

# Colonial Cinema



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## Editorial

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

ONCE again we in the Colonial Film Unit wish all our readers a very happy New Year wherever they may be. It is hoped in the next edition of *Colonial Cinema* to give a full survey of our work over the last year.

The Producer, Mr. Sellers, has recently returned from a visit to the West Indies, the purpose of which was to inspect the work done by the various trainees in their own territories, and to advise the Governments concerned on the setting up of their film Units. Visits were paid to Jamaica, Trinidad, British Guiana and Barbados. At the request of the Information Service of the State Department in Washington, Mr. Sellers spent four days in the U.S.A. Both in Washington and in New York useful contacts were made and the interest shown in the technique of film making which we have developed over the last twelve years was considerable. Elsewhere in this edition readers will find in more detail a description of his visit.

Requests for the loan of C.F.U. films are increasing at an alarming rate, and as we have no lending library it is becoming a very difficult problem to satisfy everybody's needs. The most frequent request is for a "universal appeal" film on practically all our Colonies. Unfortunately very few of the type of film showing the ports, inland routes, the railways, customs and progress of the people, etc., in one composite film have been made. Other Colonial Film Units may wish to consider this type of film as it is not only useful to show to the people of that colony, but is very useful in keeping neighbouring territories informed and is also good propaganda value for showing in the United Kingdom.

Mr. P. Morton Williams, an anthropologist, has been seconded for work on Audience Research from Ibadan University. He departed by air from the United Kingdom on the 21st November and was followed on the 28th November by the Officer-in-charge of the Unit, Mr. R. Gamble. They hope to spend approximately 10 months in Nigeria, in urban and rural areas in the north, south and east.

When this investigation has been completed in West Africa they will return to the United Kingdom to write their main report, and it is hoped that their findings will be made available to Colonial Governments. In the light of these findings consideration will be given to whether the investigation should be continued in West Africa or whether the investigation should be switched to East Africa. The Unit is equipped with a Mobile Cinema Van and also with a Standard Estate Vanguard containing portable projection and recording equipment. Experiments in the use of infra-red photography will be made and also reactions of audiences to colour films and sound effects.

## Commentary Hints

by GEORGE PEARSON

SINCE the screen picture is a sense perception, through the eyes, to the African, we must permit him longer time to appreciate its content than we might need. Whilst the moving picture is before his eyes he is absorbing its pattern, and recognizing that which is familiar to him.

Nothing must happen to disturb this absorption. To hear words arousing a new sense perception of *sound*, introduces a very disturbing element which confuses the appreciation of scene, and especially so if the words merely reduplicate what is quite clearly happening on the screen.

The good commentary waits for the precise moment of fine timing when it can hint at an implication the scene itself suggests. The hint, if well chosen, stirs the African mind to fresh ideas and thus a *concept* is born.



Occasionally there may be no opportunity for an implication, but great opportunity to arouse eager interest in what is to follow scenically. A hint towards this will stir excited desire to see what follows, and the gateway to the mind through the eye is wide open for new perceptions, which may lead later to new conceptions.

An illustration of what I mean can be given from our film of North-allerton School. The many children are running from all directions towards the school doors. It is the opening of the morning session.

A weak commentary would state that the children were running to morning school. A better commentary would, *with good timing*, hint that surely so many children must need wise control.

Then the children hang up their outdoor clothes carefully, and move towards the classrooms in an orderly manner.

Weak commentary would tell us this in words that are unnecessary. Good commentary would hint that there must be a good influence in this school. Thus we are well prepared to appreciate the next scene of the headmaster himself, as he enters the schoolroom to greet his pupils.

Thus, without one useless word, we have hinted at two vital implications about that school . . . the actual visuals have been amplified and illuminated, and fresh ideas of good order and wise control have been aroused in the minds of the audience.

To revert to the matter of commentary structure, be awake to the vital need for economy in words . . . the fewer the better as long as purpose is achieved. No words relating to the scene on the screen must be so many in number that they flow over to the next scene. Such words would only confuse the mind that is now interested in the new scenic material.

In a nutshell, the commentary must be concise, clear, free from pedantry, and completely devoid of reduplication in words of what the visuals show clearly. Its aim is picture-amplification and illumination. The ideal, ambitious and splendid, is the arousing in the minds of an audience the full implications of the visuals.

As a method to keep to these ends, I suggest that the writer of commentary works as I advise hereunder:

Since, Mr. Commentator, you know what the *theme* of the picture is . . . what its purpose is . . . and what you want the African to remember when it is all over . . .

WHAT in this scene is clearly obvious and needs no words of mine to reduplicate?

WHAT might this scene suggest to the African, if I am wise enough to give him a hint?

WHAT is the least number of words in which I can give him this hint?

