

NATIONAL FILM ARCHIVE, LONDON

ACQUISITIONS

During the year many films were received by the Archive from producers and distributors in the film industry in Great Britain. These films are chosen by the Archive's three selection committees, and are received as voluntary gifts in response to requests. They are presented under the terms of a simple agreement which has been approved by the film industry.

In addition to these regular acquisitions, particularly large consignments of film, including many negatives, have been received from Warner Bros, Associated British Picture Corporation and Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. This follows the precedent created by the Rank Organisation two years ago; it is our experience that the companies are now anxious to find a safe storage place for their nitrate films, and this the Archive can provide.

Among the more interesting acquisitions of the year, is a copy of the British feature film HAMLET, made in 1913 with Sir Johnston Forbes-Robertson; a complete positive print of OLYMPIC GAMES 1936 of Leni Riefenstahl, presented by the Imperial War Museum, a more complete version of THE PERILS OF PAULINE than is known to exist elsewhere, which has been enlarged from a 28 mm film in the possession of a private collector, and Edmund Meisel's musical score for the film OCTOBER.

FILM EXCHANGES

The film exchanges made with other members of F.I.A.F. have been numerous. The following have been received:

|                        |   |
|------------------------|---|
| TOL'ABLE DAVID         | The Museum of Modern Art, New York      |
| THE BLACK PIRATE       | " " " " " "                             |
| DAS ALTE GESETZ        | Filmhistoriska Samlingarna              |
| THE LITTLE MINISTER    | Nederlands Filmmuseum                   |
| MR GILFIL'S LOVE STORY | Czechoslovak Film Archive               |
| VANOCNI KOLEDA         | " " "                                   |
| DURA LEX               | The Danish Film Museum                  |
| MUTTER KRAUSEN         | " " " "                                 |
| THE PRESIDENT          | " " " "                                 |
| AMERICA                | George Eastman House, Rochester         |
| A SENTIMENTAL BLOKE    | Commonwealth National Library, Canberra |

The following have been sent by us to other archives:

|                         |                                    |
|-------------------------|------------------------------------|
| KRIEMHILDS RACHE        | Danish Film Museum                 |
| SIEGFRIED               | " " "                              |
| I.N.R.I. LIFE OF CHRIST | " " "                              |
| DAS HAUS AM MEER        | " " "                              |
| WESTFRONT 1918          | Cinematheque Suisse                |
| BLACKMAIL               | The Museum of Modern Art, New York |
| 90° SOUTH               | " " " " " "                        |

|                                    |   |
|------------------------------------|---|
| TURKSIB                            | Nederlands Filmmuseum                   |
| LOVE OF JEANNE NEY                 | " "                                     |
| CRITIC AND FILM, Parts<br>1, 2 & 3 | " "                                     |
| DRAWINGS THAT WALK AND TALK        | " "                                     |
| WESTFRONT 1918                     | George Eastman House                    |
| MANTRAP                            | " " "                                   |
| THE INCORRIGIBLE DUKANE            | " " "                                   |
| INTOLERANCE                        | Commonwealth National Library, Canberra |
| THE NAVIGATOR                      | " " "                                   |
| HEARTS OF THE WORLD                | " " "                                   |
| THE ITALIAN STRAW HAT              | " " "                                   |
| KAMERADSCHAFT                      | " " "                                   |
| CABINET OF DR CALIGARI             | " " "                                   |
| NANOOK OF THE NORTH                | " " "                                   |
| BIRTH OF A NATION                  | " " "                                   |
| COTTAGE ON DARTMOOR                | " " "                                   |
| THE NAVIGATOR                      | La Cinematheque de Belgique             |
| BERLIN                             | " "                                     |
| CITIZEN KANE                       | " "                                     |
| NANOOK OF THE NORTH                | Filmhistoriska Samlingarna              |
| THE GENERAL                        | Czechoslovak Film Archive               |
| MOON OF ISRAEL                     | Osterreichisches Filmarchiv             |

We have also been indebted to a number of our fellow members in F.I.A.F. for lending us films temporarily for showing in our programmes at the National Film Theatre, and we wish to thank them. We have also, of course, been happy ourselves to lend copies of a number of our own films to other archives for their screenings.

#### ACKNOWLEDGMENT TO THE DANISH FILM MUSEUM

In January 1959 our Stills Librarian, Miss Traylen, was unfortunately overtaken by a serious illness which made it impossible for her to resume work until August. This placed us in a most difficult position because the services of the Stills Library have become indispensable to many people and organisations and it would have been impossible to find anyone else in England with the knowledge and experience to take charge of this work for a temporary period. I would like to place on record our great indebtedness and appreciation to Mr Brusendorff of the Danish Film Museum for coming to our rescue in this crisis. He was kind enough to agree to allow his own Stills Librarian, Miss Grete Olsen to come to London and for a period of four months she directed our Stills Library most efficiently. I believe and hope that she enjoyed her stay in London and I would like to thank most sincerely Mr Brusendorff and his colleagues (particularly perhaps Mr Krogh) for helping us in this way.

