

## About Colonial Cinema

First published in November 1942, Colonial Cinema was issued by the Colonial Film Unit (1939-1955), a government unit set up by the Ministry of Information to produce, distribute and exhibit films throughout the British Empire. In 1945 Colonial Cinema moved from a monthly magazine to a 24-page quarterly and by 1950, 1200 copies of Colonial Cinema were distributed each quarter to 35 colonial territories, 14 foreign countries and 8 American states.

Over twelve years and 62 issues, Colonial Cinema sought, as its first editorial states, 'to provide a convenient means for the exchange of views on the production, distribution and exhibition of films for specialised audiences in the colonies.' In doing this, the publication sought to standardise colonial film practice, whether theorising on the types of films suitable for African audiences or outlining the recommended structure of a mobile cinema show. As well as sharing information and practical advice, the magazine provides detailed information on more than 200 CFU films and reveals the origins of indigenous film production and exhibition in a range of territories.

Throughout this most dramatic period in British colonial history – from the height of war to the last rites of Britain's Empire – Colonial Cinema responded to, and reflected, the Government's shifting attitudes towards its colonies. While its broad goals remained the same – 'our aim is to make Colonial Cinema a really useful magazine to the men in the field; and our hope is that they will make it their forum' (March 1945, 3) – after the war the magazine increasingly focused on promoting 'welfare and development' within its colonies and, in its latter years, to paving the way towards 'gradual' self-government.

The final article, written by British film pioneer and CFU stalwart George Pearson in December 1954, acknowledges the 'ages passed' and mourns the loss not only of the magazine and unit, but more broadly of the Empire it served. It also though looks forward, suggesting that the development of personnel, equipment and networks within the colonies can provide a lasting legacy beyond political independence. 'Since 1940 over a hundred students from some thirty overseas territories have attended Soho Square for instruction in the Visual Aids', Pearson wrote, 'They have listened to Theory, have applied Theory to Practice and have returned home determined to apply that knowledge to the benefit of their peoples.' Pearson now wrote of the need to find 'new disciples', urging that 'the good work must go on.'

This emphasis on training and instruction is evident throughout the pages of Colonial Cinema. We see reports of film schools in the Gold Coast (1948), Jamaica (1950) and Cyprus (1951), acknowledging a move towards decentralised film production that mirrored the government's broader, tentative moves towards self-government. 'One of the long-range objectives of the Colonial Film Unit and perhaps its most important one', the magazine wrote in December 1948, 'is the creation of an organisation in each colony to produce its own films'. Over the next few years, Colonial Cinema would contain reports on newly established local units in Malaya, the Caribbean and throughout Africa. Further reports discussed developments in production and exhibition across the Empire from Tanganyika and Sukumaland to Fiji and Mauritius.

Colonial Cinema provides a fascinating insight into the ways in which the British government sought to use film to promote, support and manage a rapidly decomposing Empire. It remains a rich and vastly untapped resource for both colonial and film historians, not least in examining the colonial antecedents in the cinema of modern states, whether in Africa, the Caribbean or Asia.

Tom Rice, University of St Andrews

## About the digitisation

Colonial Cinema was digitised by the BFI in collaboration with University of St Andrews' Cinema St Andrews project. Special thanks to Ian O'Sullivan, Librarian – Digital Collections, BFI. The Cinema St Andrews project is run by Dr Tom Rice and Dr Joshua Yumibe. For more information, visit <http://cinemastandrews.org.uk>. To find out more about Colonial Film, and to view a number of films produced by the Colonial Film Unit, visit Colonial Film: Moving Images of the British Empire at [www.colonialfilm.org.uk](http://www.colonialfilm.org.uk).



# Colonial Cinema



*a monthly bulletin issued by the Colonial Film Unit  
for distribution in the Colonies*

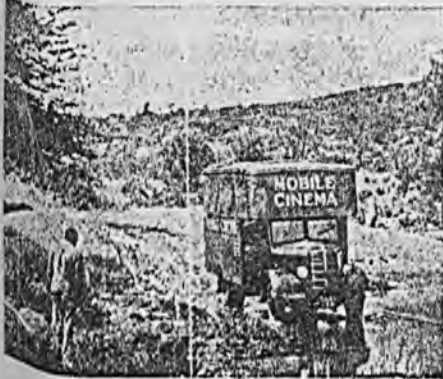
VOL. I. NO. 1

NOVEMBER, 1942

COLONIAL FILM UNIT,  
21, SOHO SQUARE,  
LONDON, W.1

The Colonial Cinema has been "under consideration" for a long time. As soon as the Colonial Film Unit began production it realised that its work would be impossible without the co-operation of officials and others in the Colonies, and some means of exchanging regular information was seen to be necessary.

This bulletin would not be justified if it were to be merely a record of the work of the Unit. The Colonial Cinema is planned to provide a convenient means for the exchange of views on the production, distribution and exhibition of films for specialised audiences in the Colonies. For more than twenty years before the war, pioneers had done much excellent work in these directions, sometimes without encouragement from any quarter. They generously made their experience available and it has been most valuable. Further examination is, however, still necessary. Not only those engaged in the work but also many people indirectly concerned will be able to contribute towards a better understanding of the problems and help to find a solution.



Even before the beginning of the war, special films for Colonial audiences had been planned. At first, the Ministry of Information proposed that these special films should be made by commercial companies under the supervision of a Ministry expert. Only one such attempt was made and it was unsatisfactory. On other occasions technicians were put at the disposal of a Ministry expert for short periods but it proved necessary to give the technicians so much instruction in the special needs of the films that progress was too slow.

It was arranged, therefore, that the Colonial Film Unit should be set up as a separate Unit under the auspices of the Films Division of the Ministry of Information for the production of special films. In recent months, considerable expansion has taken place, and it has been possible to recruit technicians who not only have the necessary professional qualifications but are keenly interested in the new technique developed by the Colonial Film Unit.

This new technique is a very debatable business altogether. Some people, seeing their first Colonial Film Unit production, dismiss it as a simple straightforward silent film. In fact, of course, the films are not so easy as they look. Many different things must be borne in mind when preparing a film for African and other audiences, and while these can be learned by most people, they cannot be learned by the man or woman who regards the films as a third-rate kind of production with a particularly slow tempo. The Colonial Cinema will from time to time seek to explain the basis on which the Unit builds its films. The Unit does not pretend that its approach in this field is the only possible one or the best one, and it hopes that others will give their views. It is clearly one of those questions which readers will want to discuss, and the bulletin intends to provide a platform for people to discuss whatever they want to discuss.

Articles and letters are invited. Anything about films which is of sufficient interest to a sufficient number of people in the Colonies has a place in the Colonial Cinema.

## CHECK LIST.

Most Colonies interested in the special films have received all the Colonial Film Unit productions.

The following list is given for purposes of check:—

1. **MR. ENGLISH AT HOME.**  
Three-reel film showing a day in the life of Mr. and Mrs. English and their three children.
2. **THE BRITISH ARMY.**  
Two-reel film showing the British Army in peace and war. The film was made two years ago and is now rather dated.
- 2a. **BRITISH SOLDIERS.**  
A one-reel version of the above film.
3. **THE ROYAL AIR FORCE.**  
This film shows how a plane is piloted and how the R.A.F. operates like "The British Army," the film is somewhat dated.
4. **ENGLISH AND AFRICAN LIFE.**  
This film shows the differences and similarities of life in Britain and Africa—a woman taking care of her lady, a man at the hairdresser, shopping, etc. It is self-explanatory and needs no commentary.
5. **STORY OF COTTON.**  
How cotton is brought to Britain and woven in the mills.
6. **GUNS IN THE DESERT.**  
This film, which was resituated from another Ministry film, is now out-of-date and no further copies are being supplied.
7. **PROGRESS IN THE COLONIES.**  
This film shows how new hospitals have been built in one colony and explains the work they do.
8. **AN AFRICAN IN LONDON.**  
An African comes to London and is shown the sights by a friend—The Tower of London, Trafalgar Square, the Law Courts, Buckingham Palace, etc.
9. **THIS IS A SEARCHLIGHT.**  
Explains how a searchlight works and shows it in action.
10. **THIS IS A SPECIAL CONSTABLE.**  
The work done by a special constable in a large British city.
11. **THIS IS A BARRAGE BALLOON.**  
The work of barrage balloons over Britain.
12. **THESE ARE PARATROOPS.**  
Paratroops in training and on manoeuvres. The material from which this film has been made up was provided by the War Office.
13. **THIS IS AN A.R.P. WARDEN.**  
The work of a warden in air-raid.
14. **THIS IS AN ANTI-AIRCRAFT GUN.**  
How an anti-aircraft battery carries out its duties.
15. **OUR INDIAN SOLDIERS.**  
This film was made up from material sent from India and used in other Ministry films.
16. **SELF-HELP IN FOOD.**  
A British family grows food in an allotment as well as in its garden.
17. **THESE ARE LONDON FIREMEN.**  
London firemen in training and in action.
18. **MOBILE CANTEEN.**  
This film shows the presentation of a Mobile Canteen from Kenya. Thereafter, the film consists of material from a Ministry film showing canteens in operation.
19. **EARLY TRAINING OF AFRICAN TROOPS.**  
This film was made by Mr. Arthur Champion, C.M.G. (in charge of the Kenya Mobile Canteen Unit), and recorded by the Colonial Film Unit for general distribution.
20. **AFRICAN TROOPS ON ACTIVE SERVICE.**  
Made up from War Office and newsreel material.
21. **COMFORTS FROM UGANDA.**  
A film which shows the pleasure given by furniture presented by Uganda to soldiers stationed at a lonely site.
22. **THESE ARE BREN-GUN CARRIERS AND TANKS.**  
A simple explanation of the difference between a Bren gun and a tank. The material was shot by the Army Film Unit.
23. **UGANDA POLICE.**  
This film was shot by Capt. Roberts, Deputy Commissioner of Police, Uganda, and edited by the Colonial Film Unit.
24. **A.T.S. AND W.R.N.S.**  
This has been made up from two Ministry films to show the A.T.S. and W.R.N.S. at work.

All the films are one reel in length, unless it is stated otherwise.

## NEW FILMS.

The following films have recently been completed and will shortly be despatched:—

25. **RESCUE BOATS OF THE R.A.F.**  
Based on the Ministry film, "The Boat is Safe."
26. **FIGHTING MEN OF THE BRITISH COMMANDOS.**  
Made up from material supplied by the War Office.
27. **RETURN OF THE EMPEROR.**  
Made up from Army Film Unit material, showing the return of the Emperor of Abyssinia to Addis Ababa.
28. **FEEDING THE ARMY.**  
A film showing how the British Army is fed, made up from material supplied by the Army Film Unit.

## WORK IN PROGRESS.

The Colonial Office, anxious that the people of every Colony should be made aware of the need for an A.R.P. organisation, asked for the production of a film showing the working of A.R.P. in Britain. A two-reel film was envisaged, but it has been found necessary to make the film three full reels in length. Unlike other films made by the Colonial Film Unit, this film is intended for distribution commercially in the Colonies, as well as through the mobile cinema vans.

There will be three versions:—(1) music and effects with commentary; (2) music and effects only; and (3) mute.

This is the most ambitious production yet started by the Colonial Film Unit. It is hoped that the film will be completed in the near future. The provisional title is "Take Cover."

"Land and Water" is the provisional title of a one-reel film which has just been started by the Unit. It will show simply how large ships, including ships of war, have been evolved in course of time from the earliest methods of crossing water.

## COURSES OF INSTRUCTION.

The Unit is very glad to be able to offer a course of instruction in films to visitors from the Colonies. Some officers will be more interested in exposing film, some in editing, some in maintenance of equipment; some will want elementary tuition, others will be very advanced. Arrangements should be made through the Information Officer. Whether or not information on films or filming is wanted, visitors from the Colonies are invited to come to the Unit while in London.

## AFRICAN MUSIC.

African music is prominent in the scheme of most of the Colonies for adult education, and its use in conjunction with films offers great possibilities. Under the auspices of the Unit and the B.B.C. Transcription Bureau, a series of recordings have been made by Fela Sowande, the accomplished West African musician. The series provides an introduction to this most interesting subject. The recordings, which include talks and organ transcriptions by Fela Sowande, will shortly be available for distribution to the Colonies.

## VISITORS FROM THE COLONIES.

Among recent visitors to the Colonial Film Unit have been:—

MR. HENRY MOORE.	<i>Governor of Kenya.</i>
MR. B. P. EASTER.	<i>Director of Education, Jamaica.</i>
MR. D. C. FLETCHER.	<i>Information Officer, Nigeria.</i>
MR. JOHN WILSON.	<i>Information Officer, Gold Coast.</i>
MR. BRANDT.	<i>Political Officer, Nigeria.</i>
MR. PAUL P. FOX.	<i>Chief A.R.P. Officer, Sierra Leone.</i>
MR. E. LIRONI.	<i>Film Officer, Gold Coast.</i>

## MOBILE CINEMA VANS.

The Unit is now supervising the construction of twelve additional cinema vans. One of these vans is for distribution to each of the following territories: Nigeria, Gold Coast, Kenya, Uganda, Fiji, Northern Rhodesia, Nyasaland, Tanganyika, Zanzibar, Mauritius, Barbados, Cyprus.

Shortage of labour and material makes it impossible to state even approximately when these vans will be ready for despatch.

Practically every colony made one or more suggestions regarding the specification of the vans. A number of new features have been adopted, and some modifications have been made in the specification of the earlier vans. It is hoped later to describe the design of the vans.

## DISTRIBUTION OF FILMS.

Colonial Film Unit films are distributed to the following Colonies:—

Basutoland.	Nyasaland.
Bechuanaland.	Sierra Leone.
Gambia.	Swaziland.
Gold Coast.	Tanganyika.
Kenya.	Uganda.
Nigeria.	Zanzibar.
Northern Rhodesia.	

In addition, some are found suitable for use in the West Indies, India, the Near and Middle East, China, etc.

## RAW STOCK SCHEME &amp; 16 m.m. CAMERAS.

It has always been felt that one of the best services the Unit could offer was the encouragement of filming in different parts of the Empire. Arrangements have therefore been made to send 16 m.m. raw stock to various Colonies. This stock is exposed, usually to short scenes of local interest or to provide material for general distribution. In any case, the exposed negative is forwarded to the Unit which has it processed. The material may be made up into a separate film or used as part of another film. An article on the workings of the scheme will be published later.

Recently the Unit arranged for 16 m.m. camera equipment to be sent to Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Uganda, Kenya, Gambia, Tanganyika and Gold Coast.

The following note on the equipment has been provided by an expert:—

The equipment consists of a 16 m.m. camera in a case and one tripod. The camera is fitted with 1 inch lens, working at 1:2. The lens is interchangeable.

The camera is magazine loading; incorrect loading or fogging is avoided by this type of camera. The main feature is the speed with which the film magazine can be fixed into the camera.

Regarding the lens, the aperture of f.1.9, together with the rapid speed of Super Sensitive Panchromatic and Super XX, will give excellent results and a good depth of focus. The focusing is very simple and accurate. By turning the collar of the lens barrel to the footage required, a "pin sharp" picture is assured. The "finder" of the camera is incorporated in the handle and is adjustable for all lens and plainly marked for that purpose, even when used for "close-up work," with special marking for parallax.

Two filters are included for haze and sky corrections.

The camera has three speeds:—

20 frames per second (normal).
32 " " " (sem-slow motion).
64 " " " (which gives quite good slow motion, although very rarely used).

Apart from the very simple loading, other advantages are an automatic cut-out in the motor and a locking device.

## The Tripod.

A sturdy tripod has been chosen, able to stand up to hard usage over a long period under tropical conditions.

## The Camera Case.

This is of leather and will hold all necessary equipment together with a number of spare magazines of film.

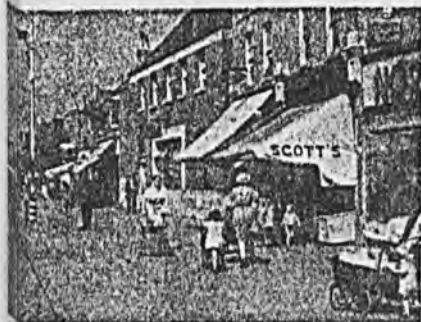
The magazine type loading cannot be too strongly emphasized, eliminating almost any chance of a failure when "taking."

## CIRCULATION OF THE "COLONIAL CINEMA."

It is hoped that anyone interested in films or filming and resident in the Colonies, whether in Government service or otherwise, will apply to be placed on the mailing list of the Colonial Cinema. It is annoying, especially at a time when everyone knows that paper is very scarce in Britain, to receive from home a copy of a publication in which one has no interest, and for this and other reasons, copies will be sent only to those who ask for them. Supplies are not unlimited, but there is a sufficient number of copies to meet all likely demands.



## SCENES FROM "TAKE COVER"



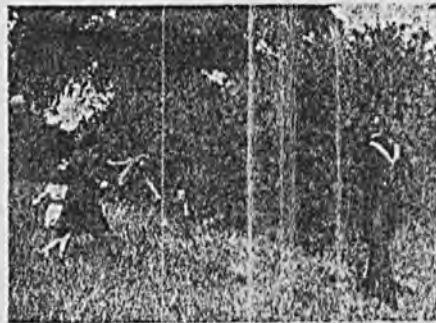
*Street in a British town before the raid.*



*Training in first aid.*



*Rescue squad.*



*People going to shelter.*



*Fire pump in action in the raid.*



*After the bombing. The warden in the centre of the picture plays the principal part in the film.*

# Colonial



# Cinema

*a monthly bulletin issued by the Colonial Film Unit  
for distribution in the Colonies*

VOL. I. NO. 2

DECEMBER, 1942

COLONIAL FILM UNIT,  
21 SOHO SQUARE,  
LONDON, W.1

As stated in the November issue of the **Colonial Cinema**, the Colonial Film Unit is now supervising the construction of twelve additional cinema vans for the Colonies. After full consideration, it has been decided that each van should be fitted with a 16 m.m. projector.

35 m.m. has for a number of years been regarded as the optimum size for film. Practically every commercial cinema has 35 m.m. projectors installed in preference to 16 m.m., and undoubtedly the advantages of 35 m.m. film are considerable in such cinemas. The best 35 m.m. projectors used in the larger stationary cinemas are very heavy as well as very costly, but 35 m.m. projectors much lighter in weight are also manufactured. Although these are a great deal more expensive than even the finest 16 m.m. projectors, it is not the cost which decided the Unit against recommending the supply of the larger projectors for the cinema vans.

Nor was it any question of difficulty in supplying 35 m.m. prints of Colonial Film Unit films. All the Unit's films shot in Great Britain are on 35 m.m. negative. (35 m.m. can, of course, readily be reduced to 16 m.m., whereas 16 m.m. cannot be successfully enlarged to 35 m.m. For this and other reasons, the Unit uses 35 m.m. cameras exclusively.)

No enquiry was made by the Unit whether 35 m.m. projectors could be supplied; the arguments against installing them in vans for the Colonies were so overwhelming that it

would have been a waste of time to make any such enquiry.

Anyone with a knowledge of the Colonies will be at once aware of some of the objections to the installation in cinema vans of 35 m.m. projectors, but not everyone will be acquainted with all the difficulties. The first thing which occurs to one is probably the size of the van. The present size of van is inadequate for 35 m.m. equipment, and it is regarded as the largest van which can safely be used over many roads.

Apart from the question of the width and surface of roads, the dimensions of bridges and culverts must be borne in mind. If 35 m.m. projectors were installed in larger vans, the operation of the travelling cinema would have to be restricted. Not only would it be impracticable for larger vans to travel over many of the roads where vans of the present size go, but larger vans could not be transported by ferry and rail, as is necessary to carry out the itineraries in some places.

In addition to the extra space and weight needed for 35 m.m. projectors, there would be the bulk and weight of the necessary 35 m.m. copies. A 35 m.m. copy of a film is several times heavier and bigger than a 16 m.m. copy. The additional weight of the copies is an important factor in the vans, and is also important when it is remembered that the films are sent from Britain by air transport, where every ounce is valuable.

Even if there were no other objections, projection problems would rule out the installation of 35 m.m. projectors in vans for the Colonies. Commercial cinemas with 35 m.m. projectors invariably run copies printed on nitrate base stock. Such copies could not be shown in cinema vans. Nitrate stock is highly inflammable and is used in commercial cinemas only after strict precautions are taken against fire. Similar precautions are impossible in cinema vans.

Almost every country requires, therefore, that non-flam stock should be used in travelling cinema vans. This also applies to halls which cannot comply with the stringent fire regulations. It is difficult enough to obtain 16 m.m. copies of films; it is in present circumstances more difficult to obtain 35 m.m. non-flam prints.

The Ministry of Information has 124 travelling cinema vans in operation in this country. Although there are not the same problems either in the transport of equipment or the sending of films in Britain as in the Colonies, 120 of the vans are equipped with 16 m.m. projectors. The Ministry's experience in projection is very extensive, and only in four cases has it considered that the advantages of 35 m.m. projection outweigh the disadvantages.



## MOBILE CINEMAS IN THE GOLD COAST

By the Cinema Officer, Gold Coast.

*(Photographs of the Cinema vans which have been in use in the Gold Coast for over two years are on the back page. The author of this article had no difficulty in training carefully selected Africans to operate the vans without European supervision.)*

Early in 1940, the Information Department of the Gold Coast Colony received from the Ministry of Information one cinema van and three complete portable sets of projection equipment. These were specially designed for the showing of 16 m.m. films and the dissemination of news to the mass of illiterate people, who form approximately 95 per cent. of the Colony's population.

The first problem was the recruitment of African staff—interpreter, driver-operator, and assistant operator. The interpreter had repeated showings of each film, and received full explanations of all details so that he understood every foot. He worked with commentaries based on the specimens supplied by the Ministry of Information but adapted for local conditions. He made written translations of these commentaries and re-translated them into English without reference to the original. The comparison of the original commentary with the re-translated English commentary made apparent any misapprehension under which the interpreter laboured and showed up any mistakes which had crept into the vernacular version.

The driver-operator and assistant operator meanwhile studied the instruction book issued by the Colonial Film Unit. They received an exhaustive training on the equipment—maintenance, operating, and fault finding—until each of them was quite at home in everything relating to the van and able to take it over by himself. It was amazing to see not only the interest taken by these two technicians in the equipment, but the speed with which they mastered even the finer points of operating the controls.

The tour opened in British Togoland on the 21st of June, 1940. At the beginning of the tour, the crew worked under direct European supervision, but as they gained experience they were left more and more to themselves. At the end of three weeks they continued the tour without supervision for two months. During that time no breakdown took place and not a single performance had to be missed.

These early demonstrations proved that the cinema was opening up a new channel of communication to the illiterate population, and as a result of a report on the first part of this tour, it was decided to construct three vans locally. It was realised that the building of vans in the Gold Coast was likely to be difficult. The difficulties, however, proved much greater than we had foreseen. Wood, the only material available for body building, did not prove entirely satisfactory under the varied weather conditions, and material for the many small pieces of equipment which go to make up the complete van and which add so much to the efficient presentation of programmes was not easy to find. Although locally-built vans have worked well, construction in the United Kingdom is considered to be much preferable.

The itineraries were worked out so that a unit covered the whole of one of the provinces of the Colony in four to five months; this assumed working on six nights a week. Between each tour a major overhaul was made at headquarters of all equipment.

The mobile cinema vans have been in use for two years, and during this time they had to tour under gruelling road conditions and wide climatic changes. The equipment of the original van stood up very well under these adverse conditions, and the layout was in every way suited to the open-air presentation of cinema programmes to illiterate people.

The four vans have given some fifteen hundred performances to audiences estimated at over a million.

## NEW FILMS

The following films have been completed and prints will be despatched as soon as they can be obtained:

### 29. GIFTS FROM THE COLONIES: MOBILE LIBRARIES.

### 30. GIFTS FROM THE COLONIES: KATSINA TANK.

Gifts purchased from collections made in the Colonies are important for several reasons.

The Unit shot on two occasions the presentation of mobile libraries purchased by Colonies, and then followed a mobile library during a tour. This material was intended to be part of a composite film, but it has been decided to make it into a separate production. It is more advanced than most Colonial Film Unit films and it is necessary to choose carefully the audiences to which it is shown.

The Unit also shot the presentation of a tank purchased by the contributions of the Emir and people of Katsina. The tank is shown undergoing test.

### 31. "TAKE COVER."

Reference was made to this 3-reel film in the November issue. In the full sound version, there is a recorded commentary spoken by Frederick Allen, the B.B.C. announcer.

The film is not an instructional film; the intention is to show the A.R.P. organisation in a British town in the belief that other places may learn something of value from it. The production is, of course, prepared for distribution in the Colonies, and has been made with the problems of the Colonies in mind. The views of several Colonies were obtained on the script before production was begun.

## COURSES OF INSTRUCTION

Mr. H. E. Lironi of the Gold Coast is at present attached to the Unit for a course of instruction. He has shown films and shot material in the Gold Coast. He feels that not only does he want to have experience with professional cameramen in this country, but to see other aspects of production. It is hoped to publish an article by him later.

## FILM DEMONSTRATION

A demonstration of Colonial Film Unit films was given on October 15th at the Ministry of Information. Among those present were Mr. C. J. Jeffries, Assistant Under Secretary of State for the Colonies; Miss E. Oakden and Mr. E. Burney, Board of Education; Sir George Anderson, Indian Civil Service; Professor Julian Huxley; Mr. R. A. McL. Davidson, Mr. T. R. Rowell, and Mr. H. S. Scott.



## CHARLIE CHAPLIN FILMS

" Shall be glad to receive as soon as possible a Chaplin film in addition to 'The Manhunt.' " " It will be most useful to have another Chaplin film. " " Chaplin is such a success that I hope you are arranging for more of his films to be sent here. "

Such requests as these come frequently to the Colonial Film Unit. No doubt it seems an easy matter to find suitable Chaplin films, and the non-appearance of a succession of Chaplin subjects may seem due solely to lethargy at 21 Soho Square. In fact, Chaplin films for the Colonies are a vexatious problem. "The Manhunt" is, everyone agrees, most successful; but "The Manhunt" consists of specially selected shots from a much longer film, "The Adventurer." That film, shown in its entirety, would not have had equal appeal to the same audiences. It may be taken as established that Chaplin films as they stand will not fit the bill, and the search is for films containing suitable sequences.

This is not a new problem, and it is one to which the Unit has given much thought. From time to time, various Chaplin films have been examined but for one reason or another it has been decided that they would not be made suitable for the special purpose. It must be admitted that the search was not exhaustive, largely because staff could not be spared to concentrate on the job. Recently the Unit decided that it must provide for a thorough examination of the question. The writers of this article were consequently given the job of tracking down Chaplin films, viewing them, and recommending what, if any, films should be used as they stood or otherwise.

As is well known, copyright in the later Chaplin films is held by the Charles Chaplin Corporation of America. This corporation finds itself unable to agree to the printing of copies in 16 m.m., the size which is needed. All the later Chaplins are therefore ruled out by this prohibition.

Perhaps this may not sound so serious to most readers. For when we think of a Chaplin to serve the same audiences as "The Manhunt," many of us are thinking not of Chaplin's more recent triumphs, but of the early films, the roaring slapstick comedies. We may have seen them in our youth. If so, we retain very vivid recollections of these masterpieces and are quite certain that all or any of them are exactly what should be shown.

The writers had the same belief. They traced the owners of the Colonial copyright in early Chaplin films and arranged for screenings. The first few films were a shock. Some were not so funny as anticipated, some were much funnier, but not one was suitable for the particular purpose for which the investigation was being made. Other Chaplins were obtained, viewed hopefully, and sadly rejected.

Not only had the choice to be confined to the early Chaplins, but there was a further limitation. The available negatives in this country were duplicates taken from the originals made many years ago. For the purpose of making up a 16 m.m. film to send out to the Colonies, it is necessary to take a positive (lavender) from the duplicate. From this lavender we get a dupe which can be used for printing 16 m.m. positive copies. (There is an alternative but it is costly.) This process is successful

only if the first dupe is in reasonably good condition. Some of the dupes were in very bad condition because they belonged to the days when laboratory work was not so good and when the careless handling of negatives was not uncommon.

Within the limitations imposed, practically every Chaplin film has been seen. We started with no preconceived notions (so far as we know), but it did not take long before we had to decide to rule out certain things; for instance, Chaplin or some other character dressing himself up as a woman; scenes which showed the police in a bad light; scenes in which a priest or a clergyman was a figure of fun. Also, it was useless to send out films dealing with matters of which the audience would have no knowledge. Fun and games in the snow do not look so funny to an audience which thinks the snow is sand and wonders how it sticks together. Similarly, the elaborately fitted dentist's chair is a perfect centre-piece around which to build a humorous film, but only for people who recognise the setting.

This article will, it is hoped, indicate some of the difficulties encountered in a piece of work which on the face of it is perfectly simple. Happily, near the end of the search, a film was found which seems likely to turn out to be a worthy companion to "The Manhunt." The film is entitled "Charlie the Rascal." A report is anxiously awaited from the processing laboratory on the condition of the dupe negative. If it is satisfactory, every effort will be made to send out copies as early as possible. "Charlie the Rascal" may well prove as popular as "The Manhunt."

W. D.  
E. M. H.

## WORK IN PROGRESS

"Gold Coast Timber," a new production, shows how timber from the Gold Coast is shipped to Britain and used here for war purposes.

It will be some time before this film can be issued because it is necessary to get certain scenes of loading the timber shot in the Gold Coast. This is the first occasion on which the Unit has been able to adopt the plan of having material specially shot on its behalf overseas to a definite script.

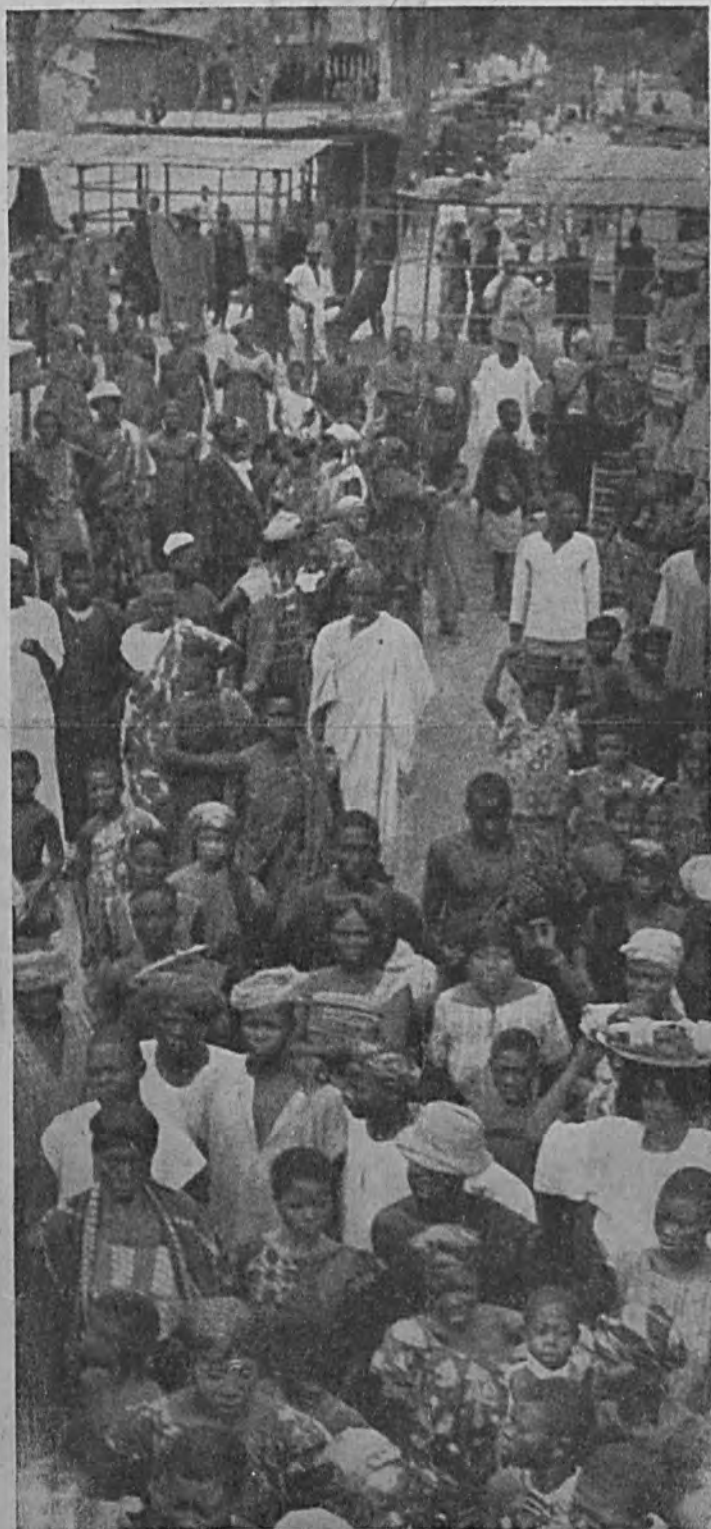
\* \* \*

Shooting on "Land and Water" is continuing.

\* \* \*

"Training the Blind" is the provisional title of a film which has just been scheduled for shooting. The film is of particular interest. It will show how people blinded in the present war are learning to equip themselves for a different kind of life by training in the blind workshops. Nothing can make the loss of sight anything but a terrible tragedy; but those who have met with this catastrophe show a marvellous courage and cheerfulness.

## WITH A CINEMA VAN IN THE GOLD COAST





# Colonial



# Cinema

*the monthly bulletin of the Colonial Film Unit*

VOL. I. NO. 3

MAY, 1943

COLONIAL FILM UNIT,  
21 SOHO SQUARE,  
LONDON, W.1

WE are very sorry that we were compelled for a time to suspend publication of *Colonial Cinema*, and not least because its reception in the Colonies has been so encouraging. In wartime such happenings cannot always be prevented. The difficulties which suspended publication have now been overcome, and we can now look forward with confidence to its regular and prompt appearance.

The Unit has been able from time to time to make use of the services of technicians on loan from other units. A cameraman on loan from another unit who worked on *Land and Water*, wrote as follows:—

Shooting films for the Colonies was a new experience for me. Until I joined the Colonial Film Unit, I had been actively engaged in the production of commercial and full-length documentary films for the bigger studios in this country. These companies maintain a large staff, which makes the work very much lighter all round.

The Colonial Film Unit was relatively small; every one engaged on actual production work had to do many things which in a bigger unit would have been shared.

I had heard something of the Unit, but the impression I had gathered was that technically the films were beneath

contempt for any one seriously interested in his profession.

After a few days on location with the Colonial Film Unit, I discovered that the work required a considerable amount of specialised knowledge. When one is accustomed to ordinary commercial work, it is difficult to remember that for a Unit film the camera should usually be more or less static. Perhaps the most important point is rigorously to maintain the flow of continuity.

The script for *Land and Water* called for shots of ducks swimming in a pond to illustrate how closely the action of their feet resembles that of a boat's paddle. The companies with which I had worked previously could have shot these scenes in a studio tank with nicely heated water. We had no tank. We had to shoot in a little stream, and after the camera had been set up, the ducks either refused to swim at all, or swam in the wrong direction.

What is appreciated in a film for Western audiences may be useless for illiterate people, and may be quite misleading. For example, I shot a number of scenes on the river for *Land and Water*. Small sailing craft were plying up and down stream, and in all the shots I included the branch of a tree to fringe the edge of the frame. I realised that as this was moving and in the forefront, the branch would be prominent on the screen. A Western audience would, of course, have hardly been aware of it. Their attention would have been concentrated on the boats, and anything else on the screen would have been incidental. When the "rushes" of these scenes were shown, it was explained to me that Africans would focus on the moving branch—not because it was a branch, but because they are accustomed to look at moving objects individually—and that it would be the first thing to catch their eye. Only after they had looked at the branch would the Africans turn to the other objects on the screen, and by that time the boats would have passed from the picture.

All kinds of unexpected things are apt to appear in a picture shot out of doors. On one occasion we took care that we should shoot out of sight of a railway line, since it would have been distracting. When work was in progress, a train passed, but as it did not show in the picture no harm was done. A few seconds later, however, a trail of smoke from the engine swirled to the sky, and this did appear in the picture. Had Africans seen this shot, they would have wondered where the smoke came from. The work had to be done over again in order to prevent confusion.



"LAND AND WATER." THE OPENING SCENE.

## LEARNING TO FILM

ABOUT three months ago, I returned to Britain from the Gold Coast Colony after completing a tour of service as Cinema Officer in the Information Department. During this tour much of my time was spent on trek with one of the four mobile cinema vans in the colony. While touring, I began to realise the great possibilities which exist for filming in Africa. The success of such Colonial Film Unit productions as *Progress in the Colonies*, *English and African Life* and *An African in London* confirms that the African likes to see other Africans on the screen. There are many things which are well worth filming in the Gold Coast, and I was keen to cover them.

I knew how to operate a 16 mm. camera. I realised, however, that much more is necessary if successful films are to be produced. What I wanted was practical experience with a film-producing unit. This is never at any time easy to obtain; but my difficulties were solved when I learned that the Colonial Film Unit was offering a course to officers and others on leave from the Colonies.

I reported for tuition at 21, Soho Square, in the middle of August. There is a staff of twenty people engaged on the production of films.

The amount of work which goes into the making of a completed film for Western audiences is enormous. I had not quite understood just how many different things had to be borne in mind in making a film to appeal successfully to illiterate audiences.

The first lesson I learned was that not even a most

experienced film-maker can begin a film with any hope of success until he has worked out the theme in the greatest detail.

During my course at the Unit, I saw the idea of a film being expanded into a treatment, and then being written up in the form of a scenario or script. I watched this script being shot by the cameramen under the film director, and viewed with them the rushes (prints of the material as shot). I saw the various shots lined up in the order in which the editor suggested they should appear in the film, and I saw these shots rearranged and re-cut, as indicated by the director and the producer, until the film emerged in its completed form. Approval had then to be given by representatives of the Colonial Office.

This formed the first part of the course. The second part consisted of trying out what I had learned. I was asked to make a film on land cultivation, and, after investigating the subject, wrote a first treatment. This was carefully considered and some revisions made. Then I prepared a script, which was re-written several times before it was passed as satisfactory.

It was arranged I should translate this script into film. I was provided with a 16 mm. camera and equipment, similar to that supplied to selected colonies, and spent a number of days in shooting the film. The lessons learned were many and the experience gained invaluable.

I would recommend any officer interested in the use of the cinema to take a similar course.

H. E. LIRONI.

## NEW FILMS

Since the December issue of *Colonial Cinema*, several films have been completed and despatched to the colonies. A list follows:—

## 32. CHARLIE THE RASCAL.

Reference was made to this film in the article on "Charlie Chaplin Films" in the December issue. Copies have now been released.

## 33. FARMING IN RUSSIA.

This film, received from the U.S.S.R., has been re-cut by the Unit to make it more suitable for African audiences.

## 34. HEROIC MALTA.

The need was felt for a film which would show the heroism of the people of Malta and explain the importance of the island in the Mediterranean theatre of war. Obviously, it was not possible to shoot material specially, but a large amount of material had been shot by newsreel companies, by the Army Film Unit, and by others. From this material a film has been made up which shows Malta in peace and war and ends with the presentation of the George Cross to the people of Malta.

## 35. MACHI GABA.

This film, which was shot in Nigeria, illustrates the increasing interest taken by tribal chiefs in the well-being of their people.

## (32A). THE MAN HUNT.

The other Chaplin film has been allotted this number in the Colonial Film Unit series in order to prevent confusion.)

Four other films have been completed, and copies will be despatched as soon as possible. They are:—

## 36. TIMBERMEN FROM HONDURAS.

This is a record of the lumbermen who have come from the West Indies to help in the war effort by felling timber in England and Scotland.

## 37. LAND AND WATER.

This film, which was mentioned in our first issue, shows something of the evolution of ships from the simple boat to the great ocean-going vessel. It is a pleasant little film, and we hope it will have a wide appeal.

## 38. WE WANT RUBBER.

A short film has been made with the object of stimulating the production of rubber in the Colonies. Something of the manufacture of tyres is shown, and emphasis is laid on the urgent need for rubber by showing some of its multifarious uses in the equipment of the fighting services.

## 39. BLIND PEOPLE.

This is the film made under the working title of "Training the Blind." It shows that blindness need not be synonymous with helplessness, but that blind people can learn to do a real job of work as efficiently as those who have their sight. This has been a most interesting film to produce. The fullest co-operation has been obtained from various bodies concerned with the training and care of the blind, and the blind people who have taken part in the film have showed the greatest keenness.

## THE BRITISH EMPIRE AT WAR (Fortnightly News Film).

Numbers 1 and 2 have now been completed, and arrangements have been made for regular delivery of release prints from the laboratories. The news film will be issued fortnightly and release will begin shortly.

Number 1 contains three stories:—

- The desert battle following the attack at El Alamein. An artillery barrage is followed by the advance of the infantry. Abandoned enemy positions are searched, and thousands of prisoners, in a crocodile that stretches for miles, are marched to the rear.
- "With our African Troops: Artillery in Action." Nigerian troops of the 6th Light Artillery cross a wide river with their guns in sections, and reassemble them and prepare for action on the other side.
- "His Majesty inspects his Fighting Forces." H.M. the King arrives by car and takes the salute at a parade of mass formations of armoured fighting vehicles.

