

**Media Culture for a Modern Nation?**  
**Theatre, Cinema and Radio**  
**in Early Twentieth-Century Scotland**

a study

© **Adrienne Clare Scullion**

Thesis submitted for the degree of PhD  
to the Department of Theatre, Film and Television Studies,  
Faculty of Arts,  
University of Glasgow.

March 1992

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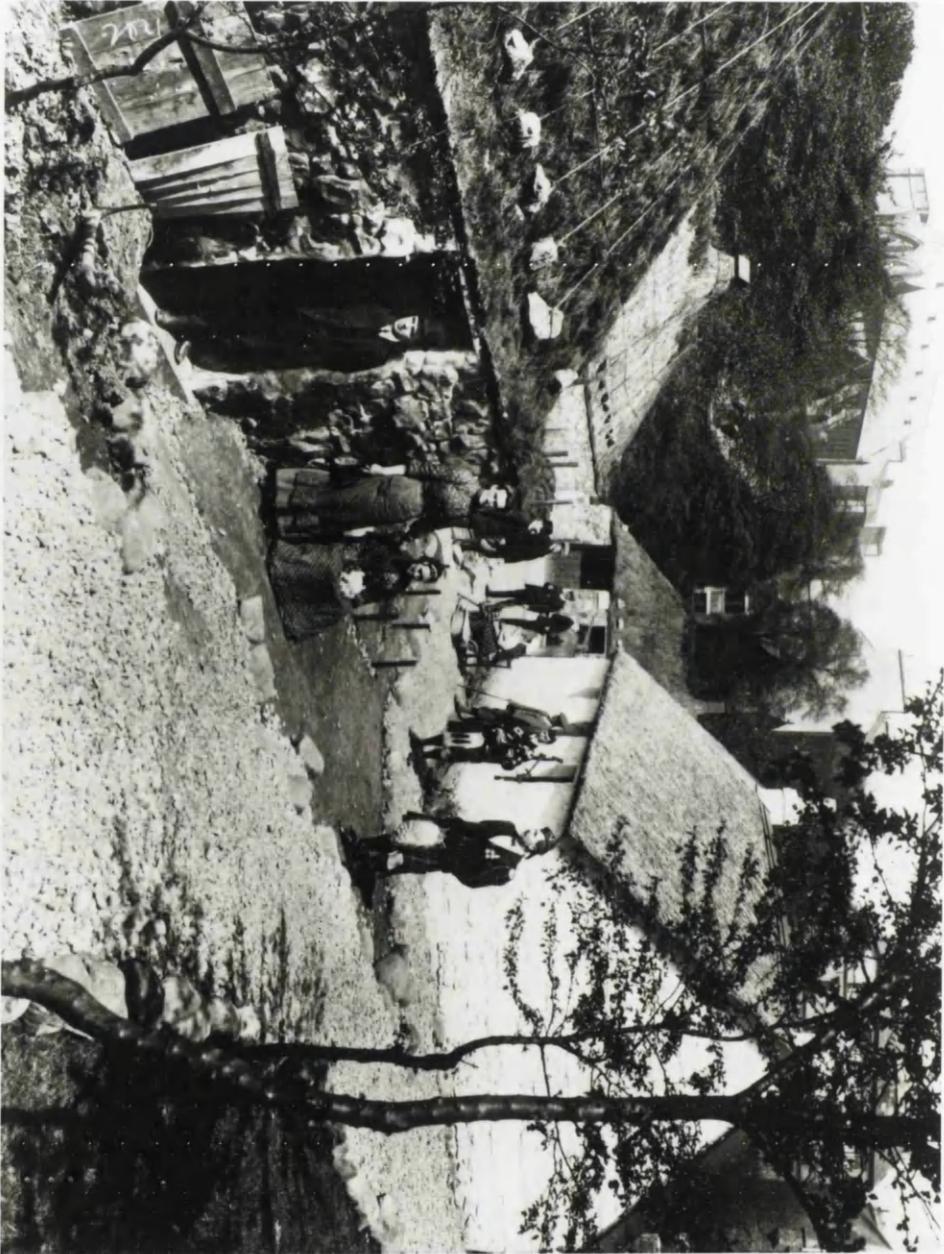
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## Frontispiece



The Clachan,  
Scottish Exhibition of National History, Art and Industry,  
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## **Abstract**

This study investigates the cultural scene in Scotland in the period from the 1880s to 1939. The project focuses on the effects in Scotland of the development of the new media of film and wireless. It addresses question as to what changes, over the first decades of the twentieth century, these two revolutionary forms of public technology effect on the established entertainment system in Scotland and on the Scottish experience of culture.

The study presents a broad view of the cultural scene in Scotland over the period: discusses contemporary politics; considers established and new theatrical activity; examines the development of a film culture; and investigates the expansion of broadcast wireless and its influence on indigenous theatre. The study argues that it was the interaction of these media which created a modern culture in Scotland.

The examination of the Scottish scene acts as a distillation of general trends in the cultural life of Britain as a whole: the expansion of the industries of popular culture; the rise of repertory theatre; the influential role of amateur performers and the contribution of the Left as cultural sponsor and producer are all part of the Scottish experience.

The underlying aesthetic project of the period is identified as one which the state increasingly calls its own: that is a cultural strategy which perceives itself to be educative and improving. The repertory theatres are part of this, as are the Film Societies and the institutions of the British Film Institute and the Scottish Film Council. In developing an ethos of public service, the paradigmatic cultural institution of the period is, however, the BBC, whose role are regional as well as national broadcaster is acknowledged in this thesis.

The key shift that this study highlights, however, is the active participation of the state in some of the nation's major artistic and cultural projects. The effects of the perceived cultural mission of artists, producers and state, and the developments of industry, technology and the arts generally are drawn together and discussed in the representative celebration of the 1938 Empire Exhibition: a distinctive and indeed final moment for the aesthetic, cultural and social projects of the preceding period and one in which the state participates as both exhibitor and arts sponsor.

Of parallel importance is the active role increasingly adopted by the audience. Political debate combines with new theatre activity and the development of new and accessible technologies to create an environment in which the audience emerges as a powerful player in the media system.

At the end of the period the social importance of the arts has been acknowledged and the culture industries are poised to be legitimised by state sponsorship and subsidy.

**Media Culture for a Modern Nation?  
Theatre, Cinema and Radio  
in Early Twentieth-Century Scotland**

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The Clachan -- Scottish Exhibition of National History, Art and Industry, 1911

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## Introduction

It is a significant moment ... when culture ceases to be the privilege and prerogative of the cultivation of *private* individuals and begins to be a matter for which the state takes public responsibility.<sup>1</sup>

This thesis deals with just such a moment in the political and social experience of British and, more particularly, Scottish culture -- and indeed resets the 'moment' as an ongoing process.

The twentieth century sees the greater centralisation of the industries of the entertainment environment and the shift from an unregulated, market-based economy towards an arts environment that encompasses a sector less immediately dependent on financial profit and one which increasingly comes under the influence of the state. The paradigmatic cultural institution of the interwar period is the BBC which within five years of its founding evolved as a public corporation and from that point developed as a core producer at the very centre of the hegemonic practices of the contemporary state. Film had begun as a fully independent provider of entertainment yet by the outbreak of war in 1939, the cultural worth of this medium of mass entertainment had been ratified by the establishment of the the state-sponsored agencies of the British Film Institute and the Scottish Film Council. Throughout the period, development in the production context of theatre also laid the foundations for the institutional developments to be made under the auspices of the Council for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts (CEMA) from 1941. As Stuart Hall points out in his essay 'Popular Culture and the State,' 'The twentieth century, it is often argued, has seen the growth of the all-encompassing state, from the cradle to the grave.'<sup>2</sup> The influence is equally to be charted in the cultural life of the nation.

The current project will focus on the effects in Scotland of the development of the new media of film and wireless and will question what changes these two revolutionary forms of 'public technology'<sup>3</sup> were to effect on the established entertainment system in Scotland and on the Scottish experience of culture over the first decades of the twentieth century.

The study will present a broad view of the cultural scene in Scotland over the period. It will consider new and established theatrical activity, the mainstream theatre industry, popular entertainments and theatrical experiments; it will discuss the politics of the period, the role of nationalism and socialism, important backdrops to Scotland's

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<sup>1</sup>Stuart Hall, 'Popular Culture and the State,' *Popular Culture and Social Relations* eds Tony Bennett, Colin Mercer, and Janet Woollacott (Milton Keynes: Open U P, 1986): 27.

<sup>2</sup>Hall: 26.

<sup>3</sup>Raymond Williams, *Television: Technology and Cultural Form* (1974. Glasgow: Fontana, 1979): 32-33.

cultural life. This will be balanced against the pre-existing experience of the theatres and the music halls of the late-Victorian period which maintained a mutually complimentary system of entertainment industries. (The intervention of film in the form of its most influential social use, cinema, altered this cultural model. Over the first years of the new century a renewed system, encompassing cinema, reasserted itself but then the introduction of domestic radio changed the experience of entertainment and the very nature of 'public technology' through its essential domesticity.) The underlying aesthetic project of the period will be isolated as one which the state increasingly calls its own, that is a cultural strategy which perceives itself to be educative and improving. The effects of it and the developments of industry, technology and arts activity in general will be drawn together and discussed in the representative celebration of the 1938 Empire Exhibition -- a distinctive, and indeed final, moment for the aesthetic, cultural and social projects of the preceding period and one in which the state participated as both exhibitor and arts sponsor. Indeed, one of the major shifts that this study will highlight is the active participation of the state in some of the nation's major artistic and cultural projects.

For Scotland this same period encompasses the Scottish literary renaissance. Although the political context of the renaissance period will provide an important framework, the literary tradition and debates fall outwith the scope of the current study. Nevertheless, reference will be made to the cultural and political journals loosely associated with the movement, in order to present a socio-political context for the study's main interest in the period's new media and its cultural institutions. The theatre and media environment described in this thesis gives only a partial view of a wider and essentially interconnected view of culture which could also take account of print journalism within the rise of the popular press, the development of a rhetoric of film language within the expansion of cinema, new ideas in psychology, philosophy and science; all part of society's expanding experience of culture during the period.

This study focuses on a period between which two different ideologies of culture were dominant. The period from the late 1880s saw the shift from the *laissez-faire* policies of Victorian capitalism and Whiggish Liberalism, to the period of the planned economy and the rise of the Left as a viable Parliamentary force (~~this despite the disasters of the MacDonald leadership in the 1920s~~). In terms of culture, the politics of individualism, of a capitalist, market-led economy with the state deferring interest to the arts producers gives way to a view of the collective experience of society and the state's explicit declaration of interest and investment in the social and culture activities of the community and the nation. The arts practices of the Victorian Age were transformed across the period into the beginnings of an arts policy. Through the intervention of the independent theatres and their broadly Left ideologies the established theatre of the

Victorian period was reinterpreted as inadequate and static. Through the expansion of this new form of theatre (in the form of the expansion of repertory theatres) the point is reached where these 'dangerous' and 'challenging' forms of drama have become part of the establishment infrastructure of arts activity in Britain. The Left's sphere of influence extends beyond the areas of social and cultural activity (workers' education, Fabianism, Clarion, Kino) into the area of active political activity and parliamentary politics. By the end of the period the point is reached where the two elements of culture and politics converge as the state is set to invest directly in the formation of the nation's cultural identity. This being a massive sea-change in the course of some forty or fifty years.

This also reveals something of a paradox in the role of culture in the British context. Loosely coincident with the period of study is the rise of Modernism as a new aesthetic and social force. While this study will not engage directly with the debates and the ideologies of Modernism, the underlying processes of modernity -- the role of new technology, new politics and the re-creation of the role of the state -- will be seen to influence cultural activity and debate. It is, however, interesting to isolate one element of the modern that the British state reacts to suppress. Modernism is a fragmented aesthetic. Neither limiting nor prescriptive of meaning it encourages diversity and the proliferation of meanings.

This thesis describes the expansion of points of access for arts producers: new theatres (in many cases distinct from the economic and cultural hegemony of the London theatre); a film culture inclusive of production and experimentation consciously outwith the dominant entertainment ethos; and broadcast wireless (a pro-active participant in the recovery of local, non-metropolitan culture). Nevertheless media expansion -- a symptom of modernity -- does not necessarily point to the successful intervention of the politics of Modernism. Underlying much of the arts and entertainments activity that this thesis describes is a shift, not towards the multiplication and diversification of meaning, but towards the *contraction* of the apparatus of control. With the growth of modern media and the industrialisation and commercialisation of the arts, access to points of production are more closely monitored. Increasingly the state is the agent through which meaning is controlled, produced and constructed. The Empire Exhibition refracts particularly well the expanding scope of the state's interests in the social and cultural life of the nation. Although it is always problematic to have the state reinterpret culture and its meanings (this resetting culture as propaganda) the activation of the state to the importance of culture in the social well-being of the nation is, perhaps, to be welcomed. The government involvement with culture may bring with it state subsidy and sponsorship which, independently administered can free the arts producer from the imperialism of the market and greatly expand the reach of arts

activity and the depth of its content. The foundations for this were also established during the early part of the twentieth century.

Until the 1980s this was the pre-eminent trend in arts policy in Britain: the move away from a purely market-led capitalist economy towards one somewhat outwith the dominant discourse of entertainment, wherein the cultural activity which the market can independently support is complimented by another sector of arts provision that is often supported (directly or indirectly) by the state. The first decades of the twentieth century lay the foundations for this new sector. In this complimentary category, culture is transformed both socially and politically as new producers and new agencies emerge which strip away the financial elements of the production equation and concentrate instead on reception, on the active participation of or effect upon the audience. While this liberation from the market-place may allow audiences a wider exposure to and experience of different arts products and cultural forms, in its implementation it also encourages the greater involvement of the state in the life of its citizens. The active role adopted by the state in terms of the arts in the course of the twentieth century affects in complex ways the role of culture in the contemporary society.

## **Part one: Contexts**

## The Scottish Scene: Political Context

The nineteenth century had given birth to two great movements which challenged the old order: socialism and nationalism. In Britain as a whole and in Scotland in particular, it was socialism which became the major channel for those who wanted to challenge the established order. For various reasons it was in opposition to the other major approach, that of nationalism and thus, while socialism was dominant, nationalism had little chance. Nevertheless, [after World War I] the new nationalist movement was, like socialism and the working class movement generally, an attempt to challenge the existing social order. In this it was quite different to the pre-war Home Rule movement, which did not challenge the basic social order but rather requested a modification of it in order to re-establish Scottish control of Scottish affairs.<sup>1</sup>

Throughout the modern period the very nature of art, of culture, is interrogated by artists and by audiences. In the modern world nothing is a 'given' -- neither the role of the arts producer, nor the identity of the text, let alone a definition of the canon, the nature of the audience and the reading process, the context of the production. Political, aesthetic and technological discourses do not just merge and interconnect but take part in a complex and ongoing debate which contributes to the fundamental fluidity of the cultural context.

This study begins, therefore, with a consideration of the various contexts, fashions and movements which influence the culture, institutions and representations of the period. This chapter begins the project by focusing on the political history that helps shape the period. If, as will be argued, the state was increasingly active in the provision of the nation's culture, with the institutions and the products of the cultural industries being subsumed into the infrastructure of the state, then the politics of the period must be put in place as formative of the attitudes of contemporary society as well as influential to the nature of the cultural products themselves. The consequent measured politicisation of culture, implicating the state as sponsor and producer, is shaped by the political debates of the time. In Scotland the added dimension of nationalism, and debates around national identity, complicates the role of the indigenous cultural producer, potentially caught between different understandings of the use of culture. The political background to the period provides a useful backdrop for cultural questions. This chapter's concentration on politics and history will be tempered in the next by presenting some of the cultural debates and experiences current within the Scottish scene. As something of an appendix to the political history, however, this chapter will conclude with a look at some aspects of the way history has been used in the cultural life of Scotland. The role of tradition and the representations

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<sup>1</sup>Jack Brand, *The National Movement in Scotland* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978): 26-27.

of the past will be seen as constants in the developing cultural life of the nation which this thesis presents.

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At the start of the period the dominant political party and political ideology in Scotland was Liberalism. Commenting on the Edwardian period of the twentieth century C W Hill notes that:

Except for the 'khaki election' of September 1900, held in the jingoistic atmosphere engendered by the outbreak of the Boer War, the Liberals consistently won a majority of Scottish seats, whatever the results of the general election as a whole.<sup>2</sup>

Indeed Liberalism went further than that. As James G Kellas notes, in his study of Modern Scotland, the ideologies of that political party appealed to the improving discourses within Scottish culture as a whole:

In general, the pre-1914 Liberal tended to equate his picture of Scottish values with the ideals espoused by the Liberal Party. ... These values included the belief in democratic institutions (however qualified in practice), in the career open to talents, and in the duty of every man [sic] to make his own way in the world unaided and unhampered by privilege. In large measure, this was also the Liberal creed, and as long as such myths were powerful in Scotland the Liberal Party was secure there.<sup>3</sup>

The trends and the politics which affected the Liberals in Britain as a whole are thrown into relief in the so-called peripheral areas of Ireland and Scotland. One of the most problematic and influential of the political discourses during the latter decades of the nineteenth century and on into the twentieth century was indeed nationalism. T C Smout goes so far as to suggest that:

By the 1880s, the anger and frustration of the Celtic areas was presenting, especially in Ireland, a threat to the very existence of the Union.<sup>4</sup>

Smout draws attention to the importance of Ireland, and, by extension, the Irish Question. Clearly the area with the greatest interest in nationalism, and where it achieved greatest influence during this period, was indeed, Ireland. There again the

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<sup>2</sup>C W Hill, *Edwardian Scotland* (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic Press, 1976): 68-69.

<sup>3</sup>James G Kellas, *Modern Scotland* (revised edition of a 1968 volume) (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1980): 132-133. Kellas also quotes the phrase 'I am a Liberal because I am a Scotchman,' from A Reid, in a 1885 publication, *Why I am a Liberal*. Kellas: 132.

<sup>4</sup>T C Smout, *A Century of the Scottish People: 1830-1950* (1986. London: Fontana Press, 1987): 74.

Liberals were a powerful force. The development of both cultural and political nationalism in Ireland affected Scotland in both positive and reductive ways. Culturally, the achievements of the Celtic Revival, and in terms of the drama the Irish Literary Theatre, were regularly held up as models for the Scottish artistic scene. The militancy of the Irish MPs, their nation's political ambitions and periodic and increasing violence did keep debates about nationalism (independence and home rule) current issues. However, it also served to scare British governments away from the rising demands for home rule in Scotland from the 1880s, as well as alert potential support for such devolution of power to the dangers of nationalism. The active campaigning and agitation of the Irish also attracted attention towards them and deferred the point when Scottish nationalism would top the agenda.

The growth of political nationalism in Scotland in the late 1920s and again from the late 1960s, might suggest that it is only at particular historical moments that national identity becomes galvanised into 'meaningfulness'. National identity is, however, a constantly loaded set of discourses, images and myths.<sup>5</sup> Despite this it is less often the case that politics will find a use and a role for these to play -- other than that of the sentimental which, while clearly relevant, is easily containable within the imposed cultural values which, for instance, have Scotland as land of nostalgia (be it for lochs and glens, fey young maids and the rural idyll, or the equally lost industrial myths of Red Clydeside, manual labour and strong but nurturing mothers). The nationalism of the interwar period was supported and inspired by the cultural debates around the literary renaissance. Equally, the cultural experience of the time was influenced by the political experience of the Nationalists. It is only when the two areas of political action and debate and cultural practice and experimentation come together that national identity shifts from 'meaningfulness' into 'usefulness'. In his study of *The Growth of Nationalism in Scotland*, Keith Webb writes that:

In the past the Scottish identity and the British identity coexisted; they rarely conflicted because each was seen as being applicable to different areas of life, and politics was generally seen in a British [and just as importantly an Imperial] context. The maintenance of the Scottish sense of national identity through so many years of union with England may be attributed to a number of factors, not the least of which is that some of the central institutions of the Scottish state persisted after the Union. Further, since the middle of the nineteenth century there has been considerable institutional growth and the administrative devolution to Scotland, even though there also existed strong centralising tendencies. This has meant that within the political framework of the United Kingdom a specifically Scottish interest has been delineated, partly

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<sup>5</sup>The nature and the meaning of national identity as a point of political debate has been discussed by Anthony D Smith in his book *National Identity* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1991).

because such developments have acted to stimulate and focus national consciousness.<sup>6</sup>

According to Tom Nairn, this has been the experience of the Scottish bourgeoisie within the union. It is the Scottish civil society which sponsors, empowers and maintains the balance of Scottish institutions within the British context.<sup>7</sup> It may then be possible to argue that Scotland's modern politicians have likewise been so absorbed by Westminster, so attracted by the positions of power available within a unionist system that in career terms the Scottish card is only one to play with caution.

At the start of the period the political leader most open to a nationalist set of ideas, to some kind of home rule scheme for Britain was the Liberal William Ewart Gladstone. During the Midlothian campaign of 1880 his support for home rule was declared to be based on the amount of business that Parliament handled might be better devolved to the regions.<sup>8</sup> The plan, while Federalist in essence, is also suggestive of effective local government:

We have got an overweighted Parliament ... and, if we can make arrangements under which Ireland, Scotland, Wales and portions of England can deal with questions of local and special interest to themselves more efficiently than Parliament now can, that, I say, will be the attainment of great national good.<sup>9</sup>

Gladstone's host and guide during this first and successful campaign was the fifth Earl of Rosebery.<sup>10</sup> With this position of influence with Gladstone,<sup>11</sup> Rosebery 'immediately began his agitation for a separate [government] department to deal with Scottish affairs.'<sup>12</sup> Indeed, it was under the subsequent premiership of Gladstone that a Scottish Under-Secretary for Home Affairs was established. The first, appointed in 1881, was Rosebery. Although he resigned in 1883, frustrated with his limited amount

<sup>6</sup>Keith Webb, *The Growth of Nationalism in Scotland* (Glasgow: Molendinar, 1977): 8.

<sup>7</sup>See Tom Nairn, 'Scotland and Europe,' *The Break-Up of Britain: Crisis and Neo-Nationalism* (1977. London: Verso, 1981): 92-125.

<sup>8</sup>Gladstone and the Liberals had been in opposition between 1874 and 1880, but the crisis in the Balkans and the 'Bulgarian Atrocities' of 1876 returned him to centre stage and in direct opposition to Benjamin Disraeli. Gladstone decided to contest the seat for Midlothian, a Tory stronghold. Generally the great legislators of the period campaigned and spoke only from Parliament. In 1880 Gladstone stirred the public's imagination by electioneering in person in the Scottish constituency and by addressing large public meetings. The result was personal victory for Gladstone and the return to power of a Liberal Government.

<sup>9</sup>Quoted by Reginald Coupland, *Welsh and Scottish Nationalism* (London: Collins, 1954): 297; and by Michael Keating and David Bleiman, *Labour and Scottish Nationalism* (London: Macmillan, 1979): 30-31.

<sup>10</sup>Archibald Philip Primrose was the fifth Earl of Rosebery and went on to become Prime Minister, holding office between March 1894 and June 1895.

<sup>11</sup>Christopher Harvie describes Rosebery as Gladstone's 'plutocratic lieutenant.' Harvie, 'Before the Breakthrough, 1886-1922,' *Forward! Labour Politics in Scotland: 1888-1988* eds Ian Donnachie, Christopher Harvie and Ian S Woods (Edinburgh: Polygon, 1989): 8.

<sup>12</sup>Hill, *Edwardian Scotland*: 69.

of power and influence, he was able to suggest the need for a ministerial post for Scotland with a full cabinet portfolio. The post of Secretary for Scotland was established by Lord Salisbury's government in 1885, with the Duke of Richmond and Gordon as the first minister.<sup>13</sup> However, this first Secretary was not a supporter of the actual need for the post:

You know my opinion of the office, and that it is quite unnecessary, but the Country and Parliament think otherwise -- and the office has been created, and someone must fill it.<sup>14</sup>

H J Hanham's study of *Scottish Nationalism*<sup>15</sup> questions why a Scottish Secretariat was successfully achieved in 1885 and describes the rise of groups like the Convention of Royal Burghs, the Faculty of Advocates and the more active involvement in British and Scottish politics by MPs elected after the Reform Act of 1832, which from the middle of the nineteenth century increasingly encouraged the greater involvement of Scots and Scottish institutions in the running of domestic affairs.<sup>16</sup> It had been perceived that Scottish institutions were being subjected to processes of Anglicisation and public opinion was keen for tangible government reaction. The creation of the Scottish Office may also be seen as confirmation of the success of the Scotch Education Department from 1872. This was not a government body but operated as a board of appointed members. It developed to be Church dominated. The power devolved to this system did encourage the active involvement of local authorities and education reformers in Scotland -- successes achieved included the establishment of the Higher Leaving Certificate in 1888. In such a context Hanham can suggest, therefore, that the successful creation of the post of Secretary for Scotland in 1885 was '... more the result of steady political pressure from within the establishment than of nationalist agitation from outside.'<sup>17</sup>

By February 1886 Gladstone had been returned to power now 'fully converted to Home Rule for both Ireland and Scotland.'<sup>18</sup> In his new cabinet he appointed Sir

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<sup>13</sup>However, as Kellas notes, although given a seat in cabinet the post of Secretary of Scotland was not a full cabinet one until 1892. Indeed it was not until 1926 that the post was for the Secretary of State for Scotland. Kellas: 93.

<sup>14</sup>Quoted by H J Hanham, 'The Creation of the Scottish Office, 1891-87,' *Judicial Review* (1965): 229.

<sup>15</sup>H J Hanham, *Scottish Nationalism* (London: Faber and Faber, 1969).

<sup>16</sup>See Hanham, *Scottish Nationalism*: 54-55.

<sup>17</sup>Hanham, *Scottish Nationalism*: 82.

<sup>18</sup>Webb: 38. It was really during this Gladstone's second ministry of 1880-1885 -- after he had declared himself in favour of home rule -- that the Irish demands for legislation became a pressing problem. Gladstone's first ministry of 1868-1874 had been marked by some enlightened Irish legislation, that is the Irish Church Bill (1869) and the Land Act (1870) -- but these measures were badly received in Ireland where the goal was already seen to be at least home rule.

One of the factors that revealed the immediacy of the problem for Gladstone was the rise of Charles Stewart Parnell (1846-1891) who had been elected to Westminster in 1875. Harvie refers to

George Treveyan to the Scottish post. This resulted in new developments in the experience of politics in Scotland: the problem was that Treveyan was an Englishman.

The indignation felt by many of the Scottish MPs at Gladstone's snub, influenced by the rise of nationalist sentiment developed by figures like Rosebery, the Burghs and to an extent the unions, resulted in the founding in 1886 the Scottish Home Rule Association (SHRA).

The traditional view sees nationalism in the nineteenth century emerging out of the development of capitalism, where it was the social chasms created by early industrialisation and by the unevenness of its diffusion which made nationalism acute. Those social chasms were probably no worse than those which agrarian society tolerates without undue concern but they were no longer softened and legitimised by longevity and custom, and they occurred in a context which in other ways encouraged hope and the expectation of equality, and which required mobility. Whenever cultural differences seemed to mark off these chasms then trouble was almost inevitable. When this failed to happen, little changed. Nations, ethnic groups were not nationalist when states were formed in fairly stable agrarian systems. The Marxist dilemma in this is articulated by Ernest Gellner in his study of *Nations and Nationalism*:

Classes, however oppressed and exploited, did not overturn the political system when they could not define themselves 'ethnically'. Only when a nation becomes a class, a visible and unequally distributed category in an otherwise mobile system, did it become politically conscious and activist. Only when a class happened to be (more or less) a 'nation' did it turn from being a class-in-itself into a class-for-itself, or a nation-for-itself.<sup>19</sup>

Gellner concludes that: 'Neither nations nor classes seem to be political catalysts: only nation-class or class-nation are such.'<sup>20</sup>

The point at which this transformation occurred in Scottish history is, perhaps debatable, but an important point of social and cultural change is in the aftermath of the 'Forty-five. The quelling of the Jacobites had resulted in draconian measures against

Max Weber's analysis of the emergence of nationalism and the importance of the 'charismatic leader' in the formation of a suitable climate of opinion and political infrastructure. He notes the centrality of Parnell in the move towards home rule and independence in Ireland, in particular his ability to unite the diverse groups of society (peasantry, landowners, Church, intellectuals, local and national politicians) towards the one common goal. The framework of support was strong enough to survive his fall in 1890. Scotland never produced a similar infrastructure partly because it never produced the structurally important leader; but then the social structure of Scotland was never faced with the problems of a dissatisfied and disenfranchised peasantry. See Harvie, *No Gods and Precious Few Heroes: Scotland Since 1914* (Volume 8 of *The New History of Scotland*). (1981. London: Edward Arnold, 1987): 114

<sup>19</sup>Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988): 121.

<sup>20</sup>Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism*: 121. Thus Scotland is depicted by the Scottish Nationalist Party as second citizens within the union. (One SNP election slogan ran 'Rich Scots, not poor Britons.') It is about a mobilisation of the economic and often cultural imperial suppression.

Scots and their indigenous cultures but nevertheless parts of Scotland became one of the first areas not just in Britain but in the world to modernise. This proved a double-edged sword. Industrialisation did produce employment, housing and a degree of security for many: for some it produced great wealth and a lifestyle of leisure. Equally, this could result in unemployment, misery, urban squalor and disease. These same conditions, however, gave rise to working class organisations which proved to be a particularly important element in the spread of socialism and in some areas nationalism.

By the late nineteenth century, Scottish culture had already gained an uneasy position between self-imposed anglicising destruction and assertive renaissance, a land of Burns Suppers, cultural colonialism and books on etiquette which carefully listed 'Scotticisms. Words and Phrases to be avoided.' Scotland was a country with more respect for religion than the English, perhaps a little too much respect. The period confirmed and recreated Scotland as a land with a distinctive legal, religious and political culture. This was the cultural baggage which Scotland brought to the romantic European view of a nation as a cultural community with its own land area, language, customs and history, which originated in the nineteenth century.

... Three general directions do emerge. The first two are contradictory. In this period, Scotland reasserted and recreated a national identity. It was the period in which North Britain disappeared from the map and Scotland returned for good. At the same time anglicisation was powerful and insistent. This contradiction can be resolved by the third and most important of the general observations. Scotland was part of a series of much larger economic and social processes which interacted with the national resources, cultural, social and economic, which Scottish people brought into the nineteenth century.<sup>21</sup>

On the one hand, Scotland as partner in an Empire building, capitalist economy; on the other, flirting with the political and cultural aspects of its 'Scottish' national identity. The nationalist movements of the period were almost all caught in this tension. Indeed it was not until the debates around the Scottish renaissance began actively and with political edge to interrogate the idea of 'Scottishness' that clear social and political agendas were set out that might be termed Nationalist, in the sense of separatism and the break up of the United Kingdom. In *Albyn, or Scotland and the Future* Hugh MacDiarmid (writing as C M Grieve) comments on the role of the Scottish Renaissance within a general process of anglicisation:

All these movements [literary renaissance, Gaelic revival and political interest in nationalism] ... represent so many antitheses of the tendencies which have dominated Scotland since the Union and have conjointly driven it so far along the road to Anglicization. They are asserting

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<sup>21</sup>R J Morris, 'Scotland, 1830-1914: The Making of a Nation within a Nation,' *People and Society in Scotland: volume 2: 1830-1914* eds W Hamish Fraser and R J Morris (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1990): 3-4.

themselves and have arrested the tendency to assimilate Scotland to English standards just when it seemed on the point of complete success. Lost ground is being rapidly recovered; efforts are being made once more to create distinctively Scottish literature comparable in artistic quality and tendentious force to the contemporary output of other European countries, and to regain the independent cultural position of Scotland in Europe; efforts are being made to create a Scottish national drama and Scottish national music -- both of which Scotland alone of European countries entirely lacks, mainly because of Calvinistic repression -- and all these efforts are achieving a measure of success. Scottish genius is being liberated from its Genevan prison-house. But the centralisation of British arts and affairs in London is still restricting it in ways that can only be redressed by that re-orientation of facilities which would follow the re-establishment of an independent Scottish Parliament, or, in the event of a return to the system of Provinces, a federation of assemblies. The movement cannot manifest its full stature and move freely, save within that framework of a Scotland become once again a nation in every sense of the term for which it has been designed.<sup>22</sup>

Industrialisation also resulted in another manifestation of the power of national identity and nation-hood -- empire building. Glasgow, for instance, flourished economically as one of the major British centres of trade with the empires of India and Africa -- just as it had once done through trading with the first British empire -- the American colonies. Fundamentally, the economic and political chaos of World War I greatly accelerated the assimilation of Scottish institutions and enhanced the power of British agencies. The economic upheavals it caused brought an end to the relative prosperity the nation had enjoyed in the Imperial economy. William Ferguson comments:

... in the 1914 the Scottish economy was a reality, but by the 1920s the phrase, while still in use, could be taken to mean a depressed sector of a none-too-robust British economy.<sup>23</sup>

Though Scotland is not easily accommodated into traditional views of the development of nationalism -- it is still subject to nationalist sentiment and increasingly under attack by alternative economies and alternative cultures to the point that it might now fit more convincingly into theories of nationalism like Michael Hechter's theory of internal colonialism.<sup>24</sup>

Hechter's interpretation of nationalism is based on the economic model of nineteenth-century capitalism and imperial expansion. His notion of 'internal

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<sup>22</sup>C M Grieve, *Albyn, or Scotland and the Future* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner, 1927): 14-15.

<sup>23</sup>William Ferguson, *Scotland: 1689 to the Present*; quoted by Harvie, *Scotland and Nationalism*: 43.

<sup>24</sup>See Michael Hechter, *Internal Colonialism: The Celtic Fringe in British National Development: 1536-1966* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975).

colonialism', while reaching widespread acceptance has been found historically and materially blinkered by Gwyn A Williams in his essay 'When Was Wales?'<sup>25</sup>

At the centre of Hechter's model is a basic core/periphery structure. A state, it is proposed, will divide into a core and a periphery (or series of peripheries) which, in general, will produce a less prosperous, and certainly less powerful, periphery. Hechter argues that certain peripheries will have a relation to the (financially and culturally dominant) core similar to that experienced by the colonies within an imperial manifestation of capitalism. Such a model is applied to the 'Celtic fringe' of Britain, suggesting that, economically and culturally, they function as 'internal colonies' on the periphery of the metropolitan country. Critics like Williams increasingly find this to be an overly simplistic structure.

Acknowledging the academic appeal of 'the currently fashionable concept of internal colonialism,'<sup>26</sup> Williams develops a clear argument against the schematic and restricted basis he attributes to the theory. His argument is clear:

The thesis locates explanation in the extension of a market and the transfer of a surplus from satellite to metropolis with all the relations of production, social relations, ideological, intellectual and spiritual forms which follow. It is very often perceptive in terms of its analyses of the social and psychological consequences of the rapid advance of capitalism over the globe; ... but in truth it derives from Adam Smith rather than Marx, it misses the centrality of the mode of production in all its social complexity. It singles out one element only, the market, from that mode of production, which embodies the transformation of human attributes and human creations into commodities in the complex class relations which derive from that process; it mishandles the central reality of uneven development and it therefore often reads consequences as causes.<sup>27</sup>

Williams makes a strong case for the role of Wales as part of the imperial core of British industrial and capital development. A similar view may be developed of Scottish industrial development. Within the British economy there develop areas of financial investments and industrial growth, areas of neglect and decay. This clearly results in great profits for some but poverty and urban squalor and rural recession for other sectors of society. However, as Williams notes, 'This is par for the course for capitalism.'<sup>28</sup> Industrial Wales and Scotland are both equal players in the colonial game. Williams argues that they belong, not to the locus of the exploited colonies, but to the imperial core. That some areas of these two countries did not share in the profits

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<sup>25</sup>Gwyn A Williams, 'When Was Wales?' *The Welsh in Their History* (1982. London: Croom Helm: 1985): 189-201.

<sup>26</sup>Williams, 'When was Wales?' *The Welsh in their History*: 196.

<sup>27</sup>Williams, 'When was Wales?' *The Welsh in their History*: 196.

<sup>28</sup>Williams, 'When was Wales?' *The Welsh in their History*: 197.

of industrialisation and expansionism reveals that it is more 'the contradictions of an imperial capitalism we are dealing with, not those of one of its satellites.'<sup>29</sup>

The problem for the peripheral (and potential) nation was that within the operations of the state it was (in fact or in perception) treated, not as an equal partner, an integrated co-member but as one of a number of colonial off-shoots (a kind of wholly owned subsidiary, with little or no autonomy). Williams is perhaps correct. This is an experience of capitalism at work; and Scottish business was quite as enthusiastic a supporter of colonial and economic expansion as any other sector.

The second element, it is argued, that contributes to the region or potential state as internal colony is a cultural distinctiveness from the metropolitan community, a factor which the various Scottish cultural groups have been keen to stress and exploit. While Scotland may have been economically and politically tied into the British state, socially and culturally it may be perceived to be quite distinctive. (Perhaps the very existence and endurance of the Scottish civil society points to the truth of this.)

Hechter's model for the phenomenon of internal colonialism is particularly problematic in its application to Scotland, which clearly existed as a strong, and indeed rich, economy when modern nationalism was initially expressed in the 1880s. Now, while one might be more successful in making a case for contemporary Scotland having achieved the dubious status of the internal colony, the Scotland of the late-nineteenth century was in a very different economic position, and so does not easily fit into Hechter's model. Part of the difficulty -- in terms of economics -- has to be around the 'cultural division of labor.'<sup>30</sup> In a colonial model the colony must manifestly have lower status and must be dependent on the coloniser for skills, the colony supplying only the less skilled or manual labour force:

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<sup>29</sup>Williams, 'When was Wales?' *The Welsh in their History*: 197. Nationalist movements, as Nairn acknowledges, are often based on 'the grotesquely uneven nature of capitalist development.' 'Old and New Scottish Nationalism,' *The Break-Up of Britain*: 128.

<sup>30</sup>Hechter, *Internal Colonialism*: 9, 38-41. Hechter introduces the term in terms of economic advantage and exclusion:

The features of this model [the internal colonial model] may be sketched briefly. The spatially uneven wave of modernization over state territory creates relatively advanced and less advanced groups. As a consequence of this initial fortuitous advantage, there is crystallization of the unequal distribution of resources and power between the two groups. The superordinant group, or core, seeks to stabilize and monopolize its advantages through policies aiming at the institutionalization of the existing stratification system. It attempts to regulate the allocation of social roles such that those roles commonly defined as having high prestige are reserved for its members. Conversely, individuals from the less advanced group are denied access to these roles. This stratification system, which may be termed a cultural division of labor, contributes to the development of distinctive ethnic identification in the two groups.

Hechter, *Internal Colonialism*: 9.

Whereas the core is characterized by a diversified industrial structure, the pattern of development in the periphery is dependent, and complimentary to that in the core.<sup>31</sup>

The economic results of this include a commodity dependence and the centralised, metropolitan control of banks and of capital.

Can nineteenth-century Scotland in any ways fit these criteria? As part of the British state Scotland was an international industrial centre (at the forefront of heavy industries like ship building and engineering) and maintained its own banking system. In addition to this the terms of the Act of Union of 1707, but maintained more through the traditions of the indigenous civil society than the legal power of the Act, protected the institutions of Scottish education, law and Church. In a discussion of the 'Arguments within Scottish Marxism,' George Kerevan discusses the role of the Scottish civil society and concludes that:

The result of the Union [of the Parliaments] was unique: to leave Scottish civil society autonomous of English civil society. Scotland retained her educational system, law, church, independent bourgeoisie. And therefore through retaining her independent civil society Scotland created her modern-day nationalism.<sup>32</sup>

In some social and cultural ways, and despite the suppression of society after the 'Forty-five, the Act of Union protects Scotland as an administrative unit in a way impossible, say, for the administrative structure of Wales. Having attained, and to some extent, maintained such a degree of institutional autonomy there is also created a potential basis for the development of a segmental cultural division of labour. In Scotland's case this has led to a problem particularly around the nature and the function of the bourgeoisie. On the one hand 'selling out' to English middle-class culture (Tom Nairn develops this perspective); on the other dependent on the maintenance of cultural distinctiveness for the sake of the culturally loaded careers of the civil society -- in the law, education, the Church and perhaps also the media (in particular, the press). The problem for nationalists is that the 'Englishing' of Scotland becomes both an economic and a cultural one -- and one not easily dismissed by chauvinism and prejudice.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>31</sup>Hechter, *Internal Colonialism*: 9.

<sup>32</sup>George Kerevan, 'Arguments within Scottish Marxism,' *Bulletin of Scottish Politics* 1.2 (1981): 131.

<sup>33</sup>As Kellas point out that most traditional of careers for the Scottish bourgeoisie -- the law -- is closed to all but the keenest of English students of law wishing to or able to undertake study of Scots law. Kellas: 29-33. He also notes that this works in reverse, as Scots lawyers are unqualified to practise in the English system -- outwith the restricted areas of commercial and parliamentary work. He concludes that, 'On the whole, lawyers in Scotland seem least affected by the 'brain drain' which draws many of the best educated Scotsmen [sic] away from Scotland.' Kellas: 32.

In Scotland for most of the two centuries since the Union the myth of the stolen parliament merely masked the obvious fact that the Union was functioning with the consent, co-operation and generally speaking the enthusiasm of the Scottish people. Post-Union Scotland was pervaded by a cultural dialectic which gradually gave its society a character of rich and baffling complexity. Harvie offers the following model:

At one pole were the formal national institutions -- a civil society which was geographically and recognisably Scottish. At the other the shared experience of industrial and imperial development.<sup>34</sup>

Harvie argues against the result as being a 'British experience.' However, this model is amorphous, even 'protean.'<sup>35</sup> Harvie considers:

The main historical phases of the state of Scottish society. Between 1707 and 1830 -- the age of 'semi-independence' -- these were reasonably precise. Likewise after about 1920, when economic reversal and the literary revival introduced, for the first time, the categories of orthodox nationalism. The problem is the near-century during which industrialisation and liberalism, unassisted by any adequate historical interpretation, let alone a nationalist one, created a social structure and the functional politics of modern Scotland. But of all three periods it could be said that, for a complex and variable range of reasons, Unionist Scotland remained as distinct from assimilation as it did from nationalism.<sup>36</sup>

While this at least leaves the door open for nationalism to develop, a clear question, and one which both Harvie and Nairn pose, is just why Scotland developed no orthodox national intelligentsia? And this despite the distinctive education system:

Conscious of the dual nature of the Scots intellect, torn between cosmopolitan opportunism and demotic roots which that opportunism has cheapened into nostalgia, is directly relevant to the current political upheavals, for it has been largely since the war that it has been rationally appraised, a process which has involved inverting the usual approaches to the intellectual history of nationalism. ...

Most nationalist intelligentsias see themselves as the servants of the national geist. They do not court metropolitan recognition.... The Scots have, by contrast, an ambiguous relationship to metropolitan culture: a desire to dominate it in the only way open to a provincial -- by understanding and mastering its ideology -- and an enduring suspicion that this path might, after all, be blocked by a socially-selective clique.... The enduring characteristic of the Scottish intellect since the reformation has been cultural insecurity at one pole or the other. The remedy has traditionally lain in the energy and acumen of individuals, and the openness of the national institutions to intellectual innovation --

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<sup>34</sup>Harvie, *Scotland and Nationalism: Scottish Society and Politics: 1707-1977* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1977): 61.

<sup>35</sup>Harvie, *Scotland and Nationalism*: 61.

<sup>36</sup>Harvie, *Scotland and Nationalism*: 62.

often in the teeth of opposition from those who see their role in classic nationalist terms. The significance of the present crisis is that it has occurred at both poles: political nationalism in Scotland has coincided with the intellectual and political atrophy of the British elite.<sup>37</sup>

Faced with an intelligentsia traditionally trying to maintain relationships with all (internal and external) groups and cornered by economic devastation and the ineptitude or total lack of their own representations the working class have been left high and dry. What were the myths and cultural roles available for them? Harvie finds that the working class were using nationalism is a distinctive and ultimately productive way:

[The Scottish working class] were responding to old loyalties and the old songs. Fletcher's prophesy -- that ballads and not laws make a nation -- seemed to be coming true.<sup>38</sup>

Within Scotland the active politicised culture has shifted. In the 1920s nationalism was articulated predominantly through the forms of high culture -- in particular using the novel and the poem. At the time of the next great revival of nationalism -- co-incident with the discovery of North Sea oil -- it was the input of the 'folk', the working class, the 'popular' that led the way. Throughout the twentieth century, however, history and the past provide Scottish artists with the forms, narratives and images with which to work.

Culture, however, remains elusive and problematic: the desire remains to place cultural nationalism within a wider context which includes the political and the economic. National identity may be strong in Scotland but it is only occasionally galvanised into political action. Scottish political nationalism has never been the culturally motivated phenomenon that empowered Irish nationalism. In materialist terms nationalism within Scotland requires economic input, it requires the input of the intelligentsia and the working class. The point where these factors meet is culture; in representations of Scotland and in the institutions which maintain it. The two elements of nationalism and socialism are not incompatible within Scotland because they are historically fused within an experience of the twentieth century and thus in new aspects of national identity. Indeed, neither of these ideologies are hermetically sealed nor in their social use discrete.

In the early decades of the twentieth century, then, the example of the Irish nationalist experience was, perhaps, the most influential of the emergent nation states on the nationalist and Home Rule movements within Scotland. Ireland seemed to show the way, not just in the actual political sphere but also in relation to culture and the use

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<sup>37</sup>Harvie, *Scotland and Nationalism*: 122-23. See also Nairn, 'Scotland and Europe,' *The Break-Up of Britain*: 92-125

<sup>38</sup>Harvie, *Scotland and Nationalism*: 232.

of culture and art products within the development of a Nationalist movement. However, in terms of the Scottish experience, Harvie considers that:

Scottish Home Rule was carried along in the slipstream of Irish home rule: it did not have its own motive power.<sup>39</sup>

The success of nationalism (in Scotland focusing on the establishment of a home rule movement) in the 1880s was the success of Liberalism and the desire to maintain the Union. Even if the carrot of a devolved Scottish parliament was never granted, the nationalists within the Liberal Party could point to the achievement of the creation of the Scottish Office. In such a climate the emergence of the SHRA is an understandable step, and one containable in the context of Liberalism -- although prior to the outbreak of war in 1914 the home rule movement drew widespread support from Labour supporters, as well as organisations like the Convention of Royal Burghs and the Scottish Trade Union Congress (STUC).<sup>40</sup> However, the all-party SHRA was in effect a predominantly Liberal organisation and really more of a lobbying and pressure group, although with a somewhat radical edge. Early members included mainstream Scottish Liberals as well as Gavin B Clark, the Crofters' MP for Caithness, one of its first vice-chairs (Clark had been elected as one of five Crofters' MPs in 1885, was on the committee of the Scottish Labour Party (SLP) and also became the first president of the renewed Highland Land League formed in 1909 by Tom Johnston), with Robert Bontine Cunninghame-Graham as secretary (originally Liberal, co-founder of the SLP in 1888, and later to become a prominent Nationalist, in 1928 the first president of the National Party of Scotland). Other notable members of the SHRA include Ramsay MacDonald (who had been secretary of the London branch) and Keir Hardie -- another co-founder of the SLP.<sup>41</sup> Hanham concludes that '... although the Scottish Home Rule Association had right-wing Liberal officers in Edinburgh, its branches were associated with Radicalism and Labour.'<sup>42</sup> Labour members were increasingly active in the campaign for home rule. In the 1888 Mid-Lanark by-election campaign Hardie -- standing as an independent labour candidate -- said:

I am strongly in favour of Home Rule being convinced that until we have a Parliament of our own, we cannot obtain the many and great

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<sup>39</sup>Harvie, *Scotland and Nationalism*: 35.

<sup>40</sup>Brand: 25-26; Kellas: 92.

<sup>41</sup>The Scottish Labour Party merged with the Independent Labour Party (ILP) -- itself founded by Hardie in Bradford in 1883 -- in 1893. The ILP was subsequently affiliated to the Labour Party. In 1932, however, the ILP under James Maxton left the Labour Party.

<sup>42</sup>Hanham, *Scottish Nationalism*: 93-94.

reforms on which I believe the people of Scotland have set their hearts.<sup>43</sup>

The broad appeal of the movement for some kind of home rule legislation is clear: varying degrees of interest in the issues were expressed by Liberals, by Independent Labour Party (ILP) members and by Labour members -- or more precisely by Scottish ILP and Labour supporters. Gordon Brown in his biography of James Maxton goes further: 'From the beginning Labour in Scotland had been committed to the creation of a Scottish Parliament.'<sup>44</sup>

However, the various calls for home rule in the pre-war period are focused by the conversion of one political party, the Liberals, to home rule -- a conversion that was never really the commitment that would have produced a devolved Scottish Parliament at least before a solution to the Irish Question might be found. The pre-war home rulers were focused around the Liberal party in groups such as the SHRA. However, if the Liberal party had been as committed to legislation as they (particularly the Gladstonian Liberals) sometimes suggested then such pressure groups would not have been required and policy might have become law.

By the end of the 1890s, however, the SHRA was spent as an active pressure group and was in decline -- although it survived in some form until 1914. In spite of the fears raised by the increasing Nationalism of Ireland the SHRA had achieved a degree of success -- if either of the main parliamentary political parties was to deliver legislation for home rule it was the Liberals, and the SHRA had effectively converted all those willing to support such a policy. The radical wing of the Liberals were mobilised by both the decline in the active politics of the SHRA and the need to keep Scottish home rule on the agenda and not eclipsed by the campaign in Ireland. The Young Scots Society (YSS) was formed in 1900 as response to 'the snail's pace of the advance towards Home Rule'<sup>45</sup> and in reaction to the Boer War and issues raised by that conflict.

The Boer War was a moment of crisis for the Liberal Party which divided into three disagreeing groupings. One of the factions is described by Hill as 'the Pro-Boers or Little Englanders, who represented the Gladstonian tradition of distrust of imperialism.'<sup>46</sup> This group included the Montrose MP John Morely and David Lloyd George. The opposing view was held by Rosebery's group of 'Liberal Imperialists.'<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>43</sup>Quoted by Brand: 41-42. Although in the by-election Hardie won only 617 votes the clear message was that independent working class activity had entered the world of Scottish parliamentary politics. Indeed as a direct result of the campaign the SLP was formed in Glasgow on 19 May 1888. See Harvie, 'Before the Breakthrough, 1886-1922': 7-29.

