

# 9.5

Magazine for the 9.5mm  
cine enthusiast

Issued quarterly

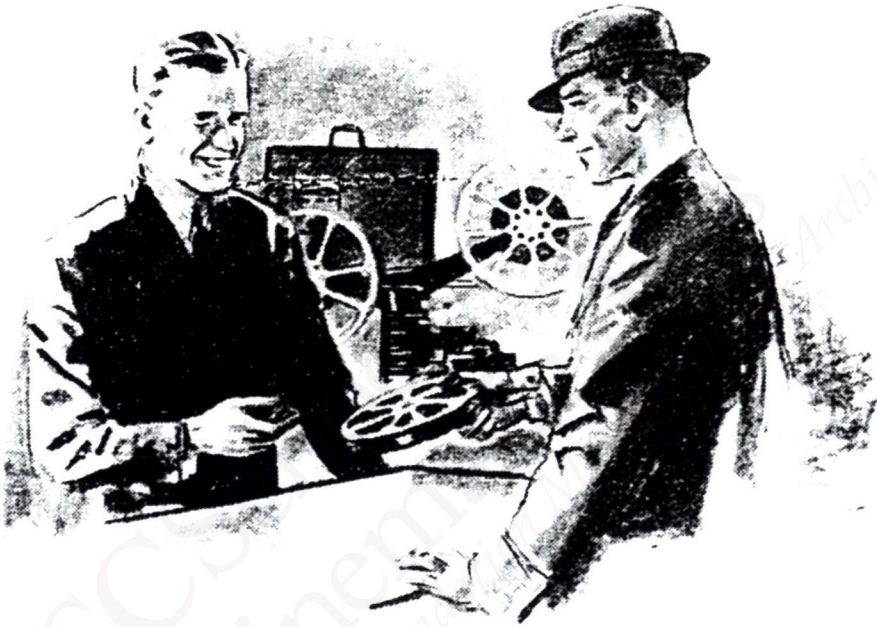
**No. 186**  
Summer 2021



This is the Dekko De-Luxe 9.5mm charger loading camera with a Pan Cinor f2 17-85mm zoom lens. The picture was taken by member Bryan Pearce who owns the camera and has provided us with an in-depth article for this issue concerning the firm of Dekko. An excellent selection of good quality pictures was submitted, hence two being used on our back cover. Top is a further view of the De-Luxe model and below, a copy of the advertisement that appeared in 'Home Movies and Home Talkies' magazine for July 1934.

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# Leader

by the Editor

Another full issue is with you again, and I must thank all of the contributors that have made it possible by sending in fresh material. Not at all easy to keep coming up with different subjects for articles which we do rely on in order to fill the many pages. News items and reports is always fairly minimal. Several readers letters again this time that is always encouraging.

The majority of you have duly renewed once more, but we always lose a few that do not for one reason or another despite a reminder. We are an ageing and slowly shrinking society and are not alone in this field as other organizations in similar vein do suffer in the same way. We no longer attract new members other than the odd one once in a while which is basically understandable. However we will soldier on as long as it is viable and practical to do so.

Sadly we have to report the passing of two members that both died during March. First Tony Hutchinson as most of you will already know. A regular face and character at virtually all film fairs and gatherings including ours and well liked buying and selling his 16mm features as shown in the picture below. This he has done for decades from his home in Leicester. Very much a British film buff, he had an interest in all gauges and was a loyal member for a long time.

Also Alan Richardson from Bristol who I well remember from way back in the 1960s when I first met him while visiting Larry Pearce in Wembley. A member throughout and very much all nine five being an avid collector of printed films and a film-maker as well. Had written for our magazine on occasions in the past, being well versed and knowledgeable where Pathoscope was concerned. Known to some of you I know, but did seem to keep a low profile. A pleasant chap, he was 81, the same as Tony and will be equally missed.

The Spanish event at Calella duly took place on line as planned and advertised for Saturday 1st May. A report with details and pictures is in this issue. The London Cinema Museum at present is still closed, but now has an eBay shop. Full information is given in our Items of News section. At this time we cannot as yet make any headway for our Get-together in October. The existing halls are now completely defunct and a new complex is almost completed. It will be known as the Eric Morecambe Centre. We have been advised to make contact in August when they should be in a better position to allow bookings to be made. Hopefully firm and better news can be given in our next issue.

We have now planned to restart the Pimlico evenings from Saturday 4th September and the hall has been booked accordingly with dates through to the end of the year. The first meeting will have to be the Group 9.5 AGM as we have not had one for well over two years. It will be followed by some 9.5mm optical sound with the feature 'The Green Pack' (GB 1937) along with some short titles. The next meeting is on 25th September showing 'The Man in the Road' (GB 1956). Basically we are simply picking up from where we left off as shown in issue 181 for Spring last year.

Following dates with programme details will be fully itemized in our next edition. As our summer recession is in July and August, we cannot in reality start any earlier. All this is hopefully without a third wave being active with Covid. We must remain positive with confidence. Any submissions for our next issue will be warmly welcomed. enjoy your read





# The Kinematograph Theatre Arrives

a new book review by Malcolm Cutmore

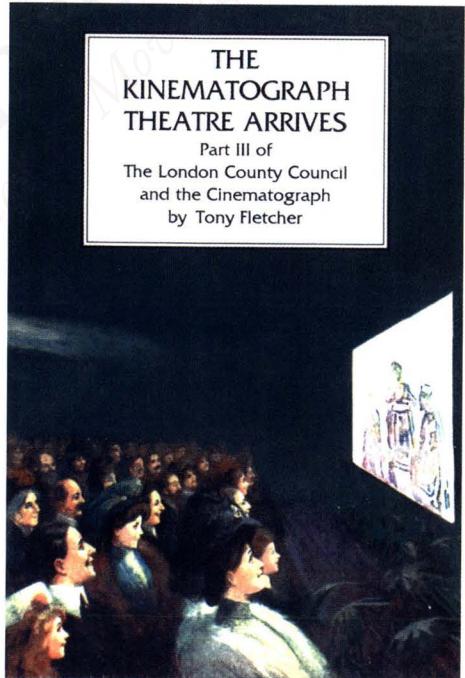
This book was published in the early spring of this year and is part three of a series written compiled and put together by Group member Tony Fletcher from London. It fully documents and examines in depth the early beginnings of the moving picture houses in greater London and one or two provincial locations where applicable. This edition concentrates on the start of the 20th century and highlights in particular the year 1909. A fourth instalment is currently in progress.

Much of the content in this volume, and indeed the previous two, has been gathered from the records of the London County Council and the Cinematograph together with the London Metropolitan Archive. Very much a historical record with lengthy research taking considerable time and effort to collate. The book is A4 size with over 150 pages and more than double this number showing pictures, illustrations, plans, diagrams and programme details. Around 230 venues are included and the majority are shown to good effect in one form or another. Tony has an index at the rear pages that lists all those mentioned with the relative page number. There were so many establishments operating around this time.

Also reported is the conditions that governed the Cinematograph Act of 1909 that had been updated and improved from that introduced in 1898. A licence had to be obtained before any establishment could operate in the showing of moving pictures to the public. Fire regulations were also very strict and of much importance as accidents did happen with sometimes loss of life. Tony has duly included the case that occurred in August 1909 where a bad fire took place at the Victoria Hall in Southsea where a boy was killed. Trying to escape he fell from a balcony and broke his neck and over twenty other children were injured.

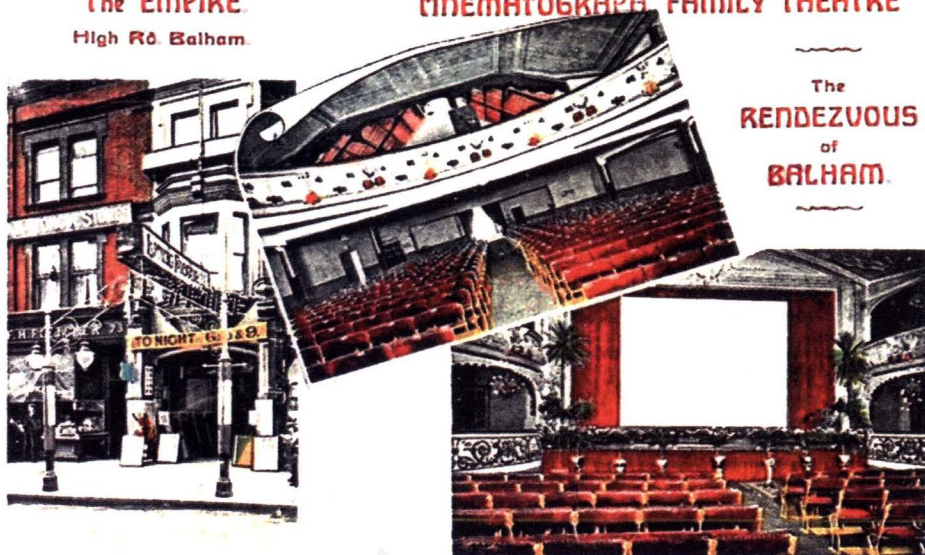
Many films shown at the time were incorporated into music hall and variety programmes. The term Bioscope being used also Electric Picture Palace and Electric Theatre. All films shown were of course silent as we all know. At some of the larger houses a full or part orchestra was provided. Examples being the Kilburn Palace in Belsize Road and the King's Hall in Southwark that boasted a 20 piece orchestra. Smaller venues would get by with just a piano or organ. All of this with much more is found in the book plus libraries and services where films could be hired. Of note is the New Film Hiring Company at 97 St. Martins Lane and The British Bioscope Co. Ltd. specialists in Cinematograph films at East India Dock Road, Poplar in east London.

