



REPORT ON

WORK OF THE NATIONAL FILM LIBRARY  
SINCE JUNE 1946

Film Preservation

During the last two years the Library has acquired 437 films and 756 newsreel subjects for permanent preservation. The larger number of these were recent films which were carefully chosen by the Library's Selection Committee at its monthly meetings and were presented on request by the film companies, all of whom are friendly and sympathetic to the work of the Library; the remainder were early films presented or sold to the Library by private collectors, or obtained from other archives. The most important of the films thus acquired were the following: MECHANISM OF THE BRAIN (Pudovkin), THY SOUL SHALL BEAR WITNESS (Sjostrom), DRIFTERS (Grierson), KAMERADSCHAFT (Pabst), BIRTH OF A NATION (Griffith), MILLIONS LIKE US (Lauder and Gilliat), DOUBLE INDEMNITY (Wilder), NINE MEN (Watt), SAN DEMETRIO (Frend), ESPOIR (Malraux), WORLD OF PLENTY (Rotha), THE STORY OF STALINGRAD (Russian war film), LA FEMME DU BOULANGER (Pagnol), DANCE PRETTY LADY (Asquith), DIE DREIGROSCHENOPER (Pabst), THE LIVING CORPSE (Ozep), VICTORY IN THE WEST (German war film).

There are now approximately 5,000 films in the preservation Section of the National Film Library. Although this is a very large number most of this material has a documentary or sociological interest and the Library still lacks some of the most important film classics in the history of the cinema.

Storage

The films of the National Film Library are kept in specially built storage vaults at Aston Clinton, 40 miles outside London. Here the Library has 62 storage vaults, each with a capacity of 500 reels, but a part of this space is let to the Government for the storage of official records. The films are stored at an even temperature and chemical tests are carried out in order to check the condition of the films. Those deteriorating are duped. A considerable amount of research has gone into the Library's conservation and testing work and the chemical tests have been considerably improved during the last year mainly as a result of experimental work carried out by the Government Chemists Department. The conservation technique of the Library is described more fully in a special report prepared for the London Congress of the F.I.A.F.

Lending Section.

Unlike many film archives, the National Film Library has no facilities for showing films in its own theatre. It serves the public by lending films out to schools, film societies and educational organisations for private and non-commercial exhibition. In this way it provides material for studies in film appreciation, which are becoming more popular and occupying a more important position in education in England. In order to maintain this service it is necessary for the Library to have one 35mm. print and several 16mm. prints of the films which it lends out, and it must also be able to keep these repaired and replace them from time to time whenever necessary; it is therefore necessary for the National Film Library to make or to obtain a dupe negative of each film in its Lending Section.

At the present time 120 of the most important films in the Library are distributed in this way through the Library's Lending

Section. In 1941 the number of copies sent out was 2,369 (as compared with 1,826 in 1945). In 1947 the figure rose to 3,375, an increase of nearly 50%.

Exchange of films.

As mentioned above, the National Film Library lacks some of the most important classics of the cinema and these it is anxious to obtain; the Library also wishes to help other archives to the best of its ability to increase their collections. For these reasons the National Film Library is anxious to encourage the exchange of films with other archives. During the period 1946-1947 films were exchanged as follows:

(a) Cinematheque Francaise

Sent: TRUE HEART SUSIE, CHARRETTE FANTOME (on Loan 16mm.),  
TURKSIB, THE GHOST THAT NEVER RETURNS.

Received: PASSION OF JOAN OF ARC, LES NOUVEAUX MESSIEURS,  
UN CHIEN ANDALOU, ENTRA'OTE

(b) Czechoslovak Film Archive

Sent: LIFE OF CHARLES PEACE, RESCUED BY HOVER, DRAME CHEZ  
LES FANTOCHES, WELL-WASHED HOUSE, LADY OF CAMELIAS,  
STAGECOACH DRIVER, TANGO TANGLE, MABEL'S BUSY DAY,  
NEW JANITOR, DOUGH AND DYNAMITE, HIS TRYSTING PLACE,  
THE CHEF, EARLY TRICK FILMS, BRAHMS' HUNGARIAN DANCE,  
MINUET BY MOZART, FILM AND REALITY, COTTAGE ON DARTMOOR.

Received: DIE DREIGROSCHENOPER, BARON MUNCHAUSEN, LIVING  
CORPSE; ZEM SPIEVA, FILMS OF MAX SKLADANOWSKY,  
HISTORY OF THE CINEMA, NIGHT BUTTERFLY, THE  
SANATORIUM, VICTORY IN THE WEST.

(c) Dutch Film Archive

Sent: BEGINNINGS OF THE CINEMA, GREAT TRAIN ROBBERY, VOYAGE  
ACROSS THE IMPOSSIBLE, EDGAR ALLAN POE, STAGECOACH  
DRIVER, CHAPLIN'S FIRST FILMS, BRAHMS' HUNGARIAN DANCE,  
MINUET BY MOZART, IN THE NIGHT, DRAWINGS THAT WALK AND  
TALK, FILM AND REALITY.

Received: COMEDY OF MONEY

Stills, Scripts etc.

In addition to films the National Film Library is anxious to build up a collection of stills, scripts, books, art directors' designs etc. Owing to its limited resources only the collection of stills has been developed to any extent. In June 1946, the Library had some 10,000 stills in its collection; today it has 25,000. They come from films of all countries but the majority are British and American. Considerable use is made of these stills by writers, journalists, book publishers, magazines etc.

General

Since it is a department of the British Film Institute, the National Film Library is also able to share in the other services and activities of the Institute. These include in particular a very large library of books, amounting in all to some 2,500 volumes, and comprising both a Lending section and a reference section for students; and secondly an Information Department which is equipped to answer questions of any kind on the cinema.