<sup>44</sup>Gordon Brown, *Maxton* (Glasgow: Fontana, 1988): 159.

<sup>45</sup>Hanham, *Scottish Nationalism*: 95.

<sup>46</sup>Hill, *Edwardian Scotland*: 72.

<sup>47</sup>Hill, *Edwardian Scotland*: 72.

Caught between the two were the majority of Liberal Members under the leadership of the member for Stirling, Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman. Such a split was indicative of the increasing impossibility of maintaining the Liberals as a convincing party of government or of potential government. The YSS were supporters of the Boers, but also campaigners for free speech and home rulers. Like the SHRA they were successful as part of the larger Liberal party -- but were keen to stress their identity as 'Scots'. Writing in one of the political magazines of the period, the *Thistle*, sub-titled *A Scottish Patriotic Magazine* and published between 1909 and 1918, T D Wanliss comments on 'The Young Scots Society and Home Rule':

It is true to say that the Young Scots Society places Home Rule for Scotland in a prominent part of its programme, but that means practically nothing, so long as it allows its policy to be guided by the Scottish wing of the English Liberal Party. Let the facts be plainly looked at, and the futility of expecting any decided action in favour of Scottish Home Rule from the English Liberal Party is obvious. Go back and take note of the action of Mr Gladstone how he humbugged his faithful Scottish followers, and led them on from one delusion to another, but all the while carefully avoiding doing anything to relieve Scotland from its degrading position of being simply a political annex to England. Then consider the subserviency and indeed servility of the English Liberal party to the Irish party then and now. What enables the Irish party to dominate English Liberalism? Simply their unanimity as a purely Irish party, and their determination to stand aloof as an Irish party from British politics, and to act and work only to secure Home Rule for Ireland.<sup>48</sup>

Other members of the YSS were later even more prominent in nationalist groups, in particular Roland Eugene Muirhead and Tom Gibson. (It was Muirhead, a member of the ILP, who re-formed the SHRA in 1918.<sup>49</sup>) However, as Hanham notes, most of its leaders had entered parliament in 1906 and this Liberal youth group became more containable as part of the parliamentary party. The YSS, the Scottish Liberal Association and members of the Liberal Parliamentary Party came together in 1912 to form the Scottish Home Rule Council, the most successful of the early Liberal nationalist groups. This success is pointed to by Webb who charts the consistent support for home rule up to the Great War, noting that it was the 1913 Home Rule Bill that came closest to success:

Between 1889 and 1914 Scottish home rule, in a variety of guises, was debated fifteen times in Parliament, including the introduction of four bills. In 1913 a Home Rule Bill passed the second reading. In every case after 1893 when home rule was debated a majority of the Scottish

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<sup>48</sup>T D Wanliss, 'The Young Scots Society and Home Rule.' *Thistle* 1.16 (1909): 244-45.

<sup>49</sup>Brand points out that Hugh MacDiarmid was one of the earliest recruits of this group. Brand: 97; Smout, *A Century of the Scottish People*: 273.

Members voting were in favour. In the 1913 debate on the second reading there were forty-five Scottish members for the bill and only eight against.<sup>50</sup>

Indeed had it not been for the war Webb, Brand and Hanham agree that a form of home rule for Scotland would have become a legislative fact, if not immediately after the 1913 Bill, then certainly before the new decade. Events of 1914, however, acted as a violent end to the domestic policies and politics of the peace. The experience of war was for Britain one of unification and not one in which the fundamentally separatist discourses of Scottish or Irish home rule and nationalism had a role to play; hence the violent reaction to the 1916 Easter Rising.

The Great War was a period of immense change in the British political scene. The Liberal party's failure first of all in David Lloyd George's 'Coupon Election' of 1918 and then in the post-War election and on into the 1920s all-but shifted home rule off the agenda. Equally the powerful interest groups (which included establishment figures like Rosebery, and organisations like the STUC) that had previously supported the campaign were no longer committed; no party took up the 1913 bill, and the new home rule bills, presented by members of the Labour Party in the middle of the 1920s fell. The parties capable of forming a government were (at least theoretically) not those of nationalism. With the rise of the socialists as a Parliamentary force, politics were increasingly organised not on national but on class lines. In the pre-War era political lines had tended to be drawn along Liberal-Tory lines -- and one of the constant areas of difference was on the policy of home rule supported by the Liberals as opposed to the unionist stance of the Tories. After the War economic and industrial decline, as well as the impact of European politics, helped to shift the political focus on to a class-based analysis of society, and the dominant parties emerged as the Tories representing the interests of capital, business and management and the Labour party (supported by the trade unions) representing the workers and the unemployed. Despite this some prominent Scottish Labour members were keen to work for some kind of devolution of power away from Westminster.

One of the most popular, if not influential, of communist figures in Scotland during this period was John Maclean, who left the British Socialist Party arguing for a Republic of Scotland -- at a point when the Communist policy was still that the worker belongs to a class and not a nation. However, Maclean's nationalism while articulated as part of a class analysis, is essentially a romantic desire for 'a kind of primitive Celtic communism'<sup>51</sup> and is closely related to James Connolly's project for Ireland at the 1916 Dublin Uprising. Maclean's argument is clearly stated in a 1922 election speech:

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<sup>50</sup>Webb: 40.

<sup>51</sup>Brand: 44.

Scotland's wisest policy is to declare for a Republic in Scotland so that the youth of Scotland will not be forced out to die for England's markets. I accordingly stand out as a Scottish Republican candidate feeling sure that, if Scotland had to elect a parliament to sit in Scotland it would vote for a working class Parliament ... The Social Revolution is possible sooner in Scotland than in England. The working class policy ought to be to break up the Empire to avert war and to enable the workers to triumph in every country and colony. Scottish separation is part of the process of England's imperial disintegration and is a help toward the ultimate triumph of the workers of the world.<sup>52</sup>

In Scotland a number of groups continued to press for different versions of such political change. Among them the Scots National League (SNL) founded in May 1903 with 'One Straight Issue: 'Scotland for the Scots'.<sup>53</sup> In the magazine *The Scottish Patriot* the aims of the group are set out:<sup>54</sup>

[The Scottish National League] will test the question as to whether there is a national spirit in the country capable of solid work, or whether it is only vapour signifying nothing. To talk of Scottish nationality is not sufficient. There must be some solid outcome, and the Scottish National League ... will bring this question into the first rank, or to use the present day phrase will make it form a part of 'practical politics.'

The first object of the League is -- *To secure proper attention to Scottish interests on the part of Scottish representatives to the British Parliament.* ... We have every sympathy with Irish aspirations for liberty, but there may be too much even of a good thing, and if millions are to be thrown away upon Ireland in freeing the land, we do not see why some of the crumbs should not fall to the Highland crofters who are more deserving and just as much in need of help as the Irish tenant.

... The second object of the League is -- *when necessary to bring forward national candidates for Scottish constituencies.* ...

The third and last object of the league is -- *to agitate for and demand the establishment of a Scottish Parliament for the efficient conduct of Scottish affairs.* ...

It must be self-evident to every well-regulated mind that separation or repeal of the Union is the last argument to be used, and could only be used when every other attempt at local legislation had failed. With good representative local parliaments, attending to the peculiar local needs and requirements of each division of the Empire, instead for a wish for separation there is no doubt whatever but that a strong bond of union would be formed ....

... this movement which we believe is really increasing at the present time, to get first of all a Parliament for Scotland to manage entirely its own affairs without interfering in those of the United Kingdom, and afterwards to get Federal Home Rule for every section of the British Empire, a bright day would open up on this country which would herald the time that would make it the envy of all nations.<sup>55</sup>

<sup>52</sup>John Maclean election address of 1922; quoted by Brand: 45.

<sup>53</sup>See John Wilson, 'One Straight Issue: 'Scotland for the Scots': The Programme of the Scottish National League.' *Scottish Patriot* 18 (1904): 82-83.

<sup>54</sup>No author attributed but likely to be John Wilson editor of the journal.

<sup>55</sup>Wilson, 'One Straight Issue: 'Scotland for the Scots' ....' *Scottish Patriot* 18 (1904): 82-83.

This final defense of Empire and the fundamental support of the Union is typical of the broad interpretation contemporary politics made of nationalism.<sup>56</sup> It is a policy that is not part of the programme of the SNL founded (or re-established) during 1921 by, among others, Erskine of Marr.<sup>57</sup> The policy differences between the SNL and those of the supporters of a more mainstream home rule programme<sup>58</sup> was graphically laid out in a 1921 edition of the SNL's magazine *Liberty*:

THE SCOTS NATIONAL LEAGUE  
DECLARES -- That Scotland was  
a nation.

THEY STATE -- That the so-  
called Union was brought about  
by 'force and fraud.'

THEY ADMIT -- That the result  
has been disastrous,

AND THAT THEREFORE -- A  
change is needed.

AND ALSO -- That the Scottish  
people need educating on the  
subject

IN ORDER THAT -- They may  
call a National Assembly and  
resume the use of their  
sovereign power in a manner at  
once dignified and worthy of  
their race and history.

SCOTTISH HOME RULERS  
DECLARE -- That Scotland was  
a nation.

THEY STATE -- That the Union  
was brought about by 'force  
and fraud.'

THEY ADMIT -- That the results  
have not been satisfactory,

AND THAT THEREFORE -- A  
change is needed.

AND ALSO -- That the people of  
Scotland must be educated on  
the subject

IN ORDER THAT -- They may  
send 72 men to the Westminster  
Parliament to ask for Home  
Rule whereby they perpetuate  
the above fraud as well as show  
themselves ignorant of simple  
arithmetic and modern political  
history.<sup>59</sup>

The SNL, this somewhat more determined Nationalist organisation, was founded by supporters of the Highland Land League,<sup>60</sup> including William Gillies and Angus Clark, both political separatists, and Thomas H Gibson. The SNL and its magazines, including *Liberty*, the *Monthly Intelligencer* and the *Scots Independent* are the most colourful of the various nationalist organisations of the interwar period -- although, as Brand points out<sup>61</sup> the latter journal -- the *Scots Independent* -- was more concerned with internal economics and socio-political analyses than the previous publications' interests in social and cultural matters. This, however, is closely linked to the League's development towards what might be termed 'practical politics,'<sup>62</sup> actual involvement

<sup>56</sup>Indeed this has been something of an ongoing use of nationalism in Scotland. Kellas notes that even with the formation of the Scottish National Party in 1934, 'Almost every shade of political opinion was represented, from communist to ultra-Conservative.' Kellas: 146.

<sup>57</sup>Hanham, *Scottish Nationalism*: 142.

<sup>58</sup>Noted by Brand: 24.

<sup>59</sup>'Where we Differ.' *Liberty* 2.6 (1921): 93.

<sup>60</sup>Brand comments on the parallels and links between the Highland Land League, the SNL and the Irish experience. Brand: 183-188.

<sup>61</sup>Brand: 184.

<sup>62</sup>Wilson, 'One Straight Issue: 'Scotland for the Scots' ....' *Scottish Patriot* 18 (1904): 82.

with elections, and away from the traditional but essentially nineteenth-century role of nationalists to promote the folk cultures, indigenous languages and land rights. In a pamphlet of 1923 Gillies, as Vice-President of the SNL, declares:

We repudiate the Union, its nomenclature, its commitments, its implications, and, as resolved on Bannockburn Day, 1922, the Scots National League works solely for:

The resumption by Scotland of her rightful sovereign independence in conjunction with the establishment of Scottish Democratic institutions.

We seek, therefore, the co-operation of every patriot, every democrat, every social reformer.

We shall not rest until the mandate of the majority of the Scottish people has been publicly affirmed in favour of those aspirations for freedom which they fondly nourish in their hearts, and the Rightful Sovereign Independence of our country is re-affirmed and re-established on the soil of our own land!<sup>63</sup>

By 1925 the SNL had taken the decision to enter parliamentary politics, and to field candidates in elections:

the policy of the Scots National League is, by means of the existing electoral activity, to obtain a majority of Scottish representatives pledged to remain on Scottish soil and to resume the powers of Government in Scotland and that National candidates independent of all political parties be put forward at the next General Election.<sup>64</sup>

The other notable figure associated with the SNL was Erskine of Marr. He was particularly interested in Gaelic culture and established a number of magazines (one appearing between 1909 and 1925 was *Guth na Bliadhna: the Voice of the Year*) concerned to promote both Gaelic culture and his essentially romantic belief in an independent Gaelic-speaking Catholic Scotland.<sup>65</sup> With the emphasis he placed on language and the Celtic cultural heritage it is easy to argue for the influence of the Irish situation and the Celtic Revival in general on Erskine of Marr.

One of the last journals which Erskine of Marr edited was the magazine *Pictish Review*.<sup>66</sup> Published between 1927 and 1928, a major contributor to this literary magazine was Hugh MacDiarmid. MacDiarmid, writing under his own name of Christopher Murray Grieve, contributes to the very first edition of the publication and

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<sup>63</sup>William Gillies, *Some Arguments for Scottish Independence* (Edinburgh: Scots National League, 1923): 11.

<sup>64</sup>Resolved at the SNL Annual Conference 19 June 1925; quoted by Brand: 187.

<sup>65</sup>As Brand points out, 'Sentiments like these were not likely to find wide support among ordinary Gaels who were overwhelmingly Protestant.' Brand: 184.

<sup>66</sup>Erskine of Marr, although still a committed nationalist, was not an enthusiast of the increasing order imposed upon the movement after the founding of the National Party of Scotland in 1928. He distanced himself from it and in 1930 retired to live much of the rest of his life in the south of France. He died in 1960. See Hanham, *Scottish Nationalism*: 136-145.

identifies the two tendencies of the nationalist debate -- the political and the cultural -- but sees the whole as a complex and inter-related experience of the nation that would reach its best potential by working in unity:

An effort is at last being made to establish a united front in Scottish arts and affairs .... In Scotland, as in every other country concerned with the maintenance and development or recovery of a national culture, it is becoming realised that sectionised interests are not only incapable of withstanding the great over-ruling tendency towards standardisation inherent in contemporary industrialisation, dependent in the last analysis on cosmopolitan finance, but that sectionising of interests is in itself merely an index of how far disintegration has already gone.... We have a whole series of isolated movements little related, and often antagonistic, to each other and making for nothing that is nationally synthetic. If all these dparateis organisations could be federated and imbued with a common policy, that would not only in no way depreciate the special activities and purposes of each, but would give them a new force and meaning. The aims and objects of An Comunn Gaid-Lealach, the Scottish Renaissance Group, the Scots National League, the Scottish Home Rule Association, the Burns Federation and Vernacular Circles, the St Andrew's and Caledonian Societies, are ultimately interdependent. They are part of a potential whole, viz. a reassertion of Scotland as a separate and sovereign entity -- just as they all represent parts of the shattered unity of the Scotland that used to be.<sup>67</sup>

As MacDiarmid suggests there existed a whole raft of cultural agencies and pressure groups giving support to issues of political nationalism and the role of Scottish culture in the modern world. The Burns Federation, in particular, was lobbying the Scottish Education Department to promote Scottish literature in education.<sup>68</sup> Now, while for MacDiarmid some of these groups were essentially nostalgic and culturally and politically corrupting, ignoring their common goals deferred the point at which such (desirable) aims might be achieved. For MacDiarmid the organic relationship between the political and the cultural was a clear one; for Compton Mackenzie less so. Writing in a subsequent edition of the *Pictish Review*, he disagrees with MacDiarmid:

The real question he [MacDiarmid] has raised in my mind is whether it will be wiser to concentrate all our passion upon political independence and let the renaissance of the arts take care of itself or whether it would be wiser to nourish the artistic renaissance and assume that it will fire us with the desire for political independence. After meditating for a month on Mr Grieve's words I have reached a conclusion in my own mind that the arts must take care of themselves and that every intelligent Scot,

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<sup>67</sup>C M Grieve, 'Towards a 'Scottish Idea'. *Pictish Review* 1.1 (1927): 1.

<sup>68</sup>Brand: 97. Brand quotes William Power, a leading figure in the SNP:

The main and immediate purpose of the vernacular movement is to ensure that every Scottish child shall be placed in possession of a key to the national treasure house of vernacular literature.

Brand: 97.

wherever he be, must devote himself practically to the cause of political independence.<sup>69</sup>

The impetus towards Nationalism within Scotland does have clear cultural and emotional aspects. However, the modern Nationalist politics of the 1920s was much more focused on the hard-edge economic strategy that a Nationalist solution might give to Scotland with an economy in recession and moving towards deep depression. In the new nationalism of the post-war period, the influence of the German experience of the politic use of the romantic and the folk culture and language issues, which so attracted figures like Blackie,<sup>70</sup> Wanliss and Erskine of Marr, were shed as 'antiquarian.'<sup>71</sup> The new nationalism was that of an industrial economy -- it was about 'modernisation'<sup>72</sup> and a 'secularising movement which works for the dissolution of traditional institutions that have functioned under the old order.'<sup>73</sup> Brand notes the economic appeal of the Nationalists:

The vote for nationalism was a vote to establish a modern prosperous society where there were problems of unemployment and industrial decay. ...

... [Brand] identifies Scottish nationalism as a modernising movement, not as an attempt to re-create a Scottish Golden Age but as a determination to work for a technologically advanced, prosperous, modern, small nation state. Traditions may be used for propaganda purposes but their preservation is not the heart of the nationalist appeal. ... The SNP appeals precisely because Scottish people are worried about unemployment and declining industry.<sup>74</sup>

The interwar period might then seem to offer a potentially successful period for the nationalists in Scotland -- a decade that needed firm economic management, offered new possibilities in the use and manufacture of technological advancements and was supported by a wide range of new representations and new texts from the writers that emerged as part of or related to the literary renaissance. However, although a determined voice calling for devolution of power and even political separation was still audible, such legislation was never part of the agenda of British politics in the 1920s and 1930s. The reasons for this are tied up in the very nature of the modern world experience: recession was a global phenomenon; markets in Europe and in North

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<sup>69</sup>Compton MacKenzie, 'Towards a Scottish Idea.' *Pictish Review* 1.4 (1928): 40.

<sup>70</sup>Professor John Stuart Blackie of Edinburgh University was '... the most fervent educational nationalist ... [who] also won a certain notoriety as a champion of Highland Celtic Culture against its English and Lowland detractors ... .' He was also the first chair of the SHRA. See Hanham, *Scottish Nationalism*: 40.

<sup>71</sup>Brand: 28.

<sup>72</sup>Brand: 31; referring to the definition described by Ernest Gellner.

<sup>73</sup>Brand: 31; referring to the definition described by Elie Kedourie.

<sup>74</sup>Brand: 23.

America and beyond were all suffering economic crises; expansion of the news media and the development of film and then broadcast technology brought the potential to read, hear and see news from everywhere to everyone and so revealed the interdependence of the countries of the world as had never before been acknowledged. Through the media the public were also able to chart the rise of the European dictators with an immediacy never before experienced.

Film of the Boer War (actual or staged<sup>75</sup>) and newsreels of the Great War had been both novel, popular and essential sources of information in previous years; but film was experienced in quite different ways in the 1900s and even in the 1910s to the way it existed in the next decades. Industrialisation confirmed the entertainment role of film (and this is reflected in the increasingly decadent architecture of cinemas in the period) but developments in cinematographic technology (light-weight, powered cameras and faster film stock, for instance) and in the increasing ease and speed of world travel assured a role for film as source of information. The vast number of cinemas and the attendance patterns of the public -- attending a film screening once or twice a week in some urban centres -- demanded a lot of factual film to be shot and processed both quickly and regularly. As well as this, however, the rise of wireless broadcasting brought news into the domestic environment potentially on the instant and so changed the whole way in which the 'world' and news events were meaningful to the public of the developed economies. Listeners to the BBC or audiences of Pathé newsreels could experience both the differences between cultures and the similarities of life during depression.

Nevertheless, it should be noted, the same technology and market forces also enabled and encouraged the depiction of the local on both wireless broadcasts and film screenings. However, it simply seemed that the concerns of the local were if not irrelevant then of less concern (or of a different type of interest) than were the global crises of the 1920s and 1930s. Brand describes 'a political climate' -- to which it might be added, 'a social climate' -- 'which inhibited, but could not prevent, the rise of nationalism in Scotland.'<sup>76</sup>

With the Parliamentary impossibility of legislation for the devolution of power, there was little institutional or organised political support of the increasing role of Scottish national identity articulated within the Scottish renaissance. In 1928, however,

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<sup>75</sup>Although it was certainly the case that some film companies produced and distributed films shot on location in South Africa, documenting actual events, this material was limited in amount and quality. Demand for such footage certainly outstripped supply and so was supplemented by film of military activity re-enacted for film cameras rather closer to home. Dennis Gifford, for instance, catalogues a 1900 film *Briton v. Boer* described as a film of 'Staged war scenes combined with actuality.' See Dennis Gifford, *The British Film Catalogue* (London: David and Charles, 1973): catalogue ref: 00272.

<sup>76</sup>Brand: 39.

the National Party of Scotland (NPS) was formed.<sup>77</sup> This was created by the joining forces of several small nationalist groups -- the Glasgow University Scottish National Association (GUSNA), the Scots National League, under the leadership of Erskine of Marr, the SHRA and the Scottish National Movement (SNM), a break away group of the SNL founded by the poet Lewis Spence in 1926. The key figures include John M MacCormick, Cunninghame-Graham and Muirhead, and Spence. The aims of the new group were political (in effect suggesting Dominion status for Scotland) but the prejudices of those involved, writers, students and politicians, were cultural as well. The aims of all the constituent groups had a cultural edge but perhaps the Spence's SNM has the clearest statement of intent:

1. The restoration of Scotland to her rightful place in the community of nations and her recognition as an independent state within the British Commonwealth.
2. The re-establishment of an independent national parliament sitting in Edinburgh.
3. Dissemination of propaganda regarding such questions of importance as the land, agriculture, afforestation and fisheries.
4. The revival of national sentiment, the study of Scottish history, the advancement of Scottish art, literature and music.
5. The preservation and restoration of the Scots language.<sup>78</sup>

The cultural element is also explicit in the wording of the first 1927 membership cards of the GUSNA:

To foster and maintain Scottish Nationalism by (1) securing self-government for Scotland and (2) advancing the ideals of Scottish culture within and without the University.<sup>79</sup>

The establishment of the NPS finally split and destroyed the traditional home rule campaigners. Until then the movement had been able to contain within it and call upon the support of members of the established political parties, in particular, from the end of the war members of the Labour party (like Tom Johnston and Rev James Barr, who had been a leading supporter of the SHRA<sup>80</sup>) and trade union members. MacCormick

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<sup>77</sup>Its inaugural meeting was held on 23 June 1928 in Stirling. See Hanham, *Scottish Nationalism*: 143. It is interesting to note that in 1930 the Nationalist Drama Club was established as a branch of the NPS. While this certainly points to the cultural dimension within political nationalism this new drama group is perhaps more usefully understood as symptomatic of the huge expansion of amateur theatre activity in Scotland in the period. The new group are reported to have J M Paterson's *Monthrow*, J S Ferguson's *The King of Morven* and John Brandane's *Rory Aforesaid* in rehearsal. See 'Talk of the Month.' *Scottish Stage* Dec. 1930: 108.

<sup>78</sup>A 1926 SNM pamphlet by Spence, *Freedom for Scotland: The Case for Scottish Self-Government*; quoted by Brand: 189-190.

<sup>79</sup>Recalled by John M MacCormick, *The Flag in the Wind: The Story of the National Movement in Scotland* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1955): 19.

<sup>80</sup>James Barr is the subject of the *Bailie's* 'Men You Know' column in 1922:

notes this as an early point of discussion in his involvement with nationalist politics. At a meeting -- called the National Convention -- held in the Highlanders' Institute, Glasgow, at the end of 1927, MacCormick, there as representative of the newly formed GUSNA, notes along with the SHRA, of which Muirhead was president, the presence of:

... about 100 delegates, mostly from trade union branches and ... half a dozen Labour M.Ps. headed by the Rev. James Barr. An organisation known as the Scottish National Movement was represented by the poet and journalist Lewis Spence, supported by Miss Wendy Wood. Another organisation, apparently of a more extreme character, called the Scots National League, was not officially represented but made its presence heard if not felt by angry interruptions from the public gallery.<sup>81</sup>

Although this meeting ended inconclusively, as Barr opposed a suggestion from Spence that a National Party should be formed, it did at least bring together the various nationalist groups operating in Scotland at that time. It was thereafter MacCormick and the GUSNA who took the initiative. In April 1928 the NPS was formed.<sup>82</sup> Members of the Labour Party could not also be members of the new NPS and so the latter lost its immediate and potentially sympathetic links with Parliament. This, however, only brought into the open the ongoing problems that had been more or less latent within the home rule movement since the war. The post-war 1918 version of the SHRA was not the Liberal organisation of the 1886 group. The new association was supported by Labour, co-operative societies and the trade unions. One of the founding members in 1918 was James Maxton, who along with the miners' leader Robert Smillie, was part of the SHRA's national committee.<sup>83</sup> It was still a pressure group, however, and not formally attached to any political party. As Keating and Bleiman note:

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[Barr] ... has been identified with the Scottish National progressive movement during the whole of his public life. Many years ago, when the Young Scots Society was in the hey-day of its efforts, Mr Barr was a frequent speaker at its meetings. Scottish Self-Government, Land Reform and Internationalism were amongst his favourite subjects. ... Towards the close of the war, a small group of men and women met together to consider the how Scotland as a nation could have its interests most effectively advanced, and so enable it to contribute its best to the world. As a result, towards the end of 1918, the Scottish Home Rule Association was formed for the purpose of the organising and focussing the Scottish peoples' demand for Self-Government, as it was felt that although the majority of Scottish members of Parliament had several times promised to obtain Home Rule for Scotland, they had so far miserably failed to do so. The Rev. James Barr was one of this small group of enthusiasts. He assisted to establish the Scottish Home Rule Association, and has since given increasing assistance to the Scottish National movement, especially by speaking at meetings and demonstrations.

'Men You Know.' *Bailie* 21 June 1922: 3.

<sup>81</sup>MacCormick, *The Flag in the Wind*: 21.

<sup>82</sup>Both MacCormick and Kellas give the date of formation as April 1928; Kellas: 145; MacCormick, *The Flag in the Wind*: 21.

<sup>83</sup>Brown, *Maxton*: 160.

The SHRA was, from the start, an alliance of two very different kinds of Home Ruler: on the one hand, Labour men, trade unionists and Co-operators, for whom Home Rule was part and parcel of Labour's advance; on the other, committed nationalists, for whom the alliance with the Labour movement was useful only to the extent that it served the national cause.<sup>84</sup>

This, as Hobsbawm comments in his review article on Nairn's *The Break-Up of Britain*, has been a continual theoretical and practical impasse for nationalists and socialists.<sup>85</sup> Such pragmatic politics had also been the experience of the earlier formation of the SHRA in the late nineteenth century; and the open (officially) non-aligned identity of the SHRA, with the potential for rallying all groups interested in aspects of nationalism and home rule, was something which the creation of the NPS sacrificed. Labour members put as much distance between themselves and the new NPS as possible. At the same time the policy of home rule still had a place in the manifesto of the Labour Party where it had featured since 1918. The Labour Government of 1929-1931 maintained an interest in the issues of nationalism, but with the creation of the NPS as a separate political party such a degree of support was, at least for a while, not as forthcoming. Keating and Bleiman note that:

The break-up of the old Home Rule coalition after the failure of the 1927 Bill heralded a progressively widening split between the forces of Scottish nationalism and the labour movement during the 1930s.<sup>86</sup>

1927 was also the year that MacDiarmid published *Albyn, or Scotland and the Future*. Here he acknowledges the existence and vitality of the Scottish Renaissance and its widespread effect on the whole of Scottish life. He also refers to the political climate and activities in Scotland:

The Scottish Home Rule Movement is re-orienting itself along realist lines, and has ceased to be mainly sentimental. For the first time it is looking before as well as after. It is concerning itself less with the past and more with the present and future, and its membership is growing in direct ratio to its increased practicality. Most significant of all is the fact that these developments are marked by an ascending claim. It is now generally realised that no form of devolution without fiscal autonomy will meet the case, and that merely constitutional means may not suffice. Bill after Bill, backed by four out of five of the Scottish representatives of all parties, has been thrown out by the overwhelming majority of English members. This is a state of affairs which will not be tolerated indefinitely. A premium is being put upon militant effort; and the fact that the Scots National League which is out for complete independence

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<sup>84</sup>Keating and Bleiman, *Labour and Scottish Nationalism*: 103.

<sup>85</sup>Eric Hobsbawm, 'Some Reflections On *The Break-Up of Britain*.' *New Left Review* 105 (1977): 3-23

<sup>86</sup>Keating and Bleiman, *Labour and Scottish Nationalism*: 109.

is now growing very much more rapidly than the moderate Scottish Home Rule Association is significant in this direction. At present the nationalist Press consists of two small monthly organs; and all the daily, and practically all the weekly, papers are anti-Home Rule, just as they are all anti-Socialist, although the Scottish Socialist vote represents a third of the Scottish electorate. Scottish journalism is, therefore, almost wholly untrustworthy in relation to Scottish opinion. Realistic nationalism and the majority elements of the Labour movement solely, or at all events, predominantly concerned with bread and butter politics, have naturally a great deal in common in the existing state of affairs, and it is not surprising that Scottish nationalism and Scottish Socialism should be making joint cause. Nor is the attitude of those Liberal and Conservative politicians who are opposing Scottish Home Rule, or modifying their interest in the subject, because it would probably mean a Scottish Socialist Government, failing to produce its own effects. Constitutionalism that fears and evades the will of the people signs its own death warrant.<sup>87</sup>

Into the 1930s the nationalists continued to organise and increasingly fielded more candidates at elections -- particularly after they came together in another amalgamation of the NPS and the Scottish Party (itself a 1932 splinter group of the Cathcart Conservative Association -- with the support of the Duke of Montrose and Andrew Dewar Gibb -- and the input of some Liberals including Sir Alexander MacEwen) as the Scottish National Party (SNP) a merger finalised on 7 April 1934. This merger confirmed 1930s Nationalism not as part of the loosely left-wing campaign of previous years when the cause had been supported by the radical Liberals and some members of the Labour party and the trade union movement but as a more introspective and bourgeois group. Keating and Bleiman observe that the establishment of the NPS was 'not an advance for Scottish nationalism, but a retreat.' They continue:

The foundation of the NPS was a result of the decline of nationalism in left-wing and radical circles and the despair felt by Roland Muirhead and other nationalists of getting any action on the subject from the Labour Party. In later years, Muirhead regretted the break-up of the Home Rule alliance of the 1920s and his own decision to work outside the Labour Party, but he was certainly right in his belief at the time that Home Rule was not to be attained through Labour.<sup>88</sup>

This had been confirmed by the failure of Barr's 1927 Home Rule Bill to make any impact in Parliament.

In terms of the close relationship between cultural practises and political activities in the 1930s certain individuals -- notably Hugh MacDiarmid -- remain prominent in the nationalist cause. More active, however, were the left groups who combined politics and culture (in its widest possible usage) in the areas of education, entertainment and

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<sup>87</sup>Grieve, *Albyn, or Scotland and the Future*: 8-10.

<sup>88</sup>Keating and Bleiman: 117.

political advancement. The Left activity which led to the formation of groups like the Clarion Scouts, the Clarion Choir, the Orpheus Choir, the Glasgow Workers' Theatre Group, Kino, had its roots in the broad view of culture and politics adopted by the ILP and the Communist Party (CP). As Gordon Brown notes:

With *Forward*, Sunday schools, youth clubs, cultural societies, and political activity, the ILP offered much more than simple politics. 'This romantic type of socialism almost became a religion in itself,' as Harry McShane recalled.<sup>89</sup>

Indeed, one of the cultural groups organised by the Left were the Socialist Sunday Schools. The Labour movement had always defined its role in at least two directions. Stephen G Jones identifies 'the political and industrial wings of the movement' and 'a recreational or cultural wing, which catered for all kinds of leisure interests.'<sup>90</sup> In the nineteenth century the two elements combined in the co-operative societies and the friendly societies. Jones notes that:

The Socialist League, the ILP and other political groupings, the trade unions, the Socialist Sunday Schools, and the Labour Churches all provided space and time for recreation as well as political expression, with the Clarion movement as the major forum for leisure provision, bringing recreation and Socialism together.<sup>91</sup>

By the 1930s other demands on leisure time had been introduced -- with cinema emerging as the main leisure activity of the period for the working class. Nevertheless:

In the 1920s and 1930s, social and cultural activity was a very important element in the local and national life of the Labour Movement, reflected in the proliferation of many Socialist agencies directly concerned with leisure -- Workers' Travel Association, Workers' Temperance League, British Workers' Sports Federation, National Workers' Sports Association, workers' theatre, film, photograph and music societies, Unemployed Associations, and many more. ... some of these agencies had been inherited from an earlier period -- the Clarion Cycling Club, for example, was rejuvenated in the 1930s -- ... the empirical evidence points to the inter-war years ... as Labour's cultural and leisure climacteric.<sup>92</sup>

The rise of the active Left is paralleled with the economic crisis of the slump years. The Scottish dependence on the infrastructure of heavy industry concentrated the effects of the depression in the industrialised central belt where most of the population lived.

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<sup>89</sup>Brown, *Maxton*: 49.

<sup>90</sup>Stephen G Jones, *Workers at Play: A Social and Economic History of Leisure: 1918-1939* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1986): 142.

<sup>91</sup>Jones, *Workers at Play*: 143.

<sup>92</sup>Jones, *Workers at Play*: 143.

The crisis in the economy was felt across the whole of the country, however, and was to be dealt with by centralist and interventionist economic management plans. In the 1930s a nationalist discourse was not generally used as the cutting edge solution to the economic and social problems of the day. The contemporary political strategy was to manage from the centre a planned *British* economy. While the end of the decade did see interest in political nationalism increase, again war cut off the potential for home rule.

A key figure in the Labour party who is also closely bound up with nationalism in the first half of the twentieth century is Tom Johnston. As co-founder (in 1906 along with Muirhead, who partly financed the venture) and editor of *Forward*<sup>93</sup> his popular influence as the leading Labour journalist of his time was complimented by his experience of government -- he had been the Under Secretary for Scotland in the 1929 Labour government<sup>94</sup> -- and, as has been mentioned, prominent in the home rule campaign. His interest continued throughout the 1930s (although he gave up editing *Forward* in 1933<sup>95</sup>) and came together in 1937 with the creation of the London Scots Self-Government Committee: a group which might offer a bridge between the debates around political Nationalism and the politicians and policies of 'Red Clydeside'.

In the modern period but before the formation of the NPS as an independent political party nationalism had existed as part of the manifesto or policy of the Liberals and the socialist groups. During the same period the socialists had become a highly organised and successful in Parliamentary politics. In the 1922 Labour representation in Parliament doubled from the previous election to 142 seats.<sup>96</sup> Scotland returned 29 Labour MPs, one Communist and another left-wing Prohibitionist member to Westminster.<sup>97</sup> Glasgow alone returned ten socialist MPs; ten out of a total of 15 constituencies.<sup>98</sup> It was the election which returned Johnston, James Maxton, Emanuel Shinwell, John Wheatley, Campbell Stephen, David Kirkwood, George Buchanan.<sup>99</sup> With the next election, in 1923, the Labour Party in Scotland consolidated its position.

[In Scotland] Labour won 34 of the 48 seats it contested .... Throughout Britain Labour gained 50 new Parliamentary seats ensuring, in all, a Labour Parliamentary Party of 192, to the Conservatives 258 and the Liberals 151. In Scotland, Labour's 34 seats were won with

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<sup>93</sup>*Forward* was described by George Bernard Shaw as 'the first paper worth a workman's [sic] tuppence.' See Douglas Young, 'A Sketch History of Scottish Nationalism,' *The Scottish Debate: Essays on Scottish Nationalism* ed. Neil MacCormick (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1970): 11.

<sup>94</sup>Johnston was later appointed as Secretary of State for Scotland in Churchill's World War II cabinet.

<sup>95</sup>See 'The Man You Know -- by 'The Bailie' -- Tom Johnston.' *Glasgow Weekly Herald* 1 June 1935. Article in bound collection of 'Men You Know' features (new series) held in the Glasgow Room, Mitchell Library, Glasgow (Ref. G920.04).

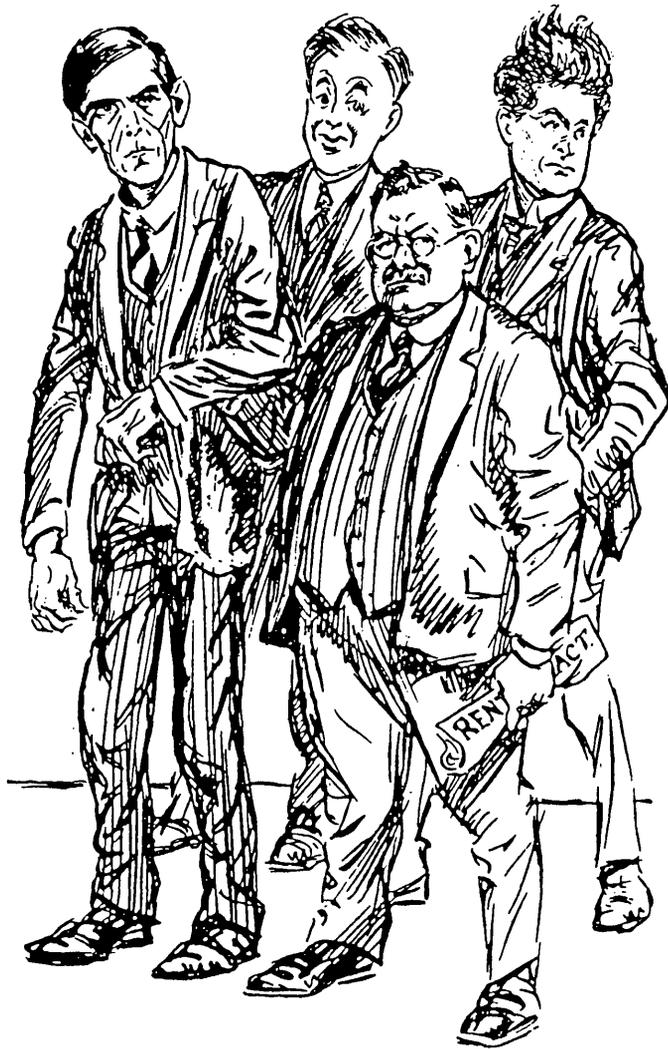
<sup>96</sup>Brown, *Maxton*: 11.

<sup>97</sup>Smout, *A Century of the Scottish People*: 259; Brown, *Maxton*: 120.

<sup>98</sup>Brown, *Maxton*: 11, 120.

<sup>99</sup>See Brown, *Maxton*: 11-17.

## Plate i



Caricature of James Maxton, George Buchanan,  
John Wheatley and Campbell Stephen.

(*Bailie*, 25 December 1923: 13)

36% of the vote, making Labour the most popular of the three parties in Scotland.<sup>100</sup>

In January 1924 Labour, under Ramsay MacDonald, was able to form a minority government -- and although of the 'Clydesiders' only Wheatley gained Cabinet office (as Secretary of State for Health), the Scottish Labour members were crucial to even the possibility of success. The central importance of the Scottish members might have allowed the possibility of home rule as a point of bargaining within the coalition government. Certainly the individual members were publicly committed to some form of devolution. Brown notes that, 'In both the 1922 and 1923 elections, almost every Scottish Labour candidate had personally pledged support for a devolution bill for Scotland.'<sup>101</sup> Indeed in May 1924 George Buchanan introduced a federalist home rule bill -- which despite government approval and some Liberal support was talked out by the Unionists. Some five months later -- on 9 October 1924 -- the Labour government was dissolved and in the ensuing election saw their representation in Westminster fall by 40 seats. With the return to office of the Conservatives home rule was again off the agenda. Internally the Labour Party fell into conflict.<sup>102</sup> Even at the polls this was reflected -- throughout the 1920s support in Scotland was maintained 'and only reversed by the cataclysm brought down upon the movement by [Ramsay] MacDonald's formation of the National Government in 1931.'<sup>103</sup> The conflict within the Labour movement -- within Parliament and without -- is paralleled with the 'deterioration in Labour's relation to the ILP,'<sup>104</sup> and lead to the 1932 disaffiliation of the ILP with the main party. Woods points out that, 'One reason why Labour in Scotland could not ignore Home Rule was the apparent strength of the ILP's support for it ....'<sup>105</sup> With just this one split within the Labour movement, the decrease in power of the ILP-Clydesiders and the consensus demanded by the National Government nationalism within the Labour Party was firmly off the agenda.

In the slump that marked the 1920s and 1930s both rural and industrial Scotland suffered much. In the course of the slump emigration added to the problems as the skilled, ambitious and healthy left Scotland in search of better prospects. Smout charts the pattern:

In the 1920s, out-migration became a flood, exceeding the natural increase of the country by 10 per cent, so that [the] Scottish population actually fell between 1921 and 1931. Emigration only declined in the

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<sup>100</sup>Brown, *Maxton*: 145.

<sup>101</sup>Brown, *Maxton*: 159.

<sup>102</sup>See Brown, *Maxton*: 169-246 (section 3).

<sup>103</sup>Ian S Wood, 'Hope Deferred: Labour in Scotland in the 1920s' *Donnachie, Harvie and Wood*: 31.

<sup>104</sup>Wood, 'Hope Deferred: Labour in Scotland in the 1920s': 39.

<sup>105</sup>Wood, 'Hope Deferred: Labour in Scotland in the 1920s': 37.

1930s because there were not many jobs left elsewhere in the world for Scots to go to.<sup>106</sup>

This might have contributed to the development of a radical or even a socialist-nationalist movement. The SNP, however, were increasingly the party of a bourgeois and staid nationalism; and Labour in Westminster was fighting other battles. The energy of nationalism as it had been experienced in society and culture generally was dissipated. Webb goes so far as to comment that 'Nationalism between the two World Wars existed only on the fringe of serious politics.'<sup>107</sup> Despite a greater centrality and influence in cultural and artistic matters (which Webb acknowledges<sup>108</sup>), it was not the nationalists but the politics, politicians, social policies and activities of the Left groups (Labour Party, ILP, Communists, trade unions as well as the cultural groups like Clarion, Kino and Workers' Theatre) which were to give shape to the 1930s. Despite the failure of the second Labour Government and their subsequent election failure in 1931,<sup>109</sup> the political grassroots of the Left did hold; and it was Left activists who were able most effectively to help society face the social and cultural needs of the 1930s.

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The decades from the 1880s until World War II are those in which a pattern for modern parliamentary politics was established. The period saw the demise of Liberalism as an effective force within British society. The Liberal/Tory divide is then replaced by a parliamentary system balanced between the politics of the Socialists (in the 1930s the Labour Party, the ILP and the CP) and the modern Conservative party. At the same time Nationalism, in the nineteenth century so closely tied to the Home Rule politics of the Liberals, emerged as an independent political, social and cultural force. In terms of parliamentary success, however, the power of the Nationalists was severely limited. Nevertheless, as a political issue nationalism was a major part of the policies of both the Liberals and, into the 1920s, for the Scottish Socialists as well. By 1934, when the

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<sup>106</sup>Smout, *A Century of the Scottish People*: 116.

<sup>107</sup>Webb: 46.

<sup>108</sup>Webb: 46-47. Nairn too notes the relative feebleness of the nationalists during this period, and comments that the:

... whole career [of the SNP] from the '20s to the '60s reproduces the 'split-personality' phenomenon *within the nationalist movement itself*. This took the shape ... of the chronic division between political and cultural wings of the movement -- a division far deeper and more irreconcilable, one should add at once, than the customary quarrels between idealists and 'practical men' which dog all nationalist parties.

Nairn, 'Old and New Scottish Nationalism,' *The Break-Up of Britain*: 175.

<sup>109</sup>Ian Donnachie gives some details:

The General Election of 1931 was an unmitigated disaster for Labour in Scotland, for despite gaining a third of the popular vote only seven candidates were elected, while National Government candidates almost swept the board with 64 MPs returned to Westminster.

Donnachie, 'Scottish Labour in the Depression: the 1930s': 54.

Scottish National Party was formed, and by which point Labour was established as a major parliamentary player, the model for modern political debate in Scotland was set. The shifts in policy and the complex negotiating within the Liberal, Nationalist and Left political parties and their factions which so marked the earlier decades tended to diminish. In the 1930s the general shape of modern Scottish politics was clearly established; although for some decades yet it was a pattern in which Nationalist politics as a viable electoral alternative was severely marginalised.<sup>110</sup>

The Left, coming to political and social maturity in the 1930s, was not the party of high and elite culture that aspects of Scottish nationalism overtly attracted. The grassroots cultural activity of the Left, discussed by many critics including Stephen G Jones, John Stevenson and, in the Scottish context, Douglas Allen,<sup>111</sup> was not the culture that the nationalists directly espoused in the literary renaissance. It was a culture which was educative, designed to involve and to enlighten workers through participation and as active and involved audience. The Left's emphasis on the usefulness of culture was one which this thesis will identify as increasingly part of the cultural project of the state in the same period.

There are parallels to be made between the framework which politics developed and the cultural institutions of the same period. In the period up to and including the 1920s nationalism in Scotland had an imprecise and variable meaning, proposed and agitated for by a number of politically quite different groups. It was a diffuse ideology in which culture and politics met with little common currency. With the demise of nineteenth century Liberalism, nationalism was variously supported by a number of different political groups.

The rise of nationalism in the 1920s was met in Scotland by an array of cultural events and institutions, including the literary renaissance, the Scots National Dictionary, advances for indigenous amateur theatre and coincided with the expansion of an influential new medium with immediate and lasting influence upon Scottish cultural life. Wireless broadcasting in Britain was organised by the BBC, and the BBC in Scotland operated within a context of public service as a cultural provider structurally devolved from the powerful core of British political, social and cultural life. There

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<sup>110</sup>The campaignings of the Scottish National Party in the 1930s and 1940s is discussed and commented upon by many of the critics and historians previously mentioned. See Hanham, *Scottish Nationalism*: 163-180; Webb: 54-73; Brand: 228-57; MacCormick, *The Flag in the Wind*: 88-124.

<sup>111</sup>See Jones, *Workers at Play* and Jones, *The British Labour Movement and Film: 1918-1939* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1987); but also John Stevenson, *British Society: 1914-45: The Pelican Social History of Britain* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1984); John Stevenson and Chris Cook, *The Slump: Society and Politics between the Wars* (London: Quartet, 1979); Douglas Allen, 'Culture and the Scottish Labour Movement.' *Scottish Labour History Society Journal* (1980): 30-38.

was, therefore, potential for the BBC in Scotland to interpret, to reflect and to shape the role of 'Scottishness' in the social, cultural and political life of the nation.

In the 1930s the coalition parliament of the 'national government' resulted in an increasingly centralist aspect to political and cultural life. The cultural parallel of the BBC was equally reductive with power being taken from the regions and being reasserted in London. Many of the social policies of the period had a similar centripetal structure. Economic and social planning was organised with the active participation of the state. The entertainment industries were increasingly tied, economically and culturally, to commercial enterprise organised on national and international levels -- this is seen most clearly with regard to entertainment film to the increasing cultural and economic role of the Hollywood production system.

At the start of the period politics, popular and high culture, economics and fashion seemed to present unlimited possibilities for Scottish culture. By 1939 the diversity of opportunity offered to society by way of new beginnings (new technology, the Great War, the Russian Revolution, Modernism, new politics) had been brought under control by social familiarity, capitalist interpretation and government legislation. The fragmented society that Modernity produced had been rendered neutral, the challenge reinterpreted to be one of marginalised comment. The de-fusion of culture, the containment of the chaotic gaze of Modernity is increasingly brought under control and may be seen to be formalised by the 1938 Exhibition.

This thesis presents the political and cultural options that a modern nation experienced. For Scotland the political options were essentially contained within the ideologies and practical politics of the Nationalists and the Socialists. The points of debate within culture were both related and more complex.

## **Tradition**

Within the context of social and cultural change that the period's domestic politics reflects, one of the issues raised in Scotland that is of social and cultural interest is that of the national, caught as it is between and within discourses of political and aesthetic activity. Within Scottish culture the national dimension is often enmeshed in representations of the past. Within popular culture Scottish national representations and images tend to be tied up with nostalgia and the recovery of history. Scottish culture has always found its own history a meaningful and marketable image-bank. The general use of the past within Scottish culture has often been transformed into an fixation with history, myth and memory. The collective obsession with history is perhaps at the root of Nairn's diagnosis of Scottish culture as schizoid.<sup>112</sup> Contemporary culture is constantly and easily constructed with reference to an

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<sup>112</sup>Nairn, 'Old and New Scottish Nationalism.' *The Break-Up of Britain*: 172.

increasingly ill-conceived past. Images recovered from a lost and mythic landscape provide the community of Scotland with easily assimilable versions of their past and points of collective emotional access. They are ostensibly simple to comprehend, seeming to require no decoding. 'Tradition' is itself meaningful in that it creates an illusion of a narrative history -- a version of the past on to which myth and memory are easily mapped.

The use of indigenous culture may be charted across the whole spectrum of texts, images and institutions both before and after the Great War. Perhaps more representative of the cultural projects of the period is the phenomenon of the exhibition, drawing together many of the ideas, images and experiences of the contemporary world. Glasgow has a tradition of great exhibitions: with events held in 1888, in 1901, in 1911 and in 1938. The fifty years that separate these events are the subject of this thesis. In terms of the representation of Scottish culture the two most interesting, and problematic, are the 1911 Scottish Exhibition of National History, Art and Industry and the 1938 Empire Exhibition, Scotland. These two events will act as major cultural markers for this study. Although the history of the modern media environment in Scotland insists on being dated from the late-nineteenth century (so to account for the major political and ideological shifts of the twentieth century as well as to chart the intervention of cinema) indigenous arts activity explodes in new directions in the 1910s, 1920s and 1930s. Political debate and the Scottish literary renaissance are significant parallels for the energy of the new media environment: the Scottish National Players, the Tron Theatre, the Curtain Theatre, the film societies and film making groups, broadcasting by the BBC, collectively mark the period as culturally pregnant.