Tony commenced researching for his very first edition over 20 years ago and has continued on and off ever since. He is very knowledgeable on silent cinema and much involved with the London Cinema Museum at Kennington. They have given him much support and encouragement throughout. Tony is a member of his local historical society and has had much help from many sources that



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I found the book a fascinating read and is full of interesting detail of a bygone age along with so many illustrations and pictures A work of art and very much a labour of love The example shown above is taken from the book and highlights the Empire Cinematograph Theatre located in High Road Balham south London If you would like a copy it can be obtained direct from the author for £20 that includes postage and packing in the UK Simply send a cheque made out to Tony Fletcher and post to 11 Claverdale Road Streatham London SW2 2DJ You will not be disappointed

## **Film Collecting on the 9.5mm Format**

### **The Spat Family**

**by Maurice Trace**

Nobody liked the Spat Family That is the view of many “experts” on Silent Film Comedy and they are talking about the 24 two-reel shorts made by Hal Roach in the early 1920s Recently differing views have surfaced and although many of the films now no longer exist Nine Fivers can join in the debate as there is plenty of footage on our gauge

But back to the start The year is 1923 and Roach was trying to evolve his company to become the top USA studio for short comedies He looked for a more realistic brand of humour than the crude slapstick used by most of his rivals One idea was a series based on a feuding family of three adults Like a modern situation comedy it would not have a single star and the plots would see the relationships develop picture by picture The lead players included Frank Butler as dapper Englishman Mr J Tewkesberry Sprat who looks (and acts) very much like our own Terry-Thomas Laura Roessing is his combative wife and Sidney d Albrook appears as Ambrose her uncouth live-in brother

Rushing It was the first film to go into production but the initial release was ‘Let’s Build’



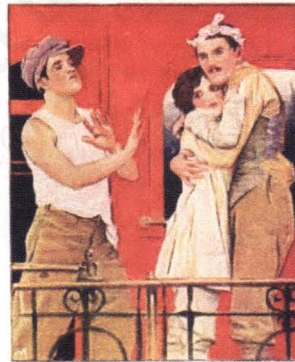
which Pathescope put out as *Build Your House* (120 ft) Here the newly wed Mr & Mrs Spat read a newspaper advert on how to erect a house in 48 hours. They find an ideal spot of land on a hillside and persuade Ambrose to help out. He parks his car in a garage which has been built on the slope directly under where the house will go. Foundation posts in the new home are pushed through the floorboards but unknowingly come to rest stuck to the bumper of the brother's car. After many work mishaps on the roof, Ambrose decides to leave. He drives off from the garage but the car dislodges the beams holding up the entire structure. In a spectacular sequence which could not have been made cheaply, the whole building collapses!

The second release was *Heavy Seas* (9 5mm title *The Landlubbers* ) The Spats have won a large yacht in a contest and the Pathescope print starts as the smartly dressed family board the vessel for a first sail. Naturally everything goes wrong – Ambrose sets the motor going and the boat hurtles around the harbour, narrowly missing obstacles and other craft. Eventually right out at sea after more antics, they think the ship is sinking and jump in the lifeboat to await rescue.

The fourth film is *The Great Outdoors* where the Spats go for a week-end's camping in the forest. The first of two Pathescope extracts is 'The Lucky Horseshoe' (60 ft) which shows the trio arriving at a log cabin deep in the woods. Ambrose finds a horseshoe on the ground and nails it above the door, declaring it will bring them luck. Tewkesbury heads off with a small axe to cut wood for a fire. He manages to demolish the tallest tree which crashes down and destroys the cabin. The other 9 5mm footage from 'The Great Outdoors' is the 200 ft reel 'A Chapter Of Accidents' Needing food, the family go fishing in a nearby river but end up falling in the water. When Tewkesbury hangs the soaking clothes on a washing line to dry, he forgets about a nearby fire and the garments go up in smoke. The Spats return to the river and delude a group of six men into thinking they have lost a pile of money in the water. The men take off their clothes and jump in to find the lost cash while the family pinch their suits. Putting them on while being pursued by their irate owners, they reach a railway track and climb on to a passing freight train. They fall foul of a railroad cop (Leo Willis) and end up getting soaked again – this time when the train stops to take on water. In the final scene all three are arrested, handcuffed and led away.

*Hot Stuff* (1924) on 9 5mm as a 60 ft notched reel, finds the family have somehow acquired "a new ultra-modern fire-engine". As a test they decide to set a small blaze going and then practice putting it out. Ambrose gets in the driver's seat, starts-up and immediately loses control. The vehicle careers around, smashing up their garage and causing chaos in the streets. Meanwhile that small fire has set the house ablaze and the Spats resort to desperate measures before the building burns down.

Richard Ward in his excellent history of the Roach studio reveals that in 1925 Hal conducted a poll among cinema managers throughout the USA. He asked for their views on most of his films. The *Our Gang* comedies rated highly. Charley Chase and Glen Tryon



Hal Roach presents

# The Spat Family

Two Part Comedies

13—Sold in Series of Six

Pathécomedy

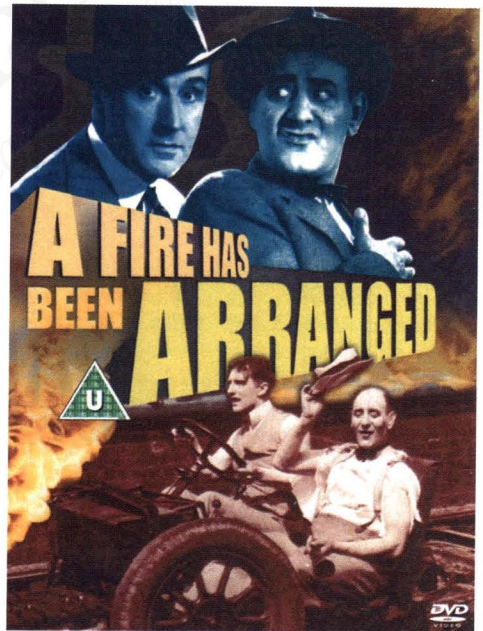
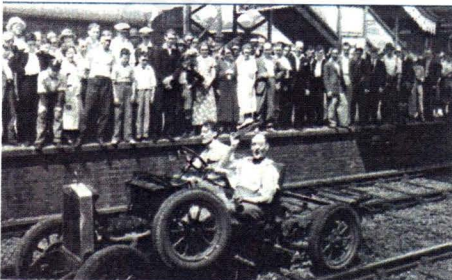
TRADE MARK



were liked but the Spats drew an almost universally negative response. Most thought that it was a good idea with a bad cast – too much of the comedy was low and the quality of the films never good to begin with – had declined during the series' run. That verdict was enough for Hal and he pulled the plug on the films. Seen today that verdict looks harsh. The shorts are well made and at times very funny. The lead performers are good and the supporting casts include many reliable Roach studio regulars such as George Rowe and Joe Cobb of 'Our Gang' fame. The 1925 'Wild Papa' is notable as it contains the first appearance in a Roach movie of Oliver Hardy. Pathescope had fun with the names of the characters. In various reels they change brother Ambrose to Adolphus and Tewkesberry becomes Gus.

Frank Butler impressed the historian James Root. In his book 'The 100 Greatest Silent Film Comedians' he wrote that the series was dominated by a genuinely interesting leader whose style (affected, over-educated, silly-ass Englishman) made him distinctive and truly funny. After the Spats ended, Roach tried out Frank as a solo star in a strange one-reeler called 'Tolerable Romeo' where he first appears as a nervous violinist trying to practice in a park. The small set looks very cramped when Butler is joined by some weird characters (irate cop, ham actor, faded showgirl) for a string of so-so gags. Then suddenly workmen turn up shouting 'Time to clear the stage' and it is revealed that the action is taking place in a theatre. Frank and his violin are there for an audition but he doesn't excite the manager (William Gillespie) and it all ends in disaster. 'Tolerable Romeo' is low-key and Butler's timid character fails to shine – and that was the end of his acting career at Roach. But he branched out to become a successful scenario writer and in 1934 returned to the studio as head story editor. Later Frank worked on the scripts for the Bing Crosby-Bob Hope 'Road' films and also won the 1944 Academy Award for best screenplay for Crosby's 'Going My Way'.

*Do You Know?* There is a splendid website called *ReelStreets* which is devoted to identifying the outside locations used in British cinema and television films. Currently there are an amazing 2,506 films listed featuring over 65,000 original screen captures. Nine Fivers will find much of interest. For example in 'A Fire Has Been Arranged' (9.5mm Sound) Flanagan and Allen are trapped in their car on the middle of a railway crossing with a train advancing in the distance. Where was that filmed? Well *ReelStreets* tell us it is the Greenland Mill level crossing on Bridge Street in Bradford on Avon. We also learn that the wedding in 'Lorna Doone' (9.5mm Silent) between Lorna and Jan Ridd was shot at the Church of St Mary in Oare, Somerset, which was also the location of the marriage in R.D. Blackmore's novel on which the picture is based. 'Cotton Queen'



(9.5mm Sound) has mill owners Stanley Holloway & Will Fyffe driving to Blackpool. They lose their way near the resort at the village of Little Puddbury. No wonder – this sequence was shot at Letchmore Heath in Herefordshire! Some early shots in Pathescope's 'Down Among The Z Men' were made in Village Road, Denham, and how about the scene in 'Death Drives Through' (9.5mm Silent) where hero Kit Woods, played by Robert Douglas, leaves the laundry after being unable to collect his clothing. The location of the building was in West Ealing at Number 7, The Avenue.

