. Regressing the appropriate POPSTAT statistics on the film budget information presented by Glancy for MGM, and Warners and Jewell for RKO generates a set of equations and associated statistics which are presented in Table 8.2. Again, the results and analysis

Table 8.2: The Relation between Production Budgets and POPSTAT Scores for Annual Top 50 films emanating from the MGM, Warners and RKO Studios and released in Britain, 1932-37, using OLS Regression techniques^{a, b, c}

Constant	20.971
Film Budget	0.006 (0.002)
R Squared	0.136
No. of Observations	82

Sources: Glancy (1992, 1995), Jewell (1994)

Note:

- a. There was little lag between the respective release dates in either country.
- b. The number in parentheses is the standard error of the Film Budget co-efficient estimate.
- c. Film budgets are measured in \$000s.

are handicapped by imperfect information since budgetary information is only available for between 11 and 15 of the 50 'hits' in any one year. Nevertheless, it would appear that for those films within the Top 50 POPSTAT category, the size of the film budget is a less powerful explanatory tool in assessing popularity with British audiences, with a R^2 statistic of 0.136.⁶ The value of the Film Budget coefficient is also much smaller than for that generated for the whole population of Warners' films shown in Table 8.1, indicating that popularity was less responsive to additional budgetary expenditure amongst those films at the 'hit' end of the market. The Film Budget coefficient is statistically significant at the 95% confidence level and heteroscedasticity is less of a problem than was the case with the whole population. This suggests that whilst big budgets were an necessary feature of 'hit' production they cannot be said to have been a sufficient condition and, as argued earlier, other more complex factors were at work.

London Films

London Films has been subjected to more scrutiny than any other domestic production company during the Thirties. Its founder and prime-mover - Alexander Korda - is the subject of an authoritative biography by Karol Kulik (1975), and Sarah Street (1986) has written a scholarly account of the company's relations with Prudential Assurance. Furthermore, as Rachel Low points out, Korda is generally represented as a pivotal figure in accounts of the film industry in Britain during the period.⁷ Kulik writes of him:

...from the Autumn of 1933 to early 1937, Alexander Korda was the most important single figure in the film industry in Britain, the man whose progress, whose success and failures were the focus of everyone's attention. (1975,p.96)

From the time of the critical and commercial success of the **Private Life of Henry VIII** (1933) and for the remainder of the Thirties, Korda, in the words of Ian Dalrymple:

....made films in England for international exhibition amongst the best American, French and German product. (1956, p.7)

Evidence for this may be found in Table 8.3 which lists London Films' releases for the period of the investigation. There is a clear tendency for film budgets to rise over the period, culminating in the release of the equivalent of two 'One Million Dollar' films in **Things To Come** and **Knight Without Armour** in 1936 and 1937 respectively.⁸

However, Table 8.4 shows that whilst high by British standards, and either on a par or greater than the the majority of Hollywood productions, the budgets of London films were exceeded by a

Table 8.3: London Films' Film Budgets and Domestic Gross Box-Office Revenues Information, 1932-38^a

Titles	BofTReg Date (1)	Production Cost (£s) (2)	BR. B-O Rev (£s) (3)	Columns (3)/(2) (4)	POPSTAT (5)
Wedding Rehearsal	11-Aug-32	42,080			12.527
Men of Tomorrow	06-Oct-32	30,922			1.019
That Night in London	10-Nov-32	33,428			4.023
Strange Evidence	02-Feb-33	28,350			0.654
Counsels Opinion	16-Mar-33	25,424			10.506
Private Life of Henr	22-Aug-33	93,710	81,825	0.873	55.133
Girl From Maxims	24-Aug-33	62,578			6.577
Cash	05-Nov-33	22,694			3.338
Catherine The Great	25-Jan-34	127,868	58,308	0.456	43.614
Private Life of Don	06-Sep-34	109,987	18,048	0.164	15.611
Scarlet Pimpernel	03-Jan-35	138,392	108,306	0.783	51.202
Sanders of the River	04-May-35	144,161	94,360	0.655	43.834
Moscow Nights	19-Dec-35	57,916			14.114
Ghost Goes West	17-Jan-36	161,362	86,894	0.539	41.602
Things to Come	24-Feb-36	256,028	71,757	0.280	40.651
Forget Me Not	30-Apr-36	74,007	15,163	0.205	10.235
Man Who Could Work M	27-Jul-36	136,604	30,976	0.227	18.236
Rembrandt	20-Nov-36	140,236	34,140	0.243	24.122
Men Are Not Gods	30-Nov-36	92,606	22,308	0.241	14.878
Elephant Boy	11-Feb-37	149,882	54,615	0.364	20.751
Knight Without Armou	10-Jun-37	307,201			24.714
Squeaker	22-Oct-37	92,940	42,854	0.461	12.417
Return of the Scarle	02-Nov-37	94,433	56,569	0.599	7.834

Source: London Films Special Collection, Box 5, British Film Institute.

Note:

a) Most of the data on budgets and revenues appears in an internal memorandum dated 7 Jan 1946 addressed to London Film's Production Manager, Sir David Cunynghame, in response to a request for information on the company's 1930s productions. Unfortunately, the domestic revenue earned by Knight in Armour is not listed. Production costs pertaining to seven of the first eight films in the list - the exception being The Private Life of Henry VIII - appears on an internal Cost of Production schedule for "Films Completed and in the Course of Production as at 30 April 1933."

significant number of major releases. Given the ambitious objectives of the company, and the size of budgets devoted to major feature films by the principal Hollywood studios, it would appear that the magnitude of London Films' budgets was not unwarranted.

A second and associated observation which emerges from the data appearing in Table 8.3, is the company's dependence on foreign

Table 8.4: The Number of Films from the Warners, MGM and RKO studios which cost more to make than London Films' principal Box-Office Attractions during the Year of Release, 1932-38 ^a

	British Release Year	Warners	MGM	RKO
Knight Without Armour	1937	0	8	0
Things to Come	1936	3	7	0
Ghost Goes West	1936	7	8	2
Elephant Boy	1937	7	10	1
Sanders of the River	1935	2	5	3
Rembrandt	1936	8	9	2
Scarlet Pimpernel	1935	4	5	3
Man Who Could Work Miracles	1936	9	9	2
Catherine The Great	1934	3	9	1
Private Life of Don Juan	1934	5	9	2
Private Life of Henry VIII	1933	4	5	1

Sources: Glancy for the complete Warners Ledger, Glancy (1992) and Jewell (1994), London Films Special Collection, Box 5, British Film Institute.

Note:

a) The comparison includes all films from Warners, but only those MGM and RKO films listed by Glancy (1992) and Jewell (1994) in their respective appendices. As a consequence the number of bigger budget films emanating from the MGM studio is likely to be underestimated. This is less likely to be the case with respect to the RKO studio given its much lower film budgets.

markets to amortise their film budgets. Revenues from the domestic market on average only account for 0.435 of the production costs, ranging from a high of 0.873 for the **Private Life of Henry VIII** to a low of 0.164 for **The Private Life of Don Juan**.

The cost and budgetary information unearthed on London Films provides an opportunity to assess further both the general validity of the POPSTAT statistic as a proxy for domestic box-office revenues and the proposition explored earlier in the chapter that film company executives associated popular films with bigger budgets.

Table 8.5: The Relation between London Films' Film Budgets and POPSTAT Scores using OLS Regression techniques ^{a,b,c},

Constant	6.304
Film Budget	0.137 (0.042)
R Squared	0.343
No. of Observations	23

Source: Table 8.3

Notes:

a. Film Budgets measured in £000s.

b. The numbers of films listed is less than that given in Table 7.6.4 in Chapter 7, as budgetary and/or box-office information for the films of associated companies made at the Denham Studios such as Pendennis have not been uncovered, with the exception of The Squeaker made by Denham Films.

c. The number in parentheses is the standard error of the Film Budget co-efficient estimate.

The correlation coefficient between the POPSTAT scores and domestic box-office revenue of London Films is 0.832, which of course is no less than is to be expected if the POPSTAT index is convincingly to represent film popularity. The regression equation presented in Table 8.5 is expected to conform broadly to the results set out in the second section of Table 8.1, which tests for the proposition that production budgets were an important factor in determining the scale of popularity of film releases in Britain. In the case of London films the statistically significant Film Budget coefficient predicts that an extra £1000 increment to a film budget added on average 0.137 to its POPSTAT score. This compares favourably with the Warners' Film Budget co-efficient set out in Table 8.1, after account is taken of the exchange rate.¹⁰ A £1000 of additional budgetary expenditure would appear to have bought London Films greater popularity than its American rival. Also it would appear that in the domestic market, at least, the coefficient of determination (R^2) is also broadly comparable with the result for Warners. Because of the relatively small number of London Films, and the

assumptions made above concerning annual POPSTAT comparability, it is sufficient to argue that the results obtained for London films are: i) statistically significant and; ii) of a similar magnitude to those generated by the much larger volume of Warners' films. These further confirm the conclusion that film budgets mattered in securing general levels of popularity, although of course the results presented in Table 8.2 suggest that this wasn't sufficient to obtain a Top 50 ranking status. In turn, the box-office and revenue information from London Films provides further validity for the POPSTAT index as a measure of film popularity.

Genre

In assessing the significance of genre as an element in the success or otherwise of films, difficulties associated not so much with information as with definition arise when attempting to organise a classification schema devoid of imprecision and assign films in accordance with it. At an abstract level these difficulties stem from the unique form of individual film products. Accordingly, there will be films which cut across genre classifications, however defined, as well as differences between commentators as to the respective characteristics of particular films: for instance is Hitchcock's **39 Steps** (1935) primarily a thriller or comedy or should we seek a distinct inclusive classification?

The classification below represents a crude attempt to distinguish between films on the basis of raw genre characteristics and has been applied to the annual lists of Top 50 films found in Appendix 8.2 and presented in summative form in

Table 8.6.¹¹

A = Adventure
C = Comedy
D = Drama
F = Fantasy
H = Horror
M = Musical
R = (prefix) Romantic
S = (suffix) with Songs
T = Thriller/Crime
W = Western

Essentially, the pattern which emerges in Table 8.6 is one of stability. The three main genre categories were Drama (inclusive of Romantic Drama and Drama with Songs), Comedy (inclusive of Romantic Comedy and Comedy with Songs), and Musicals. It is interesting to note that not a single Western made the annual Top 50 category during the period. The only significant shift in the pattern of genre composition occurred in 1934 with a doubling of the number of musicals making the Top 50 list with a complementary fall in comedies.¹² A subsequent reversion to previous levels occurred in 1935.

The place of music in the affections of domestic audiences is amplified by grouping together Musicals with those films which contained singing, but where the latter was not central to its intent. The same is true of those films which had strong romantic element, even though Musicals with a strong or dominant romantic element such as the Astaire/Rogers films were have not been counted in this category.

A further point which needs to be made concerns the popularity and regularity of films, made on both sides of the Atlantic,

Table 8.6: Genre Classification of Annual Top 50 POPSTAT Films Released in Britain, 1932-37

Genre	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	Total
Adventure	4		3	1	1	5	14
Comedy	15	16	8	15	14	12	80
Drama	22	21	21	25	24	24	137
Fantasy ^a		1			2	1	4
Horror	2	2					4
Musicals	4	8	16	7	8	7	50
Thriller/Crime	3	2	2	2	1	1	11
Western							0
Total	50	50	50	50	50	50	300
Romantic Comedy	1	2	0	2	3	1	9
Romantic Drama	13	5	7	8	4	10	47
Romantic Interest	14	7	7	10	7	11	56
Comedy w. Songs	6	6	3	3	3	6	27
Drama w. Songs	1	1	2	3	6		13
Thriller w. Songs			1				1
Adventure w. Songs						1	1
Musicals	4	8	16	7	8	7	50
Musical Content	11	15	22	13	17	14	92
BR. Empire/ Patriotism ^b		2	1	3	1	4	11

Source: Appendix 8.2

Notes:

a. Includes Science Fiction.

b. As the dominant subject matter.

about aspects of the British State - past and present - which emphasised and applauded the unique and idiosyncratic nature of British institutions, and the people who served them.

Unfortunately, the information set out in Table 8.6 is not sufficiently robust to support an investigation into the importance of genre as an element in the relative success or otherwise of feature films. The absence of any underlying trends in the annual genre composition of the Top 50 films leads to the

supposition that inter-genre competition was not an important aspect of the competitive process.

The extent to which the pattern of genre popularity outlined above is reflected in the 'hit' outputs of British and American studios, is set out in Table 8.7. Here, it is possible to obtain an idea of relative advantage. For instance, and not surprisingly given the culture-specific nature of much comedy, British studios

Table 8.7: Genre Classification of British and US Annual Top 50 POPSTAT Films Released in Britain, 1932-37

Genre	1932		1933		1934		1935		1936		1937	
	US	BR	US	BR	US	BR	US	BR	US	BR	US	BR
Adventure	4	0	0	0	3	0	1	0	0	1	2	3
Comedy	6	9	6	10	5	3	8	7	11	3	8	4
Drama	18	3	15	5	15	6	17	8	19	5	16	8
Fantasy	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	0
Horror	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Musicals	2	1	6	2	8	8	5	2	7	1	7	0
Thriller/Crime	2	1	2	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	0	1
Western	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	34	14	32	17	32	18	32	18	37	13	34	16
Romantic Comedy	1	0	2	0	0	0	2	0	3	0	1	0
Romantic Drama	11	1	5	0	6	1	5	3	4	0	6	4
Romantic Interel	12	1	7	0	6	1	7	3	7	0	7	4
Comedy w. Songs	1	5	2	4	1	2	2	1	1	2	5	1
Drama w. Songs	1	0	0	1	1	1	3	0	4	2	0	0
Thriller w. Son	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Adventure w. Son	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Musical Content	4	6	8	7	11	11	10	3	12	5	6	1
BR. Empire/ Patriotism	0	0	1	1	1	0	2	1	0	1	2	2

Source: Appendix 8.1

take a significant, but none-the-less not a majority, share of

Top 50 films in the comedy genre, contributing in total 36 of the 80 films. British comedies were particularly successful during the early part of the period. A particular feature of many of these British comedies was the inclusion of musical numbers, undoubtedly the consequence the Music Hall roots of many of the comedians. Conversely, domestically made dramas performed poorly in relation to those of Hollywood origin during the the early years, but became more prominent later, and exceeded the number of domestically made comedies in the Top 50 listings for those films released between 1936-38. It is interesting to note the importance of Romance as an integral ingredient in so many American dramas and the contrast with popular British films of this genre.

The contribution of British studios to the 'hit' Musical was partial with the exception of 1934 releases when a staggering 8 films made the Top 50 category, matching the success of Musicals emanating from Hollywood. This had fallen away to zero by 1937, when not even the Jessie Matthews' vehicles **Head Over Heels** and **Gangway** made the 'hit' list.¹³

The preceding analysis is based upon the conception of genres as sets of distinct elements (categories) in a film classification system. The designation of these genre categories is a matter of historical convention and judgement, but once abstractly formed, provide a means of labelling and differentiating films. However, it may be objected that, difficulties of definition and hence classification are made even more problematic, because the genre form is itself subject to variation. Set against the backdrop of

competitive capitalist production and market relations, those producers in pursuit of 'hit' successes, sought either to create new forms within a general genre category - such as the emergence of the 'screw-ball' comedy from Capra's **It Happened One Night** (1934) - or, modify existing forms or, follow/plagiarise new forms - within legal limits. The interplay between all three processes meant that the conceptions and standards of intra-genre form were subject to change, as studios sought to establish or narrow competitive advantage. Perhaps with the exception of the Western, genre categories at the end of the Thirties had a different style and set of conventions to those at the beginning of the decade. The critical factor in the seemingly organic flux of artistic and technical inputs which gave rise - in an unpredictable fashion - to new genre conceptions and standards was the search for profit.

Conclusion

The attempt to dig beneath the surface veneer, provided by sets of box-office revenue, production cost and genre classification, to uncover the dynamic competitive process in the market for films has not been very successful. Whilst positive associations have been uncovered between the scale of film budgets and popularity, the very general specification of the model and its moderate explanatory powers leaves much unsaid. Doubt has been expressed about the extent to which inferential statistical techniques can further elucidate an understanding of relative success, because of the large number of contributory variables and their often unique juxtaposition. The high degree of popularity achieved by the Astaire/Rogers musicals, made at the same studio (RKO), with acting, artistic, technical, writing and

directorial inputs stretching across two or more films is perhaps the exception to the rule! But, even in this case, Jewell's (1994) figures show that after **Top Hat** (1935) the US Box-office receipts of **Follow the Fleet** (1936), **Swingtime** (1936) and **Shall We Dance** (1937) and **Carefree** (1938) fell whilst production costs rose: their success defined in either box-office or rate of return terms was in decline and was to end after one further film in 1939.

The problems associated with assessing the role of genre in the competitive make up of a film have also been discussed. Whilst in broad terms it is possible to describe what people went to watch, the more-or-less constant proportions of Top 50 films falling into the respective genre categories fails to capture dynamic changes occurring within genre categories and the reasons for them.

On a more positive note, budget and revenue information on London Films' and Warners' releases, give further validity to the POPSTAT index of film popularity in the domestic market 1932-37.

Notes:

1. Korda organised a national poll in 1935 through the Daily Mail based upon the first 10,000 responses to a questionnaire survey, some details of which can be found in Wood (1986, p.134). Bernstein organised a questionnaire at his cinemas to survey his patrons' film and cinematic preferences in 1927, 1928, 1932, 1934, and 1937. Wood (1986, pp.131-133) publishes summary results.
2. For a full treatment of Low's case, including submissions made to the Moyne Committee, see Low (1985, pp.33-53)
3. See Sedgwick (1994b, pp.51-58).

4. See Sedgwick (1995).

5. Glancy (1992, 1995) and Jewell (1994) have published financial information on the performance of approximately 25% of feature films released in Britain during these years from the MGM, Warners and RKO studios respectively. I am grateful to Mark Glancy for access to the complete record of the William Schaefer Ledger of Warners' films 1921-51.

6. As with the whole population of Warners' films (Table 8.1), the performance of these 82 Top 50 films in the American market, measured in U.S. box-office returns, generates a higher R^2 (0.234), further confirming the greater uncertainty - competitiveness - of the domestic market. As argued in the text, this is explained in terms of the asymmetrical nature of the distribution of British and American films in the two markets.

7. Low writes, "More has been written about Korda than about other producers in Britain, and he has been both praised for restoring British film production and blamed for ruining it." (1985, p.165)

8. An exchange rate of \$4.5 has been used in this and subsequent calculations in comparing the film budgets of London Films with Hollywood productions. Ostensibly, this would not appear to closely shadow the Dollar-Sterling Exchange Rate of the period which swung dramatically from a low of \$3.24 in December 1931 and \$3.14 in November 1932 to \$5.10 in January 1934. The annual average exchange rate remained above the Gold Standard parity of \$4.86 between 1934-38. However, these rates reflect the considerable instability which existed in the international currency market during these years, as economies adopted dramatic internal measures to adjust to recession, balance of payments difficulties, movements of gold and speculation. Accordingly, exchange rates do not provide a particularly good reflection of the comparative state of the major international economies, with the US Dollar being relatively under-valued against the Pound for much of the period after 1934.

A better measure of international competitiveness and, therefore, of the respective strengths and weaknesses of internal economies and underlying trend in exchange rates, can be found in respective unit labour costs, which reflect relative changes in labour productivity, and inflation, as well as exchange rate movements between economies. Using 1929 as a base year Dimsdale (1981) has calculated the index for Britain and the US as 89 and 87 respectively for 1931 and 91 for both countries in 1938, with the index sensitive to domestic policy initiatives during the intervening years. Over the period as a whole it would appear that there was very little change in the relative competitiveness of either economy. Accordingly, a single exchange rate measure to gauge comparative UK-US film budgets has been adopted for the period. The choice of \$4.50 is very close to the 1931 average after Britain had left the Gold Standard and is near to the underlying exchange rate following the US Dollar devaluation of 1933, given that the dramatic nature of the latter, led to an undervalued US Dollar until at least 1938. See Dimsdale (1981, pp. 329-343)

9. Strictly speaking, the film revenues should be inflated to take into account the fall in general prices between 1932-36 and deflated for 1937 releases, owing to the increase in prices during that year. However, as the general price level at the end of this period returns to the 1932 level, little explanatory purposes is served.

10. See footnote 7. Also note that the coefficient values in the Warners' based regression equations are expressed in terms of \$000s whereas London Films are expressed in £000s.

11. I am indebted to Bernard Hrusa Marlow for this genre classification.

12. The expansion in 'hit' Musicals follows an interesting history with the introduction of sound. Musicals proved to be the ideal form for distracting attention from constraints imposed by the early primitive and immobile sound equipment, whilst having an enormous initial appeal to the public. However, by 1930-31 cinema-goers had become satiated with the genre and there are instances of films being conceived of and made as musicals but subsequently issued with the musical element edited out - **50 Million Frenchmen (1931)** and **Reaching For the Moon (1931)** are such examples. The number of 1933 Top 50 releases indicates that musicals were becoming more popular again and the phenomenal commercial success of Warners' **Gold Diggers of 1933** (with a production budget of \$433,000 and respective US and foreign earnings of \$2,202,000 and \$1,029,000) and to a lesser extent **42nd Street** (costing \$439,000 to make and grossing \$1,438,000 and \$843,000 respectively in US and foreign markets) led to an upturn in the production of big budget musicals, many of which made the Top 50 list for 1934 releases. (Production budget information to be found in Glancy (1995))

13. **Head Over Heels** and **Gangway** were placed 59th and 72nd respectively in the listings of 1937 releases.

CHAPTER 9

THE DEMISE OF THE FILM PRODUCTION BUSINESS IN THE LATE THIRTIES

Introduction

The history of film as a business explicitly acknowledges film as a commodity - albeit with unique characteristics - within the general framework of commodity production. Further, within capitalist economies, the commodity 'film' is generally produced by business organisations operating within a context of rivalry in the pursuit of profit. Certainly, in both American and British markets the major domestic players were vertically integrated, suggesting the prevalence of monopoly power and practices. They were strategic outfits. That is, they developed plans and organisational structures based upon and congruent with a set of long term objectives. These in turn informed and guided activity and behaviour at an operational level. Accordingly, the size, scope, and internal organisation of the businesses - including both the hierarchical arrangement of authority and the throughput processes - were the consequences of strategic thinking.

This is not to say that the fit between objectives and strategic thinking was perfect or that the latter was not subject to modification in the light of unforeseen changes in the business environment or learning from experience. However, it does mean that business structures, such as those mentioned in Jewell's (1994) observation that RKO and MGM owned approximately the same number of theatres in the United States and produced approximately the same number of films and yet "were playing in different leagues", were the outcome of human design and require explanation. This is the stuff of the film business as a research

programme.