Number 2 contains four stories:—

- "The War against Malaria." A special anti-malaria section of the Army in Ceylon is seen at work clearing ditches and ponds and spraying oil over the water.
- At an Ordnance factory in the north of England, L. N. Constantine, the well-known West Indian cricketer, along with the manager, presents to one of the workers a letter of thanks from the Colonial Secretary for outstanding services.
- "North Africa." These sequences show destroyed and burning Italian equipment and captured food, ammunition and transport. Great numbers of prisoners are seen marching through the streets of Cairo to their internment camp.
- "With our African Troops in Ceylon." Men from Nyasaland are seen at tactical manoeuvres in the bush, moving with their Bren guns and rifles, and transporting and assembling a light mortar.

## WORK IN PROGRESS

*Gold Coast Timber* will now disappear from this bulletin for some time. The shooting in Britain is almost complete except for one shot—a shot of unloading a log at London docks. The history of this shot illustrates some of the difficulties of making documentary films. The director wanted to follow a log from the time of unloading until parts of it formed ammunition boxes. Timber does not arrive from the Gold Coast every day, but the Port of London Authority arranged that the Unit should be informed when a ship was expected at the docks. The camera crew were duly on the dockside, but thick fog made satisfactory shooting impossible. It was arranged that some logs should be unloaded on the following day, but the work was not done on that day. On the day after, it was again foggy and unloading could no longer be held up.

When the much-pursued shot is obtained, the film will

have to await sequences taken in the Gold Coast.

Work is proceeding on a film with the working title of "Bicycles." The object of the film is to bring home to Africans the necessity of attending to running repairs and making periodic adjustments to cycles—a lesson that has added importance now that it is more difficult to ship supplies of new machines and spare parts to Africa.

The story is written round James Wise and Thomas Foolish. Wise, of course, looks after his cycle, and enjoys trouble-free service; Foolish, on the other hand, neglects his and in the end points the film's message by coming to grief in a ditch.

Other films in prospect will deal with Agricultural Schools, the Home Guard, British Families in Wartime and British Sailors.

## THE NEW CINEMA VANS

PROGRESS in the construction of the 12 cinema vans—to be sent to Nigeria, Gold Coast, Kenya, Uganda, Fiji, Northern Rhodesia, Nyasaland, Tanganyika, Zanzibar, Mauritius, Barbados and Cyprus—has been very slow indeed. Even at this date it is impossible to give an approximate time for delivery. No one, of course, will expect or wish cinema vans to receive priority over vehicles needed for the fighting services. It is not a matter of allotting a few vans out of the thousands which come off the assembly line every week. Vans which go out on tour for months on end and work under arduous conditions must be specially built and be correct in every detail.

An expert with considerable experience of the previous vans was asked to make a comparison, and wrote as follows:

The new cinema vans are mounted on Ford V 8 forward drive, 30 h.p. two-ton long-wheelbase chassis. The body, which extends the whole length of the chassis (indeed, it extends an extra two feet at the rear), forms one compartment, with the driving and passenger seats mounted in the front. It has an internal height of approximately 6 ft. 6 in., is fitted with a sliding roof for the front hood, and has large lockers fitted against the sides.

Instead of roller shutters, the rear has now a pair of dust-proof swinging doors, which, when open, can be locked at an angle sufficient to form a shadow box for showing during bright moonlit nights. A special feature has been the provision of a heat-insulating material inserted in the cavity between the outer panelling and the inside lining of the vans. The whole of the woodwork has been protected as far as possible against tropical conditions, including spraying with rot-resisting fluid.

The floor is covered with heavy cork linoleum. The interior of the van is far more roomy than in the previous models. The generator is driven directly from the main engine, thus dispensing with the air-cooled auxiliary engine. The amplifier is now mounted in the cupboard

which forms the projector pedestal, on which is also mounted the gramophone playing desk.

The projector is a B. and H. 16 mm. sound projector, which can handle either sound or silent films. It is fitted with a 1,000 watt lamp and is more powerful than the silent models previously supplied. The microphone lead, the gramophone pick-up lead, and the feed from the sound head on the projector are all fed into the one amplifier control panel. By the use of three knobs, therefore, sound from each of these sources can be amplified and produced from the speakers, either separately, in pairs or all together. The volume of each source is thus under control, so that sound effects from the film, with the vernacular running commentary, are heard with a background of music from a gramophone record, or any such other combination.

The loud-speakers are, as before, fitted into a movable turret at the rear of the roof; this has a counterbalance device so that it can be easily raised or lowered for operation or for travelling.

The rear projection screen is of maximum size and is firmly fixed in the back of the body. Two tip-up seats are provided for the operating staff. A small table for the microphone and a seat are provided for the interpreter's use.

The main supply from the generator is led to a switch-board through a main switch-box. From there, it is distributed to the various points of consumption. Emergency lighting is provided from the chassis battery.

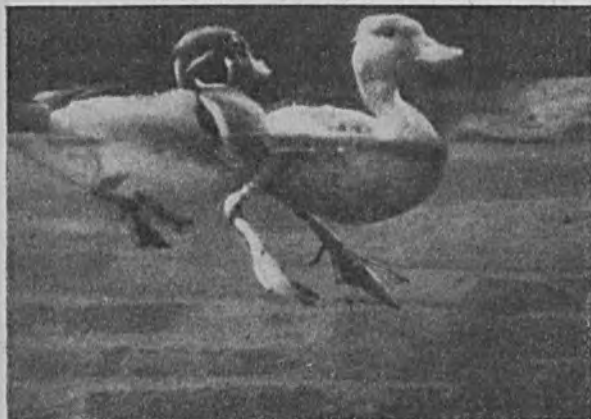
Projector lenses of various focal lengths are supplied for indoor projection in halls, etc., together with portable stand, transformer, screen and loud-speaker.

The equipment includes a spare amplifier, two microphones, and liberal supply of spares.

The whole of the equipment has been specially designed to stand up to severe road conditions and wide climatic changes, and to operate over long periods with the minimum amount of servicing.



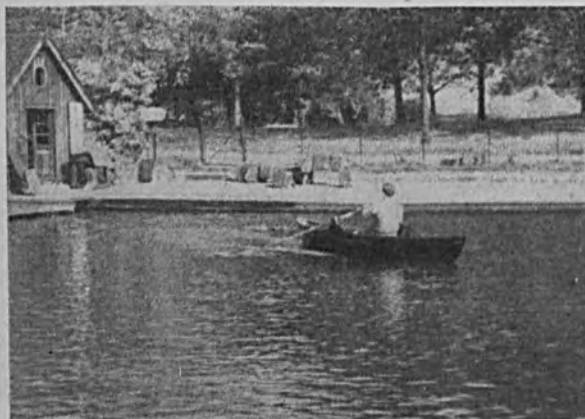
## SCENES FROM "LAND AND WATER"



THE ORIGIN OF THE PADDLE BLADE.



THE PADDLE IN USE.



THE OAR—A DEVELOPMENT OF THE PADDLE.



HARNESSING THE WIND.



MECHANISED PROPULSION.



A MODERN WARSHIP.



*the monthly bulletin of the Colonial Film Unit*

VOL. I. NO. 4

*Colonial Film Unit, 21 Soho Square, London, W.1*

JUNE, 1943

## FILMS FOR AFRICAN AUDIENCES

THE object of the Colonial Film Unit, like that of every branch of colonial administration, is to raise the primitive African to a higher standard of culture.

The Unit works through the medium of the cinema, probably the greatest invention since the introduction of printing. Inherently it is ideal; for, apart from broadcasting, the benefits of which are confined to the few with receiving sets, it is the only modern invention through which large numbers of Africans can be effectively influenced. In the Colonies it is certainly the most fruitful, for whereas the printed word can have little effect upon the vast numbers of illiterate Africans, the moving picture appeals instantly to all; the range and power of the cinema is limited mainly by difficulties of organisation and distribution.

Films must be plentiful and equally they must be beneficial; and if the cinema can be controlled in its early stages, there is scarcely any limit to the benefits it can bestow upon Africans. It is far too vital an instrument to leave in the hands of those whose interests are purely commercial. If profit is to be the principle influencing the development of the cinema, it may well become a menace with consequences as dangerous as they are unforeseen. At all costs that end must be avoided.

We have said that the main obstacles to the development of the range and power of the cinema are those of organisation and distribution. Modern equipment must replace the cinema van, which is at best a makeshift. The ideal must be a static cinema in every village, with programmes in frequent circulation, for the aim is the widest possible exhibition of good films. (In this connection an idea which may lead to the realisation of the village cinema appears in this issue of *Colonial Cinema*.)

We may turn now to a discussion on the means best calculated to achieve the maximum benefit from the use of the cinema. Little study of the Africans' reactions to the cinema has been possible up to the present; but sufficient has been done to prove that we require a special technique in film production, conditioned by and adapted to the character and development of this type of audience. The African, though illiterate, is by no means unintelligent; and this must be fully appreciated if the most satisfactory approach is to be discovered.

The simple screen technique which has been evolved is founded upon careful observation undertaken in the earliest stages of film shows. On the basis of this work, certain experiments were carried out, and now reports by responsible officials abroad confirm the belief that our films undoubtedly attain their purpose and justify their production in accordance with the new method. The records of the Unit are being continually enriched by information about the reactions of African audiences; this information, so essential to the successful work of the Unit, will be slowly and surely supplemented by carefully compiled questionnaires to be sent out to a wide circle of observers.

The word "technique" may arouse misgivings, but there is no real reason why it should do so. In any art or craft, technique is simply the mechanics of expression and must be moulded to suit the purpose for which it is required. Thus, if observation assures us that the existing technique of making films fails to arouse any intelligent reactions in the mind of the African illiterate, it becomes obvious that a different technique must be employed to make the necessary appeal.

The salient principles of this specialised production are simple. The first object is to gain the attention of the audience. Though the novelty of the moving picture may command a fleeting attention, it will be maintained only by a technique which is skilfully related to the psychology of the African. Photographic clarity is essential. Tone values must be true, image shapes and patterns needle sharp. Clarity of subject is equally important; there must be one fundamental idea only in each film. Conventional tricks like "panning shots," "dolly shots" and others, used in modern films to short-circuit time and space will certainly create confusion in the minds of an illiterate audience. The "fade" is, in fact, the only technical subterfuge which can be used with safety. The question of camera angles is just as vital. Shots should be made from a viewpoint that is normal: bird's eye or worm's eye views should be rigidly eschewed since, for the African, they simply obliterate understanding of the content of the scene. It is no less necessary that visual continuity from scene to scene should be sustained. Every new shot without a visual link with its predecessor starts another train of thought which may exclude everything that has gone



before. More sophisticated audiences have been educated to a surprising mental agility in connecting up dimly related flashes. But to the illiterate such a technique leads to utter confusion; their minds are not sufficiently versatile to comprehend these swift and sudden changes. For the same reason, each scene should be longer than is usual for educated audiences. More time must be allowed to follow the sequences of visual images, to read them aright and to benefit by their proper understanding.

The ideas which inspire this technique are neither new nor mysterious. Essentially didactic in approach, beginning with the known and passing by gradual stages to the unknown, they may be said to be as old as Socrates.

Besides being a powerful weapon for the gradual elimination of adult illiteracy, the cinema can be a medium for promoting that better social understanding which must be the basis of post-war reconstruction. The scope of the educational film is almost unlimited. It can be used to impart vital knowledge in such subjects as agriculture and hygiene. Its propaganda value is high; the right type of

film should help to promote goodwill between governors and governed and can be the means of combating swiftly and efficiently subversive propaganda by the dissemination of truth.

If the real aim of education is borne in mind during these early days of film production, there will be few reasons to regret the introduction of the cinema to African audiences. This aim has been interpreted by a great exponent of education as follows:—

“To render the individual more efficient in his or her condition of life whatever it may be, and to promote the advancement of the community as a whole through the improvement of health, development of industries, the training of the people to manage their own affairs and the inculcation of true ideals of citizenship and service.”

With the maintenance of this aim and a measure of control in the exhibition of films, there will be none of the unfortunate consequences which have followed the promiscuous presentation of unsuitable films to illiterates in some other parts of the world.

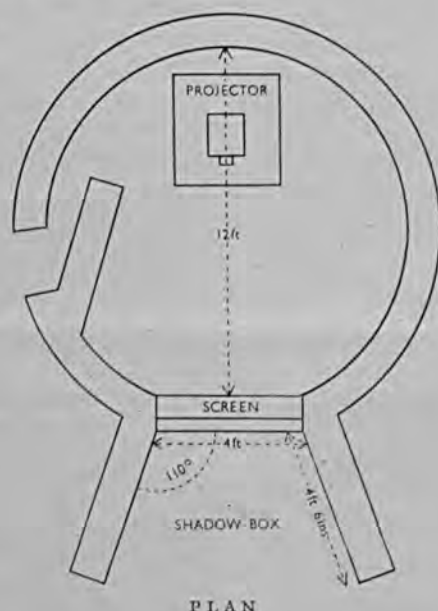
## THE VILLAGE CINEMA

FOR the mass of the African population, the exhibition of cinema films is restricted mainly to the demonstrations given by the cinema vans operating during the hours of darkness. These vans carry out their long tours according to a pre-arranged schedule. So vast are the areas to be covered that any one place is fortunate indeed if it receives visits on more than two occasions in any one year.

Many less important places must suffer keen disappointment to see the cinema van pass by during the day to the scene of its next evening performance. In many cases time would permit vans to show films to audiences *en route* during the daytime.

It is not generally realised that, given certain conditions, it is quite practicable to hold satisfactory performances in the open during the day to audiences of about three hundred people. For such a demonstration a small building is necessary in which to house the projection equipment. Films are projected inside this building on to a translucent screen placed inside two walls forming a “shadow box.” Pictures can be seen clearly by the audience standing or sitting outside looking into the shadow box.

Photographs of a model of such a building are shown. To make the construction clearer, a plan is also given. With



a real community effort, it is possible to erect a small building like this in a day or so. Local material can be used and the cost is negligible. Daylight demonstration can be successful only if the interior of the projection hut is as dark as it is possible to make it. If you look at the plan you will notice that the interior wall overlaps the exterior wall, thus excluding most of the light from the entrance. This entrance faces the projector end of the hut so that no light filters that way on to the screen. The walls should be higher than the ordinary hut; about ten feet would be suitable. If the walls are too low, it will not be possible to place the screen sufficiently high to give a satisfactory view to a standing audience. It is important that

the eaves should overlap the walls all round to exclude any light that would otherwise come in at the wall top. The projecting walls of the shadow box should be built out 4 ft. 6 in. at an angle of about 110 degrees from the screen. A good thatch will be built over the projecting walls. Care must be exercised with the construction of the front for the screen. It is as though one wished to build in the wall a high window the size of the screen. The distance from the bottom of the screen to the floor should be about 5 ft. 6 in. As already noted, the screen must be



a translucent one as projection is made from the rear. In an emergency, a stretched sheet will serve admirably as a screen.

In certain parts of East Africa, on account of the roofing material used, rectangular huts are in general use. It will not be beyond the ingenuity of those responsible, to construct a rectangular hut quite as suitable as the round one. The layers of mkuti on the roof must be denser or the hut will not be dark enough for satisfactory projection.

What can be done to serve the less fortunate people who live in villages off the beaten track where it is found impossible to send a heavy cinema van? Many roads which will not carry a heavy van are quite suitable for a kit carrier or light van in which the necessary portable equipment may be carried. Such transport has been used successfully to supplement the work of the cinema van. In cases where any kind of wheeled transport is impossible, the projector, generator, screen and programme of films may be made up into head-loads and carried to the village.

Only in villages where the cinema hut is available is a demonstration possible. It is, in fact, the key to all cinema development in the outlying villages. Every encouragement should be given to the people to erect the cinema hut and to keep it in good repair when it has been built. As a gesture of appreciation, a showing of films should be arranged as soon as opportunity offers after the hut has been completed.

The village cinema hut should be sited near the most central open space where there is likely to be scope for development. This initial effort has great possibilities before it. Starting as a projection hut it will, in time, grow into a larger building where it will be possible for the audience to sit under cover in some degree of comfort for their periodic film shows. Gradually the larger building

will become the village hall and the centre of the adult social and educational activities.

It will be particularly interesting to this Unit to hear of any early development in the use of the village cinema.

Many people with knowledge of conditions in the Colonies have seen the working model here, and the idea has aroused considerable enthusiasm.



## NEW STUDIO

The Colonial Film Unit has now got its own studio in London, and "Wartime Family" will be the first film to be made there. Hitherto we have had to rely on casual accommodation. The fact that the Unit has a studio of its own, small though it be, should help production and widen the scope of indoor work.

## STORAGE OF FILM STOCK

THE greatest problem with which the photographer in a tropical country has to deal is how to store the raw film. The combined effects of great heat and extreme humidity result in rapid deterioration of the emulsion unless the most stringent precautions are taken.

A certain amount of deterioration of the emulsion has been noticed in the film which is sent from Africa to the Colonial Film Unit for processing. Sometimes this deterioration is at the end of a reel, showing that it has occurred after the film has been exposed; but most often it is found at the beginning, showing that the film has not been properly stored before exposure. Although we do not know of any infallible method of storing film so that it is protected against heat and damp, there are two methods which have been found more or less effective; both involve a certain amount of trouble.

The first method is to store the film in a refrigerator; this has the advantage of being simple and easy. But it has the serious disadvantage that the film must be very carefully weathered when it is taken out for use—a disadvantage which may be found in practice to outweigh the initial advantage of easy storage.

The second method is to wrap the film tightly in several thicknesses of dried-out newspaper and then pack it in the middle of a uniform case. The newspaper acts as an absorbent of the moisture in the air, and should therefore be re-dried at intervals which will vary with local conditions. This method, though tedious, has been found to be very effective, and has no other complication than the packing and unpacking; weathering is unnecessary.

Both the methods outlined are of course makeshifts; it is hoped that Kodak experts, who have been asked to consider the problem of deterioration with special reference to the conditions which obtain in the African colonies, may be able eventually to overcome the difficulties. In the meantime, it is hoped that these notes will be of some help to those who have to cope with a most difficult situation.

## WORK IN PROGRESS

**British Sailors.** We are compiling from library material a film dealing with the daily life and work of the men of the Royal Navy.

**Home Guard.** The story of the work of the Home Guard should be of considerable interest to those overseas.

The film shows the ungrudging service given by men who work hard at their own jobs and still find time to train as soldiers; it shows the high standard of fighting efficiency that has been achieved by constant training.

**Wartime Family.** A film on similar lines to the ever popular *Mr. English at Home* is in production. It will show how a typical British family quietly settles to the national task of winning the war.

**Village School.** Investigation is complete and work will soon be started on a film dealing with an English village school whose curriculum includes "outdoor" subjects. The object of the film is to show the African that education means more than learning the three R's, and has a wider aim than obtaining a Government clerkship.



H.R.H. THE DUCHESS OF GLOUCESTER OPENING THE COLONIAL CENTRE

## NEW FILMS

## 40. PILOT-OFFICER PETER THOMAS, R.A.F.

Pilot-Officer Thomas, who comes from Nigeria, is the first African to qualify for a commission in the R.A.F. This film shows him on active flying duty and during his leisure time, when he takes part in the social and religious life of the station. Parts of the sequences showing his work have been included in No. 8 of *The British Empire at War*.

## 41. COLONIAL CENTRE

This film, parts of which have been included in No. 7 of the fortnightly newsreel, shows the new Colonial Centre at 175 Russell Square, London, W.C.1. This Centre is the vigorous child of Aggrey House, and is intended to be not only a hostel for service people and war workers from the Colonies, but also the nucleus of the bigger and more comprehensive social and educational organisation which will be needed for colonial people in Britain after the war.

The Centre was given an excellent start at its opening, when the ceremony was performed by H.R.H. the Duchess of Gloucester and was attended by the Colonial Secretary and Mr. J. L. Keith, the Welfare Officer from the Colonial Office.

## THE BRITISH EMPIRE AT WAR

*News Film No. 3* contains three sequences.

1. **Cyprus: Soldiers in Training.** A number of Cypriots are seen volunteering for the Army at Polymedia Camp, following the example of thousands of their fellow countrymen. Under instructors from famous British regiments they begin their training.
2. **London: African Seamen Meet.** Under the same scheme as that behind the Colonial Centre, other hostels for colonial people have been opened in Britain. One of them, Colonial House, is in London's dockland, and is used by colonial seamen while they are in port.
3. **North Africa: British Soldiers in Action.** This sequence shows an attack on a German position during the North African campaign. Artillery, tanks and armour combine in a successful action.

*News Film No. 4* has four stories.

1. **Uganda: Accession of the Kabaka of Buganda.** This is an interesting record of the celebrations in Kampala on the occasion of the accession of the new Kabaka.
2. **Gold Coast: Sappers Build a Ferry.** African sappers are shown building a ferry for the transport of Army lorries across a river.
3. **India: War Factories.** This sequence illustrates the importance of the work being done by Indian factories in the production of munitions to assist the war effort.
4. **North Africa: R.A.F. in Action.** The R.A.F. is shown in vigorous and successful action in North Africa.



PILOT-OFFICER PETER THOMAS



# Colonial



# Cinema

*the monthly bulletin of the Colonial Film Unit*

VOL. I. NO. 5

*Colonial Film Unit, 21 Soho Square, London, W.1*

JULY 1943

## FILMING IN AFRICA

IT seems generally agreed that the cinema is destined to play a major part in the education of Africa's illiterate millions. If the use of the cinema is to be fully effective and the interest of the Africans is to be maintained, the general atmosphere of the bulk of the films must necessarily be African.

During the present emergency, obvious difficulties exist which make it impossible to produce films in Africa on a large scale. Technical staff is difficult to recruit, fresh stock often is difficult to obtain, while erratic transport and travelling are at all times liable to interfere with planning. For these reasons the Unit must rely on the work of the enthusiastic amateur overseas for much of its African background material.

But even in normal times, when regular visits of camera units to the Colonies may be possible, there will be a great deal of scope for the amateur, who will be able to render much valuable assistance to general production. To frame a successful story, say on hygiene or agriculture, that will appeal to the huge illiterate African audience, requires the

knowledge of the expert on the subject, who has had experience of work among Africans. Many argue that it is easier to teach such an expert to produce good camera work than to coach the producer and cameraman adequately in the subject and provide them with sufficient psychological knowledge of the African to enable them to drive the lesson home through the film story which they are about to build. Perhaps the ideal would be the professionals working in perfect co-operation with the expert. The expert who happens to be a keen amateur cameraman may always be of great assistance to the Unit. If he is given a certain amount of guidance and adheres to instructions given from time to time in the *Colonial Cinema*, the material he produces should be a valuable addition to the store at the disposal of the Unit.

The raw stock scheme has been successful up to a point. Most of the material provided, however, has been of purely local interest compiled in newsreel fashion about events which are happening at the moment. Much of it is done without any serious preparation prior to the events and without the usual preliminary of a good shooting script. In view of the difficulties of arranging for professional productions overseas, the time seems particularly opportune for enthusiasts in the Colonies to give more serious attention to making films likely to be of more general interest.

It may be advisable first to explain the ordinary routine of making a film. The initial stage is the idea. This idea is developed into a story. Bearing in mind what the purpose of the story is to be, the matter is investigated from various angles with a view to ascertaining whether it will be possible to carry out the purpose. Contacts are made and promises of co-operation and departmental assistance when required are obtained. When the investigation is complete, a final treatment is written up in consultation with those able to give assistance and advice. Full details are included of the ground to be covered. The final and critical paper stage is the shooting script. In this script the scenes are broken down into shots and a description of each given. A bad shooting script almost invariably



"WARTIME FAMILY": THE NEW RECRUIT  
(After the painting "Raw Material," by Ernest Carlos)

results in a bad film. A thoroughly good script usually makes a satisfactory or very good film.

It is impossible within the compass of this short article to go into the details of film producing. What we propose is to plan a series of articles taking each section of the procedure and describing the gradual building up to the shooting script stage on which the success of any film depends. When one considers building a house, one plans it carefully and commits every detail to paper. From these plans one is able to judge what it will look like when finished, the amount of material required to complete it and what it is likely to cost in hard cash. It should be exactly the same when making a film. It must be planned carefully. Keeping the purpose of the film in mind, the

script must be worked out to achieve that purpose. Anything which does not help to keep the story moving forward must be eliminated. Consideration must be given to the length of the film as compared with the importance and interest of the story. When this plan on paper is considered satisfactory, then and only then should filming commence. Casual and indiscriminate shooting of film should be avoided. As a rule material made without any prearranged plan is useless for background or library use. To ensure good results the story must be well planned, the shooting script as good as it is possible to make it and continuity preserved carefully to ensure good editing. This question of continuity is of great importance and will be the subject of an early article.

## CARE OF RAW STOCK IN THE TROPICS

**I**N the May issue certain suggestions were given with regard to the care of raw stock in the tropics. The research chemists of Kodak, Ltd. have been studying the matter, and the following extract from their letter dated 9th June, 1943, will be of interest to readers.

The use of calcium chloride as a dehydrating agent in the tropics is not entirely satisfactory owing to its tendency to become liquid almost immediately in atmosphere having such a high humidity. We think that silica-gel will be more satisfactory as you say. Any grade between about 8 and 20 mesh should prove suitable and should be dried by heating to 400°F. or more, being well stirred meanwhile. It should then be cooled in a tightly closed container. This material should be placed in the bottom of a large tin and covered with a piece of gauze on top of which are several sheets of paper or cloth which serve to prevent any dust from reaching the film. It is very important with any drying agent to prevent specks of the material reaching the film or it is almost certain that results will be marred.

It will probably be found advantageous to dry a fair quantity of film at a time rather than 100 ft. rolls separately, although there is no objection to the latter course if you are using small quantities of film at any time. The space left in the tin above the drying agent should be as small as is reasonably possible, and care should be taken that the box is fitted with a very tight-fitting lid which should preferably be sealed down with adhesive tape.

A fair amount of silica-gel is required for drying the film effectively. Between half and one pound of the dried material will be required for each 1,000 ft. of 16 mm. film. If supplies of silica-gel are not immediately available at any time, a satisfactory substitute would be rice dried by heating to a faint brown colour or similarly dried tea leaves. Between two and three pounds of either of these materials would be required to dry 1,000 ft. of 16 mm. film effectively.

Whatever material is used, the film should be left above it for at least two days and preferably longer, the time depending on the tightness with which the roll of film is

wound and whether or not it has wrapping round it. It is preferable to leave the spool of film unwrapped but to place the wrapping material in the same atmosphere so that both are dried before placing in the tin. On no account should film ever be shipped back to this country with any of the drying material in the same container.

When the film is dry, it should be wrapped as quickly as possible in the dried paper, placed in its original tin and re-sealed with tape and paraffin wax.

A few points may be mentioned in case they are of any interest to you. It is the humidity which causes deterioration of film, rather than the temperature, although in regions of high humidity, the temperature has a marked additional effect. At 95 per cent. relative humidity, one week at 95° will probably be sufficient to ruin the film. In particular, the latent image suffers quite as much as the physical properties of the gelatine. Film should not be taken out of its wrapping until the last moment before it is required, and it should be borne in mind that even a taped can will breathe slightly and therefore fresh tropically packed stock should be forwarded to the units concerned as rapidly as possible.

During the time it has to be stored under tropical conditions, it is better to keep it out of unventilated buildings and very often storage out of doors under piles of bedding or other heat-insulating materials is better than storage indoors. In permanent stations, underground storage pits are probably the most satisfactory arrangement. Refrigeration is not altogether satisfactory as it keeps the film considerably cooler than is really necessary, and this leads to difficulty in bringing it back to room temperature afterwards without giving the atmospheric conditions a chance to do more harm than they would otherwise have done if the film had not been refrigerated at all. If it is possible to place the film cans sealed with tape and wax inside a larger container which can contain a drying agent and which can be finally soldered down, this might be a further improvement.



## COLONIAL FILM UNIT STAFF

IT is a pleasure to announce the appointment of the first African to the staff of the Colonial Film Unit. Mr. Fela Sowande has been released from the Royal Air Force to assist the Unit. His father, the late Rev. E. J. Sowande, M.A., was a respected minister of the Church of England in Nigeria.

Since Mr. Sowande's arrival in England in 1934 he has become quite a prominent figure in the musical world. His organ recitals have given endless pleasure to large audiences in England, while his broadcasts have become well-known to listeners in all parts of the Empire overseas.

While in the Forces he obtained his Fellowship of the Royal College of Organists with the added distinction of gaining the Limpus prize for his practical work on the organ, and the Harding and Read prizes for the high quality of his music theory. This indicates a standard of attainment rarely achieved by candidates of any race. It is certainly the first time an African has gained such high honours. He is continuing his musical studies, his objective being Mus. Bac. He has already passed the Intermediate Examination.

Initially Mr. Sowande's work is to advise on African life and reactions to films which are being made for African audiences. Later his musical talent will be utilised in the production of suitable music for the sound tracks which must be supplied with all films at no distant date. In the same way that films of a special type are required for African audiences, so the music which is to be used for these films must be adapted and given an African flavour. There is no one better fitted to develop this important side of the Unit's activities.

## NEW FILMS

WE hope that by the time this appears most of the territories we serve will have had copies of at least the first two newsreels. Transport is very difficult; and where we saw a possibility of being able to send a limited weight of material by air, with the likelihood of getting no more air space for some time, we made what seemed to us the best use of what space we had. Thus, some territories, instead of receiving their usual number of copies of one issue of the newsreel, have been sent a reduced number of copies of more than one issue. We hope that the people in the field will find that this was in fact the most economic use of what air space we had available. Other copies to the normal complement will follow by sea or by air as the Despatch Department of the Ministry—who do their utmost to get prints away—can find room for them.

### THE BRITISH EMPIRE AT WAR

The fifth and sixth issues are now released.

News Film No. 5 has four stories.

#### 1. NORTH AFRICA: The Allies bring Food to the People

One of the first tasks of the Allies when they landed in Algeria was to organise the distribution of food to the populace, who had been

## PRINTS OF FILMS

ON occasions there may be cause to criticise the quality of the prints of some of the films that are distributed. Even though the quality of the original film is everything that can be desired, the print made from it lacks that definition and quality that makes for clear vision on the screen.

It may be difficult for those overseas to understand how war conditions can be responsible for inferior processing. At the outbreak of war there were a limited number of laboratories catering for the comparatively small amount of 16 mm. printing that had to be done. It was not long before all three services recognised the value of the 16 mm. projector for use in their training programmes. The demand for 16 mm. reduction prints of these training films became so great that every available laboratory was soon working at high pressure. Some of these laboratories had already lost many of their skilled workers in the general call up for the services and were forced to carry on with less experienced assistants. Even though some of the old staff have been returned to this essential work, the strain on existing resources is still enormous. It will be readily understood that in these circumstances, it takes time to distribute prints of films that have been made and that the prints sent may not always be of a high standard.

While every effort is made to get as good a print as possible, it is necessary to ask our people overseas to be indulgent and hope that the time is not far distant when things will revert to normal. At present it is not a question of selecting the laboratory that will turn out the best work. One is given an allocation of so many thousand feet per month. One accepts this allocation thankfully and hopes for the best when prints are ready for distribution to the Colonies.

robbed by the German commission of at least eighty per cent. of all that they grew. These shots show the people drawing their ration cards and buying their food in the market.

#### 2. FREETOWN: A.A. Gun Crews at Practice

African A.A. gunners are seen at practice at Freetown.

#### 3. NORTH AFRICA: The British Army goes Forward

Sappers of the R.E.s go cautiously forward clearing the road of mines. Later shots show the columns of transport speeding along the roads already cleared.

#### 4. TRIPOLI: General Montgomery and his Victorious Army

The Eighth Army enters Tripoli, and after the formal surrender of the city to General Montgomery, the British flag is hoisted over the fort.

News Film No. 6 contains the following stories:—

#### 1. GOLD COAST: Soap from Cocoa

The manufacture of cocoa beans into soap is sketched from the raw crop to the finished product.

#### 2. SIERRA LEONE: Sailors in Training

After an introductory shot showing the smart bearing of African sailors, something is seen of the training that produces efficient and well-disciplined ratings.

#### 3. NORTH AFRICA: Winston Churchill inspects the Desert Army

This is the story of Mr. Churchill's visit to the victorious Eighth Army. The Prime Minister is met by General Montgomery at the airfield where he lands, and then inspects the forces and addresses them before he leaves.

# SCENES FROM "WARTIME FAMILY"



DAUGHTER—PEACE TIME



DAUGHTER—WAR TIME



MOTHER AND SON—PEACE TIME



BROTHERS—WAR TIME



FAMILY MEAL—PEACE TIME



FAMILY MEAL—WAR TIME



the monthly bulletin of the Colonial Film Unit

## FUNDAMENTALS OF FILMING

IN the article on *Filming in Africa* in the July number of "Colonial Cinema", we said that films for exhibition to Africans should have an African atmosphere. That means, of course, that they should mainly be made in Africa. During the war, however, it is practically impossible for the Colonial Film Unit to do any filming in Africa, and until conditions are normal again, we shall have to depend almost entirely on the resident enthusiast for the provision of background material. Some of that which has been received is excellent; but some is of much less value not because it is intrinsically less interesting, but because the scenes have been incompletely covered and editing is, in consequence, very difficult or quite impossible.

The letters which we receive from Africa often show that writers are themselves doubtful whether the films they send will be found to show all that was intended to show, and we feel, in consequence, that some guidance on the essentials of film technique will be welcome by our helpers in the field.

The enthusiastic camera-director will find his work much more satisfying if he will adhere rigidly to the fundamental principles that govern all good filming. They are few and simple; obedience to them will reduce wasted effort to a minimum. All those who work with a camera know too well how their pleasure is marred and their enthusiasm damped if poor results recur. If with each effort some little improvement is effected, one is spurred on to greater efforts. We believe that a careful study of articles that will appear from time to time will bring about that improvement and maintain enthusiasm.

Every time the camera is used, three essentials must be borne in mind. They are the *matter*, the *method* and *continuity*. The director must be absolutely sure of what his camera is to record, how it is to be established and in what way the scene will join its predecessor and successor. It is in clear appreciation of these three fundamentals that the whole secret of good direction lies. If they are always made to govern filming, the result should be good; if not, it will certainly be bad.

Let us take a typical case to illustrate simply the point at issue. The shooting script may read: "The man washes his hands in a bowl of water". This simple everyday action has been included in the script because it is significant. We may wish to emphasise the necessity of clean hands for a doctor about to examine a patient or perhaps for some one about to milk a cow. Whatever the reason, it was of sufficient importance to be included in the shooting script. Therefore we must make sure of the real *matter* of this scene. It is the removal of dirt from dirty hands. What is the best *method* of making this clear through the camera? The obvious way is by means of a close shot. Finally, we must consider in what way it is possible to join the shot to the one that precedes it and to the one that follows it; in other words, how are we to make certain of *continuity* through this scene?

The whole scene may be detailed as follows:

SHOT A.—The man walks to the bench (let us say from a shot showing him leaving his hut door). This could be a medium long shot showing the bench in full and the man in full. He picks up the soap from the bench.

SHOT B.—This will be a medium shot closer, to include the bench top, the bowl in the rear foreground with the man behind with the bench top and the man's head clearly established. He repeats the action of picking up the soap—this ensures continuity between shots A and B. He commences to wash his hands in the water.

SHOT C.—This will be a close shot of the bowl and the hands. The washing of the hands proceeds. This is the vital action of the whole scene, hence the close shot. The camera operates until the man removes the soap from the bowl and puts it on the table.

SHOT D.—This will be a similar shot to the one in Shot B, that is, the bench top and the man's head are clearly seen. The final moments of the hand washing are repeated—this ensures continuity between shots C and D. The man then walks out of the scene towards the towel, which is probably hanging near by. Similar continuity is preserved to the next scene of hand drying.

It will be observed that the shot has a beginning, a most important middle, and an end—all good work should conform to this general arrangement. The vital middle not only establishes the real message, but also provides for a reduction in the length of the scene if deemed desirable, once the message has been made clear. Note, too, the perfect continuity that is possible when the scene is being edited. Actions can be run smoothly one into another because of the overlap of the various actions during the scene.

The more experienced amateur will have observed the possibly more practical and expeditious way of dealing with the scene described. He would combine shots B and D when the camera is in its "medium shot closer" position, later introducing the close-up described in shot C with the appropriate overlapping of the actions for editing purposes. The shots are described seriatim for the benefit of those less experienced.

Not every scene can be established in a medium long shot, a medium shot, a close up and a return to a medium shot in that specific order. The example given cannot be taken as a fixed pattern for every scene, but it does provide a pattern for any scene of similar content.

All this may appear to be very elementary but it is the strict attention to these elementary matters that makes for good camera work. Summed up, good screen work is nothing more than knowing:

- (i) WHAT one wishes to show clearly.
- (ii) HOW one can show this clearly.
- (iii) HOW one can make a shot join smoothly with the shots that precede and follow it.



NURSE ADEMOLA (see *Work in Progress*)

## NEW FILMS

**THE BRITISH EMPIRE AT WAR**

The seventh, eighth and ninth issues are now released.

*News Film No. 7* contains three sequences.

- (a) **LONDON : H.R.H. the Duchess of Gloucester opens Colonial Centre**  
The new club and hostel for people from the Colonies, which replaces Aggrey House, was opened on 9th March. The opening ceremony was performed by H.R.H. the Duchess of Gloucester in the presence of the Colonial Secretary and Dr. Harold Moody. The arrival of the Duchess is followed by the ceremony and shots in which Her Royal Highness talks to some of the people present. Later she is seen leaving, followed by the Colonial Secretary and Admiral Bromley.
- (b) **EAST AFRICA : Sisal Production**  
This sequence sketches the production of sisal fibre from the cutting of the leaves to the shipping of the fibre overseas, and includes some shots of rope making.
- (c) **African Soldiers come Home on Leave**  
Men of the Auxiliary African Pioneer Corps who have been on active service for two or three years are seen on their return home on leave. After coming ashore they march off to camp, where they are inspected and congratulated on their service.

*News Film No. 8* has four stories.

- (a) **GT. BRITAIN : H.M. the King inspects Men of the Royal Navy**  
H.M. the King visits part of a fleet, and inspects the ship's company of a battleship.
- (b) **Pilot-Officer Peter Thomas, R.A.F.**  
P.O. Thomas, of Nigeria, the first African to become a pilot in the R.A.F. is seen on and off duty at his station.
- (c) **British Gunners defeat a German Tank Attack**  
A forward outpost signals to a battery the approach of enemy tanks. The guns open fire, and the tanks are stopped and turned back, leaving damaged tanks with their crews lying dead.

*News Film No. 9* has three stories.

- (a) **H.R.H. Princess Elizabeth inspects Grenadier Guards**  
A battalion of the Grenadier Guards is inspected by the Colonel-in-Chief of the regiment—Princess Elizabeth.
- (b) **Amadu Sokoto joins the British Army**  
Amadu Sokoto, a Nigerian, decides to leave his work in the fields and follow a squad of soldiers to their camp. There he joins up and is trained to drill and to use his weapons. He draws his pay and enjoys a good meal.
- (c) **Gurkhas with the Eighth Army**  
A company of Gurkhas are seen cleaning their weapons and sharpening their kukris in preparation for inspection. General Montgomery inspects them, and they are later seen going into action.



IN THE REST ROOM

## LIST OF FILMS

*As it will not be possible to supply the early numbers of "Colonial Cinema", the following list brings Colonial Film Unit productions up to date.*

**1. MR. ENGLISH AT HOME**

Three-reel film showing a day in the life of Mr. and Mrs. English and their three children.

**2. THE BRITISH ARMY**

Two-reel film showing the British Army in peace and war. The film was made three years ago and is now rather dated.

**3. THE ROYAL AIR FORCE**

This film shows how a plane is piloted and how the R.A.F. operates; like "The British Army" the film is somewhat dated.

**4. ENGLISH AND AFRICAN LIFE**

This film shows the differences and similarities of life in Britain and Africa—a woman taking care of her baby, a man at the hair-dressers, shopping, etc. It is self-explanatory and needs no commentary.

**5. STORY OF COTTON**

How cotton is brought to Britain and woven in the mills.

**6. GUNS IN THE DESERT**

This film, which was re-edited from another Ministry film, is now out-of-date and no further copies are being supplied.

**7. PROGRESS IN THE COLONIES**

This film shows how fine hospitals have been built in one colony and explains the work they do.

**8. AN AFRICAN IN LONDON**

An African comes to London and is shown the sights by a friend—The Tower of London, Trafalgar Square, the Law Courts, Buckingham Palace, etc.

**9. THIS IS A SEARCHLIGHT**

Explains how a searchlight works and shows it in action.

**10. THIS IS A SPECIAL CONSTABLE**

The work done by a special constable in a large British city.

**11. THIS IS A BARRAGE BALLOON**

The work of barrage balloons over Britain.

**12. THESE ARE PARATROOPS**

Paratroops in training and on manoeuvres. The material from which this film has been made up was provided by the War Office.