The site really excels with its survey of that Nine Five favourite, Richard Hearne's 'Something In The City'. There is extensive filming in and around London, much of it in familiar spots such as Trafalgar Square, The Strand and outside The National Gallery. But did you know the exterior of William Ningle's house was shot at 28 West Way in Shepperton; his lodging house is 2 Mead Street, Soho, and the shop where he buys a clock used to be Mappin & Webb at 1 Poultry, Queen Victoria Street (now demolished). There is an extended chase sequence towards the climax and screen captures name some of the locations as The Old Brompton Road, Kings Road, Sloane Square, Monument Tube Station, Salisbury Square, Notting Hill Post Office, Charing Cross Library and Cecil Court at the corner of Charing Cross Road.

*ReelStreets* is an invaluable source for researchers and great fun to browse through. The site is free to use but its dedicated team of four webmasters suggest a donation of £10 towards running expenses would be welcome.

## Let's Have a Dekko

by Bryan Pearce

I am sure most cine enthusiasts have noticed the number of manufacturers of cine equipment who marketed their output with a Company or product name ending in "O". Ampro - Filmo and Eyemo - Campro - Cine Nizo - Specto - Zeiss Kinamo and of course the British - Dekko. There may well be other cine products with names ending in "O".

Regarding equipment names, and Specto in particular, a comment was made by Harold B. Abbott in his 'The Complete 9.5mm Cinematographer' about this 9.5mm projector. Mr. Abbott wrote the name 'Specto' did not seem sufficiently dignified for the high class projector that this undoubtedly is. Could this comment also apply to the name 'Dekko'? 'Have a Dekko' was the slogan in the 1930s advertisements for the 9.5mm Dekko camera manufactured by Cameras Ltd, Slough, Bucks. The English dictionary defines 'dekko' as slang meaning to 'have a look'. As good a slogan as any, and it may well have resounded with many. What matters however, it was a 9.5mm cine camera with features not found on other cameras of the same price, and encouraged the purchaser to 'have a look' (have a dekko) at the advantages of buying a Dekko camera. Of course there was a down-side: the original Dekko camera had a body made of Bakelite.

This material was, as we know, the 1930s plastic for everything. For 1930 it was a modern, cheap, utility, hard-wearing, tough but brittle product, and it was used at the time on a variety of goods: 'Wireless' cabinets, car distributor caps, handles of all sorts, as well as the lamp house cover and base of the Pathe 200B projector and parts for other Pathe



A close view of the Dekko De-Luxe



machines Two early 9.5mm Eumig cameras were also made with Bakelite bodies. The material was probably adequate for static items, but not really good enough for move around with items like vulnerable cameras and bits thereof.

John E. Lewis wrote recently in this magazine extolling the virtues of the Pathe H camera. A camera I would have loved to have owned, as it did exactly what was required with a minimum of fuss and produced first class results. At the time of my starting out in cinematography I could not afford to buy a Pathe H, even secondhand. Then through a friend I was offered, at a cheap price, a Bakelite bodied Dekko, well-worn, and with a damaged door hinge, but it was my first 9.5mm camera.

As with most Bakelite body Dekko cameras it was always the door hinge that suffered most. Each half of the hinge formed on the door and camera body were secured together with a metal pin. However the Bakelite moulding was not substantial enough to sustain an accidental knock received when opening or closing the camera door, hence broken door hinge. Undeterred by this minor irritation I used my Dekko for many years with the door pushed fully home once loaded with film, and the hinge covered over with black tape. Not the most impressive of cameras sporting as it did its black tape light proof hinge, but producing film with pin sharp images. The quality of those images was due to the Ross 1 inch f1.9 focusing C mount lens fitted to the camera. It is interesting today that the Ross 1 inch lens is much sought after, and recently one sold, attached to a very beaten up Dekko camera, for well over £300 on Ebay -where else? It was the lens the buyers were after and several other examples of this lens have been sold for similar prices. Quite a testimony for an item manufactured over eighty years ago.

At some time in the 1930's "Cameras Limited" became "Dekko Cameras" and began to offer their 9.5mm camera with a die cast aluminium body, defined as the Dekko DE-LUXE. It is probable the "door hinge fault" that played a part in upgrading the camera body to a more substantial material, but the camera was still being offered in both Bakelite and metal body versions up to the start of WW2. Good business, no doubt, as it maintained a price range from basic Bakelite to the De-Luxe models of an established and well-respected 9.5mm cine camera. I have no means of knowing how much the standard C mount lens fitting influenced a cine enthusiast to buy the Dekko camera. Purchasing the instrument would however give the owner the capability to use an array of top quality lenses from several manufacturers, assuming of course the camera owner had the cash available. The photograph of the Dekko De-Luxe camera with my Som-Berthiot Pan Cinor '85' lens is an example of what is possible. Of course the two items, camera and lens, are years apart in manufacturing periods, also in use the lens would need additional support to take the weight off the 'C' mount camera thread. As camera film is not available at the moment, it is just a dream, anyway, this combination would not be very convenient to take on holiday.

The Dekko camera did go through a number of upgrades, namely gate and operational features. Both the De-Luxe and Dekko 104 had a better designed gate pressure plate which made loading film easier. The pressure plate unit is shown in the Dekko 104 photograph. The original Bakelite body camera has the distinctive Art Deco styling with a quarter turn starting lever. This lever is associated with an adjacent selector knob which determined normal filming, continuous run, or single picture mode.



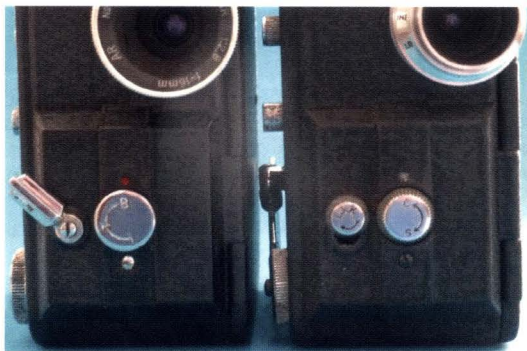


The Dekko De-Luxe maintained this operational feature. The camera was later redesigned to become the Dekko 104 with a completely different starter mechanism in the form of a round press down to start knob with twist to lock for continuous run. The adjacent selector now had two positions: normal and continuous run when set to "c" and single shots when set to "s".

Dekko also produced several projectors, but the original machines were not very exciting compared to their excellent cameras. These projectors were low light output, having started as 30/60ft machines and then updated with motor and 300ft arms. Dekko's post-war machine emerged as the Dekko Model 48 and was thought to be made using up pre-war parts in preparation for a completely new designed projector. Late in 1949 the Dekko 500 series was launched: first in 8mm, then later in 16mm and finally 9.5mm. As the name suggests it possessed a 110 volt 500 watt lamp with built-in fan-cooled volt-dropping resistor. Well-made, compact with a light weight die-cast body and totally enclosed with a removable side cover over the gate, lens and sprockets. Like the Specto 500, the top reel arm folded down and locked to provide a carrying handle.

Amateur Cine World magazine test reported the Dekko machine twice in 1950: first in January for the model 118A, the 8mm version, and secondly in November for the 16mm model 126. It was the November report where mention was made of the forthcoming introduction of the 9.5mm model 119A. There were variations regarding voltages, in particular the 16mm model 126/C where, with an external transformer, a 750watt lamp could be used. It was also pointed out that when the 9.5mm model 119/C was available, the machine would be the first 9.5mm projector to be made in Britain with a 750watt lamp. ACW concluded the Dekko 500 projectors, whatever the gauge, were very nicely designed and built with a high standard of performance.

Sadly the Dekko 500 projector did not have a long production run, the remaining stock being



De-Luxe model on left and the 104 on right



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**FROM ALL WESTMINSTER PHOTOGRAPHIC SHOPS**

This advertisement appeared in ACW in June 1958 as detailed in the text

bought and sold off by Westminster Photographic in 1958. Sold below the last listed high retail price of £45 00 (8mm) and £53 00 (9.5 and 16mm models). I can report that the Dekko 9.5mm model 119A was an excellent performer, as I was lucky enough to buy one of those offered by Westminster in part exchange (plus cash) for my Noris 9.5mm projector. To have a brand new 9.5mm projector for £19 19s (£19 95) was a real bargain, especially as it was less than half original price. Maybe the reason Dekko 500 'did not do well on the cine market' was the high price, and the competition from the cheaper 9.5mm Specto 500 (£48 10 shillings (£48 50)). The Specto 500 could project 900ft reels of film, whereas the Dekko 500 only had facility to project 400ft, the short bottom arm being designed to fold up under the detachable transport cover.

Dekko Cameras also produced a range of other items, again in all three gauges, among which were their well-engineered geared rewind arms, in both 400ft and 900ft reel sizes. In the mid-1950's Dekko Cameras ceased manufacturing amateur cine equipment. A sad loss, yet another British manufacturing company which had successfully produced good quality cine products throughout the 30's, 40's and 50's, moving out of amateur cine due to increasing competition from home and abroad.