The 1911 Exhibition<sup>113</sup> opened between 3 May and 4 November of that year. Like the two earlier events the 1911 Exhibition was held in Kelvingrove Park, Glasgow (the larger and more ambitious 1938 venture in Bellahouston Park, in the south-west of the city). Although not officially part of the main sections of the Exhibition the centre-piece of the event was the Art Galleries and Museum. The goal of the event was to fund a new chair of Scottish History and Literature at Glasgow University.<sup>114</sup> The *Official Guide* to the event notes that:

The inception of this Scottish Exhibition of National History, Art, and Industry in Glasgow had its origins in the belief, shared by so many, that the time had fully arrived when Scottish History should be placed on a different plane than it had hitherto been in the education of the rising generations of Scottish children, and not less in the teaching of

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<sup>113</sup>An account of the planning and organisation of the event is give by George Eyre-Todd, *Leaves from the Life of a Scottish Man of Letters* (Glasgow: Brown, Son and Ferguson, 1934): 171-181.

<sup>114</sup>The proceeds of both the prior exhibitions had been used for municipal improvements. The Art Gallery and Museum was built from the £40,000 profit from the 1888 Exhibition, and the same profit from the 1901 event went to the Art Purchase Fund of the Kelvingrove Gallery.

the subject in our schools and colleges. It was right that to attain this object a movement should be initiated which had for its aim the raising of such a sum of money as would adequately endow a Chair of Scottish History and cognate subjects at Glasgow University.<sup>115</sup>

The touchstones are, therefore, those of cultural representations and the arts, although as with the earlier events, technological and mechanical developments are clearly represented in the Palace of Industries.<sup>116</sup>

The 1911 event was held at a point at which Scottish national identity was increasingly under discussion. This, indeed, is thrown into relief by the purpose of the event; it suggests that in 1911 a need, a demand for a University Chair concerned with Scottish historical and cultural issues had been widely and enthusiastically acknowledged: groups like the Scottish Patriotic Association<sup>117</sup> and the Burns Clubs and Federation were involved in supporting the event and its goal. This period leading up to the outbreak of the Great War was one of increasing debate and discussion around issues of home rule and nationalism. The 1910 general election had returned to power the Liberals, the party most associated with home rule. Interestingly, their parliamentary success was very much based on their Scottish power-base, since up to a third of the cabinet were either sitting for Scottish seats or were in fact Scots. As has been discussed, the potential for Scotland to achieve home rule or some degree of devolution was a current issue; and one with ramifications for the wider cultural experience of Scotland.

The 1901 exhibition, in promoting a view of Glasgow as Second City of the Empire, focused more on the industrial and manufacturing achievements of the city, the achievements of Scottish culture were presented as those of the Fine Arts and the historical artefacts of the past. However, some of the exhibitors, if not the actual organisers of the Exhibition, did acknowledge strands of the new artistic movements. The Wylie and Lochhead exhibit (the exterior of which was designed by David Gow) featured the interior design work of John Ednie, E A Taylor and George Logan. Charles Rennie Mackintosh designed four stands, including the Glasgow School of Art exhibit on bookbinding in the Women's Section of the Exhibition.<sup>118</sup> However, the newest, the most challenging of ideas within Scottish culture and within Europe in general were not part of the Exhibition's schema.

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<sup>115</sup>*Scottish Exhibition of History, Art and Industry, Glasgow, 1911: Official Guide* (Glasgow: Dalross, 1911): 7.

<sup>116</sup>The 1888 event had a large Machinery Section, the 1901 had both a Machinery Hall and an Industrial Hall.

<sup>117</sup>George Eyre-Todd was the President of the Scottish Patriotic Association.

<sup>118</sup>The real international success of Mackintosh, Margaret Macdonald, Frances Macdonald and Herbert MacNair was reserved until the International Exposition of Modern Decorative Art at Turin in 1902.

The 1911 Exhibition similarly excluded the avant garde of contemporary culture. Scottish culture was still defined in terms of the fine arts and history and archaeology. William Eadie's study of Art Nouveau in Glasgow discusses the marginalisation of new arts within this context at the Exhibition:

As with the 1901 Exhibition, the newest ideas in Glasgow architecture were excluded, and the 1911 affair ... demonstrated to what degree the banal 'nationalist' historicism mystifyingly emphasizing the status and power of Scotland's landed gentry was the current vogue. Glasgow's real wealth and power in this period, however, were more realistically reflected in the neo-classical monumentalism of the soaring commercial blocks built by the assurance companies and banks in the city centre. The Exhibition of 1911, by which time Mackintosh was completing the Cloister Room for Cranston's Ingram Street Tea-rooms, was thus as underwhelming an architectural experience as 1888 and 1901 had proven to be, with again the new directions that were being indicated here and there in the city, excluded from the grand event. The involvement of Mackintosh and the Macdonald sisters was restricted to the provision of the interior (Mackintosh) and menu card (Margaret Macdonald) for Cranston's 'White Cockade' Tea-room. The menu card for Cranston's Red Lion café was designed by Frances Macdonald.<sup>119</sup>

Eadie argues that the 1911 Exhibition marks a peak for the public acceptance and architectural use of 'Victorian/Edwardian novelty 'Scottishness'.'<sup>120</sup> He notes that:

The popularity of an overt Scottish baronial 'style', either in architecture or in interior design ... cannot be adequately understood without a consideration of Victorian/Edwardian novelty 'Scottishness', that is, a *mock-baronial stylism*, as a manifestation of the Empire in which Scotland participated. This reached its peak with the Scottish Exhibition of National History, Art, and Industry in 1911. On this occasion all of the main buildings manifested pseudo-baronial stylism. To engender some historical credibility there was a 'Highland Village' and an 'Auld Toon', and authentic furniture and paintings were loaned from various famous collections. ... Relics of Scottish cultural history were absorbed into the most commercially ostentatious presentation of the Scottish-imperialist apparatus of tartanry.<sup>121</sup>

The apotheoses of this mock-tartan discourse were the reconstructions of 'An Clachan' and the 'Auld Toon'; both extending the Victorian preoccupation with the concept of Scotland as romantic theme-park into a containable and marketable distillation. And yet, at least with the Clachan, there is a desire to presents the Scottish rural culture in something of an anthropological discourse, and with acknowledgement of the distinctiveness of the Highland culture and Gaelic language -- after all profits

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<sup>119</sup>William Eadie, *Movements of Modernity: The Case of Glasgow and Art Nouveau* (London: Routledge, 1990): 234.

<sup>120</sup>Eadie: 233.

<sup>121</sup>Eadie: 233.

were destined for An Comunn Gaidhealach and the Highland Home Industries Co-operative Council.<sup>122</sup>

The 'Auld Toon' and the Old Scottish Street of the 1911 event are developments of the successful 'Bishop's Palace' from the 1888 Exhibition.<sup>123</sup> It presented a township consisting of Medieval Keep, Town Hall, and replicas of old Glasgow buildings such as St Ninian's Chapel, Old Gorbals Tower, and houses from the Stockwell Street, Gorbals, Tiddler's Close, High Street, and Rottenrow areas.<sup>124</sup> 'Ye Olde Toun' is described in nostalgic tones by the *Official Guide* as 'a veritable burgal town, characteristic of quaint bits of our older Scottish architecture.'<sup>125</sup> In more mystical tones the *Guide* hopes that:

Many shall wander round this town, thinking of the days that have gone forever in Scotland, and dreaming that they have been transplanted suddenly into the life and manners of a bygone century.<sup>126</sup>

The desire is not to adopt the critical eye of the historian but to mythologise the past. The tendency towards using the Scottish past as theme-park might be seen to be at odds with the Exhibition's aim of endowing an academic Chair for the study of the the same themes and issues. However, the commercialisation and problematisation of Scotland at the Exhibition was most marked not in the Auld Toun but in relation to the Clachan, which was situated in the Amusement Park and to which an additional entrance fee was charged.<sup>127</sup> The Clachan consisted of reconstructions of rural cottages, made of painted plaster and wood, and peopled with Gaelic-speaking and Gaelic-singing Highlanders:

The village consists of a group of thatched cottages varying from the old-fashioned kind still so often seen in the Hebrides, with the peat fire

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<sup>122</sup>*Scottish Exhibition of History, Art and Industry, Glasgow, 1911: Official Guide: 36.*

<sup>123</sup>One of the most successful exhibits at the 1888 Exhibition was this wood and canvas reconstruction of the fifteenth-century Bishop's Palace which had stood in Glasgow's Cathedral Precinct just off the High Street. It had been demolished as early as 1792 to make way for the new Royal Infirmary. The reconstruction was filled with a collection of stained glass, archaeological relics and other exhibits of historical interest. See Jonathon Kinghorn, *Glasgow's International Exhibition: 1888: Centenary Celebration* (Glasgow: Glasgow Museums and Art Galleries, 1988): 16-18; Kinchin and Kinchin: 45.

<sup>124</sup>*Scottish Exhibition of History, Art and Industry, Glasgow, 1911: Official Guide: 15.*

<sup>125</sup>*Scottish Exhibition of History, Art and Industry, Glasgow, 1911: Official Guide: 11.*

<sup>126</sup>*Scottish Exhibition of History, Art and Industry, Glasgow, 1911: Official Guide: 13.*

<sup>127</sup>Despite this, the *Guide* assures the visitor that:

An Clachan has not been undertaken as a commercial speculation, but with the patriotic objective of arousing a greater interest in the Highland people, in their traditions and customs, in their beautiful Gaelic language, literature and music, in their distinctive Celtic art, and especially to afford a unique opportunity for exhibiting and disposing of Highland Home Industries to the vast concourse of people who will visit the Exhibition from many lands.

*Scottish Exhibition of History, Art and Industry, Glasgow, 1911: Official Guide: 13.*

burning in the middle of the earth-floor, to the more up-to-date style of a 'bien' crofter's cottage. The 'By House' adjoining with its Celtic decoration, might be the Chief's Castle, but is fitted internally as a Hall to hold 350 people, where Gaelic and Scottish entertainments of all kinds will take place. Visitors can enjoy many a sociable and happy evening in 'Talla mhor a Clachain.'

'An Tigh Osda,' or Village Inn, is also an important and picturesque building, where the best of fare can be obtained, daintily served by Gaelic-speaking maidens in homespun and tartan. 'Uisge beatha' is, however, not on the menu, although the old apparatus of a smuggling still may be seen on the outskirts of the Village.

Further on stands the Village store, where home industries of every description can be bought. There is an immense assortment of Tweeds ..., rugs, plaids, stockings, homespun yarn, basket-work, carved wood, etc., etc. The sellers are attired in the picturesque dress called 'Arisaids,' which was worn by Highland ladies about 200 years ago.<sup>128</sup>

The Clachan was a popular feature of the Exhibition -- attracting as many as 700,000 visitors during the six month run of the event.<sup>129</sup> With the profits from the Clachan being shared by An Comunn Gaidhealach and the Highland Home Industries Co-operative Council the context must be inclusive of the reality of Highland life, even if in its reception and use the Clachan is tied up in a falsely nostalgic discourse. Indeed the myth and the reality proved enduring features of the Scottish cultural context: despite the demographic, political and social shifts of the intervening decades the success of the Clachan in the 1911 resulted in its being used as a model for the 1938 Empire Exhibition's Clachan. There the mock-tartan discourse is repeated with equal success pointing to the enduring nature of the myth of rural and Highland Scotland in the collective imagination of the community.<sup>130</sup>

This restricting nostalgia is developed not just in the exhibits and the architecture of the earlier event but also in its use of other forms, in particular theatre. The major component of this was the pageants staged in the Exhibition's Concert Hall:

These Living Pictures and Demonstrations will be of such a character as to appeal to the patriotism of Scotsmen [sic] in a marked degree, and should form an outstanding feature of the Exhibition.<sup>131</sup>

The Pageant Committee (chaired by Professor Phillimore, of Glasgow University) commissioned a number of specially written plays. George Eyre-Todd, who contributed a play on the life of Burns to the programme, describes some of the features of these pageants in his reminiscences *Leaves from the Life of a Scottish Man of*

<sup>128</sup>*Scottish Exhibition of History, Art and Industry, Glasgow, 1911: Official Guide: 35-36.*

<sup>129</sup>W H Knight, *Scottish Exhibition, 1911: Manager's Report* (Glasgow: N. p., 1911): 7. The total attendance to the Exhibition is given as 9,369,375.

<sup>130</sup>See below: chapter seven.

<sup>131</sup>'Foreword: ... Outstanding Features: ... Music and Entertainments.' *The Scottish Exhibition of History, Art and Industry, Glasgow, 1911: Foreword* (Glasgow: Nisbet, n.d. [1910?]): 9.

*Letters*. The subjects of the pageants are connected by their reference to the key mythologised moments of Scottish culture and history. W H Knight's *Manager's Report* highlights four plays: *Robert Burns* by George Eyre-Todd; *Glasgow Cross and Castle* by Rev James Primrose and Graham Price; *Mary, Queen of Scots* by Sir George Douglas; and *Thomas the Rhymer* by Macneil Dixon.<sup>132</sup> However, Eyre-Todd's record of the productions is slightly different. The collaboration between Primrose and Price -- 'official teacher of elocution at the University [of Glasgow]'<sup>133</sup> -- as somewhat vaguely described by Eyre-Todd seems little connected with its ostensible subject of *Glasgow Cross and Castle* as it was:

... a tremendous show, consisting mostly, I think, of the Battle of Bannockburn, and a dozen or so of pipers in complete Highland dress, who kept marching across the stage with their pipes at full blast.<sup>134</sup>

The use of the ballad source for *Thomas the Rhymer* seems to offer a much more coherent and focused production -- with Price as True Thomas being particularly successful. It is on Sir George Douglas's contribution that Eyre-Todd differs from Knight's report. Instead of *Mary, Queen of Scots*, Eyre-Todd remembers that Douglas:

furnished a real drama in blank verse on the subject of Robert the Bruce, [which] proved highly popular, and realised a profit of several hundred pounds for the Exhibition.<sup>135</sup>

Indeed it was Eyre-Todd himself who wrote a play on the subject of Mary Queen of Scots for the Exhibition.<sup>136</sup> Of the financial success of the pageants Eyre-Todd can boast that:

These plays, staged in the great Concert Hall, attracted large audiences and realised a handsome profit. The two which I myself wrote [*Robert Burns* and *Mary, Queen of Scots*] produced no less a sum than £700, quite a substantial contribution to the endowment to the Chair of Scottish History and Literature.<sup>137</sup>

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<sup>132</sup>See Knight: 9.

<sup>133</sup>Eyre-Todd: 153. The post was later held by R E Jeffrey an early and highly influential drama producer for the BBC in Glasgow, Aberdeen and London. See below: chapter six.

<sup>134</sup>Eyre-Todd: 153.

<sup>135</sup>Eyre-Todd: 153.

<sup>136</sup>See Eyre-Todd: 155. Like *Robert Burns*, *Mary, Queen of Scots* was produced by Percival Steeds who contributed to many of the early drama productions of the BBC in Glasgow, and indeed was a member of the Music and Entertainment Committee for the 1938 Empire Exhibition. Eyre-Todd notes the great popular success of both his plays and notes that it was R B Wharrie, later of the Scottish National Players, who appeared as Sir Robert Melville, in this second play.

<sup>137</sup>Eyre-Todd: 180.

The sets of images of Scotland promoted at this event are not those of advances in industry, manufacturing and new developments in the arts but are those of nostalgia. In a general European context of modernity the tendency within the Scottish scene was much more regressive. Even the architect of the 1911 Exhibition, Alexander Walker, built traditionally and in a version of the vernacular. The exclusion of new architecture from municipal and public building has been a continuing debate but its exclusion from a context such as an exhibition is of note. The early Exhibitions in Glasgow are more about the achievements of the past, more about retrenchment than about projecting an image for the future. But Exhibitions offer a whole series of opportunities: to reassess the past, not just represent it; to discuss the present, and not just for commercial and marketing aims; and to set agendas for the future. 1911 completely denied these positive opportunities. Shifts in the experience of the arts, technology and industry across the period might present the 1938 event with a different set of criteria.

## The Scottish Scene: Cultural Contexts

‘... culture is, or ought to be, the study and pursuit of perfection ....’<sup>1</sup>

An examination of the contemporary political scene provides an important context and background to the period, acknowledging as it does the ongoing debates around issues of ‘Scottishness’. Whilst contemporary domestic politics is one axis against which to chart the development of a media culture of equal import are the more general cultural contexts. Underlying this study is a tripartite understanding of the Scottish cultural scene in the early twentieth century. The period reveals the gradual modernisation of some aspects of Scottish culture; in which an ideology of cultural mission, cultural usefulness, is a constant feature of deepening influence; this connects with a general and evolving entertainment environment which maintains and promotes an integrated, socially and culturally complete system. The broad view of culture assumed in this view of society is one influenced by many factors. This study must, therefore, acknowledge a number of axes of potential understanding.

### Introduction: the cultural system

The market-led theatre of the Victorian period, though inevitably precariously balanced on the vagaries of the general economy, offered a complex set of different types of entertainment. Melodrama, musicals, ballet, opera, literary theatre and music hall coexisted and complimented each other so that a rich tapestry of theatre-based entertainment was available in almost all areas of the country. This might be best described as a theatre system held together by the touring syndicates.

Discussing theatre, film and broadcasting as a ‘system’ allows the critic to understand culture and the arts as they are actually experienced by society as a whole and by members of audiences in particular. It presents a context for the mass of differing media, ideas, politics, forms and experiments of cultural activity without splitting these into innumerable sets of discrete moments and genres. The use of the term system -- perhaps suggesting process and reaction -- focuses attention on the relationship between society and its culture. It reveals an essentially symbiotic relationship acknowledging the organic quality of its association. It exists as a changing and constantly evolving environment and because of this the term is perhaps to be used more as a tool than as a strict model of understanding.

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<sup>1</sup>Matthew Arnold, *Culture and Anarchy: An Essay in Political and Social Criticism* ed. J Dover Wilson (1932. Cambridge: Cambridge U P, 1984): 72. Arnold’s essay was first published in book form in 1869, with a second edition including corrections and amendments in 1875 and a third edition in 1882.

In terms of British cultural policy what this ever-changing society developed towards was a number of centralised and/or centralising institutions -- for instance the BBC. In many ways such institutions and agencies are an investment, not necessarily government sponsored, although this was increasingly to be the case, in the cultural capital of the country. Whether the investment was to preserve or to develop remains open to question. In passing, though, the BBC was established as an 'independent' company in 1922 and then licensed by Royal Charter in 1927. Although it clearly demonstrated its policy of independence from direct government control in its coverage of the General Strike, it was nevertheless more closely associated, at least in the popular mind, with establishment cultural institutions and sources of finance rather than with cultural groups and agencies like the British Film Institute, Kino and later the Arts Council and Independent Television which exist within a different set of definitions of 'independent'.

The alternative to the increasingly influential policies of cultural consensus and containment combined with the industrial model of investment and economic expansion was to confront the paradoxical cultures of Modernity, to make active use of the European political inputs coming from, in particular, post-Revolutionary Russia, from the increasing decadence (real and tangible, imagined and perceived) of the Weimar Republic and the Bohemian atmosphere that typified the French experience as well as responding to the US model of social and cultural activity. In short, the elements that the alternative, non-industrial arts producers and institutions in Britain had to respond to include the rise of the Communist Party as arts sponsor, of Workers' Theatre and centrally the new development of the discussion and debate that demanded the active involvement with and interrogation of the political.

In the media of theatre and of film, economically more highly organised and developed than some of the other arts, one can easily map these two elements (the conservative and its alternative) onto the institutions and practices available -- but there is also a kind of middle ground to be discussed, an aspect in the experience of the arts that, in its scale, organisation and importance, is a new development. It seem as if there is a discernible, if unequal, balance in the relationship that exists between the institutions, practitioners, products and audiences of the media of film, theatre and broadcasting.

At one level there is the phenomenon of film, of cinema and of theatre, wherein each exists as part of a capitalist economy that is profit led and judged in terms of box-office and perhaps also overseas trade. This is basically the mainstream element of the equation.

At another level there exists film and theatre as part of a political project; in which the arts are to play a crucially active part in social process, in the belief that such actions

will be effective in contributing to fundamental changes in society. This tendency picks up on the issues of revolution and of culture-in-crisis. It insists on the need to totally re-evaluate and re-define itself. It is a debate of the Left which finds its focus around the key questions of content, of audience, of organisation and of form.

Negotiating a position in some ways between these is that of theatre and film as part of a perceived cultural mission -- educative, certainly, but not aligned to the Left. It promotes a culture less politically confrontational than that which focuses on the Left and often financially less secure than the culture of the mainstream.<sup>2</sup> It is also the category in which broadcasting in Britain tends to be located; certainly it might be how the BBC in those decades (and even to present times) would have perceived and interpreted its own role within British social and cultural life. It is in many ways a discourse of public service. Indeed, the key institution which reflects the increased social involvement of the state and its acknowledged cultural responsibilities is perhaps the BBC: a 'broadcasting authority thinly disguised as an arm of private enterprise yet bearing a curious resemblance to an officially blessed monopoly.'<sup>3</sup> It may be understood that this sector of cultural activity became that most closely associated with state concern, initially through concern with the BBC as cultural provider but subsequently as the area most actively supported by subsidy and grant.

Throughout the period, then, the spheres of culture and society's arts existed in an intense relationship with and in reaction to the problematisation of politics. Peter Collier raises the problem in the essay 'Dreams Of A Revolutionary Culture: Gramsci, Trotsky And Breton'<sup>4</sup>:

The social responsibility of the intellectual and the relationship between culture and politics have always been urgent questions. But there has occurred an epistemological shift since the end of the nineteenth century. The theories of Freud and the experience of the Great War came to suggest an unconscious, irrational, lustful and destructive drive behind *culture* as well as politics. An age-old belief in the meliorative tendency of culture was shaken. And man's [sic] most spectacular intellectual advances -- that is, his scientific inventions and discoveries -- undermined the unity of art and science.<sup>5</sup>

It is important to note that the mainstream is, of course, just as political as the alternatives -- but must efface this truth. Within Western Europe it is argued by left

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<sup>2</sup>Perhaps this is the cultural strand that moves towards and is attractive to state subsidy. Certainly this is how the category develops in relation to film (beginning with the Government supporting the films made by Films of Scotland for the Empire Exhibition of 1938 and this evolving towards a British documentary movement).

<sup>3</sup>A Boyle, *Only the Wind will Listen*, 1972; quoted by Hall: 42.

<sup>4</sup>Collier, 'Dreams Of A Revolutionary Culture: Gramsci, Trotsky And Breton,' *Visions and Blueprints: Avant-Garde Culture and Radical Politics in Early Twentieth-Century Europe* eds Edward Timms and Peter Collier (Manchester: Manchester U P, 1988): 33-51.

<sup>5</sup>Collier, 'Dreams Of A Revolutionary Culture': 33.

cultural theory that the liberal capitalist state will survive not through the naked exercise of power but through the less obvious function of hegemony, which is worked through the acceptance of the minority ruling class's world view by the majority oppressed class thus creating the phenomenon of rule by consent. This points to the theoretical inputs of Antonio Gramsci. Collier discusses the Italian Marxist's theory of culture:

Gramsci's model of hegemony takes its authority from his understanding of the process of socio-linguistic change, whereby a prestige language secures the active consent of lower-prestige speech communities. He argued that linguistic innovations radiate outwards from a prestigious core or elite ...<sup>6</sup>

This cultural manifestation of the economic model of 'uneven development' offers clear parallels with the development of a distinctive Scottish culture. This has been a central point of debate for critics and practitioners since after the Union of the Parliaments of Scotland and of England in 1707. However, such problems were foreshadowed by the removal of the indigenous Scottish court (along with the Church *the* major source of cultural patronage for native arts) with the Union of the Crowns in 1603. Critics have argued that both Scottish culture and the Scottish economy have been reduced and debased by the expanding sphere of influence of English and British society. In the early twentieth century while the mobilisation of national identity within politics and the arts was certainly to prove influential, the pervasive tone of period emerged from a rather different system of cultural values.

### Cultural mission

Stemming from the Victorian period and the political, social and cultural projects of groups like the Independent Theatre Society and the Fabians, there emerged in the early part of the twentieth century a new vision of the usefulness of culture, of culture as morally enlightening and socially beneficial. The ideas and the ideals that underlie the notion of such arts activity with what might be termed a 'cultural mission' are those influenced by Matthew Arnold, in particular in his essay *Culture and Anarchy*<sup>7</sup> In the twentieth century the 'improving' role of culture as articulated by Arnold is developed and used in different ways by groups and organisations as diverse as the Fabians, the

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<sup>6</sup>Collier, 'Dreams Of A Revolutionary Culture': 35.

<sup>7</sup>In the Preface to *Culture and Anarchy* Arnold writes that:

The whole scope of the essay is to recommend culture as the great help out of our present difficulties; culture, being a pursuit of our total perfection by means of getting to know, on all matters which most concern us, the best which has been thought and said in the world; and through this knowledge, turning a stream of fresh and free thought upon our stock notions and habits, which we now follow staunchly but mechanically, vainly imagining that there is a virtue in following them staunchly which makes up for the mischief of following them mechanically.

Arnold: 6.

Repertory Theatre movement, the BBC under the leadership of John Reith and in the 1920s and 1930s by the cultural groups associated with the Left (Workers' Theatre, Kino and the Clarion groups). All these agencies focus on the social use of culture as both educative and improving. Within this context 'culture' is redefined in a number of different ways: to extend the understanding of culture to both 'high' and 'popular' arts; to encompass the new media of film and wireless broadcasting; to contain mainstream, progressive, popular and politically motivated theatre and arts; as empowered to counter or to support the hegemony of the state. The main development, however, was not only to see cultural products as more than just social signifiers, the fundamental shift is towards the state's increasingly active participation with cultural agencies and producers. It is a dominant view that an ideology of cultural mission was not rendered explicit within British culture until the 1950s with the mature evolution of the Arts Council and the creation of Independent Television as a commercial counterpoint to the broadcasting strategy of the BBC. What this study proposes is that this tendency may be identified more clearly as an important strand in early twentieth century cultural life, and will question how the desire to participate in and to improve both culture and society was developed by the new media of film and radio.

While this discourse of cultural mission does articulate a positive role for the producer, it also allows a deeply felt split to develop between cultural activity with the implicit or explicit purpose to reveal truth, to inform, to educate, to test the audience and other cultural activity -- wherein the audience is essentially passive -- which is recast as 'mere entertainment'. With the rise of socialism and the currency of Marxist ideology for the twentieth century the point of conflict is popular culture and the cultural interests and activities of the 'masses'. Arnold's view of culture implicates the hegemony of the modern state. For Arnold culture is the force that can unify the fragmented society. He considers that:

Plenty of people will try to give the masses, as they call them, an intellectual food prepared and adapted in the way they think proper for the actual conditions of the masses. The ordinary popular literature is an example of this way of working on the masses. Plenty of people will try to indoctrinate the masses with the set of ideas and judgments constituting the creed of their own profession or party. Our religious and political organisations give an example of this way of working on the masses. I condemn neither way; but culture works differently. It does not try to teach down to the level of inferior classes; it does not try to win them for this or that sect of its own, with ready-made judgements and watchwords. It seeks to do away with classes; to make the best that has been thought and known in the world current everywhere; to make all men live in an atmosphere of sweetness and light, where they may use ideas, as it uses them itself, freely, -- nourished and not bound by them.

This is the *social idea*; and the men [sic] of culture are those who have had a passion for diffusing, for making prevail, for carrying from

one end of society to the other, the best knowledge, the best ideas of their time; who have laboured to divest knowledge of all that was harsh, uncouth, difficult, abstract, professional, exclusive; to humanise it, to make it efficient outside the clique of the cultivated and learned, yet still remaining the *best* knowledge and thought of the time, and a true source, therefore, of sweetness and light.<sup>8</sup>

Whether such idealistic motivations were behind the cultural mission undertaken by Reith at the BBC is debatable, although the project is in many ways similar. Institutions and individuals who, like Arnold, perceive the potential social and political influence of cultural activity tend to function outwith the mainstream entertainment economy. Within the model offered by Arnold, in which culture may be transformed into prestige product, such a shift, in organisation and production, is symptomatic. Such producers tend not to be part of the mainstream commercial sector -- by 1927 the BBC is a non-profit making corporation, by 1938 state funding is being directed towards cultural events and products. Indeed, it may be argued that such institutions, texts and representations exists in parallel with and, within a political discourse, function to counter the hegemonic influences of, for example, West End theatre and Hollywood film. The arts sector with what might be described as a political discourse, or agenda, exists to counter cultural activities which are exclusive (of audience, of particular social groups, of politics, of popular culture, of high culture) and seeks to present a range of representations and forms. It is necessarily a wide section of the cultural environment because in practice it contains the broad spectrum of political ideologies. It is, after all, a sector able to contain the establishment cultural prejudices of the pre-War BBC, the socialist projects of both the Fabians and the Workers' Theatre, the nationalist impulses of the Abbey Theatre and the Scottish Literary Renaissance. Because of its widespread validity, is the term 'cultural mission' of any real use? The phrase identifies the underlying arts programme that is at work in the period up to the beginning of World War II and signals the way ahead for arts policy after 1939. It is the area of culture that most easily gravitates towards state subsidy; it is the area of cultural activity which the Council for the Encouragement of Music and the Arts (CEMA) and then the Arts Council will validate as valuable, as adding to society's general well-being and success. It is an area of the arts in which the agenda is concerned with indigenous arts production in ways that the economic goals of the mainstream and commercial sectors really cannot contain and support. As such it is a valuable and useful term to introduce into an analysis of arts and leisure in Britain -- simply because of the cultural and social dominance it ultimately achieves. This study follows the period in which the 'cultural mission' is the implicit project for many new developments in the entertainment environment. In the subsequent period of war and

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<sup>8</sup>Arnold: 69-70.

reconstruction the implicit project is rendered explicit as it is placed firmly on the state's agenda with the public funding of the arts.

Within the strand of the media associated with the cultural mission, nationalism, or at least national identity, becomes an issue in ways unimportant or untenable in relation to the other aspects of the contemporary cultural scene (the Left -- mobilised by ideologies of Marxism and internationalism -- or the mainstream -- determinedly capitalistic and market-led). This, then, becomes one area in the broad base of cultural activity in Scotland during the period which is essentially linked to the political context and the Scottish Renaissance. Indeed those art producers and products that might be included under the terms of the cultural mission were interested in providing images and representations of Scotland and as such did sponsor, promote and use new writers, new practices and even new venues.

The two major innovations into the cultural and entertainment environment around the twentieth century are two new forms of technology: film and radio. Both fundamentally alter the nature of the arts in Britain. The introduction of wireless broadcasting in Britain produced a quite different set of problems to those associated with the intervention of film and the subsequent development of theatre in the same period. From the start it did not offer the programme of populist entertainments with which film threatened popular and mainstream theatre. With the dominating ethos of broadcasting as public service, radio developed a new and influential set of ideologies. More than any other part of the cultural scene of the interwar period it was the institution of the BBC that most fully articulated a discourse of cultural mission. As such the impact of the BBC is only partially containable within the existing cultural experience -- it created a new version of culture, with new prejudices and new values. Film had fitted into the existing environment -- initially quite literally by music hall and variety managers programming film in a variety bill and later by exploiting the entertainment role of the theatre and by copying or taking-over the infrastructure of its exhibition circuit. Ultimately, however, this allowed for a more covert intervention of American business, culture and ideology. Working from within the business economies of the popular theatre and increasingly replacing the audience for touring stage drama with one for films the business interests of Hollywood were able to change the face of British culture. Radio had a different project. Over a much shorter period of time its effects were just as challenging. Radio shifted the emphasis of the experience and the role of culture in Britain: this an aspect of broadcast history examined by Paddy Scannell and David Cardiff.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>See Paddy Scannell and David Cardiff, 'Serving the Nation: Public Service Broadcasting Before the War.' Bernard Waites, Tony Bennett and Martin Graham, eds, *Popular Culture: Past and Present* (London: Croom Helm/Open UP, 1982): 161-88; and *Social History of Broadcasting: volume 1: 1922-39: Serving the Nation* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991).

The BBC developed the ideologies of the educational value and usefulness of cultural activity that the independent theatres had used, that the repertory theatres developed and that amateur arts activities expanded. Broadcasting in Britain, typically of those arts practices within the general scope of the cultural mission, might have been compromised by the consequences of modernisation:

The appetite for entertainment had been growing and the machinery for duplicating the printed page, the phonograph record, and eventually motion-picture brought quantity production into this field.<sup>10</sup>

Using and developing the technology of the age was a key feature of the BBC's cultural policy but equally the BBC:

... resisted many of the values which often went with them. Reith and his colleagues ... believed that interest in education, the growth of public libraries and a diffusion of knowledge were just as active forces in a democratic society as the drive for 'superior entertainment'. They did not hesitate to oppose tendencies which are now thought to be 'inevitable' tendencies of our age, and sought neither to drift with the tide of 'mass culture' nor, in the modern idiom, to treat people as masses and 'manipulate' them. Wireless to them was an instrument of public good not as a means of handling people or of 'pandering to their wants'.<sup>11</sup>

The hegemony of the Hollywood product as entertainment continued to marginalise the role of indigenous British film production. The response was the development of the public service role of the arts. Film in Britain depended on Hollywood imports, indigenous film making was enthusiastic and often of high quality but had too early in its history been colonised by America for it to match its economic power and cultural pervasiveness. That British film was to become more associated with the documentary movement than with feature films points to this economic reality and is suggestive of the ubiquity of the ethos of public service. Broadcasting, of course, existed within the improving discourse of Reith's BBC, while theatre in the interwar period was split between the popular and entertaining theatre of the West End and a different theatre to be valued for its literary worth and social cachet. In short, by World War II indigenous British culture was less easily the environment of entertainment than it had been at the end of the Victorian period and was much more part of the hegemonic infrastructure of the state. The multi-faceted system of the earlier context was, by the end of the 1930s, much more clearly divided into opposing interpretations of the social role of (high) culture on the one hand and an entertainment sector, a popular culture -- dominated by

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<sup>10</sup>G Seldes, *The Public Arts* (1956); quoted by Briggs, *The History of Broadcasting in the United Kingdom: volume 1: The Birth of Broadcasting* (London: Oxford UP, 1961): 6.

<sup>11</sup>Briggs, *The Birth of Broadcasting*: 6-7.

imported feature films -- on the other. Negotiating a way into this environment was a discourse that had been developing throughout the period but was to come into its own in the post-war period. The challenge of arts with a social role to play, those with a cultural mission, shifted from being a radical discourse at the start of the twentieth century (being associated with socialism and, in particular, the Fabians) to being representative of the respected set of values of the cultural establishment after World War II.

The mechanism and the results of this complex intervention of popular culture are the subject of the theory of the state articulated by Antonio Gramsci in *The Prison Notebooks*<sup>12</sup> Gramsci's Marxist view of the state is of a modern hegemonic agency fundamentally enmeshed in the administrative and psychic infrastructure of society. The importance of Gramsci's perception of society is the emphasis placed on the role of culture as a central factor in the activities of the state. In society cultural activity is invested with the responsibility of upholding and developing, or revealing and debunking, the hegemonic power of the state. The intervention of the state into the arts will tend to be about consolidation and will uphold the dominant and preferred ideologies of that state. The state can sponsor new forms and new institutions, or appropriate existing ones. This is what happened to both the BBC and to the repertory theatre. From being the challenge to the bourgeois, safe and unproblematic theatre of the Victorian Age it was, in the course of the first decades of the twentieth century subsumed within the hegemony of 'establishment' culture. The potential of this theatre as 'counter culture' was effectively effaced as it became naturalised as a producing system and legitimised as upholding the 'best' of culture, the 'sweetness and light' that Arnold describes. This was rather different to the experience of both film and broadcasting in the period. Within the British film context, economically subordinate to the dominant Hollywood industry and increasingly under the sway of the cultural hegemony that the American product, a distinctive form was to evolve which acknowledged the increasingly powerful discourse of culture as educative, as improving, as being about more than entertainment. The industrial grip of the Hollywood industry shifts the balance of power in film culture towards America but in Britain a new specialisation develops which was not entertainment film *per se* but the documentary, a form with an information-based agenda.<sup>13</sup> There emerged a sector

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<sup>12</sup>Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1971).

<sup>13</sup>Forsyth Hardy, writing in 1947, notes that:

There is no novelty today in the claim that documentary is the distinctively British contribution to cinema. ...

It is not difficult to find the basic reason for the continuity of documentary in Britain. In the British tradition, documentary stands essentially for a social use of film. Those who launched and have sustained the movement were interested in film primarily as a medium for social education; although there have been periods of pre-occupation with form and style, the aesthetic interest, in any final analysis, has

both distinctive from the entertainment product and part of the development of a state-associated culture of information and education. Whilst from its instigation broadcasting in Britain was more directly shaped by the state and strategies of the cultural mission that are part of the public service project.

Stuart Hall, in his essay 'Popular Culture and the State,' argues that 'the British state has always played a crucial role in conforming popular culture to the dominant culture.'<sup>14</sup> Part of the arts activity of the early part of the twentieth century may be seen to confirm this view. Theatre activity was many and varied but over the course of the century a standard, based on the repertory theatre model, was established. This dominant model invested both financial and cultural capital in a form of theatre that, at the start of the period was politically, socially and artistically challenging. Later in the twentieth century it has been effectively neutralised -- integrated into the hegemonic value systems of the wider society and effectively institutionalised by the establishment of institutions like the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre, CEMA and the Arts Council. The dominant cultural policy and cultural projects associated with a group like the Fabians have been stripped of their 'counter' political edge and have been incorporated into a vision and use of culture legitimised by the state. The role of the Left then consolidates around its traditional role of education and improvement for the workers which in the course of the twentieth century was first influential and widespread but increasingly became isolated into smaller areas of influence.

The role of the state in this evolutionary development only becomes explicit around legislative and institutional intervention -- for example, the creation of CEMA. However, as Hall points out, the state's facilitations and mediations in the sphere of culture (both elite and popular) have been an often covert function of the legal system, religious practices, educational prejudices, indeed, in general, under the influence of the civil society. In this model both the cultural forms and practices, and the role and the nature of the state shift and change over time. Changes can be both evolutionary and revolutionary. In the period from the late Victorian Age to the outbreak of World War II, the cultural forms that society encouraged and supported changed to encompass advances in technology, developments in the aesthetic context, artistic experimentation and the increasingly direct role of the state in the everyday lives of the community.

The state in nineteenth century Britain is characterised by its *laissez-faire* involvement with both economy and society. The market was left to regulate the expansion of successful British industry and it was under duress that the state

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always been secondary. As the need for the social use of films has been increasingly recognised, so has the movement steadily grown.

Forsyth Hardy, 'The British Documentary Film,' *Twenty Years of British Film: 1925-1945* eds Michael Balcon, Ernest Lindgren, Forsyth Hardy and Roger Manvell (London: The Falcon Press, 1947): 45.

<sup>14</sup>Hall: 23.

introduced legislation to monitor and implement health and safety, suffrage and minimal education rights for citizens. However, into the twentieth century the state's sphere of social influence expanded. Indeed, as Hall suggests, 'The twentieth century ... has seen the growth of the all-encompassing state, from the cradle to the grave.'<sup>15</sup> The political and social effects of this may be traced in the expansion of government ministries, the development of legislation that the nineteenth century would have interpreted as interventionist, the expansion of welfare programmes, education system, centralised fiscal and economic policies and the expansion of government departments (for instance in this period the Scottish Secretary develops towards full cabinet status reflecting the expansion of state into the active government of the country). Less easy to dissect is the state's encroachment into the culture of the civil society and the involvement with the role of popular culture. It is easy to point to moments of direct legislation (for example, the Cinematograph Act, 1909 and the 1927 Cinematograph Films Act), more obscure is the point when the state declares responsibility for the development, the accessibility, indeed, even the definition of culture.

The aesthetic and the theatrical projects and experiments of the period prior to the establishment of CEMA seem to point the way towards the kind of cultural product that the British state will support and promote. It is a cultural product that, while certainly about entertainment, is more centrally concerned to both educate and inform -- in short, it advances a policy of arts with some kind of cultural mission. As Hall points out, however, it is true to say that the role of the British state in the cultural life of its citizens is less formalised and less overt than for many other European states: CEMA, the Arts Council, even the Department of Education and Science are a far cry from having a Ministry of Culture.<sup>16</sup> Yet the role of the state is an important and influential one, in many ways more influential than the pressure exerted by the institutions of (civil) society in general (the state *per se* is more effective than the society which legitimises it).

Of course the British state has assumed wide responsibilities for the *conditions of culture* in a broader sense. Especially through its education systems, it assumes responsibility for the definition and transmission of cultural traditions and values, for the organization of knowledge, for the distribution of what Pierre Bourdieu calls 'cultural capital' throughout the different classes; and for the formation and qualification of intellectual strata -- the guardians of cultural tradition. The state has become an active force in *cultural reproduction*.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>15</sup>Hall: 26.

<sup>16</sup>See Hall: 37-38.

<sup>17</sup>Hall: 38.

Hall argues that this process was particularly marked at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century when social and cultural requirements, technological and political contexts reset the state as fundamental to the dissemination of culture. In this indigenous and local cultural activities may fall outwith the legitimised cultural capital of the state, and yet be fundamental to the identity used and referred to by the civil society. This is the perceived lack for 'Scottish culture' within the context of British arts. Increased centralisation and bureaucratisation of the arts community and cultural institutions towards the metropolitan core can produce an intractable gap between the respectable culture of the centre and the barbaric, parochial, dangerous arts of the periphery: a periphery which may then be recast as 'other'. Within that context, however, the same technological, political and social advances are imposed and experienced but they will be interpreted and used with reference to the local and the indigenous as well as to the national and the international.

Within Scotland the period from the 1880s on into the new century throws into relief many of the problems experienced by modern industrial and peripheral societies. For Britain it was indeed the 'period of profound historical transformation'<sup>18</sup> that Hall identifies. Economically the dominant lead that Britain's early industrialisation had produced was swept away as the other major world powers attained equal levels of industrial advancement and pursued similarly expansionist strategies of colonialism: in terms of output Britain's productivity was surpassed by its major rivals Germany, Japan and the USA.<sup>19</sup> Domestically Hall notes that:

... this break-up of past economic supremacy triggered off a fragmentation and reconstruction of political parties, formations, and philosophies. *Laissez-faire* political economy and political individualism, which had been pivotal to the parties and ideas of liberal reform (the dominant political philosophy of the middle of the century), lost their hegemony and new political formations emerged, totally transforming the political scene. The modern forms of mass-industrial labour first appeared in this period, giving rise to new types of labour organisation (the *general* trade unions for semi-skilled and unskilled labour, replacing the craft unions and skilled 'aristocracies of labour' which had dominated trade union and radical-liberal politics earlier in the period). Eventually, this social force broke its alliance with the radical tail of the Liberal party and emerged on the political stage as an independent 'party of labour' -- the Labour Party. Women entered the struggle for mass political enfranchisement.<sup>20</sup>

This final push towards universal suffrage combined with the increased participation of the state in the fields of education, home affairs like public health and economic policy

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<sup>18</sup>Hall: 38.

<sup>19</sup>Hall: 38.

<sup>20</sup>Hall: 38-39.

changed the very nature of the state. In Britain the increasing participation of its citizens in electing government and empowering the state ensured that more account had to be taken of the community as a whole. In this context social and cultural policy became important areas of division between political parties.

### Modernity

In the period around and between the Exhibitions of 1911 and 1938 the discourses of cultural modernism, political upheaval and violent war all contributed to the development of the social, political and cultural scene but, at least of equal importance, advancements in technology also ensured decisive change. While the 1911 Exhibition struggled to incorporate the art of modernity, by 1938 the new and the experimental was, on some levels at least, to be exploited and celebrated. Political and cultural trends and movements are unpredictable and often contradictory but technology exists in fundamental forward motion, building on past successes and failures certainly, but always projecting onwards. This was one of the essential lessons of Modernism, a cultural movement that used the new, the challenging and the technological to develop a language that signalled dissatisfaction with the old order, the old canon, the cultural nexus that had dominated previous arts activity. As the period of this study is coincident with that of the aesthetic projects of Modernism, some beginning must be made to suggest a working understanding of and definition for the artistic movement that most influentially of all shaped the early part of the twentieth century.

Immediately what must be clear is that Modernism is not a single and easily defined aesthetic tendency or genre. Within the wider understanding of Modernism is a whole series of aesthetic movements and experiments in culture. Edward Timms, introducing a collection of essays on the meaning of the urban cityscape from 1910 to 1930, points the way into this essentially modern and urban artistic scene: 'The poets and painters of the city were cosmopolitan, and it was the interaction between different cultures which generated the most complex images.'<sup>21</sup> The art of the period is typified by this mixing of media and of genres and by a Renaissance-like willingness on the part of the artistic to crossover cultural and technological boundaries. This is combined with an equal exposure of audiences to manifold different experiences of what 'art' or 'culture' might be. For instance, the Surrealist movement is just one of the Modern movements where artists from many different disciplines meet (intellectually and in fact) to produce poetry, commercial art, fine art and even film. Cultural expansion is not just experienced within arts practice. The whole of the media is expanding. Audiences are increasingly exposed to print journalism, political debates and magazine culture,

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<sup>21</sup>Timms, 'Unreal City -- Theme And Variations.' Introduction. *Unreal City* eds Timms and Kelley: 1.

indigenous and touring theatre, whilst most revolutionary of all, advances in technology allow new means for the communication of ideas. Allan Bulloch's view of 'The Double Image' of the Modern experience<sup>22</sup> focuses on just this 'creation (and use) of the modern media'. He notes that:

In 1896 Alfred Harmsworth began publishing the *Daily Mail*, a landmark in the history of popular journalism. The year before the Lumière brothers had invented the cinematograph, and Marconi wireless telegraphy.<sup>23</sup>

From this point the cinema continues to develop in quality and scope and broadcast radio alters the very nature of the domestic experience. Eric Hobsbawm discusses this shift:

... [the] technical revolution [had] already created an entirely new dimension of the life between the wars. In addition to the traditional and declining music-hall and the equally old-fashioned but expanding 'palais-de-danse', two technologically original forms of entertainment triumphed after 1918: radio and cinema. Of these the first was more revolutionary than the second for it brought round-the-clock entertainment ready-made into people's actual homes for the first time in history, though it was not the primary purpose of the uncommercially-minded public corporation which controlled it, the BBC.<sup>24</sup>

The use and the understanding of these technological and cultural advances exists originally as a European cultural discourse. The Modern, while certainly having distinctively national manifestations (Italian Futurism, Russian Futurism, German Expressionism), could also exist as a catholic discourse that provided a theoretical framework which was about being new, challenging and, above all, exciting. So whilst aspects of the movement are often described in geographically specific terms, Malcolm Bradbury and James McFarlane in the volume *Modernism: 1890-1930* agree that 'one of the defining features of Modernism has been the breaking down of traditional national frontiers in matters of literary and cultural concern.'<sup>25</sup> Indeed these commentators reiterate the point when they note that, '... the essence of Modernism is its international character -- one critic,<sup>26</sup> indeed, has argued that 'Modernism, in short, is synonymous with internationalism'.<sup>27</sup> How, then, has this boundary crossing

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<sup>22</sup>Described in his essay 'The Double Image.' Allan Bulloch, 'The Double Image,' *Modernism: 1890-1930* eds Malcolm Bradbury and James McFarlane (1976. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1986): 58-70.

<sup>23</sup>Bulloch, 'The Double Image': 60.

<sup>24</sup>E J Hobsbawm, *Industry And Empire: An Economic History of Britain Since 1750* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1968): 186.

<sup>25</sup>Bradbury and McFarlane, Preface. *Modernism: 1890-1930*: 14.

<sup>26</sup>Whom they note as A Alvarez in *Beyond All This Fiddle: Essays, 1955-1967* (London, 1968).

<sup>27</sup>Bradbury and McFarlane, 'The Name and Nature of Modernism': 31.

discourse been picked up and used in a Scottish context? Indeed, did it prove in any way relevant for Scotland, a society on the periphery, on the very edge of Europe?

In an overview of the contemporary Scottish scene such aesthetic experimentations and activities do indeed seem oddly lacking: there is the impact of Charles Rennie Macintosh and the Glasgow School;<sup>28</sup> and later in the period Hugh MacDiarmid, through his poetry and his criticism, thrusts Scottish letters on the stage of European Modernism. But these are, perhaps, isolated incidents, single flourishings. Despite the achievements of the Glasgow School and the importance of the literary renaissance, Scotland cannot boast the artistic outputs of a Paris, a Berlin, or even a London, where schools, movements, or just coteries developed and ensured a degree of momentum be maintained to encourage artistic activity and experimentation. Scottish culture is, perhaps, rather outside the developments of cutting-edge Modernism. Scottish culture is aware of Modernism but it is not a central part of the debates and projects.<sup>29</sup> However far removed from the aesthetic debates of the time Scotland essentially remains part of the modern world -- both economically and industrially, politically and socially and in terms of cultural provisions.

Timms writes:

A crucial factor was not merely the overwhelming size of the metropolis, but also the dynamic acceleration of urban and technological development. Within a single life-span a rural community might be transformed into an industrial conurbation.<sup>30</sup>

Certainly aspects of such modernity are familiar within the Scottish context. Timms's project is centred on the nature and the significances of the urban itself -- the artistic importance of the 'city' -- the social and cultural metamorphosis of spaces. For such a transformation to occur, however, there must also be revolutionary shifts in a society's overall demographics. As T C Smout's *A Century Of The Scottish People, 1830-1950* shows this is just what happened within the rural and industrial communities of Scotland:

As the city rose, the countryside, ultimately, declined. In 1851, 30 per cent of the male employed population worked directly in agriculture: there were still more people, men and women, engaged in farming than textiles and mining put together, and most rural areas had been enjoying a rising population for a century. By 1901, the proportion of male workers who were employed in farming had dropped by one half to 14 per cent, and by 1951 to less than 10 per cent. At the same time the urban concentrations of the Central Belt drew from the village and the

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<sup>28</sup>See Eadie, *Movements of Modernity: The Case of Glasgow and Art Nouveau*.