## Mobile Cinema Shows in Africa

By W. SELLERS, M.B.E., *Producer, Colonial Film Unit*

### Introduction

THE purpose of these articles is to assist those who, with little or no technical knowledge, may be called upon to supervise or operate equipment in Mobile Cinema Vans and Travelling Projection Units. A thorough understanding of the equipment will help greatly in avoiding unnecessary trouble, delay and interruptions when giving demonstrations. The various subjects treated in these articles are of vital importance to the performance and service which the equipment will give.

A very simple error on the part of the operator may cause some part of the equipment to fail at a time when its satisfactory operation is essential. For this reason it is strongly urged that copies of handbooks supplied should be kept with the mobile cinema so that they can be consulted in time of need.

The vans will be required to operate over long periods without skilled servicing. For this reason the responsibility of maintaining the equipment in good condition falls upon the operator. This is, perhaps, as it should be, because the operator will, it is hoped, recognize his responsibility and set up a regular routine which will enable the equipment to be maintained in good condition. In this way he will become familiar with the entire equipment and be able to replace or readjust minor parts without causing delay in an itinerary or the expense and miles of travel by a skilled mechanic or electrician. On the other hand, the operator should not proceed blindly. He must not attempt to change an adjustment until he has studied the instructions carefully and understands the construction.

The writer has experienced operating mobile cinemas over a period of almost four years, through wet and dry seasons, in all parts of Nigeria. During that time, film demonstrations, totalling over 1,000 hours, were given to over two million Africans. Itineraries covering tours as long as five months ahead were strictly adhered to and every demonstration arranged given without a single mechanical or electrical breakdown; not even a broken film. This is a compliment to the African staff who, without any previous training, assisted when on tour in maintaining the vehicle and equipment in serviceable condition.

Cinema vans are thoroughly tested before shipment and nothing more serious than slight teething troubles may be expected.

The temptation to give a public demonstration before the van is properly run in and before the staff is thoroughly trained should be

avoided. The complete programme for a demonstration should be rehearsed many times with the full equipment working. Every demonstration should be carried out with the utmost precision. In many respects it may be considered in the same light as a stage show where all concerned must know thoroughly the parts they are to play and carry them through to the best of their ability.

The success of film demonstrations depends on showmanship and stage-management. *This cannot be too strongly emphasized.* The officer in charge should combine the best qualities of the teacher, the orator and the showman. The most perfect apparatus and projection are useless if the audience is not fully engaged and kept on its toes by skilful presentation. Only practice can give the requisite degree of skill in this difficult art, but much can be done by intelligent approach to the work. Officers should realize from the outset that the success of their work will depend upon their own personal contribution, and should thus seek always to improve their technique of presentation.

#### *Staff for the Mobile Cinema*

The operator of the mobile cinema will usually also be the driver of the vehicle. Every operator should have a keen interest in the work. He must take a pride in caring for the equipment placed in his charge and see that it is always kept clean. He should be made responsible for seeing that the whole equipment is given the attention needed at regular intervals, such as greasing the chassis, oiling projector, changing of the oil in chassis engine and petrol engine of the alternator.

The assistant should work under instructions from the operator. He should be suitable for training as a second operator so that he could operate the van in emergency.

The duties of the interpreter are of the highest importance. He should be a permanent member of the staff of the cinema van, preferably able to speak the language most widely used and competent to take complete charge of the remainder of the staff. For this reason he must travel with the van and all instructions to the driver should be given through him. The interpreter should be made responsible for translating an adaptation of the model film commentaries.

He should memorize his translations so that he can speak them without reference to a script. Experience has shown the need for checking all translations before they are used in public.

Although the following information refers particularly to conditions in Nigeria, it is of general application and will be useful to those responsible for arranging propaganda demonstrations in any part of Africa.

It is desirable that the first few tours made by the mobile cinema should be closely supervised by a responsible officer, who would arrange

for and supervise all demonstrations. Later, when officials in various parts of the country become acquainted with the possibilities and technique of this rather specialized medium, and the African staff are well trained, it should not be necessary for an officer to tour with the unit.

After deciding upon which towns and villages to visit, the officer should plan an itinerary and obtain information regarding the most convenient routes to follow. The itinerary, with a covering letter, should be circulated to all concerned so that local arrangements for the visit may be made and announced well ahead.

Film demonstrations are not sufficient in themselves. They should be preceded by preparatory work carried out during the day. A good procedure is to arrange for a meeting round about 10 a.m. under the chairmanship of the Administrative Officer; all local influential people, including the local chief and his council, headmasters, teachers, court clerk, and other enlightened Africans are invited to attend. At those meetings the reason for the visit by the cinema unit is made clear and the fundamental theme connected with the evening film demonstrations thoroughly explained.

It is recommended that the audience should be invited to ask questions at suitable intervals during the talk. The subjects raised in the discussion are a valuable indication to important points of interest. Every effort should be made to ensure that influential people who attend the preliminary meetings clearly understand the reason for the visit; they are the people who will pass on all the necessary explanations to the local public once the unit has moved on. At these meetings the Administrative Officer should be asked to suggest a local person to speak over the microphone to the public at the evening demonstration in support of the subject of the visit. In arranging this it is as well to ascertain the views of the person invited and give him guidance when necessary. A tape recording of the speech can be made in the day-time and played back over the loud speakers in the evening. If the speaker chosen is the local chief, and the van is to visit other towns within his jurisdiction, a recording made by him would be very useful for including in the demonstration in these towns.

