

## Sam's Boy

Friday 16 April, 2.15pm

U.K. 1922

Director: Manning Haynes

Production Company: Artistic Films

Producer: George Redman

Adapted by Lydia Hayward & Manning Haynes

Story: W.W. Jacobs

Photography: Frank Grainger

63 min

### Cast

Captain Hunt	Johnny Butt
Sam Brown	Tom Coventry
Mrs. Hunt	Mary Braithwaite
Harry Green	Charles Ashton
Charley Legge	Toby Cooper
Mate	Harry Newman
Billy Jones	Bobby Rudd
Mrs. Sam Brown	Kate Gurney
Matey (the dog)	MONTMORENCY

*Sam's Boy* was adapted by Lydia Hayward from one of W.W. Jacobs stories of maritime life, or as Punch put it 'men who go down to the sea in ships of moderate tonnage'. Filmed in and around the Thames Estuary and on the Kentish coast, this is the charming comedic tale of an urchin in need of a father.

Note: The place names of Withersea and Dimport are fictional. The voyage is probably along the Kent coast of the Thames Estuary. There are establishing shots of the port of London in the opening sequences and shots of the two unidentified fishing villages on the Kent coast. Most of the filming is on location work apart from brief scenes in the sailors' quarters. The dog's credited name of Montmorency is probably a play on the dog's name in Jerome K. Jerome's book "Three Men in a Boat".

H Manning Haynes was an actor, writer, director and producer with an active career between 1917 - 1941. He started his acting career in 1918 in *Lead Kindly Light* directed by Rex Wilson, made his directorial debut in 1921 with *Monty Works the Wires* and went on to direct 20 feature films including *The Monkey's Paw* (1923) and *The Ware Case* (1928). His last films as a director were *Coming of Age* and *The Claydon Treasure Mystery* in 1938. He died in 1957.



Kimematograph Weekly March 2, 1922

Released February 12, 1923.

This is the second of a series of six films of W.W Jacob's stories, and is in every way up to the standard set by the first. "A will and a Way," and all the remarks about that film apply equally to this feature. If this standard is maintained one could hardly wish for a better series. Whereas the first dealt with life in the country, this interprets one of Jacobs' barge stories with which everyone is familiar, and comes from the same book of short stories as the first.

The humour is inimitable, and once again the well-known character comes to life. In this case there is a certain amount of pathos introduced by the character of an orphan waif, but it is as far removed from "sob stuff" as England is from America. This type film is wanted and will raise the prestige of England producers the world over.

Warning: contains plot spoilers

**Story** – Billy Jones, an orphan waif, and Matey, his dog, adopt Sam Brown, a seaman, much against his will. His mates determine to have a joke with him and pretend to believe seriously that the boy is his illegitimate son. He is taken on board ship and is accepted as such by the entire crew. Meanwhile, Sam is wondering what his wife will say when he arrives home with his appendage. Finally he deserts and makes his way home. Later the ship puts in at his home port, and the skipper, thinking that Sam has been drowned goes to break the sad news to his wife. They find he is alive and explain to him that it is all a joke. Then the Captain goes to see his own wife, and the little boy follows him and calls him father. His wife believes he has been unfaithful, but when he calls her mother she sees the deception of the waif and finally they adopt him.

**Points of appeal** – here is a humorous story with an undercurrent of pathos which will appeal to all audiences. There is a strong child interest, and once again the deep insight into human nature which Jacobs interprets as well. Besides this there is "Montmorency," so happily a "doggy" dog and not a trained monstrosity. The seascapes are an artistic triumph in themselves, and there are some excellent shots of the London docks.

**Production** – Manning Haynes once again shows his skill at keeping the atmosphere which the author intended, and also his wisdom in the choice of the short story to be filmed: this one lends itself admirably to the screen.

Once again the casting has been excellently done, and the whole production is beautifully balanced with every point made effectively, and continuity leading up to the culminating denouement runs smoothly and never lets the interest flag.

In this film too, he has made another find in Bobbie Rudd, who is quite one of the most natural and clever child artistes now acting for the films.

Partially all the settings are exteriors; great numbers are on board ship, and very beautiful they are. Some of long shots are outstandingly excellent and all are well above the usual standard.

**Acting** – Bobbie Rudd, as an orphan waif, is one of the most unprecocious children on the screen. He is natural and so effective and his part adds pathos to the story without its becoming mawkish. He is ably supported by "Montmorency," the dog with two successes to his credit. Johnny Butt makes quite an effective Jacobs' skipper, and Tom Coventry is very good as the much-maligned seaman. All the rest of the cast capable.

**Photography** – Excellent. Some very well-conceived long shots and well-taken views of the London docks. All these are taken in the winter and so deserves an extra meed of praise.

**BOOM IT WITH EMPHASIS ON W.W JACOBS.**

This film is typical of W.W. Jacobs barge stories, and should be advertised widely as such. A link with booksellers should be effective. Any exhibitors will find it a feature which will attract large audiences and it will be welcome change to the usual run of films. Stress the fact that it is an all English production. Bobbie Rudd's name is worth publicity, for he is assured of future success.

**The Bioscope March 2, 1922**

Small boy works havoc among sailors –  
Delighting Jacobs story well acted – superb English production.

Featuring: Johnny Butt, Tom Coventry, Harry Newman, Toby Cooper, Charles Ashton, Ned Searie, Mary Braithwaite, Kate Qurney, Bobbie Rudd, Montmoreney.

As a joke upon a sanctimonious sailor, his mates encourage a sharp, small boy to call the man "father." But the joke recoils upon the skipper.

There is something delightfully new in villains in this irresistibly laughable story, for it shows how a sharp, small boy created havoc on the lives of his elders by the simple but effective devices of calling them "father." Although fairly destitute of worldly goods, and completely minus relations, young Billy Jones has a superabundance of wits and a decided ambition to make his own destiny. When, therefore, with his dog. Matey he is faced by the workhouse, the idea occurs to him of accosting the first sailor he meets and boldly greeting him as "father". It happens that Samuel Brown, A, B, who is not over popular

with his mate on account of his leaning towards salvation, is the victim of this plot, which is aided and abetted by two along with them, or any of his crew, really believes that a joke to be allowed to die, and Billy is soon the life and soul of the voyage. Poor Samuel, however, takes his persecution too seriously, and dreads facing his wife with the insistent Billy.

Allowing himself to be thought dead, she swims ashore and asks Mrs. Samuel to hide him in the pig sty. When the skipper calls to break the sad news he learns the truth has found his ruse so successful that he follows Skipper home and calls him "father," until Mrs Skipper makes things unpleasant, and then he calls her "mother".

The production throughout is really excellent. Every scene is exactly as it should be as a realistic and convincing picture. The acting is natural throughout and the photography particularly fine. This is a real comedy in every sense of the word, and it will make everyone who sees it feel better. Thoroughly English in both conception and execution, it is a picture that cannot be recommended too warmly.

**With premieres of two recovered short films from the Scottish Film Archive**

**To Rona on a Whaler**

UK, 1914, 12mins

**In The Calm Waters of the Yare**

UK 1910 6mins