**13. THIS IS AN A.R.P. WARDEN**

The work of a warden in air-raids.

**14. THIS IS AN ANTI-AIRCRAFT GUN**

How an anti-aircraft battery carried out its duties.

**15. OUR INDIAN SOLDIERS**

This film was made up from material sent from India and used in other Ministry films.

**16. SELF-HELP IN FOOD**

A British family grows food in an allotment as well as in its



NURSE ADEMOLA WITH THE SENIOR SISTER



LEAVING GOOD FRIENDS BEHIND

**17. THESE ARE LONDON FIREMEN**

London firemen in training and in action.

**18. MOBILE CANTEENS**

This film shows the presentation of a Mobile Canteen from Kenya. Thereafter, the film consists of material from a Ministry film showing canteens in operation.

**19. EARLY TRAINING OF AFRICAN TROOPS**

This film was made by Mr. Arthur Champion, C.M.G. (in charge of the Kenya Mobile Cinema Unit) and re-edited by the Colonial Film Unit for general distribution.

**20. AFRICAN TROOPS ON ACTIVE SERVICE**

Made up from War Office newsreel material.

**21. COMFORTS FROM UGANDA**

A film which shows the pleasure given by furniture presented by Uganda to soldiers stationed at a lonely site.

**22. THESE ARE BREN-GUN CARRIERS AND TANKS**

A simple explanation of the difference between a Bren gun carrier and a tank. The material was shot by the Army Film Unit.

**23. UGANDA POLICE**

This film was shot by Capt. Roberts, Deputy Commissioner of Police, Uganda, and edited by the Colonial Film Unit.

**24. A.T.S. AND W.R.N.S.**

This has been made up from two Ministry films to show the A.T.S. and W.R.N.S. at work.

**25. RESCUE BOATS OF THE R.A.F.**

Based on the Ministry film "The Pilot is Safe".

**26. FIGHTING MEN OF THE BRITISH COMMANDOS**

Made up from material supplied by the War Office.

**27. RETURN OF THE EMPEROR**

Made up from Army Film Unit material, showing the return of the Emperor of Abyssinia to Addis Ababa.

**28. FEEDING THE ARMY**

A film showing how the British Army is fed; made up from material supplied by the Army Film Unit.

**29. GIFTS FROM THE COLONIES: Mobile Libraries****30. GIFTS FROM THE COLONIES: Katsina Tank****31. TAKE COVER**

The film is to show the A.R.P. organisation in a British town.

**32. CHARLIE THE RASCAL**

Reference was made to this film in the article on "Charlie Chaplin Films" in the December issue. Copies have now been released.

**32a. THE MAN HUNT**

The other Chaplin film has been allotted this number in the Colonial Film Unit series in order to prevent confusion.

**33. FARMING IN RUSSIA**

This film, received from the U.S.S.R., has been re-edited by the Unit to make it more suitable for African audiences.

**34. HEROIC MALTA**

The film shows the heroism of the people of Malta.

**35. MACHI GABA**

This film, which was shot in Nigeria, illustrates the increasing interest taken by tribal chiefs in the well-being of their people.

**36. TIMBERMEN FROM HONDURAS**

This is a record of lumbermen who have come from the West Indies felling timber in England and Scotland.

**37. LAND AND WATER**

This film shows something of the evolution of ships from the simple boat to the great ocean-going vessel.

**38. WE WANT RUBBER**

This film has been made to stimulate the production of rubber in the Colonies.

**39. BLIND PEOPLE**

This film shows that blind people can learn to do a real job of work as efficiently as those who have sight.

**40. PILOT-OFFICER PETER THOMAS, R.A.F.**

Pilot-officer Thomas, first African to qualify for a commission in the R.A.F., is shown on and off duty.

**41. COLONIAL CENTRE**

This film shows the new Colonial Centre at 17, Russell Square, London, W.C.1.

**42. BARLESS INCINERATOR**

This film shows how to build an efficient incinerator entirely from local materials. No iron bars are necessary.

★ ★ ★

**BRITISH EMPIRE AT WAR (Fortnightly News Film)**

No. 1—contains three stories.

(a) Battle at El Alamein; (b) African artillery in action; (c) H.M. the King inspects fighting forces.

No. 2—contains four stories.

(a) War against malaria; (b) Work in a factory; (c) North African captures; (d) With our African Troops in Ceylon.

No. 3—contains three stories.

(a) Cyprus: Soldiers in Training; (b) London: African seamen meet; (c) North Africa: British Soldiers in action.

No. 4—contains four stories.

(a) Uganda: Accession of the Kabaka; (b) Gold Coast: Sappers build a Ferry; (c) India: War factories; (d) North Africa: R.A.F. in action.

No. 5—contains four stories.

(a) North Africa: The Allies bring food to the people; (b) Free-town: A.A. Gun crews at practice; (c) North Africa: The British army goes forward; (d) Tripoli: General Montgomery and his victorious army.

No. 6—contains three stories.

(a) Gold Coast: Soap from cocoa; (b) Sierra Leone: Sailors in training; (c) North Africa: Winston Churchill inspects the Desert Army.





PRINCESS ELIZABETH  
REVIEWS  
GRENADIER GUARDS



GENERAL  
MONTGOMERY  
VISITS  
GURKHA TROOPS



(See New Films)



## WORK IN PROGRESS

**Wartime Family:** The shooting of the film with the working title of "Wartime Family", has now been completed, and it is in the process of editing. Judging by the "rushes", this promises to be a film of high quality and should be ready for general distribution shortly.

**British Sailors:** Giving some idea of the training, and the life of the British sailors on board our ships of war, this film should be an acquisition to the African programmes. It is almost ready for issue.

**Victory in Africa:** Many suggestions have been made to us that a complete film of the campaign in Africa should be compiled. The idea has been approved, and a film covering as many of the campaigns as possible is in the course of preparation. It is a big task and we hope the result will justify the great amount of time being spent on it. Such a compilation should prove of great historic value to Africa.

**Village School:** There has been some delay in the preparation of this film. After much examination and discussion, it was decided to make three films in a series connected with rural education in English schools. The first is to deal with several activities in the Rural type of school; the second is to show something of the agricultural and allied activities in the Senior school—such a school is for boys and girls of a normal age of 11 years to 14 years who are likely to benefit more through a craft rather than an academic training; the third film is to deal with the activities of Young Farmers' Clubs, about which we shall have more to say later, possibly through the medium of an article in *Colonial Cinema*.

Other items of interest dealing with production :—

- (i) Recently we received some particularly good films in colour from East Africa, taken by Mr. Arthur Champion, C.M.G. These have been approved for general distribution. We hope to be able to issue them shortly.
- (ii) For a news item in the current News film being compiled, the activities of Nurse Ademola have been filmed. Nurse Ademola is the daughter of the Alake of Abeokuta. She trained at the famous Guy's hospital in London, and is to return shortly to Nigeria.

Some photographs appear in this issue.

## CINEMA SCREENS

TO obtain satisfactory projection of cinema films, a good screen is essential. For best results the surface should be clean, flat and unwrinkled. Other qualities are dependent on the type of projection.

Provided the surface is prepared suitably, the gable end of a house or school makes an admirable screen for outdoor projection. The wall should be smooth and should be

treated with several coats of whitewash or distemper. Periodically it will require an extra coat of white to freshen it up.

When projection is made from the back of the screen or if the audience is to be seated on both sides, it will be necessary to have a screen of the translucent type. The screen supplied with the standard cinema equipment is of the silvered translucent variety. An excellent translucent screen and one easy to keep clean may be made with an ordinary linen bedsheet stretched on a framework. Directions for the preparation of screens of this type with frame and stand will be found in the red instruction book supplied to all cinema units.

Screens vary in size. The standard one provided is six feet by four feet. A screen of this size is suitable for an audience of about four hundred. Using this size of screen, the majority of the audience should be at an average distance of 32 feet from the screen. The maximum screen size recommended is twelve feet wide and eight feet high. With a screen of this size, the audience should be at an average distance of 64 feet from the screen.

Using the normal two-inch lens, the best size of picture is obtained on the screen when the projector is located in the centre of the audience, that is, at about the average distance suitable to the size of screen being used. This will throw images on the screen neither too large nor too small for good viewing with minimum eye strain. Other projection lenses are available for longer or shorter throws, but these entail a variable loss in screen brilliance. Within the limits of the screen used, the picture size should be related to the distance of the majority of the audience from the screen.

Due attention must be given to the position and fixing of the screen. If it is hung from a tree or from the gable end of a building, it must be secured so that it is not disturbed by the wind during a performance.

It must be placed sufficiently high for the people at the back of the audience to enjoy an uninterrupted view. It is a good thing, too, to raise the projector above the level of the heads of the audience otherwise some of the best accommodation must be sacrificed to leave a passage from the projector to the screen.

When the picture is being viewed from the back as well as from the front of the screen it may be found convenient to place all the children together on the side further away from the projector and the adults on the projector side. The fact that the children see the action of the film reversed does not matter a great deal.

Standing near the screen, the commentator will be able to use his voice more effectively than if the same number were to be assembled on one side of the screen. It may be an advantage sometimes to use two commentators; the usual commentator would direct his voice to the adults while the local teacher might give his commentary to the children.

One other small point is worthy of mention. The audience should be seated as nearly as possible in front of the screen; wide-angle views on either side of the screen should be avoided.

## SURVEY OF EDUCATIONAL FILMS

A YEAR ago a survey of existing educational films was begun by the Colonial Film Unit in order to discover which were suitable and which could be adapted for projection to illiterate audiences. It was designed also to select films which could be used for educational and instructional purposes among more advanced audiences and to ensure that subjects embraced by forthcoming Colonial Film Unit productions had not already been satisfactorily covered.

The object was to take full advantage of the work already carried out by educational film authorities, and it was decided to examine first those films which were listed in the principal libraries as being suitable for elementary school children. These, presumably, would have the correct approach and technique for illiterate audiences—a simple, single theme and a slow tempo. The films selected for review were those which would either broaden knowledge of background or give instruction in such subjects as local industries and crafts, farming, hygiene and geography.

The atmosphere of optimism in which the enterprise was begun was swiftly dissipated, since the majority of these films proved to be sketchy productions which were often badly photographed and which usually assumed too much experience. Often they were composed of cuts from longer films and were linked only by titles, so that there was seldom any real visual continuity. Only a small percentage reached the required standard, some needing the addition of a few shots, others the cutting of a sequence. It is now plain that the standard of elementary films as a whole is very low. Though films catalogued as being suitable for secondary education proved to be of a much higher standard, it became obvious that an educational library compiled for this country had a different angle of approach and could not be expected to provide for the problems and interests of colonial audiences.

It was decided to extend the field of research to the Government libraries, commercial educational libraries, industrial publicity libraries, commercial short films, amateur film societies and various other sources. It will not be possible to go into the question of educational films produced in America and other parts of the world until after the war. There should be a particularly promising field in the U.S.A. for two reasons: firstly, owing to the number of rich educational foundations, many films have been produced on a non-commercial basis; and secondly, there is a negro problem there which may be similar, in some respects, to the one in Africa.

Upwards of five hundred films have been examined so far, and about half of these have been rejected for various reasons, of which bad photography and lack of planning in the structure of the film constitute the bulk. Provisionally approved films have been carefully recorded along with a



*West African Editors with Secretary of State for the Colonies*

synopsis of their content, an estimate of their quality and the probable range of their utility. Most of the available films on the following subjects have now been studied:—crafts, industrial geography (agriculture, fishing, manufacture, mining, transport), science (elementary general science, geology, physics, zoology), physical training and sport.

Plainly there are many gaps which will have to be filled by the Colonial Film Unit productions, and many unsatisfactory films on important subjects which will have to be replaced as soon as possible. Certain subjects such as agriculture can only be covered satisfactorily by African material which relates their particular problems and methods to a familiar background. The exceptions to this principle are films dealing with the scientific aspect of these subjects which have a universal value for students.

This survey has its lighter side in the search for films of general interest which will entertain and at the same time increase background knowledge. Travel films contain excellent accounts of the lives and occupations of people in many lands, and there are many entertaining stories about birds, animals and fishes from which a great deal can be learned.

It is proposed to carry out in the near future a practical test with a representative selection of films which will be sent to territories in East and West Africa for trial with illiterate audiences, primary and post-primary schools, students of specialised subjects in trade schools and universities. From the results of this test it will be possible to assess the value of films produced in this country for these widely differing fields in the Colonies and to gain valuable information to guide the future activities of the Unit.

## YOUNG FARMERS' CLUBS

MANY may ask, "What is a young farmer?" If a boy or girl plants a row of potatoes, carrots, onions or other vegetables, or keeps rabbits for fur or flesh, or bees for honey, he or she is a young farmer. If several boys or girls combine to collect household scraps to keep a pig or a few hens, they are young farmers. In as much as they work on a co-operative basis, they may be regarded as a kind of young farmers' club.

The Young Farmers' Club movement was established in the United States of America early in the century and spread thence to Canada. It has become an integral part of the system of agricultural education sponsored by the U.S.A. Department of Agriculture. It now comprises more than a million members whose contribution to food production is of striking importance and whose influence on the life of agricultural communities is considerable.

The late Lord Northcliffe was responsible for the inception of the movement in this country after one of his visits to the United States in the early 'twenties. Between 1921 and 1924 the first Young Farmers' Clubs were started. In the initial stages, the clubs were concerned mainly with the rearing of dairy heifer calves and the encouragement of clean milk production. When Lord Northcliffe died, the Ministry of Agriculture assumed responsibility. In 1928, with the financial support of the Ministry of Agriculture and the Carnegie United Kingdom Trust, the National Council of Social Service undertook the central administration, and carried on until 1932. There were then 100 clubs with a membership of 1,500.

In 1932 the present Federation of Young Farmers' Clubs was formed as an independent national organisation under the auspices of the Ministry of Agriculture. Although there was acute agricultural depression for the succeeding seven years, progress was consistent. At the outbreak of war in 1939, there were over 400 clubs in England and Wales, with a total membership of 16,000.

The Federation was among the national youth organisations approved for grant in aid on the formation of the King George Jubilee Trust. That it was regarded by this trust as an organisation of the greatest importance may be judged from the following extract from a report on the movement made to the Jubilee Trust:—

"There is no other juvenile organisation which is based on the profoundly important principle of uniting vocational training with recreation. It is making a contribution to one of the greatest social problems of our time, the divorce of work and leisure."

Further encouragement was received from other bodies. County councils were asked to include grants in aid to the Federation as part of their expenditure on agricultural education. Much support is now being received from them.

In 1938 the Federation received strong support from the Board of Education, which pointed out to school teachers the advantage of association between the school and the Young Farmers' organisation. An increasing number of schools began to link up with the Federation. A definite chain was formed in the scheme of agricultural education, starting in the elementary school, leading to the Young Farmers' Club, and thence to the Farm Institute and Agricultural College.



*West African Editors visit St. Paul's Cathedral*

The chief objects of the Federation are:—

- (a) To advance the education of boys and girls under 21 and their knowledge of country life, especially by means of instruction in stock raising and other branches of agriculture.
- (b) To promote the formation of Young Farmers' Clubs as a means of achieving this object.
- (c) To co-operate with all other bodies interested in the furtherance of this work.

The clubs themselves vary greatly, as their activities are largely dependent on the age group of the members. At one end of the scale there may be a Young Farmers' Club at a small elementary school where the members, under an enthusiastic teacher, will be keeping rabbits, poultry, bees, etc., and cultivating plots of ground. At the other end might be a club making experiments with young pedigree stock and paying as much as £1,000 for a beast for breeding purposes. Another club may specialise in a pig-feeding experiment over a number of years. Other clubs may make a special study of the effect of manuring of root crops with different fertilisers. Another may choose as its main activity the study of grasses of various types. Each club in its own way is doing work of considerable educational value.

Meetings are held regularly for members, when—in addition to the ordinary routine business—record books come up for examination, reports on members' stock or produce are discussed, and as a rule a paper is read by some qualified individual or by some member well versed in the subject.



In the school Young Farmers' Clubs, an important aspect is the relation of the country school to country life. The Young Farmers' work may be related to the school curriculum to the advantage of both. Nor must it be supposed that Young Farmers' activities are necessarily to be confined to the country school. On the contrary, the extension of its aims and activities among young people in urban areas provides a source of accurate information regarding the land and its resources, and gives the townsman a better appreciation of the ability and intelligence required for efficient work on the land.

The influence of the Young Farmers' Club movement on adult agricultural education has been considerable. It is certain that much of the interest of the adult farming community in agricultural education has been aroused in the first instance through participation in the activities of their children.

Whatever the future of agricultural education may be, a voluntary organisation such as the Young Farmers' Club has a definite part to play in connection with it. Its many activities make a direct appeal to the rural boy and girl just at the time when youth is seeking for a means of self-expression and a way of life. Moreover, the movement is international and as such may be regarded as yet another medium whereby a better understanding may be promoted between the nations in the post-war world.

What has been done in Europe, America and Australasia can surely be done in Africa. In some parts of the continent there are youth organisations existing which really work on similar lines. With its fertile soil capable of generous production, there seems to be great scope in Africa for the development of such an organisation. It would be worth while if its only result was to stimulate respect for work on the land. It is unfortunate, but true, that education in Africa often breeds an unhealthy contempt for manual labour and even for the manual labourer. Young Farmers' Clubs in schools would help to solve this difficult problem. Through them young Africans would learn that the scientific cultivation of the soil is a matter of the greatest importance to the community as a whole.

It has been decided to make a short film on the subject of Young Farmers' Clubs. Those with special knowledge of the Colonies are most enthusiastic about the matter. Investigation is proceeding, and we hope to give more news of the film later.

NEW FILMS

43. THESE ARE BRITISH SAILORS

This film, compiled from library material, has been approved for issue. It is quite a pleasant film, showing something of the training of the sailor on land prior to joining his ship, and, on the completion of his training, giving glimpses of his ship board life. It ends on a suitable note with a visit of the King to the fleet.

THE BRITISH EMPIRE AT WAR

News Film No. 10

This is a special issue dealing with the final stages of the Tunisian campaign. The first part shows the great assault of the British armies and the entry into Tunis, with vast numbers of prisoners moving into the reception centres. The sequence ends with the placing of General Von Arnim in the safe custody of a prisoner-of-war camp in England. The second part shows the deliriously enthusiastic reception of the Allies by the inhabitants of Tunis and Bizerta, and a grand victory parade in Tunis of units of all the troops who won this resounding victory. The salute is taken by General Eisenhower, and the film ends with shots of the Allied commanders who under him made the victory possible.

NOTES

**HUMOROUS FILMS.** This Unit has been asked on several occasions for humorous films for inclusion in cinema programmes. As a rule the demand is for more Charlie Chaplin films. This is probably the result of the success of the two Chaplin films which have already been supplied.

In this connection attention is drawn to the article in the *Colonial Cinema* of December last. The difficulties were fully explained there. Such films need very careful selection. Many scenes which may be masterpieces of fun to an audience with the background to appreciate them would fall very flat in the case of the less sophisticated.

This problem of comedy films is kept in mind constantly, and no opportunity will be lost to find something to satisfy this particular demand.

**COURSES OF INSTRUCTION.** We are glad to welcome Mr. O. Waterfield, of the Nigerian Education Department, who began a course of instruction with this Unit in August.

In the same month Mr. J. A. Ballantyne, of the Sudan United Mission, who is on the staff of Gindiri Training Institute, Nigeria, also came for a short course.

West African Editors visit Epsom Civil Defence Headquarters







H.M. THE KING IN MALTA



H.M. THE KING IN NORTH AFRICA

**WEST AFRICAN EDITORS.** A West African Press delegation arrived in this country in early August on a visit.

There were three representatives of Nigerian newspapers—Mr. Nnamdi Azikiwe, editor of *West African Pilot* and three subsidiaries; Mr. Isaac Babalola Thomas, editor of *Akede Eko*; and Mr. Abubakar Imam, editor of *Gaskiya ta fi Kwabo*.

Gold Coast representatives were Mr. Robert Benjamin Wura-Ofei, editor of *Spectator Daily*, and Mr. Daniel George Tackie, editor of the *Daily Echo* and *Weekly Independent*.

Mr. C. V. Jarrett, editor of *African Standard*, Freetown, and Mr. T. J. Dephon Thompson, editor of the *Freetown Daily Mail*, represented Sierra Leone.

The eighth member of the party was Mr. Downes Thomas from the Gambia, editor of the *Gambia Echo*.

An extensive itinerary was prepared which gave them an opportunity of making a study of Britain's many war-time activities.

The Colonial Film Unit is following their progress with the camera. This tour of the editors should make a good film story. No time will be lost in sending it overseas for general exhibition.

**DESPATCH OF FILMS.** We feel there will be considerable disappointment at the delays in the arrivals of new films, particularly the newsreel series, *The British Empire at War*.

It has been impossible to obtain air mail space for despatches. Rather than hold up films any longer, the batch which had accumulated were sent off by surface mail. Once the first heavy consignment has been received—and we hope it will not be unduly delayed in transit—there should be a regular in-flow.

Altogether nine reels have been sent off from here. No. 10 is almost ready and No. 11 has been approved for issue. Although these newsreels will be dated, the majority of the sequences are of such general interest as to make them suitable for inclusion in a programme at any time.

**ACTIVITIES IN THE GOLD COAST.** Recently an excellent report was received from the Gold Coast giving in detail the general organisation of the cinema work in that colony. It is a most enlightening document, full of interest for those who believe in the future of the cinema in Africa.

So valuable is this report considered to be, that it is hoped to publish complete sections of it in *Colonial Cinema*.

Apart from the fact that it is always interesting to

know how the other fellow is tackling the problem, there is a great deal of matter contained in this particular report that will give every one who reads it cause to think. It is instructive for those in the field to find out, in some detail, how difficulties are being overcome in other colonies.

**VICTORY IN AFRICA.** A pamphlet has been compiled in simplified English by a member of the staff of the Unit giving the complete story of the whole of the campaigns in Africa. If approved by the Colonial Office educational experts, it will be issued by the Ministry.

This illustrated pamphlet should make a very suitable accompaniment to the historic film which is being made by the Unit under the same title.

**MOBILE CINEMAS IN BRITAIN.** It may come as a surprise to overseas readers to know that the mobile cinema is used very extensively in this country. This is quite apart from the mobile van schemes of various rural educational committees which exhibit educational films in schools in rural areas.

The cinema vans have become important instruments of war-time propaganda in the scattered areas. A request has been made to the officer in charge of this section to write a short article telling us something of the organisation and working of this branch of the Ministry's activities. It is hoped that this article may be included in the next issue of *Colonial Cinema*.

It should be of some interest to those engaged in similar work in the Colonies.

**AFRICAN OPINION.** We have just received from Kenya Colony an instructive collection of essays written by African schoolboys of different tribes after seeing an exhibition of films given by a mobile cinema unit.

As soon as space becomes available it is hoped to give some extracts from these essays. It is pleasing to note that some of the finer and less obvious lessons, purposely included in films by way of experiment, have penetrated to this higher class of audience.

While limiting the scope of the film to one particular subject, opportunity is taken in places to touch on some other matter closely related. If it misfires, no harm is done; on the other hand, if the points get across, it is another lesson learned.

These essays are of great service to the Unit from this point of view. We take this opportunity of thanking those responsible, and hope others will do likewise, in the knowledge that time given to this is by no means wasted. Such efforts will be very much appreciated here and may provide us with most valuable information.



*the monthly bulletin of the Colonial Film Unit*

VOL. I. NO. 8

*Colonial Film Unit, 21 Soho Square, London, W.1*

OCTOBER 1943

## MOBILE CINEMA WORK IN BRITAIN

THE war has brought many changes in the life of the British people. Thousands of young men and women were called upon to serve in the Forces. Large numbers of them were sent to training camps, the majority of which were in areas remote from towns. Factories for the production of war material sprang up here and there in places that were green fields in peace time. Workers were taken to the factories and accommodated in hostels built close by. Defence measures caused the posting of many service units far away from the centre of population. Hundreds of thousands of women and children were evacuated from the crowded areas in anticipation of aerial attack. More old and young people left the towns to live in the smaller villages when the bombing offensive opened. Thus quite a substantial percentage of the people came to be living away from home under abnormal conditions. To maintain the morale of all these people, it was essential to organise entertainment so that they would not be entirely without the facilities they had come to regard as part of their every day lives.

The mobile cinema van was used extensively to take films to these people. A vast organisation had to be built up to cope with the demand for film exhibitions. The mobile cinema vans proved a handy method of supplying the demand and the 16 mm. film was found convenient for all purposes. More than 5,000 film shows are now being given every week; this is exclusive of the private ciné shows of which there must be a large number. The total number of people attending these shows during an average week is well over a million. About 200 films a year are being produced specially for these "non-theatrical" shows as they are called. The production of 16 mm. prints is more than eight times what it was in the year before the war. Such an enormous increase has not come about without causing complications in the supply question. Is it surprising in view of this that printing difficulties have arisen from time to time? The development in this particular field in the short space of four years of war is probably greater than would have been made normally in the course of a decade. Though there is nothing novel in the idea of the mobile cinema, the scale on which it is being used to meet wartime needs is quite remarkable. Though many regard it as a temporary expedient, it may be that there will be a permanent place for the well-organised travelling cinema in the future to serve villages which are not large enough to support their own public cinemas.

All three fighting services were not slow to appreciate the value of substandard films for training and instructional purposes. More than a thousand projectors are in constant use to implement training the the Army, Navy and Air Force. Earlier instructional films, in many cases, were poor,

but with the experience that has been gained, general technique has made a marked advance and may have a lasting effect on the production of instructional and educational films in general.

To show the growing popularity of mobile cinema exhibitions, the following comparative statistics in respect of civilians attending these shows will be of interest:—

	1940-41	1941-42	1942-43 (Estimated)
Mobile units at work	72	107	140
Number of shows	21,000	38,000	52,000
Audience	3,000,000	6,750,000	10,000,000
Average audience	150	175	200

It will be noted that the number of shows and the size of the audiences have shown a greater increase proportionately than have the number of units at work. This seems to be clear evidence that the demand for such shows is rising steadily.

Primarily the function of these film shows is entertainment, but they can be used to convey information vital to the war effort to large numbers of people in an attractive way. By clever and entertaining films much has been done to improve security measures and neutralise the efforts made by the enemy's fifth column. On many occasions the travelling cinema has been used to give urgent instruction to large numbers of people. A typical instance of this was the instructional film "Fire Guard" which was shown as part of their training to over two million fireguards in different parts of Britain. Through the mobile cinema, the people have been taught to increase production of food, how best to fight diseases and how to preserve their physical fitness. Campaigns have been conducted through the medium of films to encourage people to save and to develop the salvage habit. It would be a difficult matter to list the many ways in which the cinema has been utilised to increase Britain's war effort.

One envisages a similar organisation of film service to the African people in the not too distant future. The existing facilities, inadequate as they are, contact an enormous number of people in the course of a year. There is much to be taught and an increasing urge to acquire knowledge. No other instrument is comparable as a means of conveying information and instruction to the mass of the people. Where the cinema is regarded as a novelty, it is unnecessary to lay any particular emphasis on the entertainment aspect. The future of the mobile cinema in the Colonial Empire is pregnant with possibilities. Those interested in the Colonial peoples' welfare will see to it that full advantage is taken of this modern method of approach.

## THE FOLLOWING IS AN EXTRACT FROM THE GOLD COAST MEMORANDUM

REFERRED TO IN THE SEPTEMBER ISSUE OF COLONIAL CINEMA

**MOBILE UNIT STAFF—THEIR TRAINING AND ATTAINMENT.** Each unit carries a crew of three Africans, including an interpreter, a driver-operator and an assistant operator.

**Interpreters.**—These were recruited on recommendations from the Principals of the Colleges where they had received post primary education. One has passed Matriculation and all have passed School Certificate. In addition, one is a 2nd Class Teacher qualified under the rules of the Gold Coast Education Department. The greatest care was exercised in their selection and each had to show evidence of attainment, far above the average, in knowledge of their own African languages and culture. Their preliminary training in the Information Department was exacting. A high standard was set and fulfilment was demanded to the last iota. In addition to intellectual attainment they had to show versatility, the gift of varied and dramatic presentation, and a high degree of commonsense and tact. Not the least of the required qualifications was moral and physical endurance to stand up to the very trying work and conditions of the travelling units.

Training began by requiring translation into the various vernaculars of all the talks and film commentaries to be used during the forthcoming trek. These were then translated back to the original English, without reference to the originals. Exactness was thus enforced and comparison of the interpreters' scripts so produced, with the original English, revealed any deficiency in understanding. The films to be used were shown repeatedly and studied to the last detail. The relationship between the film and the script was examined exhaustively. Interpreters were then left on their own to run the films through the projector as often as they wished in order to try out the timing of their commentaries,

since the vernacular versions are invariably longer than the English versions. The commentaries were then tried by microphone and loudspeaker, and any faults in the use of the microphone corrected.

During each interpreter's first trek he was accompanied for two or three weeks by the Cinema Officer, who gave training on the organising of a performance, the selection of sites, audience control, and the many detailed arrangements necessary to the satisfactory presentation of a programme.

**Driver Operators.**—The drivers so far selected have been fitter-drivers of ripe experience and clean driving records. Two have had training in automobile engineering in the Government Technical School.

**Assistant Operators.**—These are all young men who, with one exception, are ex-pupils of the Government Technical School and possess the City and Guild Certificate. Personnel in both these groups were given an intensive training in the operation and maintenance of the van and its equipment. The training began with a detailed explanation of every piece of equipment, including dismantling and reassembling the alternators, projectors and amplifiers. The correct method of operating was then demonstrated and the crew members made to practise this operation until they were perfect. Training in diagnosing faults followed. Faults were intentionally placed in circuits or equipment and staff was required to trace these and their causes. The quickest and most efficient way of finding and dealing with faults was demonstrated and practised. Cleanliness was insisted on to a most meticulous degree, a measure which has paid good dividends in ensuring efficiency and long life of equipment and in training the staff in carefulness and responsibility. It is interesting to note that after six



BRITISH SAILORS (Film No. 43)



WARTIME FAMILY



months' work, one driver operator, who had never had experience of an amplifier, was able to telegraph asking by number for the correct spare valve to rectify a breakdown.

It is important, when selecting candidates, to pay attention to the class of African, his background and education, rather than his previous experience as a mechanic. With good background and innate handiness an African can be turned into an expert operator. Too frequently, an experienced fitter without these qualities does not advance to more complicated, more delicate and more exacting work but remains 'a rude mechanical.'

*General.*—Apart from the initial training described above, training continues when the units are at headquarters undergoing overhaul. With the assistance of headquarters staff the Driver Operators and Assistant Operators carry out the overhaul. The Cinema Officer on such occasions takes the opportunity to give further instruction both in practice and in theory. A small technical library has been provided for the use of the Driver Operators and Assistant Operators. Similarly, when at headquarters, interpreters undergo continued training. They prepare the commentaries for the next trek of their van. They are supplied with copies of useful topical publications. They are encouraged to undertake wide reading and they attend the daily briefing of their colleagues—the African vernacular broadcasters—in the topics of the day and in radio presentation.

It is a striking tribute to the qualities of the staff themselves and to the stimulating atmosphere maintained around them that one interpreter is now preparing for examination for the Inter-B.A. degree in economics and the remainder have recently taken the Matriculation examination. The operators desire to obtain further qualifications but so far no suitable recognised examination has been found. The Information Department holds its mobile cinema staff in high regard as an example of the high degree of attainment possible when the right Africans are chosen with the right kind of education and given further training under the close personal supervision of the right kind of European.



EDITORS VISIT AIRCRAFT FACTORY



EDITORS VISIT MUNICIPAL FARM

## NEW FILMS

### 44. NURSE ADEMOLA

A film under the above title has been passed for distribution. Nurse Ademola, the daughter of the Alake of Abeokuta, Nigeria, was sent by her father to be trained as a nurse at Guy's Hospital in London. It gives some idea of the many sides of a nurse's training at a great London hospital.

Nurse Ademola has left for Nigeria where she will put her training into practice among her own people.

### THE BRITISH EMPIRE AT WAR

#### New Film No. 11

This news reel contains three stories:—

#### 1. PANTELLERIA ISLAND CAPTURED

This gives the story of the invasion of the Italian island of Pantelleria. There are some vivid shots of the terrific aerial bombardment to which the island was subjected prior to the landing, followed by the occupation by British troops and the surrender of the garrison.

#### 2. H.M. THE KING IN TUNISIA

There are some splendid shots in this sequence of the King's reception in Tunisia by the members of the Allied Forces. His Majesty pays a visit to the wounded in hospital.

#### 3. H.M. THE KING IN MALTA

The gallant island of Malta received a visit from His Majesty. There was great enthusiasm in the island and this sequence is an excellent record of this historic occasion.



LANDING IN SICILY (News film 12)



## NOTES

## COMPLETE VICTORY IN AFRICA

Considerable progress has been made with the film on the African campaigns which is being compiled from library material. As a preliminary many thousands of feet of film received in this country from various sources were examined carefully for material suitable for this film. Unfortunately there was incomplete camera cover for some of the stages which seem very important to the Unit in a film which it is making for African audiences. In spite of this it is hoped to compile a documentary which will have a great deal of historic value.

## AFRICAN EDITORS' VISIT

Our cameramen had a strenuous time during the period of the visit of the West African Editors to this country. An excellent pictorial record of this tour was obtained. The difficulties of editing such a film are obvious if interest is to be maintained and the length kept within reasonable bounds. There is, too, the question of censorship to be considered. Much that would be of absorbing interest must be omitted from the film for security reasons. Nevertheless, the film when complete should be a useful addition to a programme in any colony.

## COMMENTARIES FOR BRITISH EMPIRE AT WAR

Commencing with British Empire at War News Reel No. 10, we are supplying a full commentary. Recent news reels seemed so good and interesting that we were tempted to expand the short notes that had been sent with previous news reels.

We shall be glad to hear whether the new departure is welcome or if it is better to leave those overseas to make fuller commentaries from short notes sent with these films.

On the general question of commentaries, we shall always be glad to have the opinions of those overseas. A certain amount of information was gathered from the replies to the questionnaire but the question of commentaries is considered of sufficient importance to ask operators for special remarks with regard to their suitability. Criticisms will greatly assist those here who undertake this difficult task.

## A UNIVERSAL LANGUAGE

Recently there has been much talk and discussion on the question of an international language. A Cabinet committee is studying the possibilities of Basic English, the simplified language of only 850 words. Such a universal language would solve many of the difficulties which have to be faced when considering a sound track for films for African audiences.

Apparently it is not all quite so easy as it seems to be. H. G. Wells, for instance, points out that there are 39 sounds requiring separate and unambiguous letters. In addition, there are the accent and intonation indications to consider. There would be many difficulties compiling a universal alphabet. To illustrate them he quotes the word COP which spells "cop" in English but "Sor" in Russian. This one example eliminates C.P.S. and R. from the alphabet.

Mr. Wells is doubtful if the problem will ever be solved in a satisfactory manner through Basic English.

## CINEMA IN EDUCATION IN BRITAIN

Judging by reports which are issued from time to time, good progress is being made with schemes for the increased use of the cinema in education within the limits imposed by war-time conditions. The films used are 16 mm., both sound and silent.

The system of showing is much the same as that in practice in Africa. Mobile vans tour round; one type services schools where there is electric power while another is equipped with its own power. Daylight projection is also done, though of course this limits strictly the number of the audience.

If we can find space in a later issue, we shall try and print a report of one of the county education committees on film activities in its area.

## WARTIME FAMILY

The scout sequence, an illustration of which appeared in the July issue of *Colonial Cinema* has been removed from "Wartime Family." The scouts played their part so well, that this sequence was inclined to steal the picture and give an unbalanced effect to the film. It has been replaced by another sequence showing scout war activities on a farm helping with the harvest.

The original scout sequence will be used as a basis for a film on Boy Scouts which is included in the Unit's production programme. It should be possible to make an excellent picture round this sequence.

## RAW STOCK

It has been found convenient, owing to the fact that some stock has been lost in transit and some processed in Africa, to purchase 16 mm. reversal film from Kodak, without pre-paying the cost of processing. Stock so purchased is packed in white cartons with yellow labels saying that the company do not undertake the processing; stock on which the processing is pre-paid is packed in the familiar yellow cartons.

Since there is still outstanding a certain quantity of stock on which processing has been paid, it is important that roll and magazines sent to Colonial Film Unit for processing should be packed in the appropriate carton to avoid confusion in payments.

We intend from now on to number each consignment of stock exported, so that if deterioration should occur, we can inform Kodak which batch has been affected. It will be appreciated that this plan also depends on the stock being returned to us in its appropriate carton.

★ ★ ★

It is the aim of those responsible for the issue of the monthly bulletin to make it as interesting as possible to readers overseas. Criticisms and suggestions will be equally welcomed. A place will be found for any contribution that is likely to be of general interest.

Photographs, too, are always useful. All that is required is a good print; it is unnecessary to send a negative.

# Colonial



# Cinema

*the monthly bulletin of the Colonial Film Unit*

VOL. I. NO. 9

*Colonial Film Unit, 21 Soho Square, London, W.1*

NOVEMBER 1943

## FILMING WITH AN OBJECT

THE natural beauties of Africa and the life of its people offer illimitable material for films. The education of the people to a higher standard of life demands the use of films on countless different subjects. For those people who use a cine-camera in Africa there is never any lack of a subject; the difficulty is rather to choose the right one. It is because of this that for the requirements of the Colonial Film Unit, the work of the informed amateur may be of more value than that of the experienced professional. In his endeavours to produce first-class photography and in striving to obtain high-grade picture composition, the professional may introduce matter which, though ideal for more sophisticated people, may easily serve to distract the attention of illiterate audiences from some special point which may be vital to the proper understanding of the film. His inclination might be to choose the subject that would ensure artistic production; the informed amateur would be guided rather by the urgency of the lesson to be learnt through the films and how it could best be presented to the African mind.

The function of the cinema among illiterate Africans is at present purely informative and didactic. As a first essential there must be a purpose behind each film. It is the endeavour to tell the people what is going on in the various parts of the world and to teach them lessons which will be of lasting benefit to them and to their descendants. It is the man living in Africa and dealing every day with its people who can be most helpful; he knows as no one else can the requirements that are most pressing and the subject that is most likely to benefit the people.

It is often tempting to make a record of such special events as parades, sports meetings or the opening of this or that institution. Such films by their nature can be of only local and transitory interest. What is to the spectator a lively and colourful event, may often appear disjointed, incomprehensible or downright dull when only parts of what went on are presented on the screen to those who have not the necessary local knowledge. This is not to say that all such films are of no interest to other than local people. Some events of this nature will be found well worth filming; a few might have a sufficiently good story to interest people all over Africa and even elsewhere. This is where the operator must preserve a due sense of proportion neither under-estimating nor over-estimating the importance of the material he proposes to film.

Improved systems and methods of agriculture, the

principles of hygiene and their application to ordinary life, new and better housing, are subjects which will all have a real value to the Africans. Such films will be made with the definite purpose of showing the African what can be done to make life richer and fuller and of stimulating him to constructive effort. To this end, careful thought must be given to the content of the film. An African is much more likely to be encouraged to build good houses, for example, if he is shown a film of his fellows actually building them. This will be much more effective than showing on the screen the completed village after an expensive scheme of reconstruction has been carried out. It is far better if he is able to see the new ideas being put into practice by the people's efforts, developments well within the capabilities of the village people.

Similarly with agriculture it is better to work with the camera in a place where people are carrying out the experiments and not at the stage of completion. Not only is the lesson unfolded gradually for other people to see, but a lasting impression is made on the village people who are being filmed and the improved methods being taught are more likely to be absorbed. There is a large selection of agricultural films which could be of great assistance in the general drive to improve the diet of the people.

Subjects connected with hygiene, too, are endless. The very mention of the word "dirt" brings to mind many ways in which an improvement in cleanliness could be achieved through simple film stories. Gradual improvements in a village where a new chief with new ideas brings about drastic changes in the comfort of his people by working to the slogan "Where there's dirt there's danger" would make a first-class story with considerable propaganda value.

Rarely is one able to go to a place and find exactly what one wishes to film. Time and again the importance of the paper work prior to shooting has been stressed. It is essential to undertake a thorough investigation of a subject before any attempt is made at filming. It sometimes happens that subjects which at first sight appear most promising turn out most disappointing after the investigation has been made. It is well, too, to keep in mind the financial implications that enter into any particular activity or development that is to be encouraged through the medium of a film. It is a well-known fact that people's hearts often follow their purses. If a community realises the soundness of a scheme, it is the cash payment rather than expenditure in energy that is likely to limit the progress that is made.

## FIGHTING MEN OF AFRICA



NIGERIAN ARTILLERY CROSSING A RIVER



NIGERIAN ARTILLERY CROSSING A RIVER



GIRLS FROM JAMAICA ARRIVE TO JOIN THE A.T.S.

*The following is a further extract from the Memorandum from the Cinema Branch of the Information Department, Gold Coast. The first extract appeared in the October issue.*

## THE UNITS AT WORK

THE service is operated from Accra as headquarters. The country is divided into six areas, the Eastern, Central and Western Provinces of the Colony proper, Ashanti, the Northern Territories, and British Mandated Togoland. Each of these territories, though differing widely in area, has a density of population so distributed that one unit can cover it in a period of between four and five months. In consultation with the Political Administration, a detailed itinerary of a tour of any one of these areas is drawn up to cover each day and each performance of the complete tour.