If school teachers attend these day-time demonstrations, arrangements may be made for them to return in the afternoon with their older scholars (say Standard III upwards) when the talk given in the morning can be repeated in class-room style. Should there be many schools in the district, ascertain the number of scholars from each who may be expected to attend, and, if there are too many for the accommodation provided, they should be divided up and times given for the different schools to return. Essays written by the scholars provide useful information and often bring to light interesting points.



When visiting a new district a suitable site for the evening demonstration should be chosen as soon as possible after arrival and the public informed of the place and time. The mobile cinema, by nature of its size and unusual appearance, will be found quite sufficient to start the people talking the moment it makes an appearance in a town or village. A few announcements here and there are all that is necessary as the news will travel round the town quickly.

On no account should an attempt be made to give a demonstration in a confined space unless the attendance can be very effectively controlled. The larger the open space the better. An ideal site is one where the rear of the van can face the direction of the town, on ground which very gradually slopes up from the van. The reason for facing the town is twofold:

- (a) the loud speakers are directional and will attract people from all over the town;
  - (b) many people will continue to assemble after the demonstration has actually started, and, by approaching the van from the direction of the town, they will stop as soon as they can see the picture screen well enough; whereas if the van is placed the other way round, the crowd will pack close to the van and although in this position they cannot see the screen, nothing will convince them that the back of the crowd is the best place to see and hear. This is quite apart from the fact that it means interrupting the demonstration to try to persuade them to move and also avoids interfering with young people comfortably seated on the ground near the front of the van.
- Undulating ground should be avoided as only the people standing on the ridges will be able to view the screen.

It is always advisable to take the mobile cinema to the proposed site during the day and point out to the operator the exact spot from which the demonstration will be given. If a doubtful culvert is encountered there is still time to arrange for another site.

The interpreter and operator should be instructed to have the van in position and prepare for a display half an hour before dusk.

#### *Seating, etc.*

Arrangements may be made for one or two chairs to be provided for such people as the Administration Officer and the local chief. These chairs should be placed roughly 30 yards from the screen. On no account should forms or benches be allowed because members of the audience are sure to stand on them and thus obscure the screen from the view of those behind.

With the arrival of the van at the site many small children will collect; they should be instructed to sit on the ground between the screen and the chairs (if any). See that the children are seated close together as many more will come along later. Adults should be requested to stand at the rear of the space occupied by the children.

#### *Programme Balance*

In arranging a programme careful attention should be given to the balance between films and talks. The talks should be made short and crisp; they should be straight to the point and devoid of all padding.

Experience has shown the most effective length of a demonstration to be approximately 75 minutes.

*The following outline of a programme is given as a guide :*

(1) Music . . . . .	4 mins.
(2) Introductory talk . . . . .	3 "
(3) Film . . . . .	8 "
(4) Talk . . . . .	4 "
(5) Film . . . . .	20 "
(6) Talk by influential local . . . . .	5 "
(7) Film . . . . .	15 "
(8) Talk . . . . .	4 "
(9) Short entertainment film . . . . .	8 "
(10) God Save the King . . . . .	1 "
	<u>72 mins.</u>

#### *Attracting the Audience*

Just before dusk instruct the operator to start up and play a rousing march on the amplifier. Recordings of such marches as "Empire Builders", "Under Freedom's Flag", or "Blaze Away" are popular with Africans as the rhythm is well marked. Other recordings which should be carried in the van are dance tunes known as "rumbas". Although recorded by English bands they have a story appeal to African audiences. All records used should be chosen with care, as many, and especially those including vocal efforts, are not always appreciated.

#### *Presentation of Programme*

The crowd will grow very quickly once the music begins and the interpreter should be instructed when to begin the introductory talk. From this point the programme should continue *without a moment's pause*. Keep the audience interested and the background noise from the crowd will remain at a low level. If this background noise increases and becomes disturbing it is a good plan to ask the audience a question such as "Are you all well?" Repeat the question, requesting them to shout

their answer loud—ask them once again—louder still. The answer will come back with a roar. Allowing the audience to shout occasionally in this way greatly assists in keeping them quiet and attentive between times. This technique to reduce background noise is very effective with large audiences. It can, however, be used effectively with any type of audience, particularly at the end of a display when question after question based on the talks given may be put to the audience in quick succession. The interpreter in this case should gradually increase the volume of his voice with each question and the audience in turn will reply with greater vigour. There is more likelihood of any lesson getting home when the people themselves have actually voiced their acceptance of it.

African audiences voice their reactions to films in no uncertain manner and they do so at what, at first, may appear to be the most unexpected moments. For this reason, some difficulty may be experienced in the early stages in fitting in and timing a film commentary. Experience and careful observation will overcome this difficulty.

