

## TANSY

CECIL M. HEPWORTH, GREAT BRITAIN, 1921

Screening: Friday 20 April, 11am



Image courtesy of bfi Stills, Posters and Designs

This film is a very good example of one of Cecil Hepworth's most positive qualities: his photography of the English countryside. As he himself said, "it was always in the back of my mind from the very beginning that I was to make English pictures with all the English countryside for background and with English idiom throughout."

His photography of the English countryside was part of his search for purely pictorial beauty: "Always I have striven for beauty, for pictorial meaning and effect... Much of my success, I am sure, is in the aesthetic pleasure conveyed, but not recognised, by the beauty of the scene and generally mistaken for some unknown other quality in the film."

This interest in film as a primarily pictorial art perhaps worked at the expense of his films' dramatic or narrative interest, but at least his lack of theatrical background ensured that his films were not stagey and over-literary. He disliked stage plays as his raw material and preferred to write his own stories: he liked to work in the open air and if he had to work indoors always tried to use daylight. Unusually for the time, his actors and actresses wore little or no make-up.

Julian Petley—screenonline

Alma Taylor stars as aTansy, a shepherd girl caught up in a love triangle between the two Wilverley brothers, played out against the dramatic backdrop of the Sussex Downs.

### Alma Taylor

Alma Taylor spent virtually her entire silent career, beginning in 1907, with producer Cecil Hepworth, co-starring with Chrissie White in the 'Tilly Girl' series (1910-1915) as well as 75 or more short subjects. She was the obvious favourite of the producer, who was proud that she never used make-up in any of his films, and Taylor, in return, was Hepworth's most loyal performer, starring in his last film, *The House of Marney* (1926).

She starred in only three non-Hepworth films: *The Shadow of Egypt* (d. Sidney Morgan, 1924), *Quinneys* (d. Maurice Elvey, 1927) and *Two Little Drummer Boys* (d. G.B.Samuelson, 1928). In 1924, she was named by the *Daily News*, along with Betty Balfour, as Britain's top star.

With the coming of sound, the actress played minor, matronly roles, in a handful of films, including *Bachelor's Baby* (d. Harry Hughes, 1932), *Things Are Looking Up* (d. Albert de Courville, 1935), *Lilacs in the Spring* (d. Herbert Wilcox, 1954), and *Blue Murder at St. Trinian's* (d. Frank Launder, 1957).

Anthony Slide, Encyclopedia of British Film

## CAST

Alma Taylor -

Tansy Firle

Teddy Royce-

Mark Wilverley

Hugh Clifton -

Will Wilverley

James Carew -

Joad Wilverley