## **How Sunday School Changed My Life!** by Graham Warner

My father didn't like films. He didn't like the way the movie makers mauled the written word and always changed the story when they brought a book to the silver screen. He didn't like the accents of American actors either, and furthermore, he considered the cinema to be just a money-making racket rather than a genuine form of art! Consequently, neither he nor my mother ever took me to the cinema. They took me to church instead! To Sunday morning worship at the modest Methodist chapel where they had first met and then eventually married.

I was around three years old at the time and found the whole experience most unsatisfactory. In fact, it was so intolerable that by the second or third visit, I decided to rebel and bawled my eyes out! A successful strategy that compelled my poor embarrassed mother to carry me from the building and take me home, leaving my father to return later on his own, with a smile on his face. I remember! My parents didn't attend church again for quite some time. Each Sunday, my father tended our extensive garden instead, cultivating every conceivable fruit and vegetable as he 'dug for Britain' in those far-off days of wartime austerity.

In due course, he walked me to Sunday School after our mid-day lunch. A useful precursor to my starting proper day school, no doubt, and it was as a result of this that I eventually saw the light. The light of a 1000 watt projector lamp illuminating frames of 16mm film on the big roll-down screen in the church hall. It came about when I was aged about ten. I became aware of a fortnightly announcement at Sunday School which seemed a trifle strange. Strange, because it appeared to have absolutely nothing to do with Jesus, the bible, or being good! We were told to

Remember, it's Cinema Cub this week at six thirty on Tuesday! As I hadn't the faintest inkling of what this was actually about and didn't belong to any clubs, I simply let the information pass me by. It wasn't until I asked my mother about it out of idle curiosity one day, that I finally learned the amazing truth - that the Cinema Club provided the opportunity to see films regularly, rather than as a special treat once a year in the school hall at Christmas. Well, I could hardly believe it! The next time I heard the familiar reminder, I paid full attention, noting that the upcoming show would not be in the church hall as usual, but in the hall of Maidenhall day school, close by across the road. I just couldn't wait! On the appointed evening, I arrived in good time and joined a group of eager youngsters clamouring at the closed school door. My euphoria, however, was abruptly curtailed when I discovered to my dismay that I didn't belong! I had no membership card! While I was entertaining the awful possibility of being refused admission, the church minister, the Reverend Clutterbuck, appeared. Probably to ensure our good behaviour since we were all on 'foreign' day school property. When he saw me, he said I was "trouble" - a joke I didn't really appreciate since I always regarded myself as a well-behaved sort of chap!



Nevertheless I was allowed into the hall and very nice it was too with polished wood floor and luxurious curtained windows and stage Quite unlike the utilitarian church hall with its narrow bare windows of hammered glass set in their rudimentary metal frames The projectionist, I recognised at once He was an odd looking character who had an allotment on a tract of otherwise wasteland near my home Of that first show I remember little other than a brief episode from the final film A long mythical drama in colour it featured a sequence in which smoke pouring from a mysterious bottle materialised into a menacing giant! A kind of evil genie! This I found visually amazing and it was my introduction to special effects or trick photography as my father called it when I later told him of it

With the day of the next show firmly fixed in my mind I needed no further reminder and reached the hall once again in high spirits But something was amiss The school playground was deserted and the doors closed However the hall's lights were on and its curtains open so I was able to have a good look in To my consternation there was a number of adults within batting a strange object I later learned to be a shuttlecock to and fro over a high net! I just couldn't believe my eyes! And to make matters worse the Cinema Club's projectionist was one of the players! I instantly regarded him as some kind of traitor who had absolutely no right to be involved in such activity! I returned home puzzled and disappointed only to learn later that the show two weeks before had been the last of the season and the school hall with curtained windows had been used due to the lighter evening

It was a long wait till Cinema Club resumed the following Autumn but when it did I had my membership card at the ready and never missed a show The man from the allotment no longer a traitor projected faithfully apart from one evening when much to my surprise my day school teacher Mr Duncan took his place Not only that the projector was different - possibly his own It was enclosed in a rather shabby black squared up functional blimp An ex-government L516 perhaps

When the allotment man was apparently no longer available at all the lady who ran our Sunday School department took over and very capable she proved to be Especially the evening the projector lamp exploded! Quelling the ensuing bedlam Miss Thorogood cleared up the shattered glass replaced the broken lamp and resumed the show She was Miss Thorogood alright - both in name and nature!

Despite these fortnightly film feasts however I like young Oliver Twist asked for more A request that was eventually granted when my parents provided a Pathescope Ace and several short films These were soon augmented by a number of larger spools including *Boys Will Be Boys* The Laurel and Hardy short in which the comic duo appear not only as their usual selves but also as a pair of diminutive juvenile siblings thanks to duplicated oversized film sets and props Even my father liked this film frequently extolling its ingenious technical wizardry!

Nevertheless the little Ace with its limited performance from its odd centre perforated films still seemed somewhat second rate compared to the amazing shows in the church hall and very occasionally at school! A totally unjustified feeling of course and one that would eventually change dramatically one evening at Cinema Club itself The evening that *Brats* was shown Suddenly there was *Boys Will Be Boys* a film I actually owned up there on the hall's large screen with sound and extra scenes! It was a revelation! My Ace and the 9.5 gauge had gone up in my estimation and was really part of the big-time!





The films I enjoyed most at Cinema Club were those especially made for young audiences in the late 1940s. Films with dramatic stories which often featured small groups of youngsters helping a friendly detective and his colleagues thwart some major criminal activity.

Of these I remember well *The Last Load* concerning the highway robbery of lorries belonging to Mr Potter's road haulage business and *Under the Frozen Falls*, a film in which boys exploring an old lead mine become involved with the kidnappers of a top scientist. Some secret plans and dynamite. An explosive plot you might say!

Another tale that included juvenile sleuths, spies and a friendly detective was *Three Bags Full*. The bags in question being three curious identical briefcases. This gripping yarn came as a three part serial and the fortnight wait between episodes felt interminable as you might imagine.

As time went on I came to associate films that opened with a small man striking a large gong as something special and when the name J Arthur Rank appeared I knew I was in for a treat. My assumption that the man himself was some kind of movie making genius was however quite wrong. He possessed no film making expertise whatsoever. He was a millionaire Methodist flour miller! Finding sermons boring he saw film as a way of instilling moral virtues especially into the young without sermonising. A philanthropic venture that also proved extremely lucrative!

Yes Sunday School Cinema Club J Arthur Rank and many others certainly changed my life and did so in a way neither my father nor mother could have possibly expected. They turned me into a film fanatic!

## Continuity in 'The Ladykillers'

from Cliff Perriam

In these times of home video recordings it's quite easy to spot mistakes in a film by use of the rewind and pause functions. The Internet Movie Database ([www.imdb.com](http://www.imdb.com)) has a section that details reported lapses and certainly 1955's 'The Ladykillers' has a full complement on the website. Such things would not have been noticed if you saw the films at the cinema but there's an error in 'The Ladykillers' that even I as a small boy noticed when I saw the film on its initial release, and, I am surprised to say nobody else has remarked upon!

In the accompanying frame captures two entirely different taxi-cabs are shown both with the same number-plate. The one with Danny Green just getting in is an Austin FX3 which was in the very first shot of the robbery. The other one seen arriving at King's Cross Station at the end of the robbery sequence is a Morris Oxford. Both vehicles are shown alternately in successive shots during the robbery. Despite such lapses it's an excellent film which I have seen many times since 1955.

Incidentally later in the film when the gang are threatening their landlady Herbert Lom says 'We'll tell them she planned the big one - the Eastcastle Street job'. There really was such a robbery carried out in 1952, where 7 masked men sandwiched a post office van between two cars in Eastcastle Street in central London and got away with £287,000. Sound familiar? It's obviously the prototype for the Ladykillers gang's robbery.

The location of Katie Johnson's house also bears some explanation. The house was built for the film at





the end of a cul-de-sac just north of King's Cross station Frederica Street (which is indeed visible in shot as the address given on the card in the newsagent's window on which Katie Johnson advertises her rooms to let - nice touch!) However the view when looking from the front of the house was that of Argyle Street with the facade of St Pancras station (which is just west of King's Cross) visible at the end of the street These and many other location shots with then-and-now comparisons are shown on the

website [www.reelstreets.com](http://www.reelstreets.com)

Footnote Coincidentally, just after I'd written these notes I watched *The Hideout* a 1956 British B movie on Talking Pictures channel. Sure enough the same thing happens: start the journey in an FX3 and finish in an Oxford! The Oxford is seen in one of the frame captures on [reelstreets](http://www.reelstreets.com)!

## Tales from the Camera Shop

### Joining Up

by John E. Lewis

On hearing a customer say 'I want to buy a splicer' it obviously prompted one question - 'What gauge do you use?' If their reply was 9.5mm then their choice was rather limited.

From the mid-1950s onwards 9.5mm splicers started to disappear from suppliers catalogues while those for 8/16mm increased. The latter even more so when restrictions on the import of photographic accessories from Japan was eased in 1958. We were quite selective as to which splicers we stocked. In addition to a competitive purchase price we'd take into consideration the general build quality - was the scraper easy to use, will it be kind to the film - in fact all the things that we'd want in one for our own use.

For 9.5mm we normally stocked three models - the Pathescope Film Mender, the Ensign Popular, and the Marguet. After what I said in the previous paragraph you might be wondering why the rather simple Pathescope Film Mender was included - but there was a good reason for it.