#### ARCHIVE REORGANISATION

The National Film Archive is a department of the British Film Institute, and both the Institute and the Archive are subsidised by the British Government. During the last year the Governors of the Institute invited the Organisation and Methods Department of the Treasury (the Government Department of Finance), to carry out a detailed and thorough investigation into the administration and organisation of the Institute and all its departments. As a result of this Enquiry certain recommendations

were made about the future organisation of the Institute. These recommendations have been accepted with certain modifications, and as a result the British Film Institute is in future to be organised in two main Divisions. One of these will be the National Film Archive, and incorporated in the Archive will be the Institute's Information Department and Book Library, which were previously separate from the Archive. The Curator of the Archive is given the new title, Deputy Director and Curator. The other administrative half of the Institute will comprise Administration, Film Distribution, Film Appreciation, Publications and the National Film Theatre, and will be administered by the Secretary, who will have the title Deputy Director and Secretary. Both Deputy Directors will, of course, be responsible to the Director of the Institute, Mr James Quinn. The incorporation of the Book Library and the Information Department within the Archive is a logical and most welcome development and it will mean that the organisation of the National Film Archive will in future correspond much more closely to that of most members of F.I.A.F.

#### PROGRESS IN TECHNICAL WORK

The National Film Archive has its administrative centre in London, but its film storage vaults are in a village called Aston Clinton, 40 miles to the North-west of London; here all the technical work of the Archive is carried out. During the year a large new testing laboratory, a cleaning room with a cleaning machine and ventilators, a dark room for special printing and other photographic work, and a loading bay where films can be unloaded under cover. This important new extension to our technical buildings was formally opened on the 1st May by Mrs Eirene White, one of the Institute's Governors and a Member of Parliament, in the presence of members of Archive Committees and representatives of the film industry.

A new printing machine for copying shrunk film and early films of all guages has been built and installed in the new dark room. (It was on this machine, for example, that the 35 mm copy of THE PERILS OF PAULINE was made from the 28 mm original).

The storage buildings at Aston Clinton are for nitrate film. The Archive's Technical Advisory Committee has recently discussed the problem as to whether the time has now arrived when the Archive should build stores for acetate film, but it has decided that this would be premature. The Archive still has a very large collection of nitrate film and it is clear that we may expect to receive quantities of nitrate film for many years to come. Although nitrate projection copies are no longer in general use, the negatives and duplicating prints made before 1950 are all on nitrate, and the companies who do not wish to destroy them, or to continue to store them, may be expected to offer them in increasing quantities to the Archive. The Archive is also the official repository in England for the preservation of Government films, and all the Government films to be received for many years to come are likely to be on nitrate stock. We mention this point in our Report for the guidance of other archives who may be debating this problem. Although for the rest of the world nitrate film is becoming a thing of the past, film archives must expect to be occupied with it for very many years, because the cost of copying all their collections onto acetate film would be astronomical.

### B.I.R.H.C.

We are glad to be able to report that a British Society for Film History Research has been formed with the object of co-ordinating research in Great Britain and acting as the British member of B.I.R.H.C. Its first meeting took place on the 22nd January 1959. The Chairman is Mr John Minchinton and the Secretary is Miss Rosemary Heaward. The Society has prepared a special Report of its activities which I am attaching at the end of this Report, and Miss Heaward herself hopes to be in Stockholm to attend our Congress as an Observer, and to take part in any discussions concerning B.I.R.H.C.

### TELEVISION FILMS

The National Film Archive is not only concerned with the history of film art but also has a responsibility to preserve films which are important as historical records. As an extension of this work it has been decided that the Archive shall also preserve important television films, and television programmes recorded on cinematograph film. To organise the selection and acquisition of television films a Television Acquisitions Officer, Mr David Francis, has been appointed. He will work closely together with the Film Acquisitions Officer, Mr Liam O'Leary.

### THE PROBLEM OF RESEARCH

One of the purposes of building up the National Film Archive collection was to provide reference material for research students, but unfortunately very few such students at present make use of the Archive. This is partly because the academic and university world in England has not yet become fully alive to the importance and possibilities of the film, and partly because the collection itself is not yet old enough for its historical value to be obvious, (even the earliest year of the Cinema is still within living memory). We consider that one of the most serious problems immediately facing us is to encourage the research use of the Archive, both as a good in itself, and also because the support we get from the Government and elsewhere will depend upon the use which is made of our services. One of the organisations with which we have discussed this problem is the British Universities Film Council.

### SOCIETY OF FILM LIBRARIANS

In England many of the large production companies and television organisations have film production libraries. The librarians in charge of these libraries have recently come together to form a Society of Film Librarians, and members of the staff of the National Film Archive also belong to this Society. During the year our Chief Cataloguer, Mr David Grenfell, read a paper to the Society on the principles of film cataloguing and as a result the Society decided to set up a working committee with Mr Grenfell as Chairman to draft rules for the standardisation of cataloguing in Great Britain.

F.I.A.F. VISITORS

We have been very happy to welcome representatives of other archives who have visited our premises in London, either for short visits or for extended periods of study or work. They have included the following:

Miss Turid Orstad from the Norwegian Film Archive  
Miss Grete Olsen from the Danish Film Museum  
Mr Aito Makinen from the Film Museum of Finland  
Monsieur Jacques Ledoux from the Belgian Cinematheque  
Mr George Pratt from George Eastman House

We also had the pleasure of welcoming our President, Mr Toeplitz, when he came to London to present in our National Film Theatre films made by the students of the Polish Film School. These original and imaginative films formed one of the most interesting series of programmes we had during the year.

Ernest Lindgren

September 1959