The Relative Smallness of the Domestic Market

Rachael Low was in no doubt as to the central problem facing British film producers, writing:

Even the quality producers had to operate on a scale of production far below that of their competitors in the British market, the Hollywood companies. Only Korda was rash enough to try to compete on equal terms. The size of the market to which the Americans had unquestioned access, not just for the occasional special picture but for all their films, made a very lavish scale of production economically viable....During the decade every British quality producer tried to break into this market, but circuit distribution and the terms upon which films were distributed were in the control of the big producers and they very naturally did not wish to encourage British competition. (1985, pp.115-116)

The concluding two sentences of her *Film-making in 1930s Britain* read:

It has been argued in this study that although it is sometimes possible, with a lot of talent, to make good films on modest budgets in general a constant level of high quality is expensive and needs to be sure of a big market not just for isolated films but as a matter of course. The Americans had one and the British did not, and underlying the history of the British film industry is its struggle to come to terms with that fact. (1985, p.270)

The revenue and production cost information on (or about) films produced by London Films, presented in the previous chapter, draws attention to the dilemma posed by Low. In all cases where domestic revenue figures are available the company was unable to cover its production costs from domestic sales. Penetration into foreign markets, particularly that of the United States, was critical to the success or otherwise of its big budget productions.

Korda developed a clear three pronged strategy of: a) the

production of *international* films¹ - films which were rooted in time and place but in a style which was international rather than parochial; b) the ownership and management of first rate production facilities; and c) world-wide distribution, including the American market, through United Artists. In many ways the strategy was brilliantly successful. From a base of almost nothing Korda and his organisation were able to produce a string of films which was critically acclaimed and popular on an international scale right up to and beyond the outbreak of the Second World War: projects such as **The Thief of Bagdad** and **That Hamilton Woman** were completed in Hollywood. In the case of London Films, as with its fellow United Artist American counterpart, Goldwyn Studios, individual film popularity was critical. As outlined in Chapter 7 both were small output, big budget 'hit' producers, making it difficult for either to absorb the losses associated with 'flops' within the annual portfolio of films. Clearly, the ambition of London Films was such as to take on the challenge associated with big budget film-making set out above by Rachael Low.

By the end of this period the only other domestic organisation attempting to establish a foothold in the American market was Herbert Wilcox's production unit.² Otherwise the sentiment amongst British film-makers and contemporary opinion was one of caution. George Arliss wrote an article in which he argued that:

America can afford to spend £200,000 on a film and still make a handsome profit. England cannot spend half that sum without courting disaster.

Arliss proposed the following strategy, the first premise of which was that film-makers should make:

....less pretentious films and make for the English

markets.....By making British films at modest prices for the English market, films that depend for their successs mainly on story and the acting - and, in time, we could excel in such films as Hollywood excels in the spectacular productions - I think the American market would be automatically opened to us. The companies in the United States that control the kinemas are not likely to be slow in making a bid for any British films out of which they can make money.³

George Smith, a film-producer with over 50 Quota films to his credit, also thought that much of the production-side of the industry was too ambitious.

....our films have suffered from a little too much genius and not enough commonsense. That is why I plead that it is the bread and butter pictures which should form the solid background for the film Industry in this country. Including the Empire, we have a great home market which is quite enough to make films pay without a thought to foreign markets: why not, then, make reasonable (sic) priced films for this market - and let those which achieve greatness go out as our ambassadors to America and the rest of the world.⁴

Clearly, Smith did not seem to share Arliss's belief that well made modest budget films might find a niche in the American market. However, in writing in praise of the British 'B' picture, he argued:

Modestly priced films have been, and are, the finest training ground for artists, directors and technicians. Here these young people are given real opportunities to emerge from obscurity.,

and names the directors Brian Desmond Hurst, David MacDonald and Michael Powell as cases in point.⁵

Gaumont British made a concerted effort in 1935 to obtain widespread distribution in the United States. As has been demonstrated in Chapter 7 the company's films were truly popular with domestic audiences. This, coupled to its strong corporate association with the Fox organisation in America led it to

establish its own American distribution branch.

The Kine Weekly in December 1934 reported Mark Ostrer's (Chairman of Gaumont British) declaration that contractual arrangements had been made with two Broadway (New York) 6,000 seater cinemas - the Roxy and Radio City Music Hall - to show Gaumont British-Gainsborough films. This followed the success of **Chu Chin Chow** and **Little Friend** at the former and **Jew Suss** at the latter. Ostrer indicates that the international reputation of its films had led the company to adopt an export orientated sales strategy which in turn required it to establish its own sales staff in the United States. This venture it would appear, however, was disastrous. Thirteen months later, Ostrer was reported in the same journal as stating:

We have attempted to distribute our films in the American market in the hope that we could capture from that most important territory a return on our films to which we think we are justly entitled. Although our films were reviewed most favourably in that country results have not justified our expectations.

This is not due to any lack of merit, but to the fact that we are not accorded playing time in the most important situations, these being almost wholly controlled by American producing interests. At the close of our financial year in 1935 we had in stock a number of films which failed to realise their book values, and consequently considerable losses were incurred not only in respect of these particular films, but also in respect of most of the films subsequently released.⁶

Although Gaumont British-Gainsborough did not make films with budgets of the magnitude of those common at London Films, Low suggests that typical budgets of their films were in the £30-40,000 range with Jessie Matthews' musicals costing between £50-70,000 and **Jew Suss** reaching the £100,000 mark. If such investments were, as a rule, unable to generate positive rates of return, given both their popularity and the size of the Gaumont

British owned circuit in the U.K., what chance was there for the rest of the industry?⁷

Having burnt his fingers on a small number of large budget productions in the late twenties and unsuccessfully attempted to market British International films in the United States, John Maxwell had developed a quite different approach to film budgets. According to Rachael Low:

He operated a policy of cut-price window dressing, trying to make cheap films which looked like expensive ones. After determined efforts in the early years to get their films into America had largely failed, costs were kept firmly down in order that the films, still ostensibly first features, might make a profit from the home market alone. (Low 1985, p.116-117).

Maxwell was clear minded as far as the balance between revenues and costs was concerned. His was the only major concern to make profits throughout the Thirties. As early as 1935 he predicted the speculative bubble which broke in late 1936 and so badly affected production levels in 1937. In warning the trade against the growth in speculative ventures, based upon the spectacular success of *The Private Life of Henry VIII*, and set up by:

....inexperienced promoters who, with no particular or intimate knowledge of the business, seem to think that by raising £60,000 from confiding City gentlemen, plunge (sic) into picture making and leave a large loss behind them.,

Maxwell proceeded to give a lesson in industry economics. He declared:

I have made inquiries which satisfy me that not more than ten pictures a year gross more than £100,000 in this country. Of these prizes six or more are carried off by our American competitors, leaving four, five or six for British companies.

Consider the matter in the light of economies. The total amount of film hire available for feature pictures from the cinemas may be placed at £7.5 millions after making allowance for the amount of available film hire in newsreels and shorts etc.. From this £7.5 millions must be

newsreels and shorts etc.. From this £7.5 millions must be deducted roughly one-third as the cost of print distribution, publicity, etc., leaving five millions available for division amongst all the feature pictures put out in this country in one year. As the number of feature pictures released in a year is about 500, it is easy to calculate the average gross per picture. Assuming there are only three or four £100,000 grosses - which means £65,000 or so net to the producer - available for British pictures in the year, and that as against this there are at the moment 30 to 40 pictures of which it is claimed to have cost £60,000 to £70,000, and (sic) it will be seen that the danger of heavy losses to which I have drawn attention is in no way exaggerated.⁸

It is interesting to contrast the figures set down by Maxwell with those presented to The British Association by Simon Rowson a year earlier, in September 1934.⁹ Based upon Entertainment tax returns and a massive sample of ticket sales from 2000 cinemas for the first six months of 1934, Rowson estimated that the British public paid £40,200,000 in cinema admissions in a single year.¹⁰ The total admission revenues net of tax were about £35 millions including £1.3 millions from Irish exhibitor receipts. Of this Rowson calculated that renters received £11.8 millions which after overhead and operating expenses left them with £8.1 millions. This is some £3 million more than Maxwell estimated for feature film revenue only. Rowson estimated that the sum paid by renters to domestic film-makers was of the order of £2.4 million - including shorts and newsreel outputs - with another £0.6 million in the form of overseas earnings. Given that the renters generated profits of between £0.4 - £0.5 millions, Rowson calculated the amount being remitted to American film-makers was £5.3 million. These final estimates are presented in Table 9.1.

Comparison of the Maxwell and Rowson calculations is made more complex by Rowson's inclusion of all film output, whilst Maxwell

Table 9.1: Rowson's Estimates of Net Remittances from the trade in Films during 1934

	USA (£m)	Other Countries (£m)	Total (£m)
Remittances for foreign films	5.3	0	5.3
Receipts from British films shown abroad	0.1	0.5	0.6
Net remittances abroad	5.2	0.5	4.7

Source: Rowson (1934)

attends only to feature films. Intuitively, it is difficult to believe that over a quarter of producers' net revenues - the difference between the two estimates after Rowson's estimate of renters' profits has been deducted - came from non-feature film sources. If we accept Rowson's calculations as being more scientific in origin and assume that a tenth of film revenues was generated by 'shorts', cartoons, documentaries, newsreels etc., this leaves a net income of £6,790,000 to be shared amongst the film producers.¹¹ The figures produced earlier in Table 7.6.1 indicate that 664 feature films were released in Britain in 1934: many of these earned revenues during 1935, whilst many films released in 1933 did the same in 1934. Taking this number (664) as an approximate denominator, an arithmetic mean revenue per film of £10,226 is generated which is of the same order of magnitude as the £10,000 per film inferred by Maxwell.¹²

As shown in Chapter 4, the skewed frequency distribution of POPSTAT scores shows a tremendous concentration of films around the modal score, below the value of the arithmetic mean. By

transforming the POPSTAT scores generated by 1934 releases, on a *pro rata* basis, into imputed revenue figures based upon the assumed £6,790,000 revenue earned by the producers of feature films, it is possible to obtain an idea of the scale of net box-office takings per film. These are presented in Table 9.2 below and would appear to confirm broadly Maxwell's assessment of net box-office returns, and the risks associated with British big budget productions, given the latter's dependence upon the domestic market.¹³ A full listing can be found in Appendix 9.1.

Table 9.2: Frequency Distribution of Imputed Box-Office Revenues (Net of Entertainment Tax) for Feature Films Released in Britain in 1934

Class Intervals (£s)	Frequency of all Films	Frequency of British Films
0	81	27
1 to 10000	332	107
10001 to 20000	165	28
20001 to 30000	50	13
30001 to 40000	15	5
40001 to 50000	11	4
50001 to 60000	4	1
60001 to 70000	2	2
70001 to 80000	2	1
80001 to 90000	1	0
90001 to 100000	0	0
100001 to 110,000	1	0
Total	664	188

Estimated Total Box-Office Revenue for all films = £6,790,000

Arithmetic Mean Box-Office Revenue for all films = £10,226

Estimated Total Box-Office Revenue for British films = £ 1,667,385

Arithmetic Mean Box-Office Revenue for British films = £ 8,869

Arithmetic Mean Box-Office Revenue for British films with a POPSTAT score > 0 = £10,356

Sources:

Rowson (1934), Table 6.6.1, Appendix 9.1

The net revenue estimate found in Appendix 9.1, the frequency distribution of which is presented in Table 9.2, are crudely

arrived at. Maxwell provides no source for his claim concerning box-office performance. Rowson steers away from making such estimations. The London Films' budgets used in Chapter 8 are found on a single archive document and are not supported by details of their composition. In general, evidence is hard to come by and poor in quality. Indeed, these factors provided the principal impetus for generating the POPSTAT index. In turn, they cannot be regarded as more than a rough indicator of the reliability of the latter. However, what little evidence is forthcoming would appear to support the validity of the Index.

The Market for Feature Films in Britain During the 1930s.

Whilst cinema was the dominant leisure activity in Britain during the 1930s, accounting for approximately two-thirds of all entertainment admissions and expenditure, the data presented in Table 9.3 shows that it did not feature very prominently in household budgets, absorbing only 1% of consumers' expenditure in real terms during the period. As far as the national economy was concerned the Film Industry was small, but nevertheless provided the principal source of entertainment for the British people. As pointed out in Chapter 4 annual per capita cinema attendance grew from 19 to 20 visits during the period: about once every two and a half weeks for every British citizen, generating a per capita expenditure of between 16 - 17 shillings between 1934 - 38, equivalent to a little more than 4d per week. The slow upward drift in attendances captured by Browning and Sorrell (1954) appears to keep pace with the growth in population and if anything the proportion of personal expenditure devoted to cinema-going fell - albeit marginally - whilst real incomes and expenditure rose. It does not appear, that as a general rule,

**Table 9.3: Cinema, Entertainment, Leisure, and Income Statistics
1930-38 Statistics^a**

	1930	1931	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938
1. Personal Disposable Income(£ms)	4083	3930	3827	3884	3994	4154	4372	4517	4625
2. Consumers' Expenditure(£ms)	3932	3805	3683	3696	3802	3935	4080	4289	4392
3. Balance (Savings)(£ms)	151	125	144	188	192	219	292	228	233
4. Personal Disposable Income per capita (£s)	89	85	83	84	86	89	93	96	97
5. Real Consumers' Expenditure per capita (£s) 1913 Prices	49	49	48	49	51	52	53	54	54
6. Population UK (millions)	45.866	46.074	46.335	46.521	46.666	46.868	47.081	47.289	47.494
7. Employment (millions)	19.115	18.665	18.753	19.136	19.685	20.037	20.670	21.364	21.418
8. Unemployment (millions)	2.379	3.252	3.400	3.087	2.609	2.437	2.100	1.776	2.164
9. Average weekly wage earnings 1930=100	100	98.857	97.143	96.000	96.000	97.143	98.857	102.857	105.714
10. Retail Prices 1930=100	100	93.548	90.968	88.387	89.032	90.323	92.903	98.065	98.710
11. Cinema Admissions (millions)					903	907	917	946	987
12. Average Price (d.)					10.3	10.2	10.1	10.1	10.1
13. Expenditure (£m)					38.8	38.7	38.6	39.9	41.5
14. All Ent. Admissions (millions)	1378	1333	1253	1234	1315	1332	1400	1447	1497
15. Average Price (d.)	10.6	10.5	11	10.8	10.7	10.6	10.4	10.4	10.4
16. Expenditure (£m)	60.9	58.5	57.2	55.4	58.5	58.6	60.8	62.7	64.9
17. Expenditure on all Ent. and Recreation (£ms)	223.6	221.5	221.7	221.5	225.4	234.0	242.9	254.6	262.5
<u>Proportions</u>									
18. Row 13/Row 16					0.663	0.660	0.635	0.636	0.639
19. Row 13/Row 17					0.172	0.165	0.159	0.157	0.158
20. Row 13/Row 2					0.010	0.009	0.009	0.009	0.009
21. Cinema Admissions per capita (millions)					19.350	19.352	19.477	20.005	20.782
22. Expenditure per capita (£)					0.831	0.826	0.820	0.844	0.874
23. Weekly Expenditure per capita (£)					0.016	0.016	0.016	0.016	0.017
24. Real Weekly Expenditure per capita (£) @1930 prices					0.018	0.018	0.017	0.017	0.017

Sources:

Rows 1-3 Feinstein (1976) Table 10, Rows 4-5 Feinstein (1976) Table 17, Row 6 Feinstein (1976) Table 55, Rows 7-8 Feinstein (1976) Table 57, Rows 9-10 Feinstein (1976) Table 65, Rows 11-16 Stone and Rowe (1966) Rows 11-13 taken from Browning and Sorrell (1954), and estimates for other entertainment activities for 1 Row 17 Stone and Rowe (1966) Table 39

Note:

a) Unless stated otherwise all values are expressed in current year prices.

audiences perceived the cinema as a luxury good. Indeed, judging from Orwell's observation of the activities of unemployed men in Wigan - quoted in Chapter 4 - amongst the poorest members of the community, cinema may well have acted as an inferior good.¹⁴

Based on the data presented in Table 9.3, the average annual real income elasticity for cinema admissions was 0.42 with a negative income elasticity of demand occurring in 1937. Clearly, cinema admissions were not particularly responsive to changes in real personal disposable income. Given the small proportion of disposable income spent on the cinema-going, this is not a surprising finding. As for prices, the fall in the real price of cinema attendance - from 1934 prices in general were rising whilst the average cinema ticket price fell marginally - may have encouraged higher attendances, although it is more likely that more people were attracted to the cinema for reasons other than price, but once there chose to pay for cheaper seats. In both cases the small number of annual observations of cinema attendances, admission prices and revenues makes time-series model building a doubtful activity. On the surface it appears unlikely that price or income were particularly good explanatory variables for the rise in attendances during the Thirties.

The 1938 Films Act

The 1938 Films Act was based upon an exhaustive inquiry into the domestic industry; resulting in the Moyne Committee Report (1936) and White Paper (1937). The 1927 Films Act was regarded as a success and the Quota was retained to bias openly the market towards British films. Even though a large number of domestic productions might have competed on an equal basis with 'A' films emanating from Hollywood, the quota constraints imposed upon both

renters and exhibitors provided a cushion of security for domestic producers. However, whether this was sufficient to enable film-makers to at least cover costs is debatable. Table 9.2 indicates that only 26 films made upwards of £20,000 at the Box-office and only 13 films earned £30,000 or more for their makers, with an Arithmetic mean box-office for those 161 British films securing at least one booking in the sample cinema set, of just over £10,000. Nevertheless, in softening the risks associated with distribution, the architects of the 1938 Act continued to protect an industry which otherwise would have been swamped by the Hollywood product.

An important new element to the 1938 Films Act was the reciprocity clause by which foreign renters could obtain quota credits for buying the distribution rights to British films for £20,000 or more. Its inclusion in the Act was the consequence of the obvious structural asymmetry between the British and American market for film producers. The American market, with a population rising from 122,775 million 131,669 million between 1930-40, and with a significantly higher per capita income than Britain, was dominated by the Hollywood product, whereas in Britain, these same American producers were joined by indigenous film-makers in the scramble to attain market share.¹⁵ Furthermore, revenues from the American market covered the production and domestic distribution costs of Hollywood, whilst overseas markets provided the source of their profits. This can be seen from the figures produced below in Table 9.4, recording the production costs and box-office performances of Warners' films during this period. Unfortunately the William Schaefer Ledger does not record

Table 9.4: US Annual Gross Box-Office and Production Costs for Warners' Releases 1932-37

	US Box-Office (\$000s)	Production Costs(\$000s)	Costs/B-O
1932	17891	11316	0.63
1933	19769	11579	0.59
1934	18603	12279	0.66
1935	25670	16127	0.63
1936	21632	14777	0.68
1937	29642	21845	0.74

Source: Glancy: unpublished William Schaefer Ledger.

distribution costs. However, if we assume that distribution costs to revenue ratio is approximately one-third, then joint production and distribution costs of films produced at Warners 1932-37 approximately equal U.S. box-office receipts.¹⁶ Film distribution outside the American market hence represented, after the deduction of overseas distribution costs, clear profits for the Hollywood majors. Given that Britain was Hollywood's long standing principal overseas market - this being even more the case after the advent of sound and the emergence of totalitarian regimes in Italy and Germany - it is not surprising that they took the legislative constraints on their ability to dominate the British market so seriously.¹⁷

For British firms access to the American market appeared the only way of moving beyond the constraints imposed by the size of the domestic and Empire market and the competitiveness of the Hollywood product. For these reasons John Maxwell became a champion of the reciprocity idea, maintaining in a 1937 Kine Weekly article:

The object in allowing this barter scheme is to provide the British producer with the extra money he must get from

overseas markets if he is to escape extinction, and gradually to build up an outlet for British pictures in the American market.

The American market, of course, is three times the size of the British market in money yielding capacity, and if the British producer cannot get a reasonable part of his cost from that market he can never hope to establish his business on a footing that will enable him to compete with foreign film producers who have a world market at their disposal.¹⁸

Maxwell argued that the size and complexity of the U.S. distribution structure, with its 36 distribution centres compared to the eight in Britain, militated against British producer-renters organising their own distribution company. He alluded to the "The gallant attempt of Gaumont British to do this" and explained its failure in terms of "the lack of a large enough quantity of pictures suitable for that market to justify the very heavy costs of distribution there". Reciprocation, on the other hand "....will avoid any British company having to undertake the enormous cost of setting up an organisation, and get the American producers to use their own existing organisations to distribute British pictures". Hence, the key element in this agency arrangement was the financial commitment required from the American Renter. Maxwell argued:

The fact that under the reciprocity scheme the American companies would have a substantial financial interest in putting out these pictures in America would, in my view, completely overcome the difficulties that have hitherto existed.

American companies, like any individual, once they have their money invested in a proposition, will do their utmost to get back that money, plus a profit.¹⁹

There is no evidence that the reciprocity option led to a sizeable increase in the numbers of British films distributed in the United States. However, it must be said that our knowledge of

those British films which were popular in the American market is lamentably poor. It would appear that rather than adopt greater numbers of British productions for distribution in U.S. markets, the major American companies responded to the double and triple renters' quota provision of the 1938 Act by either establishing their own production facilities or investing heavily in a new set of domestic companies set up to produce small numbers of big budget films at existing production studios. By doing so, they reduced their need for cheap domestic quota-fillers. In the 1938-39 Renters' Year 10 foreign (American) films were registered as triples and 21 as doubles. This in turn lowered domestic film output levels as this new provision reduced the quota requirement by 41 films; although the decline in actual exhibition was nothing like as dramatic with well over 20% of cinema screen space occupied by British films.²⁰ But, as in Rachael Low' words:

"....the quota quickie was dead" (Low 1985, p.51)

Film Industry Infrastructure

The decade of the 1930s was one of remarkable achievement for British film-makers. By the end of the decade an infrastructure was in place which enabled them to meet much of Britain's' war-time needs. In the *Evidence to the Moyne Committee* , a table was produced which showed that between 1928 and 1935-6 the area of stage floor space in British studios had increased seven and a half times from 105,211 to 769,557 square feet. Yet, as the New Year issues of the Kine Weekly show, even as late as 1934 there was only 301,584 square feet of studio space available to film-makers, with the real explosion occurring between 1935 and 1937 when studio floor space more than doubled.²¹

Commensurate information on the human capital side of the industry is difficult to find. Low writes that by the end of 1936 the AC-T trade union claimed to represent virtually all studio technicians with a membership of 1,200.²² The Board of Trade Census put the number of those working in the production sector of the film industry on 16 October 1937 at 9,529 of whom 4,125 were artists.²³

There appears to have been no shortage of capital coming into the industry during this period. The speculative nature of much industry financing has been covered thoroughly by Klingender and Legg (1937), Low (1985) and Street (1986).²⁴ The increased number of firms entering the industry, given the low levels of profits earned by incumbents, would appear to suggest that many investors found the allure of potential profitability which accompanied box-office success - *The Private Lives of Henry VIII* factor - sufficient to overcome the risks entailed. It is clear from Table 9.5 that 1936 saw a spectacular increase in film industry investment which tailed away, so much so that levels in 1938 were ten times lower. As noted earlier, the expansion of studio floor space, and hence output capacity, peaked precisely at that moment when the speculative bubble of film industry financing burst, leaving established film-makers with plenty of facilities, but short of operational finance. In the case of Korda's principal backer, Prudential Assurance, their attempt to gain boardroom control of London Films' costs failed and by 1938 they were looking to loosen their ties.²⁵ Both major combines sought to cut back on production, which was increasingly viewed as loss-making. The banking sector never became intimately

Table 9.5: New Film Industry Companies 1935-38

	1935	1936	1937	1938
Production Companies	88	94	73	69
Distribution Companies	1	0	0	7
Finance Companies	0	2	7	0
Studios	4	5	6	1
Laboratories	1	1	0	1
Recording Studios	0	0	0	1
Stills Studios	0	0	0	1
Colour Companies	0	0	3	0
Newsreel Companies	0	0	1	0
<hr/>				
Total Capital Value				
Of New Companies (£)	1,070,390	2,102,500	769,100	199,760

Sources:

Kine Weekly 6 January 1938, 12 January 1939

formulation in the industry, preferring to extend overdrafts, and reschedule loans to existing producers, although it appears that the banks were an important source of finance for those companies set up through the Aldgate Trust, whose loans were underwritten by Lloyds insurers.