Remember that the audience may not be accustomed to having an idea presented to them visually and by the spoken word at the same time. It is therefore important to take particular care to time the film commentary so that it does not coincide with any exciting scene. Make the commentary crisp and to the point and do not include explanations of things which are fully explained in the visuals.

Whenever possible arrange for observers to be present in the audience to listen for any interesting remarks which might be made.

A point to remember in judging audience reaction is that illiterate people, unaccustomed to seeing pictures of any kind, do not focus their eyes on the screen in the same way as educated people. Educated people usually focus their eyes at a point a few feet from the screen and by doing so appreciate the entire scene at a glance. The illiterate, on the other hand, scans each scene and his eyes travel from one part of the picture to another. For this reason films for illiterate people contain scenes which are much longer than is usual in film making.

A crowd can be controlled more effectively if they are kept in a good humour and they will respond more readily to an announcement given through loud speakers than they will to instructions given by police and other individuals who are often self-appointed. It is only by giving careful attention to such details that good control can be maintained throughout a demonstration.

Much useful information can be obtained by going into a town or village the morning after a demonstration and questioning the people who attended the display. Replies with regard to details may be very disappointing and yet the main lesson may have got home. Constant checking in this way is necessary in perfecting a technique for giving successful demonstrations.

(To be continued)

## Make Some Yourself

By GEORGE LOMAX

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MY colleague has told you something about the apparatus and material for making your own films. My concern is the subjects about which your films are made, and the best ways of approaching them.

People tend to become too preoccupied with the mechanics of film-making, leaving the grammatical aspects unconsidered. I know of individuals and groups who gaily embark on the most elaborate productions without a vestige of knowledge of the simple grammar of film making, sometimes choosing a subject that is quite unsuitable for turning into a film.

The first thing is to decide what your film is to be about. It is sufficient to say to yourself, "I will make a film about London", or "About my pets", or "About my factory". That is not definite enough. A film that was "About London" in the broadest sense, would go on for hours and hours and probably end up by being utterly boring because it would overwhelm the audience until their senses became dulled. In some degree this happens with every film where its maker has not made his mind up about his subject. We have all suffered from those boring diffuse pictures of the family at home, those epics that earned the scornful title of "baby on the lawn".



*Shooting a film on Cocoa by the Trinidad Film Unit*



### NARROW THE SUBJECT

So, choose some aspect of your subject and concentrate upon it. If it is London, you can decide to tell your audience something about its transport systems, or alternatively something about the people who frequent its streets, or about its country-in-town parks and open spaces, but not all of these.

If it is to be your family, then you can decide to bring out some facets of their characters or show their prowess at games, or in some other way narrow down the viewpoint so that what the audience sees can be shown vividly and pungently without obscuring the impression with irrelevant issues.

If it is your factory, or your product, then you can decide to concentrate on the efficiency of your methods, or the team spirit that prevails, or the way in which welfare is looked after, and so on.

### REMEMBER THE VIEWPOINT

The pictures may be largely the same for any one of a variety of possible treatments, but because the film is made with a certain point of view in mind all the time, emphasis will be thrown this way or that to impart a particular flavour to the film to give it form, and incidentally to make it easier for the film-maker to choose the significant scenes from the mass of material that the subject presents to him.

After deciding the subject, the next step is to get it down on paper. To do this do not think about films or film-making. Just write a story about your subject and all you would like to say about it. If you stop to think "can I do this in film?" your conception will become clouded and trepidation will often cause you to discard as impractical otherwise excellent ideas. Or you may waste a lot of time trying to find filmic solutions to situations which may not arise when you are able to consider the film as a whole.

Once you have established your story you will be able to get a clear conception of the work as a whole and then, when it comes to translating the ideas into terms of moving pictures, you will be able to assess how important or otherwise it may be to include or exclude some part of the story and to find a solution to the pictorial problems it presents. If you do not discipline yourself in this way your final result will be unbalanced. There was the man who made a film about "The Farming Year" and devoted more than half of the total time to pictures of horse-ploughing, because he found this subject so attractive and easy to photograph.

### PREOCCUPATION WITH TOOLS

Never forget that the basic idea and its expression in pictures is the most important thing, even in the simplest domestic picture. Learning to operate the camera, make exposures, light the scenes and so on, is much the same as the young journalist learning shorthand and type-writing.

These are no more than tools with which you work. It is the handling of ideas with the aid of such tools that makes the journalist and the film-maker; that enables one amateur to hold an audience spellbound with a little domestic picture of father, mother and the kids on a Saturday afternoon, while another man will experience a resounding flop with a relatively expensive and elaborate production.

The more experienced you become, the more you will instinctively be aware whether your conceptions are pictorial or not—that is to say, whether they are susceptible of pictorial exposition in movement. You may, in your mind's eye, see the subject happening before you and your growing knowledge of film technique will steer your imagination along the channels most likely to produce practical, usable material.