<sup>29</sup>See Tom Normand, 'Scottish Modernism and Scottish Identity,' *Scotland Creates: 5000 Years of Art and Design* ed. Wendy Kaplan (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1990): 162-184.

<sup>30</sup>Timms, 'Unreal City -- Theme And Variations': 3.

small remote town; a ring of counties on the periphery of Scotland, in the far north and the south as well as in the Highlands, reached their historic peak in the middle decades of the nineteenth century and then steadily fell in numbers while the population of Scotland continued to grow.<sup>31</sup>

Smout places the Scottish element of this in the wider context that is the locus of *Unreal City*:

The combination of rural depopulation and city growth was not peculiar to Scotland; it was equally to be found in England and Wales and ultimately throughout the whole of Europe, though it occurred earlier in the UK than in other countries. It is what happens when industrialization creates a demand for labour in the towns and stimulates the countryside to produce more food with fewer hands, and when the life of the town comes into popular culture to seem more real and desirable than life in the country.<sup>32</sup>

This ongoing demographic and cultural process creates social needs in the industrialised cities. In the new world of the twentieth century -- particularly in the harshness of the years after the Great War -- the depressed economies of the world, the General Strike and the rise of the established Labour Party<sup>33</sup> revealed that British society had to face the advancing modernisation of politics and of the political which were the implicit products of the period. Yet the issues raised by the rise of socialism, communism, the demise of Liberalism, the vogue of nationalism and the social shifts they resulted in were the very ones which caused establishment interests and even the middle class to regard change with, at the very least, unease. Such shifts were

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<sup>31</sup>Smout, *A Century of the Scottish People*: 58. In his study of the cultural and social parallels between Scotland and Quebec, Ian Lockerbie notes that this shift plays an important role in the development of the indigenous arts of these peripheral cultures:

The ready interaction between Scots and French Canadians points to an affinity in character and outlook between the two peoples. At the time of the first contacts both were rural peoples, reared in not dissimilar northern landscapes where conditions were harsh. In both communities religion played an important role, as much in a social as in a spiritual sense. If the Scots, in many cases, had been the victims of expulsion from their land, the French Canadians also were no strangers to suffering at the hands of foreign landowners: in their case British Canadians who had taken over many of their *seigneuries* after the Conquest of 1759. Historical evolution was to transform both these rural peoples into urban dwellers, but for a substantial proportion of them their lot in the towns continued to be one of hardship, through overcrowding in industrial slums. Hence in the collective memory of each people a nostalgia for their pre-industrial rural society and a strong attachment to their past. The motto of Quebec: *Je me souviens* could also be Scotland's.

Ian Lockerbie, 'Scotland and Quebec,' *Image and Identity: Theatre and Cinema in Scotland and Quebec* ed. Lockerbie (Stirling: The John Grierson Archive, 1988): 5-6.

<sup>32</sup>Smout, *A Century of the Scottish People*: 58.

<sup>33</sup>But interestingly after the General Strike the role of the Trade Unions was not to recover its position at the point of becoming a major player in the ongoing politicisation of the culture. Indeed it might be argued that established trade unionism was not even to recover its bargaining position until after 1945.

interpreted as ensuring that the society would split, most problematically, along notions of class.

Within Modernism there can be an active politicisation of culture (more or less directly related to the influence of Marxism). This means, for many artists and critics, that the 'crowd' is transformed into the 'mass'. Referring to the development of 'mass communications', Raymond Williams discusses the term 'mass':

'Masses' had been the new nineteenth-century term of contempt for what was formerly described as 'the mob'. The physical 'massing' of the urban and industrial revolution underwrote this. A new radical class-consciousness adopted the term to express the material of the new social formations: 'mass organisations'. The 'mass meeting' was an observable physical effect. So pervasive was this description that in the twentieth century multiple serial production was called, falsely but significantly, 'mass production': mass now meant large numbers (but within certain assumed social relationships) rather than any physical or social aggregate.<sup>34</sup>

In the twentieth century, though, the 'mass' can take on a materialist guise: a term not so much of contempt but control, used by the middle class to render the 'proletariat' characterless in all but economic role. Walter Benjamin discusses the role of the mass in 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction':

The mass is a matrix from which all traditional behaviour toward works of art issues today in a new form. The greatly increased mass of participants has produced a change in the mode of participation. The fact that the new mode of participation first appeared in a disreputable form must not confuse the spectator. ... Clearly, this is at bottom the same ancient lament that the masses seek distraction whereas art demands concentration from the spectator. That is a commonplace. The question remains whether it provides a platform for the analysis of the film. A closer look is needed here. Distraction and concentration form polar opposites which may be stated as follows: A man who concentrates before a work of art is absorbed by it. He enters into this work of art the way legend tells of the Chinese painter when he viewed his finished painting. In contrast, the distracted mass absorbs the work of art.<sup>35</sup>

As Gareth Stedman Jones notes in an article on 'Working-Class Culture and Working-Class Politics in London, 1870-1900 ...'<sup>36</sup> it was a feature of the Modern period 'that middle-class observers began to realize that the working class was not simply without

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<sup>34</sup>Williams, *Television*: 23-24.

<sup>35</sup>Walter Benjamin, 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction,' *Illuminations* trans Harry Zohn, ed. Hannah Arendt (London: Cape, 1970): 241.

<sup>36</sup>Gareth Stedman Jones, 'Working-Class Culture and Working-Class Politics in London, 1870-1900: Notes on the Remaking of a Working Class.' *Journal of Social History* 7 (1974): 460-508.

culture or morality, but in fact possessed a 'culture' of its own.'<sup>37</sup> Part of that (popular) culture is of the fairs, popular theatricals and music halls of the period; a culture increasingly under pressure from a bourgeois ideology that reduces the culture and the audiences to 'mass'. It is a culture essentially, but not exclusively, of the towns. It is an urban culture and industry, but in a social environment vacated by the middle class who had moved either geographically to the suburbs or morally away from all but the most respectable of the Theatres Royal or the intellectually challenging, but essentially minority, independent theatre of the 1890s.

One of the most common features of the art of Modernism is its (re)use of the codes and conventions of other cultural practices: Terry Eagleton notes its fundamental reference to realism.<sup>38</sup> But Modernism is also self-referential; it comments on its own identity, its own nature in its moments of creation and consumption. As such one of the key features of the artist working within a discourse of Modernism is her/his awareness of the cultural and social context -- the latter being particularly important for those elements of Modernism that take on board an active socio-political role.

Malcolm Bradbury provides an interesting axiom: 'Realism humanizes, naturalism scientizes, but Modernism pluralizes, and surrealizes.'<sup>39</sup> One of the roles of technology in the twentieth century has been of multiple reproductions, the universal availability of knowledge and information: it is a role of plurality that art prior to 'the age of mechanical reproduction' did not permit. It is a process that demands the politicisation of art and culture:

The growing proletarianization of modern man and the increasing formation of masses are two aspects of the same process. Fascism attempts to organize the newly created proletarian masses without affecting the property structure which the masses try to eliminate. Fascism sees its salvation in giving these masses not their right, but instead a chance to express themselves. The masses have a right to change property relations; Fascism seeks to give them an expression while preserving property. The logical result of Fascism is the introduction of aesthetics into political life. The violation of the masses, whom Fascism, with its *Führer* cult, forces to their knees, has its counterpart in the violation of an apparatus which is pressed into the production of ritual values.

All efforts to render politics aesthetic culminate in one thing: war. War and war only can set a goal for mass movements on the largest scale while respecting the traditional property system. This is the political formula for the situation. The technological formula may be stated as follows: Only war makes it possible to mobilize all of today's technical resources while maintaining the property system. ...

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<sup>37</sup>Jones, 'Working-Class Culture and Working-Class Politics ....': 463.

<sup>38</sup>Terry Eagleton, *Walter Benjamin, or Towards a Revolutionary Criticism* (London: Verso Editions and NLB, 1981). Especially part 2, section 1: 81-100.

<sup>39</sup>Bradbury, 'The Cities of Modernism,' *Modernism: 1890-1930*: 99.

*'Fiat ars - pereat mundus,'* says Fascism, and, as Marinetti admits, expects war to supply the artistic gratification of a sense of perception that has been changed by technology. This is evidently the consummation of *'l'art pour l'art.'* Mankind, which in Homer's time was an object of contemplation for the Olympian gods, now is one for itself. Its self-alienation has reached such a degree that it can experience its own destruction as an aesthetic pleasure of the first order. This is the situation of politics which Fascism is rendering aesthetic. Communism responds by politicizing art.<sup>40</sup>

At all times during this period society is in flux; involved with complex internal re-negotiations to deny revolutionary, or even just fundamental, social change and yet fascinated by and drawn to the art products of that same modernising force. On the one hand an artistic celebration of the new, the cutting-edge, the 'Modern' -- on the other a recoil from this and a series of policies of retrenchment and consensus. In terms of a theory of culture this is reflected in the view that Modernism is a development of the nineteenth-century form of Realism. For instance, Bradbury and McFarlane consider that:

... it [Modernism] has also been seen as a form of the late bourgeois aestheticism, especially by Marxist critics like Lukács who see the characteristic, the truly self-realizing modern art as a species of Realism.<sup>41</sup>

This 'modern' period (which is also the period of Modernism) is, then, a period of stress within industrialised societies -- but importantly this is an anxiety which is articulated and consequently worked out in a number of ways: political debate and discussion, artistic practice and experimentation, the social use of industry and culture. Raymond Williams adds to the debates around the nature of the Modern movement in art:

Although Modernism can be clearly identified as a distinctive movement, in its deliberate distance from and challenge to more traditional forms of art and thought, it is also strongly characterised by its internal diversity of methods and emphases: a restless and often directly competitive sequence of innovations and experiments, always more immediately recognised by what they are breaking from than by what, in any simple way, they are breaking towards.<sup>42</sup>

This subjective use of contemporary culture is often, but not exclusively, of the political left. However, such use of culture does not necessarily exist as an organised ideology, rather it is a set of discourses that interconnect and react to and against each

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<sup>40</sup>Benjamin, 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction': 243-244.

<sup>41</sup>Bradbury and McFarlane, 'The Name and Nature of Modernism': 23.

<sup>42</sup>Raymond Williams, 'The Metropolis And The Emergence Of Modernism': 9.

other being shaped by certain formal and practical prejudices. In the same volume, *Unreal City*, Timms quotes from Leon Trotsky to begin to answer his question: 'Why ... are the images of the city which emerge from the literature and art of this period so fraught with tension and unease?'<sup>43</sup> He continues:

One answer is to see this response as a reflection of historical contradictions, as Trotsky does in his analysis of Russian Futurism:

Futurism reflected in art the historical development which began in the middle of the [eighteen] 'nineties, and which became merged in the World War. Capitalist society passed through two decades of unparalleled economic prosperity which destroyed the old concepts of wealth and power, and elaborated new standards, new criteria of the possible and of the impossible, and urged people towards new exploits.

At the same time, the social movement lived on officially in the automatism of yesterday. The armed peace, with its patches of diplomacy, the hollow parliamentary systems, the external and internal politics based on the system of safety valves and brakes, all this weighed heavily on poetry at a time when the air, charged with accumulated electricity, gave sign of impending great explosions.<sup>44</sup>

Timms comments:

These dynamic contradictions undermined the sense of a stable social order, of a 'here and now' which could be unproblematically affirmed. The technological future was a manifest force, to be greeted with joy or foreboding. The cultural past could also be easily identified, cherished or repudiated. But the society -- and the city -- of the present were in a state of flux which eluded representation.<sup>45</sup>

Despite the cultural importance of a new aesthetic, British society still faced familiar domestic problems. In terms of the actual political situation of the period, 'The 1931 and 1935 Parliaments,' as Ben Pimlott points out, 'were controlled by the largest Conservative majorities of modern times.'<sup>46</sup> T C Smout and Sydney Wood comment on the same period in their volume of social history *Scottish Voices, 1745-1960* and point out that:

The most severe and prolonged period of unemployment ... came in the inter-war period of the twentieth century, when for almost twenty years the unemployment rate in Scotland exceeded ten per cent, and between

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<sup>43</sup>Timms, 'Unreal City -- Theme And Variation,' *Unreal City*: 2.

<sup>44</sup>Timms, 'Unreal City -- Theme And Variation,' *Unreal City*: 2; quote from Leon Trotsky, *Literature and Revolution*, trans. Rose Strunsky (1925. Michigan: Ann Arbor, 1960): 126,

<sup>45</sup>Timms, 'Unreal City -- Theme And Variation,' *Unreal City*: 3.

<sup>46</sup>Ben Pimlott, *Labour and the Left in the 1930s* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1977): 1.

1931 and 1935 exceeded twenty per cent. In 1931-3 more than a quarter of the entire work force was out of a job.<sup>47</sup>

August 1931 saw the establishment of the National Government, and the rise of Sir Oswald Mosley's New Party. In the election of October 1931 although the New Party did badly, so too did the Labour and Liberal Parties :

The Labour party was reduced to fifty-one seats, the Liberals to seven. The *Daily Express* heading said: SOCIALISTS WIPED OUT. The Government, with its National Labour and National Liberal allies, had an overall majority of more than 500 seats.<sup>48</sup>

Julian Symons goes on to note that the National Government would remain in power until the outbreak of the Second World War, '... when it was replaced by a coalition of the three main parties.'<sup>49</sup> This might suggest stability, even stasis, in the government of Britain, and yet the period was one of internal crisis (violence and the rise of Fascism, poverty and the establishment of the Means Test, unemployment and the Jarrow Crusade). These domestic issues were problem enough without the example and the complication of Europe -- the rise of the dictatorships of Germany, the Soviet Union, and Italy, and the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War in 1936. The Government's response was one of retrenchment and reaction -- even in Britain the response of the arts was rather different. Within English literature it was the period of the Auden group; within drama the establishment of first the Group Theatre (very much influenced by W H Auden), and then of Unity Theatre. Only the latter had any real influence in Scotland and even then Left theatre in Scotland was only a feature of the very late 1930s -- Glasgow Workers' Theatre Group (GWTG) first performed Clifford Odets's *Waiting for Lefty* in May 1937. 1936, the year of the outbreak of war in Spain and the Jarrow Crusade also saw the establishment of the Left Book Club and the key event for the fine arts -- the International Surrealist Exhibition, held in the New Burlington galleries from 11 June to 4 July. Although few British artists actually exhibited the experience of the event did place Britain (admittedly somewhat belatedly) firmly within the context of Modernism and its avant garde experimentation: the impact of European Modernism is one of the discourses to be detected in the politicisation of theatre and film culture and in the arts in general as society and its institutions and representations project towards the cultural excesses of the 1938 Empire Exhibition.

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<sup>47</sup>'Deprivation,' chapter 13 in *Scottish Voices: 1745-1960*, T C Smout and Sydney Wood (London: Fontana: 1991): 211.

<sup>48</sup>Julian Symons, *The Thirties: The Dream Revolved* (London: Faber and Faber, 1975): 20.

<sup>49</sup>Symons: 20.

### Scottish questions

Within an overview of the Scottish arts perhaps the only area which is knowingly concerned with issues of national identity is art with a cultural mission, those arts projects with a set of clearly defined cultural objectives which are connected to the debates of the literary renaissance and the rise of political nationalism in the interwar years. Within political and cultural debates -- with the establishment of political groups like the Scottish Home Rule Association, the National Party of Scotland and cultural groups like the Glasgow Repertory Theatre, Scottish National Players, even the Saltire Society and the publication and use of the Scottish National Dictionary -- there is an increased concern with identity and representation. Indeed there is much contemporary discussion as to an understanding and even a definition of 'Scotland'.

The crisis of an independent Scottish culture, Scottish economy and Scottish nation-state is often perceived around the intelligentsia and the fact that it did not take on the role expected of this class in what has been seen as the typical nineteenth-century move of small and potential nations towards nationalism, that is attaining the status of a nation-state.

The goal of the independent nation-state remains the main model for nationalists -- with culture, myths and history mobilised towards this goal. Nairn sees in the semi-independence of the Civil Society a point of rupture, both economically and emotionally. The point of real crisis is in the divided role of the civil society. On the one hand, the socially and geographically specific civil society was perceived as clearly Scottish; on the other, the same civil society, like the rest of Scotland, was tied to the economy (indigenous industry and imperial expansion) of 'Britain'. Under this structure the role of the Scottish intelligentsia comes into crisis. Tom Nairn argues that because of this economic and emotional division 'there was no call for its usual services' -- that is, the classic role available to the intelligentsia of mobilising the nation's thought, economy and culture to the point at which political independence was possible.<sup>50</sup> Among others Harvie discusses this point:

Elsewhere nationalist intellectuals remedied the lack of national institutions by creating a nationalist imagination which served as a surrogate state. In Scotland they were silent, despite the presence of the traditional institutions of semi-independence. A rational case probably existed for legislative devolution, which the intelligentsia could direct through press and public opinion, but the most it contributed was a decorative and rather frivolous nostalgia. Only in the 1920s did intellectual nationalism become a reality, and only in the 1970s has it attained any real political significance.

But for most of the time after 1707 nationalism was never the only, or the most important, option for the Scottish intelligentsia. Its loyalty

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<sup>50</sup>Nairn, 'Old and New Scottish Nationalism,' *The Break Up In Britain*: 154.

was a dual one, and only its weaker element concerned the home country and its institutions.<sup>51</sup>

William Butler Yeats maintained that a nation could not exist if there were:

... no national institutions to reverence, no national success to admire, without a model of it in the mind of the people.<sup>52</sup>

The models of the Scottish nation developed from the 'Forty-Five on have been reductive, romantic images of the noble Highlander, the defeated Jacobite, the lochs and the glens all images which in the course of the nineteenth century were tied up in tartan for export purposes, not reset and mobilised for political ends. For Scotland, and in particular for the Scottish intellectuals idea of 'nationhood' was indistinguishable from the general 'British' state. Scottish intellectuals, in the post-Union era, migrated at least metaphorically, in terms of philosophies and value systems to the bigger, more 'organic', more 'mature' culture of Anglo-Britain. It seemed that Scottish history had little to offer as paradigm or example and any nostalgia for the use of such sources was duly dealt with by Buckle's volume, *On Scotland And The Scotch Intellect*, a work in many ways typical of the Victorian intellectual tradition:

For those particularly interested in the Victorians, Buckle remains a figure of cardinal importance. A generation ago, the late Humphry House drew attention to the way in which the *History Of Civilisation [In England*, of which *On Scotland And The Scotch Intellect* is part of the second volume] brought together so many of the strands of the 'advanced' thought of the early Victorian age -- belief in progress, emphasis on statistics, hatred of superstition, nationalism, and interest in physical influences upon the shaping of character.<sup>53</sup>

'He sought to create a 'historical science' ... ,' writes H J Hanham in his introduction to the reissue volume.<sup>54</sup> As Hanham describes Buckle's thesis:

He was anxious to free history from the historians and give it a pattern of organisation such as John Stuart Mill attempted to provide for the social sciences in his *System of Logic*. Indeed, Buckle and John Stuart Mill, Comte and Herbert Spenser, may be said to form a group of thinkers sharing much the same preoccupations. They wished to break

<sup>51</sup>Harvie, *Scotland and Nationalism*: 120.

<sup>52</sup>Quoted by F S L Lyons, *Culture and Anarchy in Ireland: 1890 - 1939* (1979. Oxford: Oxford U P, 1989): 49.

<sup>53</sup>John Clive, 'Series Editor's Preface' to Henry Thomas Buckle, *On Scotland and the Scotch Intellect*. First published as part of *The History of the Civilisation of England*, London, 1862. Ed. H J Hanham (Chicago: Chicago U P, 1970): x. Phrenology itself played a major role in the nineteenth-century development of discourses of nationalism and of racism -- in Scotland it was particularly influential in Edinburgh.

<sup>54</sup>Hanham, 'Editor's Introduction.' Buckle: xiv.

the hold of superstition on the study of human affairs and to construct a science of society.<sup>55</sup>

The theoretical basis to his work is, then, the importance of progress, focusing on the developmental nature of national and social histories. With such a thesis in mind, 'Scotland seemed to present a paradox to Buckle.'<sup>56</sup> He comments that even in the nineteenth century:

The gloom of the middle ages was yet upon them [the Scots]. While all around was light, the Scotch, enveloped in mist, crept on, groping their way, dismally, and with fear. While other nations were shaking off their old superstitions, this singular people clung to theirs with undiminished tenacity. Now, indeed, their grasp is gradually slackening, but with extreme slowness, and threatening reactions frequently appear. This, as it always has been, and still is, the curse of Scotland, so also is the chief difficulty with which the historian of Scotland has to contend.<sup>57</sup>

In essence the removal of the court resulted in there being no truly indigenous and purely national culture being produced within the Scottish cultural scene -- with the exception, perhaps, of the culture of the people, the folk culture that was under economic and then political pressure and even censorship in the aftermath of the 'Forty Five. Within the context of Anglo-Britain this local culture was not powerful and struggled to survive without the leadership of a politicised intelligentsia and bourgeoisie

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<sup>55</sup>Hanham, 'Editor's Introduction.' Buckle: xviii.

<sup>56</sup>Marinell Ash, *The Strange Death of Scottish History* (Edinburgh: The Ramsay Head Press, 1980): 147.

<sup>57</sup>Buckle: 155. Buckle continues:

Every where else, when the rise of the intellectual classes, and that of the trading and manufacturing classes, have accompanied each other, the invariable result has been, a diminution of the power of the clergy, and, consequently, a diminution of the influence of superstition. The peculiarity of Scotland is, that, during the eighteenth century, and even down to the middle of the nineteenth century, the industrial and intellectual progress has continued without materially shaking the authority of the priesthood. Strange and unequalled combination! The country of bold and enterprising merchants, of shrewd manufacturers, of far-seeing men [sic] of business, and of cunning artificers; the country, too, of such fearless thinkers as George Buchanan, David Hume and Adam Smith, is awed by a few noisy and ignorant preachers, to whom it allows a license, and yields a submission, disgraceful to the age, and incompatible with the commonest notions of liberty. A people, in many respects very advanced, and holding upon political subjects enlightened views, do, upon all religious subjects, display a littleness of mind, an illiberality of sentiment, a heat of temper, and a love of persecuting others, which shows that the Protestantism of which they boast has done them no good; that, in the most matters, it has left them as narrow as they found them; and that it has been unable to free them from prejudices which make them the laughing-stock of Europe, and which have turned the very name of the Scotch Kirk into a by-word and a reproach among educated men.

Buckle: 156. It is perhaps true to say that when, within the Scottish context, the illiberality of religion and the liberality of politics come into conflict it was the former which ultimately won -- as may be seen to be the case around the Great Disruption of the Church of Scotland in 1843.

that might have provided focus and political direction. Even that most significant of movements -- the Enlightenment -- is often interpreted -- by critics of the Left in particular -- as not being 'Scottish' but almost by definition an extended apologia for 'North Britain.' It is further argued that the Enlightenment was 'strikingly non-nationalist, [being] so detached from the people, so intellectual and universalising in its assumptions, so Olympian in its attitudes.'<sup>58</sup> The possible role for culture -- potentially so divisive -- remains a key problem for critics, particularly nationalist critics, of the Scottish experience: on the one hand an intellectual tradition rooted in the values of 'North Britain' -- with the civil society maintained particularly for and by the middle class interest groups of Church, Law and education and also of the indigenous Press; on the other, a popular tradition that still values, or at least uses, the past and has some kind of conception of 'Scotland'. Here, perhaps, the culture of the 'folk' should be firmly rooted but this has not been the case.<sup>59</sup> Unfortunately, this latter strand was and indeed remains all too easily debased by and into the popular image systems of Scotland, notably those of tartanry and kailyard.

Without wishing to analyse these discourses too closely, the nineteenth-century preoccupations with tartanry and kailyard, and the twentieth-century element of Clydeside, constitute what has been referred to, with clear reference to Gramsci's cultural theories and acknowledging Louis Althusser's idea of 'interpellation', as a 'durable and confidently hegemonic system'<sup>60</sup> able to provide a 'semiotics of Scotland'<sup>61</sup> -- a limited variety of themes but crucially a large number of representations and images which are drawn from this highly specific pool. The proven power of these discourses may well come from not just the actual but also the emotional impact of the point of their historical genesis: this being particularly true for the two dominant discourses.<sup>62</sup> The defeat of Culloden, and the ensuing demise of the clan system of social organisation, is the key moment for tartanry. The death of the old order is transformed by sentiment, by sheer emotional need, into a moment of 'triumphal defeatism.'<sup>63</sup> The 1843 Great Disruption of the Church of Scotland acts as the spark

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<sup>58</sup>Nairn, 'Old and New Scottish Nationalism,' *The Break Up In Britain*: 140

<sup>59</sup>See Ernest Gellner, 'What is a Nation?' *Nations and Nationalism*: 53-62; Tom Nairn, 'The Modern Janus,' *The Break-Up of Britain*: 329-363.

<sup>60</sup>Colin McArthur, 'Breaking the Signs: 'Scotch Myths' as Cultural Struggle,' *Cencrastus* 7 (Winter 10981/1982): 22.

<sup>61</sup>David McCrone, 'Representing Scotland: Culture and Nationalism,' *The Making of Scotland: Nation, Culture and Social Change (Explorations in Sociology, volume 29)*, eds David McCrone, Stephen Kendrick and Pat Straw (Edinburgh: Edinburgh U P/British Sociological Association, 1989): 167.

<sup>62</sup>This is the approach taken by John Caughie in 'De-Picting Scotland: Film, Myth And Scotland's Story,' ts. 1988. This article has been subsequently published in T Ambrose, ed., *Presenting Scotland's Story* (Edinburgh: HMSO, 1989): 44-58.

<sup>63</sup>Caughie, 'De-Picting Scotland': ts. 3.

for kailyard.<sup>64</sup> Despite the historiography of the systems and the potential each 'privileged moment'<sup>65</sup> had to be reinterpreted by the politics of nationalism or of class they lack any strong political manifestation. Their function is, while not necessarily nostalgic, at least backward-looking. As Craig Beveridge and Ronald Turnbull point out,<sup>66</sup> despite the cultural dominance of these discourses, they both provide symbols which can offer little or no comment on present day society. But then that might also explain their dominance within a society in which, until relatively recently, nationalism has been, if not a meaningless concept, then at least an unattainable goal.

In their use the discourses of tartanry and kailyard operate as less of a mythological construct (which is full of at least potential energy) and more

... to mystify; they prevent Scots from seeing themselves, their history and social reality with any clarity, and provide comfort and escape and false reasons for pride and satisfaction.<sup>67</sup>

Critics have, on the whole, lined up against what has been perceived as the reductive power of these dominant discourses. Tom Nairn discusses the 'cultural sub-nationalism'<sup>68</sup> of such discourses, which Lindsay Paterson describes as 'a bit of an opiate'<sup>69</sup> and 'an ideology to help people to adjust to their environment,'<sup>70</sup> again Ian Lockerbie describes the myths of tartanry and kailyard as 'mask[ing] an opting-out from history and the world of action'<sup>71</sup> -- to which Beveridge and Turnbull add, 'an ideal compensation for material deprivation.'<sup>72</sup>

Despite the collective critical engagement with tartanry and kailyard, David McCrone is keen to stress restraint. He warns that:

... the critique of Tartanry/Kailyard as the hegemonic discourse in Scottish culture arises from an essentially 'internalist' accounts of Scotland, ... [which] ignores major culture and social changes in the world generally.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>64</sup>Caughie, 'De-Picting Scotland': ts. 7.

<sup>65</sup>To use Caughie's term; Caughie, 'De-Picting Scotland': ts. 6, 7.

<sup>66</sup>Craig Beveridge and Ronald Turnbull, *The Eclipse of Scottish Culture: Inferiorism and the Intellectuals* (Edinburgh: Polygon, 1989): 4-15.

<sup>67</sup>Beveridge and Turnbull: 13.

<sup>68</sup>Nairn, 'Old and New Scottish Nationalism,' *The Break-Up of Britain*: 160.

<sup>69</sup>Lindsay Paterson, 'Scotch Myths -- 2': 70.

<sup>70</sup>Paterson, 'Scotch Myths -- 2': 70.

<sup>71</sup>Lockerbie, 'Scotland and Quebec.': 8.

<sup>72</sup>Beveridge and Turnbull: 13.

<sup>73</sup>McCrone, 'Representing Scotland: Culture and Nationalism': 172. This is perhaps where socialist thought, particularly along the lines offered by Eric Hobsbawm, may be mobilised.

McCrone argues that cultural theory in Scotland reaches a political and cultural impasse because it sets out to find a Scottish 'national culture' when this is an 'illegitimate'<sup>74</sup> project. A more useful project, it is suggested, is one willing to acknowledge that modern societies do not experience 'a national culture which will speak to people in their own terms, an integrated discourse which will connect with political and social realities in Scotland'<sup>75</sup> but are essentially 'pluralistic'<sup>76</sup> and paradoxical. While this wider vision is certainly one to be encouraged and sought out it is nevertheless important to acknowledge that a 'national' view is one which practitioners and critics in Scotland have long held up as the ideal of indigenous culture..

In terms of the development of cultural theory and the ongoing discussion of Marxism in particular but Left politics in general, the contemporary writings of Benjamin, Trotsky and Gramsci are useful. As Collier points out, 'Gramsci shared with Trotsky the belief that socialism should redesign the whole aesthetic and cultural as well as social and political context of human life.'<sup>77</sup> This -- directly in terms of form and content, indirectly in terms of mode of production and use, even as theme or metaphor -- is at the root of much of the actual cultural products of the period. It is interesting, as is so often the case when working on the development of a distinctive Scottish culture, to look at the situation in Ireland. The key figure of interest in the development of a cultural project, if not a policy, is William Butler Yeats. F S L Lyons comments that:

[Yeats's] purpose was to create a new literary movement, which would indeed use Irish themes from the past, but which would not be content with simply embalming what had been handed on by previous generations.<sup>78</sup>

The project was to develop and to provide new images, new representations, new stories within a context of political and social agitation. Indeed the Irish example was one that was actively held up as a cultural, if not a political, paradigm for the arts community of Scotland during this period, and indeed thereafter. In this project the role of the Abbey Theatre, Dublin, was to influence how Scotland as peripheral nation could aspire to organise and focus its drama. The Abbey was in different ways directly influential on the Glasgow Repertory Theatre founded in 1909 and on the Scottish National Players founded under the auspices of the St Andrew Society in 1921. As with the Abbey, both companies encouraged and produced the work of new writers.

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<sup>74</sup>McCrone, 'Representing Scotland: Culture and Nationalism': 172.

<sup>75</sup>McCrone, 'Representing Scotland: Culture and Nationalism': 168.

<sup>76</sup>McCrone, 'Representing Scotland: Culture and Nationalism': 172.

<sup>77</sup>Collier, 'Dreams Of A Revolutionary Culture: Gramsci, Trotsky and Breton': 35.

<sup>78</sup>Lyons: 39.

However, the national and international success of the Abbey was not to be repeated by indigenous Scottish companies. None of the Scottish theatre ventures of the early twentieth century quite caught the nation's imagination in the way that Yeats had ensured that the Abbey evolve as part of the cultural infrastructure of the Irish community. The political backdrop, in many ways similar, was in important aspects markedly different: Scotland never aspired to independence in the way that Ireland did, and the literary project of the Scottish renaissance was not matched by Ireland's institutional support system.

Political and cultural nationalism in Scotland was increasingly marginalised. However, despite domestic politics nurturing something of an Anglo-British aspect cultural activity was revealing Scotland as different. With British politics concentrating on consensus and community values (the 'nation as family'), the lack of debate within the country may be seen as symptomatic of a huge (Conservative) government majority and the fissures within national Labour politics. Pimlott notes that:

Two great national anxieties, mass unemployment and the threat of war, dominated British politics in the 1930s and preoccupied British politicians who failed to provide an answer for either of them.<sup>79</sup>

The Scottish scene may, for a time at least, be viewed as atypical.

Arenas for discussion and debate were expanding in Scotland. Magazines like *Pictish Review*, *Scots Independent* and *Modern Scot* were still interested in debating issues of socialism, of nationalism and, perhaps because of the terrible impact the Depression had in Scotland, of poverty, public health and housing. In Scotland, across a wider range of activities and therefore meeting a greater proportion of the public, Left groups in particular (but not exclusively so) worked on ways to communicate to all. One way this was achieved was to make culture relevant for all, a real and vibrant part of people's lives. So while the Scottish National Players may not have performed the kind of text that later in the 1930s GWTG would, they did allow access for people to participate in the production of theatre and become involved in all kinds of theatrical activity in ways that did challenge and rework existing models of organisation -- at least for a short time. In this project to encourage active participation, the Scottish Community Drama Association (SCDA) was able to provide an infrastructure of competition and comment, however, increasingly it came to connote not a challenging theatre culture -- a theatre culture truly of the people -- but a bourgeois model of cultural and leisure activity. The literary debate coincided with economic crisis and political developments within Scotland. While 'Britain' seemed to become ever more centralised and centralising, Scotland was working around issues of political and

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<sup>79</sup>Pimlott: 1.

cultural independence. The National Party of Scotland was founded in 1928 and only two years earlier Scottish literature had found access to an international arena with the establishment of Scottish PEN.<sup>80</sup>

It seems a much more important and indeed radical approach to an imposed cultural hegemony that these two institutions were established around this time. While it was important that Scots increasingly found themselves represented in empathetic and recognisable ways across the media, images are only important, useful and effective if supported by a framework of cultural and social dimensions. Certainly the publication of Hugh MacDiarmid's *A Drunk Man Looks At The Thistle* in 1926, Lewis Grassie Gibbon's *A Scots Quair* (*Sunset Song* in 1932, *Cloud Howe* in 1933, and *Grey Granite* in 1934),<sup>81</sup> even Neil Gunn's *The Silver Darlings*, written at the very end of the period between 1939 and 1940, Edwin Muir's *Scott And Scotland* in 1936 and the staging of the plays of James Bridie from 1928 (when the Scottish National Players first performed *The Sunlight Sonata*, written under the pseudonym of 'Mary Henderson') are important -- particularly in terms of literary prestige and the nation's cultural capital -- there are problems. To find a distinctive national voice is simply not enough. To base it in a loosely united grouping (the 'Scottish Renaissance') may allow a degree of experimentation unavailable to the individual, the lone voice, but as the disintegration of that loosest of movements shows, without domestic economic support and critical engagement it is all too easy to let this energy dissipate. There came to be no focus (neither political nor aesthetic) and no point of social or literary reference. The literary renaissance developed no institutional framework nor even a discrete manifesto like many of the other cultural movements of the period. Despite the success and the social and cultural impact of the individuals of the renaissance there was never the aspiration to develop an infrastructure or even just a support system to harness the energy of the time. Despite the linguistic importance and cultural weight given to the creation of the Scottish National Dictionary such a project and such a text was not the point of organisational support that, for instance, Kino was for the Workers' Film Societies; it was not the creative model of Unity Theatre; nor could it offer much in the way of political encouragement. By the 1930s the political energy within Scotland was no longer inspired by the national question (and its cultural manifestations) but was of the Left, energised by socialism and internationalism.

What may lie behind the increasingly deformed and deforming images of cultural Scotland is a sense of the lost 'Golden Age' -- when society and state were one, when it was possible to argue that Scottish culture was a community and a communal one.

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<sup>80</sup>1926 was also the year of the Scottish National Convention under the guidance of the Scottish Home Rule Association.

<sup>81</sup>Gibbon's *A Scot's Quair* was first published -- as the trilogy in -- 1946.

(Indeed for Scottish drama in particular the myth of the 'community' is still a problematic one.) The key creative figures in this cultural aspect include Robert Henryson, William Dunbar, John Barbour, Sir David Lyndsay but also, in later centuries, Allan Ramsay, Robert Fergusson and Robert Burns. The key critical works are those of Kurt Wittig<sup>82</sup> and David Craig,<sup>83</sup> with Edwin Muir's *Scott And Scotland* providing a kind of central thesis. This thesis argues that the literature of this 'Golden Age', a period of great antiquity, it must be stressed, was 'whole'. William Findlay quotes David Murison, who describes the 1460-1560 period as:

... the heyday of the Scots tongue as a full national language, showing all the signs of a rapidly developing, all-purpose speech, as distinct from English as Portuguese from Spanish, Dutch as German, or Swedish from Danish.<sup>84</sup>

It was clearly a literature, and by extension a culture, that did speak for a national consciousness; that at this time Scotland was the "natural" or organic unity<sup>85</sup> which critics as different as Muir and Henry Thomas Buckle<sup>86</sup> considered England to be.

This began to change around 1560 with the Protestant Reformation and the subsequent dissociation of a Scots language from use within religion (under Calvinism the Bible is translated into English not Scots) and then at the Court and in the arts patronised through the Crown. Just at the point when the Scots language had developed to the point where it might be used for the law, the court, the everyday as well as for the arts there is an irreconcilable split. With the Union of the Crowns in 1603, James VI's court relocates to London and begins to use, to patronise and to influence by example work in English. This affected literature directly and indirectly as English also became the language of government -- this confirmed by the 1707 Union of the Parliaments when English became the official language of Scotland. By association English acquired social cachet in Scotland (it was the language of what was perceived as fashionable, of the new metropolis and the cosmopolitan centre). So Scots loses its status as an 'all-purpose'<sup>87</sup> and fully rounded language and is debased, ultimately to become a series of parochial, or at best regional dialects and, in general, a

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<sup>82</sup>Kurt Wittig, *The Scottish Tradition in Literature* (1958. Edinburgh: The Mercat Press, 1978 -- facsimile of the 1958 edition).

<sup>83</sup>David Craig, *Scottish Literature and the Scottish People: 1680-1830* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1961).

<sup>84</sup>William Findlay, 'The Scots Language Context To Translating *Les Belles-Soeurs*.' Ed. Lockerbie, *Image and Identity*: 27.

<sup>85</sup>Webb: 5.

<sup>86</sup>See Buckle, *On Scotland and the Scotch Intellect*.

<sup>87</sup>Findlay: 27; quoting *The Scottish National Dictionary*.

discourse of sentiment -- a language of emotion not reason.<sup>88</sup> Jack Brand notes that '... the distinctive languages, Scots ... and Gaelic, were assigned the status of dialects, the mark of the yokel or of the barbarian.'<sup>89</sup> This is a position from which the Scots language has never really recovered. From the seventeenth century language in Scotland was always politically as well as ideologically loaded. Language could not, in such a context, even pretend to be a neutral conveyor of meaning. How one spoke, which language one, chose aligned communities with either history and tradition, or imperialism and the perceived way forward. Scots, and even more Gaelic, was instantly debased as backward-looking and barbarous. English became the medium of advancement and of cultural and social aspiration. As William Findlay notes:

By the 18th century, then, Scots had ceded to English its spiritual, social and political prestige. Importantly, in the process Scots prose was lost: not only had the prose of officialdom become English, but the departure of first the Court and then the Parliament to London meant that the means of maintaining a metropolitan written standard for Scots prose had gone. Thus Scots lost its capacity to be a fully national tongue and was reduced to its regional dialects.<sup>90</sup>

Andrew Hook notes the eighteenth-century literary division that this produced:

The intellectual and artistic life of eighteenth century Scotland is marked by two apparently contradictory impulses or emphases; one is exclusively native or national, the other more English or European or international. Allan Ramsay, Robert Fergusson, Robert Burns looked inward to Scotland herself, to the rediscovery and revitalisation of her enduring folk and literary traditions; Francis Hutcheson, Adam Smith and David Hume looked outward to the wider intellectual world, bringing Scotland to the forefront of European philosophical and scientific thought.

Where the difference between the two groups is made clearest is over the question of language. Many Scotsmen [sic] in the eighteenth century seem to have sensed the connection between national identity and a national language. But for the 'North Britons' -- the Hutcheson, Smith, Hume group -- because there had never been a firmly established tradition of prose-writing in Scots, there was no alternative to English. Scots, a vigorous energetic spoken language in the eighteenth century -- the language spoken by all the people of all Scotland of all classes outside the Gaelic area of the north and west -- was entirely deficient in the formal, learned, technical vocabulary required by philosophers and historians like Robertson, Hume and Smith. English was for them the

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<sup>88</sup>But it is interesting to note that by the nineteenth century the discourse of the sentimental had developed to become a generic category, an aesthetic form unto itself.

<sup>89</sup>Brand: 91-92. Grieve adds to this debate in *Albyn*:

The Reformation, which strangled Scottish arts and letters, subverted the whole national psychology and made the dominant characteristics of the nation those which had previously been churl elements. ... As a consequence Scotland today is singularly destitute of aesthetic consciousness.

Grieve, *Albyn*: 30.

<sup>90</sup>Findlay: 28.

natural choice, even as Latin had been for their medieval predecessors.<sup>91</sup>

The literary and cultural traditions of Scotland are complex and it may be argued that they focus at least as much attention on the externally available view of Scotland as on the internal role that culture might be able to play. Certainly Ian Lockerbie considers that:

After the rapid intellectual flowering that made Edinburgh one of the centres of the European enlightenment, came a pioneering role in the industrial revolution and all the benefits that arose from participation in Britain's imperialist expansion. Scotland achieved fame for its ship-building, engineering, its education system, its universities, its medicine etc.

But there is a sub-text to this success story. One only has to look at the representations of Scotland in circulation since the nineteenth century to see that all is not well. The images of Scotland as philosopher, educator, engineer, inventor which are what one would expect from the external history are undercut by less flattering images: the Scot as dour, canny, mean, as inarticulate or incomprehensible in speech, as a romantic chieftain in implausible dress, as a comic figure with a red nose and a funny walking stick. It is important to note that the unflattering images have been propagated by Scots themselves. Such evidence reveals that there are serious ambiguities in how Scots construct their identity.<sup>92</sup>

The language issue also put certain restraints on art producers and cultural institutions within Scotland. This search for a distinctively 'Scottish' cultural statement and opus is (given the limitations of the language question and the power of the dominant cultural discourses) almost inevitably retrospective and romantic; it develops as a celebration of the past. In Scotland culture has been interpreted as being engaged in 'a heroic attempt to find a mythology ... which will cover the splits between and within Scots.'<sup>93</sup> But even this is formed around a debate about the role of language -- not necessarily just played out linguistically but in terms of images and narrative style. Lockerbie can describe this in easily recognisable terms of sentimentality and loss:

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<sup>91</sup> Andrew Hook, *Scotland and America: A Study of Cultural Relations: 1750-1835* (Glasgow: Blackie, 1975): 2-3.

<sup>92</sup> Lockerbie, 'Scotland and Quebec': 8. In many ways Scots language (and by association Scottish culture) is reduced to the status of the folk, the barbarian. However, within Scottish texts an intriguing anomaly is to be discovered. In a discussion on the role of the supernatural in the works of James Hogg, Coleman O Parsons reminds the reader of a stylistic device that is also to be noticed in the plays of James Bridie: '... the proper language for supernatural is, of course, Scots. As a character protests in *The Hunt of Eildon*, 'That winna tell in English.' Coleman O Parsons, *Witchcraft and Demonology in Scott's Fiction* (Edinburgh and London: Oliver and Boyd, 1964): 290.

<sup>93</sup> Douglas Gifford, 'Scotland And The Search For Cultural Identity' -- lecture given as part of the Arts and Nationhood Event on Scotland and Lithuania at the Tron Theatre, Glasgow, on 30 Oct. 1989.

... major writers of earlier generations lamented the impossibility of dealing with the full range of human experience in a native language that they claimed to be defective and stunted.<sup>94</sup>

It might well be argued that the Scottish literary renaissance movement of the early twentieth century was most valuable when it stopped trying to cover up the splits, the gaps and began to focus on them. The popular Scottish literature of the late-nineteenth century was that of the kailyard -- a literary form almost by definition apolitical -- or at least a form which upheld and did not question the politics of the social establishment. The problem with the texts used by the Scottish National Players, for instance, is that they are, in terms of narrative style and often in terms of plot, character and setting, still involved in the literary prejudices and fashions of the nineteenth century, even if, in mode of production and the development of audience they are socially progressive, that is, they exist to challenge the dominant experience of theatre production and theatre-going in the 1920s. In terms of re-evaluating the role of nineteenth-century culture, these are the myths and the literature and the genres against which the early twentieth-century renaissance is a reaction; and so the various aesthetic products and projects are comprehensible, are useful and valuable within a historical and cultural context. What has tended to happen is that the useful (the context and the history) has been removed in the literary criticism of Scotland and replaced by a patchwork of myths which in their use have been culturally limiting.

The output of the Scottish renaissance (a 'movement' identified not from within the culture but by French academic Denis Saurat, although developed by MacDiarmid, mostly notably in *Albyn ...*) was a development of a modern world view -- a world that looked to and was informed by European culture and so developed both in parallel and in reaction to it. One project associated with the movement is both inward and outward looking and described as '... a great international interaction of national ideas ....'<sup>95</sup> This was not an easy path to traverse:

The result was to create in the Scottish literary world a sort of permanent confrontation between those writers who looked habitually to the continent ... and those whose horizons were set by Britain and the United States. For Hugh MacDiarmid and the younger poets between the wars, England was an evil thing, not merely because it represented a form of imperialism, but because English domination of Scotland meant the imposition of second-rate standards on Scotland. ... they thought of culture and ideas as having their origin on the continent of Europe and wished to have them direct from the fountainhead, not filtered and a generation late via England.<sup>96</sup>

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<sup>94</sup>Lockerbie, 'Scotland and Quebec': 10.

<sup>95</sup>Hanham, *Scottish Nationalism*: 45.

<sup>96</sup>Hanham, *Scottish Nationalism*: 45-46. Hanham continues:

A basic problem is to define 'Scotland' and a role for Scotland. This is a task for literary and dramatic texts and for critical and philosophical texts. The Scottish literary renaissance discussed the nature of 'Scotland' on both these fronts but there was a particular problem around literary criticism and hence the perceived role of the literature, the cultural product itself:

Scottish writers ... have repeatedly complained of the low level of Scottish criticism. In 1936, Edwin Muir, harshly condemns what he considers the pseudo-criticism of the Scottish Renaissance Movement. In *Scott And Scotland* he writes:

Scottish criticism, lacking either sensibility or a standard, has become a mixture of Nationalist ideology, local patriotism and vague international sentiment, so that it has little to relation to the writers it criticizes, [sic] who are at best a springboard to something else and more exciting. ... [Scottish criticism is] more like a disease of literature than a corrective.

We know, of course, that Muir was at odds with Hugh MacDiarmid and his close followers; but even MacDiarmid growlingly admits, as late as 1950, that 'the neglect of aesthetic studies is evident every day in what passes in Scotland for criticism,' and he concludes his treatise *Aesthetics in Scotland* with the words: 'We are a breed of cultural simpletons.'<sup>97</sup>

It is a clear lack in the development not just of the national culture but of the nation. It is a lack that the renaissance at least addressed despite the fact that:

... the Scottish literary movement had itself no ideological homogeneity. It was an *ad hoc* coalition brought about largely for defensive reasons -- a sideways glance at Ireland and a preoccupation with the break-up of Scottish society -- in which linguistic revivalists coexisted with local journalists, ex-Kailyarders, established or hopeful Anglo-Scottish writers and romantics of left and right. It lacked the strength of the coalition between mass organisation, academic activity and aristocratic patronage which had created the Irish literary movement of the 1890s, and in the absence of this sort of backing, the linkage of ex-home rulers (backed up by the the journalists, Kailyarders and Anglo-Scots) and root-and-branch separatists (backed up by the linguistic revivalists) could not be expected to last.<sup>98</sup>

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For such people Gaelic culture was important because it gave Scottish writers a stock of distinctive ideas, attitudes and memories to draw on which were not part of the common currency of Europe. The Lowland Scots tongue, too, had a special merit as something distinctively Scottish, while for a time a revival of older Scots, 'Lallans', looked as though it could be made into a suitable vehicle for the expression of Scottish ideas that could not be suitably expressed in English.

<sup>97</sup>Peter Zenzinger, 'Nationalism in Twentieth Century Scottish Literary Criticism,' *Studies in Scottish Fiction: Nationalism in Literature: Literature, Language and National Identity* eds Horst W Drescher and Herman Volkel (Frankfurt am Main: Verlag Peter Lang, 1989): 143.

<sup>98</sup>Harvie, *Scotland and Nationalism*: 150.

Indeed the split suggested by Hanham and described by Zenzinger became a bitter fissure within the loose grouping of the political and the literary nationalists. The effect of Muir's *On Scott and Scotland*, when it was published in 1936, was all the greater because it seemed to offer a critical basis and validity to the process of cultural and linguistic anglicisation. Language became permanently 'meaningful' within the cultural experience of Scotland.<sup>99</sup> There exists an identifiable number (if not a tradition) of texts written in the actual speech systems of Scotland, in 'the real speech of their communities' as Ian Lockerbie describes the use of indigenous languages in both the Scottish and Québécois cultures.<sup>100</sup>

But Scotland does have its unique institutions -- those of the Law, the Church and education -- and an independent cultural agency. The Saltire Society was founded in 1935, ironically too late to be part of the core energy and political force of and behind the renaissance writers (but perhaps this was as much an advantage as a disadvantage). In any event, the Saltire Society is the ultimate cultural representative of the Scottish Civil Society, and, perhaps because it depicted itself as such, really came to be more interested in ensuring that it did not become the agency to affect cultural and social change but maintain the 'traditional' role of Scottish culture -- as backward looking, as upholding the accepted and the acceptable social order and as being a culture ratified by the structures and codes of another's cultural policy, often perceived as a North British or 'Scotlandshire' version of an indigenous history and culture. That the Scottish Civil Society would have a commitment to the living culture of the nation was perceived as, if not impossible then at least somewhat unlikely. Its need, and by extension its function, it might be argued, goes little beyond the mythologising of past cultural products or the mercenary use of particular sections of the cultural scene as a means of establishing and reaffirming the elite nature of the bourgeois civil society.