Conclusion

Ian Jarvie (1992) has recently made an important contribution to our understanding of Hollywood's historical dominance of the international market for feature films since the twenties. In particular he alludes to the "structural resilience" of what Fine and Leopold (1993) have termed its "system of provision". Jarvie starts his examination of the success of the Hollywood film at the point of consumption and then works back to explain that structure which delivered and sustained it over a period of forty years - the period which Bordwell, Staiger and Thompson (1985) refer to as "Classical Hollywood" - and beyond into the era of television and video. "Structural resilience", accordingly, describes a dynamic state of organisational and institutional

emerging uncertainties.

For Jarvie, "Hollywood and its pictures.. set the standard for what was required to make really big money." (1992, p.143) However, whilst this was necessary it was not by itself a sufficient condition for global domination. Jarvie explains the latter as a consequence of a "grand strategy", based on relations between the U.S. Government and Hollywood over the period. He writes:

It transpires that although market dominance was not gained by strategy, it was held by strategy, and challenges were beaten off by strategy. Some of that strategy was conscious, some was not....Nevertheless 'strategy' is the best name for it. (1992, pp.9-10)

It is within the context of this "system of provision", established during the late teens and early twenties of this century, that Jarvie analyses the emergence of a film industry in Britain during the Thirties.²⁶ He maintains that, given the strengths of the "system", the British effort at securing trade success was "quite futile." For Jarvie:

(the British)appreciation of their situation was faulty. The fundamental secrets of the success of the Americans were opaque to them. They put it down to chicanery rather than strategy. (Jarvie 1992, p.8)

The structural impediments to trade success lay not just with the quality of the Hollywood product but also with its world-wide system of distribution and the pro-active commercial and trade policy of the U.S. Government. The American distributors had created a world market for their films. In most countries outside Europe the market and Hollywood were synonymous. For British firms to match the performance of their Hollywood counterparts,

access to this system of distribution was necessary.

It is a phenomenally difficult task for any new product, from a new company, to be successfully entered into a developed and mature market. For this to occur there has to be a close match between the unique qualities of the product, the reach of the marketing effort and the perceptions and appetites of the potential customers. Where such a match occurs structural patterns can change rapidly.²⁷ Whilst all industries can expect to experience structural changes over time, it is rare for them to occur with the appearance of a new entrant. The ambitions of first British International Pictures (ABPC) and then Gaumont British to obtain a sustainable foothold in, let alone conquer, the American industry may well have been "naive".

Clearly, the principal American distributors were not sufficiently convinced by the commercial potential of British films to feel compelled to offer them widespread distribution: particularly as this may have been at the expense of exhibition dates for films from the production wing of the parent company. (This appears to have been the case for Gaumont British, even given its corporate link with Fox and then 20th. Century Fox and the demonstrable success of its product in the British market.)

Yet, from within the Chandlerian paradigm championed by Elbaum and Lazonick, the organisational strategy of the two British combines would appear astute. Both set out to recreate the structures which had served the American majors so well in their domestic market during the 1920s. The argument for vertical integration - set out in Chapter 1 of this work - is that of

transaction cost economies. Jarvie captures this ably when contrasting the booking arrangements of the combines with that of single proprietors. (1992, p.142) Given the dearth of what Chandler has termed M-type (multi-divisional) organisations in Britain circa 1928, and the previous inept corporate performance in the domestic film industry, the commercial and organisational activities of the two combines in response to the 1927 legislation suggests imagination and shrewdness.

Jarvie's approach to the production activities of the domestic industry is retrospective and hence not particularly helpful in explaining the process through which British films were "pushing back" the market share of their American rivals.

In the U.K. there was a protracted struggle that at one point seemed to be pushing back, but over confidence led to over extension. (Jarvie 1992, p.8)

For example, Gaumont British's success - measured by market share - as a volume producer of around 20 films a year, and at the forefront of this "pushing back" process - suggests a lean, modern, quality based studio production system: albeit not on the same scale as the U.S. majors, but of sufficient scale to enjoy those economies associated with spreading fixed costs. In this respect it was far removed from the experience of London Films. The failure of Gaumont British in 1937-38 was primarily one of financial management rather than a commercial failure. (Incidentally, all of the American majors - with perhaps the exception of MGM - underwent similar financial, rather than commercial, crises during the early Thirties) The losses recorded by the organisation in 1936, leading to the end of its American distribution venture, were partly responsible for pricking the

speculative bubble of film production finance which had gathered pace during 1935 and 1936. Some years later, Gaumont British had learned the same lesson as Maxwell with respect to the U.S. market.

However, by this time the production facilities in Britain had been transformed, distribution and exhibition networks established and human capital considerable expanded. If we contrast the industry in 1936 with that of ten years earlier, the transformation is nothing short of remarkable, and this, it should be remembered, was during a period of deep and sustained recession. Whilst it is possible to agree with Jarvie's statement that:

British films owed their existence to, indeed were in a certain way parasitic upon, the exhibition industry created around the American product., (Jarvie 1992, p.172)

this does not lead to the proposition that the domestic industry did not produce films of worth, and genuine domestic popularity. The results set out in Chapter 7 suggest that such a case cannot be made. Rather than such a glum prognosis, the Thirties ought to be seen as a decade of achievement which laid a foundation for future development.

Further, new American capital played little part in this transformation.²⁸ Prior to MGM's emergence as a domestic producer in 1937, only Warners (from 1932) and Fox (from 1934) established studio facilities and produced low budget films on a systematic basis. On the exhibition side, only Paramount outside of London's West End, developed a presence. Accordingly, Jarvie's statement concerning the transformation of the British film

industry from cottage industry to corporate structure (p.143), over-emphasises the American contribution. The notable fact, along with the emergence of the new corporate structure, is that the capital raised was for the greater part domestically supplied and organised.

Finally, this leads to the issue of "over-extension". The very concept implies an excess of supply over demand, yet this was not the case in the market for real goods, where there were still insufficient British films of merit to meet exhibitors' quota requirements. Klingender and Legg (1937) developed the thesis to highlight those monopoly elements in the U.S. industry and the irrational operation of the domestic capital market in financing British film companies. The excess they refer to was the speculative nature of film finance and the opportunistic behaviour of a number of domestic film production companies. The decline in domestic production in 1937 was the consequence of loans being called in and tumbling share values. For perhaps the first time since the 1927 legislation there was a shortage of funds available for film production. Undoubtedly, many companies in the industry had been poorly managed at both a commercial and financial level, and major changes were required at a corporate level. Unlike its counterpart in the United States during Hollywood's corporate crises of the early Thirties, the British banking/financial sector failed to take the initiative in restructuring the financial and corporate sides of the British film business.

In challenging the institutional account of British industrial retardation, most persuasively presented by Elbaum and Lazonick

(1986), and set out in Chapter 2, Foreman-Peck writes:

The problem Britain faced in the industries of the 'second industrial revolution' was that she generally lacked rapidly growing markets for the products. When the markets were available, as in the urban markets for processed foods such as biscuits, British companies did grow large enough to require professional managers to a much greater extent than elsewhere. Such firms were internationally competitive. (1994, p.398)

Given the structural weaknesses of the domestic industry and conversely the strength and resilience of the American "system of provision" at the time of the 1927 legislation, the contribution of British film-makers to cinema-going in Britain during the Thirties was marked. Although we know little of the operational efficiencies of British studios, there is ample evidence in both the scale of the inputs and the quantity and quality of the outputs to suggest that British studios were able to make significant in-roads into domestic market shares. Moreover, British International Pictures (ABPC) and Gaumont British adopted multi-divisional type organisational structures: although in itself this tells us little *per se* about the quality of internal organisation.

From our knowledge of the profit and loss ledgers of films from the MGM, RKO and Warners studios, the contribution of non-American box-office receipts was critically important to the profitability of the season's production portfolio - even given the size of the American market. It would appear that the inability of British film producers to acquire extensive distribution rights in the United States seriously constrained the revenues and profitability of domestic production and led the two most ambitious and successful British producers - Gaumont

British and London films - into financial loss. The collapse of domestic production in 1937 and the triple and double quota provisions of the 1938 legislation signal the absence of a "grand strategy" on the part of British producers, financial institutions and the State. It is as if the experience of the successful emergence of a domestic film industry, occasioned but certainly not planned by the authors of the 1927 legislation, was not understood by their 1938 counterparts. The inability of the latter to stand above the sectional conflict of the three functional strands of the British industry proved to be a success for American "grand strategy".

The problem of access to the American market for non-American producers of mass media products is a constant and continuing theme. A recent variant comes from Terry Illot in connection with the failure of Goldcrest - the latest in a long line of domestic production businesses which failed to sustain a presence in the American market. He wrote:

All over the world, it seems, television producers are prey to a perennial pipedream: that somehow the very best of their output - prize winning dramatizations of literary classics, ground-breaking documentaries, acclaimed recordings of ballet and opera, folk dance and song - will find an audience in the vast, rich, and fragmented American market. It doesn't happen. (Eberts and Ilott, 1990, p.2)

Notes

1. See Kulik (1975, Ch.9) for a full account of the concept of *Internationalism*. Kulik (p.97) quotes Korda from an interview recorded in 1933 that to be international a film had to "first of all be truly and intensely national. It must be true to the matter of it".

2. See Low (1985, pp. 247-251).

3. Kine Weekly 3 June 1937.

4. Kine Weekly 27 October 1938.
 5. *ibid.*
 6. Kine Weekly January 1937. Also see Low (1985, pp.142-43).
 7. Low intriguingly suggests that the internal distribution arrangements were far from satisfactory and may have led to the production wing of the organisation cross-subsidising the exhibition wing. See Low *op cit* pp.142-43.
 8. Reported in Kine Weekly 5 September 1935.
 9. As with the estimates set out in Rowson's paper of 1936 given to the Royal Statistical Society, Browning and Sorrell (1954) maintain the estimate of admission required to obtain the £40,200,000 revenue estimate needs revising downwards. Their own revenue estimates are listed Table 9.3.
 10. Rowson (1984). Also reported in Kine Weekly 13 September 1934.
 11. This is arrived at as follows: Rowson's calculation of net revenues taken by renters is £8.1 million. From this subtract £810,000 as the revenue earned by non-feature film producers and £500,000 for renters' profits. This leaves an estimate of £6,790,000 going to the makers of feature films.
 12. For some reason Maxwell supposed that the number of feature length films marketed in Britain was in the order of 500. Given the assumption concerning one tenth of revenues being earned by non-feature films, the difference between the two denominators is sufficient to obtain approximate arithmetic means from the two sources.
 13. In effect, the aggregate POPSTAT score for 1934, generated from the the sample cinema set for that year, is taken to represent the exhibition sector as a whole. The performance of the season's 'hits' is likely to be under-estimated since the respective box-office percentages negotiated by the renters is not measured in the POPSTAT statistic. For example, where an exhibitor booked a double bill programme which included a major 'A' and a 'B' feature, it is likely that whilst the former commanded a percentage of the gross box-office revenue, the latter would have been booked at a low flat rate fee. However, the POPSTAT score for both will be identical, thereby under-estimating the popularity of the 'A' film as measured by box-office potential revenue and over-estimating the popularity of the 'B' film.
- At the other end of the scale, the fact that so many films return a zero POPSTAT amongst the sample cinema set, suggests that the latter leads to an under-estimation of the performance of the cheaper flat rate bookings. This is not likely to be very important in terms of market share since the size of the cinemas in which such films predominated and their tariff range imply very small box-office returns.
14. In a letter addresses to the Chancellor of the Exchequer and

published in the Kine Weekly on 23 March 1933, the General Secretary of the Cinema Exhibitor's Association - Mr. W R Fuller - argued that:

It (the k(c)inema) is no longer a luxury, but in the drab and dreary circumstances of life in depressed areas it is the only means available for bringing a little colour into the lives of people.,

as part of a campaign to persuade the Government to abolish the Entertainment Tax levy on admissions of 6d. and less.

15. U.S. population statistics taken from Eldridge and Thomas (1964). See Low (1985, p.50) for details of the Reciprocity provision of the 1938 Act.

16. The assumption of a one-third distribution cost to revenue is supported by data from the Trevlin ledger on RKO film performance, published by Jewell (1994). In my comment on this paper (Sedgwick 1994b), I produce an Appendix in which Column 7 presents the proportion for each film listed by Jewell in his microfiche Appendix. The latter is inclusive of foreign revenues and distribution costs, thus requiring an assumption of *pro-rata* spread of distribution costs to domestic and overseas sales for the proposition in the main text to be carried. This does not seem unreasonable.

17. See Dickinson and Street (1985, ch.5)

18. Kine Weekly 4.11.37

19. *ibid.*

20. The Board of Trade registered 228 British 'long' films submitted by renters in the registration year 1937-38. This fell to 103 and 108 respectively for the registration years 1938-39 and 1939-40. On the other hand the proportion of British 'long' films registered by exhibitors fell from 26.4% to 22.8%. See Low (1985, Appendix, Tables 2 & 6).

21. These details are presented in Wood (1986, p.120)

22. Low *op.cit.* p.29

23. *ibid.*, p.30

24. *ibid.*, pp. 199-208. Low gives an excellent account of the the system devised to finance speculative ventures.

25. Street (1986) *passim*.

26. See Jarvie (1992, p.5), Thompson (1985) *passim*, for accounts of the emergence of this system.

27. Note for instance the changes in the American ready to eat breakfast cereal industry during the late 1970s and early 1980s. See Schmalensee (1978).

28. Jarvie (1992, p.143).

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Appendix 3.1: British Studio Output Statistics

Film Company	1927	1928	1929	1930	1931	1932	Total	Share of Domestic Output (%)
Albion Film Syndicate	0	0	0	1	0	1	2	0.34
Alpha Film Corporati	0	0	0	2	0	0	2	0.34
Amalgamated Films Ass	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	0.34
Argyle (John)	0	0	0	1	2	0	3	0.50
Arnold	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0.17
Associated Film Exhi	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0.17
Associated Met.Produ	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0.17
Associated Picture P	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0.17
Associated Talking P	0	0	0	2	4	6	12	2.02
Balfour (Betty)	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0.17
Becket	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0.17
Benstead	0	1	0	1	1	0	3	0.50
Betts (Ernest)	0	0	0	1	1	0	2	0.34
Blattner (Louis)	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0.17
British and Dominion	0	2	6	6	8	13	35	5.88
British Filmcraft	0	1	3	0	0	0	4	0.67
British Independence	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0.17
British Instructional ^a	1	4	7	4	2	5	23	3.87
British International ^b	0	14	16	31	28	28	117	19.66
British Lion ^c	0	3	2	5	2	4	16	2.69
British National	0	2	0	0	0	0	2	0.34
British Projects	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0.17
British Screen Class	0	0	0	2	0	0	2	0.34
British Screen Prod	0	1	2	2	0	0	5	0.84
British & Foreign	0	0	2	0	0	0	2	0.34
Britsh Sound Film	0	0	2	0	2	0	4	0.67
Brittania	0	1	1	0	0	0	2	0.34
Bushey Studios	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0.17
Butcher's	0	0	0	2	1	1	4	0.67
Carlton	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0.17
Cinema Exclusives	0	0	3	1	0	0	4	0.67
Cinema House	0	0	0	0	1	2	3	0.50
Cohen (Harry)	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0.17
Cross (Martin)	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0.17
Delta Productions	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	0.50
Deuchar	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0.17
D&H Productions	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0.17
Edwards (Henry)	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0.17
Electrocord	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0.17
Encore	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0.17
Epic	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0.17
Eppels	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0.17
Equity ^d	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	0.50
European Motion Pict	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0.17
Famous Players Guild	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0.17
FBO 1919	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0.17
Fellner & Somlo ^e	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0.17
Film Engineering	0	0	0	0	5	1	6	1.01
Film Manufacturing	1	3	0	0	0	0	4	0.67
FN-Pathe	1	1	1	0	0	0	3	0.50
Fogwell (Reginald)	0	0	0	0	3	3	6	1.01

Foremost	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0.17
Fox British	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0.17
Gainsborough ^f	4	6	6	7	18	7	48	8.07
Gaumont British	2	12	2	5	6	4	31	5.21
Gem	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0.17
Geneen	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0.17
General Productions	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0.17
George Smith	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	0.34
Glavany	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0.17
Gloria	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0.17
Glyn	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0.17
Graaf	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0.17
G&S Productions	0	0	0	2	0	0	2	0.34
Hammer	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0.17
Harvel	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0.17
Heale	0	0	0	0	3	0	3	0.50
Hero	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0.17
Homeland	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0.17
Imperial Pictures	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0.17
Ingram (Rex)	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0.17
International Cinema	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0.17
Kearton	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0.17
King (George)	0	0	0	2	4	1	7	1.18
Kingsway General	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0.17
Langham Productions	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	0.34
London Films	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	0.50
London Screen Plays	0	1	0	0	2	0	3	0.50
Lupino Lane	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0.17
Macnamara	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0.17
Majestic Films	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0.17
Markham (Mansfield)	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0.17
Morgan (Sidney)	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0.17
National Talkies	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0.17
Neo Art	0	2	1	1	0	0	4	0.67
Nero ^g	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0.17
Nettlefold	0	6	2	3	1	0	12	2.02
New Era ^h	1	2	2	0	2	0	7	1.18
Pall Mall	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0.17
Paramount British	0	0	0	0	3	6	9	1.51
Parkinson	0	0	6	1	1	0	8	1.34
PDC	0	0	0	4	0	4	8	1.34
Piccadilly	0	0	0	2	0	0	2	0.34
Pugh	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0.17
QTS	0	3	0	0	0	0	3	0.50
Real Art	0	0	0	0	2	9	11	1.85
Reciprocity	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0.17
Regina Films	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	0.34
Rowson (Harry)	0	0	0	1	1	0	2	0.34
Samuelson (GB)	0	1	0	1	1	3	6	1.01
Savana Films	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0.17
Seven Seas	0	1	1	0	0	0	2	0.34
Sheridan (Oscar)	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0.17
Smith (Bernard)	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0.17
Smith (E)	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0.17
Smythe (F.S.)	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0.17
Sound City	0	0	0	0	0	2	2	0.34
Starcraft	0	0	0	2	3	0	5	0.84
Sterling	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	0.34
Stoll	1	4	0	1	0	0	6	1.01

Strand	0	2	3	0	0	0	5	0.84
St. George's Product	0	1	0	0	0	1	2	0.34
Talkiecolor	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0.17
Teddington Studios	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	0.17
Thompson (F.A.)	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0.17
Tschechowa	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	0.17
Twickenham	0	0	0	4	8	8	20	3.36
UFA ⁱ	0	0	0	1	1	1	3	0.50
Victoria	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0.17
Warners British	0	0	0	1	0	13	14	2.35
Welsh-Pearson ^j	0	3	3	1	1	1	9	1.51
Westminster Films	0	1	0	0	0	3	4	0.67
Whitehall	0	0	2	0	0	0	2	0.34
Whiting (Edward)	0	0	0	2	1	0	3	0.50
Whittaker (Charles)	0	0	0	1	0	0	1	0.17
Wilcox (Herbert) ^k	0	2	1	0	0	0	3	0.50
W&F	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0.17

Total 13 89 83 121 136 153 595 100

Sources: Kine Year Books 1927-33, Gifford (1973)

Notes:

- a. Includes one British Instructional/British International production registered in 1932 and two Anglo-German productions.
- b. Includes two British International/British Instructional production registered in 1931 and three British International/Burlington Films productions registered in 1928, 29 and 30 respectively. Also includes Anglo-German collaboration, registered in 1930.
- c. Includes two British Lion/Gainsborough productions.
- d. Produced by John Argyle.
- e. A German company.
- f. Includes three Gainsborough/British Lion productions registered in 1929, a Gainsborough/ Felner & Somlo production registered in 1929, a Gainsborough/ Greenbaum (German) production registered in 1930, a Gainsborough/Piccadilly production registered in 1927, and a Gainsborough/Tiffany (USA) production registered in 1930.
- g. A German company.
- h. Includes two New Era and Majestic productions.
- i. A German company.
- j. Includes films made by Welsh-Pearson-Elder.
- k. Includes a Graham-Wilcox film.