### THE WORKING DRAWINGS

After your "story" or "treatment" as it sometimes is called, comes the script. A script is not a literary document, though it is composed of words. It is in effect a series of working drawings in which the author puts down in words a description of each one of the successive pictures that must be secured and then strung together in order to build up the total impression to be conveyed.

In the sense that the film is a pictorial language that language has a pictorial grammar. It will assist you in the early days of your film work, but it must not be regarded as a rigid set of rules that cannot be departed from. But learn the rules first, so that when you *do* break them you do so intelligently and with full awareness of what you are attempting.

When you go to the pictures or look at your library films, endeavour to analyse the fleeting impressions, to work out in your mind how the director and editor between them built up a feeling of intensity or placidity or other effect. This is easily done with films that you yourself can project as often as you want, but do not despise the opportunities offered by the public "flicks".

Try to analyse your own mental processes in observing and recording life around you. For example, you will find, when you go into a strange room, you do not smoothly assimilate more and more of your surroundings. Instead of that your eyes and mind jerk rapidly from point to point.

Even while you are being introduced to a person in the room, your mind will momentarily fasten on some peculiar feature of decoration seen over the shoulder of the person or to some item of dress or adornment upon the person. Then you will flick away to some other item, and so, piece by piece, you will build up your knowledge of the room from the first broad impression.

That is the way in constructing film sequences; first a general or *establishing* scene; in closer to pick out the particular person or thing to which you wish to attract the attention of the audience; then in closer still to watch the behaviour of that thing or person or to examine the detailed characteristics of the subject.

### EVERY SCENE MUST TELL

Do not be afraid of being monotonous by repeating this technique again and again; if you do depart from it do not do so merely because you think a change would be good. Try to ensure that every single scene and angle in your script is there because it is utterly essential to your purpose.

All that is necessary in a script is: (a) Each scene must be numbered. I use the word "scene" to describe every new camera position and the action that is taken from that position, so that in this sense a medium shot of an artist is one scene and a matching close-up of that same artist is another scene with another number. The old term "shot" is becoming superseded in these days.

(b) Opposite to each numbered scene the distance of camera from the subject should be indicated, e.g., long shot, mid-shot, medium close shot, close shot, close up, big close up, and so on.

(c) Following camera distance there should be a description of exactly what takes place before the camera during the scene, and any movement that is made by the camera itself, e.g., fading, dissolving, and so on.

Generally, to save repetition and space, a general statement is placed before any particular group of scenes played in a certain environment, describing that environment and the artists who will play in the group—or "sequence", but here again there is no stringent rule.

In the next few issues I shall take some typical subjects and show how they would be dealt with by script-writer and film-maker. The subjects will range from the simple domestic record which—while being one of the most important types of picture that can be made by any one of us—also provides an excellent training ground for more ambitious work, up to the more elaborate record of activity in a manufacturing plant.

My purpose is to enable you to make the simpler sort of picture for yourself; but please do not use these notes to try running before you can walk. If you need a wholly satisfying and technically accurate film about your business activities, the right people to do the job are the professional companies who specialize in such work. The machinery and technique of film-making are indispensable, but the things that truly matter are imagination and the ability to "think" in pictures.

## The Cyprus Film Training School, 1951

AFTER a short transit leave in England the two Instructors of the Colonial Film Unit's West Indian Film Training School—Messrs. R. W. Harris and G. Evans—left once again for another part of the colonial territories—this time it was Cyprus, and here is what they have to say:

The trip by air from Northolt was very lovely and I particularly remember the panorama of the Bay of Naples and Vesuvius and the isles of Western Greece as they appeared below us in the bright Mediterranean sunlight. We only had a brief stop at Athens and four hours later we were making our first landing in Cyprus. The journey had taken 18 hours and we stepped out of the plane with great relief at being able to stretch our legs once more.

We were made very welcome by the Acting Public Information Officer, Mr. Josephides, who met us at the airport, and, that same night, we had a foretaste of Cypriot hospitality when he took both of us out to dinner at a restaurant with the intriguing name of "The House of Five Thousand Bottles". The local wines and the general air of friendliness were, we thought, very good auguries for the opening of the Unit's Third Film Training School.

Nicosia, surrounded by its medieval city walls and with its minarets and winding narrow streets (across which it is possible to shake hands), looked like something out of the Arabian Nights. But, fascinating as it all was, we realized that the school premises would have to be situated outside the city walls and well away from all this bustle and congestion, if we hoped to make sound recording a success. After several tours of inspection we finally selected a well-built private house a mile or so from Nicosia in a district called Kaimakli (English translation "Thick cream"! ) and, in the week before the school opened on 11th June, we spent a hectic time getting our equipment installed. The word "equipment" should be written in inverted commas because, owing to transport difficulties, we had to open the school with only the barest essentials





*Terracing near Agros*

and it was not until mid-August that our main equipment (including our two cars) arrived from U.K. by sea at Famagusta.