Compared with users of the other two gauges, nine-fivers in our area were far more focussed on projection rather than shooting film. That meant less editing in the true sense of the word but more a case of repairing after mishaps with a projector. And that's where the British made Pathescope Film Mender came in. Costing just less than one pound including a bottle of Patheine film cement, it would cope with the odd break or stressed perforation. For many users it really was just 'a mender'.

During the years when an Ace projector was the dream Christmas present for many a schoolboy, January would bring lads and/or their parents in asking - 'Can broken films be mended?' You should have seen the look of relief on their faces when we said they could. Then out of a bag would come two reels (film and take-up) to show us the wound that needed fixing. In the majority of cases we were presented with a fairly clean break on short package films, and the new young projectionists seemed to have these mishaps during rewinding.

If they had purchased an Ace or other projector from us, we'd quickly do the repair in front of them - usually on a Marguet splicer. Watching this operation being done for the first time they thought it was akin to magic. That followed with - 'How much is one of those?' Hearing that it was £3 15 0d (£3 75) often brought a look of horror - that was half the price of their hand-cranked





Ace projector So we'd show them that there was an alternative with the 17/6d (85p) Pathe Film Mender. Sometimes a parent would buy one or maybe hint that it might be the next birthday present but if they didn't purchase we'd always be happy to do future film repairs at the nominal cost of nine pence a join.

Actually we never charged for repairing those first mishaps and often made a few additional free ones along the way especially for those who were continuing to buy or hire films with their hard saved money. For many it was their only home entertainment as television sets were a luxury and some areas couldn't even get a decent signal from the transmitter. The only occasions where we didn't bend the charging rule was when presented with a home-made join. Many of you will remember tubes of Seccotine glue – the UHU of those days. People with no experience of splicing thought this must be the only adhesive that would repair a film break so we often saw two frame (or more) overlaps usually accompanied with other assorted blobs of dried gunge on the surface. Trying to save frames or perfs

after their efforts was far more time consuming so they had to pay something.

With that scenario you can see why we stocked the Pathescope Film Mender and they certainly did sell. But despite it coming with clear instructions and when used with proper film cement there could still be problems. I'd say that at least twenty-five percent of purchasers would come back saying that their joins just won't stick. As it came without a scraper you can't be too surprised and this was even fairly common for some newbies using a splicer with a scraper. Getting all the emulsion off is vital. People with a Film Mender would use pen knives, safety razor blades, nail files, you name it to try and scrape the emulsion off. And worse if they put too much effort into it then the film might move in the clamp and tear. Although this little gadget worked well when used properly it sometimes wasn't the best introduction to cinematography and must certainly have swelled the funds in many a swear box.

Life for nine-fivers was much easier with the Ensign and Marguet splicers. A legacy of the pre-war era the Ensign Popular was well made. Built onto a varnished wooden base which had the domed rubber feet providing good grip the metal deck had a nice set of small pins plus a strong clamp to hold the film in register. There was also a serrated scraper which did the job well. Having been a young nine-fiver who'd gone from a Pathescope Film Mender to the Ensign I knew only too well what a game-changer it was for my customers. At around £2 10s 0d (£2 50) it was excellent value but as the 1950s rolled on Ensign who were really in the stills photographic market with an outdated range of products ceased production and the splicers were jobbed off to the trade. That meant in the end you could buy one of these 9.5mm versions for around





ten shillings which was an absolute steal

The Marguet obviously appealed to the more serious enthusiast and one model had the bonus of being 'universal' so it would accommodate 8/16mm film in addition to 9.5mm. That made it a good investment for anyone who may have had thoughts of adding or changing their gauge in the future. Compared with many others, the scrapers on a Marguet have always seemed to work easily and the plates to hold the film were nicely finished and made to a good standard. Joining film on one of these was never a chore to me as everything always worked so well.

I still have my original 9.5mm Ensign Popular which I bought back in the 1950s plus a Marguet from the 1960s and they are still giving good service. The secret to get long life out of a splicer is to keep it clean, giving it a thorough wipe down after each session really pays dividends.

Good clean examples of the Ensign and Marguet are regularly seen on-line and bearing in mind that thousands were sold there's no need to pay some of the silly prices being demanded. About eighteen months ago I bought a lovely boxed Marguet for just £4.25 which had only minor signs of previous use. The trouble now is that the cost of film cement has climbed into the realms of printer ink!

Finally, and in my opinion, if you want a really serious cement splicer then try and find a good Premier Universal made by Robert Rigby Ltd. as it will take 9.5mm. Robert Rigby were manufacturers of professional film industry equipment and their splicers are solid lumps of metal which were built to last. The Universal can be harder to find compared to the 8/16mm versions but if you ever see a nice one at a keen price it is well worth grabbing.

## Viewpoint

### Your letters to the Editor

*I much enjoyed reading the article concerning Greta Gynt that appeared in the Spring issue no. 185. Please receive the enclosed copies of photos and cast lists regarding some of her films that may well be of good interest to you. I did purchase a copy of the film 'Tomorrow We Live' on 9.5mm sound some years ago in which she duly appears as reported.*

*Her passing away in the year 2000 with virtually no news coverage of her death must remain as a poor show for such an iconic actress. Perhaps she was not part of the showbiz in crowd during her career, or maybe just a sign of the times for someone no longer known to many, nevertheless not at all good or justified to be ignored. Last but not least, thanks for doing a great job with the magazine.*

**Peter Clayton, Littleborough, Lancs**

*(Thanks for your kind comments. The picture is one sent by Peter and is a portrait of Greta taken for 'The Calendar' (1948) in which she starred alongside John McCallum, Sonia Holm and Raymond Lovell. A horse racing melodrama based on the novel by Edgar Wallace. Editor)*



*I would like to refer to my letter in issue no. 185 as I could add one or two things which may be of interest. The H camera gave me a lot of enjoyment. From purchasing the cassette in its multicolour box for colour film, a green box I think for monochrome and obviously the filming, then afterwards sending it off for processing. Finally, a few days later the excitement of receiving the processed film back and seeing how my filming had come out. John E Lewis's article in number 184 brought back many happy memories.*

*In due course I had to succumb to 8mm. A group of us got together (we called ourselves 'The Yeoman Cine Organisation') and made a couple of films. One entitled "Two Minus One" won an award in a 'Top Eight' competition. Actually a runner up in effect we came ninth! This was before stripe and sound was (just about) synchronised with a tape recorder and a set up invented by one of the group. This worked and was acceptable by the organisers.*

*By now we were starting to go our separate ways: jobs, university and so on, also by now girls were on the scene! One of the group went on to work for the BBC as a film editor and continued in various departments until he retired. Another went to Wharfedale Speakers in research. I was offered a job as a film editor with ITN but for family reasons I did not take it up. Happy days!*

**Anthony Everall, Burntwood, Staffs**

*Once Covid is over and done with I hope to become more active as a member. Has anyone in the core membership any experience of running meetings on Zoom? I'm in several other groups which are managing to keep in touch by using it, which is actually quite easy. The only problem with it seems to be getting it to transmit films and videos while the members are still on screen and/or talking to one another as the internet bandwidth seems to make the movie image rather jerky. I can imagine ways around this however, and it might well be worth trying.*

**Stephen Papworth, Brexhill-on-Sea**

*It was good to see in the magazine that the '9.5 Vintage Film Encyclopaedia' is doing so well, especially as it has a high cover price which is totally understandable for a quality book aimed at a specialist market. When I look back over the years, and particularly to my retail days, it is amazing how the 9.5mm film gauge has always had a very loyal and dedicated following which endures to this day. May it continue.*

**John E Lewis, Norwich**

*With regards to the letter in issue 185 from Martyn Stevens entitled 'Looking After 9.5' I feel that I need to reply as some of the points he raised. I am guilty of and this is basically the reason why.*

*I was born in December 1937 and in the following year my grandfather obtained a 9.5mm camera. In the December of 1941, just after my birthday, my father died and the following month my grandfather also died. A few years later my Mother and I went to live with my grandmother. In 1951 when I was 13 she gave me all the 9.5mm equipment that my grandfather had got. With my pocket money I purchased some 9.5mm film and started taking films. I then needed to join them together. At the time there was no internet or mobile phones and most houses did not even have a telephone, and some that had were on party lines.*

*I had to join the films together the best way I could and even got the odd one the wrong way round. It was a case of doing my best with what I had. I used the camera when I could save up.*

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*enough money for film In March 1953 I had left school and started an apprenticeship at 37/6 a week By saving up I could buy some colour film when I required it However by the end of 1954 my colour film was coming back darker and darker I found out on the camera lens the F number had moved At that time I did not know where I could send it for repair or even if I could afford to do so So that was the end of my filming on 9.5mm*

*However a few years ago I had some transferred to DVD and am now transferring it to USB stick At least the film from the 1950's that I have is better than nothing Perhaps Martyn could write an article on the care of film for the magazine*

**Walter Turner, Gwynedd**

## **The Flying Scotsman runs again**

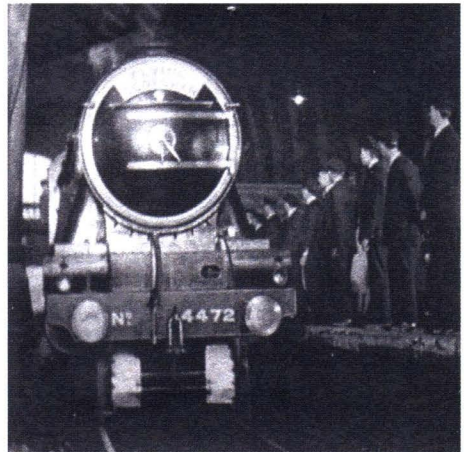
**by David Wyatt**

In 1933 Pathescope released the British railway drama 'The Flying Scotsman' and it's been popular with 9.5mm collectors ever since. Reviewing the film (back in issue 114) Maurice Trace wrote that British International Pictures had released it as a silent in May 1929 then that the cast were recalled and more filming took place for the sound version which was released in February (some sources say March) 1930. A DVD of the sound film has been available for some time revealing that the film has only music and the odd sound effect for the first 30 minutes. The soundtrack then springs into full sync sound dialogue replacing the subtitles and continues with music or sound effects (but not both together) plus a few more dialogue scenes up to and including the finale. Contemporary reviews commented not on the dialogue, but on the authentic train noises- missing of course from the 9.5mm silent version.