An easy and bourgeois response to the alienation of Scottish culture from institutional ratification was one of retreat -- either the actual or even the intellectual relocation to the South, or, as Nairn has discussed, the return to an increasingly mythologised past with the coincident celebration of the markers that came to signify some lost Golden Age. (This being more akin to the role taken on by the Saltire Society.) Although the use made by the Scottish bourgeoisie of indigenous culture may not be overtly nationalistic, the role of the national as reference point is a feature of much of the cultural activity of the early-twentieth century. This is thrown into relief in a number of different contexts. Traditional culture is a continuing source for artists and for audiences but equally the new and the challenging form a context of modernity.

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<sup>99</sup>One of the slogans adopted by Ruaraidh Erskine of Marr was 'No Language, No Nation' -- and although he was agitating for the use of Gaelic as a serious political language the cultural parallel with MacDiarmid's revival of Lallans is clear.

<sup>100</sup>Lockerbie, 'Scotland and Quebec': 1.

Traditional forms, new aesthetics, new technologies and new industries meet and react during this period in unique and challenging ways.

### Imagining

One of the problems faced by nationalists and by Scottish culture in general is that the model of 'Scottishness' available from the images of popular culture is one that is negative: it is one which will 'reduce culture to a series of tragic failures.'<sup>101</sup> The resultant myths are tied up in the 'failure of nerve' theory and the 'Scottish inferiority complex.'<sup>102</sup> Lindsay Paterson refers this back to the Scottish myths of representation. He writes that:

Tartan's principal legacy is ... a cancerous national inferiority complex: the quite unmistakable psychological end-product of two centuries of tawdry palliatives -- of escaping from social problems into wishful fantasy.<sup>103</sup>

There was, however, another type of critical discussion ongoing within the Scottish cultural scene -- one that looked less to the art objects and representations and more to the institutions which enabled or restricted particular social and cultural developments within Scotland.

It is evocative of the emphasis placed on the role of 'emotion' and 'sentiment' within the Scottish world view to compare Anderson's distillation of 'imagined communities' with Nairn's formulation of the nation based as it is on medical and psychoanalytic discourses. Nairn is only one of the critics who have characterised Scottish culture as split, divided -- often irreconcilably so:

'Identity' tends ... to be a term of approval. In the psychological terms which inform so much discussion of nationalism, 'identity' is what frustrated nationalities want and nation-states possess. ... Scotland appears as a highly developed society (as distinct from simply being part of a larger development area, the United Kingdom), which, nevertheless, does not possess all the standard filaments of development. It is hard to avoid metaphor in describing the situation -- 'decapitation', 'neurosis', or even 'schizophrenia', and so on.<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>101</sup>McCrone, 'Representing Scotland: Culture and Nationalism': 12.

<sup>102</sup>Beveridge and Turnbull: 7.

<sup>103</sup>Paterson, 'Scotch Myths -- 2: 71.

<sup>104</sup>Nairn, 'Old and New Scottish Nationalism,' *The Break-Up of Britain*: 172. Beveridge and Turnbull ask a central question:

... Nairn frequently talks of the 'lunacy' and the 'symptoms' of nationalism. He retains the physician's stance in his consideration of the Scottish 'case-history'. 'An aura of madness' surrounds Scottish nationalist ideology. Indeed, the Scottish nationalist seems for Nairn to be a doubly demented creature, since the result of the union with England has been 'a characteristic series ... of deformations and 'neuroses'....he writes that nationalist consciousness 'should be treated as a psychoanalyst does the outpourings of a patient. Where -- as is not infrequently the

The distinctive view which Nairn develops is of a schizoid nation -- it is perceived as a culture of madness, or at least of mental and emotional instability. This state of psychic disorder is perhaps analogous to the general twentieth-century state of upheaval and crisis that Modernism reflects, describes and is part of. Both offer a set of discourses of psychological and cultural chaos. One of the differences is in the role of the critic and the artist. Within the experience of Modernism the artist and the critic can shift between moments of psychological closeness and empathy and extreme distancing. The Scottish critic seems to invest so much in each text, each moment of cultural production that to step out would destroy the delicate balance of identity.

The metaphoric links between the psychological, the actual and art and criticism does have its antecedents in the nineteenth century and, in particular, in the themes and narratives of nineteenth-century realism. This tendency also has its own theorist, a writer who thrusts the old world into the new of the twentieth century: Sigmund Freud is the critic, physician and detective of his contemporary world. The two figures of Freud and Karl Marx, as commentators on the nineteenth-century world and nineteenth-century thought, fundamentally influence the shape and the nature of the twentieth century.

The psychic investigation which Freud undertakes of his patients is, by extension, an analysis of nineteenth-century European society. The 'family melodrama' that Freud describes is both socially and culturally specific and yet also functions as metaphor and as case study. An analytical equivalent is lacking in the myths that Nairn identifies in the development of the Scottish nation and psyche. The problem is clearly identified and is described using a scientific frame of reference. However, the interpretation, the analysis is clearly absent. If this is missing in Nairn's discussion, is it developed elsewhere? Within the cultural milieu which Freud investigates the dramaturgical and literary point of reference is the canon of Ibsen. For Scottish culture the key texts of the psychological narrative are clearly James Hogg's *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner* and Robert Louis Stevenson's *Dr Jekyll and Mr*

case with nationalism -- the patient is a roaring drunk into the bargain, even greater patience is called for.' So if Nairn sees nationalism in general as insane and Scottish nationalism as particularly neurotic, how has he come to identify himself with the deranged?

Beveridge and Turnbull: 53-54.

Such a discourse of neuroses is not, however, restricted to the interpretation and deconstruction of Scotland. Gwyn A Williams finds a similar set of preoccupations in Wales:

[for the Welsh] ... the problem of identity has been desperate from the beginning. In recent centuries we have progressively lost our grip on our own past. Our history has been a history to induce schizophrenia and to enforce loss of memory. Professional history, history as a craft is even more recent a phenomenon in Wales than in England. Half-memories, folklore traditions, myths, fantasy are rampant. We are a people with plenty of traditions but no historical memory. We have no historical autonomy. We live in the interstices of other people's history.

Williams, 'When was Wales?' *The Welsh in their History*: 194.

*Hyde* but their roots are deeper than the novel form, stretching back to the fairy tales, myths and legends of the folk culture. In both the novels and the tales psychic disorder is depicted as or replaced by the interaction of the real world with the supernatural.<sup>105</sup> Derick Thomson, writing on the Gaelic tradition notes that:

It is quite characteristic of Gaelic story-telling that there should be sudden transitions from the everyday to the supernatural, from the factual to the fantastic. The basis of many of the tales is the familiar, human situation, with its tensions and choices: love, jealousy, greed, violence, forgiveness and so on. Visits to the Otherworld, whether it is *Tir nan Og* (The Land of the Ever-Young) or a fairy mound or mansion, are very popular, and so is the notion of the menacing visitor from another system, whether it takes the form of the *each-uisge* or water horse, or that of the Devil whose beguiling exterior is not quite foolproof, with the hint of a cloven foot showing.

These juxtapositions are very familiar in Celtic story-telling, where the fairy world, for instance, appears in myriad guises, and returns to sober earth are not too uncommon.<sup>106</sup>

The escape within the mythic structures of Scottish culture is away from a problematic view of the community towards a fantastic, though not necessarily idealised, version of its supernatural parallel. The use of a parallel, an alternative world, is a common feature in fables and stories but may also function to mythologise and interpret events in the 'real world'. Commenting on the development of new horizons and the discovery of new societies in the sixteenth century, Benedict Anderson discusses the importance of fantastic communities in the creation of national identity (the very title of his study *Imagined Communities* has available this alternative interpretation):

In the course of the sixteenth century, Europe's 'discovery' of grandiose civilizations hitherto only dimly rumoured -- in China, Japan, Southeast Asia, and the Indian subcontinent -- or completely unknown -- Aztec Mexico and Incan Peru -- suggested an irremediable human pluralism. Most of these civilizations had developed quite separate from the known history of Europe, Christendom, Antiquity, indeed man: their genealogies lay outside of and were unassimilable to Eden. ...The impact of the 'discoveries' can be gauged by the peculiar geographies of the imaginary polities of the age. More's *Utopia*, which appeared in 1516, purported to be the account of a sailor, encountered in Antwerp, who had participated in Amerigo Vespucci's 1497-1498 expedition to the Americas. Francis Bacon's *New Atlantis* (1626) was perhaps new above all because it was situated in the Pacific Ocean. Swift's magnificent Island of the Houyhnhnms (1726) came with a bogus map

<sup>105</sup>In the drama this is used most commonly by Alexander Reid in such plays as *The Lass Wi' the Muckle Moo* (1950) and most obviously *The World's Wonder* (1953).

<sup>106</sup>Derick Thomson, 'The Gaelic Background to the Opera.' A programme note for Scottish Opera's 1990 production of Judith Weir's *The Vanishing Bridegroom* (Glasgow: Scottish Opera, 1990): N.pag.

of its South Atlantic location.... All these tongue-in-cheek utopias, 'modelled' on real discoveries, are depicted, not as lost Edens, but as *contemporary* societies. One could argue that they had to be, since they were composed as criticisms of contemporary societies, and the discoveries had ended the necessity for seeking models in a vanished antiquity.<sup>107</sup>

The challenging and pagan exoticism of the 'discoveries' threw the Euro-centric Christian world-view into a new age: one which was problematic but ultimately containable within a philosophy of rationalism; this despite the disturbing heterogeneity of the new cultures to Post-Reformation Europe. The development of rationalist thought and the philosophies dealing with this -- placing Europe as just one element within a wider world and cosmos -- were practically challenged by the expansionist strategies of the economic and political powers of the old world (the imperial and colonial expansionism of Spain, France, the Netherlands).

What may be of interest is just how this Copernican world-view missed (deliberately or not) the imagination of Scotland -- a nation with a role to play at the economic and political centre of Europe? What are the Scottish 'utopias'? *Tir nan Og* is by definition other worldly, it is about escape and separation from spatial, temporal and even emotional reality -- although perhaps geographically and culturally familiar. In the original tale used as a source for Judith Weir's opera *The Vanishing Bridegroom*<sup>108</sup> (in particular the section of 'The Disappearance'), the Father had spent a year in the fairy cavern when his friend rescued him:

<sup>107</sup>Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism* (1983. London: Verso, 1990): 67-68.

<sup>108</sup>It is interesting to consider the use of language in Judith Weir's opera *The Vanishing Bridegroom*. Although the libretto is basically written and sung in English it is quite clearly in terms of narrative and the use of dialect set in a Scottish context: this is also articulated in the references to the traditional in the actual music. In the language the role of the indigenous and traditional in the culture is most marked in the song which the Daughter and the Chorus sing in the third story 'The Stranger.' The Stranger of the sub-title is in fact the Devil:

*Daughter:* There was a man riding frae the east  
*Chorus:* Sing the cather banks, the bonny brume  
*Daughter:* He'd been wooing at many a place  
 ...  
 He came unto a widow's door  
 And speired where her three dochters were  
 The auldest's to the washing gane  
 ...  
 The second's to a bakin' gane  
 ...  
 The youngest's to a weeding gane  
 And it'll be nicht ere she comes hame  
 He set him doon upon a stane  
 ...  
 Till a' three lasses came trippin hame  
 ...

This reflect a reality of the use of dialect in the community Weir describes. Every day conversation is in English coloured by Scots words and phrases; while Scots is used as a discrete language in the songs of the community, in its own story-telling and myths. This is further extended to the use of

*Bless me! why could you not let me finish my reel, Sandy? Bless me!* rejoined Sandy, *had you not had enough of reeling this last twelvemonth? Last twelvemonth!* cried the other, in amazement; nor would he believe the truth concerning himself till he found his wife sitting by the door with a yearling child in her arms, so quickly does time pass in the company of the good people.<sup>109</sup>

The cultural experience is the same (but psychically and emotionally heightened), the temporal quite different. Brigadoon is again, of necessity, 'in a vanished antiquity.'<sup>110</sup> The village which appears only for one day every one hundred years is almost infinitely trapped temporally and culturally in the eighteenth century, and geographically in a kind of pseudo-Scotland that is at once lie and, in fact, all of rural Scotland. In short, if not *in* the past, both are *of* the past.

Neither Brigadoon nor *Tir nan Og* are commentaries on their contemporary culture, neither offers the ironic perspective of Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, nor, indeed, of any of the texts mentioned by Anderson. Now, while it is imprecise to relate directly the literary agenda of the sixteenth century to that of the eighteenth or twentieth centuries, such a comparison does present a problem for Scottish culture in relief. The critical literature, and in particular the satirical literature, of the earlier period was wholly in touch with its contemporary world scene; this, after all, was the purpose of satire. Is it just that Scottish culture does not prioritise satire as a useful literary genre? This cannot be the case, the work of just James Hogg reveals that this is not so, and equally convincing cases might be made for poets as diverse as Robert Henryson and Robert Burns, prose writers as different again as Tobias Smollett and Muriel Spark, and in terms of the drama the central feature must be Sir David Lindsay's *Ane Satire of the Thrie Estatis* and just in the early twentieth century the work of J M Barrie does have its social sharp-edges (for instance, *What Every Woman Knows* comments mordantly on the roles available to women in contemporary society, *The Admirable Crichton* on class). In Scottish culture the teeth of satire have been blunted by a gloss of sentiment and a prejudice for nostalgia: wrapped in a swathe of tartan the popular appeal of representations of Scotland is, nevertheless, unquestionable. In such circumstances, perhaps the best satire can hope for is to be re-presented within a discourse of irony as a version of *Scotto-kitsch*.

The fiction of rural Scotland expressed within the story of Brigadoon is a highly popular one both within and without Scotland. It is one that is used at the 1911 Scottish Exhibition and the Empire Exhibition of 1938; but not without tension. The

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Gaelic in the opera. It is restricted to the fairies of *Tir nan Og* in the second tale 'The Disappearance.'

<sup>109</sup>'The Disappearance' told by Widow M Calder, a pauper, Sutherland 1860.' Programme. Judith Weir's *The Vanishing Bridegroom*.

<sup>110</sup>Anderson: 68.

latter Exhibition, in particular, is keen to stress the 'modern' and forward-looking aspects of the Scottish economy while at the same time using the myth of the unique historical community that is seen to be rural Scotland. This is one manifestation of the 'Highland myth' and 'Highlandism' identified and discussed by Charles Withers in his essay 'The Historical Creation of the Scottish Highlands.'<sup>111</sup> The role of culture in the creation and sustaining of the 'imagined' is clear. When Withers affirms that '... the Highlands have been created'<sup>112</sup> the parallel with Anderson's use of the word 'imagined' and Gwyn A Williams more materialist approach arguing that nations are 'made' and 'manufactured'<sup>113</sup> is clear. It is this 'fantasy' of nation that Ruaraidh Erskine of Marr's journal *The Pictish Review* describes when noting that '... it is mind and soul that make the nation and declare it one, not area, mere extent of stick, stone and earth.'<sup>114</sup> Hobsbawm understands that this investment in fantasy is representative of a whole psychic displacement from the *real politik* of the nation-state. He notes that:

[the imagined community] can be made to fill the emotional void left by the retreat or disintegration, or unavailability of *real* human communities and networks ... .<sup>115</sup>

Whilst the nation-state is limited by geography, time and legislation, the 'imagined community' has full recourse to the fantastic, to the myths of the people and their national aspirations. This might render the 'imagined' more emotionally powerful and culturally useful than the actuality of the fully realised nation-state.

McCrone argues that, 'It is a convenient yet distorted truth of nationalism that the nation is 'natural', that every nation ought to be a state.' He refers to Max Weber, whose formulation is a useful one:

[Weber] believed that a nation was '... a community of sentiment which would find its adequate expression only in a state of its own, and which thus normally strives to create one.' Gellner's perspective, on the other hand, is to argue that national sentiment of this sort is not a given, but is historically constructed and mobilized by social interests (most notably by national bourgeoisies in nineteenth-century Europe).<sup>116</sup>

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<sup>111</sup>Charles Withers, 'The Historical Creation of the Scottish Highlands.' *The Manufacture of Scottish History*, eds Ian Donnachie and Christopher Whatley (Edinburgh: Polygon: 1992): 143-156.

<sup>112</sup>Withers: 143

<sup>113</sup>Williams, 'When was Wales?' *The Welsh in their History*: 190.

<sup>114</sup>Author unattributed but likely to be the editor Ruaraidh Erskine, 'Race and Culture.' *The Pictish Review* 1.4 (1928): 41.

<sup>115</sup>Eric Hobsbawm, *Nation and Nationalism Since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality* (Cambridge: Cambridge U P, 1990): 46.

<sup>116</sup>McCrone, 'Representing Scotland: Culture and Nationalism': 169.

'Nationalism,' writes Gellner, 'is not the awakening of nations to self-consciousness; it invents nations where they do not exist.'<sup>117</sup> By implication the invention emerges out of 'fabrication' or 'falsity'.<sup>118</sup> It is a view also expressed by Benedict Anderson but he '... assimilates 'invention' [with negative connotations] ... to 'imagining' and 'creation' [a much more positive position].'

It is perhaps useful to re-evaluate the definitions which have been used. Commonly 'nation' is taken to mean a culturally distinct group that could survive as an independent, united and self-sufficient political entity. 'Nationalism', following on, will mean the striving by members of such a group for territorial autonomy, unity or independence. Anderson comments:

In an anthropological spirit ... I propose the following definition of the nation: it is an imagined political community -- and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign.<sup>119</sup>

The economic manifestation of this centres around the notion of the nation-state of, predominantly, nineteenth-century nationalism, which ultimately finds its definition through legal discourses. Whilst Anderson describes nations and nationalism in relation to imaginings and myth, as mentioned, Gwyn A Williams provides a set of metaphors which are rather different:

Nations have not existed from Time Immemorial as the warp and woof of human experience. Nations are not born; they are made. Nations do not grow like a tree, they are manufactured. Most of the nations of modern Europe were manufactured during the nineteenth century; people manufactured nations as they did cotton shirts. The processes were intimately linked, as people called non-historic invented for themselves a usable past to inform an attainable future, under the twin stimuli of democratic and industrial revolutions. In the precociously unified monarchies of Britain and France, they began to manufacture nations earlier; a British nation emerges from the eighteenth century, in the union of England and Scotland around the armature of merchant capitalism, world empire and liberal oligarchy. The ongoing and increasingly revolutionary processes of capitalism are now radically

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<sup>117</sup>Gellner, quoted by Anderson: 15.

<sup>118</sup>The role of this emotional investment is discussed by MacDiarmid:

Scotland is unique among European nations in its failure to develop a nationalist sentiment strong enough to be a vital factor in its affairs -- a failure inconsistent alike with our traditional love of country and reputation for practicality. The reason probably lies in the fact that no comprehensive enough agency has emerged. ... For it must be recognized that the absence of Scottish nationalism is, paradoxically enough a form of Scottish self-determination. ... The tendency inherent in the Union, to assimilate Scotland to England, and ultimately to provincialize the former -- the stage which has been so unexpectedly arrested at the eleventh hour -- has, as a matter of fact, not yet been affectively countered by the emergence of any principle demanding a reversed tendency.

Grieve, *Albyn*: 48-49.

<sup>119</sup>Anderson: 15.

restructuring and remodelling the nation they conjured into existence, eliminating some, fragmenting some.<sup>120</sup>

This is a particularly useful way into Scottish nationalism since it entails an activation of national identity, it is aspirational without being hopeless, it is a mobilisation of an 'imagined community' -- but one that retains a real enough existence in the common psychic experience of Scottishness.

Despite the recent debate around the popular culture of Scotland (one can point to the work of Barbara and Murray Grigor's 1981 *Scotch Reels* event and the subsequent critical debate it inspired and suggested<sup>121</sup>) the continued currency of such discourses and their continued appeal reveal that a deeper understanding of Scottish culture's split acceptance of them still endures. While cultural theorists deconstruct the kailyard and interrogate tartanry, criticism failed to account for society's enjoyment of such problematic markers of popular culture in Scotland. Picturesque clachans, the romance of the mist-covered lochs, tartan plaids and pipes may be symptomatic of tartanry for some, but will remain unproblematic expressions of community, nostalgia and sentimental attachment for the majority. Despite new media and new cultural activity offering new means of expression for artists, such images have proved both resilient and popular.

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The early twentieth century is clearly a period of complex and often contradictory politics, aesthetics and technologies: and to focus on the Scottish experience of the period perhaps reveals more of the paradoxes than the solutions. Nevertheless, to isolate the emergence of a Scottish media culture without reference to the social and cultural importance of politics, traditional representations and discourses, new aesthetics and the ongoing debates of national identity would be to present a partial and incomplete picture. Such issues and debates had a direct influence on contemporary audiences and practitioners who brought this experience with them to both imported and the increasingly influential indigenous arts activity. Political nationalism may ultimately have faltered but a new interest in Scottish culture did emerge. Music hall and the variety stage may have been on the verge of terminal decline but new media forms were evolving to meet the needs of the audience of traditional popular theatre. Cinemas may have been dominated by imported films produced in Hollywood, but an

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<sup>120</sup>Williams, 'When was Wales?' *The Welsh in their History* : 190.

<sup>121</sup>See, for instance, Colin McArthur, ed. *Scotch Reels: Scotland in Cinema and Television* (London: BFI, 1982); Colin McArthur 'Breaking the Signs: 'Scotch Myths' as Cultural Struggle.'; the section entitled 'The Politics of Tartan' in *Bulletin of Scottish Politics* 1.2 (Spring 1981): 55- 81 (James Hunter, 'Year of the Émigré': 56-62; P H Scott, 'Scotch Myths -- 1': 62-66; Lindsay Paterson, 'Scotch Myths -- 2': 67-71; Andrew Noble, 'MacChismo in Retrospect': 72-81). This work from the early 1980s has itself been reassessed by several critics including David McCrone 'Representing Scotland: Culture and Nationalism' and Beveridge and Turnbull.

alternative film culture was able to emerge to match a general political use of the arts that extended to theatre groups, reading groups, choirs, 'cyclists and rambles. Above all the social use of culture recreated the factor of the audience, who were rendered powerful through the expansion of Left ideology and the emergence of the discourse of public service. The potential for propaganda in such a scenario must be acknowledged but within the operations of contemporary cultural politics the hegemonic influence of, for example, the BBC, the bastion of cultural mission in Britain, was tempered by legislative fact, an early devolution of production power and the increased grassroots cultural activity that the period's politicians and artists encouraged and developed. There gradually emerged, then, a perspective on culture which was modern in the confusion of social and aesthetic influences and in its engagement with new technology.

**Part two: Institutions**

## The Theatre System

‘... [a] theater of complex character and multiple traditions ....’<sup>1</sup>

From the Victorian period -- with the social dominance of the twin economic discourses of capitalism and industrialisation -- cultural products tended to be perceived as part of the general economy. In the market place fine art, music, literature and theatre had some kind of tangible exchange value -- this above any social role they might acquire. At least in Britain, until the very end of the nineteenth century, the culture connected with the theatres, the performance-based arts, were generally left wanting by municipal financial involvement, government care and philanthropic gesture. The period from around the 1890s to the outbreak of World War II lay the foundations for all these developments.

The early history of the period is important. It shows an existing and successful entertainment environment maintaining a balanced and mutually complimentary system of entertainment industries. It is, however, a fragile balance which over the early part of the twentieth century is revolutionised completely. The entertainment industry, popular and elite culture, is radically changed in its use, its status and its very nature. This occurs not just through organic change and evolution but through revolution; a violent intersection of technology in the form of two new media -- the ‘public technologies’ of film and wireless broadcasting.

This chapter points to the two predominant and apparently contradictory themes which shape the structure of the modern entertainment environment: on the one hand, a trend towards industrial centralisation (particularly within popular culture); on the other, the return towards indigenous production in the provinces and the empowerment of the local (with the rise of the repertory movement and amateur drama developing as influential cultural forces). Through the Victorian period strategies of centralisation had created a theatre system based on touring companies economically tied to the activities of the London theatre scene. Such systems were to be increasingly applied to music hall, a process encouraged by the rise of variety theatre and the model of economic imperialism effected by cinema. While some sectors of the entertainment environment became increasingly industrialised there was a reactive counter movement with the return of producing theatre to the regions in the form of repertory, amateur theatre (theatre which is implicitly political) and theatre with a manifest Left political dimension. Despite contemporary political debate and the important influence of the Abbey Theatre of Dublin, Scottish theatre was never explicitly Nationalist, despite being concerned with national identity, but did extend to encompass Left theatre in the

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<sup>1</sup>Martin Meisel, *Shaw and the Nineteenth-Century Theatre* (1963. New York: Limelight Editions, 1963): 65.

late 1930s and into the 1940s with groups like the the Jewish Institute Players, the Clarion Players, the Glasgow Transport Players, the Glasgow Players, the GWTG and, the group formed in 1941 by an amalgamation of these groups, Glasgow Unity. The experience of theatre in Scotland in the early decades of the twentieth century was formed by new genres, new business practices, new technologies and the increasingly widespread acceptance (by practitioners, audiences and state) of the utility and desirability of indigenous arts activity.

### **The theatre scene of the Victorian period**

The London theatre of the late [eighteen] eighties and nineties ... was an active, uncertain theater of complex character and multiple traditions whose strengths bore no relation to their venerability, where reactionary bursts of primitive melodrama jostled polite comedies, 'problem plays,' matinee experiments, and full-scale productions of Ibsen, Sudermann, Henry James, Barrie, and Oscar Wilde.<sup>2</sup>

Martin Meisel's description of the theatre scene points to the fact that in the late Victorian period a rich *mélange* of stage entertainments competed for attention. Within this system it nevertheless seems useful to identify three differing types of theatre as contributing to this organically and socially complete entertainment system or environment: this presenting an experience of culture that perceived itself to be inclusive of all classes and all artistic prejudices -- and although one of these elements was new and challenging, and in its own context radical, it did emerge naturally, as it were, from the debates and developments taking place in the aesthetic world of the late-nineteenth century.

There may be identified three complimentary categories: a mainstream, or general theatre, an economically successful and culturally dominant form; a new progressive and challenging theatre and drama; and a variety and music hall theatre. Many theatre historians and critics of the period offer such schematic models of the contemporary theatre scene. Allardyce Nicoll describes a three-tiered system: the 'general,' the 'popular' and the 'progressive,'<sup>3</sup> and Ernest Reynolds discusses the 'two main streams of theatrical work -- the commercial drama and the art drama.'<sup>4</sup> (Indeed Reynolds goes on to note the quintessential modern split between 'commercial money-making and artistic money-losing drama.'<sup>5</sup>) The models offered by these two writers are indicative of their literary prejudices: Reynolds displaces music hall out of the 'main streams of

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<sup>2</sup>Meisel: 65.

<sup>3</sup>Allardyce Nicoll, *English Drama:1900-1930* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1973): 150-152.

<sup>4</sup>Ernest Reynolds, *Modern English Drama: A Survey of Theatre from 1900* (1949. London: George G Harrap, 1950): 17.

<sup>5</sup>Reynolds: 17.

theatrical work';<sup>6</sup> and Nicoll includes music theatre, musicals and musical comedy in his interpretation of the 'popular' -- this leaving his 'general' category to be a theatre of plays and playwrights, which excludes musical comedy:

This area was associated with the activities of the majority of London's West End theatres, whether managed by prominent actors or controlled by impresarios and entrepreneurs, and to it belonged the majority of those playwrights, from Pinero and Barrie to Maugham and Coward, whose reputations ... still endure. These men almost always aimed at appealing to as large and representative an audience as possible, the educated and the uneducated, the intellectually brilliant and the obtuse, the rich and the poor.<sup>7</sup>

### **Mainstream theatre**

As is suggested by Nicoll's choice of representative playwrights, what is perhaps most important about this category of stage entertainments is that it can adapt and change as theatre fashions change across the period (and on into the mid and late twentieth century) and still maintain its broad audience appeal. The point of definition, or rather of identification, is the context of reception and the moment of production. The industry organised under the actor-manager was empowered by the social and technological infrastructure of the railways and the facilities houses provided by the grand theatres of the provinces as well as the literary prejudices of the age. Their theatre, their system of cultural provision was, however, impermanent, prey to the ebb and flow of the general social and cultural context. Within the overall system the management structures and strategies are essentially transient. The public demand for this type of theatre (that is a permanent site of performance but with regularly changing programmes of entertainments, plays and musicals, melodrama and comedy, farce, ballet and opera) remained a successful model for the entertainment industry. Over the ensuing decades the development of venues into chains of theatres created a new industrial infrastructure for the entertainment industry but one that still deferred to London as the centre of production activity and innovation.

For the mainstream of the theatre environment of the late-Victorian and Edwardian periods, at least as it was experienced in Scotland, and possibly more generally than that, it seems more useful to include what Reynolds describes as the 'spectacle drama'<sup>8</sup> and music theatre into the category of the commercial and general theatre and thus allow the music hall to exist as different to but neither distinct nor separate from either of the other theatre categories offered. As Nicoll notes, '... it must always be remembered that none of them [the categories of theatre entertainment described] had inviolable

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<sup>6</sup>Reynolds: 17.

<sup>7</sup>Nicoll: 150.

<sup>8</sup>Reynolds: 113-122.

frontiers.<sup>9</sup> Indeed as the period progressed the trend, at least within the mainstream sector, was towards a greater degree of crossover. Both Nicoll and Reynolds may be seen to be more influenced by the 'text' of the performance rather than the social context and business structures that mark the differences within the elements that make up the entertainment system of the period. This, again, seems to be the case in Nicoll's assessment of the discreteness of the theatre and the drama of the 1890s:

Although there had indeed been a remarkable surging forwards during the last years of Victoria's reign, this movement, in which culmination and anticipation were combined, belonged almost entirely to the [eighteen] nineties. Wilde's meteoric stage career exploded into darkness in 1895, and, while Pinero and Jones continued to write for the theatre during the early years of the twentieth century, obviously their force after 1900 was slight compared with their impact in the past: what these two authors produced later was interesting and even at times admirable, but already it was coming to seem somewhat old-fashioned. After the turn of the century ... our minds go rather to Bernard Shaw, to Sir James Barrie, to Somerset Maugham, to John Galsworthy, to Noël Coward. ...

Thus, even although there were several playwrights of consequence who straddled the centuries and even although it is easy to see how older styles continued to persist amid new forms, in essence we are forced to agree with St John Ervine's belief that shortly after 1900 a fresh start was being made.<sup>10</sup>

Nicoll's view of the late-nineteenth century as one of 'culmination and anticipation' is useful, but one that is all the more relevant when thought of in connection, not with just the plays, but with the theatre environment as a whole. Theatre experimentation and commercial practices in the period of the 1880s and 1890s set an agenda for the twentieth century. Hugh Hunt, in his contribution to *The Revels History of Drama in English: volume 7: 1880 to the present day*, considers that:

The period 1880-1900 marks the birth of the theatre of the twentieth century as a social and literary force. Between those years most of the seeds were sown that were later to blossom into the ideological ferment of Edwardian drama, and radical changes came about in the organization of the theatre as well as in the constitution and behaviour of its audiences. The theatre became fashionable, its artists respectable; the breach between stage and literature was healed; production and design took on an original shape; and new acting styles were adopted.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup>Nicoll: 151.

<sup>10</sup>Nicoll: 2.

<sup>11</sup>Hugh Hunt, 'The Social and Literary Context,' *The Revels History of Drama in English: volume 7: 1880 to the present day*, eds Hugh Hunt, Kenneth Richards and John Russell Taylor (London: Methuen, 1978): 3.

The period does find new plays and dramatists, discover new areas for drama to use but it also points the way to new types of venues and different audiences, to new methods of organisation and reading. This is equally true for the whole of the entertainment industry. The activities of these years prepare and introduce the priorities and tendencies of not just a new century but, in effect, the new 'modern' world: the risks taken within the progressive sector, and its encouragement of the 'new drama'; the lacks this revealed in the existing commercial theatre; the industrialisation of the music halls into circuits of venues (in terms of its increasing centralisation and the growth in the power of a few businessmen, this being akin to the use of theatres as mere facilities houses by the mainstream and commercialised theatre); and in the very late 1890s the start of the revolutionary intervention of film as a source of popular entertainment.

Within this theatre system there was, primarily, the commercially dominant mainstream theatre (and opera, ballet and musical theatre are important aspects of this sector of the entertainment industry). This most popular (that is, widely favoured) theatre was economically, and as a result artistically, centred on London. This was the theatre of recently-discovered respectability. It included the theatre of society and of the middle class. As suggested by Nicoll, the theatres that might be associated with this included most of London's West End venues; and the writers were even more numerous, including some of the most popular writers of the age -- Oscar Wilde, Sir Arthur Wing Pinero, Henry Arthur Jones, Sir J M Barrie. These writers operating within the context of mainstream theatre are, however, not to be easily dismissed as theatrically reactionary or dramatically staid. Indeed these writers have been identified as being 'animated by a distinctly progressive spirit, [who] attempted the serious representation of English social life on the stage.'<sup>12</sup> However, despite the influence of new ideas, forms and philosophies and the input of challenging writers like Wilde and Pinero the dominant experience of this sector was 'little touched by the ferment of criticism or by the appeals of those with higher aspirations for the drama.'<sup>13</sup>

In the latter decades of the nineteenth century the success of the 'commercialism' of most theatrical and dramatic activity was complete. It was the most influential because it was the most widespread of the 'legitimate' forms of theatre. This influence was restricted neither by finance nor geography. Indeed it may be argued convincingly that the real key to the dominance of this sector of the entertainment industry was that it existed as a nationwide operation. In the Victorian period the London touring companies, the actor-managers and the railways had all but ensured the demise of a

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<sup>12</sup>James Woodfield, *English Theatre in Transition: 1881-1914* (London: Croom Helm, 1984): 17.

<sup>13</sup>Woodfield: 17

legitimate regional theatre. Alasdair Cameron describes the theatre environment of Glasgow coming under the sway of the London companies:

Until the 1870s, the theatre which Glasgow enjoyed, was, in the main, produced by actor-managers. The most famous of these was J. H. Alexander, whose company stayed in the city for whole seasons and contained actors like Mr Lloyd the comedian, who remained with one theatre for much of their professional lives. This enabled the actors to become part of the local community and, though many chose to move from theatre to theatre with their eyes on the ultimate goal of a London engagement, many chose a more settled life away from the pressures of London.

With the demolition of the Theatre Royal, Dunlop Street [Glasgow's first purpose-built theatre, opening in January 1782 and finally demolished in 1869] came the virtual end of independent theatre in Glasgow. From 1782 onward Glasgow companies had mounted their own productions of plays. Sometimes these were sumptuous, sometimes rather threadbare. From the middle of the [nineteenth] Century, with the rise of the railways came the possibility of touring shows for years on end, sending them to a different town every week. Glasgow, of course, was sent good shows, but 'real' theatre became synonymous with the companies which arrived one Sunday and left the next. Sadly for Scotland, it also became synonymous with London theatre and the days of the National Drama and the independent actor-managers were over.<sup>14</sup>

Just this concern was also a contemporary one, and one which Alfred Wareing used as one of the central rationales at the root of the Glasgow Repertory Theatre. He describes the local stock companies as a kind of prototype for the Repertory Theatre:

The stock-company system [as it existed in the early Victorian period] was contrived a manifold debt and pay. It afforded an easy and reputable avenue, under parental or domestic ægis, for histrionic aspirants, and thus not only raised the general standard of British acting by creating numerous training centres, but also minimised in advanced the dangers and temptations of stage life. It secured adequate support for wandering stars, whose 'starriness' was not inartistically over-conspicuous in an harmonious grouping of local planets. It kept the theatres constantly open, made prices more reasonable, and avoiding the hunger-and-a-bust system now prevalent, stayed the public stomach with home-made dishes whose flavours supplied a standard by which to judge and enjoy the condiments of star acting. Above all the stock-company system gave the citizens of every town a personal and civic interest in local theatrical affairs, and, in Scotland at least, provided a possible foundation for a national drama. The visit of the first London touring company to Glasgow in 1845 must therefore be regarded as the first instalment of the sacrifice of a national birthright. A birthright consisting of plays like 'Rob Roy,' 'Crammond Brig,' or 'Guy Mannering' might be considered not worth keeping; but, on the other

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<sup>14</sup>Alasdair Cameron, *See Glasgow, See Theatre* (Glasgow: The Glasgow File, 1990): N.pag. [1-2].

hand, there was the pity of parting with it before it had come to maturity.<sup>15</sup>

This, however, is rather at odds with the general interpretation of the stock companies. In the period before the rise of the touring companies the stock company was the conventional way of organising theatre production, and as such was the system to counter and react against. George Rowell and Anthony Jackson, in the 'Introduction' to their work, *The Repertory Movement: A History of Regional Theatre in Britain*, comment on this fore-runner to the repertory system in Britain:

Most of the early champions of ... [the repertory] movement selected the touring company as their chief target. 'A smudged carbon-copy of last year's West End success' was a standard accusation hurled at the latest attraction in their local Theatre Royal. While one cannot defend *in toto* the touring system established in the Victorian era, it may be salutary to recall that the system was itself hailed as a renaissance of dramatic standards during the 1870s and 1880s. Before that provincial playgoers might see London stars, but they would be supported by an uneven and under-rehearsed stock company and mostly stock (or improvised) sets and costumes. Of course, the touring system invited abuse; an organisation as widely spread as the Victorian and Edwardian theatre encouraged managements to undertake mass production, and it was against the second-, third- and fourth-rate companies that the pioneers of repertory mainly made their stand. In the cyclic fashion of human endeavour they looked back longingly to the days of the resident manager, local favourites and even local plays.<sup>16</sup>

Thus the metropolis-based commercial theatre, essentially a theatre of plays, of 'literature' (as opposed to the sketches that were of increasing popularity on the variety stage), was exported from London's West End to waiting theatres and audiences across the country. In the process any local and indigenous drama was debased as uncouth and primitive. The theatres of the cities and towns to which these companies toured were, in this system, used merely as facilities houses. The play, the players, the stars, the design, in fact all the skills that the production would require were imported to venues like the Theatre Royal, the Royalty and the Prince of Wales's Theatres, Glasgow, His Majesty's, Aberdeen, the Lyceum and the Theatre Royal, Edinburgh, as well as the theatres of smaller towns, for instance in Dumfries, Stirling and Inverness. Across Scotland, then, the larger theatres and the prestigious venues, like Glasgow's Theatre Royal maintained an imported programme of 'Mayfair melodrama', versions of Shakespeare and opera and ballet productions. The *Glasgow Herald* describes this section of theatre activity as:

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<sup>15</sup>Editorial. *Glasgow Herald* 27 Feb. 1909: 6.

<sup>16</sup>George Rowell and Anthony Jackson, 'Introduction.' *The Repertory Movement: A History of Regional Theatre in Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1984): 2

... monopolised by tin-helmeted ladies'-darlings, imperfectly trained but perfectly photographed young women, and sentimental tenors in spotless naval uniforms ....<sup>17</sup>

As an industry it operated a form of cultural imperialism which denied an indigenous theatre equal footing: at best the local was marginalised into other forms of entertainments, into the music halls, and into pantomime; or, at worst, it simply died. In his study, *Repertory: An Outline of the Modern Theatre Movement*, Cecil Chisholm, who is very much a supporter of the repertory movement, comments on just this result:

... [the touring companies] had killed local initiative and almost extinguished taste in playgoing. Year after year the same incompetent stars trundled the same sack of dramatic trash around the same cities and towns.<sup>18</sup>

Even as late as the 1930s, when the commercial dominance of the actor-manager was a thing of the past, James Bridie could still attack the West End managements sending to the provinces a familiar product:

It is not, perhaps, unfair to say that they [the London managers] give the provincials productions of two kinds: dress rehearsals prior to London production and shabby, ill-rehearsed productions of plays that have run themselves to death in London.<sup>19</sup>

The drama offered by the touring companies was the mainstream of theatre activity in Scotland from the Victorian period well into the twentieth century. Touring companies -- whose theatre ranged from the best of new productions on pre-London try outs to inferior reruns of old West End successes, from Henry Irving's production of *The Bells* to the Macdona Players' productions of Shaw, to the Jevon Brandon-Thomas Company and, later again, the Wilson Barret Company -- defined the style and the form of theatre for most audiences most of the time. The drama offered by these groups tended to be adaptations of classic plays and few actually commissioned or produced new writing. While almost no new Scottish writing was produced within this system

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<sup>17</sup>Editorial. *Glasgow Herald* 27 Feb. 1909: 6. Neither was this strand of theatre entertainment approved by James Bridie. In a 'Men You Know' feature on him in 1934 it is recorded that: He [Bridie] once stated, in a few severe sentences, that musical comedy was the high-water mark of the intellectual appreciation of Glasgow audiences.

'The Man You Know -- by 'The Bailie' -- Dr. O. H. Mavor (James Bridie).' *Glasgow Weekly Herald* 21 Apr. 1934. Article in bound collection of 'Men You Know' features (new series) held in the Glasgow Room, Mitchell Library, Glasgow (Ref. G920.04).

<sup>18</sup>Cecil Chisholm, *Repertory: An Outline of the Modern Theatre Movement* (London: Peter Davies, 1934): 18.

<sup>19</sup>James Bridie, *Men and Matters: Scotland and the Theatre*. Radio talk: transmitted 18/6/1937. ts. BBC Radio Scotland Scripts: STA Kg Box 5/6. The Radio Scotland scripts referred to in this study are held in the Scottish Theatre Archive, University of Glasgow.

notable exceptions to this rule include James Bridie's *The Anatomist*, written for production in Edinburgh by Robert Fenimore's Masque Company in 1930 and the phenomenally successful *Swords About the Cross*, a play about Mary Queen of Scots written by Margot Lister, and produced by the Brandon Thomas Company in 1936. Despite the fact that these two new plays proved to be amongst the most successful the companies produced a Scottish element in programming policy was a rarity. The theatre of the touring companies was the theatre of London exported to what the system of legitimate theatre defined as the culture-starved provinces.

The only time of the year that a Glasgow theatre would stage its own show would be for the pantomime season when each would provide a distinctively indigenous cultural product that was as lavish as any of the shows toured during the rest of the year. But then the pantomime season in some theatres, for instance the Royal Princess' Theatre, Glasgow, might extend to several months, when the bill would then change to include melodrama and the equally popular summer season shows. Versions of such entertainments were traditionally successful across the country in both permanent venues and in the seasonal sites of the Christmas and summer fairs and in the form of the seaside troops of concert parties. It is also important to note that the close relationship of theatre, the management and the actors, with the local community which, as Cameron indicates,<sup>20</sup> shifted from the city's independently producing theatres to the 'popular' forms of music hall and variety located for the most part away from the fashionable areas of the city in the older centre of the Saltmarket and Trongate. There, in the course of the nineteenth century and into the twentieth, a vibrant music hall or popular theatre tradition was established.

While the provincial actor-manager with an independent producing theatre may have been in decline, the late Victorian and Edwardian age is also the period of the great commercial and social success of the London-based actor-managers. As Ian Clarke notes in his examination of the period, *Edwardian Drama: A Critical Study*, the late 1890s and 1900s saw a great many theatrical knightships: he lists 'Henry Irving, Squire Bancroft, Charles Wyndham, John Hare, Herbert Beerbohm Tree, Johnston Forbes Justice and George Alexander.'<sup>21</sup> What is important about this is the fact that such honours signalled the complete acceptance of the theatre into the values and conventions of the social establishment. Clarke considers that:

A consequence of the extent of this organisational control [of the actor-manager structure] was an ability throughout the period to embody and create the tone of the theatre as a social institution. ... they aimed to project an idealized vision of upper-middle-class decorum, suavity, and,

<sup>20</sup>Alasdair Cameron, *Study Guide to Theatre in Scotland* (Glasgow: University of Glasgow, Department of Scottish Literature, 1989): 7-8.

<sup>21</sup>Ian Clarke, *Edwardian Drama: A Critical Study* (London: Faber and Faber, 1989): 1.

notwithstanding the facts of their private lives, irreproachable respectability.<sup>22</sup>

Theatre practitioners, theatre audiences, the plays they saw, indeed as Ian Clarke, Allardyce Nicoll, Hugh Hunt and George Bernard Shaw<sup>23</sup> note, even the organisation of the actual theatres were all supported the dominant cultural and social values of their age. Ernest Reynolds describes this theatre as:

... mainly an apaanage of Victorian political stability, an amusement, an exhibition, an entertainment. ... Nobody went to the theatre to think, any more than they go to the cinema for that purpose to-day.<sup>24</sup>

It is this sector of theatre that George Bernard Shaw describes, with but slightly concealed irony, as 'nice':

The manager may not want good plays; but he does not want bad plays: he wants nice ones. Nice plays, with nice dresses, nice drawing rooms and nice people, are indispensable: to be ungenteel is worse than to fail.<sup>25</sup>

Theatre was clearly perceived as part of, or at least having a role to play in the processes of the cultural hegemony of the dominant social prejudices and values of the period: summarised by Clarke as 'concern for the preservation of [the] social hierarchy.'<sup>26</sup> As such this theatre was, of course, rendered neutral in terms of a progressive social potential; its impact, indeed its only possible cultural role, was to bolster not to criticise. Jan McDonald, noting this cultural and artistic impasse and the need to alter these theatre conditions, comments that:

The increasing commercialism of the West End stage which led to the long-run system and the domination of autocratic actor-managers was hardly conducive to any kind of dramatic experimentation.<sup>27</sup>

Nicoll quotes Harley Granville Barker describing (in a 1922 Preface to Laurence Housman's *Little Plays of St Francis*) the new split within the theatre, a development of the projects of the 1890s which provides the framework for the cultural agenda of the twentieth century:

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<sup>22</sup>Clarke: 1.

<sup>23</sup>See Nicoll: 18-29; Hunt: 3-8; and George Bernard Shaw, 'Why For Puritans?' part of the Preface to *Three Plays For Puritans* (1901. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1983): 7-22.

<sup>24</sup>Reynolds: 20. Reynolds's final comment on the use of cinema may, however, encourage a more jaundiced reading of his interpretation of the Victorian audience.

<sup>25</sup>Shaw, Preface. *Three Plays For Puritans*: 15.

<sup>26</sup>Clarke: 3.

<sup>27</sup>Jan McDonald, *The 'New Drama': 1900-1914* (London: Macmillan, 1986): 2.

... there is an art of the theatre and there is a theatrical industry, and it is absurd to expect that the interests of the two can be continuously identical; it is difficult, rather, to see why nowadays they should coincide.<sup>28</sup>

Despite its lacks and limitations the success of the 'commercialism' of most theatrical and dramatic activity was complete. In this model theatrical activity was indeed 'purely a business.'<sup>29</sup> Reference to listings publications like the *Bailie* and the *Glasgow Programme* reveal the continued provincial success of melodramas *Les Cloches de Corneville*,<sup>30</sup> *La Poupée* and Henry Arthur Jones's enduring 1882 play, *The Silver King*.<sup>31</sup> This mainstream and dominant theatre was conventional in form and subject, was structurally more of the tradition of melodrama and thematically akin to the foreign imports typified by Eugène Scribe than to other European alternatives of the late-Victorian period, when the main alternative dramaturgical voice was that of Ibsen. The strongest theatrical trend emerged, however, from the nineteenth-century tradition of the well-made play and the drawing-room drama:

In the well-made play ... in which an intriguing dramatic situation was the center of interest and the structural core, ordinary social ideals and conventions formed a background which had to be taken for granted or the situation would disappear. Drawing-room drama was similarly conventional. ... it aimed at creating a photographic image of life and manners in a fashionable, or West End drawing room. It was concerned with a realism of surface and confined itself to that genteel area of life which could be reproduced most attractively, with the least offense, on a fashionable stage. ... drawing-room simply toned down ordinary dramatic conventions to the pitch of polite discourse while reproducing on the stage the very stronghold of accepted social ideals. As in the well-made play, ordinary social ideals and conventions formed a background which had to be taken for granted.<sup>32</sup>

The context, the form and the subject was essentially bourgeois, 'of a puritanical, middle-class society that was eminently satisfied with its own morality and mode of living.'<sup>33</sup> The mainstream theatre was one of cosy predictability, a theatre that rarely

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<sup>28</sup>Nicoll: 12.

<sup>29</sup>Chisholm: 11.

<sup>30</sup>*Les Cloches de Corneville* was an equally popular feature for early broadcasters in Scotland. R E Jeffrey directed a production from the BBC's Glasgow studio (to be broadcast simultaneously to Aberdeen) as early as 1 November 1923, and George Ross directed a further Glasgow production on 31 May 1924. See *Radio Times* 26 Oct. 1923: 159; R E Jeffrey, 'How an Opera is Broadcast,' *Radio Times* 30 Nov. 1923: 337; and *Radio Times* 23 May 1924: 367.

<sup>31</sup>Lynton Hudson's over view of English theatre between 1850 and 1950 notes that:

In 1925 Jones's publishers stated that the play had been performed every week-night somewhere ever since its first production.

Lynton Hudson, *The English Stage: 1850-1950* (1951. Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood, 1976): 112.

<sup>32</sup>Meisel: 67.

<sup>33</sup>Woodfield: 173.

took risks and rarely reflected the realities of British life, despite the rise of the naturalistic stage. The drama was still under the influence of the genres and conventions of the earlier nineteenth century: in terms of narrative good was to triumph, the virtuous rewarded, evil to be redeemed or punished. The moral code of the stage was to reflect (at their best) the orthodoxies of society at large:

The Edwardian theatre also pandered to the materialistic tastes of its predominantly middle and upper-class audience not only by staging sumptuous productions and by presenting plays set in a world of opulence, but also by providing an equally sumptuous environment where opulence enveloped the theatregoer with grand, gilded foyers, ornate bars, smoking rooms lounges and auditoriums, and plush seats and carpets, all creating a cosy reassuring atmosphere of solid luxury, ideal for relaxation.<sup>34</sup>

The mainstream theatre, in form and in mode of operation, had protected itself fully from the storm of the developments of European literary and theatrical experiments and advances. Through the 1880s and 1890s, theatre was dominated by high comedy and pleasant romances. The rise of the 'Intellectual Theatre'<sup>35</sup> -- and the manifest influence of Ibsenism -- was a feature for a time. Plays like Arthur Wing Pinero's 1893 *The Second Mrs Tanqueray* and other social 'problem' plays (often featuring the woman with a past, the wronged woman, the New Woman) offered a new arena for drama to investigate, but, for most theatre-goers, this was experienced as an ostensibly passing fashion -- although one with more lasting effect than was suggested by contemporary playgoers preferences for music and romance. Writers of the 'problem plays' carried to their more popular (and perhaps more mainstream and less challenging drama) the experience of the Ibsen experiments of the 1880s.<sup>36</sup> The first proponents of the 'New Drama', those writers influenced by European developments continued to experiment; the drama of the 1890s, the drama of writers like Jones, Pinero and Wilde examined contemporary society but essentially within the dramaturgical vocabulary of the predominant genres of the period. Their theatre was not the economically and socially marginalised theatre of the independent theatres, but took its place within the mainstream market place of London. Despite notable success, in general the West End depended on a different type of theatre, although one equally at the whim of the audiences. In 1896, after initial rejection in London and production in New York,

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<sup>34</sup>Woodfield: 19-20.