So much for the bricks and mortar of the business, and now a little about the students themselves. In the West Indies we had six, but here we had nine and their homelands ranged from Hong Kong in the East to Cyprus in the West. There were the four Cypriots, Wideson, Constantinides, Tsangarides, and Pavlides; the Turkish-speaking Cypriot, Aziz; the two Sudanese, Kemal and Gadalla; the Mauritian, Domaingue, and the Chinese from Hong Kong, Li.

The school had not been in session for more than a few hours before the instructors realized that their task in Cyprus was to be considerably more difficult than it was in Jamaica. In the first place, there was the language problem. The mother tongue of Cyprus is Greek and three of the Cypriot students were definitely hesitant in their English and, to a lesser degree, so were the others—with the exception of two whose English was idiomatically perfect. With the ability of the students to follow spoken English varying so widely it was not easy to keep the level of general progress throughout on an even keel, but we were later helped considerably by those concerned making Herculean efforts to improve their English. Conditions now are not nearly so tricky as they were



*The School on location*

at the beginning. Secondly, there are the teaching problems involved in coping with the wide range of ages among the students. They vary from 24 to 47.

It must not be thought that these difficulties weighed too heavily with the school and I'd like to emphasize what a happy bunch of fellows the students are. Their interests are by no means one track and are, in fact, unusually wide, ranging from astronomy to Greek Classical verse. As their English improved so did their eloquence.

As far as the school syllabus was concerned we had to depart in some ways from that followed in the West Indies because the lack of equipment in the early stages held back progress on the technical side. The students, consequently, found themselves during the early months of the course receiving plenty of theoretical instruction and, in fact, with theory racing ahead of practice, it was not until August that they were able to learn in practice what they had been taught in theory. An amusing sidelight on the course might be mentioned at this point. From our experience in West Africa and the West Indies we thought we knew all possible beginner's mistakes, such as fixing before development or developing in a printing safelight, but we learned a new one in Cyprus when one member, developing a spool, threw the emulsion strip on to

the floor and developed the paper! Needless to say, this student is now one of the most successful in this branch of our work.

Our first production was a filmstrip on Road Safety called "It's up to you". Five minutes driving on the roads of this island, be it in town or in country, will convince anyone of the vital need for such a strip. Well-known adages such as "Only police and foreigners ride on the left in Cyprus" and road signs in Nicosia reading "Please walk on the pavements" give some idea of the need of public education on the subject. The strip consisted of fifty frames in all and, considering that it was a first effort, the quality was unusually good and the Traffic Superintendent was well pleased with the result.

Soil and Water Conservation was the subject of our first film—a subject which, on first consideration, seemed fairly straightforward, but, on closer examination, proved to be something of a headache. The original shooting script was amended almost out of recognition to meet criticisms from many sides and the long hours in the class-room—in temperatures ranging from 90° to 106°—tested our endurance and tempers to the utmost. At last, we succeeded in producing a script that met most objections and, from it all, the school gained valuable experience and an appreciation of some of the intricacies of film production.

One of the great attractions of this film was that it gave us the opportunity to visit and photograph a wide variety of the wonderful Cyprus scenery and we have—touch wood—high expectations of our work so far. At the time of writing we have completed our mountain shots and are busy now on those needed in the plains.

Besides this film on Soil and Water Conservation (working title—"Save the Soil") we are making a filmstrip on the same subject together with one on the Hydatid Cyst. The incidence of this disease in Cyprus (about which we knew nothing) is one of the highest in the world and is passed by the dog—in the most unphotogenic of processes—to man and animals. The treatment of this strip calls for several flashlight photographs and, in this respect, will be a very useful exercise for the school.

Our future programme until the conclusion of the school in March 1952 is, at the moment, in the lap of the gods since the choice of our second and final film subject is undecided between Juvenile Delinquency and Tuberculosis. There is also an outside possibility of our being able to make one more film strip for the Medical Department.

The work has been intensive but very interesting and we are both extremely glad to have had this great opportunity of meeting men from so many different parts of the world. We all have one great interest in common and that is a firm belief in the value of the film and the part it has to play in the world.

## Film Production in the West Indies

By W. SELLERS, M.B.E., *Producer, Colonial Film Unit*

THE success of the training school in the West Indies was reflected in my recent visit to Jamaica, Trinidad, Barbados and British Guiana. Each of these territories now has its own film production unit and the people in charge are the men who only a few months ago were trainees.

Copies of films made by the trainees working as a team in Jamaica, and others made independently since the training course ended, were ready in time for me to take to the Caribbean. I was able to show these films to audiences which included senior Government officials, members of Legislative Councils, Heads of Departments and others, and it was most heartening to find how they were received. There can be no doubt regarding the value of these films not only for local showing but for use on an inter-territorial basis. The film on T.B., "Delay means Death", made by the trainees in Jamaica, was shown in Trinidad and is now being used there in conjunction with a T.B. campaign organized by the Medical Department. In Jamaica the D.M.S., after reviewing the film, warmly congratulated all concerned on the production of a valuable film and immediately decided to arrange for the film to be shown at a Conference of Medical people with a view to using the film as widely as possible.