Appendix 4.1: The Sample cinema Set

Cinema	City	Seats	Owner	Mid-Range Price (shs.)	Potential Revenue (shs.)	POPSTAT Weight
<u>1932</u>						
FORUM	BIRM	1259	ABC	2	2518	0.683
FUTURIST	BIRM	1223	SCALA	1.8	2201.4	0.597
GAUMONT	BIRM	2092	GB	1.8	3765.6	1.021
SCALA	BIRM	800	SCALA	1.7	1360	0.368
WEST END	BIRM	1385	GB	2.1	2908.5	0.788
EMPIRE	BRIS	1437	ABC	1	1437	0.389
HIPPODROME	BRIS	2000	HIPPO	1.3	2600	0.705
KINGS	BRIS	1485	ABC	1.3	1930.5	0.523
NEW PALACE	BRIS	1574	GB	1.5	2361	0.640
REGENT	BRIS	2050	GBPCT	1.5	3075	0.834
STOLL	BRIS	1887	STOLL	0.9	1698.3	0.460
TRIANGLE	BRIS	1400	ABC	1.3	1820	0.493
WHITELADIES	BRIS	1314	ABC	1.3	1708.2	0.463
DAVIS	CROYDON	3712	DAVIS	2	7424	2.013
CALEY	EDIN	1900	CALEY	1.1	2090	0.566
NEW PICTUE	EDIN	951	GBPCT	1.6	1521.6	0.412
NEW VICTORIA	EDIN	2006	GBPCT	1.6	3209.6	0.870
PALACE	EDIN	750	PALACE	1.5	1125	0.305
PLAYHOUSE	EDIN	3000	PLAYHOUSE	1.3	3900	1.057
RUTLAND	EDIN	2187	GBGTC	1.3	2843.1	0.771
ST ANDREWS	EDIN	1399	GB	1	1399	0.379
SYNOD	EDIN	1470	POOLES	1	1470	0.398
COLISEUM	GLAS	3094	ABC	1.3	4022.2	1.091
CRANSTONS	GLAS	750	CRANSTONS	1.5	1125	0.305
GRAND	GLAS	733	GRAND	1.4	1026.2	0.278
GREENS	GLAS	4200	GREEN	1.8	7560	2.050
LA SCALA	GLAS	1191	GLAS PHOT	1.5	1786.5	0.484
NEW SAVOY	GLAS	2000	GB	1.4	2800	0.759
PICTURE HO.	GLAS	1572	GBPCT	0.8	1257.6	0.341
REGAL	GLAS	2359	ABC	1.3	3066.7	0.831
REGENT	GLAS	1119	GLAS PIC	1.5	1678.5	0.455
ASSEMBLY	LEEDS	900	GBPCT	1.4	1260	0.341
COLISEUM	LEEDS	2000	GB	1.4	2800	0.759
MAJESTIC	LEEDS	2392	GBPCT	1.3	3109.6	0.843
PARAMOUNT	LEEDS	2550	PAR	2.4	6120	1.660
RIALTO	LEEDS	1256	UNIVERSAL	1.5	1884	0.511
SCALA	LEEDS	1794	GB	1.5	2691	0.729
TOWER	LEEDS	1125	TOWER	0.9	1012.5	0.274
FORUM	LIV	1835	ABC	2	3670	0.995
FUTURIST	LIV	1029	SOL LEVY	1.7	1749.3	0.474
PALAIS	LIV	1300	PALAIS	1.8	2340	0.634
PRINCE OF W.	LIV	700	ABC	1.7	1190	0.322
RIALTO	LIV	1274	GBGTC	1.3	1656.2	0.449
ROYAL HIPPO.	LIV	3200	GBGTC	0.8	2560	0.694
SCALA	LIV	650	SCALA	1.9	1235	0.335
TROCADERO	LIV	1362	GBPCT	1.3	1770.6	0.480
ADELPHI*	LON	1352		4.3	5813.6	1.577
ALHAMBRA*	LON	1438		4.3	6183.4	1.677
ASTORIA	LON	1696	GBGTC	2	3392	0.920

CAPITOL	LON	1560	GBGTC	5.5	8580	2.327
CARLTON	LON	1159	PAR	6.5	7533.5	2.043
DOMINION	LON	2835	GBAPPH	3.8	10773	2.922
EMPIRE	LON	3226	EMPIRE	4.3	13871.8	3.763
L.COLISEUM	LON	2089		4.3	8982.7	2.436
LEICESTER	LON	1771	RKO	5	8855	2.402
HIPPODROME*	LON	1392		4.3	5985.6	1.623
PALACE*	LON	1245		4.3	5353.5	1.452
MARBLE	LON	1189	GB	3.7	4399.3	1.193
METROPOLE	LON	2000	METRO	3.3	6600	1.790
NEW GALLERY	LON	1450	GBPCT	5	7250	1.966
NEW VICTORIA	LON	2786	GBPCT	3.8	10586.8	2.871
PLAZA	LON	1896	PAR	5	9480	2.571
REGAL	LON	2400	ABC	5	12000	3.255
RIALTO	LON	684	UNIVERSAL	5	3420	0.927
STOLL	LON	2425	STOLL	2	4850	1.315
TIVOLI	LON	2097	GBPCT	5	10485	2.844
LONDON PAV.	LON	1574	ABC	1.5	2361	0.640
DEANS GATE	MAN	866	MAN ENT	1.3	1125.8	0.305
GAIETY	MAN	1434	ABC	1.4	2007.6	0.544
MARKET ST.	MAN	620	MARKET	1.5	930	0.252
NEW OXFORD	MAN	1150	MARKET	1.5	1725	0.467
PARAMOUNT	MAN	2914	PAR	2.4	6993.6	1.897
PICCADILLY	MAN	2324	PICCADILL	1.7	3950.8	1.071
REGAL	MAN	1600	IND	1.6	2560	0.694
ROYAL	MAN	1943	CLEMENT	1.8	3497.4	0.948
NEW WESTGATE	NEW	1865	GBDENMAN	1	1865	0.505
PARAMOUNT	NEW	2608	PAR	2.4	6259.2	1.697
PAVILION	NEW	1525	GBDENMAN	1.4	2135	0.579
STOLL	NEW	1389	STOLL	1.7	2361.3	0.640
QUEENS	NEW	1400	GBGTC	1.5	2100	0.569
ALBERT HALL	SHEF	1611	GB	1.5	2416.5	0.655
CENTRAL	SHEF	1539	CENTRAL	1.3	2000.7	0.542
CINEMA HO.	SHEF	800	SHEF CINE	1	800	0.217
ELECTRA	SHEF	587	SHEF CINE	0.8	469.6	0.127
HIPPODROME	SHEF	2445	ABC	1.2	2934	0.795
REGENT	SHEF	2207	GBPCT	1.5	3310.5	0.898
UNION ST.	SHEF	970	SHEF PIC	0.8	776	0.210

* London Legitimate Theatres and only occasional cinemas.

1933

FORUM	BIRM	1259	ABC	2	2518	0.695
FUTURIST	BIRM	1223	SCALA	1.6	1956.8	0.540
GAUMONT	BIRM	2092	GBAPPH	1.8	3765.6	1.039
SCALA	BIRM	800	SCALA	1.6	1280	0.353
WEST END	BIRM	1385	GB	2.1	2908.5	0.803
EMPIRE	BRIS	1437	ABC	1	1437	0.396
HIPPODROME	BRIS	2000	HIPPO	1.3	2600	0.717
KINGS	BRIS	1485	ABC	1.3	1930.5	0.533
NEW PALACE	BRIS	1574	GB	1.5	2361	0.651
REGENT	BRIS	2050	GBPCT	1.5	3075	0.849
STOLL	BRIS	1887	STOLL	0.9	1698.3	0.468
TRIANGLE	BRIS	1400	ABC	1.3	1820	0.502
WHITELADIES	BRIS	1314	ABC	1.3	1708.2	0.471
DAVIS	CROYDON	3712	DAVIS	2	7424	2.049

CALEY	EDIN	1900	CALEY	1.1	2090	0.577
NEW PICTURE	EDIN	951	GBPCT	1.6	1521.6	0.420
NEW VICTORIA	EDIN	2006	GBPCT	1.6	3209.6	0.886
PALACE	EDIN	750	PALACE	1.5	1125	0.310
PLAYHOUSE	EDIN	3000	PLAYHOUSE	1.3	3900	1.076
RUTLAND	EDIN	2187	GBGTC	1.3	2843.1	0.784
ST ANDREWS	EDIN	1399	GB	1	1399	0.386
SYNOD	EDIN	1470	POOLES	1	1470	0.405
COLISEUM	GLAS	3094	ABC	1.3	4022.2	1.110
CRANSTONS	GLAS	750	CRANSTONS	1.5	1125	0.310
GRAND	GLAS	733	GRAND	1.4	1026.2	0.283
GREENS	GLAS	4200	GREENS	1.8	7560	2.087
LA SCALA	GLAS	1191	GLAS PHOT	1.5	1786.5	0.493
NEW SAVOY	GLAS	2000	GB	1.5	3000	0.828
PICTURE HO.	GLAS	1572	GBPCT	0.8	1257.6	0.347
REGAL	GLAS	2359	ABC	1.3	3066.7	0.846
REGENT	GLAS	1119	GLAS PIC	1.5	1678.5	0.463
ASSEMBLY	LEEDS	900	GBPCT	1.4	1260	0.347
COLISEUM	LEEDS	2000	GB	1.4	2800	0.773
MAJESTIC	LEEDS	2392	GBPCT	1.3	3109.6	0.858
PARAMOUNT	LEEDS	2550	PAR	2.4	6120	1.689
RIALTO	LEEDS	1256	CINEMAS	1.5	1884	0.520
SCALA	LEEDS	1794	GB	1.5	2691	0.742
TOWER	LEEDS	1125	TOWER	0.9	1012.5	0.279
FORUM	LIV	1835	ABC	1.8	3303	0.911
FUTURIST	LIV	1029	SOL LEVY	1.7	1749.3	0.482
PALAIS	LIV	1300	PALAIS	1.3	1690	0.466
PRINCE OF W.	LIV	700	ABC	1.9	1330	0.367
RIALTO	LIV	1274	GBGTC	1.3	1656.2	0.457
ROYAL HIPPO	LIV	3200	GBGTC	0.8	2560	0.706
SCALA	LIV	650	SCALA	1.9	1235	0.340
TROCADERO	LIV	1362	GBPCT	1.3	1770.6	0.488
ADELPHI*	LON	1352		4.3	5813.6	1.605
ALHAMBRA*	LON	1438		4.3	6183.4	1.707
ASTORIA	LON	1696	GBGTC	2	3392	0.936
CAPITOL	LON	1560	GBGTC	4.3	6708	1.852
CARLTON	LON	1159	PAR	6.5	7533.5	2.080
DOMINION	LON	2835	GB	3.8	10773	2.974
EMPIRE	LON	3226	EMPIRE	4	12904	3.562
L.COLISEUM*	LON	2089		4.3	8982.7	2.480
LEICESTER	LON	1760	UA	5	8800	2.429
PALACE*	LON	1245		4.3	5353.5	1.478
MARBLE	LON	1189	GB	3.7	4399.3	1.214
METROPOLE	LON	2000	METRO	3.3	6600	1.822
NEW GALLEY	LON	1450	GBPCT	5	7250	2.001
NEW VICTORIA	LON	2786	GBPCT	3.8	10586.8	2.923
PLAZA	LON	1896	PLAZA	5	9480	2.617
REGAL	LON	2400	ABC	5	12000	3.313
RIALTO	LON	684	UNIVERSAL	5	3420	0.944
STOLL	LON	2425	STOLL	2	4850	1.339
TIVOLI	LON	2097	GBPCT	5	10485	2.894
DEANSGATE	MAN	866	MAN ENT	1.3	1125.8	0.310
GAIETY	MAN	1434	REGENT	1.4	2007.6	0.554
MARKETST.	MAN	620	MARKET	1.5	930	0.256
NEW OXFORD	MAN	1150	MARKET	1.5	1725	0.476
PARAMOUNT	MAN	2914	PAR	2.4	6993.6	1.930
PICCADILLY	MAN	2324	PICCADILL	1.7	3950.8	1.090
REGAL	MAN	1600	IND	1.6	2560	0.706
ROYAL	MAN	1943	ABC	1.8	3497.4	0.965

NEW WESTGATE	NEW	1865	GBDENMAN	1	1865	0.514
PARAMOUNT	NEW	2608	PAR	2.4	6259.2	1.728
PAVILION	NEW	1525	GBDENMAN	1	1525	0.421
STOLL	NEW	1389	STOLL	1.7	2361.3	0.651
QUEENS	NEW	1400	GBGTC	1.5	2100	0.579
ALBERT HALL	SHEF	1611	GB	1.5	2416.5	0.667
CENTRAL	SHEF	1539	CENTRAL	1.3	2000.7	0.552
CINEMA HO.	SHEF	800	SHEF CINE	1	800	0.220
ELECTRA	SHEF	587	SHEF CINE	0.8	469.6	0.129
HIPPODROME	SHEF	2445	ABC	1.2	2934	0.810
REGENT	SHEF	2207	GBPCT	1.5	3310.5	0.914
UNION ST.	SHEF	970	SHEF PIC	0.8	776	0.214

* London Legitimate Theatres and only occasional cinemas.

1934

FORUM	BIRM	1259	ABC	2	2518	0.722
FUTURIST	BIRM	1223	SCALA	1.6	1956.8	0.561
GAUMONT	BIRM	2092	GB	1.8	3765.6	1.079
SCALA	BIRM	800	SCALA	1.6	1280	0.367
WEST END	BIRM	1385	GB	2.1	2908.5	0.834
EMBASSY	BRIS	2021	AVENUE	1.4	2829.4	0.811
EMPIRE	BRIS	1437	ABC	1	1437	0.412
HIPPODROME	BRIS	2000	HIPPO	1.3	2600	0.745
KINGS	BRIS	1485	ABC	1.3	1930.5	0.553
NEW PALACE	BRIS	1574	GB	1.5	2361	0.677
REGENT	BRIS	2050	GBPCT	1.5	3075	0.881
STOLL	BRIS	1887	STOLL	0.9	1698.3	0.487
TRIANGLE	BRIS	1400	ABC	1	1400	0.401
WHITELADIES	BRIS	1314	ABC	1.3	1708.2	0.490
DAVIS	CROYDON	3712	DAVIS	2	7424	2.128
CALEY	EDIN	1900	CALEY	1.1	2090	0.599
NEW PICTURE	EDIN	951	GBPCT	1.6	1521.6	0.436
NEW VICTORIA	EDIN	2006	GBPCT	1.6	3209.6	0.920
PALACE	EDIN	750	PALACE	1.5	1125	0.322
PLAYHOUSE	EDIN	3000	PLAYHOUSE	1.3	3900	1.118
RUTLAND	EDIN	2187	GBGTC	1.3	2843.1	0.815
ST ANDREWS	EDIN	1399	GB	1	1399	0.401
SYNOD	EDIN	1470	POOLES	1	1470	0.421
COLISEUM	GLAS	3094	ABC	1.3	4022.2	1.153
CRANSTONS	GLAS	750	CRANSTONS	1.5	1125	0.322
GRAND	GLAS	733	GRAND	1.4	1026.2	0.294
GREENS	GLAS	4200	GREEN	1.8	7560	2.167
LA SCALA	GLAS	1191	GLAS PHOT	1.5	1786.5	0.512
NEW BEDFORD	GLAS	1800	GREENS	1.5	2700	0.774
NEW SAVOY	GLAS	2000	GB	1.5	3000	0.860
PICTURE	GLAS	1572	GBPCT	0.8	1257.6	0.360
REGAL	GLAS	2359	ABC	1.3	3066.7	0.879
REGENT	GLAS	1119	GLAS PIC	1.5	1678.5	0.481
ASSEMBLY	LEEDS	900	GBPCT	1.4	1260	0.361
COLISEUM	LEEDS	2000	GB	1.4	2800	0.802
MAJESTIC	LEEDS	2392	GBPCT	1.3	3109.6	0.891
PARAMOUNT	LEEDS	2550	PAR	2.5	6375	1.828
RIALTO	LEEDS	1256	CINEMAS	1.5	1884	0.540
RITZ	LEEDS	1950	ABC	1.5	2925	0.838

SCALA	LEEDS	1794	GB	1.5	2691	0.771
TOWER	LEEDS	1125	TOWER	0.9	1012.5	0.290
FORUM	LIV	1835	ABC	1.8	3303	0.947
FUTURIST	LIV	1029	SOL LEVY	1.7	1749.3	0.501
PALAIS	LIV	1300	PALAIS	1.3	1690	0.484
PRINCE OF W.	LIV	700	ABC	1.9	1330	0.381
RIALTO	LIV	1274	GBGTC	1.3	1656.2	0.474
ROYAL HIPPO	LIV	3200	GBGTC	0.8	2560	0.734
SCALA	LIV	650	SCALA	1.9	1235	0.354
TROCADERO	LIV	1362	GBPCT	1.3	1770.6	0.507
ASTORIA	LON	1696	GBGTC	2	3392	0.972
CAPITOL	LON	1560	GBGTC	4.3	6708	1.923
CARLTON	LON	1159	PAR	6.5	7533.5	2.160
DOMINION	LON	2835	GBAPPH	3.8	10773	3.089
EMPIRE	LON	3226	EMPIRE	4	12904	3.700
LEICESTER	LON	1760	UA	5	8800	2.523
LONDON PAV.	LON	1209	UA	5	6045	1.733
MARBLE	LON	1189	GB	3.7	4399.3	1.261
METROPOLE	LON	2000	METRO	3.3	6600	1.892
NEW GALLERY	LON	1450	GBPCT	5	7250	2.079
NEW VICTORIA	LON	2786	GBPCT	3.8	10586.8	3.035
PLAZA	LON	1896	PLAZA	5	9480	2.718
REGAL	LON	2400	ABC	5	12000	3.441
RIALTO	LON	684	ABC	5	3420	0.980
STOLL	LON	2425	STOLL	2	4850	1.390
TIVOLI	LON	2097	GBPCT	5	10485	3.006
DEANS GATE	MAN	866	MAN ENT	1.3	1125.8	0.322
GAIETY	MAN	1434	REGENT	1.4	2007.6	0.575
MARKET ST.	MAN	620	MARKET	1.5	930	0.266
NEW OXFORD	MAN	1150	MARKET	1.5	1725	0.494
PARAMOUNT	MAN	2914	PAR	2.5	7285	2.089
PICCADILLY	MAN	2324	PICCADILL	1.7	3950.8	1.132
REGAL	MAN	1600	IND	1.6	2560	0.734
ROYAL	MAN	1943	ABC	1.8	3497.4	1.002
NEW WESTGATE	NEW	1865	GBDENMAN	1	1865	0.534
PARAMOUNT	NEW	2608	PAR	2.5	6520	1.869
PAVILION	NEW	1525	GBDENMAN	1	1525	0.437
STOLL	NEW	1389	STOLL	1.7	2361.3	0.677
QUEENS	NEW	1400	GBGTC	1.5	2100	0.602
ALBERT HALL	SHEF	1611	GB	1.5	2416.5	0.692
CENTRAL	SHEF	1539	CENTRAL	1.3	2000.7	0.573
CINEMA HO.	SHEF	800	SHEF CINE	1	800	0.229
ELECTRA	SHEF	587	SHEF CINE	0.8	469.6	0.134
HIPPODROME	SHEF	2445	ABC	1.2	2934	0.841
REGENT	SHEF	2207	GBPCT	1.5	3310.5	0.949
UNION ST.	SHEF	970	SHEF PIC	0.8	776	0.222

1935

GAUMONT	BIRM	2092	GB	1.8	3765.6	1.072
SCALA	BIRM	800	SCALA	1.6	1280	0.364
FORUM	BIRM	1259	ABC	2	2518	0.717
WEST END	BIRM	1385	GB	2.1	2908.5	0.828
FUTURIST	BIRM	1223	SCALA	1.6	1956.8	0.557
NEW PALACE	BRIS	1574	GB	1.5	2361	0.672
TRIANGLE	BRIS	1400	ABC	1	1400	0.398

KINGS	BRIS	1485	ABC	1.3	1930.5	0.549
WHITELADIES	BRIS	1314	ABC	1.3	1708.2	0.486
REGENT	BRIS	2050	GBPCT	1.5	3075	0.875
EMBASSY	BRIS	2021	AVENUE	1.4	2829.4	0.806
EMPIRE	BRIS	1437	ABC	1	1437	0.409
HIPPODROME	BRIS	2000	HIPPO	1.3	2600	0.740
STOLL	BRIS	1887	STOLL	0.9	1698.3	0.483
DAVIS	CROYDON	3712	DAVIS	2	7424	2.114
ST ANDREWS	EDIN	1399	GB	1	1399	0.398
NEW VICTORIA	EDIN	2006	GBPCT	1.6	3209.6	0.914
POOLES	EDIN	1470	POOLES	1	1470	0.418
RUTLAND	EDIN	2187	GBGTC	1.3	2843.1	0.809
CALEY	EDIN	1900	CALEY	1.1	2090	0.595
PLAYHOUSE	EDIN	3000	PLAYHOUSE	1.3	3900	1.110
PALACE	EDIN	750	PALACE	1.5	1125	0.320
NEW PICTURE	EDIN	951	GBPCT	1.6	1521.6	0.433
NEW SAVOY	GLAS	2000	GB	1.5	3000	0.854
PICTURE	GLAS	1572	GBPCT	0.8	1257.6	0.358
GRAND	GLAS	733	GRAND	1.4	1026.2	0.292
BEDFORD	GLAS	1800	GREENS	1.5	2700	0.769
REGENT	GLAS	1119	GLAS PIC	1.5	1678.5	0.478
COLISEUM	GLAS	3094	ABC	1.3	4022.2	1.145
LA SCALA	GLAS	1191	GLAS PHOT	1.5	1786.5	0.508
PARAMOUNT	GLAS	2784	PAR	2.5	6960	1.982
REGAL	GLAS	2359	ABC	1.3	3066.7	0.873
CRANSTONS	GLAS	750	CRANSTONS	1.5	1125	0.320
GREENS	GLAS	4200	GREEN	1.8	7560	2.153
RITZ	LEEDS	1950	ABC	1.5	2925	0.833
ASSEMBLY	LEEDS	900	GBPCT	1.4	1260	0.358
RIALTO	LEEDS	1256	CINEMAS	1.5	1884	0.536
MAJESTIC	LEEDS	2392	GBPCT	1.3	3109.6	0.885
COLISEUM	LEEDS	2000	GB	1.4	2800	0.797
TOWER	LEEDS	1125	TOWER	0.9	1012.5	0.288
SCALA	LEEDS	1794	GB	1.5	2691	0.766
PARAMOUNT	LEEDS	2550	PAR	2.5	6375	1.816
SCALA	LIV	650	SCALA	1.9	1235	0.351
ROYAL HIPPO	LIV	3200	GBGTC	0.8	2560	0.729
FUTURIST	LIV	1029	SOL LEVY	1.7	1749.3	0.498
PARAMOUNT	LIV	2595	PARAMOUNT	2.5	6487.5	1.848
TROCADERO	LIV	1362	GBPCT	1.3	1770.6	0.504
PALAIS	LIV	1300	PALAIS	1.3	1690	0.481
FORUM	LIV	1835	ABC	1.8	3303	0.940
RIALTO	LIV	1274	GBGTC	1.3	1656.2	0.471
NEW VICTORIA	LON	2786	GBPCT	2.5	6965	1.984
RIALTO	LON	684	ABC	5	3420	0.974
DOMINION	LON	2835	GBAPPH	2.3	6520.5	1.857
EMPIRE	LON	3226	EMPIRE	4	12904	3.675
NEW GALLERY	LON	1450	GBPCT	5	7250	2.065
METROPOLE	LON	2000	METRO	3.3	6600	1.880
CAPITOL	LON	1560	GBGTC	4.3	6708	1.910
PLAZA	LON	1896	PLAZA	5	9480	2.700
REGAL	LON	2400	ABC	5	12000	3.418
TIVOLI	LON	2097	GBPCT	5	10485	2.986
LONDON PAV.	LON	1209	UA	5	6045	1.722
CARLTON	LON	1159	PAR	6.5	7533.5	2.146
ASTORIA	LON	1696	GBGTC	2	3392	0.966
LEICESTER	LON	1760	UA	5	8800	2.506
STOLL	LON	2425	STOLL	2	4850	1.381
MARBLE	LON	1189	GB	3.7	4399.3	1.253

PICCADILLY	MAN	2324	PICCADILL	1.7	3950.8	1.125
NEW OXFORD	MAN	1150	MARKET	1.5	1725	0.491
MARKET ST.	MAN	620	MARKET	1.5	930	0.264
REGAL	MAN	1600	IND	1.6	2560	0.729
GAIETY	MAN	1434	REGENT	1.4	2007.6	0.571
GAUMONT	MAN	2300	GB	2.4	5520	1.572
PARAMOUNT	MAN	2914	PAR	2.4	6993.6	1.992
DEANS GATE	MAN	866	MAN ENT	1.3	1125.8	0.320
ROYAL	MAN	1943	ABC	1.8	3497.4	0.996
NEW WESTGATE	NEW	1865	GBDENMAN	1	1865	0.531
STOLL	NEW	1389	STOLL	1.7	2361.3	0.672
PAVILION	NEW	1525	GBDENMAN	1	1525	0.434
PARAMOUNT	NEW	2608	PAR	2.4	6259.2	1.783
QUEENS	NEW	1400	GBGTC	1.5	2100	0.598
CINEMA HO.	SHEF	800	SHEF CINE	1	800	0.227
HIPPODROME	SHEF	2445	ABC	1.2	2934	0.835
UNION ST.	SHEF	970	SHEF PIC	0.8	776	0.221
CENTRAL	SHEF	1539	CENTRAL	1.3	2000.7	0.569
ELECTRA	SHEF	587	SHEF CINE	0.8	469.6	0.133
ALBERT HALL	SHEF	1611	GB	1.5	2416.5	0.688
REGENT	SHEF	2207	GBPCT	1.4	3089.8	0.880