<sup>35</sup>Hudson: 94.

<sup>36</sup>Bernard Shaw suggests the response for the 1890s theatre to the rise Ibsen:

The change is evident at once. In short, a modern manager need not produce *The Wild Duck*; but he [sic] must be very careful not to produce a play which will seem insipid and old fashioned to play-goers who have seen *The Wild Duck*, even though they may have hissed it.

Shaw, 'The Saturday Review'; quoted by Meisel: 86.

Edward Rose's adaptation of *The Prisoner of Zenda* was produced at the St James's by George Alexander. The production earned Alexander a profit of £50,000, and engendered a rash of uniformed, Ruritanian melodramas.<sup>37</sup> These were perhaps more typical successes than the extraordinary excesses of Wilde.<sup>38</sup>

### Independent theatres

Contemporary critics and practitioners, like the modern theatre historians, were aware that within such a restrictive set of practices there resulted a tangible lack -- that of theatre and drama as a force for social and even political change. This gap was, if not filled, then at least revealed in terms of the drama by Henrik Ibsen but was only truly effective when theatre itself developed a form that was counter to the context of the commercial. That which was new and challenging from the late 1880s and 1890s was not just the publication of Shaw's theatre criticisms and Fabian writings, translations of Ibsen by Edmund Gosse and William Archer and the subsequent production of, most influentially, *A Doll's House*, *Ghosts* and *Hedda Gabler* but the establishment of new institutions with a new aspect on the function of the stage. The Independent Theatre Society was founded by J T Grein in 1891, was followed by the New Century Society (1898) and the Stage Society (1899), and was modelled on André Antoine's Théâtre Libre, established in Paris in 1887.<sup>39</sup>

Thus the next strand in the system is the 'artistic' and the 'progressive' -- that which Clarke describes as the 'minority ventures'<sup>40</sup> and Anna Irene Miller refers to as 'the theatre of revolt.'<sup>41</sup> This theatre, of the Independent Theatre, the Stage Society, and from 1904 to 1907 the Court Theatre under the influential control of Harley Granville Barker and J E Vedrenne produced the drama of Ibsen, Maurice Maeterlinck, Gerhart Hauptmann, Eugène Brieux and latterly of Barker, John Galsworthy, St John Hankin, John Masefield (that is, the 'New Drama') and of George Bernard Shaw, who most consistently used the conventions of the nineteenth-century stage 'to blow up the enemy with its own critical assumptions.'<sup>42</sup> The drama and the theatre of this group is a reaction to the perceived lacks of the surrounding theatre environment. However, Reynolds describes the theatre which Grein founded as:

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<sup>37</sup> See Hudson: 119.

<sup>38</sup> John Russell Taylor offers a useful overview of 'Dramatists and Plays since 1880' with sections on the well-made play in Hunt, Richards and Taylor: 161-264.

<sup>39</sup> See McDonald: 2.

<sup>40</sup> Clarke: 13.

<sup>41</sup> Anna Irene Miller, *The Independent Theatre in Europe: 1887 to the Present* (1931. New York: Benjamin Blom, 1966): 2.

<sup>42</sup> Meisel: 68.

...a specialist cult ... [which] did not immediately affect the English stage in general. It was essentially a minority movement, confined to small coteries of London playgoers.<sup>43</sup>

Now while this is at one level true -- the Court was neither a commercial nor a great popular success -- the overall effect of this theatre of liberality was to prove far more influential than Reynolds is willing to admit. Many critics agree that the experimentation worked on at the Independent Theatre Society led on to further developments at the Court Theatre and then was used and referred to by the Repertory movement in the first decades of the twentieth century. Of course the Repertory movement was not simply a direct product but a result of the evolution of this London theatre and the impact of other European theatre developments, including that of the Abbey Theatre, Dublin, which was in many ways an ideal for the Scottish theatres of the interwar period -- in particular for the Scottish National Players.

The demands for changes to the theatre system were not restricted to the London critics, even in the contemporary criticism of the period the lacks of the touring companies are unfavourably compared to the potentials of the repertory theatre. The *Bailie*, in a 'Men You Know' feature on Alfred Wareing, managing director of the Glasgow Repertory, picks up firstly on the role of this theatre as a stage for new and indigenous writing, but then focuses on the new role for the actor:

Much is hoped from the establishment of repertory theatres, of which that in the Royalty is the second to come into being, though it is actually the first citizens' theatre in the English-speaking world. While the dramatist is thankful for the wider horizon he enjoys when he writes for a repertory company -- one untrammelled by a 'star,' the actor in the repertory company knows that his small part of to-day will be succeeded by an important part to-morrow, and, further, that there will be no long run to identify him with a particular line of business and so stunt his growth in the practice of his art. Consequently all branches of the drama feel, they all experience the beneficial influence of the repertory system. Then the gain to the public is equal in its own way to the gain to writers and actors, inasmuch as a company provides them with opportunities for studying the art of acting which the 'touring company' system never allows.<sup>44</sup>

### Popular theatre

Finally, and ultimately most vulnerable to the intervention of the technologies of film and later in the period even of broadcast radio, was the music hall. The true golden age of the British music hall was around the 1880s but well into the first decades of the new century it was an important strand in the cultural scene. Gareth Stedman Jones describes the shifts in leisure patterns at the end of the nineteenth century:

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<sup>43</sup>Reynolds: 19.

<sup>44</sup>'Men You Know.' *Bailie* 8 Sept. 1909: 1.

By the end of Victoria's reign, gin palaces had virtually disappeared. The social and economic functions of the pub had been reduced; drinking hours had been restricted and children had been excluded from the bar. Cock-fighting, bearbaiting and ratting had all but died out. Gambling had been driven off the streets. ... a growing number of parks, museums exhibitions, public libraries and mechanic's institutes promoted a more improving or innocuous use of leisure time.<sup>45</sup>

The 'improving' discourse was one to come into greater prominence as the new century developed. From being associated with the education programmes of the Left and municipal and philanthropic donation they were incorporated into the general and cultural hegemony of the state. Leisure patterns do change and adapt over time but within the popular forms of entertainment of the Edwardian period in particular, and certainly apparent in the Victorian Age, is a tendency to reset the traditional working-class cultural activities within the improving prejudices of the respectable bourgeoisie. Jones argues that this 'middle-class onslaught'<sup>46</sup> did not greatly alter the habits and the morality of the London working class -- and certainly not by the end of the Edwardian period. He concludes that at least London working-class cultures were:

... clearly distinguished from the culture of the middle class and had remained largely impervious to middle-class attempts to dictate its character or direction. Its dominant cultural institutions were not the school, the evening class, the library, the friendly society, the church or the chapel, but the pub, the sporting paper, the race course and the music hall.<sup>47</sup>

This improving strategy was, however, to increase its cultural and social influence over the ensuing decades. Popular culture, indeed culture in general, was increasingly brought under the direct or indirect influence of the state. The state's reaction to the perceived needs of a modern society (particularly one in crisis, as during war or social and economic unease), a society of increasing economic diversity, was to respond with an interventionist strategy, to implement direct legislation and to encourage particular cultural practices and institutions. In particular economic plans and the move toward the managed economy laid the foundations for the planned cultural strategy the British state sponsored during World War II and after.

Even in London, during the late-Victorian period Jones describes, the nature and the contexts of the entertainments had changed. Not just because of the municipal and philanthropic building of museums and art galleries in the great cities, but because the entertainments had become an integral part of the capitalist economy; they had been industrialised. However, the music halls, even if they existed as part of a centrally

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<sup>45</sup>Jones, 'Working-Class Culture and Working-Class Politics ...': 470.

<sup>46</sup>Jones, 'Working-Class Culture and Working-Class Politics ...': 471.

<sup>47</sup>Jones, 'Working-Class Culture and Working-Class Politics ...': 479.

managed circuit, each existed within a specific locus of industrial and social activity. The theatre chain developed by H E Moss during this period offer a paradigmatic example. Moss's early Empires existed in both Glasgow and Newcastle. Demographically both areas were industrial centres with large working class populations. Within a class analysis, and with a potentially politically active proletariat, the two cities might be perceived as rather similar. However, in other cultural and social terms the experience of life was probably quite different -- that is, in terms of the mix of indigenous and migrant workers (those from rural communities), the religious mix of the populations, the geographical spread of the city and the lifestyle of those within it. The music halls existed collectively within a national economy and individually within a local economy. In the first decades of the twentieth century, but in particular after the Great War, with the rise of political socialism and the continued industrialisation of culture (in particular, the colonial exploitation undertaken by the American film industry) class, not ethnic divisions, increasingly became the point of mobilisation. However, at the turn of the century the differences, essentially the cultural differences of the cities were at least as meaningful as demographic and class-based similarities. The entertainment offered by the music halls allowed for these differences to be maintained. Despite the development of the touring circuits and later the input of radio and film, the local market of the provincial towns was important. Within Scotland the most popular of performers (for instance, Will Fyffe and Harry Gordon, both of whom did work in London with Fyffe in particular appearing in a number of films) were able to maintain a successful career and a tradition of entertainment quite distinct from the rest of Britain. Within the Scottish system Fyffe and Gordon were crucial to the business of particular theatres -- the Beach Pavilion, Aberdeen, and the Alhambra, Glasgow.

What marked out music hall and variety from the other public entertainments of the turn of the century was not just its particular popular appeal but the potential for a distinctive relation to and flexible use of the indigenous popular cultures. While the music hall is particularly relevant as regards its ability to produce nationally, regionally and locally specific representations, it was not the exclusively working class phenomenon it was later perceived as being (after all there were sectors of the variety industry very much focused on attracting the other classes).<sup>48</sup> In this context Irish critic and writer George Moore gives this enthusiastic view of the attractions of the

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<sup>48</sup>The perception of the mid-twentieth-century music hall as a working class entertainment seems much more appropriate to the English scene than the Scottish. In Scotland the smaller market and the broader appeal of venues like the Alhambra, Glasgow, and the characteristic and indigenous appeal of the pantomime allowed the variety show to remain popular and influential until well after the World War II.

music hall, in comparison with his more jaundiced opinion of the contemporary fare offered on the 'legitimate' stage:

I shall not easily forget my first evening at the Royal, when I saw for the first time a living house -- the dissolute paragraphists, the elegant mashers (mark the imaginativeness of the slang), the stolid, good-humoured costers, the cheerful lights o' love, the extraordinary comics. What delightful unison of enjoyment, what unanimity of soul, what communality of wit; all knew each other, all enjoyed each other's presence; in a word, there was life. There was no cascades of real water, nor London docks, nor offensively rich furniture ... but one scene representing a street; a man comes on -- not, mind you, in a real smock-frock, but in something that suggests one -- and sings of how he came up to London, and was 'cleaned out' by thieves. Simple, you will say; yes, but better than a *fricassé* of 'Faust,' garnished with hags, imps and blue flame; better, far better than a drawing-room set at the St. James's, with an exhibition of passion by Mrs. and Mr. Kendal; better, a million times better than the cheap popularity of Wilson Barrett -- an elderly man posturing in a low-necked dress to some poor trull in the gallery .... That inimitable artist Bessie Bellwood, whose native wit is so curiously accentuated that it is no longer repellent vulgarity but art, choice and rare -- see, here she comes with 'What cheer, Rea! Rea's on the job.' The sketch is slight, but is welcome and refreshing after the eternal drawing room and Mrs. Kendal's cumbersome domesticity; it is curious, quaint, perverted, and are not these the *aions* and the attributes of art? ...

The hall is at least a protest against the wearisome stories concerning wills, misers in old castles, lost heirs, and the woeful solutions of such things -- she who has been kept in the castle cellar for twenty years restored to the delights of hairpins and a mauve dress, the *ingénue* to the protecting arm, etc. The music-hall is a protest against Mrs. Kendal's marital tenderness and the abortive platitudes of Messrs. Pettit and Sims; the music-hall is a protest against Sardou and the immense drawing-room sets, rich hangings, velvet sofas, etc., so different from the movement of the English comedy with its constant changes of scene. The music-hall is a protest against the villa, the circulating library, the club, and for this the 'all' is inexpressibly dear to me.<sup>49</sup>

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Into the 1910s, then, theatre was in a period of change and development. The mainstream, London-centred theatre world continued to profit. The 'minority ventures' of Barker and the Court -- though not responsible for -- were at least influential in the creation of:

... the most typical, the most denotative and perhaps the most important theatrical development within the years 1900 to 1930, and, moreover, a force which succeeded in laying a foundation for the theatre of the present.<sup>50</sup>

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<sup>49</sup>George Moore, *Confessions of a Young Man* (1888. London: William Heinemann, 1952): 123-125.

<sup>50</sup>Nicoll: 48-49.

Across the country, and within this tradition, regional producing theatre was beginning to establish strong roots, and perhaps just beginning to counter the economic and cultural dominance of the touring companies. Music hall, however, was in a more problematic position; being put under increasing stress by the rise of film and the uniquely twentieth-century development of cinemas as places of inexpensive entertainment and new sources of information. In his collection of sources connected with the music hall, D F Cheshire quotes from a 1917 Report by the London Branch of the Cinematograph Exhibitors Association:

The cheapness of this form of entertainment [the cinema], has created what is really a new type of audience. Over half the visitors to the picture theatres occupy seats to the value of threepence or less. In the main, the vast majority of picture house patrons were not in the habit of attending any other places of amusement. The picture house is emphatically the poor man's theatre.<sup>51</sup>

The distinction between the characteristic, and often locale-specific nature of the theatre and the music hall and the imported and imposed images of the new media is problematic for local artists and producers as well as arts managers and audiences. The new developments of film and the increasing industrialisation of its production and distribution splits the cultural producers both temporally and physically from the moment of reception. This was both revolutionary and problematic as all previous commercial forms of entertainment had maintained, by necessity, a close and immediate relationship with the audience. However, none of the elements of the theatre system described utilised or, more precisely, were dependent upon technology in the essential way of cinema.

One of the the problems with film was that unlike the close relationship the acts of the popular and variety stage could have with the actual lived experience of the audience, the cinemas were providing a largely imported, foreign, selection of products. Music hall stars in many ways developed particular aspects of national identity, particular images of the sexes, and national character-types which could become formalised into stereotypes but still had some organic relation with their immediate society. Harry Lauder as the 'Laird of the Halls' singing 'I Love a Lassie', Marie Lloyd the 'Queen of the Halls', Vesta Tilley as the Edwardian swell about town singing 'Burlington Bertie', and a whole subgenre of 'coster' singers and comedians, like Alex Hurley.<sup>52</sup> The imposed economics and signifying systems of the film

<sup>51</sup>D F Cheshire, *Music Hall in Britain* (Newton Abbot: David and Charles, 1974): 56.

<sup>52</sup>Perhaps some of the music hall entertainments veered too much towards the stereotype. The *Bailie* 4 June 1913: 12, contains this notice under the headline 'Home Rule For Scotland':

Home Rule for Scotland was the subject of a debate at the meeting of the House of Commons on Friday [30 May 1913]. The *Bailie* hopes that, if ever such a measure is passed, some of the earliest Bills to be introduced by our ain Parliament will be: --

industry might be interpreted as exerting particularly powerful forces of capital and cultural imperialism upon an economically weakening society and industry. Clearly with the establishment of something like the Moss-Stoll circuit, by the 1890s a powerful entertainments group, and its bid to re-invent the music hall as a more middle class experience, this cultural imperialism or at least the centralisation of the culture 'industry' was already occurring, but it was still a more or less domestic (British) experience. The later twentieth-century experience of cultural imperialism was an altogether more influential and broad based (international) phenomenon.

The business partnership of H E (later Sir Edward) Moss and Oswald (later Sir Oswald) Stoll marks clearly the commercial and social rise of the popular theatre in this period. It marks the demise of a locally organised popular entertainment theatre and the rise of a national entertainment industry. The shift is from traditional music hall, with its roots in gin-parlours, pubs and shebeens to purpose-built and architect-designed theatres, variety bills and social respectability. It is the shift from an active and involved audience to a passive and sedate one. Describing the experience of the traditional music hall, Jones comments that:

Music hall was a participatory form of leisure activity, but not a demanding one. The audience joined in the chorus, but if they didn't like the song or the sentiments expressed, they 'gave it the bird,' and it was unlikely to be heard again.<sup>53</sup>

Such a close relationship between stage and public was lost in the move towards respectability.

### **Oswald Stoll and the rise of respectability**

Oswald Stoll was born in Melbourne, Australia, in 1866.<sup>54</sup> He was the son of Irish immigrants -- his mother an actor, or a 'Dublin dancer' according to Raymond Mander and Joe Mitchenson in *British Music Hall*, and his father Oswald Gray, 'the disinherited son of a famous Irish family.'<sup>55</sup> Upon his father's death the family returned to Liverpool where his mother married John Stoll:

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... A Bill to make the death sentence applicable to writers of Scottish sketches for the music-hall who picture every Scotsman as either a sentimental lunatic or a drunken sot. ... A Bill appointing Harry Lauder Chief Minstrel of Scotland.

<sup>53</sup>Jones, 'Working-Class Culture and Working-Class Politics ....': 490.

<sup>54</sup>Both *Who Was Who: volume 4: 1941-1950* (1952. London: Adam and Charles Black, 1958) and *The Oxford Companion to the Theatre* ed. Phyllis Hartnoll (1951; London: Oxford UP, 1967) give Stoll's year of birth as 1866, with the former noting the exact date of 9 January 1866. In a 'Men You Know' feature in the *Bailie*, however, the date is given as 1867. ('Men You Know.' *Bailie* 7 Oct. 1908: 1.)

<sup>55</sup>Raymond Mander and Joe Mitchenson, *British Music Hall* (1965. London: Gentry Books, 1974): 148.

... a retired merchant captain, from whom Mr. STOLL takes his name. His stepfather was proprietor of the Parthenon in Liverpool, and when he died the future head of Moss Empires and his mother carried on the business.<sup>56</sup>

n fact the original business that John Stoll managed had been a wax works show (according to Peter Honri in *Working the Halls* the venue was known as 'Bianchi's Waxworks'<sup>57</sup>), but this was converted in the 1870s into the Parthenon Music Hall, which Stoll and his mother ran together after the death of John Stoll in 1880. As Mander and Mitchenson note, 'It was a partnership that was only to end virtually with the death of Mrs Stoll in 1924.'<sup>58</sup> Maintaining a successful hall in Liverpool, in 1890 Stoll expanded. According to the *Bailie*, '... he made a plunge into the whirlpool of music hall speculation by purchasing a hall of his own at Cardiff.'<sup>59</sup> This was alternatively the Star Music Hall or the Pavilion<sup>60</sup> which he converted and renamed the Cardiff Empire. This marked the beginning of a large-scale expansion programme:

... so well did he succeed, despite the headshakings of the critical Cassandras, that he soon opened other flourishing Empires at Swansea, Newport, Nottingham, and London.<sup>61</sup>

This level of independent expansion is impressive but geographically limited. The mutual economic attraction of these Welsh and Midlands halls to the Scottish, northern and Midlands halls of the operation headed by Moss is clear. And indeed the next step was a joining of Stoll with Moss, and his partners Richard Thornton and Frank

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<sup>56</sup>'Men You Know.' *Bailie* 7 Oct. 1908: 1. This article does tend to gloss aspects of Stoll's early life, however. It notes that Stoll was:

Born in Melbourne in 1867, the Man You Know was cradled in the profession. His mother was an Irish lady and a well-known actress, who, along with his father, was domiciled in Australia at the time young OSWALD first made his bow on life's stage. After their return to England his father died ....

<sup>57</sup>Peter Honri, *Working the Halls* (Farnborough: Saxon House, 1973): 83.

<sup>58</sup>Mander and Mitchenson: 148.

<sup>59</sup>'Men You Know.' *Bailie* 7 Oct. 1908: 1.

<sup>60</sup>This according to Jack Read's book on the career of Frank Matcham *Empires, Hippodromes and Palaces*. Read, *Empires, Hippodromes and Palaces* (London: Alderman, 1985): 45. Read also suggests that a failed romance with Vesta Tilley contributed to Stoll's desire to leave Liverpool -- and, indeed, Tilley did step in after an unsuccessful opening season with financial support to ensure the early survival of the Cardiff Empire.

<sup>61</sup>'Men You Know.' *Bailie* 7 Oct. 1908: 1. *British Music Hall*, by Mander and Mitchenson, also notes Stoll's expansion and his acquisition of 'a veritable Empire of eight halls.' (Mander and Mitchenson, : 148.) The *Bailie* does suggest that Stoll operated a London Empire before the Moss Empire combine had been formulated, by 1900. This seems not to be the case. Indeed, the expansion of Moss Empires itself into the capital was hampered by the existing London Empire not being for sale. This resulted in Moss building the Hippodrome and Stoll building the Coliseum. See also Felix Barker, *The House that Stoll Built: The Story of the Coliseum Theatre* (London: Frederick Muller, 1957).

Allen.<sup>62</sup> As well as creating a circuit of halls that might ensure long-term engagements for the performers, such a widespread scale of operation also allowed the development of a different type of hall, a more salubrious theatre without the taint of the old-style music hall and its lack of appeal to a middle class and family audience. In Glasgow the opening of the Empire in 1897 is directed towards this market, as is, more emphatically, the opening in 1905 of the Coliseum and, again, the opening of the Alhambra in 1910. In 1907 (and the direct reason for the *Bailie*'s feature on Stoll) with the acquisition of the Grand Theatre, Cowcaddens, the venue 'enters on a new lease of life, which promises to be full of vigour and youthfulness.'<sup>63</sup> The *Bailie* comments on the Stoll take over of the Grand:

The old Cowcaddens house has had a long and honourable career, being known to the older generation of city playgoers as the Prince of Wales' Theatre before it assumed the title by which it is now recognised.<sup>64</sup> When recently the announcement was made that the Grand Theatre had been acquired by the Moss Syndicate, most people jumped to the conclusion that its future would be as a music hall. Like a great many other hastily formed conclusions, however, that idea was false. The theatre will continue to be devoted to what is known as 'the legitimate' drama, and its reopening on Monday night [5 October 1908] with a revival on an imposing scale of the ever melodious 'Dorothy' was striking evidence of the elaborate productions which are to be staged.<sup>65</sup>

This production was, however, still a bought in touring play and not one locally cast and produced in-house. Nevertheless, it is interesting to note that there is concern over the loss of a 'play-staging' theatre and its replacement by a music hall stage. In time the Grand did move towards the staging of variety shows and then operated a cine-variety bill before it was developed as a full time cinema.

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<sup>62</sup>Richard Thornton owned theatres across the north of England and was Moss's first business partner. As such Thornton was one of the founders of Moss Empires. He is also part of the history of the show business benevolent society the 'Grand Order of Water Rats'. Roger Wilmut notes that:

The Water Rats started as a small social club, taking its name from a trotting pony called 'The Magpie', and afterwards renamed 'The Water Rat', which was given to Jack Lotto in 1899 by Richard Thornton ...

Roger Wilmut, *Kindly Leave the Stage! The Story of Variety: 1919-1960* (London: Methuen, 1985): 49.

Frank Allen's career in the theatre began when Richard Thornton appointed him manager of the South Shields Variety Theatre in 1885. He went on to become the general manager of the halls owned by Moss and Thornton, was subsequently general manager of Moss Empires and from 1912, after the death of Moss, managing director. See *Who was Who in the Theatre: volume 1: 1912-1976* (London: Pitman, 1978): 35.

<sup>63</sup>'Men You Know.' *Bailie* 7 Oct. 1908: 2.

<sup>64</sup>The Prince of Wales's Theatre was situated on Cowcaddens Road, Glasgow, and opened in 1867. As the Grand it was destroyed by fire in 1918, but was rebuilt as a cinema, being reconstructed in 1926. It closed finally in 1959 and was demolished. See Chris Doak, *Klondyke of the Kinema World* (Unpub. diss. Glasgow School of Art, 1979); and Cameron, *See Glasgow, See Theatre*: [20].

<sup>65</sup>'Men You Know.' *Bailie* 7 Oct. 1908: 1.

Although specifically commenting on the career of Stoll, the *Bailie* may reveal some of the issues at the root of the development of the variety stage both in London and across the whole of the country. Of particular importance is the input in the early years of the century by Moss and Stoll, and their competitors as theatre and music hall entrepreneurs Alfred Butt and Walter Gibbons.

What he [Stoll] has achieved in the variety world he means to accomplish in the more serious branch of the dramatic art. And when he says he will do a thing it may be considered as good as done. Mr. STOLL has taken for his motto the oft-quoted phrase, 'Tis not in mortals to command success, but we'll do more -- deserve it.' That is the adage which he has caused to be printed at the top of all the Empire bills, and it is by acting up to the spirit of this that he has climbed to the top of the tree in the variety world. As managing director and mainspring of the Moss Empires Mr. STOLL might have been thought to have reached the summit of ambition in the profession he has adopted. But he is a man with ideas. His originality was for ever finding new outlets. He it was who anticipated the demand on the part of the great B. P. [British Public?] for having its music hall fare, like a great many other things, in what might be termed a tabloid form. The introduction of the two-houses-a-night variety entertainment was the result. Its immediate success showed how accurately he had made his estimate.<sup>66</sup>

Like Alexander, however, he looked around and sighed for fresh fields to conquer. He saw the possibilities lying open to those who could run theatres on lines that would be more in sympathy with the popular fancy than are many present day managements. With that in his mind he persuaded his board to embark on the enterprise. Already four theatres have come under their control, the Glasgow venture marking the fourth of the quartette.<sup>67</sup>

The idea seems to be modelled on the circuit of music hall venues already developed under the Moss Empire scheme.<sup>68</sup> But it is also about the cultural prestige of 'theatre' as opposed to the more popular associations of the music hall. Clearly this was a fundamental consideration in the London building programmes of Moss, Stoll, Butt and Gibbons.

In 1900 Moss began to build a metropolitan flagship venue for his company. This was to be the London Hippodrome and although it was initially operated to provide circus and aquatic entertainments (rather in the manner of Hengler's Circuses) it became a permanent variety theatre in 1909 when the playing arena was converted into stalls. It became a theatre for revues in 1912, the year of Moss's death.<sup>69</sup> Despite his influential position as Chair and Managing Director of the Moss Empires, Stoll also wanted his

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<sup>66</sup>The term 'tabloid' probably refers more to the length of the shows than their popular appeal and cultural worth.

<sup>67</sup>'Men You Know.' *Bailie* 7 Oct. 1908: 1.

<sup>68</sup>See below: chapter five.

<sup>69</sup>See Roy Busby, *British Music Hall: An Illustrated Who's Who from 1850 to the Present Day* (London: Paul Elek, 1976): N.pag.; see picture 75.

own theatre in the metropolis and his own business independence. During the first decade of the twentieth century, then, the Moss-Stoll partnership was gradually dissolved -- some business activities continued jointly (like the building of the Glasgow Coliseum), some independently like the operation of the Hippodrome, and the building of the London Coliseum, this leaving both men wealthy and powerful owners of chains of theatres and music halls (and increasingly cinemas) in all parts of the country.<sup>70</sup> Stoll's grand London venue was, in fact, the Matcham designed Coliseum, which opened on Christmas Eve 1904. Initially four shows were given each day at the Coliseum 'which did much to change the old-style music-hall show into Variety'<sup>71</sup> splitting the entertainments off from their connections with alcohol and music hall's origins in public houses and the working class districts of the cities. This was but part of the wider trend repeated increasingly across the country from the 1890s on. Its effects in Glasgow receives comment in a 1898 edition of the listings and advertising publication the *Glasgow Programme*, which features a picture of Arthur Hubner on its cover:

The gentleman who occupies the place of honour on the front page this week is one whom East-End Glasgow should delight to honour. When Messrs. Moss and Thornton threw over the Glasgow working class by closing the Scotia and opening the Empire with high West-End prices of admission such as no working man could afford to pay, Mr Hubner

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<sup>70</sup>Roger Wilmut in his study *Kindly Leave the Stage!* reveals the scale of the success of both men.

Wilmut lists the Moss circuit as it existed in 1920. It consisted of the London Hippodrome, Finsbury Park Empire, New Cross Empire, Stratford Empire, Liverpool Empire, Liverpool Olympia, Glasgow Empire, Glasgow Coliseum, King's Theatre Southsea, Edinburgh Empire, Newcastle Empire, New Empire Cinema Newcastle, Leeds Empire, Nottingham Empire, Sheffield Empire, Birmingham Empire, Grand Theatre Birmingham, Summerhill Palace Birmingham, Cardiff Empire, Bradford Alhambra, Olympia Cardiff, Swansea Empire, Newport Empire, Hull Palace.

Wilmut: 229.

For the same year of 1920 the Stoll circuit is attributed with seventeen venues:

Coliseum [London], Alhambra [London], Stoll Picture Theatre Kingsway, Manchester Hippodrome, Shepherd's Bush Empire, Hackney Empire, Palace Leicester, Chatham Empire, Bristol Hippodrome, Chiswick Empire, Wood Green Empire, Ardwick Empire, Alexandra Stoke Newington, Bedminster Hippodrome, Floral Hall Leicester, Picture House Chatham, Stoll Picture Theatre Newcastle.

Wilmut: 229-230.

<sup>71</sup>Hartnoll: 919. Wilmut describes some of the attractions available at the Coliseum:

... Stoll adopted a policy of high-class Variety, mixing the more usual acts with spectaculars such as tennis tournaments or golf demonstrations on-stage. In earlier years he had even presented horse races! (The Coliseum had a huge multiple revolving stage consisting of three concentric rings, the outer two each being 12 feet across and the middle being 25 feet in diameter, and by running it in the opposite direction to the horses, the competitors would stay in the centre of the stage. This technique was also used for the chariot race in the stage version of *Ben-Hur*, and in 1929 for dog races.)

Wilmut: 22.

stepped into the breach, and taking the Britannia Theatre<sup>72</sup> in hand -- always a favourite with the working class -- took the tide at the flood and led on to the future. It was a good thing for him; and to-day the Britannia stands as the only working class music hall in Glasgow -- a city with nearly one million of a population, while some three or four years ago there were no less than four. Well, it is some reason for satisfaction that the one music hall has a manager in whom the Glasgow public can place such implicit trust and confidence ....<sup>73</sup>

Just how successful Hubner was at the Britannia is unclear. However, on 2 October 1905 Hubner has transferred his business *back* to the Britannia<sup>74</sup> and by mid 1906 it is A E Pickard who is the proprietor and manager of the re-named Panopticon -- although the music hall section of the operation is still advertised as the Britannia.<sup>75</sup> Increasingly all these managers of essential working class venues include film, either on a cine-variety bill in a music hall, or, from the 1910s, to transform their business into a cinema -- as indeed was the case with the Britannia. One of the most enduring of variety theatres in Glasgow, and one that did maintain a working-class bias, was the Metropole. Situated in Stockwell Street, close to the city's East End, it was opened in 1862 as the Scotia Theatre by James Baylis. In 1897 it was renamed the Metropole but maintained its policy of operating a more traditional music hall bill which 'provided entertainment for the respectable 'working man' [and woman].'<sup>76</sup> It existed as an

<sup>72</sup>Describing 'Developments in Leisure' through the nineteenth century, W Hamish Fraser comments on the rise of the commercial music hall, noting that, 'The largest in Glasgow in the 1870s was Rosburgh's Britannia.' W Hamish Fraser, 'Developments in Leisure': 257. The Britannia, which was built in 1857, is still partially intact and is situated in Argyle Street close to the Tron steeple.

<sup>73</sup>'Glasgow Notes: The Panopticon.' *Glasgow Programme* 20 June 1898: 4 (picture on page 1).

<sup>74</sup>The *Glasgow Programme* notes the:

Re-opening by Mr. Hubner. Many will be pleased to welcome the return of Mr. Hubner to this old Established House, which is announced to open to-night, 2nd October.

'Britannia Theatre, Trongate.' *Glasgow Programme* 20 Oct. 1905: 2.

<sup>75</sup>The mix of amusements and music hall under one management is commented upon in the *Glasgow Programme*:

The old Britannia Music Hall has blossomed out into a palace of wonders, under the management of Mr. A. E. Pickard, of waxworks fame, at 101 Trongate. It is yet to be seen whether the Glasgow public will take to this idea or not. It is sincerely hoped they will do so. However, we think that the success of the old Britannia in her new dress is almost assured, as this class of amusement is keenly enjoyed by a large portion of the population. If energy and push and expense have anything to do with its success then it is assured, for Mr. Pickard has done all in his power to make this place of entertainment second to none, and to provide everything necessary and desirable for the comfort of visitors. The forms of amusement are many and various, from the famed Lady Palmist to a variety entertainment in the hall itself. Among the special attractions in this line we have Miss Kate Gourlay, scotch comedienne, Miss Victoria Connor, child vocalist, the special engagement of Shekissima Ladies' Japanese Orchestra, and above all a specially good American Bioscope.

'Glasgow Notes: The Panopticon.' *Glasgow Programme* 16 July 1906: 4.

<sup>76</sup>Cameron, *See Glasgow, See Theatre*: [9]. For the period between 1901 and 1924 the Metropole was managed by Arthur Jefferson. Jefferson's son, Stan Laurel, achieved international fame when he went to Hollywood but his career is said to have begun at one of Pickard's regular Friday amateur nights at the Britannia. These popular amateur nights are highlighted in an illustrated feature in *Quiz*. See 'At the Britannia with the Amateurs -- by Dicky Deuce.' *Quiz* 15 July 1897: 36-37.

## Plate ii



PRACTISING THE NEW STEP.

'Practising the New Step' --  
amateur night at the Britannia Theatre.  
(*Quiz*, 5 August 1897: 91)

independently operated venue. It therefore owed less to the increasing industrialisation of the music hall circuits and was able to develop stronger links to the Scottish culture around it.<sup>77</sup>

The general metropolitan bias of the respectable music hall is, however, further described by Mander and Mitchenson:

The bill at the Coliseum consisted of long song scenas, musical spectacles, music hall acts selected for their refinement. Never was Marie Lloyd to appear within its walls, and even less honest vulgarity was censored by Stoll himself who watched and vetted every act.<sup>78</sup> Through the ensuing years he was able to attract artists of the standing of Sarah Bernhardt and Ellen Terry, the Diaghileff Ballet<sup>79</sup> and musicians of the highest reputation, making the Coliseum unique in London's entertainment world.<sup>80</sup>

Unique or not, what is important about the Coliseum programme is that it knowingly created a theatre of middle class respectability out of a genre that was associated more with the working class. (This despite the fact that in the 1880s and in the period of *fin de siècle* decadence it had been rather fashionable for the male aristocracy to frequent the London music halls.) The move towards owning 'theatres', like the Grand in Glasgow, might, then, be seen as a development of this policy. Stoll at the Coliseum formulated a new meaning for the term 'variety': it was to be associated with high-class

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<sup>77</sup>Cameron notes that:

For much of this century the theatre was managed by Alex Frutin and specialised in variety with a Scottish flavour and gory 'Burke and Hare' melodrama. From 1937 the Logan family was closely associated with the theatre. The Metropole was destroyed by fire in 1961.

Cameron, *See Glasgow, See Theatre*: [9].

<sup>78</sup>Compare this with the *Bailie's* 1897 portrait of Moss. ('Men You Know.' *Bailie* 7 Apr. 1897: 2. ; See below: chapter five)

<sup>79</sup>Wilmot describes the visit of the Diaghilev company to the Coliseum in 1925 when:

... they found themselves sharing a bill with performers such as Nervo and Knox (a knockabout act), Hilda Ward's 'Lady Syncopators', several speciality acts, and a newsreel.

Wilmot: 22. It should be noted that Wilmot attributes to this 1925 tour the first British performance of the last act of *The Sleeping Princess*. Mander and Mitchenson, on the other hand, consider that this had taken place in the 1921 visit to the Alhambra. They argue that the Diaghilev Ballet also had season at the Alhambra, London, in 1921; a season managed by Stoll.

The production [of *The Sleeping Princess*] ran for 105 performances, which may not seem to us now like a failure; but as Dame Ninette de Valois, looking back, has said, though Diaghilev's small coterie of followers for his modern works would support him handsomely for a six-week season, London did not have the public for a three-month season of one classical ballet of such dimensions as *The Sleeping Princess*. It was very costly, with its sets by Bakst and its hundreds of costumes, and the expensive venture came to a dolorous end when, after a quarrel between the backer (Sir Oswald Stoll) and Diaghilev, costumes and scenery were placed in store from which, years later, they emerged almost ruined by damp.

Trewin, J C, Raymond Mander and Joe Mitchenson, *The Gay Twenties: A Decade of the Theatre* (London: Macdonald, 1958): 28.

<sup>80</sup>Mander and Mitchenson: 149. For more detail on the history of the London Coliseum see Barker, *The House that Stoll Built*.

entertainment, beyond moral reproach and took place in an environment of theatrical splendour and the best of society. The rise of the respectable variety stage was reflected in the architecture and interior design of the new venues built by these powerful businessmen -- the huge Glasgow Coliseum with its lavish Matcham designed interior is typical rather than exceptional: indeed, Frank Matcham became the house architect for Moss Empires. It is also publicly declared by the honours bestowed on them (Moss being knighted in 1906, Stoll in 1919 'not only for his services to the stage, but for his benevolent works and his War Seal Foundation during the First World War'<sup>81</sup>) and in the very public event that was the Variety Performance celebrating the coronation of George V.

The initial mover behind the scheme seems to have been Moss, who was keen that on the new King's coronation visit to Edinburgh, the Edinburgh Empire (the premiere of Moss's Empires) would be the venue for a gala celebration of variety performers. This event, scheduled for July 1911, was clearly as much a celebration of the Moss Empires and the social acceptability of the 'music hall' as it was to honour George V. Indeed it would have been a triumphant night had not the Empire been all but destroyed by fire just weeks before during the second house on 9 May 1911.<sup>82</sup>

The blaze which consumed Moss's theatre began during the act of The Great Lafayette, one of the most popular illusionists performing at that time. He and eight members of his company died in the disaster.<sup>83</sup> As a result Moss lost out on the great event and it was rescheduled to take place on 1 July 1912 at the Palace Theatre, London, the venue of rival theatre magnet, Alfred Butt. Mander and Mitchenson quote Stoll on the importance of the event: 'The Cinderella of the arts,' he said, 'has gone to the ball.'<sup>84</sup> But as they also note the ball was rather exclusive: 'All the stars of the day were included. ... Only Marie Lloyd was missing.'<sup>85</sup> In the drive towards the respectable and the attraction of both middle class audiences and even the respectable working class certain aspects of the music hall had to be shed, and the exuberant *risqué* humour (and, perhaps, the union politics<sup>86</sup>) of Lloyd is representative of a whole raft of acts that were marginalised and, eventually, left without a stage, even if an audience was still there. Indeed Lloyd might be seen as victim of the whole improving drive

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<sup>81</sup>Hartnoll: 919.

<sup>82</sup>See Mander and Mitchenson: 152; and Busby: 95.

<sup>83</sup>The fire received much press comment -- including a feature in the *Glasgow Programme and Exhibition Journal* (15 May 1911: 10) with a dramatic picture of the destroyed stage.

<sup>84</sup>Mander and Mitchenson: 152. It is, perhaps, interesting to note that Val Gielgud makes a similar comparison as regards wireless drama in his 1956 Preface to *British Radio Drama: 1922-1956: A Survey* (London: George G Harrap, 1957): 7-8.

<sup>85</sup>Mander and Mitchenson: 152.

<sup>86</sup>Marie Lloyd was one of the major stars who joined the Great Music Hall Strike of 1907 to fight for better and more secure contracts for performers. Basically the demand was for an engagement of seven nights and four matinees a week. This dispute led to the first regularisation of contracts for performers.

associated with the cultural politics of the period. Her songs were more directly related to the working class experience than those of Vesta Tilley, for example, who may have presented a powerful female figure on stage (even given her male attire), but did not address the questions female sexuality that Lloyd's songs do; for instance, 'A Little of What You Fancy Does You Good.' Lloyd's songs, while clearly entertaining and humorous, shift easily from the good-natured romanticism of 'The Boy I Love is up in the Gallery' and the overt suggestiveness of 'Every Little Movement has a Meaning of its Own' and 'She'd Never had her Ticket Punched Before' to addressing contemporary issues of debt, 'My Old Man Said Follow the Van,'<sup>87</sup> and even domestic violence, 'One of the Ruins that Cromwell Knocked About a Bit.'<sup>88</sup> The whole point of music hall entertainment, as Jones stresses, was that it appealed to working-class audiences 'because it was escapist *and yet* strongly rooted in the realities of working-class life.'<sup>89</sup>

This symbiotic relationship was increasingly under attack from the new economics which shaped the entertainment world. In music hall's boom period of the 1880s audiences may have been expanding but an even larger section of society still avoided this kind of the theatre. The economic (and cultural) project of theatre magnets like Moss and Stoll was to attract the potentially lucrative middle class sector of society -- their 'policy was to replace the 'coarseness and vulgarity' of the halls, by the gentility and decorum of the Palace of Variety.'<sup>90</sup>

It seems at least unfortunate that in the entertainment environment preferred by Moss, Stoll, and the other powerful entertainment industrialists the potentially rich mix of audiences developed in the halls of the *fin de siècle* was lost in favour of a narrower, bourgeois society. Lost too was the political edge of the acts; after all performers like Lloyd and Tilley do present the potential for undercutting conventional ideologies. Within the hegemonic business operation that went into the 1910s and 1920s this was absorbed and diffused. T S Eliot's obituary of Marie Lloyd celebrates the role of the audience as at the centre of the pleasure of music hall:

The lower class still exists; but perhaps it will not exist for long. In the Music Hall comedians they find the expression and dignity of their own lives; and this is not found in most elaborate and expensive revue. In

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<sup>87</sup>See also Jones, 'Working-Class Culture and Working-Class Politics ....': 489.

<sup>88</sup>Anne Karpf perhaps points to the personal irony of Lloyd's success with this song. In her act and her public persona:

Marriage was treated as a comic disaster. Lloyd herself wed a gambling stage-door johnny at 17 and produced a daughter. Though she went on to have a happy relationship with a comic she, left him for a jockey who battered her but with whom she stayed.

Anne Karpf, 'Dilly-Dallying with the Lusty Queen of the Halls.' *Observer* 17 Mar. 1991: 53.

<sup>89</sup>Jones, 'Working-Class Culture and Working-Class Politics ....': 491.

<sup>90</sup>Jones, 'Working-Class Culture and Working-Class Politics ....': 491.

England at any rate, the revue expresses almost nothing .... The working man who went to the Music Hall and saw Marie Lloyd and joined in the chorus was himself performing part of the act; he was engaged in that collaboration of the audience with the artist which is necessary in all art and most obviously in dramatic art.<sup>91</sup>

It is true, then, that during the Modern period fissures appeared in the sphere of the popular theatre, splitting audiences into classes, and splitting performer from audience in ways that would have been impossible in the hey-day because of the physically and socially close relationship of performer to audience. Again more concerned with the London scene, but interesting in a wider perspective, Jones is succinct:

Apart from the central palaces [in London] which particularly from the 1880s onwards began to attract sporting aristocrats, military officers, students, clerks and tourists, the music hall was predominantly working-class, both in the character of its audience, the origins of its performers and the content of its songs and sketches. ... In general the music hall appealed to all sectors of the working class from the casual labourer to the highly paid artisan. Its importance as a social and cultural institution was second only to that of the pub.<sup>92</sup>

This class-based appeal points to one aspect of the national and indeed international success of the music hall and the vaudeville circuits to an empathetic audience. Perhaps the energy and the immediacy of the event offers a broader and less materialist interpretation of its general appeal. Whatever the case, although not necessarily in decline, the Great War marks the end of the expansion of the popular theatre. After that cinema becomes ever more of an economic threat and in the 1920s wireless develops as a financially attainable alternative to going out for entertainment and information.

### **Between the Wars: the rise of repertory and the impact of technology**

What, then, was the mainstream of the interwar period itself? London was still the centre of the theatre industry despite the cultural significance of the rise of the Repertory system and its influence, particularly in the field of amateur drama. What was popular in the capital would still be sent to the provinces, or the West End would receive a show previously tested on tour. The type of theatre that was most successful was the musical comedy and revue, and the most successful writers of dramas during the period were Noël Coward, Terence Rattigan, Somerset Maugham, T S Eliot, with James Bridie as the only Scottish voice to figure with any degree of success on the predominantly English stage.

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<sup>91</sup>T S Eliot, Obituary of Marie Lloyd, *Criterion*, Jan. 1923: 192-195; quoted by Honri: 83.

<sup>92</sup>Jones, 'Working-Class Culture and Working-Class Politics ....': 477-78.

In Scotland the major cities were still part of the touring circuit for the West End try-outs and successes and also provided venues for opera and ballet tours; Glasgow regularly hosted visits from the Carl Rosa company and the British National Opera Company. The popular and the mainstream theatre was still more of the genre of melodrama than of the 'new drama'. The 1910s saw the rise of the revues at the variety venues like the Hippodrome and the Alhambra, a genre whose popularity was confirmed with the outbreak of the Great War. Perhaps the exemplary production of the war years was *Chu-Chin-Chow*, which opened at His Majesty's for a five year run in August 1916. The increasing success of these shows with their lavish production values is marked by the expansion of links between theatre and film and Broadway and the West End. During this period, however, the cinema was increasingly coming into its own. The spread of cinemas as places of entertainment continued and was complimented by the development of the American film industry which produced in this decade some of the most popular and most influential films of the silent era. The importance of film within the general entertainment environment created a powerful industry and an influential force for theatre to face. While the technical and narrative sophistication achieved by D W Griffith's *Birth of a Nation* (1915) and *Intolerance* (1916) are important milestones in the development of a rhetoric of film they are also important pointers to the way in which film would be integrated into habitualness, but equally how the remarkable and the innovative is still received enthusiastically. In Glasgow neither film was screened in a cinema but in the Theatre Royal -- giving the films the still important cachet of cultural worth associated with legitimate theatre.<sup>93</sup> It was, perhaps, most decisively with the introduction of sound that theatre becomes an influential source of texts for cinema. The rise of musical theatre in the 1920s as a source of sophisticated entertainment is best exemplified by the international careers of writers like Coward, Cole Porter and the Greshwins -- whose work, while beginning in theatres, in comedies, revues, musicals, and was popularised again in the 1930s through the development of talking pictures.

Within the increasingly diverse entertainment environment, theatres were still popular and numerous:

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<sup>93</sup>*Birth of a Nation* has a successful run in July and August 1916, and is again engaged in summer 1917 as a kind of trailer for *Intolerance* which is excitedly received by the Glasgow press and public; so much so that the film was held over at the Theatre Royal for four weeks from 20 August 1917, returning for a further two weeks in September 1918. See the *Bailie* 2 Aug. 1916: 14; 23 May 1917: 14; 30 May 1917: 11; 6 June 1917: 14. In addition see: Advertisement: *Intolerance*. *Bailie* 15 Aug. 1917: cartoon supplement 3; "'Intolerance" Griffith Spectacle Influences Season's Styles.' *Bailie* 15 Aug. 1917: 11; 'Under the Limes: A Review of Plays and Players.' *Bailie* 12 Sept. 1917: 14.

At the peak of the [variety theatre] business in the 1920s there were twenty-four theatres in Glasgow, fourteen in Edinburgh, ten in Dundee and many others round the country.<sup>94</sup>

Despite the experiment of the Glasgow Repertory Theatre under Wareing, theatres in Scotland still survived as a kind of facilities house -- merely as venues -- simply providing a stage for a cultural product that was imported, generally via London but possibly from another area -- for instance the success of the tours of the Abbey Theatre, so influential for Scottish theatre in general and the Scottish National Players in particular.

'An Irish dramatic invasion is upon us.'<sup>95</sup> In the coverage of the visit the focus of attention is on the 'national' aspects of the Abbey project and it is this which is most influential on the Scottish theatre scene:

Yet scarcely half-a-dozen years have passed since the movement to establish an Irish Literary Theatre was projected in Dublin. It is a phase of the still larger movement known as 'The Celtic Revival,' a term that has resulted in much ink-slinging. The prime element in that revival is nationality .... Whether the languishing Celtic spirit is reanimated by Mr George Moore, Mr W. B. Yeats, and the other 'rebellious persons' will lead to great national results remains to be seen. There is no denying its influence in the cosmopolitan world of letters.<sup>96</sup>

The plays performed on that first night at the King's Theatre, Glasgow, were two by Lady Gregory, *Hyacinth Halvey* and *Spreading the News*, John Millington Synge's *Shadow in the Glen*, and *Kathleen ni Houlihan* by William Butler Yeats. What is most influential in the Irish project is the emphasis on the creation of a literary tradition and a repertoire of new Irish plays. The Irish drama upholds and develops a European theatrical movement, as it exists within the context of theatrical naturalism:

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<sup>94</sup>Wilmot: 171.

<sup>95</sup>'Entertainments: King's Theatre -- The Celtic Drama.' *Glasgow Herald* 5 June 1906: 6.