In selecting the towns and villages for performances, the following procedure has been developed. The first itinerary was made up by considering an area by map and judging the size of villages according to the map signs. The order of the villages and the route were determined by what gave efficient coverage, due consideration being given to avoiding dangerous hills, poorly constructed or dangerous road sections, and such political considerations as the District Commissioner's headquarters, a Paramount Chief's town, special needs of a town or village, or the prevailing political situation.

The itinerary was then submitted to the Political Administration with the suggestion that villages of under 500 inhabitants were to be ignored, unless two or three such villages were very close together, when a joint show might be arranged; that villages of 500-1,000 should be given one performance; that villages of 1,000-2,000 should be given two performances, and that towns above this number should be given four or more performances as the population warranted.

This original itinerary was found to be correct in almost every detail and alterations suggested by the Political Administration were merely in respect of shifts of population that had occurred since the map survey was made.

Subsequent itineraries have been based on the original plans, the Interpreter who carried out the previous trek of an area being consulted as to whether previous performances were sufficient in number for each town or village, whether any points should be removed from the itinerary, whether road conditions warranted deviations, whether fresh points should be added to the itinerary.

The itinerary is strictly followed and permission for an alteration, no matter what the cause, can only be obtained from headquarters in Accra or from the local officer of the Political Administration.

After a maintenance overhaul at headquarters a unit sets out on its tour with Interpreter, Driver-operator and Assistant Operator, usually accompanied for the first few days by the Cinema Officer, who, satisfied that all is well, leaves the unit to proceed in charge of the crew only. A unit tours under these conditions for approximately two months, after which period a few days' break is made at some convenient centre to rest the crew and to allow for a maintenance check of equipment by the Cinema Officer. Experience has proved that a two-month period is the optimum time that a unit can be expected to work on its own without the personal attention and supervision of the Cinema Officer.

The Interpreter, who is in charge of the unit, is the key member of the staff. He is required to render in vernacular the various talks and news bulletins, to make an explanatory running commentary on each film. This must not be a



literal translation of the original English, but must contain such traditional allusions, proverbs, similes, metaphors, jokes, topical references and the like as will convey to the people the real inner meaning of the material in all the clarity and with all the acceptability of the local idiom. He must imitate as far as possible the incidental sounds of the film. The Interpreter is further required to make contacts with the village chiefs and provide them with the latest news in detail, and generally to supervise the efficient working of the unit in all its public, as apart from technical, aspects.

The Driver-operator is in charge of the unit and its equipment. Besides being an experienced driver of unexceptionable presence of mind, skill and caution, he is a trained fitter, and is able to operate and maintain without supervision by the Cinema Officer the fairly delicate equipment for long periods.

The Assistant Operator normally does all projection but is able to drive the unit and operate all equipment. At a pinch he can act as understudy to the Interpreter so that any two of the staff can carry on during an emergency caused by sickness, without alteration or curtailment of the itinerary.

Supplies to units on tour have not proved difficult, for the country is well covered with roads, and has an efficient transport and mail service, by which it is possible to arrange monthly deliveries of petrol, oil, and spare equipment at some focal point.

The vans give performances six nights of the week, and over the whole of the three years' period of operation, the audiences have averaged approximately 800 per night.

An audience of 800 has proved to be slightly bigger than obtains a satisfactory view of the screen with the units as at present constructed. As regards sound, audiences up to 10,000 can hear the loud speakers with ease but when the audience numbers much over the 1,000 mark, disorderliness is apt to creep in unless severely checked by the van staff.

The siting of a show is extremely important—the ideal being slightly rising ground to the rear of the van, which carries the screen and loud speakers. It is necessary to exercise the greatest care in arranging the audiences. The members of the audiences are encouraged to bring chairs and frequently forms can be borrowed from the village school. These are arranged in a semi-circle some 60 feet from the screen. On these the chief and his retinue are seated with all due formalities. This is highly important. The early comers may then occupy the remaining seats. The seating accommodation forms the nucleus around which the remainder of the audience gathers. As the villagers arrive, they are directed to the rising ground behind the forms. The children are seated on the ground between the forms and the screen. This arrangement ensures that no one is likely to obstruct another's view, and the audience is easily controlled. It also serves as a protection for the small children, who are liable to be trampled underfoot if an audience becomes unruly. A lamp fitted to the top of the screen to provide light during the intervals between films has been found necessary, not only to prevent dispersal of attention while films are being changed but also to reduce any slight tendency to friction in audiences. Isolated trouble-makers are thus exposed to the general gaze and come under the censure, unmistakably expressed, of the main body of the audience.

Log books are kept in each van to cover all important details, dates, place of performance, approximate number of audience, road conditions, petrol consumption, stores required, petrol on hand, and any remarks. A copy of entries is sent to headquarters every week, together with a short weekly report. In this way headquarters is kept in touch with the progress of the tour.

## THE LANDING IN SICILY



INVASION FLEET SAILS FROM NORTH AFRICA  
(News Film 12)



LANDING IN SICILY (News Film 12)



SICILY: GUNS IN ACTION (News Film 12)



## NOTES

## 1. COLONIAL EXHIBITION

During the month of October, a colonial exhibition opened in Newcastle. The exhibition is to be a travelling one and will visit in turn the big cities of Britain, spending a couple of weeks in each.

This Unit has arranged for a short programme of selected films dealing with colonial life to be shown at the exhibition. Reports show that the reception accorded to these films is most cordial. It seems quite certain that people in this country are very anxious for more information about our Colonies and their people.

The representative of the Unit who is in attendance is preparing a short article on the exhibition. This will appear in *Colonial Cinema* in due course.

## 2. WOMEN FROM JAMAICA

Recently, between twenty and thirty girls arrived in Britain from Jamaica to join the A.T.S. Our cameramen have followed their movements and we hope the net result will be an interesting item for an early news film.

## NEW FILMS

## 45. INDIA

This film compiled from library material, shows something of the life of the people of India. Activities in various kinds of factories are seen and give some idea of India's industrial war effort.

## 46. AFRICA'S FIGHTING MEN

Various sequences which have appeared in different newsreels showing Africans on active service have been collected together and made into a film with the above title. All who have seen it agree that it is excellent. The film was made for the travelling colonial exhibition in Britain but it was considered most suitable for general distribution.

BRITISH EMPIRE AT WAR. (*News Film No. 12*)

This is quite a stirring two-reel issue showing in pictures the full story of the conquest of the Italian island of Sicily by Britain and her allies.

The film starts with the preparations for the great event in the ports of North Africa and shows many of the 3,000 craft that took part in the great amphibious operation leaving Africa for the European mainland.

There are a few shots of Africans who assisted in the landing operations. For obvious reasons the dismissal of Mussolini from power is emphasised and the reactions of the Italians to this event are made clear.

It will be found that *News Film 12* makes a very good story of the first serious assault on Hitler's fortress of Europe.

## ON LAUGHTER

REPLIES to the questionnaire which was circulated some time ago have made a most interesting study. Those who took so much pains to answer this lengthy questionnaire will have the satisfaction of knowing that much valuable information was gathered by this Unit from the replies. One question asked for information about sequences that created amusement among audiences.

There has always been a great deal of controversy about the things that amuse Africans. It is a point on which we should value more information from trained observers. To those who know him well, the African's sense of humour is one of his most engaging characteristics; to those who are inexperienced, his reactions at times may be almost bewildering. Operators showing films to Africans may often have been disconcerted by the audience going off into fits of laughter at the most unexpected moments. The simple explanation appears to be that Africans do not reserve laughter to express only feelings of pleasure. They will laugh outright at any point in a film which they find novel or which they clearly understand.

Africans are by no means unique in this respect. A class of English students will smile and possibly laugh when they see the satisfactory result of a serious and involved laboratory experiment. A man may wear a smile while he relates how, in a motor smash, he barely escaped with his life. How many have smiled or even laughed aloud when they have been accidental witnesses to the dreamy pedestrian walking into a lamp-post or to the pompous citizen slipping

on a banana skin and sitting down heavily on the ground? Such a laugh need not necessarily denote callousness, in fact, the one who laughed loudest might well be the one to arrive first to assist the victim.

Where Europeans exercise some restraint in their laughter, Africans would more likely give full vent to their feelings and laugh heartily. They often laugh to express sympathy and they sometimes do so without realising it. It was noticed that Africans in a certain audience laughed outright at a tragic scene of a badly maimed leper who appeared in one of the scenes in a film. When questioned afterwards as to why they had laughed, they were quite indignant and perturbed. They seemed quite unaware that they had laughed and emphasised that they were very sorry indeed for the poor man they had seen in the film. A possible explanation of laughter such as this might be that it was the subconscious expression of a feeling of superiority roused at the sight of inferiority in the person of the leper on the screen.

It surprises many that Africans will laugh heartily at the sight of people on the screen eating and drinking. This may be one way of expressing a feeling of satisfaction about the action being done, an action so familiar to everyone in the audience.

From all this it becomes apparent that it is by no means easy to gauge clearly the reactions of Africans to cinema films. It is a task that requires an almost infinite amount of patience, a great deal of understanding and not a little tact.



the monthly bulletin of the Colonial Film Unit

VOL. I. NO. 10

Colonial Film Unit, 21 Soho Square, London, W.1

DECEMBER 1943

## LESSONS TO LEARNERS

NEARLY three months ago I started a course of instruction at the Colonial Film Unit to learn to make 16 mm. films. It may be of interest to others coming home on leave who contemplate taking a similar course to know something of my experience at 21 Soho Square.

The arrival of certain editors from West Africa coincided with my start at the C.F.U., and I spent several days outside the office with the camera staff who filmed the Africans' tour of London, Epsom and Birmingham. The C.F.U.'s two cameramen were most helpful in explaining their equipment and methods, and to them I owe such knowledge as I have of "shooting newsreel".

In the near future the C.F.U. is to make a film dealing with the production of margarine. The object of this film is to urge Africans to produce more ground-nuts and thus help the Allied war effort. Certain sequences will be filmed in Africa, but the main story deals with the manufacture of the fats in England and their value as a vital food ration. With two members of the C.F.U. staff, I visited a vast margarine factory near London and learnt how a preliminary survey for such a film should be made, bearing in mind all the while the motive of the film and avoiding all extraneous interests. Later, I drafted a preliminary first treatment for the African sequences for the film; they had to dovetail with the factory processes.

In this way I soon began to acquire a new and considerable vocabulary dealing with film production. I was no longer confused by such terms as breakdowns, fades, rushes, lavenders, wild tracks, stocks, pre-dubbing, loops, rough cuts, dope-sheets, etc., and I was in a position to write first treatments and to break them down into shooting scripts. I wrote a number as exercises, describing fairly simple activities in the manner in which they should be photographed into a cine-camera. It was impressed on me that a fully detailed shooting script is imperative to the making of a good film. A poor script very rarely can produce a good film. Shooting "off the cuff" (newsreel fashion) is a waste of good material so far as the C.F.U.'s work is concerned.

It was suggested, when I had been five weeks with the C.F.U., that I should attend part of a course of instruction which is regularly given to projectionists in training by the M.O.I. I enjoyed going back to school for ten days. In addition to taking copious notes at lectures and demonstrations, I was able to practise on various types of projectors and to learn a good deal about sound. After completing their training courses at this branch of the M.O.I., the projectionists make regular tours with cinema vans to various centres all over Great Britain. Some indication of their work was given in the October issue of *Colonial Cinema*.

Whenever there was time to spare, I watched and studied films which were being shown in the theatre at Soho Square. The films were not only those made by the C.F.U. and workers abroad, but also educational and general interest films made by professional companies. The officer in charge of this work views hundreds of films a year, making a précis of each and assessing their possible value for showing in the Colonies.

When mobile units are more organised abroad and the demand for general interest and educational short films is insistent, the index will enable suitable films to be quickly selected and duplicated for circulation. Unfortunately, only a small percentage of the films in the British film libraries are suitable, without considerable cutting, for general circulation—mainly because the technique is too advanced for illiterate audiences.

The time came when I was invited to make my first film. I wanted a simple subject which would be of general interest and some educational value to Africans. Model aeroplanes seemed to offer scope. I first visited the editor of the *Aero Modeller*, and in addition to making certain suggestions he kindly showed me a 16 mm. film he had made himself of models in flight. I was impressed by the great part flying models are playing in the lives of English children—from the age of nine they nearly all seem to be "air-minded".

Under the working title of "Little Airmen" I wrote a first treatment. It was considered far too ambitious for a beginner, but was a good exercise in careful script writing. After three further attempts, I produced and had approved a final shooting script. Two school boys, aged thirteen, were the actors. I had to direct, photograph and manage the production entirely myself. It was an entertaining experiment, and difficulties to be overcome cropped up frequently: the boy who was afraid to climb a tree and said he would tell his father if I made him; the plane that would not land without going base over apex; the crowd of idle watchers who always collected whenever the camera was set up and wanted to be "in the picture", these all called for considerable exercise of patience and tact. The secretary of the Streatham Aero Modellers' Club was a great standby. He introduced the actors, lent the planes, gave technical advice and encouraged the youngsters. Whether the film is good enough for general production has yet to be decided, but it served its purpose in teaching me a great deal about the scope and limitations of the 16 mm. camera I was using, and which I hope to use when I return to Africa.

To all who have had serious photographic experience in the tropics and who would be interested in making films abroad in spare time for the C.F.U., the course so generously offered would be of great value. Personally, I have enjoyed every day spent with the C.F.U. and only regret that owing to my leave being up it cannot last longer.

O. WATERFIELD

*The following is a further extract from the Memorandum from the Cinema Branch of the Information Department, Gold Coast. The first extract appeared in the October issue and the second in the November issue.*

## SOME AUDIENCE REACTIONS

THE average attendance per performance is roughly 800 (somewhat lower in the Northern Territories with their sparser population and awkward population distribution). In the first six months of 1943, working with only three mobile units instead of four, audiences totalled 355,000, that is more than one-tenth of the total estimated population of the Gold Coast. With all units working, the audience totals top the half million mark for the half year, i.e. one-sixth of the total population. The six months' period is the time taken by the units to cover the whole country, giving one performance at each point.

Audience reactions during performances are most marked. Exciting sequences are greeted by shouts. Something amusing excites spontaneous laughter. Normally informative and simply presented sequences are followed with silent attention. Uninteresting, poorly presented, or confusing sequences are marked by questions shouted at the interpreter, by loud disapproving comments, or by a hubbub of conversation in an attempt by the members of the audience to get enlightenment from one another. Thus it is very easy to tell whether or not a film has been generally enjoyed and understood.

Interpreters make a point of questioning individual members of the audience on the morning following performances. The highlights of the film are always well remembered. Even six months after, a crew on making a second visit to a point is greeted with shouted references to highlights from the films shown on the previous visit.

On one occasion a mobile unit was sent on tour with a recruiting party for military service. The result was a marked increase in the number of recruits. The films employed showed Army life amongst African troops. The rumour had gone round that the Army food was neither good nor plentiful. The films shown completely killed the rumour.

On another occasion, a unit entered a village where a funeral ceremony was in progress. The interpreter reported that the villagers flocked to the performance "leaving the dead to bury themselves". This is a remarkable occurrence, as funeral ceremonies take precedence over everything else in African life.

Yet another unit reported that their normal evening performance had to be abandoned at one point because of rain. The chief and his people made representations to the crew that the performance should be given at 4.30 next morning. This was done, and the attendance was as large as in normal circumstances.

These and numerous reactions of a similar nature carry conviction that the mobile cinema units are the most potent means of disseminating information at the disposal of the Gold Coast Information Department.

## WORK IN PROGRESS

CAMERA work is necessarily limited at this time of the year by weather conditions. It has been possible, however, to make some progress with the sequences of the Margarine film which have to be taken in England. Some of the African sequences have been received and others are expected shortly. In this issue will be found some photographs which have been enlarged from the actual film taken at the British factory. It should make an interesting story.



1. RAW PRODUCE FROM AFRICA BEING UNLOADED

## MARGARINE



2. RAW PRODUCE GOING INTO THE CRUSHER



3. PRESSING OUT THE OIL



## THE COLONIES EXHIBITION

WHEN the Colonial Secretary spoke of the relationship between Britain and her colonies as a partnership, he chose a felicitous word to describe a new stage of development. But the great majority of people in Britain still think vaguely of the Colonies as hot countries thousands of miles away and inhabited by "natives": they know just as much about the Colonies as the great mass of colonial people know about Britain. If the partnership is to be a real and close one, this state of affairs must be changed; and the Colonial Office and the Ministry of Information have set about changing it by bringing the Colonies to John Smith's doorstep in an exhibition which, during the next year, will visit some of the principal towns of the land. The Colonies Exhibition opened at Newcastle on October 4th, and was there for three weeks. It is at present in Southampton, and will subsequently visit Cardiff, Hull, Glasgow and other big centres.

The exhibition is admirably designed to give a clear idea of what and where the Colonies are, and of how the people live and are governed. Some of the principal subjects are agriculture, education and health. They show how improved methods of agriculture are being introduced, and pests such as the locust fought; how disease is being conquered through hospitals and good food; and how the educational system operates from the village school to the university college. Other sections deal with trade and industrial resources, and with communications, law and justice, culture and the Press. The exhibition gives in clear and concise form a good broad outline of a vast subject: it is not overloaded with terrifying statistics, and the exhibits are in the main excellent. The tsetse fly is there in person; so is the locust. Other insects are represented by lifelike models; and an *anopheles* mosquito, seventy times as large as life—is of hair-raising malignancy. In the education section there are books used in Colonial schools, and in the culture section are excellent specimens of art and craftsmanship. Two large maps—one of the colonial empires of the world, and the other showing forms of government in the British Empire—and a huge revolving globe, make reference very easy. There are a great number of excellent photographs of every subject from the fighting men of Africa to the baby in its bath.

A whole section of the exhibition is devoted to the war effort of the Colonies, and shows soldiers, sailors and airmen from the colonial empire, as well as the considerable financial contribution which the Colonies have made towards paying for the war. Special corners are given to Malta and to the many men who have done deeds of valour.

One of the most interesting exhibits—at least from our point of view—is a model of the cinema hut described in the June issue of *Colonial Cinema*. It was not found possible to make a life-size model and show films in it; but a device has been installed which shows lantern slides from the interior.

A film theatre is attached to the exhibition, and has proved to be a great success. All but one of the films shown at Newcastle were Colonial Film Unit productions, and of the 8,066 people who visited the theatre, 5,549—or 69 per cent.—saw a programme which consisted of "Machi Gaba", "Progress in the Colonies" (Kenya) and "Africa's Fighting Men". The films were silent, and one of the Unit's staff was there to read the commentaries. He reports that all three films were very well received. One devoted school teacher came day after day with different groups of children. The same films have now been dubbed with sound, and are showing to packed houses in Southampton.

1. WORKING ON AERODROMES ACROSS AFRICA

## AERODROMES ACROSS AFRICA



2. FIGHTER PLANES GOING FROM SHIP TO AERODROME



3. FIGHTER PLANES BEING UNPACKED



## NEW FILMS

## BRITISH EMPIRE AT WAR

## News Film No. 13

There are four stories in this newsreel.

(a) **Nurse Ademola.** These are sequences taken at Guy's Hospital, London, showing some aspects of the work of Nurse Ademola, daughter of the Alake of Abeokuta. A special one-reel film has been made for circulation in West Africa. This short newsreel version should be of interest throughout Africa.

(b) **West African Editors.** This also is the newsreel version of a film which was made of the visit of the West African editors to Britain. The sequences show the editors' visit to the Borough of Epsom, a visit to a municipal farm in the Midlands, and their meeting with Colonel the Rt. Hon. Oliver Stanley, Secretary of State for the Colonies.

(c) **Sicily.** There are some good shots of the famous Eighth Army commander, General Montgomery, addressing his soldiers. He gives decorations to many officers and men who performed deeds of bravery in battle.

(d) **London.** At Buckingham Palace, the King and Queen are shown talking to soldiers of a famous Indian division. One Indian officer is seen receiving the Victoria Cross from His Majesty.

## News Film No. 14

A full story was filmed showing the fine work done by Africans building aerodromes across Africa. These aerodromes played a substantial part in winning the great victories in North Africa. Instead of sending fighter planes, urgently required by our armies, by the long sea journey of 12,000 miles via the Cape of Good Hope, they were shipped in a few days to West Africa and flown in short hops to Egypt. It was the aerodromes built by Africans that made this possible. Large numbers of fighter planes were massed in Egypt in a short time.

Unfortunately a great deal of the film material making up this story was lost through enemy action. It was possible to make this short newsreel story from the material that survived.

## 47. A BRITISH FAMILY IN PEACE AND WAR

This is a story, told in four reels, of a British family in peace and war time. The camera work throughout is of high quality and the simple story is effectively told.

The first two reels show the various activities of the family under peace conditions when life was easy and pleasant and danger remote. Then war is declared and the life of every member is affected. Each one does a job to assist the war effort. War conditions separate members of the family; but all are brought together in happy circumstances to enjoy an evening meal together.

## 48. WEST AFRICAN EDITORS

This film gives an excellent pictorial record of the visit of the West African editors to wartime Britain. It is for circulation in West Africa only, but a shortened version has been included in *News Film No. 13*.

## NOTES

## COURSE OF INSTRUCTION

In the issue of November, 1942, a note appeared in *Colonial Cinema* pointing out the procedure to be followed by those who wished to take advantage of the course of instruction offered by the Colonial Film Unit to visitors from overseas. If the procedure is not followed, difficulties are likely to arise. Applicants who defer their decision until their arrival in the United Kingdom may suffer disappointment.

Those who wish to take the course should make early application to the Information Officer of the colony from which they come.

It is repeated for general information that visitors from any colony are invited to pay a visit to the headquarters of the Unit at 21 Soho Square, W.1, at any time during their leave.

SUPPLIES OF *Colonial Cinema*

Although an increase of 200 copies was approved some time ago, it is found difficult to supply new demands to the full. There are often requests, too, for back numbers of the bulletin. We are completely out of the May, June and

July issues, and very few copies for any month are available. It would be of considerable assistance if those having spare copies of *Colonial Cinema* would put them in an envelope and send them to Soho Square.

If you are receiving too many or too few copies of the bulletin, please notify the Unit at once, and the mailing list will be adjusted. It may be difficult to increase an allocation, but every effort will be made to do so.

## SERVICE WOMEN FROM THE WEST INDIES

A further batch of women recently arrived in Britain from the West Indies to join one of the women's services. Some shots were taken of them and will be included in a future newsreel.

## PRINTS OF FILMS

In a recent issue, there was a note dealing with the quality of some of the prints that had been distributed. It was explained that there could be little selective printing to-day. As all laboratories are working at maximum pressure, prints often do not come up to expectation.

There is another point, too, which must be taken into consideration. In compiling a picture from existing material, it is sometimes necessary to use second-rate film. It is often a choice between picture quality and story value. If the story value is high, some sacrifice of quality may be necessary. There may be no other material to use to complete a good story, and the reduction print suffers because of the inferior quality of the negative that had to be used.

*News Film 12* is rather a case in point. It tells an excellent story, but some short portions of the film used were not up to standard.

The difference will be seen when prints of the new film "A British Family in Peace and War" are received. They are of very good quality, because the camera work was of a uniformly high standard and it was possible to use the original negative to make the reduction prints.

## SOUND ON FILMS

With the prospect of adding sound on to our films we feel it is necessary to make the musical side of this sound as African in character and style as possible. This background music should be based on pure African melodies, and we feel that Africans should themselves suggest melodies to serve as a basis for music for their own films. We should therefore welcome any suggestions in the way of African melodies which our African friends may care to send us. These should be written in staff notation.

## COMMENTS ON UNIT PRODUCTIONS

The following extracts are given from letters commenting on the film "Take Cover":—

(a) *From Sierra Leone.* First may I congratulate you on the production of an extremely interesting film and on the variety of the forms in which it is being produced and on your new departure in producing sound films.

(b) *From Nigeria.* The civil defence films have been much appreciated by the local services, and the success of the lot is "Take Cover", on the script of which there was so much criticism from here. In this film, the best of a very difficult job has been done and it has received an enthusiastic reception.

(c) *From Uganda.* Particularly do I want to commend you on your choice of the film which showed us what life was like under a blitz in England. I very seldom enjoy a war picture, but this time I found myself spontaneously applauding when it came to the end, and everyone joined as spontaneously. I was seated among a mixture of Africans, and I can assure you your propaganda did go down this time.

# Colonial



# Cinema

*the monthly bulletin of the Colonial Film Unit*

VOL. 2. NO. 1

Colonial Film Unit, 21 Soho Square, London, W.1

JANUARY 1944

## FUNDAMENTAL FACTS FOR FILM MAKERS

**C**ONSIDERABLE skill is required to make a good film. Though any intelligent person can learn to make a competent film, he cannot expect any real success unless he is prepared to take pains to understand the fundamentals of the work. If he practises hard, and profits from his mistakes, success is almost bound to follow. This article is intended chiefly for newcomers to film-making, but it may not be without value to those who already have some experience.

Previous articles have referred to the content and build-up of the film; in this one we are more concerned with the actual operation of the camera.

*Keep your camera steady.* Perhaps the greatest difficulty the amateur experiences is to keep a steady camera. The best support is the tripod; but it may not always be possible to use it. Failing a tripod, a unipod may be useful while in an emergency, a firm support such as a tree bole, a wall top or a fence may be used. The tripod made specially for the job can be set up quickly and accurately and kept in one position throughout the rehearsal and acting of a scene. The term "scene" includes any action which it is desired to record.

It often happens that the camera has to be held in the operator's hand without support. As a living and breathing animal, man is never truly still. By conscious effort and much practice, steadiness can be acquired. A firm stance with legs slightly apart should be adopted. Incidentally, newsreel men use tripods whenever they can.

Panning shots and shots from a moving support should be avoided whenever possible. They are inclined to confuse the minds of unsophisticated audiences for whom the bulk of the Unit's films are made. If the necessity arises to take shots from a moving vehicle, it is advisable to clamp the camera support to its body.

When you are filming, remember you are trying to say something in pictures. *If you do not know beforehand exactly what you want to say, you will not know where to point your camera.* Make up your mind and do not change it. A well-prepared script will prevent all uncertainty; with its help you will be able to aim the camera to get exactly what you want for any particular shot. Once the camera is allowed to wander aimlessly from one point to another in the hope that there may be a lucky hit, the result is certain to reflect the indecision of the operator.

*Tilting and panning.* These words describe the operations of swinging the camera up and down and from side to

side during a shot. It may sometimes be desirable to pan or tilt to follow a moving object. Never move the camera haphazardly; move it directly up and down or from side to side and in no other direction. Always start with some significant object and move to another, dwelling for a short period both at the beginning and at the end of the shot. Do not go straight into a pan at the beginning of a shot or cut with the camera still moving, except when you have planned a chain of two or more shots indicating continuous movement in one direction. Normally, the camera should dwell for a short period at the beginning and end of a chain of shots.

*Take sufficient material.* In recording an action, select your viewpoint carefully, have a rehearsal if possible, and then see that you get the whole action. A tripod will enable you to set up the camera to cover a pre-determined area and to keep it trained in that direction. Action can then be controlled to take place within that area. Start a little before the required movement begins and end a little after it finishes. If you have taken too much, the editor can always cut it out; but he cannot add what you have failed to record. Try to get the shot right first time, or at most in two goes, planning and checking carefully each time. Do not take half a dozen shots in the hope that one may do. Probably none of them will be good enough; besides which film stock is scarce.

No shot should last so long that the camera motor runs down before it is completed. That limitation should enter into your shot-planning. In any case cultivate the habit of always winding up the camera motor the moment you have completed a shot and you will not have a run-down motor in the middle of an important shot. That habit will stand you in good stead when you are taking newsreel type of material.

*Practise camera operation.* Each shot involves a number of considerations—correct exposure, correct focus, correct sighting, correct camera control, correct picture content. The purely physical actions should be so automatic that you need never think about them. That proficiency can be attained by adopting a particular sequence of movements, and practising them. You can try at first with an empty camera. Every person has his own preferences, but a typical sequence is as follows:—Set lens diaphragm for exposure; set lens for correct focus; check winding of motor by trying winding handle; sight camera on subject; press exposure button; release exposure button; observe footage meter to see that sufficient film remains for the next shot; rewind motor; note details of your shot on a pad.



## VICTORY IN THE MAKING



*Above : AT CAIRO*

*Below : AT TEHRAN*





## MOVIES IN THE BACK OF BEYOND

(CONTRIBUTED)

*"Massa dis na de good ting you bring for we country. Since white man dey come for dis country we never see dis kind ting before. I wonder me too mus."*

THESE were the words of Mr. Ehihia, the garden boy attached to the District Office here, on the first night when the Cinema Unit of the Information Office screened their pictures in Afikpo.

Afikpo had never seen movies before. You can imagine what excitement these pictures created here. The third night of the show brought in "fans" from every village. It occurred to me that missionaries should consider the tremendous possibilities of the cinema when dealing with Africans like these, who for so many years have made themselves impervious to outside influence.

One night I decided to be late for the picture. I thought I would try to decipher how the mentality of the natives reacted under the influence of this picture propaganda. I descended from the hill on which my house was built and stood at the foot of it, just where two roads adopted a single course to our stadium. I saw old men, old women, girls and boys hurrying to take some vantage posts in the stadium. I was amused, for the conversation of these people centred round two things, the praise of Churchill and the rascality of Charlie. Then I observed that even the girls left their houses. This will not seem anything strange to many readers. But I must say with experience that it takes time to manufacture an interest capable of arousing an Afikpo girl or woman to leave her house in the day or in the night. I'd been a picture fan for many years. Most times, I visited the picture houses in other countries not for the fun of the pictures but to read the behaviour of picture lovers. The people here are simply marvellous. They are hero worshippers. They express very great interest in the war work of the Empire. They have shown an interest

that is not merely primitive, but loving. There was an old woman who, in spite of her age, dragged herself on her crutches to the field. I heard her say, "If I can see this picture before I die, I shall thank my God."

The war effort of the Empire was much applauded. Pictures depicting various African industries were hot favourites. The women expressed the hope that some day pictures of their pottery and ground-nuts industry will be made. It is not possible, however, to take pictures of every place, but Afikpo deserves a place in the picture propaganda.

The picture showing West African soldiers in action in East Africa excited feelings of bravery. Some mothers actually believed that they had seen their sons in action in the pictures. "That's Obio," one shouted. "Oh, that's Agbi," another put in. And so for some minutes every one shouted the name of his friend or relative, or son. The smart forms of the soldiers in uniform, the speed and strength of tanks, the air battles, the rescuing of prisoners, the bravery of commandos—all these are pictures that will remain long in many hearts. The King was applauded every time he was seen, and more so when he returned salutations.

After four nights of screening in Afikpo, a dash was made for Nguzu Edda, a town on a hill, and situated 21 miles from Afikpo. Here the natives showed very great interest in this "magic of the white man", as they call the cinema here. After two nights at Nguzu, more days were spent in Afikpo. It was not possible to screen pictures at Owutu, as the projector was damaged.

The Unit left Afikpo on the 25th October, after twenty days' stay.

The following is a further extract from the Gold Coast Memorandum on the work of the Cinema Branch of the Information Office.

## PROGRAMMES

THE programme consists of five or six films of a varied nature, interspersed with music and talks; a typical programme is as follows:—

1. Loud martial music or recordings of vernacular songs popular locally, directed to the village to bring the audience to the van. (15-30 minutes.)
2. Opening talk, dealing with the reason for the van's presence, the care of Britain for colonial peoples, the African family life and strong feeling for the land, and the attempts of the Nazis to destroy in occupied Europe the similar ways of life and to filch the ownership of land and the fruits of the soil.
3. Film: *Empire's New Armies*—Army training from various parts of the Empire, the aim being to stress the power of the Empire.
4. Recorded music.
5. News of the week. External and internal. The trends of the war.
6. Film: *Searchlight and Anti-aircraft Gun*, or other film explanatory of modern war weapons. This series has been running for some time as a preliminary training of the audiences in preparation for newsreels.
7. Recorded music.

8. Topical talk—Grow more food, Save more money, Crack more palm kernels, Tap more rubber—according to the local need of the moment.
9. Film: *An African in London*. A short tour of some of London's landmarks with a well known West African from Nigeria in the principal role, developing the idea that all are members of the Empire, that all may look to the imperial centre, that all are welcome there, and that there is opportunity for all irrespective of race or creed.
10. Message from Governor, Resident Minister, Provincial Commissioner, or District Commissioner on the need of the moment.
11. Film: *Self Help in Food*—or other film illustrating the war effort of the common man of the type of an educated British craftsman, with his wife and child doing a little extra for the war.
12. Closing talk: Remember what you have seen: the Empire is strong; all are members and are safe and free within it. Every one must do his bit towards winning the war. You have been told what you can do to help. The truth has been shown; avoid rumour.
13. Entertainment film.
14. The King.

In addition, films of more local interest are carried. These are very few, and urgently require to be supplemented, though the necessary organisation and personnel to do so will have to be developed. These films deal with the local African troops and with social and health matters, though in very general terms they are added to the programme at points where more than one performance is given. The second performance has a strong bias to social and health matters. At schools, colleges and other places where the audiences are educated above the average, these films are featured together with films of social advancement in Britain of which a notable example is the film *Mr. English at Home*.

Special films for specialised audiences are also available as, for example, Air Raid Precautions films and films of interest to Home Guard groups.

Until recently, the interpreters on tour have kept in touch with world news by studying advance copies of the news summary specially written for the Information Department's weekly publication *Empire at War*, and by a weekly packet of copies of the scripts of the vernacular broadcasts put out daily by the Information Department from Accra. These comprise news, both external and internal, and talks and dramatisation on topical subjects external and internal. Mobile units are now being provided with wireless receiving sets to enable the crews, wherever they may be, to pick up the vernacular broadcasts direct from Accra. This enables the interpreters to keep abreast of world events and to give the chiefs and villagers accurate and up-to-date news, before garbled and inaccurate versions arrive with the next day's lorry drivers from the bigger centres. Furthermore, the interpreter has the advantage of studying how material is being presented by the headquarters staff specially responsible for such work.

In the Northern Territories, which can be covered only once annually because of the impassability of many roads during the wet season, a news summary of world news for the past six to nine months is given, as in remote spots the inhabitants are completely out of touch with outside news and have no background knowledge into which they may fit a weekly news bulletin.

## NEW FILMS

### BRITISH EMPIRE AT WAR

#### *News Film No. 15*

This newsreel tells the story of the Allied landings in Italy. It covers the landing at Salerno as well as the attack on Italy's toe. The reception in London of the news of the surrender of Italy is shown. There are also some excellent shots of the units of the Italian Navy sailing in the British Naval base in Malta to give themselves up to Admiral Cunningham, Commander-in-Chief of the Allied naval forces. It makes a stirring story and should be well received.

#### 46a. AFRICA'S FIGHTING MEN (SOUND)

There have been so many calls for this picture that a sound version has been made. One 35 mm. copy is being sent to the Principal Information Office in Nairobi and one to Accra. Those having 35 mm. projection equipment and wishing to show the film should make application to obtain a copy on loan.

#### 48a. WEST AFRICAN EDITORS (SOUND)

This 35 mm. sound version of *West African Editors* is for commercial circulation in West Africa. One copy of the film is being sent to the Principal Information Office, Nairobi. Any of the East African Territories wishing to show the film should apply to obtain it on loan.

#### 49. PROGRESS IN THE COLONIES (KENYA)

This is a film made from material taken by Mr. A. M. Champion, C.M.G., in Kenya Colony. A version was prepared for the Colonies Exhibition which is visiting the big towns in Britain. It may not be possible to distribute copies of the film in colour. If the shortage of Kodachrome continues, monochrome copies will be distributed.

## NOTES

### CINEMA IN NORTHERN RHODESIA

An interesting report has been received from Northern Rhodesia on the development of the cinema in that colony. In addition to the general problem of providing cinema shows for the illiterate masses, there is the more complicated one of catering for the workers in the copper belt. These Africans have been accustomed to seeing regular weekly programmes of commercial sound films for more than seven years. Though they may be regarded as a sophisticated film audience, it seems they have not been spoiled for a good African film. The Colonial Film Unit's *An African in London* was an outstanding success.

### CONFERENCES IN NEAR EAST

It has been possible to obtain some excellent material of the two historic conferences which were held recently in Cairo and Teheran. This material should make a very good story which we shall endeavour to put on the distribution list as soon as possible.

All the photographs in this issue are of people attending one or both of the conferences. They are all enlargements done by the Unit's technicians from the actual film taken.

### FILM ON MARGARINE

Considerable progress has been made with this production. Further sequences of good quality have been received from Africa. It should make a good story with a wide appeal to all those who are concerned in producing the raw materials.

### GLOSSARY OF FILM TERMS

The cinema world has a language of its own. Though we endeavour, as far as possible, to avoid technicalities in our articles, there are certain common terms which have become recognised film vocabulary and which should be known to all those concerned with films. It is proposed to compile a short glossary of film terms for publication in an early issue of *Colonial Cinema*.

### NEW CINEMA VANS

After many delays caused chiefly by questions of equipment, the first of the new sound cinema vans is expected to be ready for delivery early in the New Year. Others will follow in fairly rapid succession.

While every effort has been made to retain the high standard of material that is essential to withstand the strain of mobile work on African roads, it must be borne in mind that components which experience has proved to be indispensable may be impossible to obtain in wartime.

For this reason extra care and attention should be given to the maintenance of the new vans, as some of the equipment may not be so robust as in the original vans.

The question of priorities is receiving careful consideration. It is impossible to satisfy everybody at once, but we know that officers will appreciate the difficulty of providing adequate quantities of equipment in wartime.

### RAW STOCK

Owing to a change in conditions and prices, 16 mm. raw film stock will henceforward be bought at a price which includes the charge for processing and will therefore be supplied in the familiar yellow cartons. It will be appreciated if film on which the processing charge has not been paid (i.e. that packed in white cartons with yellow labels) is returned in the original carton.



the monthly bulletin of the Colonial Film Unit

VOL. 2. NO. 2

Colonial Film Unit, 21 Soho Square, London, W.1

FEBRUARY 1944

## MASS EDUCATION IN AFRICAN SOCIETY

THE REPORT under the above title recently issued by H.M. Stationery Office is a document of historic importance to the people of Africa. It is the work of a Sub-committee of the Advisory Committee on Education in the Colonies.

Interested though they will be in the report as a whole, readers of the bulletin will no doubt wish to have full information about the suggestions of the Sub-committee with regard to the use of the cinema in the general scheme of mass education. The extensive section dealing with the cinema is some indication of the importance which the Sub-committee attaches to it.

Owing to the lack of evidence about the effect of films in any educational sense on colonial peoples, coupled with the fact that the cinema is universally popular, the report sounds a note of warning about laying undue emphasis on its reception and effectiveness among backward people. The cinema must be regarded as supplementary to, and not a substitute for, the teacher. At the same time, it is pointed out that the extent to which the cinema may be used in mass education is obviously very great. It can cater for large audiences, unlimited copies of a film can be produced and colonial peoples are as much attracted by it as are any others.

The report then indicates the types of film which appear to be necessary as an aid to mass education.

- (a) *News Films* of world, regional and local events. If carefully selected, regional and local news items could create a healthy local rivalry in many activities which form part of a mass education movement.
- (b) *Documentary films* designed to extend people's knowledge of the outside world, of the territory itself and of the region in which it is situated.

Plans to set up new forms of organisation, such as trade unions, co-operative societies and local governments, would be greatly assisted by films showing such organisations in action elsewhere. The introduction of new crafts and small-scale industrial undertakings can be facilitated by suitable films.

- (c) *Films to demonstrate a technique or experiment.* A film may demonstrate to a large audience a complex manual operation or a laboratory experiment that could otherwise be shown efficiently only to very small groups. Sequences of operations about such projects as laying out a football field or building a kiln may be clearly established through a film.

- (d) *Entertainment films.* Mass education movements must provide liberally for entertainment even after allowance has been made for music and talks. There is scope for material for such films in the history and folk lore of colonial peoples.

Search should be made for what is suitable among entertainment and documentary films produced in Europe and America and libraries of these films established.

In speaking of the needs of colonial peoples in general, the report says experience has confirmed that films produced in Europe and America are unsuitable for large sections of the colonial peoples. Short sequences, quick transitions and the various trick shots common to modern production, perplex the relatively uneducated as well as the more primitive people. A special type of film is necessary, produced by individuals with a first hand knowledge of the limitations of those they seek to educate. If the films are to be educationally effective, those who prepare scripts should have an extensive sociological knowledge of their audiences. It is important they should know about the sense of humour peculiar to the people, their standards of morality and their religious beliefs. As time goes on, the films themselves will give a gradual training in comprehending the more difficult techniques of presentation.

The Sub-committee feels that the resources within the Colonies themselves have hardly been touched. Many colonial peoples have outstanding gifts in acting, music and the improvisation of dialogue. Much could be done by a sympathetic and imaginative film producer. It is suggested that a necessary preliminary is the training of selected colonial personnel. A high standard of education must be a necessary qualification for selection for such training.