1936

FORUM	BIRM	1259	ABC	2	2518	0.717
FUTURIST	BIRM	1223	SCALA	1.6	1956.8	0.557
GAUMONT	BIRM	2092	GB	1.8	3765.6	1.073
SCALA	BIRM	800	SCALA	1.6	1280	0.364
WEST END	BIRM	1385	GB	2.1	2908.5	0.828
EMBASSY	BRIS	2021	AVENUE	1.4	2829.4	0.806
EMPIRE	BRIS	1437	ABC	1	1437	0.409
HIPPODROME	BRIS	2000	HIPPO	1.3	2600	0.740
KINGS	BRIS	1485	ABC	1.3	1930.5	0.550
NEW PALACE	BRIS	1574	GB	1.5	2361	0.672
REGENT	BRIS	2050	GBPCT	1.5	3075	0.876
STOLL	BRIS	1887	STOLL	0.9	1698.3	0.483
TRIANGLE	BRIS	1400	ABC	1	1400	0.398
WHITELADIES	BRIS	1314	ABC	1.3	1708.2	0.486
DAVIS	CROYDON	3712	DAVIS	2	7424	2.115
CALEY	EDIN	1900	CALEY	1.1	2090	0.595
NEW PICTURE	EDIN	951	GBPCT	1.6	1521.6	0.433
NEW VICTORIA	EDIN	2006	GBPCT	1.6	3209.6	0.914
PALACE	EDIN	750	PALACE	1.5	1125	0.320
PLAYHOUSE	EDIN	3000	PLAYHOUSE	1.3	3900	1.111
POOLES	EDIN	1470	POOLES	1	1470	0.418
RUTLAND	EDIN	2187	GBGTC	1.3	2843.1	0.810
ST ANDREWS	EDIN	1399	GB	1	1399	0.398
BEDFORD	GLAS	1800	GREENS	1.5	2700	0.769
COLISEUM	GLAS	3094	ABC	1.3	4022.2	1.146
CRANSTONS	GLAS	750	CRANSTONS	1.5	1125	0.320
GRAND	GLAS	733	GRAND	1.4	1026.2	0.292
GREENS	GLAS	4200	GREEN	1.8	7560	2.154
LA SCALA	GLAS	1191	GLAS PHOT	1.5	1786.5	0.509
NEW SAVOY	GLAS	2000	GB	1.5	3000	0.854
PARAMOUNT	GLAS	2784	PAR	2.5	6960	1.983
PICTURE	GLAS	1572	GBPCT	0.8	1257.6	0.358

REGAL	GLAS	2359	ABC	1.3	3066.7	0.873
REGENT	GLAS	1119	GLAS PIC	1.5	1678.5	0.478
ASSEMBLY	LEEDS	900	GBPCT	1.4	1260	0.359
COLISEUM	LEEDS	2000	GB	1.4	2800	0.797
MAJESTIC	LEEDS	2392	GBPCT	1.3	3109.6	0.886
PARAMOUNT	LEEDS	2550	PAR	2.5	6375	1.816
RIALTO	LEEDS	1256	CINEMAS	1.5	1884	0.536
RITZ	LEEDS	1950	ABC	1.5	2925	0.833
SCALA	LEEDS	1794	GB	1.5	2691	0.766
TOWER	LEEDS	1125	TOWER	0.9	1012.5	0.288
FORUML	LIV	1835	ABC	1.8	3303	0.941
FUTURIST	LIV	1029	SOL LEVY	1.7	1749.3	0.498
OLYMPIA	LIV	2900	ABC	1.4	4060	1.156
PALAIS	LIV	1300	PALAIS	1.3	1690	0.481
PARAMOUNT	LIV	2595	PARAMOUNT	2.5	6487.5	1.848
RIALTO	LIV	1274	GBGTC	1.3	1656.2	0.471
ROYAL HIPPO	LIV	3200	GBGTC	0.8	2560	0.729
SCALA	LIV	650	SCALA	1.6	1040	0.296
TROCADERO	LIV	1362	GBPCT	1.3	1770.6	0.504
ASTORIA	LON	1696	GBGTC	2	3392	0.966
CARLTON	LON	1159	PAR	6.5	7533.5	2.146
DOMINION	LON	2835	GBAPPH	2.3	6520.5	1.858
EMPIRE	LON	3226	EMPIRE	4	12904	3.677
LEICESTER	LON	1760	UA	5	8800	2.507
LONDON PAV.	LON	1209	UA	5	6045	1.722
MARBLE	LON	1189	GB	3.7	4399.3	1.253
METROPOLE	LON	2000	METRO	3.3	6600	1.880
NEW GALLERY	LON	1450	GBPCT	5	7250	2.066
NEW VICTORIA	LON	2786	GBPCT	2.5	6965	1.984
PARAMOUNT	LON	2568	PARAMOUNT	2.5	6420	1.829
PLAZA	LON	1896	PLAZA	5	9480	2.701
REGAL	LON	2400	ABC	5	12000	3.419
RIALTO	LON	684	ABC	5	3420	0.974
STOLL	LON	2425	STOLL	2	4850	1.382
TIVOLI	LON	2097	GBPCT	5	10485	2.987
DEANS GATE	MAN	866	MAN ENT	1.3	1125.8	0.320
GAIETY	MAN	1434	REGENT	1.3	1864.2	0.531
GAUMONT	MAN	2300	GB	2.4	5520	1.573
MARKET ST.	MAN	620	MARKET	1.5	930	0.265
NEW OXFORD	MAN	1150	MARKET	1.5	1725	0.491
PARAMOUNT	MAN	2914	PAR	2.5	7285	2.076
PICCADILLY	MAN	2324	PICCADILL	1.7	3950.8	1.125
REGAL	MAN	1600	IND	1.6	2560	0.729
THEATRE R.	MAN	1943	MOORHOUSE	1.5	2914.5	0.830
NEW WESTGATE	NEW	1865	GBDENMAN	1	1865	0.531
PARAMOUNT	NEW	2608	PAR	2.5	6520	1.858
PAVILION	NEW	1525	GBDENMAN	1	1525	0.434
STOLL	NEW	1389	STOLL	1.7	2361.3	0.672
QUEENS	NEW	1400	GBGTC	1.5	2100	0.598
ALBERT HALL	SHEF	1611	GB	1.5	2416.5	0.688
CENTRAL	SHEF	1539	CENTRAL	1.3	2000.7	0.570
CINEMA HO.	SHEF	800	SHEF CINE	1	800	0.227
ELECTRA	SHEF	587	SHEF CINE	0.8	469.6	0.133
HIPPODROME	SHEF	2445	ABC	1.2	2934	0.836
REGENT	SHEF	2207	GBPCT	1.4	3089.8	0.880
UNION ST.	SHEF	970	SHEF PIC	0.8	776	0.221

1937-38

FORUM	BIRM	1259	ABC	2	2518	0.692
FUTURIST	BIRM	1223	SCALA	1.7	2079.1	0.572
GAUMONT	BIRM	2092	GB	1.8	3765.6	1.036
PARAMOUNT	BIRM	2424	PAR	2.5	6060	1.667
SCALA	BIRM	800	SCALA	1.6	1280	0.352
WEST END	BIRM	1385	GB	2.1	2908.5	0.800
EMBASSY	BRIS	2021	AVENUE	1.4	2829.4	0.778
EMPIRE	BRIS	1437	ABC	1	1437	0.395
HIPPODROME	BRIS	2000	HIPPO	1.3	2600	0.715
KINGS	BRIS	1485	ABC	1.3	1930.5	0.531
NEW PALACE	BRIS	1574	GB	1.5	2361	0.649
REGENT	BRIS	2050	GBPCT	1.5	3075	0.846
STOLL	BRIS	1887	STOLL	0.9	1698.3	0.467
TRIANGLE	BRIS	1400	ABC	1	1400	0.385
WHITELADIES	BRIS	1314	ABC	1.3	1708.2	0.470
DAVIS	CROYDON	3712	DAVIS	1.5	5568	1.532
CALEY	EDIN	1900	CALEY	1.1	2090	0.575
NEW PICTURE	EDIN	951	GBPCT	1.6	1521.6	0.418
NEW VICTORIA	EDIN	2006	GBPCT	1.6	3209.6	0.883
PALACE	EDIN	750	PALACE	1.5	1125	0.309
PLAYHOUSE	EDIN	3000	PLAYHOUSE	1.3	3900	1.073
RUTLAND	EDIN	2187	GBGTC	1.3	2843.1	0.782
ST ANDREWS	EDIN	1399	GB	1	1399	0.384
SYNOD	EDIN	1470	POOLES	1	1470	0.404
BEDFORD	GLAS	1800	GREENS	1.5	2700	0.742
COLISEUM	GLAS	3094	ABC	1.3	4022.2	1.106
CRANSTONS	GLAS	750	CRANSTONS	1.5	1125	0.309
GRAND	GLAS	733	GRAND	1.4	1026.2	0.282
GREENS	GLAS	4200	GREENS	1.8	7560	2.080
LA SCALA	GLAS	1191	GLAS PHOT	1.5	1786.5	0.491
NEW SAVOY	GLAS	2000	GB	1.5	3000	0.825
PARAMOUNT	GLAS	2784	PAR	2.5	6960	1.915
PICTURE	GLAS	1572	GBPCT	0.8	1257.6	0.346
REGAL	GLAS	2359	ABC	1.3	3066.7	0.843
REGENT	GLAS	1119	GLAS PIC	1.5	1678.5	0.461
ASSEMBLY	LEEDS	900	GBPCT	1.4	1260	0.346
COLISEUM	LEEDS	2000	GB	1.4	2800	0.770
MAJESTIC	LEEDS	2392	GBPCT	1.3	3109.6	0.855
PARAMOUNT	LEEDS	2550	PAR	2.5	6375	1.754
RIALTO	LEEDS	1256	CINEMAS	1.5	1884	0.518
RITZ	LEEDS	1950	ABC	1.5	2925	0.804
SCALA	LEEDS	1794	GB	1.5	2691	0.740
TOWER	LEEDS	1125	TOWER	0.9	1012.5	0.278
FORUM	LIV	1835	ABC	1.8	3303	0.908
FUTURIST	LIV	1029	SOL LEVY	1.7	1749.3	0.481
OLYMPIA	LIV	2900	ABC	1	2900	0.797
PALAIS	LIV	1300	PALAIS	1.3	1690	0.465
PARAMOUNT	LIV	2595	PARAMOUNT	2.5	6487.5	1.785
RIALTO	LIV	1274	GBGTC	1.3	1656.2	0.455
ROYAL HIPPO	LIV	3200	GBGTC	0.8	2560	0.704
SCALA	LIV	650	SCALA	1.6	1040	0.286
TROCADERO	LIV	1362	GBPCT	1.3	1770.6	0.487
ASTORIA	LON	1696	GBGTC	2	3392	0.933
CARLTON	LON	1159	PAR	6.5	7533.5	2.072
CURZON	LON	492	CURZON	5.5	2706	0.744
DOMINION	LON	2858	GBAPPH	2.3	6573.4	1.808
EMPIRE	LON	3226	EMPIRE	4	12904	3.550

GAUMONT	LON	1328	GB	5	6640	1.827
LEICESTER	LON	1760	LEICESTER	5	8800	2.421
LONDON PAV.	LON	1209	UA	5	6045	1.663
MARBLE	LON	1189	GB	3.7	4399.3	1.210
METROPOLE	LON	2000	METRO	3.3	6600	1.816
NEW GALLERY	LON	1450	GBPCT	5	7250	1.994
NEW VICTORIA	LON	2786	GBPCT	2.5	6965	1.916
ODEON	LON	2116	ODEON	5.5	11638	3.202
LPALACE*	LON	1245		4	4980	1.370
PARAMOUNT	LON	2568	PAR	2.5	6420	1.766
PLAZA	LON	1896	PLAZA	5	9480	2.608
REGAL	LON	2400	ABC	5	12000	3.301
RIALTO	LON	684	ABC	5	3420	0.941
STOLL	LON	2425	STOLL	2	4850	1.334
TIVOLI	LON	2097	GBPCT	5	10485	2.885
DEANSGATE	MAN	866	MAN ENT	1.3	1125.8	0.309
GAIETY	MAN	1434	REGENT	1.3	1864.2	0.512
GAUMONT	MAN	2300	GB	2.4	5520	1.518
MARKET ST	MAN	620	MARKET	1.5	930	0.255
NEW OXFORD	MAN	1150	MARKET	1.5	1725	0.474
PARAMOUNT	MAN	2914	PAR	2.5	7285	2.004
PICCADILLY	MAN	2324	PICCADILL	1.7	3950.8	1.087
REGAL	MAN	1600	IND	1.6	2560	0.704
THEATRE R.	MAN	1943	MOORHOUSE	1.5	2914.5	0.801
NEW WESTGATE	NEW	1865	GBDENMAN	1	1865	0.513
PARAMOUNT	NEW	2608	PAR	2.5	6520	1.794
PAVILION	NEW	1525	GBDENMAN	1	1525	0.419
STOLL	NEW	1389	STOLL	1.7	2361.3	0.649
QUEENS	NEW	1400	GBGTC	1.5	2100	0.577
ALBERT HALL	SHEF	1611	GB	1.5	2416.5	0.664
CENTRAL	SHEF	1539	CENTRAL	1.3	2000.7	0.550
CINEMA HO.	SHEF	800	SHEF CINE	1	800	0.220
ELECTRA	SHEF	587	SHEF CINE	0.8	469.6	0.129
HIPPODROME	SHEF	2445	ABC	1.2	2934	0.807
REGENT	SHEF	2207	GBPCT	1.4	3089.8	0.850
UNION ST.	SHEF	970	SHEF PIC	0.8	776	0.213

* London Legitimate Theatres and only occasional cinemas.

Sources:

Kine Year Books 1933-39, Eyles and Skone (1991), Eyles (1993).

Appendix 4.2: The Geographical Breakdown of the Sample Cinema Set

	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	38 Ave 32-38
Cinemas	82	81	85	86	87	92	85.5
All Seats	140211	138626	145606	148591	151380	158859	147212
Ave Seats	1710	1711	1713	1728	1740	1727	1721
Ave MRP	2.09	2.08	2.08	1.98	1.96	1.94	2.02
All Revenue	14618	14410	15114	14732	14817	15380	14845
Lon.Cinemas	16	15	16	16	17	19	16.5
Lon.Seats	30748	29163	30372	30372	32246	33242	31023
Lon.Rev	6460	6293	6595	5918	5870	5786	6153
Lon.Ave.MRP	4.20	4.32	4.34	3.90	3.64	3.48	3.98
Lon.Ave.Seats	1922	1944	1898	1898	1897	1750	1885
LS/AS	0.22	0.21	0.21	0.20	0.21	0.21	0.21
LR/AR	0.44	0.44	0.44	0.40	0.40	0.38	0.41
Birm.Cinemas	5	5	5	5	5	6	5
Birm.Seats	6759	6759	6759	6759	6759	7625	6903
Birm.Rev	638	621	621	621	621	684	634
Birm.Ave.MRP	1.89	1.84	1.84	1.84	1.84	1.79	1.83
Birm.Ave.Seat	1352	1352	1352	1352	1352	1271	1338
BS/AS	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.04	0.05	0.05
BR/AR	0.04	0.04	0.04	0.04	0.04	0.04	0.04
Bris.Cinemas	8	8	9	9	9	9	8.7
Bris.Seats	3147	13147	15168	15168	15168	15168	14494
Bris.Rev	832	832	952	952	952	952	912
Bris.Ave.MRP	1.26	1.26	1.26	1.26	1.26	1.26	1.26
Bris.Ave.Seats	643	1643	1685	1685	1685	1685	1671
BS/AS	0.09	0.09	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10
BR/AR	0.06	0.06	0.06	0.06	0.06	0.06	0.06
Croy.Cinemas	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Croy.Seats	3712	3712	3712	3712	3712	3712	3712
Croy.Rev	334	334	334	334	334	334	334
Croy.Ave.MRP	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.8
CS/AS	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.03
CR/AR	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.02
Edin.Cinemas	8.00	8.00	8.00	8.00	8.00	8.00	8
Edin.Seats	13873	13873	13873	13873	13873	13873	13873
Edin.Rev	889	889	889	889	889	889	889
Edin.Ave.MRP	1.28	1.28	1.28	1.28	1.28	1.28	1.28
Edin.Ave.Seats	734	1734	1734	1734	1734	1734	1734
ES/AS	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.09	0.09	0.09	0.09
ER/AR	0.06	0.06	0.06	0.06	0.06	0.06	0.06
Glas.Cinemas	9	9	10	11	11	11	10
Glas.Seats	17018	17018	18818	20203	19684	21118	18977
Glas.Rev	1216	1226	1361	1458	1417	1637	1386
Glas.Ave.MRP	1.43	1.44	1.45	1.44	1.44	1.55	1.46
Glas Ave.Seat	1891	1891	1882	1837	1789	1920	1868
GS/AS	0.12	0.12	0.13	0.14	0.13	0.13	0.13
GR/AR	0.08	0.09	0.09	0.10	0.10	0.11	0.09
Leed.Cinemas	7	7	8	8	8	8	7.67
LeedsSeats	12017	12017	13967	13967	13967	13967	13317
LeedsRev	944	944	1090	1090	1090	1090	1041
LeedsAve.MRP	1.57	1.57	1.56	1.56	1.56	1.56	1.56
LeedsAve.Seat	1717	1717	1746	1746	1746	1746	1736
LS/AS	0.09	0.09	0.10	0.09	0.09	0.09	0.09

LR/AR	0.06	0.07	0.07	0.07	0.07	0.07	0.07
Liv.Cinemas	8	8	8	7	8	9	8
Liv.Seats	11350	11350	11350	10650	12950	14170	11970
Liv.Rev	809	765	765	698	964	880	813
Liv.Ave.MRP	1.42	1.35	1.35	1.31	1.49	1.24	1.36
Liv Ave.Seats	1419	1419	1419	1521	1619	1574	1495
LS/AS	0.08	0.08	0.08	0.07	0.09	0.09	0.08
LR/AR	0.06	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.07	0.06	0.05
Man.Cinemas	8	8	8	9	9	9	8.5
Man.Seats	12851	12851	12851	15151	15151	15151	14001
Man.Rev	1140	1140	1140	1416	1379	1379	1265
Man.Ave.MRP	1.77	1.77	1.77	1.87	1.82	1.82	1.80
Man Ave.Sea	1606	1606	1606	1683	1683	1683	1644
MS/AS	0.09	0.09	0.09	0.10	0.10	0.10	0.10
MR/TR	0.08	0.08	0.08	0.10	0.09	0.09	0.09
New.Cinemas	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
New.Seats	8787	8787	8787	8787	8787	8787	8787
New.Rev	736	706	706	706	733	746	722
New.Ave.MRP	1.68	1.61	1.61	1.61	1.67	1.70	1.64
New Ave.Seats	1757	1757	1757	1757	1757	1757	1757
NS/AS	0.06	0.06	0.06	0.06	0.06	0.06	0.06
NR/AR	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.05
Shef.Cinemas	7	7	7	7	7	7	7
Shef.Seats	10159	10159	10159	10159	10159	10159	10159
Shef.Rev	635	635	635	624	624	624	630
Shef.Ave.MRP	1.25	1.25	1.25	1.23	1.23	1.23	1.24
Shef Ave.Seat	1451	1451	1451	1451	1451	1451	1451
SS/AS	0.07	0.07	0.07	0.07	0.07	0.06	0.07
SR/AR	0.04	0.04	0.04	0.04	0.04	0.04	0.04

Key:

MRP = Mid-range price of cinemas (shillings).

Rev.= Potential Box-Office Revenue (£s).

AS = All seats.

AR = All revenue.

(Hence the bottom two entries of each geographical section represent the proportion of seats of the sample cinemas of the particular city to the total seats (AS) of the sample cinema set and the proportion of potential city cinema revenue to total potential revenue (AR). Accordingly Sheffield cinemas generate about 4% of sample revenues whilst having between 6-7% of the sample seats.)

Sources: Kine Year Books 1933-39, Eyles (1993) and Eyles and Skone (1991).

**Appendix 8.1: The Relation between Annual Production Budgets and
i) US Box-Office Grosses and ii) POPSTAT Scores for Warners'
Feature Films released in the United States and Britain 1932-37
using OLS Regression techniques^{a,b}**

i) Regression of US Box-Office Grosses (Y) on Production Budgets (X).

	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937
Constant	123.1034	-91.1019	34.75862	158.3854	120.6654	94.59563
Std Err of Y Est	99.99911	274.9392	167.8562	220.1772	153.0222	183.8868
R Squared	0.370897	0.455163	0.489556	0.439502	0.780711	0.696715
No. of Observation	53	50	54	56	51	67
Degrees of Freedom	51	48	52	54	49	65
X Coefficient(s)	1.004465	2.100708	1.362166	1.041757	1.047443	1.066793
Std Err of Coef.	0.183183	0.331738	0.192886	0.160094	0.079304	0.087301

ii) Regression of POPSTAT(Y) on Production Budgets (X).

	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937
Constant	3.133181	2.143146	3.504184	4.851847	2.673779	1.011344
Std Err of Y Est	3.467508	4.644797	3.513141	4.194314	3.782372	5.954505
R Squared	0.157135	0.374199	0.30985	0.211304	0.63409	0.321899
No. of Observation	53	50	54	56	51	67
Degrees of Freedom	51	48	52	54	49	65
X Coefficient(s)	0.019586	0.030025	0.019506	0.0116	0.018063	0.015703
Std Err of Coef.	0.006352	0.005604	0.004037	0.00305	0.00196	0.002827

Notes:

a) There was little lag between the respective release dates in either country. b) Taking logs did not noticeably improve these results and in years where zero or very low POPSTAT results occurred, the log values of these outliers led to serious distortions.