Other films shown during my tour included "Cocoa Rehabilitation", made by Wilfred Lee in Trinidad; "Give your Child a Chance", a two-reeler on the care of mother and infant made by Isaac Carmichael in Barbados; "The Bush Lot Rice Co-operative Farming", made by R. H. Young in British Guiana, and a film on the University College of the West Indies made by the trainees during their training in Jamaica. One other film, "Farmer Brown learns Good Dairying", made by the trainees Rennalls, Welch and Weller in Jamaica, was awaiting the recording of the sound track at the time I left for the West Indies and so was not available for me to show during my tour.

I have mentioned the good reception given to films locally which bears out what I have always preached—the more familiar the background the greater the impact of the films on the audience.

From a purely technical point of view, and taking into consideration the limitations of their equipment and the fact that the films were made practically single handed, all my London staff agree with me that the trainees are to be congratulated on their first efforts. It would be wrong to say the films are technically perfect but in every instance the films prove honest and sincere in their purpose and provide ample





*A show in the West Indies*

evidence of the great promise for progress in this very specialized medium. The lessons the trainees will learn from these first films will no doubt serve them well and, I hope, stir them to stronger effort and finer achievement.

To me the films reflect something of the hard work and patience of their instructors—Messrs. Harris and Evans—now doing excellent work with our Film Training School in Cyprus.

A word regarding the organization of the West Indies Film Units may not be out of place.

Jamaica now has a full-time film production unit with Mr. R. H. Rennalls in charge, assisted by Messrs. Welch and Weller. The unit is housed in premises facing the racecourse in Kingston and I have just received a sketch plan showing an attractive layout which includes offices, library, cutting room, a small production theatre and a dark room.

Ample funds have been made available and work at the moment is centred on a film for the Agricultural Department dealing with banana leaf spot. I have just read the Investigation Report for this film which is a very clear and comprehensive survey of the subject.

Wilfred Lee is in charge of the Trinidad Unit which is proving itself very active. Plans have been submitted which include visual education on a fairly large scale. Premises have been earmarked to include cutting rooms, pre-view theatre, a recording studio and dark room. No fewer than 37 film subjects have been suggested by various departments of Government and nine have been selected by the Film Committee for early production.

In British Guiana, R. H. Young and an assistant are employed in film production on a part-time basis. A film dealing with the growing of coconut is at present in production.

The Barbados Film Unit is well established with Mr. Isaac Carmichael in charge. He has three assistants and funds have been made available for the production of a number of films and filmstrips. We have just received some excellent material from Carmichael for making up into a filmstrip on "Pottery".

The estimated output of film from the four units will be approximately 35 reels per annum, and if the film material I have viewed today is a criterion then we can look forward to even better films from the West Indies in the very near future.

## Filmstrip Review

### FIRST AID TO THE INJURED

*A set of six filmstrips. Devised by the St. John Ambulance Association. Made and distributed by British Instructional Films, Ltd. Price £3 the set, with teachers' notes.*

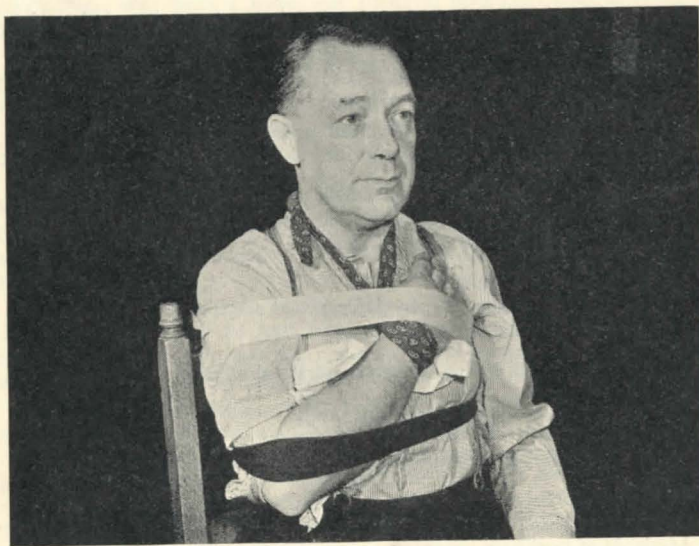
THIS well-planned, well-produced and authoritative series of filmstrips covers the very wide field of first aid most adequately, and should prove an invaluable aid to instructors in this universally useful subject.

