

## THE LURE OF THE CROONING WATER

ARTHUR ROOKE, GREAT BRITAIN, 1920

Screening: Friday 20 April, 1.30pm



Image courtesy of bfi Stills, Posters and Designs

*The Lure of Crooning Water* was released on February 7<sup>th</sup>, 1921, and was well-received by the British trade press. *The Bioscope* commented that '[a]s a study in emotional light and shade, the film is most delicately executed', and that the film's director, Arthur Rooke, had handled his study of English life and character 'almost in the manner of the Russian psycho-analysts' (*The Bioscope*, 29<sup>th</sup> January 1920). Arthur Rooke was an established film director whose film career began with supporting appearances in films directed by his friend, A. E. Coleby, during the First World War. Following his appearance in A. E. Coleby's *The Will of the People* in 1917, Rooke began to co-direct films with Coleby. The co-directors made five films together in 1917-18, before Rooke branched out on his own with *The Double Life of Mr. Alfred Burton* in 1919, an adaptation of an excellent novel by E. Phillips Oppenheim.

*The Lure of Crooning Water* is the fifth feature film in which Arthur Rooke solely fulfilled the role of director, by which time he had forged another partnership – this time with

the writer, Guy Newall, who had worked with Rooke on his previous four films. Guy Newall was himself a multi-talented film personality, who acted, directed and wrote several films throughout the silent era. Rooke and Newall first collaborated on *The Garden of Resurrection* in 1919, starring Ivy Duke, who also stars in *The Lure of Crooning Water* as Georgette and made an appearance in *Decameron Nights*, screened as part of last year's British Silent Film Festival programme. Ivy Duke, after working with Guy Newall on *The Garden of Resurrection* and this afternoon's screening, would go on to marry him; in the popular cinema gossip columns of the time, they were considered a power couple of the British film industry.

In Arthur Rooke's film, Ivy Duke plays a spoilt London stage actress – a 'typical child of joy', according to *The Bioscope*'s review – who is sent to the countryside for some rehabilitative respite following an on-stage collapse. She finds herself recuperating on the farm of Horace and Rachel Dornblazer and, finding country life boring, resolves to tempt Horace – played by Guy Newall – away from his wife. Upon leaving the farm and returning to London, Horace follows her, smitten, only for Ivy Duke's actress, Georgette, to reveal to her that her flirtatious behaviour was merely to keep herself from feeling the boredom of the farm. Will Horace return to his faithful wife, or will he instead continue to lust for his London actress?

### CAST

Guy Newall - Horace  
Dornblazer

Ivy Duke - Georgette Ver-  
laine

Douglas Munro - "Yes"  
Smith

Hugh C. Buckler - Dr  
John Congdon

Mary Dibley - Rachel  
Dornblazer

Arthur Chesney - Guy  
Pinkerton

Lawford Davidson - Frank  
Howard

The Hood Children - The  
Little Dornblazers

CREATIVE  
ENGLAND

Picture  
house  
ARTS  
CAMBRIDGE

DE MONTFORT  
UNIVERSITY  
LEICESTER

## KINEMATOGRAPH WEEKLY

January 29, 1920, page 104

The success which the British producer is achieving to-day is by no means as great as the effort now being put forth deserves. But “*The Lure of Crooning Water*” comes as an inspiration. If one producer can achieve the results attained in this film, it should not be difficult for others to follow. “*The Lure of Crooning Water*” is as near perfection as anything which has yet emerged from a British studio, and all concerned deserve the thanks of the British Industry for the effort.

The photoplay is founded on Marion Hill a novel of the same name. Guy Newall prepared the scenario himself, and has carried out his task well, for the continuity is never broken. There is a wonderful charm about the story, and it is quite safe to say that the production can safely be shown on any screen. It will hold any audience.

The acting honours, of course, go to the three principals, but it may truthfully be said that every part is sustained by an artiste of high rank. As Georgette, Ivy Duke gives us by far the greatest performance of her screen career. The spoilt actress, the creature of moods, was by no means a role easy of portrayal, and Miss Duke will add very considerably to her already long list of admirers by her splendid work. Guy Newall fits admirably into the scheme of things by his wonderful reading of the part of Horace Dornblazer. His performance will live in the memory for many a long day. Mary Dibley’s Rachel Dornblazer is also a most artistic piece of work, revealing the artiste as an actress fit to take her place with the best; and others in the cast are Hugh Buckler, Douglas Munro, Arthur Chesney, Lawford Davidson, Winifred Sadler, Chun Ah Moy, and the Hood Children.

The Hood Children deserve a little paragraph entirely to themselves. The Hood Children are distinctly clever, and the child touches introduced in this subject will compare favourably with the best work of this nature yet seen. The critical audience as last Thursday’s Trade Show evinced its appreciation in a very convincing

manner.

The settings – the work of Charles Dalmon – leave nothing to be desired, and the photography; for which Joe Rosenthal, jun., has been responsible – is of the best quality.

Taking everything into consideration – story, production, settings, photography, acting, etc – we feel that it is not too much to describe “*The Lure of Crooning Water*” as a triumph for the British producer. It disposes once and for all of the ridiculous argument that good films cannot be made in this country. If George Clarke Productions can keep up to the level of its last two subjects, there should be little doubt as to the prosperity of the Company or the popularity of its films in the world’s markets.



Image courtesy of bfi Stills, Posters and Designs

The original reviews may be abridged.