If the cinema is to be a genuine support to mass education work, substantial sums must be found for the provision of cinema vans and the installation of projectors at community education centres. Suggestions are made for meeting part of the cost of equipping territories adequately.

Consideration is being given already to the establishment in the United Kingdom of a central organisation to fulfil the following functions:—

- (a) The collection in consultation with Colonial Governments, of suggestions for films which would be useful to those authorities.
- (b) The preparation, again in consultation with Colonial Governments, of shooting scripts with detailed technical instructions.



In addition, films of more local interest are carried. These are very few, and urgently require to be supplemented, though the necessary organisation and personnel to do so will have to be developed. These films deal with the local African troops and with social and health matters, though in very general terms they are added to the programme at points where more than one performance is given. The second performance has a strong bias to social and health matters. At schools, colleges and other places where the audiences are educated above the average, these films are featured together with films of social advancement in Britain of which a notable example is the film *Mr. English at Home*.

Special films for specialised audiences are also available as, for example, Air Raid Precautions films and films of interest to Home Guard groups.

Until recently, the interpreters on tour have kept in touch with world news by studying advance copies of the news summary specially written for the Information Department's weekly publication *Empire at War*, and by a weekly packet of copies of the scripts of the vernacular broadcasts put out daily by the Information Department from Accra. These comprise news, both external and internal, and talks and dramatisation on topical subjects external and internal. Mobile units are now being provided with wireless receiving sets to enable the crews, wherever they may be, to pick up the vernacular broadcasts direct from Accra. This enables the interpreters to keep abreast of world events and to give the chiefs and villagers accurate and up-to-date news, before garbled and inaccurate versions arrive with the next day's lorry drivers from the bigger centres. Furthermore, the interpreter has the advantage of studying how material is being presented by the headquarters staff specially responsible for such work.

In the Northern Territories, which can be covered only once annually because of the impassability of many roads during the wet season, a news summary of world news for the past six to nine months is given, as in remote spots the inhabitants are completely out of touch with outside news and have no background knowledge into which they may fit a weekly news bulletin.

## NEW FILMS

### BRITISH EMPIRE AT WAR

#### News Film No. 15

This newsreel tells the story of the Allied landings in Italy. It covers the landing at Salerno as well as the attack on Italy's toe. The reception in London of the news of the surrender of Italy is shown. There are also some excellent shots of the units of the Italian Navy sailing in the British Naval base in Malta to give themselves up to Admiral Cunningham, Commander-in-Chief of the Allied naval forces. It makes a stirring story and should be well received.

#### 46a. AFRICA'S FIGHTING MEN (SOUND)

There have been so many calls for this picture that a sound version has been made. One 35 mm. copy is being sent to the Principal Information Office in Nairobi and one to Accra. Those having 35 mm. projection equipment and wishing to show the film should make application to obtain a copy on loan.

#### 48a. WEST AFRICAN EDITORS (SOUND)

This 35 mm. sound version of *West African Editors* is for commercial circulation in West Africa. One copy of the film is being sent to the Principal Information Office, Nairobi. Any of the East African Territories wishing to show the film should apply to obtain it on loan.

#### 49. PROGRESS IN THE COLONIES (KENYA)

This is a film made from material taken by Mr. A. M. Champion, C.M.G., in Kenya Colony. A version was prepared for the Colonies Exhibition which is visiting the big towns in Britain. It may not be possible to distribute copies of the film in colour. If the shortage of Kodachrome continues, monochrome copies will be distributed.

(3152.) 26695. Wt. 46876-P4695. 850. 1/44. A., P. & S., Ltd. 428.

## NOTES

### CINEMA IN NORTHERN RHODESIA

An interesting report has been received from Northern Rhodesia on the development of the cinema in that colony. In addition to the general problem of providing cinema shows for the illiterate masses, there is the more complicated one of catering for the workers in the copper belt. The Africans have been accustomed to seeing regular weekly programmes of commercial sound films for more than seven years. Though they may be regarded as a sophisticated film audience, it seems they have not been spoiled for a good African film. The Colonial Film Unit's *An African in London* was an outstanding success.

### CONFERENCES IN NEAR EAST

It has been possible to obtain some excellent material of the two historic conferences which were held recently in Cairo and Teheran. This material should make a very good story which we shall endeavour to put on the distribution list as soon as possible.

All the photographs in this issue are of people attending one or both of the conferences. They are all enlargements done by the Unit's technicians from the actual film taken.

### FILM ON MARGARINE

Considerable progress has been made with this production. Further sequences of good quality have been received from Africa. It should make a good story with a wide appeal to all those who are concerned in producing the raw materials.

### GLOSSARY OF FILM TERMS

The cinema world has a language of its own. Though we endeavour, as far as possible, to avoid technicalities in our articles, there are certain common terms which have become recognised film vocabulary and which should be known to all those concerned with films. It is proposed to compile a short glossary of film terms for publication in an early issue of *Colonial Cinema*.

### NEW CINEMA VANS

After many delays caused chiefly by questions of equipment, the first of the new sound cinema vans is expected to be ready for delivery early in the New Year. Others will follow in fairly rapid succession.

While every effort has been made to retain the high standard of material that is essential to withstand the strain of mobile work on African roads, it must be borne in mind that components which experience has proved to be ideal may be impossible to obtain in wartime.

For this reason extra care and attention should be given to the maintenance of the new vans, as some of the equipment may not be so robust as in the original vans.

The question of priorities is receiving careful consideration. It is impossible to satisfy everybody at once, but we know that officers will appreciate the difficulty of providing adequate quantities of equipment in wartime.

### RAW STOCK

Owing to a change in conditions and prices, 16 mm. raw film stock will henceforward be bought at a price which includes the charge for processing and will therefore be supplied in the familiar yellow cartons. It will be appreciated if film on which the processing charge has not been paid (i.e. that packed in white cartons with yellow labels) is returned in the original carton.



*the monthly bulletin of the Colonial Film Unit*

VOL. 2. NO. 2

*Colonial Film Unit, 21 Soho Square, London, W.1*

FEBRUARY 1944

## MASS EDUCATION IN AFRICAN SOCIETY

**T**HE REPORT under the above title recently issued by H.M. Stationery Office is a document of historic importance to the people of Africa. It is the work of a Sub-committee of the Advisory Committee on Education in the Colonies.

Interested though they will be in the report as a whole, readers of the bulletin will no doubt wish to have full information about the suggestions of the Sub-committee with regard to the use of the cinema in the general scheme of mass education. The extensive section dealing with the cinema is some indication of the importance which the Sub-committee attaches to it.

Owing to the lack of evidence about the effect of films in any educational sense on colonial peoples, coupled with the fact that the cinema is universally popular, the report sounds a note of warning about laying undue emphasis on its reception and effectiveness among backward people. The cinema must be regarded as supplementary to, and not a substitute for, the teacher. At the same time, it is pointed out that the extent to which the cinema may be used in mass education is obviously very great. It can cater for large audiences, unlimited copies of a film can be produced and colonial peoples are as much attracted by it as are any others.

The report then indicates the types of film which appear to be necessary as an aid to mass education.

- (a) *News Films* of world, regional and local events. If carefully selected, regional and local news items could create a healthy local rivalry in many activities which form part of a mass education movement.
- (b) *Documentary films* designed to extend people's knowledge of the outside world, of the territory itself and of the region in which it is situated.

Plans to set up new forms of organisation, such as trade unions, co-operative societies and local governments, would be greatly assisted by films showing such organisations in action elsewhere. The introduction of new crafts and small-scale industrial undertakings can be facilitated by suitable films.

- (c) *Films to demonstrate a technique or experiment.* A film may demonstrate to a large audience a complex manual operation or a laboratory experiment that could otherwise be shown efficiently only to very small groups. Sequences of operations about such projects as laying out a football field or building a kiln may be clearly established through a film.

- (d) *Entertainment films.* Mass education movements must provide liberally for entertainment even after allowance has been made for music and talks. There is scope for material for such films in the history and folk lore of colonial peoples.

Search should be made for what is suitable among entertainment and documentary films produced in Europe and America and libraries of these films established.

In speaking of the needs of colonial peoples in general, the report says experience has confirmed that films produced in Europe and America are unsuitable for large sections of the colonial peoples. Short sequences, quick transitions and the various trick shots common to modern production, perplex the relatively uneducated as well as the more primitive people. A special type of film is necessary, produced by individuals with a first hand knowledge of the limitations of those they seek to educate. If the films are to be educationally effective, those who prepare scripts should have an extensive sociological knowledge of their audiences. It is important they should know about the sense of humour peculiar to the people, their standards of morality and their religious beliefs. As time goes on, the films themselves will give a gradual training in comprehending the more difficult techniques of presentation.

The Sub-committee feels that the resources within the Colonies themselves have hardly been touched. Many colonial peoples have outstanding gifts in acting, music and the improvisation of dialogue. Much could be done by a sympathetic and imaginative film producer. It is suggested that a necessary preliminary is the training of selected colonial personnel. A high standard of education must be a necessary qualification for selection for such training.

If the cinema is to be a genuine support to mass education work, substantial sums must be found for the provision of cinema vans and the installation of projectors at community education centres. Suggestions are made for meeting part of the cost of equipping territories adequately.

Consideration is being given already to the establishment in the United Kingdom of a central organisation to fulfil the following functions:—

- (a) The collection in consultation with Colonial Governments, of suggestions for films which would be useful to those authorities.
- (b) The preparation, again in consultation with Colonial Governments, of shooting scripts with detailed technical instructions.

- (c) The making of arrangements, in collaboration with regional centres in the Colonies, for films to be shot both in the Colonies and in the United Kingdom.
- (d) The processing, editing and titling of the exposed film.
- (e) The editing and titling of suitable amateur films taken by officers in the Government services.
- (f) The examination of film libraries in the United Kingdom for the purpose of acquiring and re-editing any films which might be found capable of adaptation for exhibition in the Colonies.
- (g) The provision of courses of instruction for selected Colonial officers on leave in the display and care of films and equipment and in the shooting of films.
- (h) The furnishing of assistance to local centres in the Colonies, possibly under the direction of the Information Officer, in securing equipment and in training personnel required in film production and display such as cameramen and commentators.
- (i) The distribution to local centres of films produced.
- (j) The production of film strips and film slides.

To these functions, the Sub-committee recommend the addition of:—

- (k) The direction of research into the technique of presentation including the use of sound and silent films with audiences of particular grades.
- (l) Experiments leading to the development of entertainment and recreational films with purely colonial content and with colonial actors.
- (m) The administration of a central Colonial Film Library to reinforce regional libraries.
- (n) The selection for this library of entertainment and documentary films not specially produced for colonial audiences.
- (o) The collection of the results of local research into the educational effects of individual films and groups of films.

The formation of a Colonial Film Committee in Great Britain is recommended to assist in securing films of a kind to aid mass education movements. It should be widely representative of people with knowledge of the Colonies and of film producing. It is suggested it might be associated with the Colonial Film Unit as an advisory body to the personnel of that Unit.

The report recommends that some arrangement should be made, whereby films chosen by the mass education organisation should be regularly displayed in commercial houses. At present commercial cinemas show films primarily produced for European and American audiences. The negative function of the Board of Censors merely ensures that bad films are not shown. Pre-selection would result in programmes of good films being displayed in these commercial cinemas.

The opinion is expressed that, as time goes on, the vast potential colonial audience will tempt the enterprise of the film industry. As the probabilities are that efforts will be concentrated on widely extended facilities for cheap cinema shows rather than on the production of films genuinely suited to the audiences, it is suggested that machinery be set up to advise exhibitors on the selection of films. Attempts should be made, too, to induce commercial firms to produce really worth while films specially designed for colonial audiences.

Since the financial implications of the use of the cinema on any extensive scale are uncertain, the advisability of conducting a series of co-ordinated experiments in cinema techniques and adaptations and their use in education, is recommended before any heavy initial outlay in production is embarked upon.



CHINESE GUNNERS IN ACTION



PILOTS OF CHINA'S NEW AIR FORCE



A CHINESE AIR FORCE PILOT



## AN AFRICAN SCHOOL OF MUSIC

AN article in the *West African Review* for December, 1943, gives the outline of an interesting project. It is suggested that the time is ripe for the establishment of at least one school of music in Africa. West Africa is suggested, as it is quite certain that there has been most genuine development in music in that area.

On the evidence of intelligent observers, the writer maintains that there has been a revolt against inferior music in parts of Africa which are most articulate in things of the mind. The organists are forming themselves into an association with a view to improving the quality and performance of church music. Other aims are to induce the African public to show more interest in the work of their own modern composers and to make every effort to popularise African folk songs.

It is suggested that the movement should be carried much further so that the influence of good African music may be felt not only in Africa itself, but also among the peoples beyond it.

An all-African orchestra is envisaged which would command audiences in the world's musical centres as enthusiastic as those which attend Hallé or Queen's Hall performances.

The extent to which music enters into the African make-up is too well known to need dwelling upon. There is ample human material of great promise, and the cost of maintaining a school of music is not beyond the combined resources of several colonies. If the local administrations made a determined effort, each making its small contribution, and the central government gave pound for pound, there is little doubt that people technically competent could be obtained to conduct the school.

There can be no doubt that the central government would encourage a project so helpful in developing in the people those very qualities, the fostering of which is one of the highest purposes of the governments concerned.

## CONTINUITY: HOW THE CAMERAMAN CAN HELP THE EDITOR

IT has been emphasised in previous issues that the production of a good film very largely depends on a good treatment and a good script; but these alone are not sufficient. It is not enough to know *what* you are going to say; you must also know *how* you are going to say it.

The cameraman who shoots the film has a real responsibility towards the editor who cuts it. We mentioned in the last article the importance of shooting enough to allow for cutting. It is equally important—and especially in making films for unsophisticated audiences—to watch continuity. This term covers all those details of background, lighting, dress, surroundings and so on, which give the impression that action is continuous in one place. In a film viewed recently, one shot of a woman showed her with her baby on her back; in the next shot, which was supposed to follow immediately on the first, she was carrying the baby in her arms. Changes of this apparently magical order are disturbing enough to us; to the unsophisticated they must be extremely confusing. In another film, though they were supposed to depict two parts of the same action, two adjacent shots were obviously taken at different times of the day. This was quite plain from the great change in the length of the shadows cast by the sun. It is not uncommon to see the nature of the background change in the same way. Again, unless careful watch is kept, unwanted people or things will get in the picture.

Lack of attention to the question of direction of movement may cause many lapses in continuity. A cameraman will take a shot of somebody walking; he may then go round to the other side to take another view of the same person. When these shots are thrown on the screen in succession, the audience will see the person walking in one direction in one shot and in exactly the opposite direction in the next. To avoid disconcerting results such as these sometimes sets quite interesting problems for the operator, but proper thought will solve them.

It is surprising how easily common faults can arise. Suppose, for example, that the script calls for a long shot of a carpenter's shop with a man planing, to be followed by a close-up of the man. The cameraman takes his long shot and then moves nearer for the close-up. Often materials such as pieces of wood, tools and so on, have been moved from the positions they occupied in the first shot. This becomes painfully obvious when the transition on the screen takes place in a fraction of a second. Sometimes the action in the two shots does not match in direction and manner. In such circumstances, one can imagine the feelings of the editor when he tries to make the movement of one shot flow into the movement of its successor.

When making films for unsophisticated audiences, the cameraman must be specially on guard to avoid errors in continuity. In modern cinema technique, camera distance and angle are employed in a much freer way than they used to be; and many details which would be needed for strict visual continuity can be omitted because of the background of the audiences' experience. But this is not practicable in films for illiterates. Because such changes are known to confuse the minds of the audiences for which the Unit films are made, it is most important to avoid them. The camera should be moved in towards the subject along the imaginary line down which the lens is pointing, and the action in close-up should match as closely as possible that in the longer shot. It will then be possible for the editor to cut in the middle of a movement in the long shot, pick up the same movement in the close-up and thus preserve the continuity of idea. It is almost as if a magnifying lens were suddenly placed in front of the camera, bringing part of the action up closer for special study by the audience. A good way to ensure correct picture continuity is to make little thumbnail sketches. It does not matter how badly they are drawn as long as you understand them yourself. In such a way it is possible to plan a complete film before you ever expose a single foot of raw stock in your camera.



INDIAN TROOPS AT P.T.



INDIAN TROOPS KEEP FIT



WEST INDIAN RECRUITS TO THE A.T.S.

## CINEMA IN RECONSTRUCTION

In discussing the programme of action of the English speaking peoples and the constructive contribution which the Empire has to make to the picture world, *The Crown Colonist* of January, 1944, writes as follows:—

"The screen also can play a great part in stimulating public interest in the Empire. Excellent documentaries are being produced, but not nearly enough of them. The store of rich material is inexhaustible and the industry has not sufficient faith in the first class entertainment value lying dormant awaiting imaginative treatment. There is no question of propaganda or dullness. Look what America makes of similar but not so varied or rich material. It needs someone with imagination to do the same for the Empire."

We hope the C.F.U. will make its contribution when the supply and transportation problems become less acute.

## RAW STOCK

N.B.—We should have made it clear that last month's notice referred to stock in magazines and not to that in rolls.

*Processing charge is always pre-paid on Kodachrome.*

## NEW FILMS

## THE BRITISH EMPIRE AT WAR

*News Film No. 16* contains three sequences.

- (a) CHINA: There are some very interesting shots in this sequence showing the training of the new Chinese armies in modern methods of warfare. Other shots give some idea of the growth and training of the Chinese Air Force.
- (b) NORTH AFRICA: Indian soldiers are seen training in North Africa preparing for coming battles. There are some very good shots of them doing P.T. work and wrestling.
- (c) ENGLAND: This sequence shows a group of West India women who came from Jamaica to Britain to join the A.T.S.

*News Film No. 17*

This newsreel deals with the three conferences between the Allied leaders towards the end of 1943.

The first sequence shows the Cairo meeting of Mr. Churchill and Mr. Roosevelt, with the Chinese leader, Chiang Kai Shek, when the war in the Pacific was discussed.

From Cairo, the British and American leaders went to Teheran to meet the great Russian leader, Stalin. The story includes the presentation of the Sword of Honour from the citizens of London to the people of Stalingrad and the receipt of gifts from men in the services by Mr. Churchill on his 69th birthday.

The closing sequence shows the meeting which took place in Cairo when Mr. Churchill and Mr. Roosevelt met President Inönü of Turkey.

## 50. SAM THE CYCLIST

It is unusual to find a humorous film which is suitable for distribution in Africa. This one is an exception and we hope it will become popular. Most people in Africa are familiar with a bicycle though it is doubtful if they have seen such a remarkable specimen as Sam's machine. The film is self explanatory and does not need any commentary.

We shall be interested to hear of audiences' reactions to this film.

## 51. COSSACK HORSEMEN

We have had many requests for films about horses and horsemen. It is probable that this film will appeal to most audiences. Much has been heard of the Cossacks during the great Russian winter offensive of 1943-4. Their reputation as horsemen is world-wide. The particular group of Cossacks in the picture toured Great Britain before the war giving exhibitions at each place visited.



*the monthly bulletin of the Colonial Film Unit*

VOL. 2. NO. 3

*Colonial Film Unit, 21 Soho Square, London, W.1*

MARCH 1944

## COLOUR CINEMATOGRAPHY

**C**OLOUR cinematography is a much more complex process than black and white cinematography, and it is a fact that, until the last year or so, colour photography has been regarded as an occupation only for the highly skilled few. Recent developments have brought colour photography within the range of ordinary workers, but it is only by a reasonable knowledge of the fundamental bases of the colour system, that such workers can secure a high proportion of satisfactory results.

First of all, every photographer knows that it is possible to under-expose and over-expose film and to obtain results which are too dark or too light and from which valuable details in high lights or shadows are missing. A certain degree of latitude in exposure is permissible without noticeable detriment to the results. In the case of reversal film such as is used in the raw stock scheme, this latitude is further widened by the photo-electrically controlled processing methods that are used, by means of which errors in exposure can be compensated to a considerable degree.

When we come to colour, however, the process is considerably more complex. Nearly all successful colour systems, including Kodachrome, make use of the three-colour theory, which states that all colour perception is produced by three colour sensations which are stimulated in varying degree and which, in combination, give all the colour effects with which we are familiar. There is not room here to go into the details of the subtractive colour process on which Kodachrome is based. It is sufficient to say that on every Kodachrome picture there are three superimposed layers which record respectively the redness, greenness and blueness of the subject; these appear in the final image in terms of magenta, blue-green and yellow, the combined filtering effects of these three layers permitting colour sensations similar to those of the original scene to be recorded.

Instead of one exposure as in black and white, it is necessary to get three exposures correct at the same moment. The three layers do not respond equally to a given variation from the normal exposure, so that errors in exposure also result in variations of the mixtures of the three colour sensations, and therefore of the resultant colours. For other reasons—e.g. the necessity to coat three very thin layers of sensitive material where there is only one relatively thick one on black and white film—the permissible latitude is greatly reduced, so that the question of correct exposure becomes increasingly important.

The second important factor to be considered when

dealing with colour film is the degree of contrast that can be successfully handled. The range of lightness and darkness in the subject is rendered as a corresponding range of lightness and darkness in the film, but the darkest dark and the lightest light of a film image cannot be so far apart as those of an actual subject. The range must be compressed within the limitations of the material—in other words, within its range of latitude. Because colour film has less latitude than black and white, it is less successful in recording high contrasts. For example it may be beyond the capacity of colour film to render accurately the range of tones of the brightly lit and heavily shaded sides of a sunlit street. What happens then is that either a large part of the shadow areas of the picture is rendered as featureless blackness, or—if the general level of exposure is higher—the delicate highlights all run together into one dazzling whiteness without nuances or tonal differences. This means that hot sunshine is not necessarily the best illuminant for colour work.

Until experience is gained in handling colour film, it is a safe plan to keep the light fairly well in front of the subject. It should not be straight in front, or everything will be flat and featureless; but it should not be too much to the side so that a relatively large area of shadow appears in the shot. We recently saw an admirable sequence in colour completely spoiled because the cameraman ignored this precaution. An African was seen painfully descending towards a waterhole, then lowering himself over the edge of the hole; then the next shot showed a brilliant glittering edge of light, with a dense black pit in the centre and a few vague lighter areas moving around in it. The shot meant nothing. The cameraman should have come in closer until none of the sunlit portion was included in the picture and then opened the aperture of the lens until the exposure was adequate to show the details of the interior of the hole.

Another thing to watch is the effect on overall colour of the direction in which your camera is pointing. Stand and look in the general direction of the sun and note the colour of the sky just after it has risen. Turn about in the opposite direction and again note the colour of the sky. The difference is extreme, but familiarity has probably made us unaware of this difference. It becomes apparent when a shot that has been taken in one direction is instantaneously followed by a second that has been taken in the opposite direction.

Again, the light which falls to the earth when the sun is near its meridian is distinctly bluer than the light which





## NEW CINEMA VANS



falls in early morning or evening. Then, the light, travelling obliquely through a much greater air distance, is robbed of much of its blue content, and appears yellower. On the film this effect is aggravated. The cameraman may go on shooting all day on scenes which, in the film, are supposed to occur within a few seconds of each other. If they differ markedly in overall colour balance, the editor may find it quite impossible to cover up these variations while still retaining the meaning and continuity of the story. Careful planning will obviate much of this trouble and simplify matters for the editor.

It will hardly be necessary to point out to the majority of readers that the filter technique employed in black and white is not practicable in colour work. A yellow filter, for example, will impart an overall yellowness to the whole picture. This may be used deliberately for some purposes, but the opportunity will not often occur. A useful accessory in this connection is the polaroid filter, which, under certain conditions, has the property of being able to darken and control sky tone without affecting the colour or intensity of the foreground objects.

Quite apart from the physical changes in colour balance referred to above, the whole question of colour continuity arises in the making of colour films. In planning a film, the author should have in mind some consideration as to the overall colour and brilliancy of the subjects which are to be recorded. For example, relatively unimportant action taken in a garden filled with brilliant flowers may acquire an undue importance on the screen as compared with more significant sequences taken in relatively drab surroundings.

Strange though it may seem, the best thing is to avoid too much colour in your subject. The very quietest things acquire a most satisfying beauty on the screen, whereas flaring reds, yellows and blues can present an utterly

untrue picture and become almost painful to an audience. The artist is content, in most cases, that most of his picture shall be quiet, with significant colour patches of the correct size and balance placed in the most important positions. The colour cinematographer should try to acquire a similar restraint and selective power.

It must not be inferred from the foregoing notes that the taking and making of colour films is too full of pitfalls to be undertaken by the amateur. It is merely intended to point out that the cameraman who wishes to take full advantage of colour films must equip himself technically and mentally for the task in hand. Nor does it mean that the colour cameraman must always eschew the brilliant subject. In recording the pageantry of the East, the colour film really comes into its own. But as you would not feed a starving family exclusively on the richest food, so brilliance must be used with circumspection, and only in its right place.

## COLONIAL CINEMA

We are grateful to those overseas who have sent us spare copies of the earlier numbers of *Colonial Cinema*. They will be most useful for compiling file sets of the bulletin. So far we have not received any copies of Vol. 1 No. 3, the issue for May, 1943. If there are any copies of this number available, we shall be glad to receive them.

Recently, approval was given for a small increase in the number of copies to be printed monthly. There will be a small balance over and above the urgent demands to be met; application should be made at once if additional copies are required.

## WORK IN PROGRESS



## NOTES

## COLOUR FILMS

Recently we have received colour films from three different colonies. Kodachrome is in short supply these days; it is too expensive for general use in the raw stock scheme. There is little doubt, however, that the production of films in colour for the particular audiences served by the Unit must have serious consideration in the near future. All this prompts us to write a preliminary article on colour photography which will be found elsewhere in this issue.

## ARRANGEMENT OF PROGRAMMES

We shall be glad of information from colonies about the arrangement of programmes. In some places it is found more convenient to wind a whole programme on one 1600-foot spool so that it may be shown without the breaks required for threading up each reel.

Copies of *A British Family in Peace and War*, which is a four-reeler, are being sent out on 1600-foot spools. If there is any projector that will not take the large spool, the film will have to be split up into 400-foot reels. Leaders and trailers will be sent with the film in case this has to be done.

It has been possible, in spite of a shortage, to purchase a few 1600-foot spools. Each unit should have one already, but if an extra one is required, application should be made here.

## STORAGE BOX FOR RAW STOCK

We promised in a previous issue to supply details for the construction of a storage box for raw stock. This matter has not escaped notice, and is having attention. We wish to be quite certain that the box we recommend will be efficient.

In the meantime, arrangements have been made to despatch raw stock in airtight tins each holding 200 or

250 feet of film. This may help to prevent deterioration until proper storage facilities are available.

## NEW SOUND VANS

A number of photographs of the new sound vans to be supplied to the Colonies appear in this issue. They show that work is going ahead steadily. Unfortunately, a fire at the equipment store of the assembly workshop caused some delay in the delivery of the first van. In these days, when spares are difficult to obtain, such an accident may hold up output for a long time. Fortunately, in this case, the delay has not been as serious as it might have been.

## NEW FILMS

## BRITISH EMPIRE AT WAR

## News Film No. 18

This film contains two stories:—

- (a) Peace comes to Sicily. With the passing of active warfare from the island of Sicily to the Italian mainland, the population soon resume peaceful activities. This sequence shows the friendly relations which have been established between the Sicilians and the Allied occupying troops.
- (b) Allied Armies advance on Rome. The sequence shows American and British soldiers fighting side by side in Italy. Some excellent shots give some idea of the many difficulties encountered by Allied soldiers in this campaign. Flooded rivers caused endless trouble to the engineers when replacing bridges destroyed by the Germans.

## News Film No. 19

This news reel contains two stories:—

- (a) Australian soldiers advance in New Guinea. The story deals with the fighting in the Pacific where our soldiers are working under incredible handicaps. Much of the campaign is conducted in jungle country infested with snakes and poisonous insects; even the trees, shrubs and thorns are poisonous to the touch. Our Australian troops are shown fighting gallantly against the Japanese in this difficult country.
- (b) Indian soldiers build a bridge. The second story shows our Indian troops in action in Upper Burma. They find a bridge destroyed and proceed to build one in its place from material obtained entirely from the jungle through which they are passing. Bren carriers are seen passing over the bridge when work is finished.

## AFRICAN MUSIC

A MOST interesting discourse on African music was given by Mr. Fela Sowande, F.R.C.O., in the hall of the School of Oriental and African Studies on the 17th January, 1944.

The lecturer explained that when considering the music of its people, it was neither practicable nor desirable to regard Africa as one whole; but, although differences must be expected in a continent so vast and with such varying geographical conditions, there is a fascinating, complex and superb rhythm common to all African music.

Music forms an essential part of the normal life of the African. His outlook has always been fundamentally religious, and his traditional African melodies were fashioned primarily as an aid to his religious worship.

African songs fall into two groups—(a) those based on the five-note scale and (b) those based on a five-note scale with quarter tones. Mohammedan melodies are mainly on the five-note scale, but are more flexible owing to the use of grace notes. The slave trade, with consequent contact with the West, introduced the Western scale and a third class of songs, which used this scale and were not primarily concerned with ethics.

Mr. Sowande then dealt with the development of African music. Although African vocal music presented many difficulties because of its tonal inflection which limited present scope to imitative forms in music, the difficulties were not apparent in instrumental music. Records were played illustrating possible methods of approach. Among them were several recordings of African themes in orchestral settings played by the B.B.C. Northern Orchestra. These arrangements, orchestrated by the lecturer, aroused considerable interest and enthusiasm.

The lecturer said that in his opinion the future of African music depended on many factors, but most of all on the African musician himself. He must preserve his innate love of music; his work must always be the best he can do; and his contribution to musical culture must be genuinely national. He should therefore seek his basic material in the old African folk songs. Above all, he must always be conscious of his high calling, and must make sure that his handling of these ancient racial themes is worthy of the traditions they embody.

After the discourse, the B.B.C. Director of Music paid a very high tribute to the work of the lecturer in the cause of African music.

## GLOSSARY OF TERMS USED IN CINEMA WORK

## 1. CAMERA DISTANCES

**Big close-up (B.C.U.).** A very large close-up filling the screen, the frame cutting just on the head at the top and just on the chin below.

**Close-up (C.U.).** Of a person, this would include from the top of the shoulders up to 3 or 4 inches above the head. The term *close-up* applied to inanimate things means a shot that is close enough to establish the object clearly and intimately. Sometimes the term *close-shot* is used when applying it to inanimate objects.

**Medium close-up (M.C.U.).** Of a person, this would include more than the ordinary close-up—say, from about the elbows up to a few inches above the head. When one sees a double close-up—i.e. two persons—it is usually at M.C.U. distance.

**Close medium shot (C.M.S.).** It is possible to get three people quite comfortably into a C.M.S., cutting the bottom of the picture somewhere between the knees and the waist. This is a suitable camera distance for largish scenes between two persons.

**Medium long shot (M.L.S.).** This includes the whole figure of the person with a few inches of foreground and a few inches above the head. Seven or eight people can be grouped in a M.L.S.

**Long shot (L.S.).** This is how you would describe a camera distance giving a clear view of a large group of persons or a small crowd.

**Distance shot (D.S.).** This is sometimes called a *vista shot* and is used for describing really long shots where a wide sweep of action has to be shown.

## 2. OTHER TECHNICAL TERMS

**Dissolve or Mix.** The gradual blending of one scene to another accomplished by overlapping a fade-out and a fade-in.

**Dupe.** A special positive print, from the original negative, from which a duplicate negative can be made.

**Fade-in.** The gradual appearance of the scene from obscurity.

**Fade-out.** The reverse of a fade-in—the gradual fading out or disappearance of a picture.

**Footage.** Film length is measured in feet. There are 1,000 feet of 35 mm. film to the standard reel. There are 400 feet of 16 mm. film to the reel.

**Insert or cut-in.** This is a close-up of an inscribed object such as a letter, an envelope, a cheque, a signpost, a name-plate, a visiting card and so on.

**Iris in.** Opening an iris or frame in front of the lens giving the gradual opening and enlarging of a circle of picture until the whole is revealed.

**Iris out.** The reverse of *Iris in*.

**Pan (Panorama).** The camera is rotated from side to side to follow action or to traverse a scene. (Note.—It should be used only for the former purpose in films intended for showing to untrained audiences.)

**Rushes.** Photographed scenes which have been processed and are examined by the production staff for quality and to ascertain if any retakes may be necessary.

**Script.** Short for *manuscript*. A term loosely used and applied to an original story, an adaptation or a continuity.

**Sequence.** A connected series of scenes or incidents which are so closely related that they logically follow one upon the other, without a break either in time or movement in the story.

**Shooting script.** The final complete continuity which is turned over to the director and from which he makes the photoplay.

**Superimposition.** Two exposures or pictures on the same length of film. (A dissolve is a short form of superimposition, but with both pictures constantly changing in value.)

**Tilt.** This is a movement of the camera in a vertical direction, up or down.

**Tracking.** The camera as a whole moves to or from an object or passes it in a horizontal movement.

**Treatment.** An outline suggesting a particular manner in which a screen story may be treated.

**Working title.** The temporary title under which a film is sometimes made and which may be changed before the final release of the film.



## THE IMPORTANCE OF THE LENS

**T**HE most important part of a cameraman's equipment is his lens. Very precise camera mechanism is necessary to unwind the film, move it correctly past the picture aperture, expose the consecutive frames uniformly and wind up accurately the exposed material, but if the picture obtained is not clear and sharp, the perfection of the mechanism is in vain.

As the lens is a most delicate and complex piece of apparatus, the cameraman should acquaint himself with its peculiarities. Unless he understands its working, his results cannot be consistent and he will get very little satisfaction from his work.

Every point on an object being photographed emits rays of light in almost every direction. These light-rays may shine from inside the object or they may be reflected from light-rays received from another source. The lens receives a cone of light-rays from each point and bends them so that the diverging cone becomes a converging one; all those converging rays meet at another point to form an image of the original object.

If a film is placed at the correct point of convergence, the image is said to be *sharp* or *in focus*. As the film moves nearer to or farther away from the lens, the image becomes progressively less sharp. Although in theory there is only one position where the image is truly sharp for each object, in practice the image can attain a certain degree of blur before it becomes noticeable. The distance thus covered is known as the *depth of focus* of the lens.

The smaller the aperture of the lens, the narrower will be the bundle of rays and the greater this depth of focus. The fixed focus lens of 1 inch focal length and  $f/3.5$  aperture, takes advantage of this property. It is focussed at such a distance that all objects from 12 feet to an infinite distance from the camera are sufficiently sharp for all practical purposes. Such a lens can therefore be used for nearly all shots without altering its focal position. If such a lens is stopped down to  $f/16$ , the depth increases to cover all distances from 2 feet 6 inches to infinity.

On the other hand an  $f/1.9$  lens, used at open aperture and focussed at the same distance, will have its depth reduced to about 15 feet near distance and 30 feet far distance, so that the total depth of focus is only 15 feet, and all objects outside this depth will be perceptibly blurred. A longer focus lens will similarly have less depth, and a 3 in. lens at  $f/3.5$  will have a total depth of only

12 feet, that is from approximately 15 feet to 27 feet. Therefore the larger the aperture and the longer the focus, the greater the care required in focussing the camera. The cameraman should learn thoroughly this *technique* of depth of focus, because it is possible to bring two somewhat widely separated objects into sharp focus by focussing upon the correct point between them.

An important quality of your picture is proper contrast. If light extraneous to that which forms the picture is allowed to fall on the lens, this contrast will be degraded. We have all seen how the sunlight falling on the outside of a slightly dusty window partly obscures the view which can be seen through it; the effect disappears as soon as a shadow falls upon the window itself. In the same way, it is possible to shield the lens by using a hood; but the use of a hood must not lead to lack of caution. It may be found necessary, in spite of the hood, to use additional cover if all bright light is to be excluded from the front surface of the lens.

Glass is a suspension of various chemicals not completely combined. Consequently the surface reacts variously to injurious influences. Window glass, which is



IN THE STUDIO  
producing film on "Margarine"

composed of silica and various alkalis, is *fire polished*. It is allowed to cool slowly and the molecules in its natural surface are given time to settle down comfortably and present a tough and reasonably homogeneous surface to resist deterioration. Lens glass, however, is a much more sensitive material. In particular, the outer glasses of lenses are composed of barium and silica, which do not mix so happily. Furthermore, to obtain the highly accurate surface curvatures, the glass is mechanically ground and polished, an operation which to some extent tears up the molecular structure and makes the surface less able to resist damage. Once the surface is damaged, the lens must be re-polished.

The lens needs particular care and attention if it is to retain its initial efficiency. It can only control the light rays accurately so long as the surface retains its original high polish. Surface degradation means loss of image sharpness and contrast. Lens glasses are much more susceptible to physical and chemical damage than ordinary glass. Sodium alkalis such as are found in sea air, various other alkalis dissolved in the moisture in the air, and human exhalations such as may be brought into contact with the surface of the lens by touching it with the fingers, are all likely to cause damage. Heat and humidity accentuate the action of all these agents and increase the intensity of the chemical action. Dust is also a potent danger. Often it contains gritty components, and if the lens is rubbed carelessly with a cloth, this grit is scoured around the surface of the lens. A fine camel hair brush is the ideal method of removing this surface dust. By using suitable precautions, the risk of deterioration may be substantially reduced. The lens cap should be kept in position to protect the lens when not in use. After working with the lens, it should be cleaned, first with the brush as indicated above, then wiped softly with lintless linen cloth, preferably slightly moistened with a proper grade of lens cleaning fluid, such as is marketed by lens manufacturers. Finally, after a gentle polish with cleaning tissue, the lens may be put away in its case with the knowledge that it will be in good condition when next required.

When storing your lenses and other equipment, do everything you can to keep them dry. A certain amount of heat does not matter, as long as it is not accompanied by moisture. In fact, dry warmth is one of the methods advocated by the Editor of *Nigeria*, who has had considerable experience of storing photographic equipment in Lagos. Beware of refrigerators. A lens or camera brought from the outside warm humid atmosphere and placed in the cold interior will immediately become covered with condensed moisture, and when taken out again in a cold condition, will cause more moisture to condense upon it.

Dampness provides an ideal condition for the formation of fungus which, over a period of time, will even attack the surface of lenses, which will become more and more cloudy and useless. Remember, then, the great secret for safe storage is DRYNESS. There are various methods of attaining it.

The lenses can be wrapped loosely in a number of thicknesses of dry absorbent material, such as newspaper, which has been dried off in the oven. This wrapping should be examined and re-dried from time to time.

A more efficient drying agent is silica-gel, which can be purchased either loose or in small capsules. It is in granules which may be of a size from sand to small peas, and can be supplied in colours which change as moisture is absorbed. On heating, it changes back to its original colour, showing that it is once more ready for use. The same silica-gel may be used repeatedly after the drying-out process. Things for storage should be put into a large air-tight jar or suitable container with a quantity of silica-

gel, but should be protected from actual contact with the granules. Whenever possible the container should be opened at night time, when the humidity of the surrounding air is at its lowest.

An alternative method suitable for places where electric current is available is suggested by the Editor of *Nigeria*. A packing-case about two feet square is fitted with a 16 candle-power carbon filament lamp which is left burning inside night and day. It has been found that opened packets of sensitive material will keep in good condition in such a cupboard for months on end. Precautions must of course be taken to ensure that the light from the lamp does not reach the actual sensitive material.

It is vital to ensure DRY protection in a hot climate for your photographic equipment, and above all for your lenses. Film lost through damp and fungus is regrettable; a lens damaged from the same cause may be irreparable.

## COLONIES' WAR EFFORT



A GIFT FROM NIGERIA COMES IN USEFUL



THE DELTADO, NIGERIA,  
HELPS TO FURNISH A MATERNITY HOSPITAL IN LONDON

## NEWS FILMS

THE report on *Mass Education in African Society* rightly emphasises the importance of news films. It says that regional and local news items, if carefully selected, may be a powerful means of creating local rivalries in many activities which form part of a mass education movement. Some colonial communities, for example, already take a great pride in the sanitary conditions of their village; the standards which they regard as essential to a self-respecting community might well be established in others through showing on the screen what is actually being done in a neighbouring area. In many colonies, the local news services dealing with the affairs of the territory, provinces or districts, if existent at all, are of indifferent quality. Here the cinema could greatly assist the Press and broadcasting in presenting reliable facts and could indeed help to develop a national outlook among the people of the territory.

We feel it would be difficult to over-estimate the value of the news film, always provided that cameramen exercise skill and forethought in building up their material. Each newsreel item should be regarded as a miniature film with a beginning, a middle and an end. If planned in this way, it will have a story value that will lift it above the type of sequence which is merely a series of animated snapshots. When looking for a subject, it should be considered in what way it is likely to assist in arousing general interest among the people about what is going on in different parts of their country. Often it can be helpful to the Government in many side issues in its association with the people. Through newsreel items, the people can be given objectives to attain and targets at which to aim.