When the late Grahame Newnham reviewed the DVD (in issue 147) he wrote that the 1929 silent was "reworked with sound sequences and music in 1930" but added "In fact some film historians now claim it was originally made as sound and predates BLACKMAIL as one of the U.K.'s first sound films. So was there ever a silent version?"

Proof of this came when a day of silent railway movies was planned at the Cinema Museum in London. The sound 'Flying Scotsman' has occasionally been shown at the National Film Theatre (sorry BFI Southbank) and elsewhere, but luckily I discovered just in time that a copy of the silent version also lay forgotten and neglected in the BFI vaults. So of course we booked it.

There turned out to be multiple differences compared to the sound version. For one thing it was fifteen minutes longer: 76 minutes rather than 61 minutes with some different scenes and others in a different order. After opening shots of the Flying Scotsman and the crowds at Kings Cross station, the 9.5mm print (as in the sound version) has Crow (Alec Hurley) in the supervisor's office being dismissed thanks to Bob (Moore Marriott) reporting that he drank on duty. In the silent version this scene comes (minus any reference to drink) after Jim (Ray Milland) meets Joan, Bob's daughter (Pauline Johnson) at a dance hall and takes her to a restaurant. The bill in the restaurant comes to 12/6d in the sound version but strangely £1 12/6d in the silent and some of the dialogue titles are different. Jim prefers going to the New Grande in Piccadilly in the sound version but the Kit Kat in this version. The scene goes on longer here as does the next one with the couple back at her house instead



of Later that evening (sound version) it s '24 hours later and Joan had fallen in love' We see clear evidence of that (probably more than Pathescope would have wanted to show!) ending as the camera pans to one of Joan s shoes falling on the floor No sign of her dad interrupting as in the sound version, and there's a nice little in - joke in the dialogue titles - "Shall we go to hear the new talkie tonight? - "I still prefer silent entertainment - let s stay home"

In the railway canteen Jim shows photos of his female conquests in both versions but here adds that he s got a new one - a nice little golden haired filly that he met at the dance hall and saw again the next night He hasn t met her yet in the sound version All versions have the line about Crow being sacked as Another victory for Prohibition! strange and presumably a nod to the American market (Warner Brothers are credited above the main title on the 35mm prints ) Next we get Joan coming home to be confronted by her dad who has found a cigar and her photo missing from its frame so knows a man has been there This is edited into one continuous scene in the sound version with Bob returning unexpectedly rather than being two separate scenes but it s more dramatic here Bob shouts Who is this man you are ashamed of? Joan replies I m not ashamed of him- I love him!" and Bob storms out A short extra scene has Joan waking up late the next morning to find her father already gone to work

The canteen scene where Jim and Crow start fighting goes on much longer with different shots here so they obviously re shot it in sound to get all the grunts and groans It s the first time we get sync sound in the sound version There s a long tracking shot with Bob and Jim collecting lamps then turning the locomotive on the turntable Jim shows Bob his photos of girlfriends here but Bob doesn t notice that one of them is his daughter saying only Why don t you cut that game out and settle down? Jim replies Not for me Bob love em and leave em " Bob also receives a present from the directors of the railway company and later shows it to Joan

So it's mostly all this setting up the plot material that differs in the two versions From now on the dramatic action sequences are more or less the same As Joan secretly follows Crow through the train the silent version adds many more shots building extra suspense Ditto when Crow clammers over the train (again followed by Joan) to wreak his revenge on Bob who he blames for his sacking Meanwhile when Bob finally sees the photo of his daughter Jim has pinned up in the cab he starts a fight with him - Crow sees Jim knocked from the cab and with knife in hand seizes the moment to uncouple the train A notable difference here is a shot clearly revealing Jim now lying unconscious on the running board of the tender- in the sound version he's barely glimpsed so blink at the wrong moment and you d assume he d fallen to his death at 80 mph! He isn t seen again until the gallant Joan and her semi-conscious father have successfully braked the train

The pay off has amazingly well recorded dialogue for a genuine exterior scene re shot completely for the sound version Villainous Crow is taken away Jim covers up for Bob winning the affection of Joan (which he d already won an hour ago in the silent version) and Bob s last London to Edinburgh run arrives dead on time maintaining his unblemished record The final scene fades out on Bob lost in thought beside his beloved Flying Scotsman Extra shots conclude the silent version- Bob is greeted by photographers the stationmaster and a cheering mob walks past some kids and before we fade





out smiles as he remembers a (superimposed) toy train from long ago

All of which proves at last that there certainly was a silent version of 'The Flying Scotsman' made before the now better-known part talkie. Which is the better film? Well the sound version is shorter more streamlined in places but suffers from a typical 1929 music score and sound mix - or rather lack of mix. Music cuts to dialogue cuts to sound effects - there is no mixing of elements. Edwyn Gilmour wrote of the stilted dialogue and chains of clichés. I laughed at and forgiven in a 1966 NFT showing. I hope there wasn't too much laughter as a friend who was there tells me that Ray Milland and Pauline Johnson's sister were also in the audience.



The silent version was well received by a packed audience despite a surprisingly hot day and a 10 a.m. start (and despite an introduction by myself!) at the Cinema Museum. Bob Nicholls, who writes regularly in *Projections* magazine, was a railway driver for 35 years and said he thoroughly enjoyed it. His only criticism was the dramatic license taken - the way the locomotive was so easily uncoupled and the fact that the train's vacuum brake could have avoided any disaster (This is acknowledged in the introduction - there would have been no drama otherwise.) After that showing, I would definitely favour the silent over the sound version - but perhaps I'm biased. What greatly adds to any silent showing is the live musical accompaniment - and we have an expert team of pianists at the Cinema Museum (Meg Morley played for her first silent film at one of our Group 9.5 Pimlico shows only a few years ago and is now one of the best. Her playing for 'Metropolis' on 9.5mm was one of the highlights of a recent Harpenden Get Together.)

As for the 9.5mm version of 'The Flying Scotsman' what may be surprising is that we now know it was taken from the sound, not the original silent version of the film. Someone at Pathescope did a good job editing it to 2 SB reels and it retains all the railway action in the second reel. All you need is a sympathetic audience and a talented pianist like Meg Morley to accompany it.

## Tales for Old Blokes about Cinema Screen Formats

from Richard Wheeler

Who remembers the Festival of Britain? It was mounted on the South bank of the Thames in 1951 to mark the centenary of that other great exhibition held at the Crystal Palace in 1851. Both events would celebrate all things British, not least of which was in 1951 a cinema film called *The Magic Box* about the British cinema pioneer William Friese Green. It took £82,000 at the box office.

This was at a time less than six years after the end of World War II, when we as a nation were beginning to feel confident that we had largely repaired much of the damage inflicted by enemy action. There was a high level of employment and following a decade of enforced neglect we had begun to improve maintenance of the homes in which we lived.

By the time of the 1953 coronation of Elizabeth II, thousands of private homes had television, conversely cinema audiences were



The writer Richard

dwindling It was easier and cheaper for people to stop at home for entertainment But the sense of occasion of sharing the company of an audience the spectacle of colour and a large screen experience was gone Moreover the government of the day collected an entertainment tax of just over a shilling for every 2/9d cinema ticket sold Film producers didn't like that and neither did cinema patrons nor exhibitors We began to see cinema theatres closed or converted for use as Bingo halls It would not be until 1960 that the tax was finally abolished

What could be done to so enhance the cinema experience to make it so much more compelling than anything you could enjoy at home? As early as 1927 makers of silent films trembled at the knees when they contemplated the coming of sound In France Abel Gance produced a triptych drama of Napoleon Bonaparte's early days Backed by music from a full symphony orchestra it showed the action on three adjoining screens using three mechanically linked projectors However excepting in some battle scenes the images were not synchronous The cinema going public looked upon the triptych as a seven day wonder

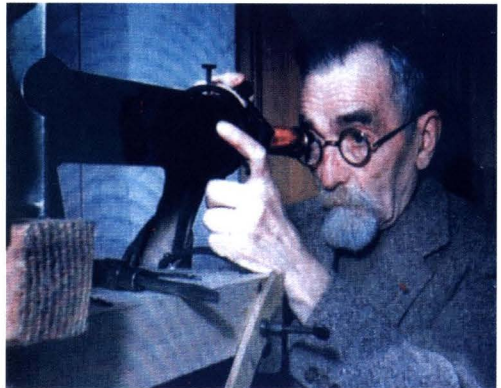
Cinema goers did rather approve the coming of synchronised sound though and they would continue to view projected films in the 4x3 format established by the brothers Lumiere in 1895 Indeed until 1952 nothing much would change except for colour coming to predominate and film emulsions improving too and that gave us clearer pictures Nonetheless home television sets were snapping at the heels of the cinema industry No doubt remembering Abel Gance an American special effects technician named Fred Waller developed a three-screen three projector system that fairly effectively pasted over joins in the images Mr Waller's Cinerama appeared in some of our larger cities in 1953 and even those who knew it would never catch on were pretty impressed with the big pictures and the seven track sound system Audiences will even now remember the astounding effect of a sequence filmed from the leading truck of a roller coaster

