



The 15th British Silent Film Festival

THE ONES THAT GOT AWAY!

PRESENTED BY TONY FLETCHER



Screening: Friday 20 April 9am

Over the past 14 years, I've been given the opportunity to show more than 100 films at the British Silent Film Festival. My first presentation at Leicester was concerned with 'Animals as a Central Role in Early Cinema'. Last year, I worked with John Sweeney at the Barbican in London on a programme of films covering Opera, Dance and Classical Music, and also included some early sound experiments with the Phototone Disc System and the Phonofilm Sound-on-film Process. At the Broadway in Nottingham I was able one year to show a series of Salvation Army films featuring William Booth in the venue where he himself had been converted.

I've been very fortunate in being given a fairly free hand by Laraine and Bryony, not forgetting the assistance of Kathleen Dickson and Steve Tollervy at the BFI where I have been able to make my annual trawls of their Film Collection. I've probably viewed over a thousand titles during the last 14 years, 900 of which I've had to reject. From these 900 I selected just 100 to re-view this year which I then whittled down to 16. I decided to concentrate on the period before 1913 before feature film production and censorship took hold and when the British film industry's output of half-reel films and short films was probably our strongest achievement.

I'll probably need another 14 years to show you the rest!

Tony Fletcher

Running Order

"A Great Temptation" (1906)

A moral tale from the Norwood Company. It is featured in the 1906 Salvation Army Catalogue

"When Mama's Out" (1909)

An anarchic children's comedy from the Precision Company

"The Clown and his Donkey" (1910)

Long before Lotte Reiniger made silhouette films, Professor Charles Armstrong was demonstrating these skills at the Kew Studios for Charles Urban.

"Children's Dental league film" (1912)
(aka *"Sambo and the two Girls"*)

A series of films were produced for the 1912 National health Week (Apr. 28th – May 2nd) including a number by Dr. George Cunningham of Cambridge on children's dental health. Around the same time in the USA the Edison Company produced films for various social health concerns.

"Just in Time" (1906)

A more pacifist version of "The Greater Temptation" from the Cecil Hepworth studios. The film incorporated superim-

position to give the impression of a séance.

"Brown's Half Holiday" (1905)

A domestic comedy with trick effects from James Williamson. The comic has yet to be identified.

"Pageant of New Romney" (c. 1910)

An experiment by G. A. Smith in Kinemacolor.

"The Magic Ring" (1906) (*"Der Gute Fee"*)

A rather violent Christmas story from Cecil Hepworth.

"The Drunken Motor Cyclist" (1907)

Possibly made by Alf Collins for Gaumont while on tour with Kate Carney in the midlands.

"Wonders of the Geomagraph" (1910)

A visual spectacle from Kineto.

"The Cheekiest Man on Earth" (1908)

Charles Raymond is featured in a chase comedy.

"Rescued by her Lover" (c. 1909)

Possibly a film by Theo Boumeester for Cecil Hepworth. It includes a tracking shot and features drugs and attempted rape.

"Queer Pets" (c. 1912)

An Urbanora Zoo study with Percy Smith.

"Road Hogs in Toyland" (1911)

Another of Arthur Melbourne Cooper's early animations for Empire Films featuring mechanical toys.

"A New Hat for Nothing" (1910)

A comedy chase film featuring most of Hepworth's female stock company.

"Lady Clare" (1912)

Based on Tennyson's poem it was produced by the Edison Company in Britain in the summer of 1912. It was filmed around Arundel Castle and features Marc McDermott and Miriam Nesbit. The film was directed by Ashley Miller.