There are other considerations which justify the little extra forethought which is advocated when newsreel items are being compiled. Any single item may become extremely valuable for historical or record purposes. A case in point is the film *Africa's Fighting Men*, which was made up entirely from sequences which had appeared in the up fortnightly newsreels. When compiled into a film, they present a most creditable record of the contribution the African colonies are making to the fighting forces of the Empire. This film has been in greater demand for universal circulation than any other of the Unit's productions or compilations. Newsreel items of such events as health or infant welfare weeks are worthy of particular attention as they may later become useful propaganda in other areas. A film on plague prevention, for instance, taken at a time when there was a serious outbreak of plague, proved most useful in many districts in campaigns which were conducted for the extermination of rats.

It will be well worth while if some special consideration is given to the selection of stories for newsreels, keeping in mind their possible use for a dual purpose. The Unit proposes to offer a special service to encourage the issue of local newsreels. Sequences when shot should be sent by the fastest route to Soho Square for processing; dope sheets and suggested captions should be sent with the film. Each story will be edited and, where necessary, every effort will be made to build up any missing links in the story by the use of material from the Unit's library. A newsreel will then be compiled from the stories submitted and will be returned to the colony for exhibition.

There are certain to be stories sent which are of more than local interest. Such sequences will be considered for inclusion in the Unit's news film for general circulation.



**AFRICA'S FIGHTING MEN  
HAVE LEARNED TO USE MODERN  
WEAPONS**





## AN AFRICAN SCHOOL OF MUSIC

IN our February issue, we gave the substance of an article published in the *West African Review* of December 1943, advocating an African school of music. A well-known West African musician writes at length in the January issue of the same paper and strongly supports the proposal.

He maintains that if a national school of music is to be built on a solid foundation, African folk songs must be used as the basic material. African folk songs are virile and healthy, and are ideal for the purpose. Ninety per cent of those known to us have a sound moral background and emphasis; the remainder deal with the ordinary aspects of everyday life. The modern type of African song is described as a shoddy, half-baked melody with cheap lyrics, the majority of which are devoid of any kind of value.

It is essential that the African musician should set for himself a high artistic standard. His own music must have a framework on which to rest. Such a framework can be supplied only by a deep study of the theoretical and technical sides of music. Without this essential text-book knowledge, any musical development attempted will be vague and formless.

In explaining the real basis of African music, the writer points out that, above all things, it is essential for the musician to renew contact with his ancient culture and civilisation, which existed many generations before slave trade days. Such a study will enable him to understand the free and full life of his ancestors and to embody something of their spirit in his music.

If this great work of reviving and developing African music is to be worthy and enduring, our work must proceed on a spiritual and moral basis. Our musical themes must be chosen from the songs of the people.

What can be done to achieve this ultimate aim? A start should be made by asking the authorities for as many centres of musical education as we can possibly have; little improvement is possible unless lovers of music are able to pursue their studies. Our minds can be widened by intelligent listening to good music of all other races, thereby developing judgment and discrimination. At the same time, we must preserve contact with the very best of our own music, either developed or in its original state. It is important that we should gather and store our folk music for use as material later on. The efforts of our present composers should be respected and appreciated and we should be quick to praise and eager to encourage them.

If all show themselves ready to help even in a small way, it will gradually bring us to our ultimate goal, the establishment of an African national school of music.

## SOUND RECORDINGS

AS the new cinema vans to be supplied to the Colonies are equipped for sound, it is necessary to prepare adequate programmes of sound films for them. To begin with, films are being provided with music and effects. While the commentary is being spoken, it will be possible to control the volume of the music and effects.

The Unit is very anxious to build up a sound library of suitable music and effects. Sound-recording equipment was supplied with all the original vans which were sent to the Colonies. Full instructions for operating the recording equipment were given in the buff book sent out with each van. Some further copies of this book are available if required.

Where recording equipment is available, we would ask

that every effort should be made to obtain as wide and varied a selection of recordings as possible. Many opportunities will occur to take recordings of African music, but equally important is the recording of African sounds. A large variety can be listed, though many other suitable ones will occur to the operator from time to time. To mention a few, the following would be extremely useful: crowd noises, market scenes; troops marching and singing; exclamations indicating surprise, indignation, amusement, scorn; noises of indigenous animals, cattle and ploughman driving oxen; noise of drums, tom-toms, prayer calls.

With the co-operation of those overseas, it will be possible in a short time to compile an adequate library of authentic African sounds for use in the films which are being made for Africa.

One recording will be sufficient, but it should not be played over more than once for purposes of a check. When the original disc arrives, a soft recording will be made for reference and library purposes; the original would be used for dubbing on to films. Where it is desired to use the material for distribution on discs, pressings would be made for this purpose.

Those who wish to make recordings will be supplied with blank discs and steel cutting needles. It is important that those overseas who are in a position to help in this matter should do what they can to assist in supplying material which will be so necessary for the production of good sound films.

## NEW FILMS

### THE BRITISH EMPIRE AT WAR

#### News Film No. 20

This film contains three stories:—

- The War in the Pacific: Bougainville Captured.* This is an excellent story of the large Allied combined operation against Bougainville. It shows the splendid cover given by the naval ships and the support of the air forces. Shots taken ashore show the effectiveness of the preliminary bombardment of the island.
- Upper Burma: Indian Soldiers on Patrol.* This very interesting sequence shows some of our Indian soldiers carrying out vital patrol work. These men travel light and are thus able to cover great distances in a day. They live on the country, and here they are shown collecting and preparing a meal in the jungle.
- Egypt: Mr. Churchill visits his Old Regiment.* As a young man, Mr. Churchill was a soldier in the 8th Hussars. While in the Near East for the conferences, he paid a visit to his old regiment. He spoke to the men and then took the salute as they marched past.

#### News Film No. 21

This news film contains three stories:—

- Middle East: Basuto Fire-fighters.* This first sequence gives some idea of the high stage of efficiency which these Basuto fire-fighters have achieved. They handle their fire-fighting apparatus like veterans.
- London: West Indian Tea Party.* These are scenes taken at one of the broadcasting parties organised for West Indians in the Services.
- India: Training for the Navy.* Some very good pictures are shown of personnel at the training school H.M.S. *Himalaya* in India. Shots of A.A. gunners at work are particularly effective.

### 52. YOUR PEOPLE IN BRITAIN

This is a sound film specially made for commercial distribution in the West Indies. It shows the fine spirit of the West Indians in the Services and their happy relations with the people of Britain. There are scenes from a broadcasting party, a party at the West India headquarters and another at the Colonial Office. Other sequences show the arrival and some of the training of a batch of girls who came from the West Indies to join the A.T.S. Altogether, this is a jolly kind of film that the parents and relations in the West Indies will love to see.

As usual, one copy of the 35 mm. sound version will be sent to the office of the Principal Information Officer, Nairobi, and one copy to Accra. Those having the necessary equipment and wishing to show the film should make application to the area officer for the loan of the copy.



*the monthly bulletin of the Colonial Film Unit*

VOL. 2. NO. 5

Colonial Film Unit, 21 Soho Square, London, W.1

MAY 1944

## SUBJECTS AND OBJECTS

THE reason why so many amateur films are of little value for educational, propaganda and entertainment purposes, is that they are impersonal and superficial in character. If it fell to the lot of the cameraman to build his material into a story from the processed film, he would be forced to realise the weaknesses of casual shooting and would see that observation and analysis are essential to the making of a satisfactory film. Unfortunately the editor suffers by the shortcomings of the operator, who may often be unaware of the many hours of toil his lack of forethought has entailed.

So much progress has been made with photographic equipment, stock and processing that there is a danger of claiming undue credit for the good quality of the material one obtains. Film is so good these days that, provided one does not give a wrong exposure, one can scarcely fail to get good photographic results. All this can be regarded as the mere mechanics of film making. The really vital part of the job is to provide the correct content of the pictures and sequences.

It is important to remember that one is making a *moving* picture. Long-duration shots of static things like buildings are generally waste of film and are particularly ineffective for showing to unsophisticated audiences. Nor does it improve matters to try to infuse action into one's picture by moving the camera about over the surface of the subject. If it is desired to show an interesting building, one should analyse what there is about it that makes it unique. One or two of the best angles having been chosen, the camera should be set in motion. This is far better than rambling round the building, shooting from every conceivable angle in the hope that the editor will find one or two satisfactory shots to use. It is unreasonable to expect an editor to inject into the final film ideas missing from haphazard exposures. Cameramen must, therefore, work to a definite plan if their story is to be satisfactory in its final form. All this merely emphasises what has been written so often before—that a good shooting script is imperative to the making of a good film.

The aim of the cameraman must be to record subjects and not merely objects. An individual, an animal or even a tree can be given personality by the right choice of shots. It is the business of the cameraman to bear this in mind. He is making a film to rouse the interest of the audiences that will come to see it. They come with unbiased minds. A confused collection of people or animals means very little to them and will, at best, mildly interest them. A good close-up, however, of a smiling face, a laughing baby or even the long, solemn face of a cow, will always win far

greater interest. In any case it holds much more interest for the onlooker than those non-committal, impersonal mid-shots and long-shots which only too often form the stock-in-trade of so many amateur film men. Such indeterminate shots, without the constant variation of the intimate close-ups, will entirely fail to maintain that interest which is so essential to the enjoyment of a film.

Individuality can also be attained by careful selection of the subjects. If, for instance, one has two different men of the same nationality appearing in the film, care should be taken that unmistakable recognition of each one is possible. To the African, one European is very like another; the European without experience in Africa also finds it difficult to recognise any particular African. There should therefore be such differences in dress that there will be no possibility of error in the establishment of each character. Once the audience has seen each person in the film, they should be provided with a set of characteristics which will enable them to say at once, "This is A," or, "That is B," without the necessity for careful examination in detail. This is a recognised principle on the stage and in films. If it is not followed faithfully, the audience may become inextricably mixed, making it quite impossible for them to follow the story that is being told in the film.

It is a good thing to use the individual to build up the idea of what happens to the mass. Recently a film was examined dealing with the inoculation of cattle. The operation was shown in its various stages by means of haphazard shots taking in half a dozen animals in the midst of hundreds of other cattle. No sequence of ideas was conveyed to the mind, and the operations remained unexplained. If one distinctive beast had been selected and the successive operations on this beast recorded, the sequence would have registered in the minds of the audience even if the background of other beasts had been included in the shots; the sequence would have been recognised as representative of what was happening to all the cattle.

It should be remembered that a film is not life, but a presentation of life in the same way that a play on the stage is a presentation of life. If a stage scene is well done, it can be quite convincing even though we know that its rooms have only three walls; its actors move and speak in certain stylised manners that are, in fact, often artificial and would be insufferable in an ordinary room with ordinary people. It is a matter of selection and presentation. Similarly in making your film, you have to select one side of your subject at a time and present it to the camera in an appropriate manner. This needs thought, analysis and imagination.

## NEW SOUND CINEMA VANS

THE prototype sound van was delivered recently and has been examined at the Ministry of Information and by the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies and other officials responsible for the territories which these new vans will serve. Everyone agreed that within the limits of the supply position which has naturally governed the design, the Ministry's Chief Technical Officer has produced a van likely to withstand the trying conditions overseas.

The chassis is a Fordson-Thames with a 30 h.p. V8 engine. A power take-off is fitted at the rear of the gear box from which a 1½ kilowatt alternator is triple vee-belt driven. Two methods of governing have been provided. The first is a belt-driven mechanical governor which provides sensitive engine speed. There is an additional control on the alternator side provided by a relay-operated ballast; this will cut in when the main load is inadvertently removed from the alternator. Provision has been made for a power intake from electricity supplies available outside.

Inside the van, everything has been arranged to give maximum space to the operators. All controls have been centralised in a special hardwood console which also contains the alternator. On top of this console, the projection equipment is mounted on a special warp-proof metallic base. On one side of the console, a table is fitted with microphone and reading lamp while on the other is the gramophone. Projector, gramophone and commentator's table all close up neatly into teak cases while there is an extra case containing a generous supply of spare parts.

The body is of special heavy-duty construction, a point of interest being that the walls have been lagged with special cellular paper to ensure insulation against heat. Another interesting feature is the special loud-speaker lift. It can be raised or lowered by means of a small hand-driven winch.

On both sides of the van there is ample locker space for petrol, oil, water and the staff's personal belongings. Space for storing films is provided in lockers fitted in the top of the driver's cab.

Those responsible have done a fine job with the materials available and vans of this type should give excellent service.

## NEW FILMS

### THE BRITISH EMPIRE AT WAR

#### News Film No. 22

This film contains three stories:—

- Cairo: Procession of the Mahmal.* There are some excellent shots of the annual procession that takes place in Cairo prior to the departure of the party of pilgrims for the holy city of Mecca.
- Upper Burma: Elephants help the Engineers.* These sequences show the cleverness of the trained elephants in India and the great amount of help they are giving the Army engineers in different kinds of war jobs they are called upon to do.
- American Airmen with the Allied Armies.* American airmen of African descent are doing some fine work for the Allies in the Italian theatre of war. These pictures give some idea of the activities of these American squadrons.

#### News Film No. 23

This film contains two stories:—

- London: Nigerian Aid to British Hospitals.* An organisation in the Warri and Burutu areas of Nigeria known as the Delta Do has raised a great deal of money which has been sent to Britain to help the war effort. Some beds and cots were given to the Queen Charlotte's maternity hospital by this organisation, for the use of the wives of service men. These pictures were taken on the occasion of the presentation of these beds and cots to the hospital.
- Upper Burma: The War against Japan.* These are some very good sequences showing the fighting against the Japanese in Burma. Some of our Indian soldiers are shown in action.

#### 37a LAND AND WATER

A music and effects track brings this film to life. It should be an acquisition to the new cinema vans.

#### 51a COSSACK HORSEMEN

This film has been improved by the addition of music and effects. This version should be popular.



MR. WISE AND MR. FOOLISH  
GO TO TOWN







## WISE WORDS FOR CAMERAMEN

(From the Director's Scrap-book)

Photography is the vehicle that carries the story. The story is the cargo and therefore the important thing. At no time must the vehicle attain greater importance than the story it is carrying.

In deciding a viewpoint, proceed by first choosing that which would be the most conventional—that which would be most certainly chosen by the easily satisfied. Then endeavour to discover if there is a better, a more daring viewpoint to be found. It does not follow, however, that the most conventional is not the best after all, but the attempt to find another is all to the good. It may lead to something of value.

Photography is a matter of *light*, not *objects*. There must be no light surfaces or dark patches aggressively interfering with the essential main light and shadow. Objects, as such, have no interest for the camera. It concerns itself only with reflections of light. These are what it records, and it does not always record these faithfully, especially in regard to colour.

The art of photography is to see as the eye sees. The eye is attracted to the highest light or the deepest shadow. If these happen to be in juxtaposition, the demand to look at that spot is irresistible. Thus one may begin to solve the riddle of the adaptation of the single-eyed lens of the camera to seeing as the eyes see. Arrange that which you desire the observer to see in such a way that his eyes are attracted to the desired spot by the knowledge of this truth. It is trickier, but the trickery of applied principles.

Good composition has no rules; it is an impulse of an artist.

## CRITICISM CAN HELP

IN prevailing circumstances it is always difficult to plan what is considered to be the ideal film programme for audiences overseas. Until it becomes feasible to send out camera units to make films in the Colonies, there is bound to be a great deal lacking in their make-up.

We are receiving considerable assistance from the few enthusiasts who are producing films under the raw stock scheme, and the improvement in the material received recently is most encouraging. With such limited facilities at their disposal, it is quite surprising that results are as good as they are. We are grateful to those working for the Unit under so many handicaps. Not least among these is the uncertainty of transport which makes the provision of fresh film stock so difficult. Even when much hard work has been done in making a film, there is little guarantee that it will be processed before deterioration sets in. Film making under such conditions is full of disappointments, and it requires a peculiar brand of perseverance to carry on when misfortune, and not bad workmanship, is responsible for poor results.

Meanwhile there are strong reasons why users should lose no opportunity of sending their comments to the Unit on the films being supplied. These will be most welcome whether they are adverse or flattering, and will always be regarded as helpful criticism sent with the object of improving the work of the Unit. All engaged in this work are eager and anxious to know in what ways the films fall short of requirements. Many things we should like to do are impossible until times become more normal. Unfortunately, we do not receive enough criticisms, and we should like as many overseas workers as possible to send us information which will help to maintain a satisfactory service.



COSSACK HORSEMEN





*the monthly bulletin of the Colonial Film Unit*

VOL. 2. NO. 6

*Colonial Film Unit, 21 Soho Square, London, W.1*

JUNE 1944

## MAKING TESTS

IT is often found that film has been wasted because people have not sufficient knowledge of the material they are using. For example, colour film, which is both expensive and difficult to obtain, is sometimes exposed and sent back to England for processing, and is found to be unusable because the cameraman has attempted shots which a little experience would have shown him could never be taken with colour film.

It is a very great temptation, when you first obtain a camera, or when you receive your first supply of a new material, to use it at once; but the serious worker must resist that temptation if he is to make his full contribution to the scheme of film making in which he is participating.

The film manufacturers have almost performed miracles in producing film stock which is practically foolproof, but nothing will alter the fact that making a photographic exposure sets up certain electro-physical effects which are controlled by rigid natural laws, and that these laws must be obeyed if the results are to be satisfactory. The cameraman's aim must be to secure the best technical standard that is possible. A few simple precautions will ensure that success is attained in nearly every shot. The precautions have been discussed before. They include the proper care of equipment, particularly of its lenses, the use of an adequate lens hood, the choice of the correct exposure with the aid of an exposure meter, and the avoidance of any attempt to take subjects which are unsuitable for the material being used.

The ability to conform with this last requirement can come only with knowledge of your film material, and only practical experience will give you that knowledge.

Most amateur photographers have gained such knowledge as they have by the painful process of haphazard exposure and frequent disappointment; but it is far better, as well as less expensive and less discouraging, to seek, by a series of planned tests, specific facts under conditions which are controlled. Exact records of these conditions should be made, so that the results can be properly assessed. It is the system used in every professional film organisation where many thousands of pounds are involved and may be lost if cameramen are not familiar with the film they are using.

For example, it is known that colour film has less latitude than black and white film and that deviations from correct exposure result in differences not only in picture brightness, but also in the overall colour of the result. Do you know exactly what those differences are in your district and under your particular atmospheric conditions? Do you know with certainty how much you can over-expose or under-expose without your shot becoming useless? Do you know what happens when you shoot in hot sunshine with hard shadows and with varying degrees of exposure? Do you

know what is the effect of soft lighting, or rain, or of different filters? Do you know the effect on depth of exposure when using different apertures?

A planned series of controlled tests, carefully analysed, will answer all these questions. It may be rather trying to the patience to make such tests, but it cannot be so distressing as to go to considerable trouble to take some important and unrepeatable shot, only to learn later that you have failed because of lack of knowledge of your film material.

The foregoing remarks have been largely prompted by viewing some otherwise excellent material which is useless for any purpose because the cameraman lacked the knowledge which would have enabled him to adjust his exposures suitably for the subject he was attempting to portray.

It is not possible within the compass of this short article to describe all the types of test which could be devised, but there are certain fundamental principles which will guide those who wish to make some experiments.

First of all, do not try to test more than one thing in a given series of exposures. If, for example, you are trying the effects of varying exposure, then lighting, camera speed, camera direction and so on must remain exactly the same, and only the aperture of the lens must vary. To attempt to check two things at once will merely result in confusion. Secondly, do not attempt to draw comparisons between unrelated things. It is not uncommon to hear a person say that one film is faster or softer than another, when the only evidence he has consists of two different shots, taken on two different subjects at two different times. That is not comparison, but self-deception. Thirdly, establish a control. For example, in making a series of exposure tests, take a reading with a meter, use the indicated exposure as the control, and vary upwards and downwards from this control in a series of known steps of increasing and decreasing aperture.

In testing such an attribute as the ability of colour film to render contrasting objects, the same general principle of a "normal" exposure should be adopted, and in addition the cameraman should, by going close up to the subject, take independent readings of the brightly lit and the shaded parts, and make records of these, as they will indicate the scale of contrast.

Other schemes will suggest themselves. It is only necessary to decide exactly the point you wish to check, arrange that nothing else varies, and then make a series of controlled exposures.

Finally, never throw away these tests or the notes made about them. They may serve to refresh your memory later, and together will form an ever-growing library of information to assist your future work.



## THE CINEMA IN NORTHERN RHODESIA

(CONTRIBUTED)

NORTHERN RHODESIA is entirely landlocked and suffers the additional handicap of a sad lack of communications. Economically, the colony is almost entirely dependent on copper mining, a fact which successive commissions have deplored.

It was natural that the disruption of African tribal life following the development of this single industry in the mines of the Copperbelt should be widespread and create social, economic, and racial problems, which are still being grappled with though the mines have been in production for many years now.

As was to be expected in a backward, undeveloped country never very sure of its future, the development of the cinema for Africans outside the larger established townships was spasmodic. In the very early days of the mines, nothing much could be done for the African's entertainment. Then by Government legislation and under the control of local authorities, the sale of native beer was allowed in special beer halls. All the profits were used to provide recreational amenities for those using them.

Cinema entertainment received first consideration, as it was calculated that greater numbers would benefit than through any other medium of entertainment, save perhaps Association football. Certain mine companies had already started, out of limited welfare funds, free film exhibitions to large audiences in their compounds. But systematic film shows in the Copperbelt came later. A small charge was made for admission as it was found that, where audiences did not pay to see their pictures, they took it so much for granted that any unpopular film was stoned, or projectionists abused.

The commercial standard sound films were generally of the purely entertainment variety produced exclusively for Western audiences. Thus, the setting up of a censorship board to scrutinise film programmes became imperative. As the distributors did not bother to note the preferences of either the audiences or the censorship board, bans were frequent, with the cancellation of exhibitions as a consequence. Nowadays, however, with African cinemas well equipped and supervised, especially in the Copperbelt, a generation of regular "film fans" is in the making, and the distributors for southern Africa have come to meet the requirements extremely well with regular supplies of Westerns, which have no rivals in popularity in African eyes. A curious feature of all the African exhibitions is that no matter who the cowboy star is, he is universally hailed as "Jack." Whole audiences roar the word "Jack" as each daring exploit wins him a laurel, or each fist lands on the villainous chin of the bad man.

Africans in the larger townships demand quite a high entertainment value in their films; British Council and Ministry of Information short sound films have been well received when the exhibitors have given some additional vernacular commentary through the microphone. These relatively sophisticated Copperbelt audiences number approximately 7,000 weekly. The majority of cinemas are for open-air shows, some having provision for moving their equipment to permit of projecting indoors in the rainy season.

Before the British Council and Ministry of Information films came out to this colony, there existed at Kitwe, the largest township and mine in the territory, an African Film Library and Purchasing Committee the business of which was to produce or purchase sub-standard films suitable for

African audiences. When British news, propaganda, and general interest films began to arrive from those bodies, the distributing and censorship services of this Library Committee were employed in the circulation of the films received through the Government Information Office; copies were eventually returned to the Library after exhibition. The Committee was composed of keen and experienced amateurs whose many years of work with Africans and their cinemas gave them an extensive knowledge of films and of local requirements. Engaged in their own administrative employments, they could not devote the time to African film production that they wished. The Secretary-Librarian of the Committee recorded the more important African social and sporting events as a start, and it is hoped that production of "planned" films will increase in the near future. Films considered as suitable for inclusion in the Library are purchased.

The distribution of sub-standard films covers three centres on the Copperbelt, and eight centres in other provinces. It is easier, as well as much more economical and effective, to send programmes of films to static cinemas at various points inaccessible to mobile units. There is a great demand for films of any sort by these static exhibitors, who are mostly public-spirited missionaries. The demand for entertainment shorts to break the monotony of programmes is insistent. Audiences at these static cinemas outside the Copperbelt number approximately 10,000 Africans and 300 Europeans. The exhibitor takes his programme round the populated centres in his area. One exhibitor, for instance, shows to seven villages within his area as well as giving his programme at his main centre. When one of these operators is transferred or a worn-out part of his obsolete equipment cannot be replaced, it is the end of regular shows for his local public. Some 4,000 patrons have already been lost in this way.

For a population of one and a third million, the numbers being served even with periodic cinema shows are ridiculously small. To cover the territory in a more widespread manner outside the area of the Copperbelt and static district exhibitors, the Information Officer runs one 16 mm. mobile unit. With this one van, there is little hope of taking the cinema regularly to the people off the beaten track. Since the commencement in 1942 the van, which is in charge of one European and an African interpreter-handyman, has toured in the Central, Southern, Northern, and Barotsse Provinces, covering 13,000 miles and showing to approximately 80,000 Africans, but has not yet covered the Western and Eastern Provinces. It did not travel in the rainy season.

Among the unsophisticated illiterates of the districts toured by the van, Charlie Chaplin was as usual a popular hero, and animal pictures, slow-tempo war pictures, farming, etc., proved equally absorbing where the action or objects were familiar, sound films proving much more impressive than silent films. The officer in charge of the van expressed the opinion that, even among the most unsophisticated natives, he had not yet met one who did not follow the films.

Like the Film Library, the Information Office unit possesses a Bell & Howell 16 mm. camera, and produces local newsreels. It is hoped that, co-operatively, this territory will be able to supply useful local sequences for the Colonial Film Unit in the future, for there is great enthusiasm and great hope for the film for Africans in Northern Rhodesia.



## LAUNCHING OF H.M.S. TANGANYIKA

**A**FRICANS, Arabs, Indians and Europeans of Tanganyika Territory contributed towards the cost of the new fleet minesweeper H.M.S. *Tanganyika* which was launched at a Clydeside shipyard recently.

This was disclosed at the ceremony by Mr. D. Roper, of the Public Relations Department of the Colonial Office. Mr. Roper explained that Tanganyika was playing an important part in the Empire's war effort. Tanganyika had contributed over £360,000, which included £63,000 for charities, £22,000 for aircraft, and £274,000 to H.M. Government for the prosecution of the war. Of the money given to the United Kingdom Treasury, £200,000 was contributed by the Tanganyika Government, and £26,000 was raised during a Warships Week in the Territory towards the purchase of a warship.

The launching ceremony was performed by Mrs. A. E. Lamb, wife of Mr. J. E. S. Lamb, C.M.G., Administrative Secretary, Tanganyika.

Before the ship was launched, Mr. V. N. V. Surtees, a director of the firm, read a message of good luck to the ship from Sir Wilfrid E. F. Jackson, G.C.M.G., Governor of Tanganyika.

Expressing her thanks and her admiration of all she had seen in the shipyard, Mrs. Lamb said she was sure the people of Tanganyika would always follow the career of the new ship with pride and interest.

The launching of H.M.S. *Tanganyika* was covered by cameramen of this Unit. Some excellent pictures were taken and will be shown in an early newsreel. The photographs appearing on this page are enlargements from the actual film.



## REVISED LIST OF FILMS

1. **MR. ENGLISH AT HOME**  
A three-reel film showing a day in the life of Mr. and Mrs. English and their three children.
2. **THE BRITISH ARMY**  
A two-reel film showing the British Army in peace and war. The film was made three years ago and is now rather dated.
3. **THE ROYAL AIR FORCE**  
This film shows how a 'plane is piloted and how the R.A.F. operates; like *The British Army* the film is somewhat dated.
4. **ENGLISH AND AFRICAN LIFE**  
This film shows the differences and similarities of life in Britain and Africa—a woman taking care of her baby, a man at the hair-dresser's, shopping, etc.
5. **STORY OF COTTON**  
Out of print.
6. **GUNS IN THE DESERT**  
Out of print.
7. **PROGRESS IN THE COLONIES (An African Hospital)**  
This film shows how fine hospitals have been built in one colony and explains the work they do.
8. **AN AFRICAN IN LONDON**  
An African comes to London and is shown the sights by a friend.
9. **THIS IS A SEARCHLIGHT**  
This film explains how a searchlight works and shows it in action.
10. **THIS IS A SPECIAL CONSTABLE**  
The work done by a special constable in a large British city is shown in this film.
11. **THIS IS A BARRAGE BALLOON**  
Out of print.
12. **THESE ARE PARATROOPS**  
Paratroops are shown in training and on manoeuvres.
13. **THIS IS AN A.R.P. WARDEN**  
The work of a warden in air-raids is shown in this film.
14. **THIS IS AN ANTI-AIRCRAFT GUN**  
The film shows how an anti-aircraft battery carries out its duties.
15. **OUR INDIAN SOLDIERS**  
This film was made up from material sent from India.
16. **SELF-HELP IN FOOD**  
A British family grows food in an allotment.
17. **THESE ARE LONDON FIREMEN**  
London firemen are seen in training and in action.
18. **MOBILE CANTEENS**  
Out of print.
19. **EARLY TRAINING OF AFRICAN TROOPS**  
Out of print.
20. **AFRICAN TROOPS ON ACTIVE SERVICE**  
Out of print.
21. **COMFORTS FROM UGANDA**  
Out of print.
22. **THESE ARE BREN-GUN CARRIERS AND TANKS**  
A simple explanation is given of a Bren-gun carrier and a tank.
23. **UGANDA POLICE**  
This film was shot by Capt. Roberts, Deputy Commissioner of Police, Uganda, and edited by the Colonial Film Unit.
24. **A.T.S. AND W.R.N.S.**  
This has been made up from two Ministry films to show the A.T.S. and W.R.N.S. at work.
25. **RESCUE BOATS OF THE R.A.F.**  
This film is based on the Ministry film *The Pilot is Safe*.
26. **FIGHTING MEN OF THE BRITISH COMMANDOS**  
Made up from material supplied by the War Office, the film gives an idea of the work of the Commandos.
27. **RETURN OF THE EMPEROR**  
Made up from Army Film Unit material, this film shows the return of the Emperor of Abyssinia to Addis Ababa.
28. **FEEDING THE ARMY**  
The film shows how the British Army is fed, and is compiled from materials supplied by the Army Film Unit.
29. **GIFTS FROM THE COLONIES: Mobile Libraries**
30. **GIFTS FROM THE COLONIES: Katsina Tank**
31. **TAKE COVER**  
The film shows the A.R.P. organisation in a British town.
32. **CHARLIE THE RASCAL**  
This is a compilation of suitable sequences from Chaplin films.
- 32a. **THE MAN HUNT**  
The other Chaplin film has been allotted this number in the Colonial Film Unit series in order to prevent confusion.
33. **FARMING IN RUSSIA**  
This film, received from the U.S.S.R., has been re-edited by the Unit to make it more suitable for African audiences.
34. **HEROIC MALTA**  
The film shows the heroism of the people of Malta.
35. **MACHI GABA**  
This film, which was shot in Nigeria, illustrates the increasing interest taken by tribal chiefs in their people.
36. **TIMBERMEN FROM HONDURAS**  
Out of print.
37. **LAND AND WATER**  
This film shows something of the evolution of ships from the simple boat to the great ocean-going vessel.
- 37a. **LAND AND WATER**  
A music and effects track has been added to No. 37.
38. **WE WANT RUBBER**  
This film was made to stimulate the production of rubber.
39. **BLIND PEOPLE**  
This film shows that blind people can learn to do a real job of work as efficiently as those who have sight.
40. **PILOT-OFFICER PETER THOMAS, R.A.F.**  
Pilot-officer Thomas, first African to qualify for a commission in the R.A.F., is shown on and off duty.
41. **COLONIAL CENTRE**  
This film shows the Colonial Centre in London.
42. **BARLESS INCINERATOR**  
This film shows how to build an efficient incinerator entirely from local material. No iron bars are necessary.
43. **THESE ARE BRITISH SAILORS**  
Compiled from library material, this film shows the training of the British sailor.
44. **NURSE ADEMOLA**  
This film gives an idea of the many sides of a nurse's training at a great London hospital.
45. **INDIA**  
A compilation from library material, this film shows something of the life and war effort of people in India.
46. **AFRICA'S FIGHTING MEN**  
This consists of sequences from newsreels and summarises the efforts of the African population in all three services.
- 46a. **AFRICA'S FIGHTING MEN**  
This is a version of No. 46 with a music and effects track.
47. **A BRITISH FAMILY IN PEACE AND WAR**  
This is a story, told in four reels, showing a family in peace time and how the war has affected all the members.
- 47a. **A BRITISH FAMILY IN PEACE AND WAR**  
A music and effects track has been added to No. 47.
48. **WEST AFRICAN EDITORS**  
This is a pictorial record of the visit of several West African Editors to wartime Britain.
- 48a. **WEST AFRICAN EDITORS**  
A sound track has now been added to No. 48.
49. **PROGRESS IN THE COLONIES (Kenya, East Africa)**  
This is a film made from material taken in Kenya Colony by Mr. A. M. Champion, C.M.G.
- 49a. **PROGRESS IN THE COLONIES (Kenya, East Africa)**  
This is a sound version of No. 49.
50. **SAM THE CYCLIST**  
This is a humorous film which will appeal to all audiences.
- 50a. **SAM THE CYCLIST**  
An effective sound track has been added to No. 50.
51. **COSSACK HORSEMEN**  
Our Russian allies have many expert horsemen. This film, showing trick riding, should appeal to African audiences.
- 51a. **COSSACK HORSEMEN**  
A good music and effects track has been added to No. 51.
52. **YOUR PEOPLE IN BRITAIN**  
This film shows the fine spirit of the West Indians in the Services and their happy relation with the people of Britain.
- 52a. **YOUR PEOPLE IN BRITAIN**  
A sound version has been made of this film.
53. **MR. WISE AND MR. FOOLISH GO TO TOWN**  
This film shows the evils of venereal disease. Owing to its special appeal it is not being given general distribution. All applications for the film should be made through Public Relations or Information Officers.
54. **THE GERMANS IN NORWAY**  
This is a film which shows the courage of the Norwegian people while under German domination.  
A summary of the 25 newsreels compiled will be given in the next issue.





the monthly bulletin of the Colonial Film Unit

VOL. 2. NO. 7

Colonial Film Unit, 21 Soho Square, London, W.1

JULY 1944

## KEEPING RECORDS

IN common with all production processes, film making involves a considerable amount of paper work in all its stages. Preliminaries such as the original treatment and the preparation of a good script have been dealt with at length in previous articles. But there are many additional records which are almost as necessary if the business of making a film is to proceed smoothly through all its stages.

A complete list of all equipment should be made out by every cameraman and preferably fastened inside the lid of the camera case. When a sudden call is made to proceed to a particular location, it is the work of only a few seconds for him to make a rapid check of his equipment. He is able to start on his journey with the minimum delay and with the comforting thought that his kit is complete in every detail. It has been told of one cameraman that he drove two hundred miles to do some urgent filming work, and found on his arrival that he had set off without any lenses in his case.

A careful record of each item of the day's work should be kept with appropriate comments. In normal times, it was possible to buy numbered scene cards. It is quite easy to make an emergency loose-leaf booklet on the same lines from an ordinary notebook, using a heavy black pencil to make the numbers. Each leaf will have its number clearly marked in the centre in figures about 1½ inches high. Before each scene is shot, the appropriate leaf should be held at arm's length before the camera and about three frames exposed on it. When a numbered shooting script is used, the leaf numbers should correspond with those on the script.

After the exposure has been made, all data relevant to the shot should be recorded on the numbered form. The following details might well be included and set out neatly in ruled sections round the central number:—

Name of production; Date; Type of film; Roll number; Time of day; Light conditions; Stop number; Footage exposed; Camera speed; Lens; Filter; Location; Remarks.

By following this method, every scene taken is unmistakably identified by the number which precedes each shot. If it is found that any particular shot is unfit to use, the relevant leaf may be consulted to enable the cameraman to trace the fault and to avoid it in the retake. Conversely, if a particularly successful effect is obtained in a scene, the fullest information about the conditions which existed at the time of the shot is immediately available.

In editing, careful records like this are invaluable, particularly when a numbered script has been used. It is usual to run through the whole of the material, noting down shot by shot the content and sequence. It may happen at any time that it becomes necessary to restore the original order

of the film. In the process of editing, it is an easy matter to become confused as to the meaning of a particular sequence of shots. In the cutting of a film here recently, shots of a group of houses became displaced from their proper geographical setting. Thanks to the assistance of a numbered script, the editor was able to recover the original order and correct an error that would have shown these houses twenty or more miles from their proper site.

Every conscientious cameraman realises with experience that only by keeping careful records of the details of his work can he hope to maintain first-rate results. It may seem rather tedious to the beginner, but it soon becomes a matter of routine.

## NOTES

### BOY SCOUTS

Shooting of this film is complete and editing has started. The standard of work is high and the film should be first-class. Many Scout customs could easily be wrongly interpreted through casual direction unless expert supervision were given. It should be difficult even for Scouts to pick any holes in this film. For this we must thank the officials of the Scouts' Association Headquarters who co-operated in the production at every stage.

### AGRICULTURAL SCHOOL

This is one of the most important films the Unit has attempted. It is important that it should be shot at the right time in order to show the material results of the agricultural instruction. The school chosen is in the North Riding of Yorkshire, which has one of the most progressive education authorities in Britain. Much time has been given to investigating and scripting, and filming started at the beginning of July.

### INVASION PICTURES

The invasion is being covered by a host of cameramen. From the masses of material, a careful selection is being made to compile a serial story of this great undertaking. It is hoped to introduce the story in *News Film 28* by showing invasion preparations in Britain. Thereafter, the best possible selection will be made to keep our overseas audiences posted in all the events leading up to the complete liberation of occupied Europe.

### MUSIC MANUSCRIPTS

In our December 1943 issue, we asked that Africans should send us copies of African melodies written in staff notation. We have received several, but should like many more, particularly from Eastern Africa. We are anxious to build up a collection of African melodies for use when sound films become general.

# NUMBERING DEVICE FOR FILMING

WE have been sent particulars of a numbering device which has been worked out by Sergt. Morniment, G.S.I. (P), East African Forces. The idea is to give an identification number to each shot when making a film.

A simple short-focus lens is required—a single convex lens costing a couple of shillings would probably be adequate for the purpose. In the actual model constructed, a scrap 27 mm. cine lens was used. The lens is fixed about halfway down a tube which needs to be about four times the focal length of the lens. At the end of the tube is attached a slotted plate which holds two small glass slides in spring clips at the side. Three narrow strips of film, each one-third the width of the slot, are inserted between the glass slides. These strips have letters and figures photographed on them and can be slipped up and down independently between the slides so that any combination of letters and figures may be recorded. The whole is adjusted so that the letters and figures on the film strips are brought into sharp focus on the film in the camera gate.

In use, the device is slipped into the camera in place of the lens whenever it is desired to record a distinctive number on the film; the camera is then pointed at the sky and a few frames exposed at normal speed. When the film is developed, the number is recorded on it permanently and in an easily legible size.

We have often stressed the difficulties experienced in sorting out sequences when editing material from overseas. If this device were used methodically by cameramen, it would probably save many hours of hard labour by the editor.

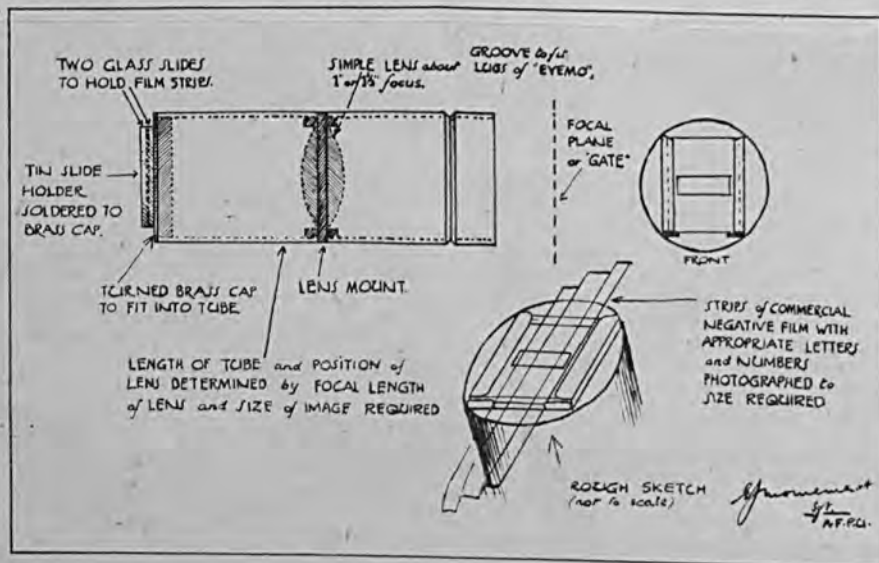
It has been suggested that a less complicated arrangement would be a similar tube with a supplementary lens (such as a spectacle lens) the focal length of which is equal to the distance between lens and strips. This might be slipped over the front of the camera lens without removing it from the camera and, provided the camera lens is set at or near infinity, sharp letters or figures will be reproduced. The suggestion is made as we feel many will be sufficiently interested to experiment along the lines of the ideas put forward.

In professional film-making, a "take-board" is used for each shot. On this take-board such details as the scene number, the take number, the name of the production, and such other notes as may be necessary, are written on the board in chalk; the board is exposed for the first few frames of each take. Exactly the same result may be obtained by using a piece of white paper or cardboard with markings in black pencil.

With the device described, the arrangement of the set figures and letters is inflexible: one cannot include any statement of non-standard character not provided for in the letter or number strips. For this reason, it is unlikely to supplant the take-board, though there is little doubt it might be particularly helpful to the director-cameraman who has to work alone.