But although Cinerama could not be shoehorned into small town cinemas there were at this time other novelties to be enjoyed such as Imax with its tall screen as big as the side of a house Then along came three dimensional pictures that could be exhibited with the use of standard 35mm cinema equipment always providing that viewers wore special polarised glasses Audiences would enjoy the sensation of being attacked by a wild bear of actors throwing punches at them or in the case of an advertisement for Capstan cigarettes you could have smoke blown in your face by the talented Dora Bryan Anything to make a living

Some features like *Creatures of the Black Lagoon* or *House of Wax* did good business Vincent Price doing a grand job in the disposal of melting waxwork corpses when the place went on fire

With the mainstream cinema industry desperate for a lifeline a Frenchman named Henri Chretien stuck his head over the parapet and got himself noticed by Spyros Scouras the then

head of 20th Century Fox Mr Chretien's background had been a career in the design and manufacture of telescopes but it seems that in his spare time he devised a lens that would squeeze a wide photographic image on to a standard 35mm strip of film Use of the same lens would subsequently enable projection of the image back into its original wide format Mr Chretien called his lens the Hypergonar What Mr Scouras saw was big bucks He bought the rights called the new lens CinemaScope and in 1953 put *The Robe* in to any cinema that would install a wide screen virtually twice the width of the old 4x3 format buy one of his add-on lenses and for good measure include stereo sound



**Henri Chretien with his special lens**



speakers Existing 35mm projectors would be used with the CinemaScope lens standing in front of the existing prime lens. Improved film emulsions ensured definition would be maintained on the enlarged screens

Of course the whole new system was fairly costly to set up but installation took less than a day and word quickly spread amongst exhibitors that previously reluctant cinema-goers would stand in line to enjoy the new experience. True carbon arcs had to be adjusted to provide brilliance right across the larger screen surfaces but the saving grace was that existing apparatus could be retained for ongoing use. Others tried their ideas Vista Vision Todd AO and 70mm came to mind but the cinemas would only take their products when the image was printed down to 35mm

With CinemaScope firmly established some 3D subjects did appear again in widescreen after a while. These tended to be for juvenile audiences especially with some exciting animation as in *The Lion King* and *Toy Story*. Other more serious 3D subjects appeared. I specially remember snowflakes gently falling on the platforms at the Gare Montparnasse in Martin Scorsese's beautiful widescreen film *Hugo* but that was not until 2011. Eventually the 3D novelty seemed short-lived. Moreover a great many pairs of the special glasses loaned by the cinemas were never returned.

For a hundred years every innovation in the cinema has been closely followed by a small army of private enthusiasts thinking "What couldn't I do with my cine camera if only I had one of those gadgets. When two or more individuals talked about it amongst themselves they had seen colour films at the cinemas and they heard sound films and they found out about telephoto lenses and they were subjected to 3D and then it was widescreen lenses. Hey that would be fun. A London man named Tony Shapps saw this as a business opportunity and was smart enough to see that the Japanese had developed a lens to produce a comparable effect to CinemaScope and it was small enough to mount on the front of a cine camera. The brand name was Kowa. It wasn't going to be cheap. I have conveniently forgotten the price perhaps a reader can remember.

Mr Shapps imported a few of these lenses then set up in premises on Baker Street trading as The Widescreen Centre. This was only a small first floor place so he advertised in the cine magazines and announced free widescreen demonstrations in public rooms at central London hotels. I recall attending one of these and I remember seeing 8mm widescreen films of water skiers whizzing around on the Colnbrook reservoir you can see that from the M4 just beyond Heathrow airport. That did it for me. I stumped up the money and took the Kowa home to experiment with it on my Super 8 camera.

Cine camera users had enjoyed the benefit of fine definition Kodachrome II since 1961 and this particular quality did lend itself to the larger picture width. There were one or two practical snags

such as the absolute requirement to use a tripod equipped with a spirit level because tilted horizons just looked well amateurish. Users had to fit a camera bracket to hold the lens in place and it had to be carefully adjusted to produce a perfectly aligned image. Also because the Kowa had a relatively small diameter users could easily find they were photographing the inside of the lens barrel along with the intended image of the subject. In practice close-ups were not possible. It was 1978 and nothing daunted I made a widescreen film about the meet of a hunt and though I do say it myself there was a memorable sequence of the hounds and horses passing by. In the same year whilst under sail in a yacht race



**Kowa widescreen lens fitted on projector**

across the Solent I hoped for some more good results from the Kowa only to be reminded of the folly in attempting to film a moving object from a moving object I put the camera and the fancy lens away for a while

Then at Torquay in 1981 there was the opportunity to make a widescreen film about the resort which resulted in a fair illustration of the place in the off season A bit lacking in action though But by the late winter of 1981 there was a fine old storm blowing from the east and you could have seen me down at Haldon quay strapped to a handy flag pole the camera and lens strapped to myself with spray spreading everywhere and mayhem at the normally tranquil moorings Now that surely was the sort of subject to go for and I was pleased with the result but somehow I never did complete another widescreen film I have no explanation excepting that my employer thought perhaps I should have been spending more time at the office



**Tony Shapps in recent times**

There were few complications with widescreen projection all that was required was to mount the Kowa or similar lens in front of the projector and to buy or make a wide screen Mr Shapps did source a few CinemaScope short subjects Most were trailers for feature films but there were Movietone newsreels in scope and a Tom and Jerry Also Mr Shapps produced a 16mm widescreen film about London with Super 8 prints made for sale Complete widescreen feature films could be obtained from Derek Simmons in Dudley and a few other dealers and there was a keen band of collectors To the best of my knowledge though not many amateurs did actually turn out their own widescreen films it was all too much of a bother

At times there were many small firms manufacturing widescreen lenses for narrow gauge use but demand was never strong enough to keep them all in business There were some bold assertions made about the adaptation of 9.5 cameras but few of these were seen It is not for us to know how many widescreen lenses Mr Shapps actually sold But we do know the other side of his business had to do with the retail sale of telescopes To this end he may well have had a connection with the Chretien factory in Paris and he certainly persuaded the well known astronomer Sir Patrick Moore to endorse his stock The Widescreen Centre was sold as a going concern in 2006 and is still trading in telescopes from an address in East Anglia

## **The Spanish 9.5mm Celebration at Calella**

As mentioned in the Leader page the above venue duly went ahead on line during the afternoon of Saturday 1st May Those that had the internet and were able to connect with the designated and specified links could view the proceedings as they happened being transmitted direct through modern technology There was a total audience recorded of about 55 Many of which were Group 9.5 members that included Tod Higginson Harley Jones, David Tatham Dominique De Bast Lee Mannering along with Cliff Parriam

There were a total of eight films being entered Six were on 9.5mm film and two were on Super 9.5mm As there was no projector capable of showing Super 9.5mm an exception was made and they were duly excepted in a digital format Four of the films came with the sound on a separate tape and two with sound stripe on the film All the soundtracks (having no lip sync) were transferred to a CD beforehand so as to eliminate changing tapes during the screenings The remaining two being digital presented no problems

Two young ladies were seen on screen all the way through and they were the presenters for the whole event that lasted for upwards of two hours They did a splendid job first giving a resume



of the 9.5 gauge before introducing each film with a brief explanation. One spoke only in Spanish while the other (Noemi Hernandez pictured) was able to give a fluent translation into French and English. There were three films representing the UK and all from Hugh Hale. Four from France with one each from Bernard Castella, Marc Boucher, Paul Bigou and Jean Penavayre with just one from Spain and entered by Josep Lluís Viscarri. Total running time for all the films was roughly an hour. Most were fairly short, the longest being 14 minutes.

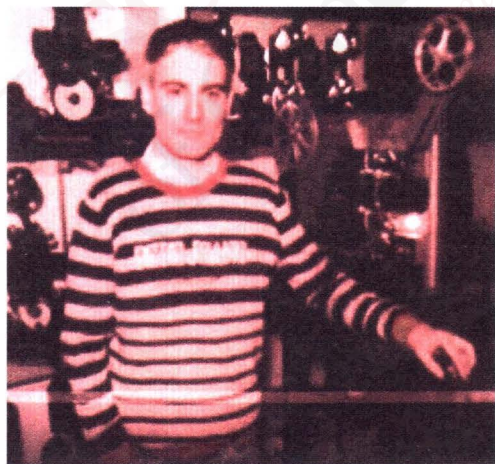
All of the projection was in the capable hands of Lluís Argelich (pictured below) and was totally executed without any hitches or breaks. Lluís was the main organizer and co-ordinator. The projector used was a Ligonie model OSM950 that was his father's and purchased back around 1990. The



difference with Super 9.5mm is that it was a little wider, consequently giving a widescreen effect. This was achieved by using unperforated 35mm stock, slit into three equal lengths. This gave it 11.67mm to each, thereby increasing the width by 2.17mm. The frame height naturally staying the same. It was a French innovation back in the late 1990's, but did not really catch on as a different and modified projector was needed, along with a splicer/editor to match.