<sup>96</sup>'Entertainments: King's Theatre -- The Celtic Drama.' *Glasgow Herald* 5 June 1906: 6. The review continues:

The movement appears to have been born in travail. That, after all, is the lot of most movements associated with the distressful country. ... the dramatic offspring of the 'Celtic Revival' is enjoying a sturdy childhood. Lets us hope that destiny, un-Irish like, has in store for it a still sturdier adolescence. Like most things Irish, it was conceived in a spirit of revolt. Hitherto the Irish drama -- like the Scotch it has been nothing much to brag about -- has been chiefly associated with the plays of Boucicault, and numerous melodramatic absurdities of political flavour. The authors of the National Theatre have broken absolutely from those traditions. They disbelieve in the actuality of Boucicaultian drama, with its tattered roystering rascals, full of jest, of song, and of 'poteen.' The 'cratur' is not absent from the new Irish drama ... but they are decidedly more humorous than our old friends. The aim of the writers of the National Theatre, it would appear, has been to found a new Folk-drama. The plays presented last night [4 June 1906] illustrated the sorrows and the joys of the Irish peasantry, those dream-haunted children 'who speak an exuberant language and have a primitive grace and wildness.' They also illustrate in some measure the tragedy of the Irish character. ...

The National Theatre is not only a revolt against the conventional Irish drama: Mr Yeats and his daring coadjutors also assail the conventions of the modern theatre. Actuality is the keynote of their method. The properties used are taken from the cottages of the Irish peasantry. In two of the plays the scenes are humble interiors, realistic representations of Irish cabins, down even to a whisp of thatch sticking through the roof.<sup>97</sup>

The desire is to describe an organic relation between writer, text, performance and Irish society at large. It is to emphasise the difference between this socially important and culturally significant drama and the easy entertainment of the touring companies and even the music halls.

The week long engagement in June 1906 was successful enough that a second visit took place the next year. This time the venue was the Royalty Theatre, Cowcaddens. The *Bailie* again refers to the Celtic Revival and provides contemporary comment on the importance of this second visit:

The company of the National Theatre Society (Limited) of Dublin will this week occupy the Royalty stage.<sup>98</sup> This National Theatre enterprise is the direct outcome -- the most important outcome -- of the Celtic movement which has been in progress among our friends on the other side of the Irish Channel during the past four or five years. Among its chief promoters are Lady Gregory, Mr. W. B. Yeats the poet, and Mr. J. M. [Synge], a young dramatist of much promise. To-night (Monday) and Wednesday and Thursday nights the programme will consist of plays by Mr. Synge and Mr. Yeats and of a play and a comedy by Lady Gregory; on Tuesday (tomorrow) and Friday nights four pieces will be staged -- three by Lady Gregory and one by Mr. Yeats. The players, who are, naturally, Irishmen and Irishwomen, are all of them skilful actors. They seek to give the proper local colour to the different pieces in which they appear, and also to carry a sense of poetry into the atmosphere behind the footlights, and both aims are accomplished with a happy measure of success.<sup>99</sup>

The *Glasgow Herald* comments on the event, again focusing on the 'national' aspects of the company:

'National Drama' seems to claim the so-called summer months for its own, or at least a portion of these as far as Glasgow is concerned. Purely Scottish productions occupy anything but great space. In Ireland, however, progress is being made. There, according to a writer on the subject, the idea of a national drama arose out of a period of intellectual activity consequent upon a period of political unrest. But

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<sup>97</sup>'Entertainments: King's Theatre -- The Celtic Drama.' *Glasgow Herald* 5 June 1906: 6.

<sup>98</sup>The Royalty (after the Great War it was re-named the Lyric) was situated on Sauchiehall Street. It is interesting to note that the theatre was in 1909 to become the home of the Glasgow Repertory Theatre. The Abbey was directly influential in this development of the Scottish stage -- as indeed it was a model for other theatre ventures.

<sup>99</sup>'Monday Gossip.' *Bailie* 15 May 1907: 4.

whatever its origin, the idea has taken tangible shape, and for some years the Abbey Theatre, Dublin -- subsidised, we believe by an Englishwoman -- has been a centre for staging pieces based upon the life of the people, written by natives of the country, and played by natives.<sup>100</sup>

As with the coverage of the previous year, the intention is to emphasise a close relation between the play and the actual lived experience of the Irish. It is perceived that the strength of the Abbey's new drama was that it would reflect internally an indigenous culture and also that the plays and the theatre, indeed the whole cultural movement, might act as an element of and as propaganda for the wider political goals of the Celtic Revival. In both cultural and political ways the Irish Players are indeed 'in the character of missionaries.'<sup>101</sup>

This clearly identified and socially supported role that theatre in Ireland adopted was never complete in the Scottish context. In Scotland the political aspects of nationalism, the cultural aspects of nationalism and the national aspects of culture never achieved the parity of vision developed in Ireland. In Scotland the Abbey may have been held up as a cultural example but it was resisted as a political model. Indeed in an editorial commenting on the new developments in the project to establish a Glasgow Repertory Theatre, the *Glasgow Herald* comments on the:

...open secret ... that among the first plays to be produced will be one specially written by a well-known Scottish author.<sup>102</sup>

However, the article continues:

There is no fear that the Scottish drama will be endangered by such lamentable circumstances as have almost crushed the life out of the Abbey Theatre at Dublin: English dwellers within our gates need anticipate no references, save historical ones, to the question of Scottish Home Rule; and a nation that delights in music-hall caricatures of its own idiosyncrasies is not likely to accuse its poets and dramatists of holding it up to ridicule. The danger is, rather that in our modern capacity as as the Jews or Phœnicians of the British Empire we may have become so oblivious to our national identity -- at least, on its more seriously emotional side -- as not to recognise or be interested in its mirrored reflection on stage. That, however, depends on the mirror: national self-consciousness will respond quickly enough to an artistic likeness. We shall see what our poets can do for us: it rests with the public, at any rate, to face the mirror attentively and give the national dramatist a chance.<sup>103</sup>

<sup>100</sup>'Entertainments: Royalty Theatre -- Irish Plays.' *Glasgow Herald* 14 May 1907: 11.

<sup>101</sup>'Entertainments: King's Theatre -- The Celtic Drama.' *Glasgow Herald* 5 June 1906: 6.

<sup>102</sup>Editorial. *Glasgow Herald* 27 Feb. 1909: 6.

<sup>103</sup>Editorial. *Glasgow Herald* 27 Feb. 1909: 6.

The line that the writer must negotiate is a precarious one: on the one hand the clear desire to create an indigenous national drama; on the other the instruction to strip it of any real understanding or working through of what the 'national', the 'Scottish' might mean. The aspiration to perform an indigenous drama was one of the stated aims of Wareing and the Glasgow Repertory Theatre. The project to give Glasgow its own locally-producing theatre came to fruition on 15 April 1909 with the performance by the Scottish Playgoers' Company of Ibsen's *An Enemy of the People*. The project had been the subject of increasing excitement from the start of that year:

A movement is on foot to establish in Glasgow a repertoire theatre, affording play-goers an opportunity of witnessing such plays as are rarely presented by the touring companies. ... inquiries have shown that enthusiastic interest exists in all circles -- university, artistic, and commercial.<sup>104</sup>

Even at that stage the key figure of Alfred Wareing ('who, as business manager for Mr F. R. Benson, Mr Beerbohm Tree, and Mr Oscar Asche and Miss Lily Brayton, is well known in Glasgow'<sup>105</sup>) is involved. The main influence behind the Glasgow Repertory Theatre was indeed Wareing, whose experience also included working with William Poel at the Elizabethan Stage Society, being secretary of the Elizabethan Literary Society, and, as the *Herald* notes, administration for F R Benson and then Herbert Beerbohm Tree.<sup>106</sup> Indeed, the model of theatre offered by these figures is what influences Wareing's view of theatre most of all. It is not so much the theatre of the actor-manager leading his company in both business and on stage, but of the flexibility of a core company working together across a season and in a number of different productions. Wareing talks of an older model, that of the 'stock companies'.<sup>107</sup> The company issued a prospectus to stimulate support from would-be investors. The *Herald* briefly describes the aims of the scheme:

1. To establish in Glasgow a Repertory Theatre which will afford playgoers and those interested in drama an opportunity of witnessing such plays as are rarely present under the present Touring Company system;
2. To organise a Stock Company of first-class actors and actresses for the adequate representation of such plays;
3. To conduct the business of Theatrical Managers and play producers in Glasgow and other places, so as to stimulate a

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<sup>104</sup>'A Repertoire Theatre for Glasgow.' *Glasgow Herald* 15 Feb. 1909: 9.

<sup>105</sup>'A Repertoire Theatre for Glasgow.' *Glasgow Herald* 15 Feb. 1909: 9.

<sup>106</sup>'Men You Know.' *Bailie* 8 Sept. 1909: 1-2.

<sup>107</sup>See 'Proposed Repertoire Theatre in Glasgow.' *Glasgow Herald* 20 Feb. 1909: 9; and A[lfred] W[areing], 'A Brief Note on the Company,' *The Scottish Playgoers' Company: Souvenir Brochure of the Repertory Theatre Opening Season, 1909, Royalty Theatre, Glasgow* (Glasgow: N.p., 1909): N.pag.

- popular interest in the more cultured, important and permanent forms of dramatic art;
4. To encourage the initiation and development of a purely Scottish Drama by providing a stage and acting company which will be peculiarly adapted for the production of plays, national in character, written by Scottish men and women of letters.<sup>108</sup>

At a meeting held in Glasgow on 19 February 1909, Wareing described the aims of the proposed 'citizen's theatre in Glasgow'<sup>109</sup> in more detail. It was reported by the *Glasgow Herald*:

The idea was to make Glasgow theatrically independent of London. They wished to make Glasgow to some extent a play-producing centre, and an endeavour would be made to produce the best plays that could be found. The theatre would be supported and financed by Glasgow citizens, those immediately associated with the life of the city. While he did not put the scheme before them as an investment, they would aim in striving after a certain ideal to make the scheme pay its way.<sup>110</sup>

In this address Wareing also proposed the type of drama that would be produced and named the same key European playwrights that the Independent Theatre Society and the Court had wished to sponsor; Ibsen, Brieux, Maeterlinck and Hauptmann. He also names writers central to the development of the English stage; Goldsmith and Sheridan. Elsewhere Wareing was even more direct:

In the programme presented by the Scottish Playgoers' Company, the names of the ultra-modern dramatists will be found: G. Bernard Shaw, John Galsworthy, and Arnold Bennett ...<sup>111</sup>

('Ultra-modern' in the sense of being new and contemporary but really not Modernist in a way that would align the movement to the politics and the aesthetics of European Modernism.) What this address did not propose was a policy on new Scottish writing. This was, however, described in another press article on the Repertory Theatre<sup>112</sup> including Wareing's own statement of intent from the Prospectus:

We may ... without any suspicion of chauvinism, express the hope that the public-spirited organisers of the Scottish Playgoers' Society ... will be able to fulfil their intentions not only to re-establish the stock company system on a wider and loftier basis, but 'to encourage the initiation and development of a purely Scottish drama by providing a stage and acting company which will be peculiarly adapted for the

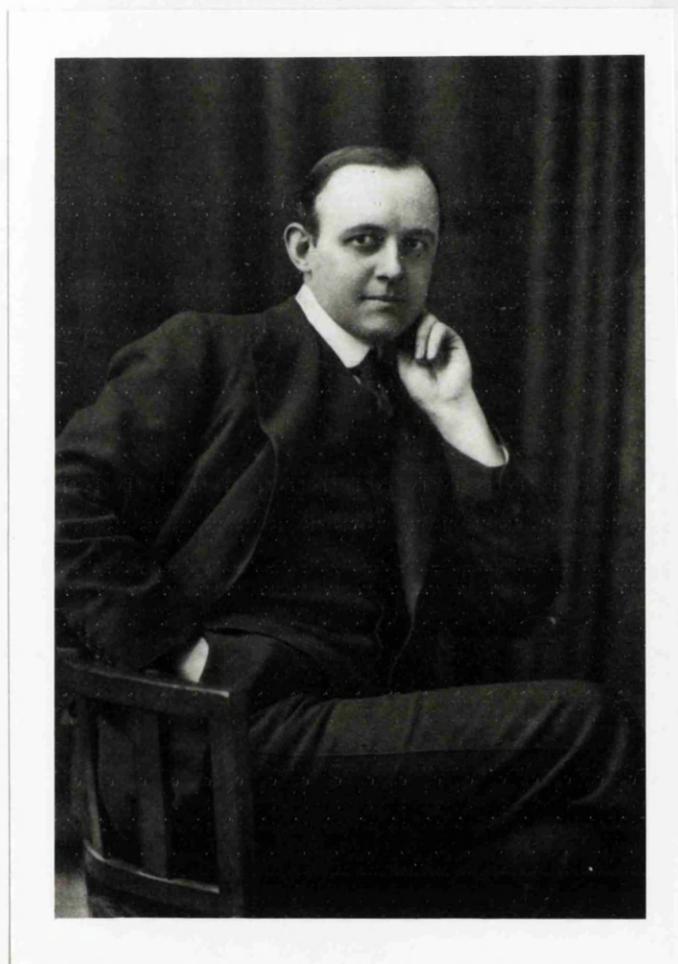
<sup>108</sup>There is no extant copy of the prospectus: but see the Editorial. *Glasgow Herald* 27 Feb. 1909: 6.

<sup>109</sup>'Proposed Repertoire Theatre in Glasgow.' *Glasgow Herald* 20 Feb. 1909: 9.

<sup>110</sup>'Proposed Repertoire Theatre in Glasgow.' *Glasgow Herald* 20 Feb. 1909: 9.

<sup>111</sup>A[lfred] W[areing], 'A Brief Note on the Company.'

<sup>112</sup>Editorial. *Glasgow Herald* 27 Feb. 1909: 6.

**Plate iii**

Alfred Wareing.  
(Scottish Theatre Arcvie)

production of plays national in character, written by Scottish men and women of letters.<sup>113</sup>

There is clearly a tension at work: the desire to foster a new Scottish drama (the model offered by the Abbey) and the perceived need for a wider cultural project and prestige (the model offered by the literary prejudices of the London developments). This may have provided a positive point of clash and debate: the linking of the various cultural projects of the European experience and the local response of the Scottish arts to that energy. Indeed this is just how the *Herald* views the plays policy of the Repertory Theatre:

The Scottish Playgoers' ... have done wisely in making the revival -- or initiation -- of Scottish drama only one of the objects of their enterprise, and, also, in not restricting themselves to new plays. The new can flourish only alongside the old; the national demands the background of the universal.<sup>114</sup>

There is potential for new theatre, and indeed new drama, in the plans of the Glasgow Repertory Theatre: but can such a scheme be seen as modern and forward-looking? It is true that Christopher Harvie refers to the 'radicalism'<sup>115</sup> of the company, but on what grounds can such a claim be made? The repeated reference to the theatrical practices and the plays of the past (the stock companies and the canon of the new English stage) may point to one of the problem areas for the company as time went on. Nevertheless the Repertory Theatre was intended to act as an alternative to the dominant experience of imported theatre and as such the theatre was indeed radical -- countering the easy hegemony of London theatre, according to Kenneth Richards, 'a determined attempt to break with dependence on London offerings.'<sup>116</sup> The implicit aim of the movement remains and is described by Wareing:

It only remains for playgoers and those interested in the drama to support, actively and energetically, the movement which will lead to the establishment of a Scottish National Theatre.<sup>117</sup>

The model is always the Abbey and yet again it is perceived as an imperfect model, chiefly because of the palpable nature of its nationalism:

... the company [of the Glasgow Repertory Theatre] may be said to have taken a fairly decided step toward the ultimate goal of their

<sup>113</sup>Editorial. *Glasgow Herald* 27 Feb. 1909: 6.

<sup>114</sup>Editorial. *Glasgow Herald* 27 Feb. 1909: 6.

<sup>115</sup>Harvie, *No Gods ...*: 137.

<sup>116</sup>Kenneth Richards, 'Actors and Theatres,' Hunt, Richards and Taylor: 111.

<sup>117</sup>Wareing, 'A Brief Note on the Company.'

ambition -- namely, the establishment of a Scottish theatre equal to the Irish one in national spirit, and possibly superior to it in breadth of artistic horizon. The literary traditions of Scotland, and the intellectual activity of our great Celto-Saxon city,<sup>118</sup> afford good grounds for a hope that the generous support of the public will justify the splendid enterprise of the Scottish Players' Company.<sup>119</sup>

Interestingly, as suggested by the *Bailie's* description of the Glasgow Repertory as 'the first citizens' theatre in the English-speaking world'<sup>120</sup> the company was indeed founded on the money subscribed by Glasgow citizens. The *Bailie* notes:

The Glasgow Repertory Theatre is owned by Glasgow shareholders, and is governed by a body of directors all of whom are representative Glasgow men. Deacon-Convenor Andrew Macdonald is chairman, his colleagues being Mr. J. Wright Robb, the secretary of the Art Club, Professors Phillimore and M'Neile Dixon, and Dr. Neil Munro, with Mr. WAREING as managing director. Such a board ensures the preservation of the high ideals which the Repertory Theatre sets out to attain, and it ensures, moreover, that these ideals will be pursued in a sound, practical, business like manner.<sup>121</sup>

The *Bailie's* 'Men You Know' feature on Wareing praises the achievement of the first season; a season which included productions of Shaw's *You Never Can Tell*, Arnold Bennett's *Cupid and Commonsense*, Galsworthy's *Strife*, Ibsen's *An Enemy of the People* and W E Henley and Robert Louis Stevenson's *Admiral Guinea*. Despite the staging of three entirely new plays,<sup>122</sup> this first season was firmly rooted in the tradition of the progressive drama, with texts and tendencies tried and tested in the London theatre scene of the Independent Theatre Society and the Court. What it did not feature was evidence of a policy on and programme of the new indigenous writing that so marked the opening achievements of the Abbey Theatre.

However, in the four years of the Glasgow Repertory Theatre's play producing activity Wareing did stage a remarkable proportion of new plays. According to Cameron the Repertory Theatre produced 'some thirty-five new Scottish plays,'<sup>123</sup> while David Hutchison notes that, over the same period the company '... presented

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<sup>118</sup>Perhaps this clumsy description of Glasgow as a 'Celto-Saxon city' encapsulates a deeper cultural crisis at the root of the tensions within the project of the Repertory Theatre. On the one hand drawn towards the role of cultural provider for a (Scottish) nation (indeed the only Scottish city both inclined to and wealthy enough to carry out such an undertaking); on the other successful partner in the economic prosperity of the British Empire, and still culturally dependent on the touring drama, ballet, opera and music companies of London. Or perhaps it is indeed the case that 'Scotland doesna mean much tae Glesca folk' as Peggy says in *The Gorbals Story* by Robert McLeish.

<sup>119</sup>'A Scottish Theatre.' Editorial. *Glasgow Herald* 26 Mar. 1909: 8.

<sup>120</sup>'Men You Know.' *Bailie* 8 Sept. 1909: 1.

<sup>121</sup>'Men You Know.' *Bailie* 8 Sept. 1909: 2.

<sup>122</sup>These plays were R H Powell, *The White Dove*; C Roxburgh, *The Convenient Lover*; and R Bankier, *Whose Zoo*.

<sup>123</sup>Cameron, *Study Guide* ...: 11.

over one hundred plays, thirty-three of which were new to the stage, and some sixteen of which were new Scottish plays.<sup>124</sup> Among these new Scottish plays were Neil Munro's *Macpherson*,<sup>125</sup> Donald Colquhoun's *Jean*,<sup>126</sup> J[ohn] J[oy] Bell's *Wee Macgreegor*,<sup>127</sup> J A Ferguson's *Campbell of Kilmohr*,<sup>128</sup> and G J Hamlen's *Colin in Fairyland*.<sup>129</sup> Does this point to the beginnings of a 'Scottish National Theatre'<sup>130</sup> or 'the establishment of a Scottish theatre equal to the Irish one in national spirit'<sup>131</sup>?

One of the figures contemporary with the Glasgow Repertory was Graham Moffat. His great success, *Bunty Pulls the Strings*, with a moral of female suffrage, was premiered in London, ran for some 600 performances and toured successfully for years thereafter. Moffat's success had, however, been increasing from 1908. In that year he had premiered two of his own plays in Glasgow:

On Thursday, 16th March [1908], in the Athenæum Hall, a very interesting event will take place in the production of two Scottish plays for the first time on any stage. The plays have been written by Mr. Graham Moffat .... Mr. Moffat deplors the fact that although Scottish life and character should provide good material for dramatic representation, we take nearly all our dramatic literature from London. However, in 'Annie Laurie' and 'Till the Bells Ring,' the circumstances giving rise to the situations are Scottish, and all the characters speak the lowland 'braid Scots,' so here we have a very fine opportunity for encouraging national drama, and we hope that every patriotic Scot will rally round and give Mr. Moffat a very enthusiastic reception that he may be induced to produce these plays again, and enable them to be more widely known and appreciated.

We wish Mr. Moffat every success in his laudable effort in the cause of patriotism, and hope our readers will also show their appreciation by attending the performance.<sup>132</sup>

It seems clear from the reports given of Moffat and indeed to its coverage of the Abbey Theatre's visit that the *Glasgow Programme* is much keener of the role of patriotic drama than is the *Glasgow Herald*. But even Moffat's use of the national, as may be best illustrated in *Bunty Pulls the Strings*, is not without its problems. It is 'patriotic' without being nationalist. Although in *Bunty* ... there may be traced leanings towards

<sup>124</sup>David Hutchison, *The Modern Scottish Theatre* (Glasgow: Molendinar, 1977): 22.

<sup>125</sup>Neil Munro's *Macpherson* was first performed by the Glasgow Repertory Theatre 20 November 1909.

<sup>126</sup>First performed 16 May 1910.

<sup>127</sup>First performed 19 December 1911.

<sup>128</sup>First performed in a triple bill with Bernard Shaw's *The Man of Destiny* and *How He Lied to Her Husband* 23 March 1914.

<sup>129</sup>First performed 22 December 1910.

<sup>130</sup>W[areing], 'A Brief Note on the Company.'

<sup>131</sup>'A Scottish Theatre.' Editorial. *Glasgow Herald* 26 Mar. 1909: 8.

<sup>132</sup>'Notes by the Way: ... Original Scottish Plays.' *Glasgow Programme* 23 Mar. 1908: 6. This edition of the *Programme* also contains a picture of 'Mr. Graham Moffat and Miss Kate Moffat: Producing original Scottish plays at the Athenæum on March 26th.' See also Moffat, *Join Me in Remembering* (Camps Bay: Winifred L Moffat, 1955).

some form of progressive social politics, Moffat uses the essentially sentimental reference points of the kailyard -- it is set in the 1880s, in a small rural town against a backdrop of the Kirk, and, with the notable exception of Bunty herself, is peopled with stock Scottish 'characters'.

The War, however, was something of a watershed in the development of the repertory movement in general and the development of that movement in its Scottish and Glasgow contexts. Despite the popular, critical and financial success of the spring 1914 season of the Glasgow Repertory, directed by Lewis Casson, the renamed Scottish Repertory Company was wound up as a result of the outbreak of hostilities -- and the mobilisation of key personnel, including Casson. The announcement was made on 16 November 1914:

The directors of the Scottish Repertory Company (Limited) have decided that, owing to the war, the active operations of the company must meantime be suspended. Before the outbreak of the war negotiations had been opened with the view of obtaining a suitable theatre, the intention being to enter upon a dramatic season on the lines of the one which proved so successful in the spring of the present year. The war, however, interfered with the arrangements, and with Colonel Morrison, chairman of the company, and Major Jowitt, convenor of the Productions Committee, on military service, it was felt that the proposal to proceed with a dramatic season should be postponed, and this step has accordingly been taken. Among the members of last season's acting company and other members of the staff who are now in France is the producer, Mr Lewis Casson, who is serving as a motor driver at the front.<sup>133</sup>

### **The rise of the amateurs: a new theatre**

More clearly focused on the 'national' role was the Scottish National Players, initially of the St Andrew Society and later under the management of the Scottish National Theatre Society. Attempts to establish this group began before the Great War in 1913, and the one is a development of the earlier company. The Scottish National Theatre Society inherited the remaining funds of the Glasgow Repertory Theatre after the War. But it was not until the 1920s that the Scottish National Players achieved the most prolonged period of success. The company was rather different to the Repertory Theatre in that it offered essentially an amateur and small-scale theatre, although one with ambitions to develop towards a professional theatre. The years of their most notable successes -- the 1920s -- was a decade perhaps more amenable to the debates and the sentiments of the national than the early 1900s and the 1910s. Within the project and the set of goals that the Scottish National Players set out, the failure of the Repertory Theatre must be excused away. The 'national' aspects of the aims are

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<sup>133</sup>'Glasgow Repertory Theatre.' *Glasgow Herald* 16 Nov. 1914: 6.

familiar from both the Repertory Theatre and the cultural project of the Abbey. The type of work undertaken by the Scottish National Players was, however, very different to that of the Repertory Theatre. The Players existed within the developing amateur sector of the cultural industries and a major part of their success was the extensive summer tour of the countryside which they used as a strategy to develop their role as prototype National Theatre. Indeed this desire is both implicit and clearly explicit in their stated aims:

1. to develop Scottish National Drama through the production by the Scottish National Players of plays of Scottish life and character;
2. to encourage in Scotland a public taste for good drama of any type;
3. to found a Scottish National Theatre.<sup>134</sup>

One of the features of the Repertory Theatre, and one most positively received by local commentators, had been its status as 'citizens' theatre.' But by 1921 even this aspect is effaced:

We remember with gratitude the work of the Repertory Theatre in the old Royalty, but that movement was not in any vital sense civic or national.<sup>135</sup>

Just on what grounds this denial is made is unclear; somewhat more lucid is the renewed turn to the Abbey as a vibrant and useful example:

The great success of the Irish National Theatre supplied the incentive to those in Scotland who appreciated the value of dramatic art as an intellectual and patriotic force, and to none could this aspect have appealed more naturally than to the Saint Andrew Society of Glasgow, which has pursued patriotism with more than dilettanti interest and enthusiasm.<sup>136</sup>

Both the Glasgow Repertory Theatre and the Scottish National Players were influenced by the example and the idea of the Abbey, however, the relation between the two Scottish companies was less than straightforward. At times the Scottish National Theatre Society (SNTS) seemed all too keen to deny the influence of the Glasgow Repertory (perhaps because of the Repertory Theatre's ultimate failure in 1914), this despite the similarity in at least some aspects of their aims, the Player's inheritance of

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<sup>134</sup>These aims are repeated in many of the Scottish National Players' publications. For instance, they are laid out on the Membership form of the Scottish National Theatre Society for the year of its founding 1922. Held in the Scottish Theatre Archive, University of Glasgow (STA 2Bb Box 1/11).

<sup>135</sup>'Men You Know.' *Bailie* 25 Jan. 1922: 3.

<sup>136</sup>'Men You Know.' *Bailie* 25 Jan. 1922: 3.

the Repertory Theatre's remaining funds, and the clear need for the Players to attract and to develop the old Repertory audience. In the magazine of the SNTS, the *Scottish Player*, this position was laid out clearly in an article 'Ourselves and Our Movement' signed 'RMD.'<sup>137</sup>

The Scottish National Theatre Society is anxious to foster all good drama but its primary object is written for all who run to read in its name. It drew its inspiration from the Dublin Abbey Theatre, and that theatre's dramatists and players not from the much beloved but dead and gone Glasgow Repertory Theatre. It has produced, and plans to go on producing from time to time the plays of other nations, but its chief object is the ones that must lie nearest its heart are to create a Scottish stage literature and to establish a Scottish National Theatre.<sup>138</sup>

The desire to create a 'Scottish National Theatre' and a Scottish tradition of literature and criticism maintained a tension between two perhaps opposing tendencies: on the one hand, it can inspire the artist towards particularly focused creativity -- although with the implicit danger of chauvinism and xenophobia; on the other, it can trap writing and representations into a closed and hermetically sealed system of images that repeats, perhaps without reinterpretation, pre-existing codes and conventions.

This reveals the strengths and the weaknesses of the twentieth-century Scottish literary renaissance. Existing within a context of Modernism -- using numerous forms and not afraid to flirt with the elitist elements that Modernism contained, if not encouraged -- the literature of this disparate grouping took Scottish culture away from the narratives, the images and the forms of the nineteenth century towards a new literature. It was not a literature that denied its history, however, since it used the styles and the images of the nineteenth century and of centuries anterior to that. But it did so with a truly distinctive *geist*, an aspect that could only have emerged in the world after the rupture of the Great War. The texts did not protect the myths of community and sentiment but challenged them within a context that acknowledged social disharmony and cultural upheaval. These elements were available to be mobilised by the politically motivated, politically active arts groups of the 1930s. The Workers' Theatre Groups, Kino and other declared Left groups were interested in activating the social malaise that the literary renaissance writers had encountered and described (more often in terms of metaphor than actual political debate) and encouraging a direct and Left motivated re-assessment of all aspects of the culture's identity.

In *Albyn* ... Grieve discusses the role of the Scottish Renaissance:

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<sup>137</sup>Actually Reah Murray Denholm a non-acting member, though for a time honorary librarian, of the Scottish National Players.

<sup>138</sup>R[eah] M[urray] D[enholm], 'Ourselves and Our Movement.' *Scottish Player* 4.32 (1926): 1.

... the main point to seize upon ... is that, apart from the 'Scottish Renaissance Group,' the rest of the Scottish people in Scotland today are not Scottish in any real sense of the term. They have no consciousness of difference except in detail; 'distinctions without difference.' They are all the less Scottish in proportion to their ardour as Burns enthusiasts, members of St Andrew's and Caledonian Societies and the like. ... the vast majority of Scots today -- even Scottish Home Rulers -- regard as typically Scottish the very sentiments and attitudes which are the products of their progressive anglicization. Scotland is suffering from a very widespread inferiority complex -- the result of the psychological violence suffered as a consequence of John Knox's anti-national policy in imposing an English Bible (and, as a consequence, English as the basis for education) upon it .... Weaker minds find a compensation in a 'romantic nationalism' -- sedulously dissociated from politics and practical realities of every kind. The others accept the situation and transcend it, that accounts for such phenomena as Scottish Prime Ministers, Archbishops of Canterbury and York, 'heids of departments' of all kinds, the ubiquitous Scotsman generally, most of the Scottish aristocracy, and such writers of English as R. L. Stevenson, R. B. Cunninghame Graham and Norman Douglas. There is a third class who are 'more English than the English.' ... The 'nationalism' of the first of these three class is such that it has been unable to create any literature, music or drama of more than a local value. It is hopelessly provincialized. The history of Scottish vernacular poetry, for example, since the days of the Auld Makars, is a history of the progressive relinquishment of magnificent potentialities for the creation of a literature which might well have rivalled the English. The only challenge to the decline was that of Allan Ramsay and Fergusson -- which Burns, in the last analysis, betrayed. The influence of Burns has reduced the whole field of Scottish letters to a 'kailyard.'<sup>139</sup>

There is, indeed, a real problem in the search for a Scottish literary tradition, a national literature, particularly if it includes a search for a Scottish theatrical tradition, a national drama. There has been a tendency, particularly marked within the twentieth century, that attempts to construct or impose a 'tradition' where either there had been none or there had been a very different type of heredity. This is a tendency that is historical without being historicist, concerned with myth while not being materialist. It is a tendency which, unlike the realism of the literary renaissance is interested only in fantasy and only in a phantasmagoria operating on metaphoric levels or, at best, held up as linguistic triumphs in their return to using a Scots language as a utilitarian voice for literature and drama. Perhaps this is a stage through which the voice-less nation (or potential nation) must pass? If this is the case then it has to be a genuine tradition that is truly indigenous and not, as may be the case in Scottish culture, a tradition that was as much for export as it was for use within the country itself. The metropolitan success of the plays of Barrie and of Bridie perhaps points to this problematic stance as a not untypical one. William Bell describes just this use of culture in his 1930 book *Rip Van*

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<sup>139</sup>Grieve, *Albyn*: 16-19.

*Scotland*: 'When Barrie looked out of his window in Thrums,' Bell writes, 'it was not Scotland he saw but Fleet Street.'<sup>140</sup> This is a tradition into which, all too easily, the plays sponsored by the Scottish National Players can fall -- although it is important in terms of theatre developments as opposed to just dramaturgical considerations that criticism rescues the Players from the pit of easy dismissal, based just on literary values. In many ways, however, the Scottish National Player's determined search for a Scottish national drama (they operated an intensive new plays policy from 1921 until 1934) limits the potential project of their aims and blinkers them to a wider and Modern experience of theatre and the drama. This is signalled in the tone and the actual sentiments of 'The Scottish Play We Hope For,' an article in the journal Scottish Player:

The history of cultural nationalism has no more fascinating tale to tell than the efforts made by enthusiastic men to use the Theatre as a means of overthrowing the power of kings and achieving the destruction of ancient ignorances. ...

If the Scottish theatre has anything to learn from the nationalist movements in European drama it is the necessity of going far ben [sic] into the national soul. It has endeavoured to do that by playing two Jacobite pieces, *Campbell of Kilmohr* and *The Dawn*, not in order to propagate antiquated and foolish dynastic politics but to give Scotsmen something to dream over. We have not yet had anything similar to Yeats' *Kathleen ni Houlihan*; we need to render tribute to our lost causes and our broken leaders, and that does not mean the laying of wreaths of white roses upon images of stone.

The Lost Cause is an idea which the Scot keeps to himself; it is a mysticism which he can barely understand though for some reason, probably of atavistic origin, he treasures it as a holy thing. He is to be heard singing *Will ye no' come back again?* and because he knows there is no coming-back he hugs the dream more lovingly. We need a dramatization of our lost causes; we would welcome a fine tragic play woven around William Wallace, one which will show us all the splendour of the Man of Scotland, a man who did not merely represent the Scots nation, but was the Scots nation in himself. We do not ask for ranting patriotism and bombast, but we do need a dramatic interpretation of the Wallace symbol, the symbol whose name we salute in our national song often the manner we have of saluting our kings and heroes and the ancient and holy dead. ...<sup>141</sup>

This points to one of the major controversies in the dramaturgical activity of the Players. Their great success was in historical verse plays and plays of the rural experience. For instance, Gordon Bottomley's *Gruach*, John Brandane's *The Glen is Mine* and George Reston Malloch's *Soutarness Water*. What was missing, some critics argued, was a view of the contemporary Scottish experience. However, some of the successful plays performed by the Players were set in the contemporary milieu and did

<sup>140</sup>William Bell, *Rip Van Scotland* (London: Cecil Palmer, 1930): 8.

<sup>141</sup>Alexander MacGill, 'The Scottish Play We Hope For.' *Scottish Player* 2.9 (1924): 1.

confront the issue of Scotland's past confronting the present. The key plays include George Blake's *Clyde-Built* (1922) and even Neil Gunn's *The Ancient Fire* (1929).

This was one of the criticisms made by Hugh MacDiarmid in his writings on the Scottish National Players, reprinted in *Contemporary Scottish Studies*.<sup>142</sup> His points, however, are not just concerned with the content of the drama but also with its form. Indeed it offers a set of criticisms equally valid for the play selections of the Glasgow Repertory Theatre. MacDiarmid writes that:

... technically, nothing has been done to differentiate Scottish Drama from English ...[that] none of the plays they [the Scottish National Players] have produced have represented a distinctively Scottish form, the dramatic equivalent of the differentia of Scots psychology; they have all been alien in form, although Scottish in subject ... [and that] it is futile to think of a Scottish National Theatre until a start has been made to devise a national theatre craft.<sup>143</sup>

In *Albyn* ... the point expands to the literary element of Scottish culture:

The centralization of book publishing and journalism in London -- the London monopoly of the means of publicity -- has reduced Scottish arts and letters to shadows of their former or potential selves, qualitatively beneath contempt in comparison with the distinctive arts and letters of any other country in Europe. There is no Scottish writer to-day of the slightest international standing. Scotland connotes to the world 'religious' bigotry, a genius for materialism, 'thrift,' and, on the social and cultural side, Harry Lauderism and an exaggerated sentimental nationalism, which is obviously a form of compensation for the lack of a realistic nationalism. No race of men protest their love of country so fervently as the Scots -- no country in its actual conditions justifies any such protestations less.<sup>144</sup>

In general terms it may be argued that the project for the culture producers within any society might be the desire to create a culture that is truly relevant for its audience. This is a problematic formulation in which culture must negotiate as wide a meaning as possible and include a whole range of artistic, social and political activity. It is nevertheless clear that in terms of external prestige the important areas of activity are literature, criticism and drama. The term of use, or relevance, is not without difficulty. It must not just mean of contemporary subject or setting but must necessitate use of the present as point of tension and potential. Equally a product may be 'relevant' and involve the use of the past to aid understanding of both the past and the present: the past as metaphor, perhaps. Even the term of 'audience' must be interrogated. The audience

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<sup>142</sup>Hugh MacDiarmid, *Contemporary Scottish Studies* (1927. Edinburgh: Scottish Education Journal, 1976).

<sup>143</sup>MacDiarmid, *Scottish Studies*: 179-183.

<sup>144</sup>Grieve, *Albyn*: 76-77.

is indeed the indigenous population, but acknowledged in all its diversity, and extended to encompass everyone else. That is, audience must be experienced inclusively and not exclusively. This ought not to suggest that each and every text be one for mass consumption. However, it ought to operate within an understanding that culture is available for all, but not necessarily attractive or comprehensible to all. Culture can be popular and it can be elitist: to be relevant it must be a true system in which there is 'something for everyone' but, it seems, not necessarily everything for everyone. In short, texts may be targeted and may provide specific experiences of culture for particular (local) audiences. Indeed, in many ways Modernism expects this potential for diversity, as technology works towards the increasing fragmentation and isolationism of the experience of culture. This is just one of the factors which makes the role of culture impossible to define in any containable and discrete way. It also renders culture with a mission, a social role, ever more slippery as it constantly strives for the high ground of elite culture. In the sphere of operations available to the Scottish National Players the desire to quantify and produce 'Scottish Drama' leads to cultural-political strategies which are reminiscent of the colonial model of expansion and exploitation. The desire is to bring a particular version of culture to the masses who are waiting to be educated into culture. In this model it is clear that any pre-existing folk culture is, in fact, not culture in the proper sense of the word. This, of course, is the pattern of peripheral debasement that led to the dominance of the London touring theatre companies by the late-Victorian period -- in which real theatre in the regions was bought in by theatre managers and increasingly theatre magnets, arrived by train on one Sunday and was carried on by train the next.

In the early-twentieth century the perceived need was to replace this dominant model of the experience of theatre with another indigenous form. This was, after all, one of the key and explicit aims of the Glasgow Repertory Theatre and again an implicit one for the Scottish National Players:

One reads without surprise that Britain is now the only European country that does not have a state-subsidised theatre. The Irish Free State is working out its artistic-salvation in the way that was to be expected, and the Abbey and Gaelic Theatres in Dublin will soon be on the national pay-roll. England and Scotland are left hopelessly behind, and it is not too evident that they are ashamed of this 'splendid isolation.' Still we can go on hoping that Scotland, one of these days will find herself in possession of a national theatre, recognised, and subsidised if necessary, by the State. Short of that we can give all encouragement and support to the gallant company of pioneers [the Scottish National Players] who are keeping the flag flying amid the difficulties.<sup>145</sup>

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<sup>145</sup>'Men You Know -- Frank D Clewlow.' *Bailie* 6 May 1925: 3.

This increasingly thorny problem of subsidy had been an issue raised some years before. Reporting a question time in the House of Commons in 1906 the *Glasgow Herald* reports:

Mr W. F. D. Smith asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he has been requested to grant an annual subsidy towards the permanent establishment of a national repertory theatre, in connection with a scheme suggested by Mr Walter Stephens; and, if so, can he state the answer given to that request. Mr Asquith -- My reply to Mr Stephens on this subject was that, having regard to the large number of objects of much more pressing national importance for which funds are urgently required, the Government would not be justified in asking Parliament for a subsidy. (Hear, hear.)<sup>146</sup>

With the key establishment of the 'citizens' theatre' of the Glasgow Repertory Theatre perhaps the rise of the municipality as being responsible for funding and support is a first step to a fully subsidised arts policy. Alfred Wareing comments on the role of the repertory theatres in 1925 are reported in the *Bailie*:

Our old friend Mr Alfred Wareing has written a long letter to the 'The Observer' to correct an impression conveyed in Mr Lennox Robinson's article that the Glasgow Repertory Theatre was 'of the accustomed type modelled upon the Manchester Gaiety Theatre and distinctively Scottish neither in its programme nor in its players.' Mr Wareing gives the history of the movement initiated by himself, and mentions some of the authors whose plays were produced. C. J. Hamlen -- 'Barbara Grows Up,' 'The Waldies,' 'Colin in Fairyland' and others; Arthur Guthrie -- 'The Probationer,' 'The Weaver's Shuttle'; Neil Munro -- 'Macpherson'; J. J. Bell -- 'Oh Christina,' 'Wee Macgregor'; Donald Colquhoun -- 'Jean'; R. K. Risk -- 'The Excelsior Dawsons,' 'Whose Zoo,' and others; Catherine Carswell -- 'The Importunate Lover.'

... There are also plays by O. H. Mavor and S. Nicolson, whilst Harold Brighouse's excellent one-act play, 'The Price of Coal,' Scotticised by Mr R. J. MacLennan, was also produced. Another play, then called 'Causey Saints,' was accepted, but though the contract was not actually signed, the author graciously asked Mr Wareing's permission to give a special matinee performance at the Playhouse, London. That play was expressly written to fit his company -- it was Mr Graham Moffat's 'Bunty Pulls the Strings.'

... As for the players, he claims that an important number of them were 'distinctively Scottish,' as may be gathered from the following names: ... Graham Moffat, ... Jean Cadell, Mrs Graham Moffat .... M. R. Morland, though not Scottish born, had lived his early manhood in Glasgow, and proved himself one of the ablest exponents of Scottish character. His success as 'Earchie' in Neil Munro's 'Macpherson' is ranked by Glasgow playgoers with William Macintosh's wonderful performance of 'Sir Petrinax Macsychophant.' Some of these artistes achieved their first successes on the stage of the Royalty Theatre, Glasgow, under Mr Wareing's management.

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<sup>146</sup>'House of Commons: ... Proposed National Repertory Theatre.' *Glasgow Herald* 21 Mar. 1906: 9.

... Credit has never been given to those courageous and far-seeing Glasgow citizens without whose support Mr Wareing could not have established the Glasgow Repertory Theatre, the first citizens' theatre in this kingdom financed by the citizens and managed by them, not with the hope of gain, but in order to make Glasgow independent of London for its supply of drama and to provide a means of expressing Scottish ideals and character.<sup>147</sup>

James Bridie, in a 1937 radio talk on the development of the Scottish theatre also uses the language of 'drama is good for you' and the cultural mission.<sup>148</sup> He describes a cultural system that is exclusive of popular culture and compares the cinema rather unfavourably with the stage:

... you have as much right to see masterpieces done as well as they can possibly be in the theatre as you have to see them on the walls of your galleries. You have a right to see them as often as you like and as many of them as can be assembled for your benefit. You should not be compelled to pay more for this privilege than you would pay for a meat tea or a book of detective stories. If you do not see dramatic masterpieces often, in your own city or town, it is your own fault.

Even if you didn't want to see them, that would be no argument against providing you with facilities. What are called Art Galleries are built in a city for its honour and glory; not to fill in an idle hour for its citizens. But you do, in fact, want to see plays. And you prefer good ones to bad ones.

I don't know how many hundreds of thousands of pounds you in Scotland send to America to help the Americans to make moving photographs of plays. I know that in Glasgow many thousands of you went to see a photograph of a play by Shakespeare. You had seen the same play done in Glasgow by real -- and very much better -- actors in a version that didn't make it necessary to cut out most of the words. With your hands on your hearts, honestly, tell me which was the better spent evening? If it was the matter of crossing the street, paying a bob and sitting in a comfortable stall would you rather see Mr. Gielgud's Romeo or the shadow of Mr. Leslie Howard's. Miss Ashcroft's living Juliet or the shadow of Miss Norma Shearer's? Mr. Quartermaine's Mercutio or the antics of Mr. Barrymore's shadow. I know what you will answer and I think you should have your choice. At present you haven't.

I don't think there is anywhere in Great Britain where you have such a choice, evening after evening. There are, as you know, many excellent repertory theatre scattered over Great Britain. They are not, however, exactly what is wanted. A repertory company has certain disabilities. It has to watch its balance sheet very carefully; its actors are apt to be overworked; it can only devote one week to rehearsal of a play. Most plays require at least three weeks. In Glasgow and Edinburgh, too, it has to confine its operations to the Off Season. The theatres are required for an extraordinary entertainment called a Christmas Pantomime, which, also, you seem to want -- I can't think why. The results of these disabilities must be that the company, at its best, has the

<sup>147</sup>'Monday Gossip.' *Bailie* 14 Jan. 1925: 5.

<sup>148</sup>Bridie's talk begins, 'I do not know if the subject of the theatre is of any interest to you. I am convinced that it ought to be ....' James Bridie, *Men and Matters: Scotland and the Theatre*. Radio talk: transmitted 18 June 1937. ts. BBC Radio Scotland Scripts: STA Kg Box 5/6.

choice of doing second-rate plays in a first-rate fashion -- I mean slick, easy, mechanically made plays -- or first-rate plays in a second rate fashion. I want you to want something better than this.<sup>149</sup>

In 1938 the question was still a recurring one. There had been renewed efforts to establish a National Theatre in London<sup>150</sup> and once again questions were asked in the House:

The announcement in a printed reply to a Parliamentary question that the Government is not making any grant this year towards the National Theatre project has dampened the spirits of those who, with Granville-Barker, envisaged generous financial aid from the State. ... [they] will for the time being at least have to depend upon public generosity alone. ... The bait dangled before the Scottish and the North of England potential subscriber is the committee's intention to send out touring companies from the parent theatre in London. Every theatre-goer, now that the first steps towards building have been taken,<sup>151</sup> will wish the project well, though there may be some who have lingering doubts. But, as has been pointed out before, the Scottish play-goer cannot look to the London-based National Theatre for sustenance and guidance. His prior interest should lie in strengthening the centres of drama that struggle along in Glasgow and Edinburgh and a few other places, and if this immediate aim cannot be a Scottish National Theatre, it should be active repertory theatres in the two big cities at least, each of a standard equal to that attained by the old Glasgow Repertory Theatre in 1913-14.<sup>152</sup>

The issues of identity and a national culture, thrown into focus by the Scottish literary renaissance, also asks specific questions of the Scottish stage in the twentieth century. These questions do not emerge directly from the experience of modernity but indirectly in terms of their relation to the institutions and the institutional practices viable within the modern world's view of culture as a broad environment and not just centring on the key areas of literature, fine art and music. The experience of the Modern allows for a wide degree of liberality in the interplay of high and popular arts along with elements of the technological and modern mass media to create a vibrant system of

<sup>149</sup>Bridie, *Men and Matters: Scotland and the Theatre*. Radio talk: transmitted 18 June 1937. ts. BBC Radio Scotland Scripts: STA Kg Box 5/6. The talk makes specific demands: 'Above all, let us have a Civic Theatre in every town in Scotland,' and continues:

It might be impracticable if the people of this country had no interest in the drama -- were so sunk in beastliness that the oldest and most beautiful of the arts meant nothing to them. But in every village in the land people are writing and acting plays. In every large town, hard-working men and women are giving their spare time to turning old factories and warehouses into theatres. This is not a luxury. It is a right. It is not a fantastic dream.

<sup>150</sup>See 'National Theatre Progress: £100,000 Required to Complete Scheme.' *Glasgow Herald* 31 May 1938: 12.

<sup>151</sup>A site had been acquired in Kensington, London 'at the foot of Exhibition Road and facing the Victoria and Albert Museum.' See 'National Theatre Progress: £100,000 Required to Complete Scheme.' *Glasgow Herald* 31 May 1938: 12.

<sup>152</sup>'Editorial: Theatre Projects.' *Glasgow Herald* 4 July 1938: 10.

interconnected art forms and practices. This potentially rich fusion is containable in several directions -- including the political and the national. In Scotland the national is an important element within the context of culture as improving, as it is closely associated with the development of amateur, semi-professional and professional drama and with the development of wireless broadcasting which is at points closely connected with the development of the modern Scottish stage. It is through the up-front national role developed by groups like the Scottish National Players and the film societies that a lack may be identified into which the political may usefully intervene. Within the generic forms of Modernism (Futurism, Dadaism, for instance) the political is almost organically part of the movement. In Scotland this aspect of Modernism was really only immediately felt in poetry (particularly that of Hugh MacDiarmid) and then later in prose (the work of Lewis Grassie Gibbon, for instance), while the social fall-out that mainland Europe experienced in its interpretation and use of Modernism was only tangible later in the period and in particular around the development of new Left theatre and film in the late 1930s, in the institutional developments of, for instance, Workers' Theatre Groups and the Workers' Film Societies. It may be viewed, then, that the effect of Modernism in Scotland was felt much more in terms of institutions than in terms of aesthetic movements and schools. It was developed by and with Left politics.

In Scotland the technologies of cinema and wireless were relatively quickly integrated into an economically motivated entertainment system. This is not to say that they did not alter, and alter radically, the pre-existing patterns of media use and organisation (for surely they did) but it does ensure that they were contained within a balanced and hence hegemonically neutralised notion of what culture and entertainment might be about. It is only on the edges of the social culture, more within political culture, that an alternative use for these technologies, or the forms of the cultural environment is tenable.

While Left culture in the form of sports, Sunday schools, Clarion groups, and so on, had developed as active political and social forces in the 1930s, in Scotland Left theatre emerged only towards the end of the decade, where it found its locus around the political groups with an understanding of the social use of culture, unions and other workers' groups within the community. Scottish political theatre was not the theatre of the intellectual Left, a metropolitan experience of the Group Theatre and Auden. In Glasgow Left theatre was not sponsored by intellectual and artistic coteries, instead the Keir Hardie Institute was something of a centre for theatre activity.

In an edition of the *Scottish Stage* in May 1936, Jack House wrote that 'Scotland Needs a Left Theatre.'<sup>153</sup> His immediate demand was for a company to produce Clifford Odets's new play *Waiting for Lefty*. Later that same year the GWTG was

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<sup>153</sup>Jack House, 'Scotland Needs a Left Theatre.' *Scottish Stage* 4.10 (May) 1936: 14.

formed with the precise aim of producing the play, with which the group was launched in May 1937. The agit-prop style of political drama was something that GWTG specialised in. Their other two great success were a version of Jack Lindsay's *On Guard for Spain* and *UAB Scotland* written in 1939 by group member Harry Trott.