1. Diagram showing construction
2. Camera making exposure
3. Close-up of exposure being made





## AFRICAN GIRL AS MAY QUEEN

THE war has not been allowed to interfere with many of the old English customs, particularly those which affect the happiness of the children. One that is preserved in many villages in the country is the crowning of the May Queen. May is a colourful month in England when the spring flowers are at their very best; it is an ideal time for children's celebrations.

Soon after the outbreak of war, hundreds of thousands of British children were evacuated from the large towns and ports which were likely to be bombed and were sent, while the war was on, to live in the quiet country places to be out of the way of German air raids. Among the children sent to Stanion, a small village in Northamptonshire, were the two daughters of an African seaman in the Merchant Navy. The foster-parents of these two children sent them to attend the village school.

Then came May Day 1944 and, as usual, the children assembled to elect the Queen of the May for the village. This time, one of the two African girls was chosen.

A story like this was too good for the Unit to miss. Permission having been obtained from the school and education authority, a camera unit went to the village to film the ceremony. Everyone in the village from the vicar to the youngest child in the school, and especially the head mistress, co-operated to make the day a success. The children gave an excellent performance, and the result is an extremely pretty little film which we think will have an appeal, not only in Africa, but also in the whole Colonial Empire.

We hope to be able to distribute this film very soon. In this issue we include some photographs taken from the actual film.







A PRODUCTION UNIT AT WORK — *African Film Library, Kitwe, Northern Rhodesia*

## REVISED LIST OF NEWS FILMS

### THE BRITISH EMPIRE AT WAR

#### News Film No. 1

- (a) Battle of El Alamein;
- (b) African Artillery in Action;
- (c) H.M. the King inspects his Fighting Forces.

#### News Film No. 2

- (a) War against Malaria;
- (b) Work in a Factory;
- (c) North African Captives;
- (d) With our African Troops in Ceylon.

#### News Film No. 3

- (a) Cyprus: Soldiers in Training;
- (b) London: African Seamen Meet;
- (c) North Africa: British Soldiers in Action.

#### News Film No. 4

- (a) Uganda: Accession of the Kabaka of Buganda;
- (b) Gold Coast: Sappers build a Ferry;
- (c) India: War Factories;
- (d) North Africa: Royal Air Force in Action.

#### News Film No. 5

- (a) North Africa: Allies bring Food to the People;
- (b) Freetown: A.A. Gun Crews at Practice;
- (c) North Africa: The British Army goes Forward;
- (d) Tripoli: General Montgomery and his Victorious Army.

#### News Film No. 6

- (a) Gold Coast: Soap from Cocoa;
- (b) Sierra Leone: Sailors in Training;
- (c) North Africa: Winston Churchill inspects the Desert Army.

#### News Film No. 7

- (a) London: H.R.H. the Duchess of Gloucester opens Colonial Centre;
- (b) East Africa: Sisal Production;
- (c) Kenya: African Soldiers come Home on Leave.

#### News Film No. 8

- (a) Gt. Britain: H.M. the King inspects Men of the Royal Navy;
- (b) England: Pilot-officer Peter Thomas, R.A.F.;
- (c) North Africa: British Gunners defeat a German Tank Attack.

#### News Film No. 9

- (a) England: H.R.H. Princess Elizabeth inspects Grenadier Guards;
- (b) West Africa: Amadu Sokoto joins the British Army;
- (c) North Africa: General Montgomery inspects Gurkhas with the Eighth Army.

*News Film No. 10* is a special two-reel issue telling the story of the final stages of the Tunisian campaign.

#### News Film No. 11

- (a) Pantellaria Island Captured;
- (b) Tunisia: H.M. the King visits Allied Troops in North Africa;
- (c) Malta: H.M. the King visits Malta.

*News Film No. 12* is a special two-reel issue telling the story of the conquest of Sicily.

#### News Film No. 13

- (a) London: Nurse Ademola;
- (b) Gt. Britain: West African Editors;
- (c) Sicily: General Montgomery decorates Men;
- (d) London: Indian Soldiers at Buckingham Palace.

*News Film No. 14* gives the story of the line of aerodromes built by Africans across Africa.

*News Film No. 15* tells the story of the Allied landing in Italy.

#### News Film No. 16

- (a) China: Training Modern Army;
- (b) North Africa: Indian Soldiers training for Battle;
- (c) England: West Indian Women join the A.T.S.

*News Film No. 17* tells in pictures the story of the conferences at Cairo and Teheran towards the end of 1943.

#### News Film No. 18

- (a) Sicily: Peace comes to Sicily;
- (b) Italy: Allied Armies advance on Rome.

#### News Film No. 19

- (a) New Guinea: Australian Soldiers in Action;
- (b) Burma: Indian Soldiers build a Bridge.

#### News Film No. 20

- (a) Pacific: The Capture of Bougainville;
- (b) Upper Burma: Indian Soldiers on Patrol;
- (c) Egypt: Mr. Churchill visits his Old Regiment.

#### News Film No. 21

- (a) Middle East: Basuto Fire-fighters;
- (b) London: West Indian Tea Party;
- (c) India: Training for the Navy.

#### News Film No. 22

- (a) Cairo: Procession of the Mahmal;
- (b) Upper Burma: Elephants help the Engineers;
- (c) Italy: American Airmen with the Allied Armies.

#### News Film No. 23

- (a) London: Nigerian aid to British hospitals;
- (b) Upper Burma: The War against Japan.

## NEW FILMS

### THE BRITISH EMPIRE AT WAR

#### News Film No. 24

This film contains three stories:—

- (a) *London: Nigeria's Timely Gift.* The sequence shows how the gift ambulance from the people of Warri and Burutu in Nigeria was used within a few days of its being handed over. Some of the bomb damage is shown and a rescue party is seen at work after an air raid on London.
- (b) *Upper Burma: Collecting Venom from Snakes.* In Burma, our soldiers are fighting against the Japanese in thick bush country. Sometimes men are bitten by snakes. Venom taken from snakes is made into serum to cure snake-bite. These pictures show men engaged in catching snakes. They are experts at this dangerous work.
- (c) *Middle East: General Smuts with South Africa's Army.* On his way from Britain to South Africa, General Smuts paid a visit to South African soldiers in the Middle East. He is seen talking to his soldiers, after which there is a march past while the General takes the salute.

#### News Film No. 25

This film contains three stories:—

- (a) *London: The King and Queen visit Bomb-damaged Homes.* This sequence contains some excellent pictures of the King and Queen among the people who suffered in the early 1944 bombing raids.
- (b) *Great Britain: Preparing for Invasion.* These are excellent pictures of parachute troops at work. The exercise is carried out in the presence of Mr. Churchill, General Eisenhower, General Montgomery and Air Chief Marshal Tedder. Mr. Churchill is shown addressing the invasion troops.
- (c) *French West Africa: Visit by General de Gaulle.* The leader of the Free French is shown paying an inspection visit to French West Africa. There is a march past of African and European Service personnel.



*the monthly bulletin of the Colonial Film Unit*

VOL. 2. NO. 8

*Colonial Film Unit, 21 Soho Square, London, W.1*

AUGUST 1944

## CONTINUITY AND TEMPO

A FILM that was recently edited here contained a sequence showing cattle drawing a plough. The cameraman had first taken a long shot of the plough approaching the camera from middle distance right to foreground left. Then he had brought a long-focus lens into position and taken a mid shot. Waiting a little he had then taken a medium close shot as the plough reached the end of the furrow nearest the camera and swung off to the right. Close shots of the feet of the oxen and the plough share were taken, and finally a medium shot of the cattle and plough completing their turn and moving away from the camera.

On paper, it would seem that everything necessary to complete a really good sequence had been provided for. In spite of the fact that all the shots were almost perfect photographically, and that the editor took considerable trouble, it was found impossible to build up a satisfactory sequence from the material. The fault was that the tempo and continuity were both wrong.

In art there is a principle that long, continued vertical and horizontal lines convey an atmosphere of calm and peace; short, oblique, interrupted lines suggest unrest and haste. Something similar applies to the film. The quiet, peaceful scene should be recorded in long, slow, deliberate shots that dwell on the screen and should be devoid of violent changes of angle and idea between successive shots; on the other hand the bustle of a market-place, for example, may best be recorded by shots of short duration with the angles varied, always remembering that however short the shot may be, it should be carefully selected.

Now such an operation as ploughing with cattle is a rather ponderous and leisurely business. In this instance, the cameraman took a number of shots, each short in time. The rapid succession of short cut-shots imparted a jerkiness to the sequence which was quite foreign to the nature of the operation.

One would think little fault could be found with the continuity, as the successive stages of the operation were shown in long shot, mid shot, medium-close shot and so on. What happened in this instance was that the cattle and plough had continued to plod steadily forward while the cameraman was pausing between one shot and the next. There were unmistakable landmarks in the background, so the audience could not fail to notice that the heavy plough, drawn by two heavy beasts, had apparently shot forward several yards in the fraction of a second between the two shots shown on the screen. Further, there was a slight

change of angle in the successive shots and none of the tricks of editing could possibly cover the hiatus.

It would have been normally possible to use one of two methods to get what was wanted. If the cameraman wished to show a complete sequence of action against the same background, he could have used two cameras at once—one to provide the longer shot and the other to provide the close-up material at the same time. The two lots could then have been intercut to a perfect match. Optionally, he might have shot the long and medium shots on the first time round, and the short shots for intercutting when the plough came round for the second time, allowing sufficient overlapping material to ensure matching up of the different shots. The audience would be unlikely to notice that the plough had moved aside one furrow. A third method might have been used with satisfactory results. Provided there was no linking background object, it would have been possible to cut from a long shot to a close-up of part of the plough at the same relative angle. For example, the long shot might show the whole team against the landscape and the close shot with the earth only as a background. This would give the effect on the screen that the camera had gone up to the plough and not that the plough had jumped many feet forward. If the cameraman wishes to give maximum aid to the editor, he will not do anything that will affect smooth movement from one shot to the next. There is an inclination when an action takes a long time to complete, to stop the camera for a short period and restart it again without moving it. If this is done when a moving object is being filmed, the result will be a sudden jump on the screen, from the position in the first shot to that in the second shot. It is impossible to correct such a fault in the editing room.

It is all a question of planning. Before filming an operation, it is generally possible to arrange a rehearsal. If it is long and lacking in variety, no attempt should be made to keep the camera running the whole time. What is required is a filmic interpretation of the operation and not a slavish copy. The solution here would be to record the first part of the operation and the end of it in long or mid-shot, and cut into the middle a matching close-up of a short portion of the middle period. If, on the other hand, a piece of planned action does not start at the proper moment, everything should be stopped, the camera rewound and a fresh start made. Always begin by giving your subject serious thought; next plan your sequences carefully and your final result should be successful.

## FILM APPRECIATION

### A New Field of Teaching

*Digest of an article by ROGER MANVELL in "The Times Educational Supplement," 13th May, 1944*

AT least 20,000,000 people use the cinema in this country each week, and of these probably about 4,000,000 are children. It is evident that this novel form of entertainment has achieved a popularity which far exceeds more orthodox and long-standing occupations, such as novel reading or play-going. For a great many people, the cinema has developed from a habit to a necessity.

The influence of the cinema is comparable with that of the radio or the daily Press. No educator can afford to ignore a medium which is certain to have a considerable influence on the formation of the habits of mind of his pupils. The old-fashioned teacher may despise the cinema and sneer at the rubbish which he thinks is shown there. By adopting this attitude, he will merely lose touch with the young people he is training and miss a golden opportunity of using a popular medium to their educational advantage. Films, though created nowadays by people of marked ability and talent, set up variable standards of beauty, art and morality before a vast and receptive audience and in most cases these standards are unconsciously assimilated into everyday life and behaviour. It is the task of the educator to study this problem and to find out in what ways films can be used to the best possible advantage.

The film is an art form, because it is a powerful instrument for the expression of emotion either through fiction, or through the presentation in documentary, of actuality itself. Yet as an art, it almost stands alone in that it is enjoyed unselfconsciously. People go to the pictures to be entertained without any of the artistic self-consciousness and, too often, of the critical approach, with which more limited audiences attend classical concerts or serious drama.

Here, then, surely, lies vast scope for education. Appreciation of the film is to-day as important a subject as appreciation of literature, though each requires its different approach. Film appreciation should be directed towards revealing the marvels and technique of film construction and, more important, towards assessing the values that lie behind the stories so persuasively projected. Film making, besides being an art, is an industry and a trade; it cannot afford not to pay. Only the occasional figure like Orson Welles can combine the originality to run ahead of public opinion with the financial resources which can risk box-office flops like *Citizen Kane* or *The Grapes of Wrath*. Entertainment without controversy is the broad aim, and within these limits appear each year, besides a series of fine achievements, a number of mediocre pot-boilers which do much subconscious harm in exploiting the baser kind of sensationalism, or are too banal to create any sensation at all.

The task of instruction is clear; it must be to teach recognition of what is good. Young people who will soon be the staple supporters of the industry must be given the opportunity to distinguish what is valuable from what is shoddy and to recognise where the emotional content is spurious and where the values are inexact.

To appraise a film requires an alert and discriminating eye, a sensitive and ready ear and an appreciation of acting. It is for the teacher to guide and develop the taste of his pupils, but this he cannot do until he has developed it in

himself. The young teachers who are to receive training under the new educational scheme should be given courses in film appreciation covering the elements of film technique; they should study the powers of the cinema in moulding the opinions and attitudes of those who make film-going a habit. With a real enthusiast on a school staff, much may be done to organise visits to the cinema in combination with the showing of films at the school in and out of hours of formal instruction. Too few schools have apparatus available, but after the war, the new education policy will encourage the installation of sub-standard sound projectors in a growing number of schools, and soon they will be regarded as equally necessary as the piano, the radio or the laboratory.

The demand for suitable books to help with the study is certain to grow, because the proper appreciation of a film requires a realisation of its structure, just as much as does that of a symphony or a novel. The film has its syntax and grammar like any other medium of expression.

Documentary films will probably be responsible for the widest publication of world problems. The majority of people who would switch off the radio when problems of food distribution are being discussed, or who would pass over articles on agriculture or vitamins in their daily papers, find absorbing interest in a film like *World of Plenty*. The film is certainly the chosen popular art of the twentieth century, and teachers must realise that a new field lies open to them for experiment and exploration.

## NEW FILMS

### 55. SPRINGTIME IN AN ENGLISH VILLAGE

In the July issue, we told a story in words and pictures about an African girl who was elected Queen of the May at a school in a small English village. Shot originally as a newsreel item, it was found inappropriate for inclusion in *The British Empire at War* series. Some library material showing the English countryside in spring was included to introduce the main story and the result is a pretty little picture which most audiences will appreciate.

### THE BRITISH EMPIRE AT WAR

#### News Film No. 26

All the colonial territories have contributed in various ways to the war effort. Tanganyika's cash contribution was over £360,000, a large portion of which was allocated to the cost of building a mine-sweeper for the Royal Navy. We filmed the launching ceremony at a British shipyard recently. Some library material showing the work of mine-sweepers completes an excellent newsreel.

#### News Film No. 27 This newsreel contains three stories:—

- Burma. The Fall of Imphal.* These sequences taken by the Army Film Unit show some of the stubborn fighting which has taken place between the Allies and Japanese along the Imphal road.
- London. Salute the Soldier Week.* Recently, in "Salute the Soldier" week, the people of London raised over £170,000,000 in savings. Our cameraman was able to film some of the military parades which were held in different parts of London during the week.
- Italy. Smashing the Gustave Line.* The Allies in Italy have made a brilliant advance against the Germans. This sequence shows some of the fighting at the opening of the offensive.



## FILM STRIPS

**VISUAL** aids have always been regarded as an essential adjunct to class teaching. The rapid growth of interest in the cinema has tended to obscure the importance of static aids such as the lantern and the epidiascope. It is significant, however, that as soon as the expensive machinery for giving action to pictures has been installed, the users have asked for means to still the films for more detailed study of particular shots. From this it would appear that there must continue to be a large field for the use of the still picture.

The old magic lantern, with its crude lighting arrangements, gave place to the more efficient dioscope; then followed the episcope which could project opaque materials such as picture post cards and illustrations from books. Finally, the epidiascope was developed, and is capable of projecting almost any type of still picture or slide.

Slides have always been costly to produce and are easily cracked and broken, while their weight and bulk make them difficult to carry and store. The idea, therefore, of providing a series of pictures on a strip of standard film is a happy one and removes most of the difficulties of showing still pictures on a screen. A small roll of film which will slip into the vest pocket is capable of containing a full range of illustrations for a talk, a lecture or a lesson. Manufacturers have not been slow to recognise the possibilities of the film strip, and have produced projectors of various design which are sold at reasonable prices.

The war has been responsible for considerable development in the use of the film strip, as the Services have found that well-planned film strips are of the greatest value in training men and women in technical work. With the help of these film strips, good instructors are able to impart to groups what almost amounts to individual instruction.

Each film strip is arranged to achieve a particular purpose. If it is to do its job successfully, the strip must be planned with the same care as is given to the making of a film. With the object in mind, a treatment is prepared and then a shooting script is made. As many as two hundred illustrations may be included in a single film strip, though usually the number ranges from twenty to eighty.

There is no doubt that the film strip will not be long in finding its rightful place in educational work. The cost of the projector is reasonable and, as the demand increases, a cheap and efficient standard machine is likely to be produced. It will be simple to operate either from mains or from a car battery and will be easily portable. Although considerable care will always be required to make good film strips, any number of copies can be made quite cheaply from one negative. Photographic material of all kinds may be recorded on film strips, so that a large public can be catered for. The teacher or instructor will have the benefit of the best brains on each particular subject treated, as great value must be attached to the written material and notes that will be supplied with the strips.

## VOLUNTEERS FROM THE WEST INDIES ARRIVE FOR THE R.A.F. *(covered by our cameramen).*



## MISSION OPINION

THE following was written to the Films Officer in one of our African colonies after a showing of Unit films at a large mission station to an audience consisting chiefly of illiterates:

The performance was a novelty for most of the audience and was enthusiastically attended. The inevitable Charlie Chaplin knock-about of all amateur film shows was given first to get their eyes accustomed to the dark and to enable us to find the best position for the screen. His antics were greeted in the accustomed manner. Then followed a series of reels picturing the Allied invasion of Sicily, various aspects of the British Empire at war, and *Mr. English at Home*.

All were impressed by the excellence of the films and the suitability of their propaganda. An interpreter assisted in making the films understandable to the illiterates. They were very pleased to see their own countrymen operating with the British and American troops in the invasion of Sicily, but particularly noticeable was their reaction to seeing General Montgomery, who, it was explained to them, was the man who had driven the German and Italian troops from African soil. An initial hush amounting almost to reverence was followed by a great burst of enthusiasm. They nearly all recognised King George VI without being told who he was. Their sense of humour, being somewhat

different from ours, showed itself in unusual places. To see a company of Indian troops filmed while they were doing physical training caused much amusement, while some English cows which were shown when the African editors were inspecting a farm during a visit to England, put Charlie Chaplin in the shade as far as causing a good laugh was concerned.

*Mr. English at Home* was very popular. Many of them find it very difficult to believe that life elsewhere in the world can be any different from their own. To see life as lived in England for themselves on the screen, does far more than any amount of talking can, to educate them in knowledge of other peoples. Two things impressed them immensely. Firstly, a revelation to them. No amount of persuasion will convince them that the majority of houses exist without a complement of servants. All Europeans in the tropics have their "boys"; why shouldn't they in their own country? Secondly, a London Transport omnibus. They had never seen such a huge object on wheels. How the roads were wide enough for it was a mystery to them.

It was certainly an education to them, and to the Europeans present also, in that we learnt how much of our own life and customs we take it for granted the Africans are familiar with. We look forward to further performances.

## WORK ON BOY SCOUT PRODUCTION





the monthly bulletin of the Colonial Film Unit

VOL. 2. NO. 9

Colonial Film Unit, 21 Soho Square, London, W.1

SEPTEMBER 1944

## HOW TO GET THE BEST OUT OF YOUR EXPOSURE METER

**M**ANY people regard exposure meters as a sort of sacred oracle whose pronouncements must not be questioned in any way. That is far from being the case, and the unintelligent use of the exposure meter can lead the worker almost as far astray as the use of no exposure meter at all. It is well to understand the underlying principles, because with the growing importance of colour strictly accurate exposure becomes more and more important.

It is no exaggeration to say that the vaunted "perfect accuracy" of certain methods of exposure assessment would be shown to be far from perfect if it were not for the fact that the average black and white film has a considerable degree of latitude, permitting fairly wide errors in exposure to be undetected. Colour film has nothing like so much latitude.

First let us see what is necessary to secure a correct exposure. If you have not enough light reaching the film there will be no image or only a ghost image on the negative. If there is too much light, the developed negative will be so dark as to let practically no light through at all. A series of exposures, increasing step by step from the first ghost image to the final dense one, would give you a range of greys of varying darkness, and somewhere near the middle of that range the changes in density correspond fairly accurately with the changes in light intensity received by the film. Your negative image must be of such character that the record of varying greys in the subject lies within or close to that central band of greys on the negative emulsion. If the film is under-exposed, all the range of densities will be too light; if over-exposed they will all be too dark; the relationship between the density variations and the light values in the subject will be distorted and a quite untrue record obtained. Obvious examples of this are shown in the "clogged" shadows of an under-exposed picture, and the "bitten out" highlights of the over-exposed picture.

The exposure meter is no more than a means of measuring light, either light reflected from the subject or light falling on the subject. Before the practical figure of the "correct" exposure can be arrived at, all sorts of things have to be taken into consideration, including aperture, shutter speed, speed of sensitive material, and a number of other factors or errors introduced by the meters themselves. The three variables first mentioned are taken care of in the calibration of most exposure meters. What are the other variables?

First of all, there are three schools of thought regarding exposure calculation. The first says: "The camera can

only work with the light that reaches it after reflection from the object; therefore let us measure that light." The second says: "If you adopt the method mentioned above, you will automatically change your reading so that a dark object gets more exposure than a light one, and you will render them both the same density on the negative. Objects change in tonal value, and should be so recorded. The only stable thing is the light falling on them. Read that value and expose for it and the dark things will be shown dark while the light things will be shown light." The third says: "The human eye is infinitely variable in its response to light intensity, and grey will look grey to us in all lights. Have a flexible method whose responses fairly closely parallel, in their effect on exposure reading, the action of the control mechanism of the human eye, and you will arrive at truth."

In assessing all these three theories, the reader must never let go of the basic fact that, at the moment of making the exposure, it is the chemical reaction of the sensitive film or plate which has to be satisfied.

To know the weaknesses of a system is to understand it and to use it to the greatest benefit. We will consider only the first and second systems as the third will not concern us at present.

In the first system the meter is aimed at the subject, and is calibrated so that, provided there is an average distribution of all light intensities over the subject, the reading will be correct for direct use. But by swinging the meter upwards and downwards in front of a subject such as a landscape with sky, it is possible to obtain widely varying readings.

To quote from P. K. Turner's *Photographic Exposure*, a normal reading of such a subject in which half was sky might bring to the meter

From sky	5,000 light units
" mid-tones	500
" shadows	50
Total	5,550

Now, supposing the sky is three-fourths of the total area, the values become

From sky	7,500
" mid-tones	250
" shadows	25
Total	7,775



If the meter is swung downwards so that the sky is only one quarter of the whole picture area, then we get

From sky	2,500
„ mid-tones	750
„ shadows	75
Total	3,325

The reading, from one extreme to the other, has more than doubled, yet common sense tells us that the subject is exactly the same all the time as far as the exposure for any individual part is concerned *if we are solely concerned with placing the exposure on the correct portion of the scale of grey tones.*

There is a method doing this. If you are making an exposure on negative material, then it is imperative that your exposure of the shadowed portion be correct. If you are exposing on reversal material, then it is more important to get your highlight exposure correct.

In the former case, choose a suitable shadowed portion of your subject; approach it with your meter (seeing that your shadow or that of the meter does not fall upon it), until at a point representing a collecting angle of about 60 degrees, you will find the meter needle assumes an optimum position. This will, of course, indicate a much longer exposure than is required for the whole subject, as an exposure at this figure would bring the image into the centre of our grey scale. We want it at the foot of the scale with the other values ascending correctly above. This can be done by dividing the indicated exposure by 8.

For reversal work, similarly read a highlight portion of the subject, and then bring the reading up the scale by multiplying by 8 (the Weston meter recommended figure) or 6 (Mr. Turner's recommended figure).

This method is troublesome, but is the only accurate one by which a certain factor is accurately measured, and a known correct mathematical modification is made of the reading.

The second technique arose to some extent out of the first one, in that its sponsor, P. C. Smethurst, at first measured the reading of a piece of card which represented a "standard normal" highlight, and applied his multiplier to the reading. Later, it was found expedient to incorporate in the meter itself a translucent opal plate which collected and diffused the light, which was afterwards passed on to the photo-electric cell.

Smethurst very correctly claimed this as a method particularly designed to give accurate results with reversal film, where highlights are of the most importance, and this fact is denoted in the title of the Smethurst "Highlight" meter. The weakness is that, provided the highlights of a subject are approximate in intensity to the intensity of the "artificial" highlight in the meter, they will be correctly rendered. But should the lightest subject in the picture still be of dark hue, some adjustment must be made. In any case the shadow portion of the record is left very much to look after itself. This is not too serious, as the average sensitive emulsion has a density range of 128 to 1, while the greatest possible range of brightness in any given subject is of the order of only 60 to 1. If the final positive is to be a transparency, e.g. a film or lantern slide, this can easily be accommodated; but if the final positive is to be a print it must be borne in mind that the average contrast range of papers is 30 or 40 to 1, while no photographic paper can possibly have a contrast range greater than about 50 to 1.

To deal with this eventuality one must either cut the contrast range of the subject itself by suitable illumination, or ignore either the shadow or highlight ends of the record

in printing, or print on to soft paper which flattens the whole contrast range but preserves the relative steps of contrast throughout the subject.

The above remarks apply to monochrome. In colour the range is shorter owing to the existence of three interdependent and simultaneous colour records upon the film, the balance of which is gravely upset by variations from the exposure norm.

## NOTES

### "THE GERMANS IN NORWAY"

It is regretted that through circumstances over which this Unit had no control, there has been a delay in the delivery of the 16 mm. prints of this two-reel war story. It is hoped that distribution will be made at the end of September.

### "AGRICULTURAL SCHOOL"

Two camera units have been busily occupied for about four weeks on the shooting of this film. Unfortunately lack of sunshine caused delays in the work on exteriors, much of which had to be deferred. Judging by the rushes this should be a film of high quality.

### SCRIPT WRITING

From time to time we have emphasised the importance of a good shooting script before the production of any film is attempted. It would be a great saving of time if those officers intending to make a film would first submit the script for criticism to the Unit. So far, those who have done so have not regretted it. A mind coming fresh to a problem often sees points that others have missed.

### FILM COURSES

Courses on "Film Appreciation" and "Visual Education" organised by the British Film Institute were held at University College, Bangor, from 19th August to 2nd September. There was a formidable programme of lectures, discussions and visits for each course. The fact that the whole of the accommodation was booked up six weeks before the opening of the course is an indication of the growing demand for knowledge of this kind in the field of education.

## FROM "HANSARD"

In the House of Commons on 29th June the Minister of Information in his review of the work of the Ministry referred to the Colonial Film Unit in the following words:—

"I am going to say a word about the small development which I hope will grow. A small staff comprises the Colonial Film Unit, which has produced in the past year 28 one-reel films and 20 newsreels. With the help of the Colonial Office this Unit has taken on the task of training resident officers to add film-making to their multifarious labours. They have been supplied with cine-cameras and with quantities of 16 millimetre raw stock. So long as the war lasts we have to look to these part-time film makers to provide films with an African background, but I believe that when the war is over this Unit will, under the benevolent eye of the Colonial Office, greatly increase its activities. It is highly desirable that the British Empire should be given more news of what is happening."

## FROM THE FILM "AGRICULTURAL SCHOOL"



## NEW FILMS

### THE BRITISH EMPIRE AT WAR

#### News Film No. 28.

This issue is devoted to the occupation of Rome by the Allied armies, and shows the enthusiastic welcome that was given them by the people.

News Film No. 29 has the sub-title "Eve of Invasion," and tells a thrilling story of the gathering and loading of great masses of arms, ammunition and supplies, as well as the final training of the men who breached the Western Wall on D-Day.

## THE CINEMA IN EDUCATION

**L**AST month we gave a digest of an article by Roger Manvell on the subject of the use of the cinema in education printed in *The Times Educational Supplement* in May 1944.

We feel sure readers will be quite as interested in a similar article written more than thirty years ago for the *Pathé Cinema Journal* by Mr. George Pearson, who is at present senior director in the Colonial Film Unit.

Even as long ago as 1914, many people were convinced that the cinema was destined to develop into a most important medium of entertainment; few realised then that the time would come when a 16 mm. sound projector would be regarded as a normal item of equipment for every senior school. With the introduction of non-flam films no special facilities are required for the projection of 16 mm. films.

### WHAT OF THE SCHOOLS? by George Pearson

(From *Pathé Cinema Journal*, 7th February, 1914.)

Reprinted by permission of Pathé Pictures, Ltd.

We, who live in the opening years of the twentieth century, have witnessed the marvellous development of a toy into a triumph of scientific skill. A new industry has been created; a new means of recreation has been given to humanity; and educational aid, possibly the greatest of all times, has come amongst us.

Yet, like the ugly duckling, it is unrecognised by those who should welcome it most. The cinematograph knocks at the portals of the schools with patience—patience born of assurance in its inevitable destiny. The door is as yet closed. The cinematograph remains outside that one place of all others wherein it should be found.

Possibly the prejudice that all new ideas must encounter has something to do with the situation. The introduction of the stethoscope was almost laughed out of the country. Harvey's discovery of the circulation of the blood was ridiculed. The *Edinburgh Review* seriously recommended that Thomas Gray, the projector of railways, should be secured in a strait jacket.

Men who have advanced new ideas have always, from the earliest days of history, been greeted with scorn and contumely by their contemporaries. Such opposition as this, however, is not at the moment the greatest obstacle the cinema has to encounter. It is looked upon with suspicion, and suspicion is even longer lived than prejudice. The cautious and conservative type of mind ever fears danger from movements that demand abandonment of ancient custom.

Do we not remember the red flag that preceded the motor-car's progress through the streets? The red flag is being held up before the cinema as educator to-day. It is the natural order of things; and the fact that there is a red flag provides evidence that the cinema is fast approaching the goal—its "freedom of the school."

The potentialities of the cinema, under prudent guidance, are illimitable. Grant it the entry into the educational world to which it rightly belongs, and then assuredly it will fulfil the predictions of even its most ardent advocates. Straws indicate the direction of the wind. Go to a picture palace and note the films that gain applause to-day. They are, in aim, invariably educational.

The medical profession is watching with intense interest the productions of Dr. Comandon, of the Pasteur Institute. A new influence has arrived in medicine, with boundless possibilities for human good. Who will dare to assert that the scourges of humanity, yet unconquered by the surgeon and the physician, may not succumb to the crusaders whose newer weapons include the ultra-microscope and the micro-cinematograph?

What of the schools? The greatest problem that educators are faced with to-day is how to bring the school

curriculum into relationship with the needs of practical life. It is the basic problem of each of the many subjects taught. The education in the school must fit the child for the life outside. But the value of all instruction depends upon the interest aroused in the instructed. Is there any better means of arousing this interest in things outside the school than by the wise use of the moving picture?

The conscientious teacher ransacks his portfolios for pictures, postcards, old illustrations, and cheap reprints to illustrate his lessons, for he knows the value of sight impressions compared with aural. What can his best efforts produce in comparison with the "screen of life"?

Germany and America have already installed the cinema in certain schools. Yet England waits! If but one educational authority dared actively to adopt it as an aid in the school, undoubtedly the others would follow.

Can it be done efficiently and economically? There are several possible schemes by which it may be effected. Here is one plan, eminently practicable.

At convenient centres there should be erected, generally in a school playground, suitable buildings. One such "centre" as this, would adequately serve ten schools averaging three hundred scholars each.

A group of children, in charge of a teacher, would attend from each school once a week. This is the method now pursued in the manual training and swimming "centres." The assembled scholars would listen to the teacher's remarks upon the films to be shown, and to his comments during the passing of the pictures.

At the conclusion, notes could be made for future reference. The cinema would thus become the most valuable asset of the school. Here natural history, art, literature, legend and geography will vibrate with actuality. The industrial operations of the whole globe may be

brought before the child seated in a desk. Whilst the noisy motor hurries by in the adjacent street, the little scholar sits wide-eyed with wonder at the Arab caravan swinging drowsily across a sun-baked Sahara. Visualised history will teach again its eternal truths, crystallised for use by the most wonderful instrument of the ages.

The extent of pleasure a child feels in listening to a story depends upon the vividness of the mental pictures he is able to form. What comparison can there be between the most earnest effort of the most skilful teacher and the passing of a reliable film upon the screen?

The intelligent child is marked off from the unintelligent by the vital factor imagination—that divine gift.

The "genius" is but the possessor of a greater share of imagination than his fellows. Let us therefore cultivate the imagination. Is there any other method one whit as powerful as the cinema in this laudable work?

One other use of the "centre" would be for the demonstration of suitable subjects to the teachers themselves. Their enlightenment would react upon their pupils. Little details of organisation would arise; but the teacher is a versatile man, and, granted the main scheme, the school cinema would, in less than a generation, almost revolutionise our present somewhat chaotic methods of instruction.

The production of the required educational films would proceed apace, and the schools would speedily arrange a means of weekly interchange. The initial outlay on the buildings completed, further expense would be small when spread over a district.

"Let us live for our children," wrote a great educationist. Are we wise in our attitude towards the cinema in the school? Surely the dawning is at hand. The greatest enemy of Truth is Prejudice; its greatest friend, Time.



FROM  
THE  
FILM  
"BOY  
SCOUTS"





# Colonial



# Cinema

*the monthly bulletin of the Colonial Film Unit*

VOL. 2. NO. 10

*Colonial Film Unit, 21 Soho Square, London, W.1*

OCTOBER 1944

## THINK IN PICTURES—NOT IN WORDS

WHEN the "talkies" first arrived, interest was centred almost entirely on the sound track and seriously affected the old art of making films in terms of pictures. It was not long before the paramount importance of the picture was again realised and sound was relegated to its rightful place as an auxiliary to the pictures on the screen.

With few exceptions, the strongest recollections we have of films seen in the past are the result of striking effects on the screen. The sound effects, though perhaps important at the time, are not often retained in the memory. When making propaganda and instructional films it is well to bear this in mind and plan the message we wish to impart in pictures on the screen and not in words that will be spoken with the films.

These remarks are prompted by consideration of many of the films which have been sent to this Unit under the raw stock scheme. Some excellent ideas have been put into films and much of the photography has been very good indeed. Unfortunately, however, there is a general tendency to make a story of words illustrated by moving pictures instead of a story in pictures commented upon in words. It is not uncommon to come across subjects in which the commentary is so good that nothing of its meaning would be lost if the pictures were omitted; on the other hand, the pictures, if run without the commentary, would be quite meaningless.

This is such a common fault with those who make instructional and similar films that it is interesting to read what was said upon the subject by Lt. H. R. Jensen, of the U.S. Navy, when he read a paper at the Spring Conference of the Society of Motion Picture Engineers in New York this year.

"The training film is primarily a motion picture, not a sound track illustrated with pictures. If training films—or, better, training motion pictures—are to be effective, the camera must be exploited to the full. A training film succeeds in its mission to the extent that it can maintain eye-attention and consequently interest. The content of the film counts for naught unless interest is aroused and maintained.

"The major responsibility for arousing and sustaining interest is the job of the camera, and not the microphone, as is too infrequently demonstrated. The substitution of track modulations [or long printed titles—Ed.] for pictures, results in a deadly kind of training film, effective only as a sleep-producer or sedative. Subverting the track and placing the burden of maintaining interest on the camera where it rightfully belongs, will result in training films that are stimulants.

"The importance of the sense of sight, the one for which

the motion picture was originally designed and the one through which we learn most effectively, must be restored."

What has been said about training films applies with even more force to films which are made for showing to illiterate people.

There are a number of reasons why there is a tendency in the novice to give undue importance to words. One is because it is the easy way to the majority of people who are engaged in this form of film making.

More often than not, it is the literary man or the public speaker who interests himself in propaganda and training-film work, and it comes naturally to him to continue in the medium which is familiar to him. What is not realised is that his very facility in words may be a handicap to him; a man who is completely inarticulate on a platform, and who is unable to string two sentences together in an article, may by reason of his pictorial outlook on life be far more capable as a maker of films.

The man who thinks in words must realise that he has to train himself afresh before he can claim to be expert in the technique of expressing ideas in pictures. He must be cautious not to claim too much credit for shots which have turned out well. With the raising of the standard of material and appliances produced by the manufacturers, it is becoming increasingly difficult to make really bad shots.

The film-maker's responsibility is to see that every one of the shots he makes contributes the maximum to the film by reason of its content in idea, the careful selection of the area it covers and the arrangement of the subject within that area, the direction of movement as it relates to the audience and as it relates to the adjacent shots, and the length in time of each shot and each sequence of shots. All these he is required to do. In addition, he must shoot an adequate amount of material for each shot. For example, he must not make the common mistake of bringing his camera into operation the moment after an action has commenced and thinking he has recorded that action. His camera must start first, and he must carry an action through to the end and slightly beyond before stopping. It will then be left to the editor to decide what length of shot shall be retained. If the action is long, he must remember that to stop the camera and then start it again a few seconds later in exactly the same position, will result in disrupted movement and puzzling effects on the screen. He must do something to fill the time gap plausibly. When cutting in close-ups for this purpose, he must shoot sufficient overlap for the editor to work on.

These are only the elementary requirements of film making, but as the inexperienced cameraman learns them and learns to take care of them, he will acquire a realisation

of the technique of thinking in pictures and will become more and more capable of writing and shooting an effective film script.

One final piece of advice. Know what you want to say before you start to say it. Unless you have an absolutely clear conception of the message or information which you wish to pass on, it is impossible to convey it to an audience. The very act of clarifying your own mind and defining the exact limits to be covered by your film will itself be one step towards the preparation of the script on which it is to be based. The most prevalent failing is to attempt to deal with subjects in a much too generalised fashion, or to try to convey too many ideas in one film. In order to avoid any possibility of confusion, it is better to confine attention to one subject only in each single-reel film.

If you are a comparative beginner in film making, adopt as your slogan: "Do a little, but do it well." It will pay you in the end.

## ASSESSMENT OF FILMS

IT is desirable that this Unit should have the fullest possible information about films sent to users overseas.

Those who show a film are often able to put their finger on any weakness after running it several times. Few engaged in this arduous work have the leisure to sit down and record audience reactions to the films that have been shown.

One solution that has occurred to us is to supply a form on which it would be a simple matter to record certain information that this Unit is anxious to obtain. If production is to be successful, it is vital that a constant stream of information should pass to the Unit from those working in the field.

Before supplies of this form are printed, it would be most helpful if those interested would study the draft carefully and send along any suggestions for its amendment or improvement. After final adjustment, forms will be supplied regularly with every film.

Those anxious to comment on films before the form is ready for circulation, may use the form as it appears in draft below. It will be sufficient to quote the section and number and not write the question out in full, e.g., "A5. Yes. Primary."

### FILM VALUES—ASSESSMENT RECORD.

Title of Film..... Place of showing.....  
Date..... Daylight or dusk.....  
Type of projector..... Projection Good or Not.....  
Type of Audience (Illiterate, Primary,  
Secondary, Mixed, Town).....  
Approximate size of audience.....  
Observer's name..... Nationality.....  
Official status.....

#### A. The film's purpose

1. Did the film fulfil its main purpose?
2. Did the film convey any general knowledge apart from the main purpose?
3. Did anything in the film detract from the main purpose?
4. Was anything omitted that might have helped the main purpose?
5. Would the film have suited a different audience better? If so, what type?

#### B. The film's construction

1. Was the film easy to follow throughout?
2. Was anything inaccurate included in it?
3. Was there anything objectionable in it: (a) ethically; (b) socially; (c) aesthetically; (d) psychologically?

4. Did the film cause obvious amusement where such was intended?
5. Did the film cause obvious amusement where such was not intended?
6. Did propaganda points strike home forcibly?

#### C. Technical film points

1. Was the continuity satisfactory?
2. Was the film too long or too short?
3. Was the tempo right.....too quick.....or too slow?.....
4. Were the characters sufficiently established?
5. Was the photography clear?
6. Was the print too dark or too light?

#### D. The commentary

1. Was the commentary clear and satisfactory?
2. Was it within suitable vocabulary range?
3. Was it too full for suitable translation?
4. Was it too scanty.

#### E. Audience reactions

1. Was the film well received?
2. If not, what were the probable reasons?
3. Did it quickly catch the interest?
4. Did it hold the interest without break?
5. If interest was lost, state why.