Seven of the films were of a documentary and interest nature and in colour. The one exception being Hugh Hale's 'The Destroyers' made in black and white. It was an action comedy with actors from a local drama group. Judging by the cars seen in the film, it probably dates from the early 1960s. I would also highlight Paul Bigou who entered 'Le Paradis Retrouvé' that he made in 1999 on Super 9.5mm. Although the longest film, it captured one's interest throughout with high quality shots of nature, including wildlife, flowers, animals, water pools and falls. All taken in the Pyrenees National Park with good close-ups.

The last film to be shown also deserves a mention and originated on Super 9.5mm. It was made by Jean Panavayre in 2001. At just 5 minutes it celebrated the Calella festival back in that year that was their 28th. It was shot during the day excursion to Catalunya miniature park, showing the participants enjoying the day. Many seen are now sadly no longer with us. A nostalgic reminder that included John Ferrarri, Ted Smith, John Chauncey, Bernard Tremblay and Pat Murray.



There were a few guest speakers that spoke briefly using the link that included our chairman Cliff Perriam. He talked about us, thanking the organizers and showed our magazine for issue 87 in Autumn 1991 that had Lluís Argelich on the cover as a small boy. Also Bernard Castella who is the President of Cine Club 9.5 de France. Santiago Marre was also seen stating that he founded the Spanish society over fifty years ago. He has now been made their Honorary President and is retired from office.

The event concluded with a fitting piece

from Xavier Rigola who is now their current President of Foto-Film Calella The lady presenters then duly thanked all for taking part and bade a fond farewell to those viewing with the hope for a normal festival next year

## Items of News

Many of you will no doubt be interested to know that Ken Valentine a little while ago and following the clear-out of his workshop has passed on all his cine spare parts that covers a multitude of material for 9.5mm to members John Shuttleworth and Peter Leverington They are both located in Stowmarket Suffolk and quite close to each other John can be contacted on 07964 382130 or visit [shutters@live.co.uk](mailto:shutters@live.co.uk) Peter is on 01449 614835 This was received just too late for our previous issue It is simply not practical to detail just what they have but are both very knowledgeable about 9.5mm

In the excellent article by Maurice Trace in this issue towards the end he mentions the climax chase sequences using London locations seen in the film 'Something in the City' But of added interest and edited in is a brief sequence where Richard Hearne rides his Corgi motorized scooter and enters a branch of FW Woolworth He quickly scoots around the store then out into the road and away

This was the branch in Walton High Street When viewed the customers (all extras of course) are located close to the serving counters so as not to impede on his passage Obviously shot when not open to the public It was made at Nettlefold Studios in Walton-on-Thames that were only a quarter of a mile away from the High Street and Woolworth They would always film locally wherever they could not having to go too far thus saving time and money

It was issued on DVD by Renown back in 2010 I actually had a copy on 9.5mm sound a long time ago The film was made in 1950 and released by Pathescope on 9 reels in March 1953 (T/9724) just over two years later and

was complete without any cuts having been made The 35mm



running time was 76 minutes, this meant that it was actually 2 or 3 minutes over their normal capacity for 9 reels Consequently the third reel that it came on as I distinctly remember was a fully loaded 990ft new metal spool known as a 1 000ft reel that could accommodate up to 28 minutes in running time It was a good buy and I can well remember Grahame Newnham telling me that there was probably no Pathescope editor at that time to trim it back

In addition to Grahame Newnham's comprehensive website about 9.5mm and other Pathe ventures (which is paid up to the year 2030) there is also that of Group member Martyn Stevens This contains much about

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our gauge along with other relative and associated material. It was quoted in our previous issue but now has a slight adjustment. Please visit [www.cinerdistan.com](http://www.cinerdistan.com)

The London Cinema Museum at Kennington are currently still closed due to the pandemic, situation. They have advised us that during the many months of closure, they have been busy exploring their numerous collections and have found various items that are surplus to their needs.

In order to raise funds to compensate for the long time lack of income, they have opened an eBay shop where they are selling spare films on various gauges that include 9.5 and 8mm, plus some photographic and film equipment along with miscellanea. The museum's eBay seller name is [museumofcinema](http://museumofcinema). Keep a lookout! Their website is [www.cinemamuseum.org.uk](http://www.cinemamuseum.org.uk)

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Free to members

## FOR SALE

Why not subscribe to the Debonair Film Collectors list. Used films on all gauges including 9.5mm. Full details from TUA Film Services. Rob and Christine Foxon. 17 Kingsway Leicester LE3 2JL. Telephone/Fax 01162 890531

Buyer and Seller of 9.5 standard and super 8 also 16mm films. Details from Paul Wooding on 01274 564409 mobile 07779 519370 Bingley West Yorks

## WANTED

9.5mm sponsored films especially Cycling to Health and Happy Isle. Also notched shorts Declaration of the Crimean War Romance of a Star and Sensation in Monkton. French comedies Voyage de Bigorno Tramway en Delire Mariage a la Vapeur Les Chauffeur Rivaux and any film of Pathescope premises this to borrow please David Wyatt Stanmore Middx Tel 0208 420 7364 Email [dwyatt145@gmail.com](mailto:dwyatt145@gmail.com)

Am looking for copies of the following films on 9.5mm. Fascinations of Fiji SB(PA) 30075 Robert Macaire (complete) SB(PA) 853 Sky High a Hall Room Boys comedy SB(PA) 771 and Conjuror James also a Hall Room Boys comedy SB(PA) 823 Good complete copies wanted. Please contact Andrew Haydon 79 The Common Freethorpe Norwich NR13 3LX Tel 01493 700258 Email [doubleopen32@uwclub.net](mailto:doubleopen32@uwclub.net)

British silent films complete features cut downs odd reels etc. Any gauge acceptable. Please phone Christopher Wibberley on 01142 492127 (Sheffield) Mobile 07964 819110

9.5mm sound films. Please phone with details on 01328 862402 John Collins Fakenham Norfolk

The following films can be on Standard 8 Super 8 or 16mm Soho Striptease Sally Visits Kew Atlanta the Grey Seal and Golden Days of Music Hall (Collectors Club). Must be sound versions. Please phone Len Kennington on 01323 733037

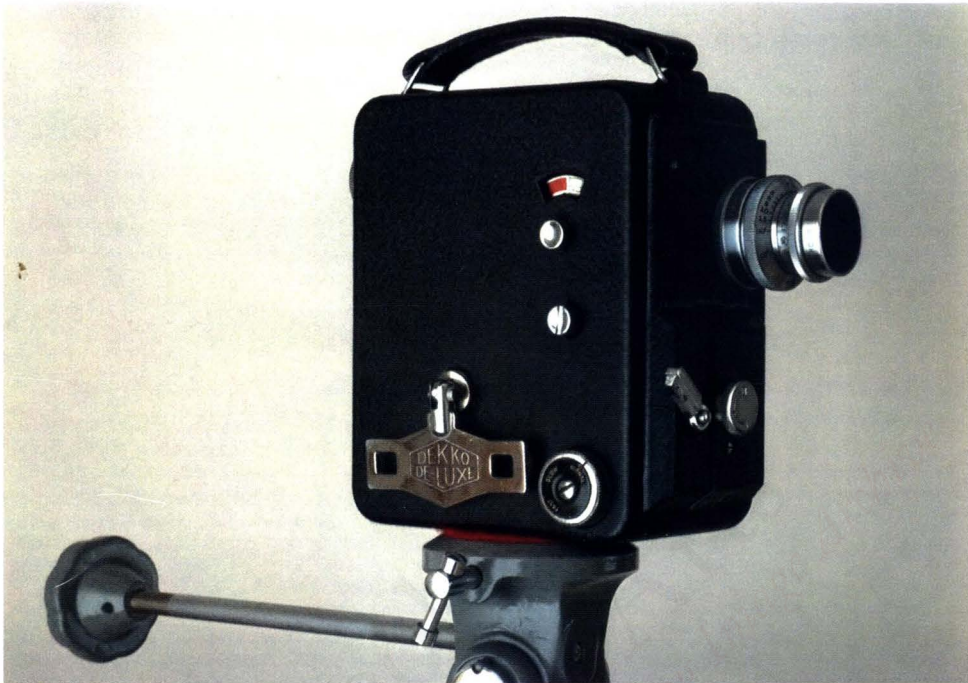
Instruction manual or a copy of same for a Peterson magnetic recorder 8 (magnetic stripe reader for cine film) particularly servicing details and circuit diagram for the electronic section. Also a Specto 8 8mm cine projector. This was the model with 500 watt lighting that preceded the Royal and Greyline models with 21.5 volt lighting. Edward Nowill 326 Wadham Road Putney London SW15 2LR Tel 02088 740069

A 9.5mm silent or sound projector plus an editor/viewer. Also a splicer for 8 or super 8mm along with any outdated film on 9.5mm for movie making. Plus copies of Amateur Cine Enthusiast magazines and a Hypergonar or similar widescreen lens. Good prices will be offered with carriage costs. Arto Lipponen Lepolantie 16 00660 Helsinki Finland

## OTHER

9.5mm films scanned frame by frame to SD or HD also 8mm and 16mm. Supplied on memory stick or a DVD. Discounted rates for Group 9.5 members! Contact Harley Jones Celtic Films 29 Beulah Road Cardiff CF14 6LT Website: [www.cinenostalgia.co.uk](http://www.cinenostalgia.co.uk) or Email [cinenostalgia@me.com](mailto:cinenostalgia@me.com) Telephone 07837 704100

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