Appendix 8.2: Top 50 Productions 1932-37

FILMS RELEASED IN 1932

Film	Producer	Dist	Country	Length	Boft REG	POPSTAT
JACKS THE BOY	GAINS	W&F	BR	8004	30-Jun-32	50.120
GRAND HOTEL	MGM	MGM	USA	10086	29-Sep-32	45.240
SHANGHAI EXPRESS	PAR	PAR	USA	7400	07-Apr-32	41.385
ROME EXPRESS	GAU	GAU	BR	8484	08-Dec-32	36.328
ARROWSMITH	GOLDWYN	UA	USA	9262	07-Apr-32	36.111
GOODNIGHT VIENNA	B&D	W&F	BR	6833	07-Apr-32	34.190
ONE HOUR WITH YOU	PAR	PAR	USA	7059	07-Jul-32	32.016
HELL DIVERS	MGM	MGM	USA	9850	21-Jan-32	31.106
LOVE ON WHEELS	GAINS	W&F	BR	7831	04-Aug-32	29.660
NIGHT LIKE THIS	B&D	W&F	BR	6600	24-Mar-32	27.985
MOVIE CRAZY	LLOYD	PAR	USA	8552	13-Oct-32	27.375
DR JEKYLL AND MR H.	PAR	PAR	USA	7269	18-Feb-32	27.366
THARK	B&D	W&F	BR	7014	04-Aug-32	27.192
DELICIOUS	FOX	FOX	USA	8850	21-Jan-32	24.534
TROUBLE IN PARADISE	PAR	PAR	USA	7200	08-Dec-32	23.699
FRANKENSTEIN	UNIVERSAL	UNIVERSAL	USA	6098	28-Jan-32	23.366
EMMA	MGM	MGM	USA	6362	28-Jan-32	23.239
TELL ME TONIGHT	F&S	W&F	GER	8264	03-Nov-32	23.203
TARZAN THE APEMAN	MGM	MGM	USA	8774	21-Apr-32	22.603
SILENT VOICE	WB	WB	USA	7307	14-Apr-32	22.546
DEVIL AND THE DEEP	PAR	PAR	USA	6202	01-Sep-32	22.535
SMILIN' THROUGH	MGM	MGM	USA	8783	10-Nov-32	22.514
MELODY OF LIFE	RKO	RADIO	USA	8280	19-May-32	22.425
PRIVATE LIVES	MGM	MGM	USA	7521	21-Jan-32	21.930
FIRST YEAR	FOX	FOX	USA	7294	01-Sep-32	21.501
BRING EM BACK AL	RKO	RADIO	USA		01-Jun-32	21.214
BLONDE VENUS	PAR	PAR	USA	8200	03-Nov-32	20.771
STRANGE INTERVAL	MGM	MGM	USA	9455	10-Nov-32	19.633
MATA HARI	MGM	MGM	USA	8024	29-Mar-32	19.527
LOST SQUADRON	RKO	RADIO	BR	7131	14-Apr-32	18.974
MIDSHIPMAID	GAU	W&F	BR	7552	29-Dec-32	18.915
ITS A KING	B&D	W&F	BR	6037	29-Dec-32	18.760
SERVICE FOR LADIES	PARBR	PAR	BR	8400	21-Jan-32	18.598
PROSPERITY	MGM	MGM	USA	7813	15-Dec-32	18.562
AS YOU DESIRE ME	MGM	MGM	USA	6209	21-Jul-32	18.424
LETTY LYNTON	MGM	MGM	USA	7320	09-Jun-32	17.930
WHAT PRICE HOLLYWO	RKOPATHE	RADIO	USA	7815	07-Jul-32	17.741
FAITHFUL HEART	GAINS	IDEAL	BR	7504	12-May-32	17.662
LOVE ME TONIGHT	PAR	PAR	USA	8081	17-Nov-32	17.493
FLAG LIEUTENANT	B&D	W&F	BR	7748	27-Oct-32	17.183
SAY IT WITH MUSIC	B&D	W&F	BR	6298	24-Nov-32	16.765
FRIGHTENED LADY	GAINS	IDEAL	BR	7848	07-Apr-32	16.736
CHEAT	PAR	PAR	USA	5917	21-Jan-32	16.680
SKY DEVILS	CADDO	UA	USA	7947	02-Jun-32	16.570
MAN I KILLED	PAR	PAR	USA	6800	19-May-32	16.519
BLUE LIGHT	SOKAL	UNIVERSAL	GER	7558	03-Nov-32	16.265
SCARFACE	CADDO	UA	USA	8324	26-May-32	16.077
TESS OF THE STORM	FOX	FOX	USA	7056	08-Dec-32	15.914
FORBIDDEN	COL	UA	USA	7759	25-Feb-32	15.703
LEAP YEAR	B&D	W&F	BR	8106	13-Oct-32	15.413

Films Released in 1933

Film	Producer	Dist	Country	Length	Boft REG	POPSTAT
CAVALCADE	FOX	FOX	USA	10073	02-Mar-33	92.887
PRIVATE LIFE OF H.	LFP	UA	BR	8664	24-Aug-33	55.133
KING KONG	RKO	RADIO	USA	8930	27-Apr-33	42.587
SIGN OF THE CROSS	PAR	PAR	USA	10680	02-Feb-33	41.727
KID FROM SPAIN	GOLDWYN	UA	USA	8812	02-Feb-33	36.874
I WAS A SPY	GAU	W&F	BR	8193	17-Aug-33	36.460
IM NO ANGEL	PAR	PAR	USA	7773	16-Nov-33	34.747
GOOD COMPANIONS	GAU	IDEAL	BR	10146	16-Mar-33	31.730
BEDTIME STORY	PAR	PAR	USA	7794	25-May-33	29.877
42ND STREET	WB	WB	USA	8145	16-Feb-33	29.513
FALLING FOR YOU	GAINSBOROW&F		BR	7391	06-Jul-33	27.847
FOOTLIGHT PARADE	WB	WB	USA	9330	16-Nov-33	25.944
WORKING MAN	WB	WB	USA	7067	15-Jun-33	25.808
WALTZ TIME	GAU	W&F	BR	7323	29-Jun-33	24.441
INVISIBLE MAN	UNIVERSAL	UNIVERSAL	USA	6494	07-Dec-33	24.334
BITTER SWEET	B&D	UA	BR	8458	20-Jul-33	24.237
DINNER AT EIGHT	MGM	MGM	USA	9897	14-Sep-33	23.874
MASQUERADER	GOLDWYN	UA	USA	7022	24-Aug-33	23.521
CUCKOO IN THE NEST	GAU	W&F	BR	7782	02-Nov-33	23.493
BOWERY	20	UA	USA	8419	16-Nov-33	23.473
YES MR BROWN	B&D	W&F	BR	7852	26-Jan-33	23.179
SONG OF SONGS	PAR	PAR	USA	7545	07-Sep-33	23.005
FPI	UNIVERSUM	W&F	GER	8343	13-Apr-33	22.521
AFFAIRS OF VOLTAIRE	WB	WB	USA	6579	31-Aug-33	22.499
CYNARA	GOLDWYN	UA	USA	7245	02-Feb-33	22.074
WANDERING JEW	TWICK	GAU	BR	9900	30-Nov-33	22.025
ONLY YESTERDAY	UNIVERSAL	UNIVERSAL	USA	9617	14-Dec-33	21.920
THATS A GOOD GIRL	B&D	UA	BR	7363	05-Oct-33	11.832
GOLD DIGGERS OF 1933	FNP	FNFD	USA	8810	06-Jul-33	21.691
HELL BELOW	MGM	MGM	USA	9220	25-May-33	20.692
DANCING LADY	MGM	MGM	USA	8207	21-Dec-33	20.511
STATE FAIR	FOX	FOX	USA	8996	21-Mar-33	20.349
SOLDIERS OF THE K.	GAINS	W&F	BR	7271	21-Mar-33	19.951
I AM A FUGITIVE	WB	WB	USA	8104	12-Jan-33	19.119
TUGBOAT ANNIE	MGM	MGM	USA	7712	31-Aug-33	18.068
BLANEY STONE	B&D	W&F	BR	7218	21-Mar-33	17.648
WHITE SISTER	MGM	MGM	USA	9488	13-Apr-33	17.604
FRIDAY THE 13TH	GAINSBOROW	GAU	BR	7706	30-Nov-33	18.607
ITS A BOY	GAINSBOROW	W&F	BR	7282	06-Jul-33	17.065
ADORABLE	FOX	FOX	USA	7946	29-Jun-33	16.939
ORDERS IS ORDERS	GAU	GAU	BR	7857	03-Aug-33	16.766
MYSTERY OF THE WAX	WB	WB	USA	7037	30-Mar-33	16.443
JUST MY LUCK	B&D	W&F	BR	6931	09-Feb-33	16.423
PADDY THE NEXT BEST	FOX	FOX	USA	6761	07-Sep-33	16.086
MORNING GLORY	RKO	RADIO	USA	6592	12-Oct-33	15.713
NIGHT FLIGHT	MGM	MGM	USA	7639	02-Nov-33	15.655
TOO MUCH HARMONY	PAR	PAR	USA	6822	02-Nov-33	15.387
THIS WEEK OF GRACE	REAL ART	RADIO	BR	8245	03-Aug-33	15.239
THIS DAY AND AGE	PAR	PAR	USA	7330	05-Oct-33	15.194
COLLEGE HUMOUR	PAR	PAR	USA	7180	27-Jul-33	15.033

Films Released in 1934

Film	Producer	Dist	Country	Length	Boft REG	POPSTAT
HOUSE OF ROTHSCHILD	20	UA	USA	7950	10-May-34	63.568
ONE NIGHT OF LOVE	COL	COL	USA	7503	02-Aug-34	48.864
ROMAN SCANDALS	GOLDWYN	UA	USA	8296	08-Feb-34	46.349
CATHERINE THE GREAT	LFP	UA	BR	8792	01-Feb-34	43.614
JEW SUSS	GAU	GAU	BR	9740	18-Oct-34	41.158
BLOSSOM TIME	BIP	WARDOUR	BR	8193	09-Aug-34	36.965
QUEEN CHRISTINA	MGM	MGM	USA	9047	15-Feb-34	33.027
LITTLE WOMEN	RKO	RADIO	USA	10332	18-Jan-34	32.551
IT HAPPENED ONE N.	COL	COL	USA	9393	29-Mar-34	31.584
NELL GWYN	B&D	UA	BR	6811	09-Aug-34	30.805
MERRY WIDOW	MGM	MGM	USA	8852	22-Nov-34	29.858
CLEOPATRA	PAR	PAR	USA	8910	23-Aug-34	27.544
CHU CHIN CHOW	GAINSBOROGAU		BR	9304	26-Jul-34	27.446
EVERGREEN	GAU	GAU	BR	8489	03-May-34	27.351
BARRETT'S OF WIMPOLE	MGM	MGM	USA	9720	18-Oct-34	27.004
JACK AHOY	GAU	GAU	BR	7450	08-Feb-34	26.872
WONDER BAR	FNP	FNP	USA	7349	22-Mar-34	26.144
RIPTIDE	MGM	MGM	USA	8307	19-Apr-34	25.322
CAMELS ARE COMING	GAINSBOROGAU		BR	7154	29-Nov-34	24.537
PAINTED VEIL	MGM	MGM	USA	7590	20-Dec-34	24.387
TREASURE ISLAND	MGM	MGM	USA	9269	20-Sep-34	23.816
GAY DIVORCEE	RKO	RADIO	USA	9425	06-Dec-34	25.290
BULLDOG DRUMMOND	20	UA	USA	7523	26-Jul-34	22.827
LAST GENTLEMAN	20	UA	USA	6603	02-Aug-34	22.714
STRICTLY CONFIDENT	COL	COL	USA	9200	20-Dec-34	22.335
THIN MAN	MGM	MGM	USA	8178	28-Jun-34	22.269
COUNT OF MONTE CRIS	RELIANCE	UA	USA	10379	15-Nov-34	22.236
EVENSONG	GAU	GAU	BR	7666	11-Oct-34	21.879
MY SONG FOR YOU	GAU/CINE	GAU	BR/GE	7690	20-Sep-34	21.658
CUP OF KINDNESS	GAU	GAU	BR	7121	10-May-34	21.251
MAN OF ARAN	GAINSBOROGAU		BR	6832	10-May-34	21.080
RED WAGON	BIP	WARDOUR	BR	8537	25-Jan-34	20.680
DUCK SOUP	PAR	PAR	USA	6141	18-Jan-34	19.462
LADY OF THE BOUL.	GOLDWYN	UA	USA	7654	05-Apr-34	19.026
TRANSATLANTIC MEL.	RELIANCE	UA	USA	8234	29-Nov-34	18.997
BRIGHT EYES	FOX	FOX	USA	7722	27-Dec-34	18.326
SING AS WE GO	ATP	ABFD	BR	7121	13-Sep-34	18.051
SCARLET EMPRESS	PAR	PAR	USA	8848	17-May-34	17.375
FASHIONS OF 1934	WB	WB	USA	7092	22-Feb-34	17.327
CAT AND THE FIDDLE	MGM	MGM	USA	7964	15-Mar-34	17.297
PRINCESS CHARMING	GAINSBOROGAU		BR	7047	03-May-34	17.287
MAN WHO KNEW TOO	GAU	GAU	BR	6764	13-Dec-34	17.181
FLYING DOWN TO RIO	RKO	RADIO	USA	8008	01-Mar-34	17.048
MURDER AT THE VAN.	PAR	PAR	USA	7850	21-Jun-34	16.825
LITTLE FRIEND	GAU	GAU	BR	7652	16-Aug-34	16.777
EVELYN PRENTICE	MGM	MGM	USA	7070	06-Dec-34	16.648
CHAINED	MGM	MGM	USA	6840	27-Sep-34	16.214
VIVA VILLA	MGM	MGM	USA	9862	10-May-34	16.089
UNFINISHED SYMPH.	GAU/CINE	GAU	BR	8175	30-Aug-34	15.958
CATS PAW	LLOYD	FOX	USA	9000	06-Sep-34	15.673

Films Released in 1935

Film	Producer	Dist	Country	Length	Boft REG	POPSTAT
LIVES OF A BENGAL	PAR	PAR	USA	9794	07-Feb-35	63.140
TOP HAT	RKO	RADIO	USA	8993	03-Oct-35	54.200
SCARLET PIMPERNELL	LFP	UA	BR	8904	10-Jan-35	51.201
IRON DUKE	GAU	GAU	BR	7967	17-Jan-35	45.675
ON WINGS OF SONG	COL	COL	USA	8186	25-Jul-35	44.706
SANDERS OF THE RIV.	LFP	UA	BR	8764	09-May-35	43.833
DARK ANGEL	GOLDWYN	UA	USA	9669	03-Oct-35	42.732
39 STEPS	GAU	GAU	BR	7821	27-Jun-35	40.197
CLIVE OF INDIA	20	UA	USA	8582	28-Mar-35	39.407
ESCAPE ME NEVER	B&D	UA	BR	9158	11-Apr-35	39.007
DAVID COPPERFIELD	MGM	MGM	USA	11726	14-Mar-35	35.496
ROBERTA	RKO	RADIO	USA	9219	11-Apr-35	34.926
CARDINAL RICHELIEU	20	UA	USA	7403	30-May-35	34.544
KID MILLIONS	GOLDWYN	UA	USA	8186	31-Jan-35	33.412
TUNNEL	GAU	GAU	BR	8578	28-Nov-35	32.632
BROADWAY MELODY	MGM	MGM	USA	9081	10-Oct-35	31.678
BREWSTERS MILLION	B&D	UA	BR	7538	31-Jan-35	30.209
CRUSADES	PAR	PAR	USA	11140	29-Aug-35	29.343
LES MISERABLES	20	UA	USA	10009	02-May-35	28.249
G MEN	WB	WB	USA	7591	23-May-35	27.721
BULLDOG JACK	GAU	GAU	BR	6581	23-May-35	27.558
LITTLE MINISTER	RKO	RADIO	USA	9605	28-Feb-35	25.899
CALL OF THE WILD	20	UA	USA	8272	06-Jun-35	25.556
ANNA KARENINA	MGM	MGM	USA	8402	12-Sep-35	24.519
CURLY TOP	FOX	FOX	USA	6842	19-Sep-35	24.308
HEARTS DESIRE	BIP	WARDOUR	BR	7437	22-Aug-35	23.878
FIRST A GIRL	GAU	GAU	BR	8273	14-Nov-35	23.797
MIGHTY BARNUM	20	UA	USA	8100	03-Jan-35	23.635
RUGGLES OF RED GAP	PAR	PAR	USA	8097	21-Mar-35	23.589
LITTLE COLONEL	FOX	FOX	USA	7414	18-Apr-35	23.458
CHINA SEAS	MGM	MGM	USA	7770	12-Sep-35	22.940
BOYS WILL BE BOY	GAINS	GAU	BR	6867	15-Aug-35	20.657
BECKY SHARP	PIONEER	RADIO	USA	7563	18-Jul-35	20.394
CLAIRVOYANT	GAINSBOROGAU		BR	7254	08-Aug-35	19.964
SHE MARRIED HER B.	COL	COL	USA	7935	26-Sep-35	19.878
COME OUT OF THE P.	B&D	UA	BR	6477	05-Dec-35	19.648
GOIN TO TOWN	PAR	PAR	USA	6355	06-Jun-35	19.498
ABDUL THE DAMNED	BIP	WARDOUR	BR	9899	04-Apr-35	19.280
FOREIGN AFFAIRES	GAINSBOROGAU		BR	6492	19-Dec-35	19.249
NO MORE LADIES	MGM	MGM	USA	7223	04-Jul-35	18.825
IRISH IN US	WB	WB	USA	7621	29-Aug-35	17.966
LOVE AFFAIR OF	TOEPLITZ	GAU	BR	7760	14-Feb-35	22.824
WEDDING NIGHT	GOLDWYN	UA	USA	7528	04-Apr-35	17.539
SHANGHAI	PAR	PAR	USA	6852	01-Aug-35	17.487
STORMY WEATHER	GAINS	GAU	BR	6753	15-Aug-35	17.480
MISSISSIPPI	PAR	PAR	USA	6607	02-May-35	17.302
GUVERNOR	GAU	GAU	BR	7452	10-Oct-35	17.183
FORSAKING ALL OTH.	MGM	MGM	USA	7434	24-Jan-35	17.136
IF YOU COULD ONLY.	COL	COL	USA	6432	26-Dec-35	17.056
MAN FROM THE FOLL.	20	UA	USA	7346	14-Mar-35	16.956

Films Released in 1936

Film	Producer	Dist	Country	Length	Boft REG	POPSTAT
MODERN TIMES	CHAPLIN	UA	USA	8018	20-Feb-36	83.264
MUTINY ON THE BOUN.	MGM	MGM	USA	11933	02-Jan-36	59.356
GREAT ZIEGFELD	MGM	MGM	USA	15901	10-Sep-36	53.294
MR DEEDS GOES TO T.	COL	COL	USA	10391	07-May-36	47.434
SHOW BOAT	UNIVERSALGFD		USA	10315	18-Jun-36	46.654
GHOST GOES WEST	LFP	UA	BR	7400	23-Jan-36	41.601
FOLLOW THE FLEET	RKO	RADIO	USA	9896	26-Mar-36	41.413
SWING TIME	RKO	RADIO	USA	9323	01-Oct-36	40.948
THINGS TO COME	LFP	UA	BR	8830	27-Feb-36	40.650
TALE OF TWO CITIES	MGM	MGM	USA	11351	06-Feb-36	34.183
LITTLE LORD FAUNT.	SELZNICK	UA	USA	9361	07-May-36	33.625
GARDEN OF ALLAH	SELZNICK	UA	USA	7213	03-Dec-36	32.705
SAN FRANCISCO	MGM	MGM	USA	10380	23-Jul-36	32.011
ROMEO AND JULIET	MGM	MGM	USA	11201	22-Oct-36	31.556
THEODORA GOES WILD	COL	COL	USA	8473	10-Dec-36	31.345
STRIKE ME PINK	GOLDWYN	UA	USA	9106	27-Feb-36	30.714
SECRET AGENT	GAU	GAU	BR	7809	21-May-36	28.532
ANTHONY ADVERSE	WB	WB	USA	12800	28-May-36	28.510
GENERAL DIED AT D.	PAR	PAR	USA	8791	22-Oct-36	28.470
LIBELLED LADY	MGM	MGM	USA	8834	05-Nov-36	27.655
MY MAN GODFREY	UNIVERSALGFD		USA	8421	17-Sep-36	27.310
CAPTAIN BLOOD	WB	FNP	USA	10829	13-Feb-36	27.215
DODSWORTH	GOLDWYN	UA	USA	9290	29-Oct-36	26.934
DESIRE	PAR	PAR	USA	8574	09-Apr-36	26.854
GREEN PASTURES	WB	WB	USA	8270	03-Dec-36	26.506
THESE THREE	GOLDWYN	UA	USA	8466	30-Apr-36	25.112
UNDER TWO FLAGS	20FOX	FOX	USA	9990	04-Jun-36	24.842
ROSE MARIE	MGM	MGM	USA	9990	05-Mar-36	24.840
REMBRANDT	LFP	UA	BR	7913	26-Nov-36	24.122
MILKY WAY	PAR	PAR	USA	7885	05-Mar-36	23.518
POOR LITTLE RICH	20FOX	FOX	USA	7144	20-Aug-36	23.490
ITS LOVE AGAIN	GAU	GAU	BR	7395	21-May-36	22.843
CAPTAIN JANUARY	FOX	FOX	USA	6959	28-May-36	21.557
EX MRS BRADFORD	RKO	RADIO	USA	7351	28-May-36	21.034
KING STEPS OUT	COL	COL	USA	7579	11-Jun-36	20.753
LITTLEST REBEL	FOX	FOX	USA	6614	23-Jan-36	20.520
AMATEUR GENTLEMAN	CRITERIONUA		BR	9118	30-Jan-36	19.926
AS YOU LIKE IT	INTERALLIFOX		BR	8674	17-Sep-36	19.856
LAST OF THE MOHIC.	RELIANCE	UA	USA	8312	10-Sep-36	19.565
RHODES OF AFRICA	GAU	GAU	BR	8175	26-Mar-36	19.212
WHEN KNIGHTS WERE.	CAPITOL	GFD	BR	6848	27-Feb-36	19.189
BORN TO DANCE	MGM	MGM	USA	9495	31-Dec-36	19.075
SONG OF FREEDOM	HAMMER	BL	BR	7225	10-Sep-36	19.025
QUEEN OF HEARTS	ATP	ABFD	BR	7165	20-Feb-36	18.923
JACK OF ALL TRADES	GAINSBOROG		BR	6868	27-Feb-36	18.440
MAN WHO COULD WORK.	LFP	UA	BR	7384	30-Jul-36	18.235
LOVE ON THE RUN	MGM	MGM	USA	7218	24-Dec-36	18.132
MAN WHO BROKE THE.	20FOX	FOX	USA	6014	09-Jan-36	18.103
GORGEOUS HUSSY	MGM	MGM	USA	9263	01-Oct-36	17.892
COUNTRY DOCTOR	FOX	FOX	USA	8440	09-Apr-36	17.866