#### F. Conclusions

1. Would you classify the film as a whole as (a) Poor; (b) Fair; (c) Good; (d) Very Good?

## GROUND NUT CAMPAIGN

MR. A. A. FAJEMISIN, an interpreter working with one of the cinema vans in Nigeria, writes as follows:—

The British Commonwealth of Nations have gathered together in this war to present a common front against German oppression. In 1939, Nigeria, as a member of this Commonwealth, professed its loyalty and readiness to assist the Mother Country in this struggle in every possible way.

Our loyalty and promised help have to be fulfilled in concrete form. Britain has been conducting the war in its real sense. We here have not felt war's pangs and horrors; our lot has been to provide raw materials for the fighting forces, with which weapons and war stores are made. One of our most important war materials is ground nuts, which are produced in great quantities in Northern Nigeria.

I assisted the officer who directed the campaign for the marketing of ground nuts. To get a large number of people together, attractive gramophone records were played and cinema films shown to the people. Talks were given in market-places in the people's own language explaining the wishes of the Government. Cinema shows were given daily at 7.30 p.m. at different centres of the town. The films showed the British Empire at work in their production drive.

After each show, a talk was given to those attending and in this way the majority of the people were contacted. The campaign was explained to them and the prices to be given for the ground nuts clearly stated.

A reward was given to the farmer who cultivated the largest area of land in his district. Prizes were also provided for farmers who marketed the greatest quantity of ground nuts; each farmer kept a pass book in which were entered his daily sales of ground nuts, which were added up at the end of the season; the chief or district head of the area that produced the greatest quantity received the ground nuts badge.

This important and national work could not have been done without the active help and co-operation of administrative officers, emirs and district heads.

## THE CARE OF FILM AND PROJECTION EQUIPMENT IN THE TROPICS

KODAK, LIMITED, who make the film supplied under the Raw Stock scheme, share the concern of this Unit about the amount of deterioration which has been evident in the film returned to them from the Colonies for processing. Their research chemists in England gave much time to the subject. As they were not satisfied with the results of their researches here, various samples were sent to their research section in the U.S.A. for further inquiry. A long report has been received from America; as it is quite impossible to find room for the whole of it in a single issue, the more important sections will be published from time to time for the information of workers overseas. This first section deals generally with the question of humidity and its effect on film.

\* \* \*

Climatic conditions in humid tropical regions often cause rapid deterioration of articles which would otherwise have a long service life in temperate climates. The primary cause of the trouble is the sustained high humidity, although other factors such as the prevalence of mould which thrives under such conditions contribute largely to the damage. Unless special precautions are taken, motion picture film as well as projection and sound reproduction equipment are likely to be short lived.

### Relative Humidity

The condition of the atmosphere with regard to moisture content is usually stated in terms of "relative humidity." At any fixed temperature the quantity of water vapour present in a given space as compared with the maximum quantity which could exist in that space is termed the relative humidity, and this ratio is usually expressed in terms of percentage. Thus, if a given sample of air contains only half as much water as it would at saturation, the relative humidity is 50 per cent.

When the temperature rises, a given space is capable of accommodating more water vapour, so that if air, at, say, 50 per cent. relative humidity is heated, the relative humidity decreases and *vice versa*. When air is cooled sufficiently a saturation point is reached and below this temperature drops of water or "dew" are deposited. This temperature is termed the "dew point."

### Sources of Harm

While the principal cause of damage to film and equipment is the continuous moist condition of the atmosphere, ranging up to 90 per cent. relative humidity, other factors

include contact with air-borne salt and sand, fumes, perspiration and undoubtedly plant debris and exudations, mould and fungus growths.

The high temperature of 120 to 140 degrees F. sometimes reached by objects which lie out in tropical sunlight, while not entirely desirable in themselves may, however, in some cases be favourable to the extent that they assist in driving out harmful moisture accumulations.

The probability of access of harmful agents is, of course, heightened by frequent handling and transporting of goods, especially under the difficulties met in military operations. Exposure to harm is greater when equipment is used out of doors, on the ground, or with makeshift accessories. Water may be deposited in the form of dew on objects, the temperature of which is only a few degrees lower than that of the tropical atmosphere with which they come in contact. In any locality, the temperature is much lower at high altitudes, so that dew is likely to form on objects following arrival by air transport.

### Effect of Moisture on Film

As the relative humidity rises above 50 per cent., the gelatine image layer on motion picture film takes up an increased proportion of water from the surroundings, causing it to swell and become somewhat tacky. The tackiness impedes the sliding motion of the film in the projector gate. An increase in dimensions of the gelatine in the plane of the film results in widening and lengthening of the strip and curling with the image layer convex.

Resistance to the motion of the film in the projector, whether from the tacky condition or from pinching, arising from increased width of the film, is likely to cause tearing of the perforations or rupture of the film strand. Excessive curl may cause the central portion of the strip to rub on the gate and become scratched.

Film which has a high degree of curl, when wound in a roll under insufficient tension, causes the roll to assume an irregular form. When a tightly wound film roll dries or gets moist at the edge more rapidly than in the centre, a buckled or fluted condition results. The film is no longer plane as it goes through the projector gate and the image may "jump in and out of focus." It may be impossible to restore the normal flat condition of the film.

When damp film is wound up in a tight roll the usually dull surface of the image layer may acquire glossy spots where it is most firmly in contact with the next fold.

## WORK IN PROGRESS

### FOOD FROM OIL NUTS

This is the title of the film which has been made on the manufacture of margarine. Work is now complete and it is hoped to distribute the film shortly.

The early sequences, which were taken in Africa, deal with the production, marketing and shipment of the raw materials. The arrival of the materials at a British port is shown and the story goes on to illustrate the different stages of manufacture.

In this film an attempt has been made by means of a hand process to explain what is being done by the different machines in the factory.

### AGRICULTURAL SCHOOL

Shooting on this film is now finished. Owing to the

weather conditions there were many delays in completing the exteriors. There is so much excellent material that one of the main editing difficulties will be to decide what to omit. It should make up into an instructive and most interesting film.

### VICTORY IN AFRICA

This film has now been edited and should be ready for distribution soon. Though it has been difficult to find suitable material to cover all the campaigns in Africa, it makes a fairly complete story of the liberation of Africa and, as such, should be a film with considerable historic value. It is being arranged in sections so that parts shown separately will not seem unfinished.



## BOYS IN THE WORKSHOPS

*Scenes from the film in production under the working title of "Agricultural School"*



## CAMERA TRICKS

It is often stated glibly that the camera cannot lie. In one respect only is this a true statement; the camera can record only what it actually sees. What it sees at any moment, controlled by its operator, may not be what the onlooker sees. Probably this confusion of ideas is responsible for the loose statement so often made.

Using a variety of tricks, the expert is able to obtain some really astonishing results with his camera. Quaint effects may be obtained, for instance, by controlling the speed of the camera. By reducing the speed, it is possible to make the actual tempo of moving objects appear faster when projected on the screen at the usual speed. Even though a car is crawling along the road, camera manipulation may show it to be moving at racing speed. This simple trick is often exploited in comedy films when we see horses racing, men running, or boats sailing at incredible speeds. By increasing the speed of the camera, the reverse result is obtained. All movement is slowed down to any degree desired. In this way the camera is able to record, in greatest detail, the various stages of any movement. Many valuable instructional films have been made by the use of this device. It would be difficult, for instance, to estimate the value of a film recording in this way the details of an intricate surgical operation, to hundreds of medical men unable to witness the actual operation. This slow-motion technique illustrating the correct muscular actions in various branches of sport has proved of enormous value to thousands of athletes, who are able to study at leisure and in great detail the technique of the world's best performers. Students of natural history have by this means been able to watch on a short length of film the growth of a plant over a long period.

By stopping the camera and changing the positions of objects before restarting it—a device which is often used in conjunction with the slow turning of the camera—some startling results may be obtained. By slow turning, for instance, a motor car may be shown dashing across a road towards a dangerous precipice. While the camera is stopped the car may be moved round, away from the dangerous edge.

As the car starts away from the precipice, the camera is started with slow turning. The result of projecting this scene supplies a real thrill. The car is seen dashing to the edge of the cliff, swinging round miraculously, and then dashing away safely from the precipice top. Many such interesting results may be achieved by this stop-camera work. A man may be shown throwing innumerable knives at another standing by a boarded wall. Knife after knife stabs the wall but none harms him. A man throws a dart at a dart board; without any apparent effort, he scores a series of bull's eyes.

By reversing the camera action, i.e., turning backwards instead of normally forwards, some quaint results are obtained. A glass full of water stands on a table; a man pours from a jug above it. The water from the glass rises and returns to the jug. Many have seen the trick of the man who does an indifferent dive into a pool and then mysteriously returns through the air to the diving board to improve on his first effort. When projected on the screen the last things taken by the camera are shown first.

Using back projection, results can be obtained which it would not be possible to get in any other way. During this operation, the characters perform in front of a screen on which a cinema scene is projected from the rear. The camera not only records the movements of the performers, but also the projected scene behind him. In this way it is possible to film a car driver in his seat presumably driving along an Alpine road though he may not be within a thousand miles of it. In the small space of a studio, a man may be shown riding over the prairie or walking along a London street.

Through the application of simple scientific principles, some clever effects are possible. By the cunning use of plate glass, the old trick of "Pepper's Ghost" may be reproduced quite easily. The interior of a room with possibly a man reading at a table may form the scene. A ghostlike figure is seen to enter and pass through unseen by the man reading. The furniture is visible through the ghostlike figure. It is a valuable device and is one very easily obtained.



*the monthly bulletin of the Colonial Film Unit*

VOL. 2. NO. 11

*Colonial Film Unit, 21 Soho Square, London, W.1*

NOVEMBER 1944

## THE CRITIC LOOKS AT A FILM

**V**ARIOUS aspects of film making have been dealt with in several articles in recent issues. It seems opportune now to summarise the various points and try to set out, in some order, what it is that one should look for and appreciate in the finished film.

In summing up the merits of a film, much depends on its type, whether it is an emotional story or a straightforward piece of instruction, whether it is to be shown to an audience of sophisticated townsmen in a European country or to an unsophisticated audience which has little knowledge of pictures and how to look at them. Even among highly experienced film audiences in different areas, reactions may vary considerably. Films featuring the Marx Brothers, for instance, rapturously received by London audiences, have met with an indifferent reception in the British provinces. How much greater, therefore, may be the difference in reaction to the same films between the townsmen of one nation and the raw countrymen of another.

However, there are certain attributes which are common to all types of successful films from the simplest to the most elaborate. Firstly, they must be thoroughly clear in their meaning; secondly, they must be so composed that one is left with a feeling of completion and satisfaction or with a desire to pursue one's contacts with the particular subject in the manner desired by the maker of the film. It may be a wish to better oneself, to learn some new method of existence, or to alleviate suffering in others.

Generally, the film has only one opportunity to convey its message. How often are film makers guilty of overlooking this most important fact! A countryman giving directions to a visitor will tell him to take a particular turning; he will entirely forget to mention a lane which comes before the turning, because this is only a farm entrance. This local knowledge is not shared by the visitor, who follows the lane and loses his way. The film producer, with his specialised knowledge about the subject that makes the film perfectly satisfactory to himself, may completely puzzle the audience because he has taken for granted certain points which the layman could not be expected to grasp.

There are a number of factors which contribute to the clarification of a film. The first essential is that the maker of the film should have no doubt about his message. If the film is about animal husbandry, he must decide quite definitely in his mind what he wants to say about the subject. It is useless merely to take a series of shots of buildings and people engaged in various aspects of the work, as the result is likely to be superficial and will lack inspiration.

Smoothness is another most important factor. Two men working with the same script may each take a series of shots which equally well fit the word description of the script. Why is it that one will run smoothly while the other does not? The reason is that the first man will have thought in pictures. Instead of taking each shot to get what he considers to be the most attractive view at any particular moment, he will have looked at the sequence as a whole before making a single shot; he will have decided his successive angles and positions on the screen in relation to foreground and background objects, so that one shot will melt almost imperceptibly into the next in the mind of the viewer. The editor can secure complete smoothness only if the cameraman co-operates fully with this end in view.

This quality of smoothness does not depend merely on visual angle; it is affected also by photographic balance. Successive shots in a sequence or even a train of sequences must have some affinity as to lightness or darkness of background, general level of exposure, degree of contrast, direction of lighting, and, in colour films, the general colour values and tendencies. The general photographic mood must also be in accord with the feeling of the sequence. There are times when brilliant, sparkling illumination must give place to soft and mournful lighting for the proper interpretation of the mood of the sequence.

If the film maker develops the habit of allowing the story to grow entirely in pictures on the screen of his mind, most of the qualities will be obtained almost automatically. Many think in words, and illustrate these words superficially in picture form; it is not surprising that the result is thoroughly unsatisfactory. Often realising themselves that a series of shots will not weld together too happily, they feel the situation can be retrieved by shooting so-called bridging shots, brief but interesting in character, to link up the other material. Even bridging shots require careful planning in relation to the material already in hand if they are to be of any real use in editing the film.

One thing is most essential; the finished product should be a picture with movement. Many pictures do not really move. Sometimes an effort is made to make them move by moving the camera about. This is particularly to be deprecated in filming for the unsophisticated. A film must move in two ways. It must move physically in the sense that each shot should be something that could not have been done as well with a lantern slide. This movement must contribute to the general purpose and idea of the film. In very rare

cases, complete absence of movement may be used as a dramatic device, and exceptions, too, are where static diagrams are shown with the definite object of rapidly conveying information in a condensed form. The inclusion of featureless static landscapes and buildings and human beings staring woodenly into the camera is always undesirable. Although it is difficult to get laymen not to look wooden on the screen, it is clear from the large number of documentaries that, with thoughtful direction, it can be satisfactorily done with people of all classes and nationalities.

The film must also move in idea. Each sequence must contribute something to the main idea and help to carry it forward to the desired conclusion. Any shot that does not make some such contribution should be ruthlessly cut. It is often tempting to include a brilliant shot which may have caused the film maker endless pains to obtain, but which does not really help the story. It is far better to use the less spectacular shot which may establish the venue and atmosphere of a new sequence which will carry the story along.

Tempo is important to the success of a film. If it has one unvarying speed throughout, a film may be as uninteresting as a speaker with a monotonous voice. While the editor can secure a difference in the movement by the method used in cutting the film, his efforts can only be satisfactory if the

cameraman helps him. Short, abrupt shots of a placid scene makes good editing impossible; long-held shots of brilliant bustling scenes are merely waste of good film stock. By clever variation of timing, a film can be made to convey a wide range of moods and to present its main point with a punch as and when desired.

Another point to watch carefully is the titling both as regards content and appearance. As the chief purpose is to show words on the screen, any ornamentation or trickery which obscures the main requirement is out of place. The wording must be complementary to, and not identical with, the pictorial matter. Exactly the same applies to commentaries. It is exasperating to be told in words exactly what is being shown in pictures. If, for example, the picture happens to be of a fine motor ambulance attached to a hospital, it is useless to comment on the fact that "the hospital possesses a fine ambulance." If it is necessary to make a comment, it might consist of interesting information to the effect that "X number of people contributed to the cost" or that "it has travelled Y miles in M months while bringing Z people to this hospital."

To sum up, a good film is one which is well photographed, well balanced, and unmistakable in its meaning, and which leaves one with a sense of satisfaction for a job well done. Above all, it must tell its story well in picture form.

## NEW FILMS

### 56. PLAINSMEN OF BAROTSELAND

This colour film, taken in Northern Rhodesia by Mr. L. Nell of the African Film Library production unit, shows something of the life of the Barotse people. They live by the river Zambesi and fish in its waters; but each year when the river is in flood, they move with their cattle to the uplands, returning to the plains when the floods subside.

### 57. WEST INDIANS WITH THE R.A.F. IN BRITAIN

The arrival of a large group of West Indian recruits in Britain and their later inspection by the Secretary of State for the Colonies was covered at the request of the Colonial Office. The material was shot and edited with an eye to its interest for the West Indies. As usual, 35 mm. copies will be supplied to the central libraries of East and West Africa for request showings.

### 57a. WEST INDIANS WITH THE R.A.F. IN BRITAIN

A sound track has been added to No. 57.

### 58. R.W.A.F.F. AT WORK AND PLAY

This film has been compiled from material taken a short time ago by Mr. John Page at a training depot for West African troops in Nigeria. It should be suitable for showing anywhere in Africa.

### 60. MASAI CATTLEMEN

This is a film which was taken by Dr. Guy Johnson in Kenya for the East Africa Command. Commentary and effects track were re-recorded here from discs sent with the film.

### 61. FOOD FROM OIL NUTS

This is the film which was made under the working title of "Margarine." It is a three-reel film, the object of which is to show Africans the importance of their raw produce in the manufacture of margarine, a vital war ration. An attempt has been made in the film to illustrate by a hand process the work done by the machines in the factories.

The opening sequences showing production of the raw material were shot in Africa. There are two versions, one for showing in the areas where ground nuts are produced and the other for those colonies where palm kernels are grown.

### 62. NEW CINEMA VAN

When the first of the new sound vans was ready for shipment, it was given a preliminary run over a testing ground. Pictures were taken of this test and others were added of vans under construction. The resulting short film should be of interest to those colonies which are to receive one of these new vans.

### THE BRITISH EMPIRE AT WAR

News Film No. 30

Two reels of film give a very clear picture of the great events of D. day. A great deal of film had to be viewed in order to get the most complete cover possible, but we think officers will agree that the film was worth waiting for.

## DOMESTIC SCIENC





## THE CARE OF EQUIPMENT IN THE TROPICS

THE following is another section of the report received from the research section of Kodak Ltd., U.S.A., in reply to certain queries raised by this Unit.

### *Effect of Moisture on Equipment*

The most immediate effect of moisture conditions on mechanical equipment is the rusting of iron and steel parts not protected with plating or lacquer. Non-ferrous metals similarly become dull or discoloured. The production of voluminous oxide layers, the roughening and loss of material may result in binding and breakage of mechanical parts as well as the depositing of dirt and stain on the film.

### *Care of Mechanical Equipment*

In addition to keeping equipment as dry as possible, it will be helpful if bearings are lubricated frequently and all accessible metal surfaces are rubbed with lubricating oil, using a clean cloth. Less accessible parts must await the attention given in a periodic overhaul. Protective coatings such as plating or lacquer judiciously applied at such times may be justifiable by reduced cost of maintenance and loss of service.

Spare machines and parts might be protected at least for a time by having them shipped in waterproof plastic sheet

wrapping recently brought into similar use for munitions, aeroplane parts, etc. Information is not at hand as to whether the spray or dip coated removable protective coatings now used for similar purposes would serve in the present case.

### *Care of Lenses*

Fungal attack of lens surfaces is best retarded by keeping the lens dry. A periodic cleaning may be necessary. The manufacturer's recommendations as to cleaning fluid and methods should be followed. Unless the equipment is enclosed in a case whenever it is not in use, exposed lenses should be covered with lens caps to prevent finger marking and abrasive etching by wind-borne grit.

### *Leather and Textiles*

Leather and textiles are subject to attack by insects as well as fungus. It is sometimes recommended that these be coated with a lacquer in which is incorporated a poisonous mercury compound or pentachlorophenol, but this is not always desirable. Oil or wax-type leather dressings are helpful. Neatsfoot oil has been found useful for this purpose.

(continued on next page)

## ACTIVITIES FROM THE FILM "AGRICULTURAL SCHOOL"



### Electrical Equipment

Premature failure of insulation, condensers and coils, in addition to rusting, corrosion of contacts, etc., is likely to occur in sound reproduction equipment which has not been designed for tropical use. Apart from keeping the equipment as dry as possible little can be done by way of protection. Replacement parts should be of the tropical service type. Motor windings which have become wet can often be dried out by the use of radiant heat furnished by drying lamps such as the R-40 type. Usually this is effective only if employed before a breakdown occurs. Harmful effects of poorly regulated portable power supplies are likely to be met under field conditions, but are beyond the scope of the present discussion.

### Projection Screens

Cloth projection screens must not be folded up while damp and should be washed and aired often. Screens made of plastics or consisting of heavily lacquered textiles should be reasonably resistant. Some of them are designed to endure cleaning with a wet cloth. Wooden frames may require impregnation with fungicides or paraffin wax for waterproofing. These are best done in manufacture, although brushed-on coatings are helpful. Numerous wood-treating concerns can be found by reference to a business register.

### Temperature and Humidity Relations

Gelatine films, leather, textiles, and wood placed in a humid location tend to absorb moisture from the surround-

ings until they contain amounts which are in a fixed relation to the atmospheric relative humidity. Although the atmospheric water vapour pressure and the weight of water in a given weight of air vary widely with temperature of constant relative humidity, the moisture content of these solids, that is, the weight of water which they contain, will remain practically constant at the same relative humidity at least at habitable temperatures. The moisture content of the solid bodies can be diminished, therefore, by lowering the relative humidity of the atmosphere surrounding them.

In large enclosures reduced relative humidity could be maintained by the use of an air conditioner. Small, tightly closed spaces can be dried out by placing in them a sufficient quantity of a moisture-absorbing material. A simple method of obtaining lowered relative humidity in small enclosures is to raise the temperature. In this way the relative humidity is lowered even though the weight of moisture per pound of air remains the same. In the most humid tropical conditions (85 deg. F. dew point) a temperature of only 110 deg. F. would be required to lower the relative humidity to 50 per cent. This scheme has been employed successfully by using electric lamps as heat sources in the box or other container where equipment was stored. A container for such use should be tight enough so that air leakage is too little to affect the temperature attained. A gasket seal is unnecessary if the storage box is intended merely to keep the film or equipment dry, and is even objectionable if the goods are to be dried out while in the box. In the latter case the evaporated moisture must be allowed to escape.

## CORRESPONDENCE

DEAR SIR,

In the September issue of the *Colonial Cinema*, you published a most interesting and thorough explanation on the most practical use of a photoelectric exposure meter.

While this article is an excellent guide for the use of an exposure meter in a temperate climate, its conclusions would not all hold good for the conditions commonly met in the tropics. There, for example, we have to deal with such things as extreme contrasts, such as a close-up of an African face in brilliant sunshine, and a general kick of light from any light-coloured surface, which is sufficient to falsify the reading given by any type of meter.

With reversal stock, which the Colonial Film Unit supplies, the exposure should be made for the highlights, and "the shadow portion of the record is left very much to look after itself." But if this is done in the tropics, you get a correctly exposed background with African heads as mere featureless black blobs against it.

The first problem, therefore, is how to apply the highlight exposure rules and yet get an adequate exposure to give the correct modelling of African faces and figures. I have found the highlight exposure rule to be correct under the same conditions as give the best contrasts—that is, when the sun is obscured by cloud to the extent that only a faint shadow can be thrown on the ground when waving the hands slowly to and fro. With more abundant light, however, one has to decide whether to expose for the highlights or for black faces. In close-ups, good modelling can be obtained in a correctly exposed film either by augmenting the light on the skin by a reflector, or by cutting down the brilliance of the sunlight by a diffusion screen of a double thickness of mosquito netting. In longer shots, where control of the lighting is impracticable, a slightly increased exposure will help to give correct modelling; but it must be decided how important features and facial expressions are to the particular shot, and the exposure made accordingly.

The second problem is one of general exposure. Unfortunately, the amount of kickback or glare (which appears to be responsible for the misleading readings) varies with the time of the day and the season of the year. Exposure readings taken in direct sunlight between 7 a.m. and 9 a.m. are usually correct the whole year round, but as the altitude of the sun increases, so does the degree of error, particularly in the dry season. I have so far examined some thousands of feet of film, including some of my own shooting, and seldom—if ever—have I come across any over-exposure. In fact, the tendency is always towards under-exposure.

In practice, I try to follow a rough guide; but since it is based on a highlight reading it ends by being pretty accurate. When there is no sun, or only partly obscured sunlight, I adhere strictly to the calculated highlight reading, being careful in close-ups to take the reading about a foot from a dark face. In direct sunlight, I add half a stop for long-shots between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m., and a full stop for mid-shots during the same hours, and control the illumination for all close-ups. Pretty good results can be obtained in this way, not only in pleasing contrasts, but also in avoiding that terrible black hole where features should be.

Yours faithfully,

H. E. LIRONI,

Films Officer, Gold Coast

### AN AFRICAN COMMENTS ON "MR. ENGLISH AT HOME"

The picture depicts the home life of an English young couple with a family of three children housed in a modern and well-furnished self-contained building with a separate room for each member of the family. Mr. English impresses me as a father with a high sense of responsibilities and his wife as a true specimen of a conscientious and dutiful helpmate. The influence of a well-organised home reflects creditably on the discipline and culture of their young ones.

Another striking point is that although Mr. English is a carpenter, yet his stipend is sufficient to maintain such a comfortable living with his family. This proves that Technical Education is valued and encouraged in the civilised world. We, in this part of the world, look forward to such a time when Technical and Industrial Education will be so valued and encouraged in our land by the powers that be.

# Colonial



# Cinema

the monthly bulletin of the Colonial Film Unit

VOL. 2. NO. 12

Colonial Film Unit, 21 Soho Square, London, W.1

DECEMBER, 1944

## FILM TITLES

IT has been said that the perfect silent film has no sub-titles; the matter fits the form, and it "contains within itself the reason why it is so and not otherwise." But the silent film can be very valuable in fields where it is nevertheless not the perfect medium—in the wide dissemination of knowledge, for example. Here it may well be found that what cannot easily be conveyed pictorially can be clearly expressed in a sub-title. This will especially apply to hard fact which it may be necessary to communicate: "The population of Malaritania is 136,000." When titles are necessary, great care should be given to their composition and layout. The matter must be complementary to the picture; their manner must be clear and concise, their lettering simple and easily legible. They should be planned with as much care as the pictures in the film. All necessary information must be included, and the wording exactly express the meaning. Even if they have to be rewritten several times, good titles are well worth the trouble taken.

Let us examine an imaginary sub-title to a film on forestry. "The trees are felled, the bark is stripped and the logs are then transported to the river front." There follows a sequence showing these operations on the screen. Here we have eighteen words grouped together in a title. What is wrong with it?

In the first place, here are three statements describing three operations each of which calls for several shots. Probably a full minute will elapse between the appearance of the title and the picture sequence showing the transportation of the logs. Audiences do not retain things in their minds as long as that, particularly when the subject is unfamiliar. It is almost as bad practice to put three things together in one title as it would be to put them on the screen together, and expect the audience to analyse the shot into its components. If you say one thing at a time you will automatically shorten your titles. There will be more of them, but that does not matter.

The other fault in the specimen title is that it adds nothing to the film. The words give the same information as the pictures, and the inference is that either the title is wrongly worded or that it was unnecessary. Titles should not tell the story of the film—that is what the pictures are for—but should give complementary information that is not apparent from the pictures.

Let us take our imaginary title, split it into three as we suggested, and then see how we could deal with the sequence.

- (i) "In A. . . . tree felling is a highly honourable occupation." (*Here follow shots of felling.*)
- (ii) "The bark is used in the local tanneries." (*Here follow shots of bark being stripped.*)
- (iii) "The smooth bare trunks are easier to haul the four miles to the nearest river." (*Here follow shots of log hauling.*)

All these titles now fulfil their true function. They are complementary to the pictures, because they give information that the pictures do not. We now have a total of thirty-two words in three titles, but in addition to having three distinct pictorial statements, the audience has acquired three additional pieces of information.

Climbing titles should be avoided. Even with trained audiences they cause discomfort; while fast readers wait irritably for the next line, the slow ones frantically endeavour to take in the information before it passes from their sight. Long, wordy statements of this kind are rarely justifiable and are often a confession of inability to make moving pictures.

So much for the content of the title. Now for its design and layout. Elaborate design is unwise and unnecessary. A simple, plain arrangement of words is by far the most effective. In designing titles and choosing lettering it should be remembered that the first requirement is legibility. Anything, however ornamental, which tends to obscure the wording should be omitted.

Whether you are going to make your own titles, or have them made for you, lettering should be studied. One should learn something of pen lettering and try to appreciate the beauties of the sculptured Roman characters which have formed the basis of most lettering since that time. Note also the perfect balance and form of the modern alphabets of Edward Johnson, which were developed further by Eric Gill; a short study will prove that a title can be satisfying without being in the least ornate.

The way in which good notices, display cards and advertisements are balanced on the page will repay close examination. It is interesting to observe how the block of type is usually placed higher than the centre, so that there is least margin at the top, more at the sides and most at the bottom, and that in the best work the margins are generous. It will be found that care is taken to get the block of type squared





...And letters are sent  
out to the districts.

and accurately centred between the sides. This squareness and straightness should be aimed at when drawing and photographing your titles.

On the question of ornament, it is almost an invariable rule that dialogue sub-titles are plain. For the others, as little ornament as possible should be used. Simple, dignified effects should be used and fine detail avoided. Suppose your original title card measures 10 inches wide and 7 inches deep—the usual size for a card. Lettering drawn on it will be  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch high, the thickness of the strokes being about  $\frac{3}{64}$  inch. The images, when recorded on 16 mm. film, will be less than one-twentieth of those dimensions. The letters will be little more than  $\frac{1}{30}$  inch high, the strokes less than  $\frac{1}{400}$  inch thick. These are the images of the more robust dimensions of the lettering, but if the original has detail which is small in character, its image will be so microscopic on the film that it will be smaller than the actual grain of the emulsion and will be lost. When the mutilated image is thrown on the screen, on a picture 6 feet wide, it is nearly seven and a half times as great as the original drawing, and nearly a hundred and fifty times as great as the film from which it is being projected. With such very wide ranges of reduction and enlargement, only relatively simple shapes can expect to be rendered without distortion.

In this connection we give above a reproduction of the excellent style of lettering which is used in the films of the Kenya Information Office. It is a style which combines dignity and clarity.

## CARE IN HANDLING RAW STOCK

IT happens quite often that material sent here under the Raw Stock scheme shows signs of fogging when processed. The suggestion has been made that the manufacturers may be at fault, and that the wartime packing is not all that it might be. We have taken the matter up with the makers, and are satisfied that, on their part, every possible precaution is taken.

Sixteen mm. film for use in cameras of the non-magazine type is wound on solid-sided spools of two sizes, containing nominal lengths of 50 feet and 100 feet respectively.

In actual fact, both spools hold more than this; there is an additional 5 feet at each end of the usable film. Sometimes this takes the form of two "leaders" of opaque material spliced on, one at each end of the sensitive material. In other cases, where the sensitive material itself has an opaque backing, 10 feet or so are added, so that waste footage is provided.

It is the close fitting of the flat cheeks or sides of the camera spool, and the opaque material wound closely round the outside of the reel that act as the means of protecting the sensitive film from light. Unless the cheeks fit well and the lead is properly wrapped round the outside of the film, fogging can be expected.

Considerable care is exercised in the film factories. All spools are carefully checked to make quite certain that the cheeks are as perfect as possible; the film is wound on by skilled operators, whose work is then checked, and then the film is sealed by means of a paper tape, metal strap or other device before the outer paper wrapping is put on.

The possibility of error at the manufacturers' end is thus reduced to a minimum. The cameraman, when unwrapping a spool, should take adequate precautions to ensure that the outer film coils are snug; he should exercise the greatest care when removing the paper tape or metal strip. Should the outer one or two turns of film be slightly loose, they should be immediately tightened, thus reducing the possibility of light's penetrating to the top layers of film that is to be used for making exposures.

A much more potent cause of serious fogging is due to unnecessary exposure of the spool to strong light. The light may strike down the sides between the cheeks and the coils of film.

Loading and unloading of the camera should always be carried out as far as possible in the shade. Even in the middle of a large open space, it is possible to turn one's back to the sun when handling film. When loading, the camera should be opened before unwrapping the spool, so that the film may be loaded into the camera without any delay. In unloading, one should have the wrappings ready before taking the exposed spool from the camera. If one of the spools must necessarily be kept unwrapped for a short period while the other is being attended to, it should be put in the darkest pocket available until there is an opportunity to deal with it.

It is uneconomic to attempt to "snatch" extra footage by shooting without running off the initial 5 feet and by continuing shooting right to the end. The film manufacturers rightly regard the footage at each end as their own material for handling, punching of identity numbers and so on, and therefore shots taken on these ends stand very little chance of being successful. If your camera runs out on a shot, reload, wind on the correct length of leader, and shoot again, even if the action in the first shot was completed.

# CARE OF FILM AND EQUIPMENT IN THE TROPICS

THE following is a further extract from the report from the research section of Kodak Ltd., U.S.A., and deals particularly with the care of film:—

## CONTROL OF MOISTURE ABSORPTION

Changes in dimension and the concomitant buckle and other distortions can be controlled by the maintenance of a moderately low and uniform moisture in the film. No chemical treatment or coating can exert more than a slight delaying action on changes in moisture content. The only really effective way of influencing the moisture content is through the control of temperature and the atmosphere in contact with the film.

## DESICCANTS

The use of a desiccant such as silica gel is effective but introduces complications. The box must be very tight. The desiccant must be replaced or baked out at intervals. It is available in a granular form which requires a dust-retaining container, and in the more convenient capsules which could be clipped to the wall of the box.

It is practically out of the question to specify a correct quantity of silica gel, or any other desiccant for that matter, because an assumption as to the wetness of the film and apparatus is involved. At the greatest a quantity equal in bulk to one-half that of the film, textile, or even absorbent matter would be sufficient to lower the moisture content substantially, but might cause too rapid or too extensive drying of film which had not accumulated excess moisture. At the least the quantity required would be equal in bulk to 1/1,000th that of the air in the container so that the film or apparatus would not gain moisture from that air.

On the whole, the use of lamps or other heaters in the storage box is to be preferred if the power can be supplied continuously. The heating system must be designed in such a way that the temperature cannot rise more than about 20 deg. F. above the ambient temperature.

It is believed that adoption of the measures indicated, coupled with an intelligently directed effort to take advantage of whatever favourable conditions are encountered and to avoid the unfavourable to the extent that schedules and weather permit, will add measurably to the quality of presentations. The protection gained from precautions taken at one time may be nullified by neglect at another, so that all phases of the work, including exhibition, maintenance, transportation and storage must be organized with a view to obtaining the effects sought.

Further improvements in method must rely on experience gained in current operations, so that it is essential to keep good records of changes in equipment and methods, troubles encountered, repairs made as well as length of service of film and equipment.

## REMOVAL OF FUNGUS FROM FILM

Fungus growth may be difficult to remove, and it may be necessary to soak the film in water in a laboratory and sponge the surface. Cleaning with carbon tetrachloride may be effective and should be tried first.

## LUBRICATION OF FILM

Lubrication of the film surface by the application of an extremely thin coating of wax is recommended to diminish scratching and to facilitate movement of the film through the projector gate. Thick coatings, while affording somewhat more protection against scratching, require buffing, which is a time-consuming and expensive operation.

Vegetable waxes and certain trade-marked or synthetic waxes are suitable. The wax can be applied to both surfaces of the film from a 0.1 per cent. solution in mixtures of petroleum distillates of suitable volatility with carbon tetrachloride or other wax solvent. The solvent proportions preferred will depend upon the required degree of non-inflammability, rate of evaporation, quantity applied, etc., but the following is typical:—

Wax .. .. .	0.1 gram
Carbon tetrachloride .. .	40.0 cc.
Gasoline or petroleum naphtha .. .	60.0 cc.

A useful degree of protection is given by merely passing the film through a bath of the composition indicated near the wind-up end of the developing machine drying cabinet, allowing sufficient time for the solvent to evaporate before the film is wound up. At running speeds up to 20 feet a minute the quantity of the liquid applied can be controlled by the use of a simple roller applicator or by passing both surfaces alternately over plush pads. At higher speeds a roller applicator equipped with a wiper consisting of a plush pad or a doctor blade is required to limit the rate of application.

## CARE OF FILM

Film should be inspected and cleaned at regular intervals and, in addition, whenever any trouble is reported. Re-application of the wax is usually unnecessary. Watch must be kept for accumulations of dirt and corrosion products on reels or in shipping containers, as these may do permanent harm to the film. Reels and cans should be of stainless steel or of high quality plated material.

Oil solvent cleaning agents of the customary type can be used except that moisture condensation on the film as a result of the cooling effect of high volatility solvents must be avoided. Tetrachloroethylene is more suitable in this regard than carbon tetrachloride and is equally fire safe. However, mixtures of carbon tetrachloride 2 parts by volume and petroleum naphtha 3 parts by volume are suitable. Chlorinated solvents should be sulphur-free and acid or gummy impurities must be avoided in any solvent. Leaded gasolines are very poisonous and must not be used.

## FILM CONTAINERS

Film is heated considerably in most of the modern high wattage projectors. An excessively damp condition of the film may, under most circumstances, be avoided if the film is sealed while warm in a metal can with good quality adhesive tape and not opened again until immediately before the next projection.

## NOTE

\* \* Stainless steel containers are recommended to keep films in the best condition. In wartime it is almost impossible to obtain superior type containers. It is realised, however, that the best possible container is essential for use in the tropics. As soon as supplies become available, the inferior tins being used at present will be replaced.

## A WORD OF WARNING

It has been found that over-enthusiastic use of preservative wax on films in the tropics has encouraged the growth of fungus. We therefore urge officers who may wish to use it to make sure that the proportion of wax in the solution does not exceed that given in Kodak's formula, and to see that the amount of mixture put on to the film is carefully regulated.

## NOTES

## SHOWING OF UNIT FILMS

On Thursday, 5th October, a show of Unit films was given in the Ministry of Information theatre at the request of the Colonial Office. The programme was arranged to give a comprehensive idea of the Unit's work. It consisted of *News Film 26*, *Plainsmen of Barotseland*, *West Indians with the R.A.F. in Britain*, *Springtime in an English Village*, and *Food from Oil Nuts*.

The audience included Sir Charles Jeffries, Assistant Under-Secretary of State at the Colonial Office, and Mr. J. Beddington, C.B.E., Director of the Film Division of the Ministry.

## UNIT COURSES

Mr. H. E. Lironi, Films Officer from the Gold Coast, while on leave recently was able to take a refresher course with the Unit. We always welcome these opportunities of personal contact with those who are making and showing films in the field.

## CARE OF FILM AND EQUIPMENT

We invite comment and criticism on the report received from the research section of Kodak Ltd., U.S.A. This has appeared in sections in the last three issues of the bulletin. Much may be learnt from the experience of others working under difficult conditions, and there must be many points which are not touched on in the report. From one source we learn, for instance, that quite by accident an officer living in a really bad part of the tropics found that a thin coating of friar's balsam on plated metal gave almost perfect protection against corrosion. With films in constant use there is less liability to deterioration, but constant trouble is experienced with stored films. If from your experience you have found out any unfamiliar method of preserving them in good condition, we shall be glad to hear about it. We were informed by one officer that he had put months on the life of his films by making a practice of never handling them without gloves.

## CHANGES IN COLONIAL CINEMA

It was suggested recently that the Bulletin might be made more useful if each issue were larger, and this in turn would mean that it must be issued at longer intervals. A sub-committee was appointed to go into the matter, and it has been decided to issue *Colonial Cinema* quarterly instead of monthly. The first of the new issues will be ready for distribution before 31st March, 1945. We very much favour the new arrangement. With unexpected complications arising out of the war situation, it is always something of an ordeal to produce a monthly issue satisfactory in every respect. No doubt we shall hear in due course what readers think of the new departure. It is purely experimental, and will be subject to revision in the light of experience gained.



FROM THE FILM

**Boy Scouts**

Photographs are enlargements  
from the actual 35 mm. film.

## A DREDGER FOR NIGERIA

Recently at a shipbuilding yard on the Clyde, a new dredger was launched for use at Lagos. It was built to replace the old dredger destroyed by enemy action.

It was possible to arrange to cover the launching ceremony performed by Lady Bourdillon, the wife of the well-known Colonial Governor, Sir Bernard Bourdillon. Out of compliment to their long colonial service the new dredger was named *Lady Bourdillon*. The story will appear as a newsreel item in due course.

## GEORGE CROSS CLUB

Recently at Cardiff a club was opened for the use of Maltese men in the Merchant Navy. At the request of the Colonial Office the ceremony was covered by our cameraman, and the story will be included in an early newsreel.

## FILMS FROM KENYA

The photographic section of the Kenya Information Office has been active, and two promising films have been received from this Colony. One made with the mobile cinema van as its subject will probably be of much general interest.

*Charcoal Burning in the Kikuyu Reserve* is the subject of the second film. In many colonies, charcoal is in great demand for both domestic and commercial use; for this reason the committee may consider it of sufficient interest for general distribution.

## NEWS FILMS

## THE BRITISH EMPIRE AT WAR

*News Film No. 31* continues the story of the liberation of France. Mr. Churchill crosses to Normandy with Sir Alan Brooke, C.I.G.S., and meets General Montgomery. Then come scenes of the fighting, culminating in the capture of Cherbourg by the Americans.

The film ends with shots of H.M. the King decorating men of the Allied armies for their bravery in battle.

*News Film No. 32* has three sequences:—

(a) *Russia*: German Prisoners in Moscow has spectacular scenes of hordes of German prisoners being marched through silent crowds of Moscow citizens.

(b) *Great Britain*: *Nigeria's New Dredger*. Lady Bourdillon launches a new dredger for use in Lagos harbour, and names it the *Lady Bourdillon*.

(c) *Italy*: *Basuto Troops with a Mountain Battery*. Basuto muleteers of the mountain artillery are seen on active service among the Italian mountains.