

THE LONG HOLE AND THE CLICKING OF CUTHBERT 'P G WODEHOUSE IN SILENT FILM'

ANDREW P. WILSON, GREAT BRITAIN, 1924

Screening: Friday 20 April, 1.30pm



Image courtesy of the bfi Stills, Posters and Designs

The Stoll Picture Company loved golf. In October 1924, Oswald Stoll's production company released no less than seven golf-related films, six of which were adaptations of P. G. Wodehouse's humorous golfing tales. These six were released in two-reel serial form as *The Clicking of Cuthbert*. Three of these survive in the archives of the British Film Institute – *The Clicking of Cuthbert*, *The Long Hole* and the supporting feature to this year's British Silent Film Festival opener, *Ordeal by Golf*. The seventh golf film released by Stoll in October 1924 – the ingeniously-titled *Golf* – was an instructional short film by John Betts, aimed at improving a player's game. *The Bioscope*, however, recommended that the one-reeler might have a wider audience, noting that although the film was 'primarily of interest to golfers, this clever sport film has been so well put together that it should hold the attention of even an audience of old ladies and invalids'. This retention of interest was primarily achieved, according to the October 16th 1924 edition of *The Bioscope*, by John Betts' use of 'racily phrased hints and comments' in the in-

tertitles, possibly making *Golf* the first (and last?) smutty golf short ever made.

But I digress. *The Clicking of Cuthbert* serial also employs golf-related humour in, one can imagine, a more nuanced manner, in the style for which P. G. Wodehouse had become celebrated for. Each self-contained episode features a story based around a conflict between two men competing for the same girl. In *The Clicking of Cuthbert*, part one of the serial, the plot revolves around the inhabitants of Wood Hills who, we are told by the *Stoll Herald*, are 'divided into two camps – the Golfers and the Cultured'. A champion golfer falls for a beautiful woman, only to find that her heart lies with one of 'the Cultured', a poet and a member of the literary and debating society. The golfer resolves to become an intellectual and, following a lecture by 'a highbrow Russian and typical whiskered Bolshevik' who happens to also be a brother golfer, the object of the golfer's affection realises that there may be something more to the game after all. *The Long Hole's* premise is simpler; two golfers love the same girl and of course, the only way to resolve this crisis of the heart is to play a golf match of one hole, with the winner free, unchallenged, to seek the affections of the girl. Cue a series of slapstick set-pieces where the golfers battle the mud of an English summer, take shots from dining tables and, I would imagine, go massively over-par.

CAST

The Long Hole

Harry Beasley-*The Caddie*

Roger Keyes-Arthur Jukes

Charles Courtneidge-
Ralph Bingham

Daphne Williams-

Amanda Trivett

The Clicking of Cuthbert

Peter Haddon—*Cuthbert*

Helena Pickard—*Adeline*

Moore Marriott—
Vladimir Brusiloff

Peter Upcher—*Raymond*

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THE BIOSCOPE

October 16, 1924, page 45

The action mainly consists in the original methods adopted by the players to gain an advantage in a one-hole match fact, that in their wildest freaks of play, they conform strictly to the rules of the game.

Although the film is brightly acted by the two leading players, the principal appeal lies in the unusual game which is followed, and discussed by sub-title in some detail, in all its stages. Harry Beasley contributes a brief and altogether delightful character sketch of the stoical caddy, who accompanies the players with an air of weary misery.

The settings, country exteriors, are well chosen, and the photography is excellent.

In districts where golf is understood and played, "*The Long Hole*"- will be a real success. Elsewhere it should prove a moderate attraction.



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The Long Hole

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Roger Keyes—*Arthur Jukes*

Charles Courtneidge—*Ralph Bingham*

Daphne Williams—*Amanda Trivett*

The Clicking of Cuthbert

Peter Haddon—*Cuthbert*

Helena Pickard—*Adeline*

Moore Marriott—*Vladimir Brusiloff*

Peter Upcher—*Raymond*



The original reviews may be abridged.

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