Films Released in 1937

Film	Producer	Dist	Country	Length	Boft REG	POPSTAT
LOST HORIZON	COL	COL	USA	11855	15-Apr-37	86.885
GOOD EARTH	MGM	MGM	USA	12385	01-Apr-37	48.950
STAR IS BORN	SELZNICK	UA	USA	10083	10-Jun-37	47.892
VICTORIA THE GREAT	IMPERATOR	RADIO	BR	10152	23-Sep-37	45.845
CHARGE OF THE LIGHT	WB	FNP	USA	10442	14-Jan-37	43.876
SHALL WE DANCE	RKO	RADIO	USA	9759	20-May-37	40.162
LIFE OF EMILE ZOLA	WB	FNP	USA	10482	30-Sep-37	38.204
CAMILLE	MGM	MGM	USA	9779	02-Apr-37	36.639
SOULS AT SEA	PAR	PAR	USA	8297	09-Sep-37	35.462
100 MEN AND A GIRL	UNIVERSAL	GFD	USA	7551	30-Sep-37	33.071
PLAINSMAN	PAR	PAR	USA	10015	11-Feb-37	32.989
CAPTAINS COURAGE	MGM	MGM	USA	10488	13-May-37	32.407
AFTER THE THIN MAN	MGM	MGM	USA	10080	04-Feb-37	31.030
MAYTIME	MGM	MGM	USA	11821	13-May-37	30.542
LLOYDS OF LONDON	20FOX	FOX	USA	10607	18-Mar-37	29.394
I MET HIM IN PARIS	PAR	PAR	USA	7745	10-Jun-37	28.693
PRISONER OF ZENDA	SELZNICK	UA	USA	9332	07-Oct-37	25.926
FIRE OVER ENGLAND	PENDENNIS	UA	BR	7750	21-Jan-37	25.223
KNIGHT WITHOUT ARM.	LFP	UA	BR	9211	10-Jun-37	24.713
HISTORY IS MADE	WANGER	UA	USA	8992	08-Apr-37	23.531
LAST OF MRS CHEYNEY	MGM	MGM	USA	8823	18-Mar-37	23.529
EASY LIVING	PAR	PAR	USA	7907	12-Aug-37	22.720
BELOVED ENEMY	GOLDWYN	UA	USA	8087	14-Jan-37	22.285
FOR YOU ALONE	COL	COL	USA	9281	08-Apr-37	22.000
ONE IN A MILLION	20FOX	FOX	USA	8499	25-Feb-37	21.433
FAREWELL AGAIN	PENDENNIS	UA	BR	7539	20-May-37	20.801
ELEPHANT BOY	LFP	UA	BR	7373	18-Feb-37	20.751
GOOD MORNING BOY	GAINSBORO	GAU	BR	7018	04-Feb-37	20.631
GOLD DIGGERS OF	WB	FNP	USA	9213	04-Mar-37	20.513
MARIE WALEWSKA	MGM	MGM	USA	10050	02-Dec-37	20.316
ON THE AVENUE	20FOX	FOX	USA	7969	25-Mar-37	20.300
LOVE FROM A STRANG.	TRAFALGAR	UA	BR	8310	14-Jan-37	20.205
THREE SMART GIRL	UNIVERSAL	GFD	USA	7598	11-Feb-37	20.203
GREAT BARRIER	GAU	GAU	BR	7590	04-Mar-37	20.187
STORM IN A TEACUP	SAVILLE	UA	BR	7894	03-Jun-37	19.579
OHMS	GAU	GAU	BR	7813	04-Feb-37	19.543
WINGS OF THE MORN.	NWP	FOX	BR	77040	11-Feb-37	19.044
TOP OF THE TOWN	UNIVERSAL	GFD	USA	7837	29-Apr-37	17.693
BROADWAY MELODY	MGM	MGM	USA	9935	16-Sep-37	17.676
LOVELY TO LOOK AT	20FOX	20FOX	USA	7108	23-Sep-37	17.414
DREAMING LIPS	TRAFALGAR	UA	BR	8513	04-Mar-37	17.357
SARATOGA	MGM	MGM	USA	8271	26-Aug-37	17.324
PARNELL	MGM	MGM	USA	10619	08-Jul-37	17.239
OH MR PORTER	GAINSBORO	GFD	BR	7578	21-Oct-37	17.170
KING SOLOMONS MINES	GAU	GFD	BR	7283	08-Jul-37	16.946
OKAY FOR SOUND	GAINSBORO	GFD	BR	7797	06-May-37	16.890
DARK JOURNEY	SAVILLE	UA	BR	7238	04-Feb-37	16.837
YOU ONLY LIVE ON	WANGER	UA	USA	7856	01-Apr-37	16.732
WEE WILLIE WINKI	20FOX	FOX	USA	8933	29-Jul-37	16.720
DAY AT THE RACES	MGM	MGM	USA	9824	08-Jul-37	16.437

Appendix 9.1: The Imputed Domestic Box-Office Revenues of Feature Films Released in Britain in 1934

Title	Studio	Country	POPSTAT	Imputed		Title	Studio	Country	POPSTAT	Imputed	
				Revenue	^a (£)					Revenue	(£)
HOUSE OF ROTHSCHILD	20	USA	63.568	104674		DESIGN FOR LIVING	PAR	USA	15.186	25006	
ONE NIGHT OF LOVE	COL	USA	48.864	80461		DIRTY WORK	GAU	BR	15.162	24967	
ROMAN SCANDALS	GOLDWYN	USA	46.349	76319		SPITFIRE	RKO	USA	15.128	24910	
CATHERINE THE GREAT	LFP	BR	43.614	71816		MOULIN ROUGE	20	USA	15.044	24772	
JEW SUSS	GAU	BR	41.158	67773		BELLE OF THE NINETIEPAR		USA	15.005	24709	
BLOSSOM TIME	BIP	BR	36.965	60868		WORLD MOVES ON	FOX	USA	14.941	24602	
QUEEN CHRISTINA	MGM	USA	33.027	54384		FORGOTTEN MEN	BIP	BR	14.872	24490	
LITTLE WOMEN	RKO	USA	32.551	53600		HOUSE OF CONNELLY	FOX	USA	14.686	24184	
IT HAPPENED ONE NIGHT	COL	USA	31.584	52008		RADIO PARADE OF 1935	BIP	BR	14.138	23280	
NELL GWYN	B&D	BR	30.805	50726		STAND UP AND CHEER	FOX	USA	13.948	22968	
MERRY WIDOW	MGM	USA	29.858	49165		LOVE LIFE AND LAUGHTATP		BR	13.789	22706	
CLEOPATRA	PAR	USA	27.544	45355		HI NELLIE	WB	USA	13.784	22697	
CHU CHIN CHOW	GAINSBOROB	BR	27.446	45190		MALA THE MAGNIFICENT	MGM	USA	13.772	22679	
EVERGREEN	GAU	BR	27.351	45030		KIDNAPPED	PAR	USA	13.577	22357	
BARRETT'S OF WIMPOLE	MGM	USA	27.004	44465		GEORGE WHITES SCANDAL	FOX	USA	13.420	22098	
JACK AHoy	GAU	BR	26.872	44248		GOOD GIRL	PAR	USA	13.384	22038	
WONDER BAR	FNP	USA	26.144	43050		TWENTY MILLION SWEET	WB	USA	13.325	21942	
RIPTIDE	MGM	USA	25.322	41697		GOING HOLLYWOOD	MGM	USA	13.226	21778	
GAY DIVORCEE	RKO	USA	25.290	41643		AFFAIRS OF CELLINI	20	USA	13.173	21692	
CAMELS ARE COMING	GAINSBOROB	BR	24.537	40403		DESIRABLE	WB	USA	13.142	21641	
PAINTED VEIL	MGM	USA	24.387	40157		SERVANTS ENTRANCE	FOX	USA	13.142	21640	
TREASURE ISLAND	MGM	USA	23.816	39217		MADAME DUBARRY	FNP	USA	13.072	21525	
BULLDOG DRUMMOND	STR20	USA	22.827	37587		MEN IN WHITE	MGM	USA	12.955	21333	
LAST GENTLEMAN	20	USA	22.714	37402		MY OLD DUTCH	GAINSBOR	BR	12.903	21248	
STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL	COL	USA	22.335	36778		GAMBLING LADY	WB	USA	12.752	20998	
THIN MAN	MGM	USA	22.269	36669		BOLERO	PAR	USA	12.747	20990	
COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO	RELIANCE	USA	22.236	36614		SHE LOVES ME NOT	PAR	USA	12.692	20899	
EVENSONG	GAU	BR	21.879	36027		LADY IN DANGER	GAU	BR	12.649	20828	
MY SONG FOR YOU	GAU/CINE BR/GE		21.658	35664		LILIES OF THE FIELD	B&D	BR	12.433	20472	
CLIP OF KINDNESS	GAU	BR	21.251	34993		CHANGE OF HEART	FOX	USA	12.430	20469	
MAN OF ARAN	GAINSBOROB	BR	21.080	34711		PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS	PAR	USA	12.397	20413	
RED WAGON	BIP	BR	20.680	34052		DEATH TAKES A HOLIDAY	PAR	USA	12.168	20036	
DUCK SOUP	PAR	USA	19.462	32048		SITTING PRETTY	PAR	USA	12.073	19880	
LADY OF THE BOULEVARD	GOLDWYN	USA	19.026	31329		MAN OF TWO WORLDS	RKO	USA	11.878	19559	
TRANSATLANTIC MERRY	RELIANCE	USA	18.997	31281		GALLANT LADY	20	USA	11.807	19442	
BRIGHT EYES	FOX	USA	18.326	30176		MANHATTAN MELODRAMA	MGM	USA	11.796	19425	
SING AS WE GO	ATP	BR	18.051	29724		BATTLE	LIONO	BR/FR	11.658	19197	
SCARLET EMPRESS	PAR	USA	17.375	28610		FOUR FRIGHTENED PEOPLE	PAR	USA	11.624	19141	
FASHIONS OF 1934	WB	USA	17.327	28532		WHAT EVERY WOMAN KNOWS	MGM	USA	11.587	19079	
CAT AND THE FIDDLE	MGM	USA	17.297	28483		WE LIVE AGAIN	GOLDWYN	USA	11.575	19060	
PRINCESS CHARMING	GAINSBOROB	BR	17.287	28466		SPY 13	MGM	USA	11.458	18867	
MAN WHO KNEW TOO MUCH	GAU	BR	17.181	28291		HAPPINESS AHEAD	FNP	USA	11.352	18693	
FLYING DOWN TO RIO	RKO	USA	17.048	28072		MARIE GALANTE	FOX	USA	11.024	18153	
MURDER AT THE VANITY	PAR	USA	16.825	27705		ADVICE TO LOVELORN	20	USA	10.968	18061	
LITTLE FRIEND	GAU	BR	16.777	27626		RICHEST GIRL IN THE	RKO	USA	10.865	17891	
EVELYN PRENTICE	MGM	USA	16.648	27414		GREAT SCHNOZZLE	RELIANCE	USA	10.820	17817	
CHAINED	MGM	USA	16.214	26699		IMITATION OF LIFE	UNIVERSAL	USA	10.768	17732	
VIVA VILLA	MGM	USA	16.089	26492		RIGHT TO ROMANCE	RKO	USA	10.754	17709	
UNFINISHED SYMPHONY	GAU/CINE BR		15.958	26277		SEALED LIPS	RKO	USA	10.711	17637	
CATS PAW	LLOYD	USA	15.673	25808		NOW AND FOREVER	PAR	USA	10.697	17614	
PRIVATE LIFE OF DON	LFP	BR	15.610	25704		HIDE OUT	MGM	USA	10.692	17607	
SADIE MCKEE	MGM	USA	15.381	25327		WERE NOT DRESSING	PAR	BR	10.680	17586	
DAMES	WB	USA	15.319	25225		DANGEROUS CORNER	RKO	USA	10.602	17457	
HERE COMES THE NAVY	WB	USA	15.288	25174		MRS WIGGS OF THE CAB	PAR	USA	10.507	17301	

Title	Studio	Country	POPSTAT	Revenue (£)	Title	Studio	Country	POPSTAT	Revenue (£)
PERFECT WEEKEND	WB	USA	10.464	17231	THIS SIDE OF HEAVEN	MGM	USA	8.054	13262
BLOOD MONEY	20	USA	10.431	17177	COCKEYED CAVALIERS	RKO	USA	8.047	13251
LOOKING FOR TROUBLE	20	USA	10.361	17061	WOMEN IN HIS LIFE	MGM	USA	8.031	13224
QUEENS AFFAIR	B&D	BR	10.341	17028	VIRGINIAS HUSBAND	GSMITH	BR	8.006	13183
STAMBOUL QUEST	MGM	USA	10.247	16873	GENTLEMEN ARE BORN	FNP	USA	7.939	13073
ITS A GIFT	PAR	USA	10.201	16797	THOSE WERE THE DAYS	BIP	BR	7.923	13047
BABES IN TOYLAND	ROACH	USA	10.188	16776	OF HUMAN BONDAGE	RKO	USA	7.920	13042
WALTZES FROM VIENNA	ARNOLD	BR	10.167	16742	LADIES SHOULD LISTEN	PAR	USA	7.914	13032
GREAT EXPECTATIONS	UNIVERSAL	USA	10.146	16707	KISS AND MAKE UP	PAR	USA	7.88	12979
WHITE PARADE	FOX	USA	10.103	16636	RETURN OF BULLDOG	DRBIP	BR	7.858	12940
THANK YOUR STARS	PAR	USA	10.068	16579	EASY TO LOVE	WB	USA	7.851	12928
ALL OF ME	PAR	USA	9.9826	16437	EARCH FOR BEAUTY	PAR	USA	7.752	12765
MENACE	PAR	USA	9.9655	16409	GREAT FLIRTATION	PAR	USA	7.736	12739
WITCHING HOUR	PAR	USA	9.8177	16166	RIENDS OF MR SWEENEY	FNP	USA	7.721	12714
DR MONICA	WB	USA	9.7785	16101	NIGHT OF THE PARTY	GAU	BR	7.71	12697
TARZAN AND HIS MATE	MGM	USA	9.7546	16062	VE GOT YOUR NUMBER	WB	USA	7.708	12693
MYSTERY OF MR X	MGM	USA	9.7389	16036	WOMAN IN HER THIRTI	FNP	USA	7.679	12645
FRATERNALLY YOURS	ROACH	USA	9.7173	16000	BIG HEARTED HERBERT	FNP	USA	7.663	12619
100% PURE	MGM	USA	9.505	15651	HIPS HIPS HOORAY	RKO	USA	7.663	12619
WHEN NEW YORK SLEEPS	FOX	USA	9.4853	15618	COUNSELLOR AT LAW	UNIVERSAL L	USA	7.646	12590
JOURNAL OF CRIME	FNP	USA	9.4235	15517	CASE OF THE HOWLING	FNP	USA	7.639	12579
EIGHT GIRLS IN A BOA	PAR	USA	9.3711	15430	CALL IT LUCK	FOX	USA	7.608	12528
MANS CASTLE	COL	USA	9.3515	15398	WERE RICH AGAIN	RKO	USA	7.569	12463
CHARLIE CHAN IN LOND	FOX	USA	9.3361	15373	HANDY ANDY	FOX	USA	7.550	12432
WILD BOY	GAINSBOR	BR	9.3268	15357	BOTTOMS UP	FOX	USA	7.543	12421
LIMEHOUSE BLUES	PAR	USA	9.2700	15264	COME ON MARINES	PAR	USA	7.527	12394
BABY TAKE A BOW	FOX	USA	9.2284	15195	BELLA DONNA	TWICK	BR	7.500	12351
READY FOR LOVE	PAR	USA	9.1883	15129	NO MORE WOMEN	PAR	USA	7.459	12282
DEATH AT BROADCASTIN	PHOENIX	BR	9.1840	15122	BORN TO BE BAD	PAR	USA	7.443	12256
BY CANDLELIGHT	UNIVERSAL	USA	9.1456	15059	PARIS INTERLUDE	MGM	USA	7.389	12168
LITTLE MAN WHAT NOW	UNIVERSAL	USA	9.1263	15027	GAY LOVE	BL	BR	7.386	12162
SUCH WOMEN ARE DANCE	FOX	USA	9.1073	14996	CRIME WITHOUT PASSI	OPAR	USA	7.368	12133
HERE COMES THE GROOM	PAR	USA	9.0909	14969	HAVE A HEART	MGM	USA	7.350	12103
TWENTIETH CENTURY	COL	USA	9.0813	14953	UPPER WORLD	FNP	USA	7.332	12074
OLD FASHIONED WAY	PAR	USA	9.0615	14921	FUGITIVE LOVER	MGM	USA	7.330	12070
MURDER ON THE RUNAWA	MGM	USA	8.8980	14651	HAT COAT AND GLOVES	RKO	USA	7.275	11980
WEDNESDAYS CHILD	RKO	USA	8.8103	14507	FIREBIRD	WB	USA	7.271	11973
I AM SUZANNE	FOX	USA	8.7519	14411	CHARLIE CHANS COURAGE	DIT	USA	7.214	11879
GIRL WITHOUT A ROOM	PAR	USA	8.7436	14397	MARRIAGE SYMPHONY	RKO	USA	7.132	11745
HOLLYWOOD PARTY	MGM	USA	8.7419	14394	NO GREATER GLORY	COL	USA	7.121	11726
JIMMY THE GENT	WB	USA	8.6774	14288	TRUMPET BLOWS	PAR	USA	7.11	11717
ROAD HOUSE	GAU	BR	8.6759	14286	KING OF PARIS	B&D	BR	7.083	11663
YOU'RE TELLING ME	PAR	USA	8.6191	14192	LADY KILLER	WB	USA	7.069	11640
PECKS BAD BOY	PRINCIPAL	USA	8.5890	14143	CHURCH MOUSE	WB&R	BR	7.058	11622
WOMAN OF THE WORLD	MGM	USA	8.5833	14133	DOVER ROAD	RKO	USA	7.000	11527
MELODY IN SPRING	PAR	USA	8.5722	14115	KANSAS CITY PRINCESS	WB	USA	6.978	11490
NOTORIOUS SOPHIE LAN	PAR	USA	8.4665	13941	APTAIN HATES THE SE	COL	USA	6.957	11455
ALL MEN ARE ENEMIES	FOX	USA	8.3819	13802	REN CASE	BIP	BR	6.956	11454
KEY	WB	USA	8.3654	13774	COLLEGE RHYTHM	PAR	USA	6.940	11427
SIX OF A KIND	PAR	USA	8.3547	13757	SIN OF NORAH MORAN	MAJESTIC	USA	6.920	11395
THIRTY DAY PRINCESS	PAR	USA	8.3402	13733	YOU CANT BUY EVERYTH	MGM	USA	6.853	11285
MANDALAY	WB	USA	8.2620	13604	WARN LONDON	BL	BR	6.835	11255
RED ENSIGN	GAU	BR	8.1355	13396	CARAVAN	FOX	USA	6.824	11238
SHOULD LADIES BEHAVE	MGM	USA	8.1316	13389	BEHOLD WE LIVE	RKO	USA	6.732	11085
SHOW OFF	MGM	USA	8.1129	13359	DARK HAZARD	FNP	USA	6.731	11084
OVER THE RIVER	UNIVERSAL	USA	8.0995	13336	FOG OVER FRISCO	WB	USA	6.720	11065
MANY HAPPY RETURNS	PAR	USA	8.0830	13309	SHE LEARNED ABOUT SA	FOX	USA	6.682	11004

Title	Studio	Country	POPSTAT	Revenue (£)	Title	Studio	Country	POPSTAT	Revenue (£)
WHARF ANGEL	PAR	USA	6.6736	10989	SPRING IN THE AIR	STRAFFORD	BR	5.596	9214
DEATH ON THE DIAMOND	MGM	USA	6.6619	10969	ITS A COP	B&D	BR	5.588	9202
FORBIDDEN TERRITORY	PROGRESS	BR	6.6500	10950	HELL CAT	COL	USA	5.54	9138
HIS DOUBLE LIFE	PAR	USA	6.6021	10871	AS THE EARTH TURNS	WB	USA	5.492	9044
IDENTITY PARADE	COL	USA	6.5725	10822	COTLAND YARD MYSTER	BIP	BR	5.474	9014
HIT ME AGAIN	FNP	USA	6.5661	10812	ME DOCTOR	RKO	USA	5.455	8983
ON THE AIR	BL	BR	6.5166	10730	ADY BY CHOICE	COL	USA	5.455	8983
OLD CURIOSITY SHOP	BIP	BR	6.4891	10685	GIRLS WILL BE BOYS	BIP	BR	5.443	8963
BLUE SQUADRON	WB&R/PITT	BR	6.4606	10638	MERRY WIVES OF RENO	WB	USA	5.42	8930
DRAGON MURDER CASE	WB	USA	6.4574	10633	HOUSE OF DOOM	UNIVERSAL L	USA	5.403	8898
NINTH GUEST	COL	USA	6.4515	10623	ONE EXCITING ADVENTU	UNIVERSAL L	USA	5.401	8894
SUCCESS AT ANY PRICE	RKO	USA	6.4494	10619	GRAND CANARY	FOX	USA	5.40	8892
GAY BRIDE	MGM	USA	6.4042	10545	WHIRLPOOL	COL	USA	5.353	8814
REGISTERED NURSE	FNP	USA	6.3832	10510	AGE OF INNOCENCE	RKO	USA	5.274	8685
GIRLS PLEASE	B&D	BR	6.3539	10462	CROSBY CASE	UNIVERSAL L	USA	5.263	8666
PARTYS OVER	COL	USA	6.3370	10434	WILD CARGO	RKO	USA	5.262	8664
ON SECRET SERVICE	BIP/CAT	BR/GE	6.2835	10346	HELL IN THE HEAVENS	FOX	USA	5.238	8626
GIRL IN DANGER	COL	USA	6.2498	10291	FRONTIER MARSHALL	FOX	USA	5.235	8620
FREEDOM OF THE SEAS	BIP	BR	6.2273	10254	LILY OF KILLARNEY	TWICK	BR	5.224	8603
GIVE HER A RING	BIP	BR	6.2174	10237	VERY HONOURABLE GUY	FNP	USA	5.184	8536
LETS FALL IN LOVE	COL	USA	6.2090	10224	THUNDER OVER MEXICO	MPT	MEX	5.177	8525
DEFENCE RESTS	COL	USA	6.1922	10196	DUDE RANGER	ATHERTON	USA	5.17	8519
WHAT HAPPENED THEN	BIP	BR	6.1843	10183	SLEEPERS EAST	FOX	USA	5.149	8478
MAN WITH TWO FACES	FNP	USA	6.1738	10166	EMPEROR JONES	K&C	USA	5.116	8424
HAPPY FAMILY	FNP	USA	6.1548	10134	I LIKE IT THAT WAY	UNIVERSALL	USA	5.069	8347
HER SACRIFICE	COL	USA	6.1288	10091	RE YOU A MASON	TWICK L	BR	5.065	8341
LOST PATROL	RKO	USA	6.1240	10084	JAVA HEAD	ATP	BR	5.041	8301
MR CINDERS	BIP	BR	6.1188	10075	BELOVED	UNIVERSALL	USA	5.014	8256
PRIVATE SCANDAL	PAR	USA	6.0995	10043	ON THE STROKE OF NIN	CHESTERFI	USA	5.007	8244
STAGE MOTHER	MGM	USA	6.0710	9996	PERSONALITY KID	FNP	USA	5.001	8235
HE WAS HER MAN	WB	USA	6.0670	9990	CAVALCADE OF THE MOV	BLACTON	USA	4.998	8231
DOUBLE DOOR	PAR	USA	6.0470	9957	MASSACRE	FNP	USA	4.966	8177
ONCE TO EVERY WOMAN	COL	USA	6.0444	9953	SING AND LIKE IT	RKO	USA	4.919	8099
CLUPID IN THE ROUGH	RKO	USA	6.0243	9919	FINISHING SCHOOL	RKO	USA	4.90	8076
SMOKY	FOX	USA	5.9860	9856	GREEN PACK	BL	BR	4.889	8051
AS HUSBANDS GO	FOX	USA	5.9728	9835	FUGITIVE LADY	COL	USA	4.884	8043
HAPPY	BIP	BR	5.9335	9770	CRIME OF HELEN STANL	COL	USA	4.873	8024
FOUNTAIN	RKO	USA	5.8982	9712	GLAMOUR	UNIVERSALL	USA	4.869	8018
I SELL ANYTHING	WB	USA	5.8808	9683	DANCING FOOL	WB	USA	4.817	7932
CHANCE AT HEAVEN	RKO	USA	5.8694	9664	WAGON WHEELS	PAR	USA	4.794	7894
SAY IT WITH FLOWERS	REAL ART	BR	5.8693	9664	SHE WAS A LADY	FOX	USA	4.781	7872
FALLING IN LOVE	VOGUE	BR	5.8471	9628	BEDSIDE	FNP	USA	4.772	7858
STRAIGHT IS THE WAY	MGM	USA	5.8025	9554	MILLION DOLLAR RANSO	UNIVERSALL	USA	4.735	7797
TWO HEARTS IN WALTZ	F&N	BR	5.7919	9537	URGENT CALL	COL	USA	4.734	7795
GREAT DEFENDER	BIP	BR	5.7812	9519	LIFE OF VERGIE WINT	RKO	USA	4.718	776
STINGAREE	RKO	USA	5.7803	9518	HOUSEWIFE	FNP	USA	4.712	7759
GIRL IN PAWN	PAR	USA	5.7648	9492	NAME OF THE WOMAN	COL	USA	4.70	7753
AFFAIRS OF A GENTLE	UNIVERSAL	USA	5.7598	9484	ROMANTIC AGE	COL	USA	4.704	7746
STRAIGHTAWAY	COL	USA	5.7523	9471	LOST IN THE LEGION	BIP	BR	4.672	7693
AUTUMN CROCUS	ATP	BR	5.7314	9437	ELMER AND ELSIE	PAR	USA	4.671	7691
SON OF KONG	RKO	USA	5.6524	9307	MURDER IN TRINIDAD	FOX	USA	4.649	7655
THIS MAN IS MINE	RKO	USA	5.6478	9299	AFTERWARDS	RKO	USA	4.638	7638
LAZY RIVER	MGM	USA	5.6473	9299	LAST ROUND UP	PAR	USA	4.619	7606
GREEN EYES	CHESTERFI	USA	5.6347	9278	HIS GREATEST GAMBLE	RKO	USA	4.605	7583
COMING OUT PARTY	FOX	USA	5.6262	9264	ONCE TO EVERY BACHEL	LIBERTY	USA	4.582	7546
CONVENTION CITY	FNP	USA	5.6114	9240	SIX DAY BIKE RIDER	FNP	USA	4.563	7514
I BELIEVED IN YOU	FOX	USA	5.5980	9217	WILD GOLD	FOX	USA	4.562	7513