*The contents and lengths of the individual strips are as follows:*

1. Structure and Functions of the Human Body. 29 frames.  
The skeleton, joints, muscles and internal organs.
2. Dressings and Bandages. 29 frames.  
Prepared dressings, the triangular bandage, slings, improvised slings and bandages for holding dressings.
3. Respiration. 29 frames.  
The respiratory organs, asphyxia, artificial respiration (Schäfer's and Silvester's methods).
4. Circulation of the Blood, Wounds and Hæmorrhage. 25 frames.
5. Fractures and Dislocations. 34 frames.  
Types of fracture. Treatment for fractures of the jaw, spine, collar-bone, upper limbs, pelvis, lower limbs. Examples of dislocations.
6. Transport of Injured Persons. 23 frames.  
Carrying without stretcher. Blanketing a stretcher. Blanket lift. Methods of loading a stretcher.



Example from "Wounds and Hæmorrhage"



Example from "Dressings and Bandages"

Both diagrams and photographs are used, and in each case the quality is excellent. The diagrams are used mainly to teach the basic physiology; they are simple yet not over-simplified, and as the white-on-black-background method is used, they are extremely clear. The photographs have equally good definition, with a complete absence of distracting background detail. They are used exclusively to demonstrate actual methods of applying first aid. The frames are numbered and clearly captioned, while the printed notes are simple and brief, consisting merely of subject headings, frame numbers and captions, with a few additional notes emphasizing special points. (As the strips are intended for use by trained instructors, voluminous notes would be superfluous.)

In short, the series can be highly recommended.

## Book Review

### THE HEALTHY VILLAGE

IN December 1950, *Colonial Cinema* reprinted an article describing the UNESCO experimental project, carried out in Western China in 1949, in which the comparative values of specially prepared audio-visual aids in fundamental education were tested. The experiments were concerned mainly with rural health problems and had two purposes: to carry out a piece of educational work on the spot and to place the experience of the Chinese project at the disposal of educators in other regions, for example, where processing facilities for standard types of visual aids are lacking. With the publication of the monograph "The Healthy Village", UNESCO has, in fulfilling the second objective, made a notable contribution to the literature of fundamental education.

The volume is essentially practical and informative in character. It consists of a symposium of complementary reports, the first by the Director, covering the planning and organization of the project, finances, equipment and training, and evaluations of the media and methods used, and others by the Field, Health and Art Departments.

The account of the work of the Art Department, by its Director, Mr. Norman McLaren, describes in detail the materials produced and the methods of production. These ranged from posters and wall charts, calendars, picture books of various kinds, mobile devices such as scroll boxes and rotary wheel posters, filmstrips and animated movies. Mr. McLaren devotes most attention to description of the filmstrip techniques, employing direct art-work on film, of which he is the pioneer, and which constitute the most important technical contribution made by the Healthy Village project to visual aids in fundamental education. It is characteristic that his report contains as much, or more, pictorial illustration as letterpress.



His methods of filmstrip production offer a wide choice to educators interested in similar experiment. They include painting with colour or indian ink, on clear film ; etching with stylus or knife either on clear film with the lines "fitted" with indian ink, or on blade photographic emulsion covered film; also numerous combinations of these basic techniques. Actual copies of the filmstrips produced by these means show a refreshing vitality and a simplicity of approach to their subject which must surely have contributed in no small degree to their successful use in campaign work.

The measure of their success in the field is indicated by the final assessment of the team, whose unanimous opinion placed the filmstrips far ahead of all other media used in the experiment, whether in reaching large numbers of people or in making a deep and lasting impression.

Cine-film was the least used of "all other media, and it played only a small part in the experiment. In addition to the animated movies" (an extension of the filmstrip technique) upon which Mr. McLaren is still working, a few films of American origin were used, but apart from their novelty value these were not appreciated by the people, even with a Chinese commentary. Film production, being impracticable under the conditions controlling the project, was omitted from its programme.

*(Obtainable from H.M. Stationery Office, price 2s. 6d. Also from UNESCO agents throughout the world, including Nigeria, Barbados and Singapore.)*

## New Films

### 194 COCOA REHABILITATION

(16 mm. Sound. 472 ft. 13 mins.)

This is the first film made by the newly formed Trinidad and Tobago Film Unit. The purpose of the film is to reveal to cocoa planters the facilities being given by Government for the rehabilitation of the Cocoa Industry.

### 195 GIVE YOUR CHILD A CHANCE

(16mm. Sound. 716 ft. 20 mins.)

The first production of the Barbados Film Unit. This film was designed to educate the general public in the standards and care necessary to produce a healthy baby, and to acquaint expectant mothers to make use of the free health services available.

### 196 CO-OPERATIVE RICE FARMING

(16 mm. Sound. 298 ft. 9 mins.)

This is the first film to be produced by the British Guiana Film Unit and deals with the problems of the rice farmer. It clearly demonstrates the undoubted economic advantages to be gained by effective co-operation.

### 197 FARMER BROWN LEARNS GOOD DAIRYING (16 mm. Sound.)

The Jamaica Film Unit's first production deals, as its title indicates, with the problem of dairying among the big, as well as the small, farmers. Included in the film are the proper methods of feeding and the care and management of cows in order to bring about an increase in milk yield and to maintain a consistent supply throughout the year.

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