Title	Studio	Country	POPSTAT	Revenue (£)	Title	Studio	Country	POPSTAT	Revenue (£)
LEMON DROP KID	PAR	USA	4.5594	7507	KING KELLY OF THE U MONO		USA	3.551	5848
HOWS CHANCES	SC	BR	4.5461	7485	THREE ON A HONEYMOO FOX		USA	3.548	5843
MAN WHO CHANGED HIS TWICK		BR	4.4796	7376	MIDSHIPMAN JACK	RKO	USA	3.541	5831
STRICTLY DYNAMITE	RKO	USA	4.4665	7354	POOR RICH	UNIVERSALL	USA	3.538	5826
FUGITIVE ROAD	INVINCIBL	USA	4.4548	7335	SHOCK	MONO	USA	3.538	5826
SHADOWS OF SING SINGCOOL		USA	4.4176	7274	LONG LOST FATHER	RKO	USA	3.514	5786
RETURN OF THE TERRORFNP		USA	4.4104	7262	MANHATTAN LOVE SONG MONO		USA	3.457	5693
GAMBLING	BROOKLIN	USA	4.3911	7230	UNCERTAIN LADY	UNIVERSALL	USA	3.437	5660
THERE GOES SUSIE	STAFFORD	BR	4.3883	7226	KENTUCKY MINSTRELS	TWICK	L BR	3.432	5651
TWIN HUSBANDS	INVINCIBL	USA	4.3565	7173	GIRL OF THE LIMBERL MONO		USA	3.425	5641
MY SONG GOES ROUND TBIP		BR/GE	4.3508	7164	SOMETHING ALWAYS HA WBBR		BR	3.418	5628
QUITTER	CHESTERFI	USA	4.3086	7094	LOVE CAPTIVE	UNIVERSALL	USA	3.41	5621
ILL FIX IT	COL	USA	4.3031	7085	BROKEN MELODY	TWICK	BR	3.410	5615
FEMALE	FNP	USA	4.3011	7082	I GIVE MY LOVE	UNIVERSALL	USA	3.399	5597
FLOOD TIDE	REAL ART	BR	4.2805	7048	LOVE BIRDS	UNIVERSALL	USA	3.372	5553
I HATE WOMEN	GOLDSMITH	USA	4.2583	7011	LES MISERABLES	PN	FR	3.348	5512
MADAM SPY	UNIVERSALL	USA	4.2361	6975	BACHELOR OF ARTS	FOX	USA	3.3	5495
WHOM THE GODS DESTROCOL		USA	4.2343	6972	GHOST OF JOHN HOLLI MONOGRAM			3.328	5481
BEGGARS IN ERMINE	MONO	USA	4.1958	6909	REDHEAD	MONO	USA	3.274	5391
HOLD THAT GIRL	FOX	USA	4.1945	6906	CITY LIMITS	MONO	USA	3.24	5343
GOODBYE LOVE	RKO	USA	4.1797	6882	JUDGE PRIEST	FOX	USA	3.243	5341
ONE IS GUILTY	COL	USA	4.1766	6877	LADY IS WILLING	COLBR	BR	3.214	5293
MEANEST GIRL IN TOWNRKO		USA	4.1666	6861	CHEATING CHEATERS	UNIVERSALL	USA	3.202	5274
REUNION	INVINCIBL	USA	4.1474	6829	NIGHT CLUB QUEEN	TWICK	L BR	3.169	5219
MURDER ON THE BLACKBRKO		USA	4.1342	6807	TWO ALONE	RKO	USA	3.108	5119
LITTLE STRANGER	KING	BR	4.1172	6779	YOU BELONG TO ME	PAR	USA	3.107	5116
OVER THE GARDEN WALLBIP		BR	4.1104	6768	DANNY BOY	PANTHER	BR	3.070	5055
DOCTORS ORDERS	BIP	BR	4.1088	6765	ROMANCE IN THE RAIN UNIVERSALL		USA	3.066	5048
HEAT LIGHTNING	FNP	USA	4.0981	6748	FLAMING GOLD	RKO	USA	3.061	5041
KEEP EM ROLLING	RKO	USA	4.0964	6745	LETS TALK IT OVER	UNIVERSALL	USA	3.037	5002
LOVES OF ARIANE	PATHE	USA	4.0924	6738	WOMAN UNAFRAID	GOLDSMITH	USA	3.018	4969
AMONG THE MISSING	COL	USA	4.0192	6618	COUNTESS OF MONTE CRUNIVERSALL		USA	3.011	4958
THERES ALWAYS TOMORRUNIVERSALL		USA	3.9486	6501	VOICE IN THE NIGHT	COL	USA	2.978	4904
BIG SHAKEDOWN	FNP	USA	3.9443	6494	WOMANS MAN	MONO	USA	2.959	4873
JANE EYRE	MONO	USA	3.9385	6485	WHEN STRANGERS MEET LIBERTY		USA	2.936	4835
COURAGEOUS	WB	USA	3.8725	6376	FOUR MASKED MEN	TWICK	L BR	2.930	4825
SPRINGTIME FOR HENRYFOX		USA	3.8518	6342	OUTCAST	BIP	BR	2.867	4722
NO SPEED LIMIT	COL	USA	3.8353	6315	EMBARRASSING MOMENTSUNIVERSALL		USA	2.860	4710
GIFT OF GAB	UNIVERSALL	USA	3.8307	6307	MR SKITCH	FOX	USA	2.831	4662
RIVER WOLVES	REAL ART	BR	3.8065	6267	BADGERS GREEN	B&D	BR	2.81	4627
PURSUED	FOX	USA	3.7994	6256	EVER SINCE EVE	FOX	USA	2.731	4497
LOVE AT SECOND SIGHTRADIUS		BR	3.7982	6254	SIXTEEN FATHOMS DEEPMONO		USA	2.730	4496
JEALOUSY	COL	USA	3.7831	6229	PASSING SHADOWS	BL	BR	2.728	4493
POLITICAL PARTY A	BIP	BR	3.7702	6208	PATHEONE PARADE	PATHE	BR	2.672	4400
MIDNIGHT ALIBI	FNP	USA	3.7688	6205	CROSS COUNTRY CRUISEUNIVERSALL		USA	2.632	4334
MODERN HERO	FNP	USA	3.7660	6201	KEEP IT QUIET	BL	BR	2.587	4260
SHALL THE CHILDREN POOL		USA	3.7014	6094	LAUGHING BOY	MGM	USA	2.576	4242
MILLIONAIRE FOR A DAUNIVERSALL		USA	3.6790	6058	HEAVEN BOUND	TOWER	L USA	2.574	4238
CITY PARK	CHESTERFI	USA	3.6752	6051	BROKEN ROSARY	BUTCHER	BR	2.557	4211
HALF A SINNER	UNIVERSALL	USA	3.6549	6018	AIR PATROL	MONO	USA	2.531	4168
OH WHAT A DUCHESS	BIP	BR	3.6377	5990	DR MABUSE	CAESAR	USA	2.523	4155
BOMBAY MAIL	UNIVERSALL	USA	3.6123	5948	GET YOUR MAN	B&D	BR	2.50	4129
MONEY MEANS NOTHING MONO		USA	3.6104	5945	WAKE UP AND DREAM	UNIVERSALL	USA	2.438	4014
MUSIC HALL	REAL ART	BR	3.6059	5937	ONE OF THE MANY	MONO	USA	2.432	4005
PATH OF GLORY	TRIUMPH	BR	3.5930	5916	YOUNG AND BEAUTIFUL MASCOT		USA	2.413	3973
CIRCUS CLOWN	FNP	USA	3.5566	5856	ILL TELL THE WORLD	UNIVERSALL	USA	2.404	3959
TWO HEADS ON A PILLOLIBERTY		USA	3.5546	5853	DAVID HARUM	FOX	USA	2.390	3935

Title	Studio	Country	POPSTAT	Revenue (£)	Title	Studio	Country	POPSTAT	Revenue (£)
GIRL IN POSSESSION	WBBR	BR	2.3863	3929	WINE WOMEN AND SONG	BRENDON	USA	1.211	1994
GIRL IN THE FLAT	B&D	BR	2.3516	3872	SECRET OF THE LOCH	WYNDHAM	BR	1.199	1975
HOLD THE PRESS	COL	USA	2.3482	3866	FIGHTING CODE	COL	USA	1.156	1904
THATS GRATITUDE	COL	USA	2.3022	3790	DESIGNING WOMEN	SC	BR	1.153	1899
STOLEN SWEETS	CHESTERFIUSA		2.3004	3788	NO ESCAPE	WBBR	BR	1.121	1847
MOST PRECIOUS THING	COL	USA	2.2991	3785	MARRIAGE OF CONVENIENCE	PINNACLE	USA	1.057	1740
SILENCE OF DEAN MAITCIN	SOUNDALUST		2.2958	3780	BORROWED CLOTHES	MAUDE	BR	1.051	1731
OH NO DOCTOR	KING	BR	2.2620	3724	ROLLING IN MONEY	FOXBR	BR	0.982	1618
ENLIGHTEN THY DAUGHTER	EXP	USA	2.2562	3715	LONE COWBOY	PAR	USA	0.940	1548
DOUBLE EVENT	TRIUMPH	BR	2.1947	3613	BOOTS BOOTS	BLAKELEYS	BR	0.905	1491
GIRL OF MY DREAMS	MONO	USA	2.1762	3583	MONTE CARLO NIGHTS	MONO	USA	0.871	1435
MOONSTONE	MONO	USA	2.1699	3573	TWENTY YEARS AFTER	IP	BR	0.860	1417
UNFINISHED SYMPHONY	CAT	BR/GE	2.1629	3561	WINGS OVER EVEREST	GAU	BR	0.851	1401
WHAT HAPPENED TO HARRY	WBBR	BR	2.1559	3549	TANGLED EVIDENCE	REAL ART	BR	0.843	1389
MAN WITH THE ELECTRIC	INVICIBLUSA		2.1551	3548	LOVE BIRDS	UNIVERSALL	USA	0.80	1333
SENSATION HUNTERS	MONO	USA	2.1512	3542	LUCKY LOSER	B&D	BR	0.778	1281
FOG	COL	USA	2.1479	3536	DANGEROUS ENEMY	MAYFAIR	USA	0.749	1234
SPEED WINGS	COL	USA	2.1311	3509	WHITE ENSIGN	SC	BR	0.705	1162
LOST JUNGLE	MASCOT	USA	2.1180	3487	LASH	REAL ART	BR	0.691	1139
MIDNIGHT	UNIVERSALUSA		2.1028	3462	PERFECT FLAW	FOXBR	BR	0.675	1112
HUMAN SIDE	UNIVERSALUSA		2.0961	3451	FEATHERED SERPENT	GSE	BR	0.636	1047
LOVE TIME	FOX	USA	2.0862	3435	NINE FORTY FIVE	WBBR	BR	0.630	1038
OPEN ALL NIGHT	REAL ART	BR	2.0605	3392	FLAT 3	BL	BR	0.629	1037
I CANT ESCAPE	BEACON	USA	2.0570	3387	MANS GAME	COL	USA	0.617	1016
BACHELOR BAIT	RKO	USA	1.9627	3231	RAISING THE WIND	SHOWMAN	USA	0.593	976
CHEATERS	LIBERTY	USA	1.9530	3215	BLACK ABBOT	REAL ART	BR	0.562	925
SECRET OF THE CHATEAU	UNIVERSALUSA		1.9469	3205	LE DERNIER MILLIARD	APN	FR	0.557	918
365 NIGHTS IN HOLLYWOOD	FOX	USA	1.9146	3152	MATTERHORN	ROBERTS	S BR/SW	0.529	872
JEANNE	LDF	FR	1.9010	3130	BY PASS TO HAPPINESS	SSC	BR	0.523	861
BLIND JUSTICE	TWICK	BR	1.8859	3105	HIS FEROCIOUS PAL	B&C	BR	0.519	855
LUCK OF A SAILOR	BIP	BR	1.8770	3090	JAWS OF JUSTICE	B&C	BR	0.508	837
WHISPERING TONGUES	REAL ART	BR	1.8367	3024	FIGHTING TO LIVE	B&C	USA	0.508	837
CROSS STREETS	INVINCIBLUSA		1.8190	2995	SHE MADE HER BED	PAR	USA	0.445	733
HAWAIIAN NIGHTS	RKO	USA	1.7796	2930	WHEN A MAN SEES RED	UNIVERSALL	USA	0.427	703
BEYOND THE LAW	COL	USA	1.7365	2859	WHEELS OF DESTINY	UNIVERSALL	USA	0.41	691
RADIO STAR	MONO	USA	1.7189	2830	LOVE BIRDS	UNIVERSALL	USA	0.413	680
SOCIAL REGISTER	COL	USA	1.6774	2762	PRIVATE AFFAIRS	SHOWMAN	USA	0.407	671
ELINOR MORTON	FOX	USA	1.6353	2692	SEEING IT THROUGH	SHOWMAN	USA	0.407	671
MAN I WANT	BL	BR	1.6156	2660	CRIMSON CANDLE	MAINWARIN	BR	0.406	669
STUDENT TOUR	MGM	USA	1.6044	2642	COLONEL BLOOD	SC	BR	0.406	669
ORIENT EXPRESS	FOX	USA	1.5652	2577	WOMANHOOD	LOUIS LON	BR	0.394	649
HOUSE OF MYSTERY	MONO	USA	1.5334	2525	MURDER AT THE INN	WBBR	BR	0.374	616
HOUSE OF DANGER	PEERLESS	USA	1.4499	2387	MAN TRAILER	COL	USA	0.373	615
FIGHTING RANGER	COL	USA	1.4429	2376	BLACK MAGIC	D&P	USA	0.37	612
THIS MAN IS MINE	RKO	USA	1.4367	2365	TELL TELL HEART	HURST	BR	0.36	606
SONG AT EVENTIDE	BUTCHER	BR	1.4275	2350	CASE FOR THE CROWN	B&D	BR	0.361	595
WITHOUT YOU	BL	BR	1.4186	2335	LEAVE IT TO BLANCHE	WBBR	BR	0.359	591
CRAZY PEOPLE	BL	BR	1.4090	2320	LUCKY TEXAN	MONO	USA	0.357	589
LORD EDGWARE DIES	REAL ART	BR	1.3973	2300	BLUE STEEL	MONO	USA	0.357	589
ADVENTURE GIRL	BEUREN	USA	1.3675	2251	HONOUR OF THE RANGE	UNIVERSALL	USA	0.347	572
JOSSER ON THE FARM	FOXBR	BR	1.3490	2221	BRIDES TO BE	B&D	BR	0.281	463
SECRET SINNERS	MAYFAIR	USA	1.3391	2205	RUGGED ISLAND	BROWN	S BR	0.278	459
IMPORTANT PEOPLE	GSE	BR	1.3359	2199	WAY OF YOUTH	B&D	BR	0.278	457
SLUMP IS OVER	CAESAR	FR	1.3295	2189	SILVER SPOON	WBBR	BR	0.270	446
LEST WE FORGET	SC	BR	1.3138	2163	SEEING IS BELIEVING	B&D	BR	0.251	414
ADMIRALS SECRET	REAL ART	BR	1.3064	2151	FATHER AND SON	WBBR	BR	0.243	400
TICKET TO A CRIME	UNIVERSALUSA		1.2222	2012	BIG BUSINESS	WBBR	BR	0.243	400

Title	Studio	Country	POPSTAT	Revenue (£)	Title	Studio	Country	POPSTAT	Revenue (£)
YSANI THE PRINCESS	IP	BR	0.2429	400	WEST OF THE DIVIDE	MONO	USA	0	0
BEFORE MORNING	EXP	USA	0.2347	386	MURDER IN THE LIBRARY	HOFFBERG	USA	0	0
PRIMROSE PATH	B&D	BR	0.2055	338	GIRL FROM GEORGIA	IDEAL	USA	0	0
GLIMPSE OF PARADISE	WBBR	BR	0.1791	294	THIRD CLUE	FOXBR	BR	0	0
MARRYING WIDOWS	TOWER	USA	0.1775	292	REFUGEES	UNIVERSUM	GER	0	0
GUEST OF HONOUR	WBBR	BR	0.1618	266	LA RUE SANS NOM	PELLIGRIN	FR	0	0
LOVE PAST THIRTY	FREULER	USA	0.1618	266	RAPT	MMF	GER	0	0
BADGE OF HONOUR	MAYFAIR	USA	0.1610	266	OFFICE WIFE	WBBR	BR	0	0
ROCKY RHODES	UNIVERSAL	USA	0.1564	257	LA ROBE ROUGE	EUROPA	FR	0	0
TICKET FOR TATTS	EFFTEE	AUST	0.1115	183	NO MORE WOMEN	PAR	USA	0	0
MONEY MAD	CHAMPION	BR	0.1085	178	HUMAN TARGETS	WHITE	USA	0	0
GIRL IN THE CROWD	WBBR	BR	0.1078	177	HYDE PARK	WBBR	BR	0	0
ROMANCE IN RHYTHM	HUNTINDON	BR	0.1078	177	LAWLESS VALLEY	HOFFBERG	USA	0	0
TROUBLE IN STORE	WBBR	BR	0.0737	121	ANYTHING MIGHT HAPPEN	REAL ART	BR	0	0
WHATS IN A NAME	WBBR	BR	0.0713	117	THIRTEEN STEPS	IMPERIAL	USA	0	0
SCOOP	B&D	BR	0.0713	117	TRAIL BEYOND	MONO	USA	0	0
SOMETIMES GOOD	GRAFTON	BR	0.0675	111	TRACEY RIDES	STEINER	USA	0	0
DANGEROUS GROUND	B&D	BR	0.0675	111	KING OF WHALES	ARGONAUT	BR	0	0
TOO MANY MILLIONS	WBBR	BR	0.0326	53	TO BE A LADY	B&D	BR	0	0
DAVE AT SEA	SCOTTISH	BR	0	0	MYSTERY RANCH	RELIABLE	USA	0	0
MISTER CINDERS	BIP	BR	0	0	RIDIN THRU	STEINER	USA	0	0
FIGHTING HERO	RELIABLE	US	0	0	HIS LAST ADVENTURE	HOFFBERG	USA	0	0
PART TIME WIFE	B&S	BR	0	0	IRISH HEARTS	HURST	BR	0	0
SCARLET BRAND	BIG4	US	0	0	SWEET INNISCARNE	MOORE	BR	0	0
SAGEBUSH TRAIL	MONO	US	0	0	TANGLED FORTUNES	WHITE	USA	0	0
QUANGA	OVANGA	BR	0	0	LIEBELEI	TONFILM	GER	0	0
MAN FROM UTAH	MONO	US	0	0	POISONED DIAMOND	GRAFTON	BR	0	0
LUCKY LARRIGAN	MONO	US	0	0	QUICK TRIGGER LEE	BIG4	USA	0	0
SILVER BULLET	RELIABLE	US	0	0	LE PETITE ROI	SGDC	FR	0	0
MARK OF THE SPUR	BIG4	US	0	0	WALTZING MATILDA	OFFP	AUST	0	0
LOVE MIRTH AND MELLO	COMANCHE	BR	0	0	CYCLONE KID	BIG4	USA	0	0
WHATS YOUR RACKET	MAYFAIR	US	0	0	GRAND PRIX	CLOWES	BR	0	0
LOST OVER LONDON	GRAVES	BR	0	0	WE TWO TOGETHER	FEJOF	HUN	0	0
STAR PACKER	MONO	US	0	0	RANDY RIDES ALONE	MONO	USA	0	0
GALLOPING ROMEO	MONO	US	0	0	HARMONY ROW	EFFTEE	AUST	0	0
LIFE OF THE PARTY	WBBR	BR	0	0	TERROR OF THE PLAIN	RELIANCE	USA	0	0
LIEBES KOMMANDO	SUPER	GE	0	0	HEADING FOR TROUBLE	BIG4	USA	0	0
PASSING SHOW	REGAL	US	0	0	VALLEY OF BAD MEN	IRWIN	USA	0	0
GET THAT VENUS	REGENT	US	0	0	CRIMSON PARADISE	COMMONWEA	CAN	0	0
PRENEZ GARDE A LA PELLE		FR	0	0	TEXAS TORNADO	HOFFBERG	USA	0	0
MEDIUM	FILM TESTUS		0	0	UNHOLY QUEST	MW&H	BR	0	0
YOUTHFUL FOLLY	SC	BR	0	0	CES MESSIEURS DE LA PN		FR	0	0
DOWN UNDER	CINESOUND	AU	0	0	MARRIED IN HASTE	ST	USA	0	0
DOOMED TO DIE	UNIVERSAL	USA	0	0					
EASY MONEY	B&D	BR	0	0					
EIGHT CYLINDER LOVERS	SAUNDERS	BR	0	0					
BEYOND THE BORDER	MONO	USA	0	0					
PECHEUR DISLANDE	GUERLAIS	FR	0	0					
GIRL IN THE CASE	SCREEN AR	USA	0	0					
MERRY MEN OF SHERWOOD	FILMOFON	BR	0	0					
MASTER AND MAN	BIP	BR	0	0					
DESERT OUTLAW	MONO	USA	0	0					
FACES	B&D	BR	0	0					
MARRIED IN HASTE	FREULER	USA	0	0					
BORROW A MILLION	FOXBR	BR	0	0					
ADVENTURE LTD	B&D	BR	0	0					
WISHES	BIP	BR	0	0					

Note:

a. The assumptions employed to generate the imputed box-office revenue are developed in detail in Chapter 8.