*On Guard for Spain* was a poem written by Jack Lindsay in 1936 and staged as a mass declamation by GWTG from around 1938. It was one of their most popular and challenging productions. The piece was directed by Lawrence Lawson for performance both outdoors at rallies and indoors at concerts and meetings. Eight actors, dressed in the uniform of the International Brigade, share the speaking of the verse while arranged around the flag of the Spanish Republic, which was waved by a flag bearer to reflect the pace of the action depicted in the poem. At indoor rallies the emotional effect was said to be considerably heightened by the dramatic use of lighting effects.

*UAB Scotland* (the name refers to the Unemployed Assistance Board, Scotland) was GWTG's most overt engagement with the concept of indigenous Scottish political drama. The play, the group's last production in March 1940, was a typical mix of agit-prop, revue and declamatory political poetry, 'written in the style of a morality play with the developing political consciousness of a young [male] worker.'<sup>154</sup> The play examines the contemporary and historical social deprivation of the people of Scotland. Like *Waiting for Lefty*, the play demands the active involvement of the audience with much of the text presented directly to the audience.

The demands of war forced GWTG to cease operations as an independent theatre group and combine with several other local, Left-wing groups. The 1941 coalition of GWTG, the Clarion Players, the Glasgow Players, the Glasgow Corporation Transport Players and the Jewish Institute Players formed Glasgow Unity. The amalgamation brought together different groups with different production records. GWTG's documentary and agit-prop style was very different to the international repertoire, and often anti-fascist plays favoured by the Jewish Institute Players. The Clarion Players were more obviously aligned to the CP and produced several anti-war plays, including Irvin Shaw's *Bury the Dead* and Ernst Toller's *No More Peace* both in 1938. Again, the Transport Players favoured challenging plays, often performed in the usually less demanding SCDA <sup>(Scottish Community Dramas Association)</sup> festivals. One of their most interesting productions was Corrie's 1936 *And so to War*, a satire on totalitarianism much influenced by Auden's theatre writing.

Unity's first production of Odets's *Awake and Sing* and subsequent productions of Sean O'Casey and Maxim Gorky were to be complimented by new Scottish writing by James Barke, Ena Lamont Stewart and Robert Macleish. The dramaturgic influence was both in terms of a politically motivated stage and an expectation of theatrical

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<sup>154</sup>Cameron, *Study Guide ...*: 72.

## Plate iv



Members of Glasgow Workers' Theatre Group  
performing *On Guard for Spain* (c 1938-'9).  
(Scottish Theatre Archive)

naturalism. The scope of theatre and drama attempted in the late 1930s by the Left theatre groups and in the 1940s by Unity marks this sector as perhaps more experimental and more challenging than that of the Scottish National Players and the Citizens.

Despite the political debates that were involved with the Scottish Literary Renaissance and the politics implicit within such groups as the GWTG, for example, active political protest during the 1930s was a much more marginalised business than it had been immediately after the War and in the 1920s -- at least before the General Strike of 1926. But the Strike had been defeated, the Labour was movement splitting, the effects of the Depression really biting. While small sections of society still debated such issues as nationalism the dominant ideology of the time was one of consensus, a particularly strong desire in the face of the almost constant threat of war in the period. The British cinema of the time seemed to produce films signalling this feeling, or at least emphasise the need for feelings of, for instance, patriotism.<sup>155</sup>

The desire to create consensus and community in contemporary British society also had its uneasy parallel in Scottish culture. One of the major concerns of the contemporary literary debate was around the distinctiveness (distinctive, that is, to British culture) of Scottish culture and in particular of Scottish popular culture. Now, while this is a repeated and current debate, it was thrown into marked focus from the late 1920s by the Scottish Renaissance. Work emerging from this group was very much concerned with Scotland in the twentieth century, re-examining the clichés of the traditional depictions of Scotland's cultural and social life with a crucially twentieth century *zeitgeist*. Yet, it has been noted that, the bourgeois elements of early twentieth century Scotland had changed little from their nineteenth century predecessors. Values were of thrift, Sabbatarianism, diligence and forbearance, and this was continually recreated in representations of a 'pawkish' and 'couthy' society -- this the essential view of Scotland, or so it seemed. This petrification of the images of the society were not, it is useful to remember, restricted to representations of the rural or the small township. Even images of industrial and urban Scotland seemed to founder on the easy cognisance of a distinctive set of stereotypes.<sup>156</sup>

These themes and discourses, and the images and attitudes they fostered, were the mainstay of much of Scottish popular culture and certainly may be traced in the popular novels (for example, those of Sir J M Barrie) and in the drama of the period; in the texts performed by the Scottish National Players (although their repertory contained plays of notable exception including as it does the successful use of verse drama in Gordon Bottomley's *Gruach*, which they first performed in 1923 and the premiere of Neil

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<sup>155</sup>See Jeffrey Richards, *Visions of Yesterday* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973).

<sup>156</sup>For example, popular culture refers to one set as 'hardmen but mammies boys.'

Gunn's play *The Ancient Fire* in 1929); and in at least some of the texts performed within the Scottish Community Drama Association (SCDA). Joe Corrie's work, for instance, offers an interesting point of reference, and points to one of the major dramaturgical controversies within the Scottish National Players.<sup>157</sup>

The Scottish National Players operated on a small, but ambitious scale, as amateurs. Each season their finances were severely limited, despite their popularity, and virtual monopoly of their market.

While offering a contemporary view of current problems within a vivid and immediate community, Corrie reuses the narrative clichés that dominate Scottish literature -- and whilst these texts were certainly hugely popular (especially amongst SCDA groups) they provide neither a progressive nor a distinctively Scottish dramaturgical vocabulary. Corrie was not at all popular, for instance, with the central figure of the Scottish Renaissance Hugh MacDiarmid. In *Scottish Scene: The Intelligent Man's Guide to Albyn*, he describes Corrie as a 'negligible scribbler.'<sup>158</sup> The images of Scotland portrayed in texts like George Blake's *The Mother*, and even the ubiquitous *Campbell of Kilmohr* by J A Ferguson, were increasingly perceived by some audiences and critics as producing a reductive and reactionary set of images of Scots and, of course, for Scots. These representations were increasingly at odds with the genuine lived experience of most of their actual and potential audience. Nevertheless their existence was and continued to be a major block in a clear view of the increasing number of effective and challenging cultural institutions that came into being through the period.

The very existence of such self-consciously cultural institutions as the Scottish National Players, for instance, must be the real key to possible cultural, social and political change in any country, particularly one, like Scotland, so dominated by another's ideology and, as a result, by the images of itself ratified by the dominant culture's prejudices. The very fact that within the space offered by the SCDA a writer

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<sup>157</sup>The Scottish National Players had been early supporters of Corrie when they produced two of his one-act plays *The Poacher* (first performed at the Lyric Theatre, Glasgow, on 21 October 1926) and *The Shillin'-a-Week Man* (first performed at the same venue on 22 March 1927). In early 1927, however, the Players' Play Reading Panel rejected his full-length play *In Time of Strife*. When, two years later, the Players staged Neil Gunn's *The Ancient Fire* its unfavourable reception prompted Corrie to publically attack the Play Reading Panel for rejecting his play on, as he saw it, political grounds. See Joe Corrie, *Plays, Poems and Theatre Writings* ed. Linda Mackenney (Edinburgh: 7:84 Publications, 1985): 169-177.

<sup>158</sup>Hugh MacDiarmid writes:

And I have even met Mr Ramsay MacDonald ... -- but here I can base my little quarrel with him ... on actual literary grounds for in a singularly stupid and impertinent interview, even for him, he lubricated on the subject of the Scottish Renaissance and had the ill taste to include among the vital Scottish writers of today such negligible scribblers as Jimmy Welsh and Joe Corrie.

*Scottish Scene: The Intelligent Man's Guide to Albyn* eds Lewis Grassie Gibbon and Hugh MacDiarmid (Bath: Cedric Chivers, 1934): 253.

like Corrie was able to write and then get his work performed by amateurs at drama festivals, by professionals and to have access to a national audience by writing for the BBC does seem to suggest at least the potential for the challenging and perhaps even the progressive in what has been traditionally viewed as an agency of a wholly nostalgic view of culture.<sup>159</sup> Such an agency offers more scope for more developments and more widespread interest in, in this case, drama than that which might be expected to emerge from the publication of one text -- even if that were to be *the* great Scottish novel, or poem, or play. The literary renaissance, like any other period of history, did produce 'great texts'. What proved less obvious were the opportunities for the cultural producers to gain institutional support. That is not to suggest the need for such an agency to impose meanings or prejudices, but simply to allow culture (the products, the producers and the audiences) a valid and relevant role in the development of that society. The existence of the SCDA, of the GWTG did allow for new and exciting developments in contemporary Scottish cultural life. Each had problems (both aesthetic and administrative), but at least a framework was made available at a time when there was certainly much to say. The amateurs, very much the bedrock of this movement, were not, however, universally popular. In a 1938 lecture James Bridie advocated that:

The theatre would benefit greatly from a decay of the amateur activity and the transference of the interest and energy so released to repertory and other serious aspects of the professional stage. The amateurs, in a word, should return to the audience.<sup>160</sup>

Indeed, even a writer as well served by the amateur theatre as Corrie was not always a supporter of some of its competitive structures and the type of drama that competition encouraged:

... I think very few of the community drama groups are achieving the results they might hope for.

How many of the plays produced at the community drama festivals are really part and parcel of the common experience of the players? Only one here and there.

Little good is done by Fife villagers tackling plays written in a Mayfair vein.

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<sup>159</sup>It is interesting to note that Corrie proves not to be the socially marginalised figure that he might generally be perceived as being. In 1938 he moves to London to work for the BBC:

Joe Corrie, a militant individualist if ever there was one, has now taken a steady job. He starts on Monday [25 April 1938] on the staff of the drama and features department of the B.B.C. in London. He has felt for some time that he was due to make a move from his play-writing seclusion in Ayr. But after years of complete freedom he may take ill with the restraining influence of the austere B.B.C.

'An Editorial Diary: Free-Lance No More.' *Glasgow Herald* 19 Apr. 1938: 6.

<sup>160</sup>James Bridie, quoted in 'Stage and Screen: Neglect of the Theatre by Amateur Movement.' *Glasgow Herald* 2 Dec. 1938: 8.

They must dramatise what lies at their back-door or in their own homes. Then their shows will have the breath of life.

They must seek to render the life of modern Scotland as they know it, not run away back to the days of the '45 or to London for the latest West End success.<sup>161</sup>

The project that Corrie advanced for the community drama groups was one which promoted new drama with an organic relation to the contemporary and immediate environment, often with an implicit political edge. This drama was recognisably Scottish drama but a rather different drama to that promoted and used by the Scottish National Players.

The national intent behind the Scottish National Players is clearly articulated; but is it nationalist? What may be said is that the cultural activity of the Scottish National Players' was part of the general experience of the Scottish Renaissance, but was not a product of it. The Players' national goals were not politically nationalist. They contributed to the energy and the burst of arts activity in Scotland in the early 1920s and for the next decade, and so were in some way connected with the development of political nationalism -- as articulated by the SHRA, GUSNA and the SNM. However, for at least part of the 1920s it was the political parties and politically motivated critics who courted and developed an idea of cultural nationalism, while the practitioners of the Scottish National Players were officially non-aligned. This is markedly different to the essential link between the cultural and the political project of the Irish scene, where the Abbey Theatre and its repertory was at the very centre of the political and social struggle.

Both the Glasgow Repertory Theatre and the Scottish National Players aspired to establish a professional indigenous theatre in Scotland -- with the drama preferred by the Players more of the contemporary amateur theatre movement than of a contemporary professional theatre. An alternative approach to indigenous theatre, a middle ground between the Players and the repertory tradition, was taken by R F Pollock at the Tron from 1931 and later with the Curtain Theatre between 1932 and 1939.<sup>162</sup> Both were amateur organisations but without the competitive dimension of the amateur groups who were part of SCDA. Pollock's project to improve the scope and quality of amateur theatre was less concerned with the competitive drama festival and more with the Little Theatre Movement and its association with the cultural mission and cultural improvement. While the BBC, through Reith, revealed an explicit project of public service broadcasting, many contemporary social, political and cultural groups shared a parallel ideological commitment to the importance and the social significance of

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<sup>161</sup>Corrie, 'Why our theatres fail: we must dramatise what lies at our doorsteps.' Corrie: 177-178.

<sup>162</sup>See Cameron, *Study Guide ...*: 29-34.

culture as a useful and beneficial activity for society to support and to participate in. The Little Theatres were part of this movement.

The Little Theatres, which originated in the United States of America, were not organised towards the seasonal theatre and drama festivals of other amateur movements but sought to establish a year-round commitment to theatre activity, to establish a strong and committed company and a permanent playing-space. By extension and example the Little Theatres came to be associated with good quality theatre and an improving mission.<sup>163</sup>

Pollock, particularly influenced by the Stanislavskian techniques used by Theodor Komisarjevsky in Chekhov productions in London's energetic Little Theatres, focused, in particular, on the role of the actor in the classic texts of the repertory theatre. Pollock was to experiment with long and detailed rehearsal periods with his own company, the Tron Theatre. To achieve the best of results 'He invited a group of the most outstanding amateur actors of the time to join [his] new group.'<sup>164</sup> Many were members of drama groups associated with the Keir Hardie Institute where the company rehearsed and performed. His productions -- of, for example, Ibsen's *The Master Builder* in 1931, Chekhov's *The Three Sisters* in 1932 -- did much to improve production standards within Scottish theatre and was to influence fundamentally some of the figures who would be at the centre of Scotland's burgeoning professional theatre -- Molly Urquhart, Duncan Macrae and E J P Mace (a regular in BBC radio productions) worked with Pollock. The repertory of the Tron was more of the traditional programming associated with the early independent theatres and the Repertory movement -- and was used by Pollock to develop the acting skills and techniques of his performers. A new writing policy and programme was outwith the scope of the Tron. This was subsequently undertaken by the Curtain Theatre.

The Curtain was perhaps Glasgow's most sustained and successful Little Theatre.<sup>165</sup> Operating between 1932 and 1939 the Curtain, based at 15 Woodside Terrace, was a development of the energy of the contemporary amateur movement and the skills fostered by Pollock. Organised by a group of amateur performers, including Molly Urquhart and Grace Ballantine, the Curtain's project was to develop a platform for both Scottish actor and writer: 'Its aim was,' according to Murdoch, 'a vigorous

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<sup>163</sup>The early success of Eugene O'Neill who had worked with the Provincetown Players helped set this tone of quality.

<sup>164</sup>Helen Murdoch, *Travelling Hopefully: The Story of Molly Urquhart* (Edinburgh: Paul Harris, 1981): 32.

<sup>165</sup>Little Theatres, with a general project to move the amateur drama of the SCDA system, were a feature of several Scottish towns and cities in the 1930s. As well as the Makars in Edinburgh, Dundee and Aberdeen had similar companies.

season of plays with as many worthwhile new Scottish plays that could be found ...'<sup>166</sup> A Curtain Theatre programme from 1936 states the company's three-fold aims:

THE CURTAIN THEATRE  
AIMS TO PROVIDE  
A Stage, equipment, and experience for the Actor and the Dramatist ...  
TO BUILD UP  
A team of experienced Actors and Craftsmen ...

TO ACCUMULATE  
A repertory of original Plays of distinction.<sup>167</sup>

The Curtain's guide to the 1938-39 season again stresses and makes the desire for a permanent playing-space explicit :

The Curtain Theatre was founded five-and-a-half years ago, with the idea that little or nothing could be done in the way of promoting a Scottish Drama until players, playwrights and designers had a theatre of their own with a stage available at all times.<sup>168</sup>

This was very much part of the general project of the Little Theatres -- a strong commitment to good acting and the potential to develop and encourage new and indigenous writing with the goal of providing a permanent acting space. The Curtain was indeed able to foster quality from both actors and writers: Robert McLellan became the house dramatist and Macrae the star actor. One of the company's most successful productions combined the skills of the two as McLellan's *Jamie the Saxt* provided Macrae with a bravura role. The tiny playing space at the Curtain -- only able to seat around 70 -- was, however, too small for large-scale and successful productions and the space of the Lyric Theatre, Sauchiehall Street (the old Royalty), was an important alternative large house. *Jamie the Saxt* was first produced there in April 1937. Like the Glasgow Repertory Theatre, the Curtain was financed through subscription, with early success and its amateur status ensuring the company a firm financial base. Such a system also enabled a very flexible programming policy. Subscribers would pay towards a season without necessarily knowing just which plays they would see. Successful plays could have an extended run (or transfer to the Lyric or even the nearby Berkley Theatre) or be revived quickly; new plays could be slotted into a season with as little programming fuss as possible.

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<sup>166</sup>Murdoch: 37. See also Norman Bruce, 'New Theatre Movements in Scotland: No. 3: The Curtain Theatre.' *Scottish Stage* 4.4 (September) 1935: 8.

<sup>167</sup>A programme note for the Curtain Theatre's 1936 production of Robins Millar's *Once a Lady* (Glasgow: Curtain Theatre, 1936): N.pag.

<sup>168</sup>'Introducing an Idea.' *The Curtain Theatre: Season 1938-39* (Glasgow: Curtain Theatre, 1938): N.pag.

The Curtain provided Scottish theatre with an important bridge between amateurism and the development of a professional theatre industry. The influence of the Curtain may be seen not just in terms of the careers of individual theatre practitioners like McLellan, Macrae, Urquhart, Grace Ballantine, Norman Bruce, Pearl Colquhon, Brown Derby, Jean Faulds and, another successful and prolific Curtain dramatist, Robins Millar, but in terms of the development of the audience and the raising of expectations of what theatre in Scotland might become.<sup>169</sup>

One of the last theatre schemes with national ambitions to emerge before the outbreak of World War II was the Theatre Society of Scotland, formed at the start of October 1938. The main proposal in the group's manifesto was the building of an actual theatre (including 'well-equipped workshops, club room, and library'<sup>170</sup>) in Glasgow. In launching the scheme reference is also made to earlier theatre companies:

The manifesto states that the achievements of the old Glasgow Repertory Theatre, the Masque Theatre Company, the Scottish National Players, the Perth Repertory Theatre, the Arts League of Service, and the Scottish Community Drama Association have increased the attraction of the theatre in Scotland, and that by adequate endowment and the organisation of guaranteed audiences an art theatre would now have a real hope of permanence.<sup>171</sup>

The proposal also insists that this fully professional company (with the facilities to train actors, stage managers and encourage academic theatre research) would tour the rest of Scotland for some of the year -- thus leaving the theatre-building empty as a venue for touring companies from elsewhere in the country.

The scheme, supported by both theatre and civic luminaries, such as Tyrone Guthrie, Bridie, Eric Linklater, Edwin Muir and Sir Hector Hetherington, is taken seriously, at least within Glasgow:

During the present century there has developed in Scotland the conception of an indigenous theatre as distinct from a provincial theatre dependent upon London for its supply of actors and plays. This movement towards cultural autonomy or self-help has been fostered with varying degrees of success by the activities of seasonal repertory companies, of organisations devoted to the production of plays by Scottish authors, and of the amateur clubs associated with the the annual community drama festivals. As a result of these individual efforts a serious interest in the theatre is more widespread throughout the country to-day than at any other time in its history. It certainly flourishes upon a

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<sup>169</sup>After the demise of the Curtain (ended by the outbreak of war and tangled amateur administration) the Park was opened by John Stewart in 1940 in the building next door to the old Curtain. After nine years of successful operation the Park closed. The enterprise, however, formed the basis of the Pitlochry Festival Theatre.

<sup>170</sup>'The Drama in Scotland,' *Glasgow Herald* 15 Oct. 1938: 13.

<sup>171</sup>'The Drama in Scotland,' *Glasgow Herald* 15 Oct. 1938: 13.

more creative basis than it did in the long vanished days of the stock company and the star tragedian's tour.

But while there is general appreciation of what has been done to create a living theatre in Scotland, there are people who, believing strongly in the social and artistic value of drama, feel that there has been dissipation of effort and interest. It is apparently as an effort to arrest this, to focus opinion upon the communal and artistic side of the theatre, and to organise audiences that the Theatre Society of Scotland is being founded.<sup>172</sup>

The group, whose chair was Cecile Walton Gildard<sup>173</sup> and secretary was Jean Allen, saw the creation of an actual 'bricks-and-mortar' national theatre as a long-term goal but immediately sought:

... to perform the spadework necessary for the establishment of a national theatre when the practical means become available. ... in pursuit of its immediate task, the society proposes to carry out a practical programme of collecting and distributing information on theatrical matters and giving support to the existing repertory and amateur venues.<sup>174</sup>

The model is derived from the experience of the Scottish National Players although the theatre is clearly perceived as essentially professional. In the 1930s indigenous theatre in Scotland operated, like the Players, on a predominantly amateur or part-time basis. The continued desire, however, was to create, if not a National Theatre, then at least a feasible professional theatre. In this the role of the wireless was a crucial, if not decisive factor. A professional theatre was an ambition for the Players and one that to an extent was achieved. The medium which which allowed for the beginnings of a Scottish professional theatre was neither the 'legitimate' nor popular stage, but the wireless. By the 1930s the BBC had attained a hugely influential role in the cultural life of Scotland and one that contributed to the development of a Scottish professional theatre, although it took the initiative of direct government subsidy under CEMA and the opportunism of James Bridie for this to be fully realised.

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<sup>172</sup>'A Theatre Society.' Editorial. *Glasgow Herald* 15 Oct. 1938: 10.

<sup>173</sup>Cecile Walton was a successful artist of the period and the daughter of 'Glasgow Boy' E[dward] A[rthur] Walton. In the mid-1930s Reith appointed her Organiser of the Scottish editions of *Children's Hour* at that time produced from Edinburgh. During this time she married BBC drama producer Gordon Gildard. BBC headquarters in Scotland subsequently returned to Glasgow and her association with broadcasting ended. Her relationship with Gildard disintegrated when, with the War, he returned to active naval service, although it was not until 1945 that they were finally divorced. See John Kemplay, *The Two Companions: The Story of Two Scottish Artists: Eric Robertson and Cecile Walton* (Edinburgh: Ronald Crowhurst, 1991).

<sup>174</sup>'A Theatre Society.' Editorial. *Glasgow Herald* 15 Oct. 1938: 10.

### A new entertainment system

In a wider context success on the London stage was in itself still important, but increasingly, and with the impact of both film and later broadcasting, the stage was just one of the media that the writer, actor and director had to consider in terms of developing a career, maintaining an audience and learning new skills. In this London reaffirmed its centrality as the core of the British entertainment business. The centre of both the financial and the theatre industries, Britain's film producers were also located around the metropolis. Increasingly the BBC was developing as a powerful factor in the nation's cultural life and more and more policy and programming was decided from London. The theatre of the West End and beyond was increasingly integrated into a matrix of the modern media. Skills developed in one media were increasingly put to use in others. Success on the stage, for instance, could lead not just to broadcasts and domestic success but to film making and an international career. Thus as the rise of the cinemas put more theatres under threat of closure the theatre industry reacted, on the whole positively, by colonising the new industry. From the 1920s writers, directors and most obviously actors maintained a career by switching between the various media of stage, film and (after some dispute with the Theatre Managers Association) wireless broadcasting.

Film had a keen appetite for scripts and the most appealing were those already tried and tested in a different medium, as a novel or on the stage. Writers who had proved successful for the stage were courted by film studios. The appeal of entering a new market and the potential income that promised was taken up by writers as different and as popular as Bernard Shaw, Coward, Rattigan, Barrie, Frederick Lonsdale and Maugham. Even directors could switch between media -- although as technology and specialisation increased, in parallel with the rise of the studio system, it became relatively rare for theatre directors to switch to film or vice versa, but again Coward directed for both media and Tyrone Guthrie directed radio and stage.<sup>175</sup>

What continued to grow most successfully was the trade of acting talent between media, and within the domestic industry and on an international (or at least British-American) level. This integration of the different forms of entertainment did, of course, extend to and include not just figures within the mainstream of theatre activity but to the alternatives of the progressive and the music hall. Guthrie and Coward have been mentioned as working across the whole range of media but so too did Maugham and Compton MacKenzie, Charles Laughton, Laurence Olivier, John Gielgud, Edith Evans and Peggy Ashcroft who all came to prominence in the 1930s and all crossed between media as much as between genres -- with Laughton, in particular, almost abandoning

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<sup>175</sup>Mention should, perhaps, also be made of Orson Welles who during the same period wrote for, acted in and directed theatre, radio and film.

the stage in favour of a new film career. In terms of music hall and popular culture the film careers of Gracie Fields, George Formby and, most notably and particularly early, Stan Laurel developed from music hall, later Arthur Askey and Richard Murdoch's success on radio developed into a number of films and the musical stage careers of Jack Buchanan and Jessie Matthews were complimented by film careers; Buchanan in particular crossing into the American stage and film musical with great success.<sup>176</sup> With Buchanan as a notable exception Scottish music hall performers and actors who moved into film tended to do so as 'character actors'. Indeed this adaptability remains perhaps more important for those involved in a more modest scale of operation, in a smaller market such as the Scottish entertainment environment.

In the Scottish context such integration contributed to the development of a professional theatre. The most important crossover (simply because it was the most common) was to be between the broadcasters and the stage -- although experience of working with film was also part of both the amateur scene in the 1930s and the professional environment of the post-war period. The development of the media towards a kind of integrated industry was initially made possible by wireless, and the opening of the Glasgow and Aberdeen radio stations. Both made use of local amateur acting talent and the writers whose work had been associated with groups like the Scottish National Players and other local amateur theatre groups. In addition Harry Lauder was a popular, if occasional, broadcaster and Harry Gordon, most successful in pantomime and as the Laird of Inversnecky, was equally popular on the variety stage and on the wireless.

In the course of the period the broad spectrum of theatrical activity continued to develop, to interact and to create a changing but still complete and evolving system. The theatres of the 1880s and 1890s were transformed across the period into a media system that encompassed stage entertainments, film and broadcasting. It was an environment that had shifted from being one of live and immediate performance to one that had to take account of film (wherein the spectacle is recorded and reception is distanced from performance and production) and wireless (where the performance may be live but the reception is diffuse and detached from the moment of production). In addition shifts in the nature of theatre allowed a new ideologically loaded discourse to come into prominence. The rise of the repertory theatres, the input of the amateurs combined with the commercial dominance of the feature film and the political experience of the time come together to encourage a strand of the cultural system that will partly eschew the values and priorities of the commercial and entertainment sector in favour of a discourse of public service.

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<sup>176</sup>When Jessie Matthews's film and stage career waned a new popularity was won when she became the eponymous hero of BBC radio's *Mrs Dale's Diary*.

## Cinema: Introduction and Use

'There is, unquestionably, great possibilities in this interesting, scientific toy ...'<sup>1</sup>

In the Modern period the cultural agencies and projects which might be termed mainstream were, typically, commercially successful. They were both financially powerful and socially popular. The two industries of cinema and theatre developed along with and in reaction to each other. In this period, 'cinema gained heavily in popularity. It was estimated in 1917 that approximately half the population went to the cinema once a week'<sup>2</sup> -- and the figures grew from that time. It is indeed remarkable that film became so manifestly influential a medium and cinemas so inherently a part of modern leisure patterns and townscapes so quickly and so completely. The intervention of film, the intervention of the technology of the modern age into the established entertainment environment, encourages the shift from the excesses of the music hall to a kind of gentrification of leisure -- music hall is transformed into variety, theatres are redesigned to appeal to middle-class audiences and to the respectable working class, a growing group defined through Left politics and empowered by education. Cinema's appeal is both to the bourgeoisie and to the workers and its geographic and technical development courts both sectors of society equally: the rise of the picture palace reproducing improvements in variety theatres; the development of small local cinemas replacing the music halls and pub culture of urban and industrial areas. This chapter aims to show that the early history of cinema in Britain develops in relation to the existing forms of theatre -- forms that encompass travelling shows, music hall and variety -- but that film's intervention most clearly affects the moment and the context of exhibition, changing the wider context in the process of developing a new industry. Unlike the theatre sector which exists as a more or less domestic industry, film in Britain was relatively quickly colonised by an aggressively commercial foreign power. While theatre culture and subsequently wireless broadcasting operated with different definitions of scale and control, the expansionist American film industry emerged as an ideal of modern capitalism. While the European film industries were decimated by the Great War, Hollywood benefitted to become a global industry wielding both economic and cultural power.

Unlike theatre, the history of the cinema is a phenomenon of the modern era. The development of this medium, however new, was based on the evolution of several strands of the technology of the nineteenth century and of centuries prior to that.

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<sup>1</sup>The response of the *Scotsman's* reviewer to the first theatrical screening of film in Scotland. See 'Amusements: The Empire Theatre.' *Scotsman* 14 Apr. 1896: 5.

<sup>2</sup>Stevenson, *British Society, 1914-45*: 328.

Dating from the seventeenth century the magic lantern was able to cast an illuminated image. From 1832 an optical effects toy was developed; the Zoetrope, or Wheel Of Life, which dates from 1834, was perhaps the best known of these toys. On the inner surface of a hollow cylinder, with slits across its depth, a series of pictures -- the consecutive views of a man running or a horse jumping, for instance -- would be depicted. As the cylinder was revolved there would be the appearance of continuous movement when the image was viewed through the slits.

The next step in the development of moving pictures was to replace the drawings with photographs -- a step that depended on advances in the art of photography. The most important change was replacing photosensitive glass-plates with a lighter and more flexible base on which to place the images required. The key development was the creation of strips of celluloid film coated with the photosensitive chemicals already employed to coat the glass-plates of contemporary photography. Several inventors developed the ability to produce such film and machines to expose and project images at around the same time (Le Prince in England and Marey in France, for instance). However, the earliest commercially available machine was patented in 1891 by Thomas Edison in the USA and was called the Kinetoscope. (However, as Michael Thomson, in his study of cinemas in Aberdeen points out, the device was not fully marketed until 1894.<sup>3</sup>) This machine could show one sequence of moving images to one viewer at a time: it was basically a kind of peep-show machine. The images, each showing, like the Zoetrope, the next moment in the sequence of a movement, were printed on a looped band of film up to 50 feet long, and running some 50 seconds. This was improved by the development of perforated film. Within the year the Kinetoscope had spread across America and Europe, and improvements were being made all the time.

Film first reached Scotland via Edison's Kinetoscope peep-shows which had their earliest recorded appearance at H E Moss's Christmas Carnival at the Waverly Market in Edinburgh on 24 December 1894.<sup>4</sup> Fairground visitors would enter the tented hall of the travelling showman and see short reels of film, certainly no more than one minute in length. Within the year the public were already used to the attractions of the Kinetoscope, and were keen to enjoy new entertainments. This may be appreciated with reference to a Glasgow newspaper article of December 1895. Previewing the entertainments available in Glasgow it features Crouch's Wonderland:

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<sup>3</sup>Michael Thomson, *Silver Screen in the Silver City: A History of Cinemas in Aberdeen: 1896-1987* (Aberdeen: Aberdeen U P, 1988): 4.

<sup>4</sup>See Brendon Thomas, *The Last Picture Shows: Edinburgh: Ninety Years of Entertainment in Scotland's Capital City* (Edinburgh: Moorfoot, 1984): 8.

One of the favourite resorts at holiday time is Mr Crouch's establishment in Argyll Street, where he is continually bringing forth some novelty to amuse or entertain his numerous patrons.<sup>5</sup>

The columnist notes that, 'The wonders of the Kinetoscope are now pretty familiar' -- and introduces a further novelty, 'the Kinetophone, which shows us not only ladies dancing but lets us hear the rhythmic music, [which] is, indeed a marvel.'<sup>6</sup>

This described part of the attractions available during the Christmas Fair season in Herbert Crouch's Wonderland in Argyle Street, Glasgow. Later the venue was known as Crouch's Theatre of Varieties, and opened in December 1912 as the St Enoch Picture Theatre.<sup>7</sup>

Despite the fact that the Kinetoscopes were in Europe in large numbers Edison had failed to patent his machine outwith North America. The French photographer Antoine Lumière, based in Lyons, and his sons Auguste and Louis, using the Kinetoscope managed to combine its use of perforated celluloid film with the principle behind the magic lantern and to project the image generated for a number of viewers. The machine they invented was the 'Cinématographe' and its famous first public screening was in the Grand Café in Paris on 28 December 1895. Less than two months later they took their invention to London and screened a similar programme of film at the Polytechnic, Regent Street on 20 February 1896.<sup>8</sup>

The entrepreneurial acumen of the showmen, responsible for much of the popular entertainment of the period, was quickly inspired by the possibilities of film and while fairground performances certainly continued, mostly in the rather basic interior of the side-show or booth type of playing space, it was not long before films moved indoors - - into music halls, theatres and then purpose built cinemas.<sup>9</sup>

### H E Moss and the Moss Empires

Horace Edward Moss (1852-1912)<sup>10</sup> exemplifies the development of the industry of popular and commercial entertainment into the Edwardian era and beyond. Indeed his career is not only representative of the commercial potentials of the entertainment industries but of its increasing social respectability. Just as the actor-managers of the

<sup>5</sup>'New Year Entertainments: ... Mr. Crouch's 'Wonderland'.' *Evening Times* 31 Dec. 1895: 4.

<sup>6</sup>'New Year Entertainments: ... Mr. Crouch's 'Wonderland'.' *Evening Times* 31 Dec. 1895: 4.

<sup>7</sup>T Louden, *The Cinemas Of Cinema City* ([Glasgow?]: n.p., 1983): 4.

<sup>8</sup>Allardyce Nicoll does, however, states that:

... the Lumière brothers had excited a little flutter of interest when, on March 3, 1896, they had demonstrated their ... machine at the Empire music-hall ...

Nicoll: 41.

<sup>9</sup>See Louden: 4. Louden notes that the previously mentioned Crouch's Theatre of Varieties had shown films since 1907.

<sup>10</sup>It might be noted that C W Hill in his study of *Edwardian Scotland* gives Moss's date of birth as 1862 -- other sources all prefer 1852. Hill, *Edwardian Scotland*: 55.

'legitimate' stage were honoured in the late Victorian and Edwardian period, so in the twentieth century the entrepreneurs of the music hall and variety theatre achieved social respectability and were equally honoured. In 1906 Moss 'was knighted for his services to the entertainment industry.'<sup>11</sup> By this time Sir H Edward Moss was head of one of the most successful entertainment organisations of the period. Moss, in 1897 the new 'Managing Director, Glasgow Empire Palace (Limited),'<sup>12</sup> was already a successful provincial exhibitor. A contemporary sketch of his achievements begins:

'The mascot of the Music Halls' is the professional cognomen of the great provincial entrepreneur, Mr. H. E. MOSS ...<sup>13</sup>

He began his career, in a manner similar to that of his future partner, Oswald Stoll, as manager of one of the venues owned by his father. James Moss was originally a travelling showman, a 'presenter of Diorama shows'<sup>14</sup> and then theatre manager. He managed the Lorne Music Hall, later the Varieties Theatre, in Greenock. In 1877, however, Moss took on the management of the the Gaiety Theatre in Chambers Street, Edinburgh, which, according to the *Bailie* '... was a risky thing to do as the three previous tenants had failed.'<sup>15</sup> Three months into his management and the Gaiety underwent a major refurbishment and an increased investment to compliment a more ambitious programming policy. 'After two years of prosperous management [Moss] bought the property for £14,000.'<sup>16</sup> In 1880 Moss bought a hall in Leith which he ran in tandem with the Gaiety, according to Jack Read, '... his artistes 'doubling' between the two halls.'<sup>17</sup> The third venue he bought was neither in Edinburgh, nor even within the Scottish economy but the Theatre Royal in Sunderland, which he renamed the Royal Music Hall. His most profitable new acquisition was purchased in 1884. After major reconstruction and investment the Gaiety Variety Theatre, Newcastle-upon-Tyne opened to great success. In 1888 the Leith variety theatre was destroyed by fire to be replaced by the Princess Theatre, Kirkgate, opening Christmas 1889. This venue later superseded the original Edinburgh Gaiety, when it was renamed the Gaiety Music Hall. Moss's growing circuit then expanded to include two Glasgow venues, the Gaiety Music Hall, Sauchiehall Street, and the Scotia. The most successful of the venues remained the Newcastle Gaiety and a project was developed with another theatre owner to build a new even bigger theatre in the town.

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<sup>11</sup>Hartnoll: 659.

<sup>12</sup>'Men You Know -- cartoon.' *Bailie* 7 Apr. 1897: cartoon supplement 7.

<sup>13</sup>'Men You Know.' *Bailie* 7 Apr. 1897: 1.

<sup>14</sup>Read: 28.

<sup>15</sup>'Men You Know.' *Bailie* 7 Apr. 1897: 1.

<sup>16</sup>'Men You Know.' *Bailie* 7 Apr. 1897: 1.

<sup>17</sup>Read: 28.

Richard Thornton operated a circuit of music halls in the north-east and was as keen as Moss to expand and develop his operation. Instead of investing in competition a partnership was established between the two men to build and operate the Newcastle Empire, Newgate Street, opening 1 December 1890. The collaboration continued with a successful building programme and the continued profitability of the joint ventures. Building on this successful base Moss then went on to create his grandest venue yet, the Edinburgh Empire, opening 7 November 1892. The Edinburgh Empire (sometimes known as the Empire Palace) is situated in Nicolson Street in Edinburgh. The Edinburgh Empire was the first Moss venue to be designed by the architect Frank Matcham.<sup>18</sup> On the exterior it boasted a copper covered dome and a roof which could be retracted. The interior design was even more spectacular -- the paint work in pastel green and white and highlighted in gold, Matcham's distinctive plaster detailing which included classical figures, cherubs, nymphs as well as non-figurative ornamentation, red plush seating and rich carpeting and the use of electric lighting throughout. Despite the unique grandeur of the Edinburgh Empire, and the commercial importance of the Newcastle Gaiety Variety Theatre, it is, perhaps, appropriate that the *Bailie* points to the success of the Edinburgh Gaiety as the necessary stepping stone for the advancement of Moss -- '... while he made that hall, it in turn made him.'<sup>19</sup> Indeed it was with the popular and critical success of the Edinburgh venues behind him that Moss was able to expand across the whole of Britain.

In quick succession Empires were introduced to the public by Mr. MOSS at Birmingham, Newcastle, Sheffield, Cardiff, Newport, Swansea, Liverpool, Leeds, Hull, and Nottingham, and now Glasgow has been favoured on an equally princely scale.<sup>20</sup>

The ongoing expansion programme of the Empires reveals a shrewd understanding of the economics and demographics of the last decades of the nineteenth century in Britain. The Empires are located in the provinces and more precisely in the industrialised provincial cities where populations were growing along with the disposable incomes of the predominantly working class populations. Many of the cities in which Moss chose to locate his music halls were centres of heavy industry, areas of economic investment by the entrepreneurs of the Victorian Age -- both investment in industry and, in the case of most of the cities mentioned in the *Bailie*, in areas noted for grand civic improvements -- town halls, hospitals, universities. Moss's investments were geared to appeal to the social habits of the potentially huge working-class

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<sup>18</sup>The first Matcham designed theatre was the Royalty, Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow, which opened 24 November 1879.

<sup>19</sup>'Men You Know.' *Bailie* 7 Apr. 1897: 1.

<sup>20</sup>'Men You Know.' *Bailie* 7 Apr. 1897: 1.

audiences essentially focusing on the market of the respectable working class, yet at the same time the scope of his expansion and improvements, the design and fittings of his theatres were all intended to appeal to the rising middle class populations of these areas.<sup>21</sup>

A sound business practice was at the root of the expansion scheme and was also a feature of Moss's projected character. The *Bailie* continues:

These companies [the music halls across the country] were received so eagerly by investors who knew the projector [Moss] that, in nearly every case, the capital was applied for four or five times over, and in some cases ten times over. Mr. MOSS attributes this success, from a financial point of view, to the fact that he never floated a concern, however good and promising, overloaded with capital. Music-halls, being more a luxury than a necessity (though, probably, to many people nowadays, a necessary luxury), are subject to various disturbing influences that trade in necessities is unaffected by, and halls attain their highest success only after trade in necessities has touched prosperity. Hence stress of circumstances may often seriously affect the most excellent concern. The difference between a sound concern fairly capitalised, and the same concern over-capitalised, is that, in the former case, a stress seldom, if ever, arises great enough to bring the dividend so low even as that of an ordinary safe investment, while in the latter case, the same stress of circumstances might wreck the company. This difference Mr. MOSS has noted and acted upon.<sup>22</sup>

The particularly original element of Moss's enterprise was his ability as a programmer. This ability was supported and to some extent founded on the sheer scale of his nationwide operation: a scale and indeed an economic strategy the benefits of which the early cinema exhibitors failed to pick up on. The generally localised nature of the early exhibition strand of the industry allowed the creation of a whole new independent tier of entertainment industry -- distribution. The distributors were able to step in and create a national organising infra-structure that was missing in early cinema in Britain, but was at the root of the success of the theatre magnets of the music hall era:

The fact that Mr. MOSS has so many places under his control gives him additional advantages with regard to artistes, and he is ably assisted in the arrangement of the programmes for his various establishments by his indefatigable lieutenant, Mr. Frank Allen. They can offer a three,

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<sup>21</sup>This programme of modernisation and upgrading is in some respects reminiscent of the improvements made by the Bancroft management of the Prince of Wales's Theatre in London from the 1860s. There the similar desire was to attract a different type of person to the theatre. Part of the Moss philosophy seems to be to attract not just one section of society or another but as wide a range as possible including the wealthier and socially respectable middle class.

<sup>22</sup>'Men You Know.' *Bailie* 7 Apr. 1897: 1. This rather didactic tone is typical of the improving ideology behind the *Bailie* of this period. While ostensibly presented as a feature in the weekly 'Men [sic] You Know' column, the language also may be seen to have another more covertly political function -- that is, reinforcing the cultural and economic values of the society that it comments on.

four, or six months tour to all the people they engage, and generally arrange it so that there is a minimum of travelling expenses.<sup>23</sup>

Acknowledging this systematic and industrial model as novel in the entertainment business, the *Bailie* comments that ‘... they can command the market.’<sup>24</sup> Now, whether or not the scale of the operation was quite the monopoly of talent suggested, the fact remains that the public view of Moss was as a manager operating the venues where the best of music hall entertainment would be seen. This market-place power is also attested by E H Bostock, whose autobiography, *Menageries, Circuses and Theatres*, charts a short and unsuccessful partnership with Moss Empires centring on the running of the Zoo-Hippodrome, New City Road, Glasgow, between 1905 and 1907. He considers that after the partnership was dissolved:

... I [Bostock] found it well-nigh impossible to get companies. Moss Empires was a powerful organisation and was in a position to book in advance all the first-class performers who had not already been absorbed by other concerns ... and had actually done so. ... these limited liability companies had a round of houses in which they could afford regular and continuous employment to artistes, and this gave them preferential pull as regards bookings.<sup>25</sup>

Moss’s apparent control of the market was, then, based on a sound understanding of the workings of business practice, partly on financial investment but also on the continued use of advertising and publicity. The *Bailie* can claim that:

Mr. MOSS is thus able to give his patrons the finest and cleverest shows on the variety stage. Our friend is often seen on the Continent, and invariably secures all that is best in the foreign halls.<sup>26</sup>

Yet, even in the face of this clear desire to connote the exotic, the Victorian sense of the frugal remains a key point that Moss is keen to discuss:

With regard to salaries, no doubt that people think some ‘stars’ are overpaid; but the fact remains, that so long as an artiste draws the money, he is worth the big salary. He may put a fictitious value upon his services, and a manager may pay it once, but any disarrangement of the law of supply and demand of that description soon finds its correct level. Mr. MOSS has paid as much as two hundred pounds per week for a special ‘star’ turn, and when Sims Reeves<sup>27</sup> was engaged in the

<sup>23</sup>‘Men You Know.’ *Bailie* 7 Apr. 1897: 1.

<sup>24</sup>‘Men You Know.’ *Bailie* 7 Apr. 1897: 1.

<sup>25</sup>E H Bostock, *Menageries, Circuses and Theatres* (1927. New York: Benjamin Blom, 1972): 191.

<sup>26</sup>‘Men You Know.’ *Bailie* 7 Apr. 1897: 1-2.

<sup>27</sup>Sims Reeves was one of the most successful of music hall acts in the mid-Victorian period. John Sims Reeves (1822-1900) was a tenor who first appeared on stage in Newcastle in 1839, and made his debut at La Scala in 1845. He is perhaps best remembered by association with Vesta Tilley.

Moss & Thornton tour, as it is called in the profession, he had £50 per night.<sup>28</sup>

The scale of investment for Moss's operation is clear -- he invests in theatre building, conversion and refurbishment and then plans bills and tours with an equally economic eye. With such investment the promoter must command a larger and/or more affluent audience than that which would frequent the older type of music hall:

Mr. MOSS rather plumes himself on the fact that the prejudice against variety shows is breaking down, as he has had not a little to do with this result. The audiences at all the Empires under his control are composed of the best people, and people may take their wives and families without being afraid of anything being done that would bring a blush to the cheek of Gilbert's 'young person of fifteen.' Mr. MOSS does not allow the slightest vulgarity on the stage, and to guard against any lapse he makes it a condition that every artiste must send a week in advance a copy of his songs and patter to the manager of the theatre. Altogether the conduct of the different establishments is admitted by those in authority to be beyond reproach ....<sup>29</sup>

By 1908, in Glasgow alone, Moss Empires had come to own and operate the Grand Theatre, Cowcaddens, the Coliseum Theatre, Eglington Street and the Glasgow Empire, Sauchiehall Street. At its zenith Moss Empires controlled thirty three theatres across the country.<sup>30</sup> It was a huge operation consisting of music halls, that in the first

Tilley made her first appearance in male attire when she was five years of age in 1869, at Day's Concert Hall (or Crystal Palace) in Birmingham. She was billed as 'The Pocket Sims Reeves.' See *Who Was Who: volume 1: 1897-1915*: 591; Hartnoll: 948; and Mander and Mitchenson: 169.

<sup>28</sup>'Men You Know,' *Bailie* 7 Apr. 1897: 2. The 'Swedish Nightingale' Jenny Lind was another of the highly paid musical performers. In 1850 Edmund Glover was able to build the Prince's Theatre Royal, in a courtyard situated between Buchanan Street and West Nile Street, Glasgow, from the profits he made as the manager of her first Scottish tour. Later in the century Vesta Tilley was one of music hall's most popular performers and could command a fee to match:

Miss Tilley, after a lapse of six months at the Scotia, again pays a welcome visit to Glasgow at a salary of £160 per week. She made her debut at 'Day's' Crystal Palace, Birmingham, at the age of five, and has been before the public 21 years .... She is booked for the next six years at the highest salary ever paid to a Music Hall artiste. [She] Goes to America for season 1897, at 1500 dollars (£300) per week. ... She is a big shareholder in the Empire Palace and every Hall under Moss and Thornton's management.

'Miss Vesta Tilley.' *Quiz* 14 May 1896: 133. The Empire Palace referred to might be Moss's Edinburgh theatre but is, perhaps, more likely to refer to Moss's new Glasgow venture. The new Glasgow Empire Palace was constructed on the site of an older theatre, the Gaiety which was demolished in 1896 -- the year of the *Quiz* feature. The Glasgow Empire Palace was built between 1896 and 1897 and opened in the first week of April 1897. The Empire took the place of the Scotia Theatre (which closed in 1897, to open later as the Metropole) as Glasgow's leading music hall venue. See 'The First Night of the Empire Palace.' *Quiz* (ns 1.14) 8 Apr. 1897: 212-13, 221.

<sup>29</sup>'Men You Know,' *Bailie* 7 Apr. 1897: 2.

<sup>30</sup>The success of the Moss Empire continued well after Moss's death in 1912. Wilmut in *Kindly Leave the Stage!* notes that the Moss circuit of theatres:

... was generally considered the top-class circuit -- it was the ambition of every rising star to work on it. In 1920 the circuit -- or 'tour' as it was known, since its artists could work the various halls in succession -- comprised twenty-four theatres, rising to thirty by 1925.

decades of the twentieth century tended to operated with a cine-variety type of bill, and theatres offering musicals, pantomimes and variety. Increasingly, however, even these venues were to be converted to cinemas.

Cine-variety evolved as one of the most common exhibition contexts for film in the 1900s and 1910s. Traditionally music halls operated a diverse programme of comics, singers, musicians, tumblers, acrobats, performing animals and other speciality acts. To add a segment consisting of one or two reels of film to this programme not only fitted into the established pattern of the music hall but in so doing allowed audiences a familiar context in which to experience this new medium. Very quickly film became a regular feature of most variety bills -- its position on the bill dependent on the subject of the film on offer and the quality of the regular acts. This model was consistently successful across the range of halls and remained so for many years after the emergence of cinemas proper. Cine-variety was a feature of the halls of the working class and at the newer variety theatres. In Glasgow cine-variety was either the basic model or a regular feature for venues as different as the Queen's, the Tivoli and the Olympia serving their local, predominantly working class audiences, and the Empire and the Coliseum serving the city centre audience. Indeed, into the 1930s the Britannia Theatre in Glasgow (renamed as the Panopticon) operated something of a cine-variety bill with live performers complimenting the programme of film. Even as film exhibition develops the model is akin to the structure of the variety bill -- the feature film was only the climax of an evening's programme which would also present a supporting feature, news reels, cartoons and in some cinemas audience participation.

### **From fairgrounds to cinemas**

Even before that level of expansion was reached the facilities at the booth theatres continued to improve. Like the Moss empire others of the most famous of the early cinema owning families, such as the Greens, began as carnival operators were involved in the seasonal fairs. The film and entertainments business that was operated by the Green family was a hugely complicated one built on high levels of financial investment. Their booths were typical of the best of the geggie tradition<sup>31</sup> and were highly decorated, at least on the outside, and could hold up to 800 people, seated, at best on rather basic wooden benches. A Green's booth cinema could be fully equipped with an engine, used to generate their own electricity and to power the steam organ.<sup>32</sup> It is not

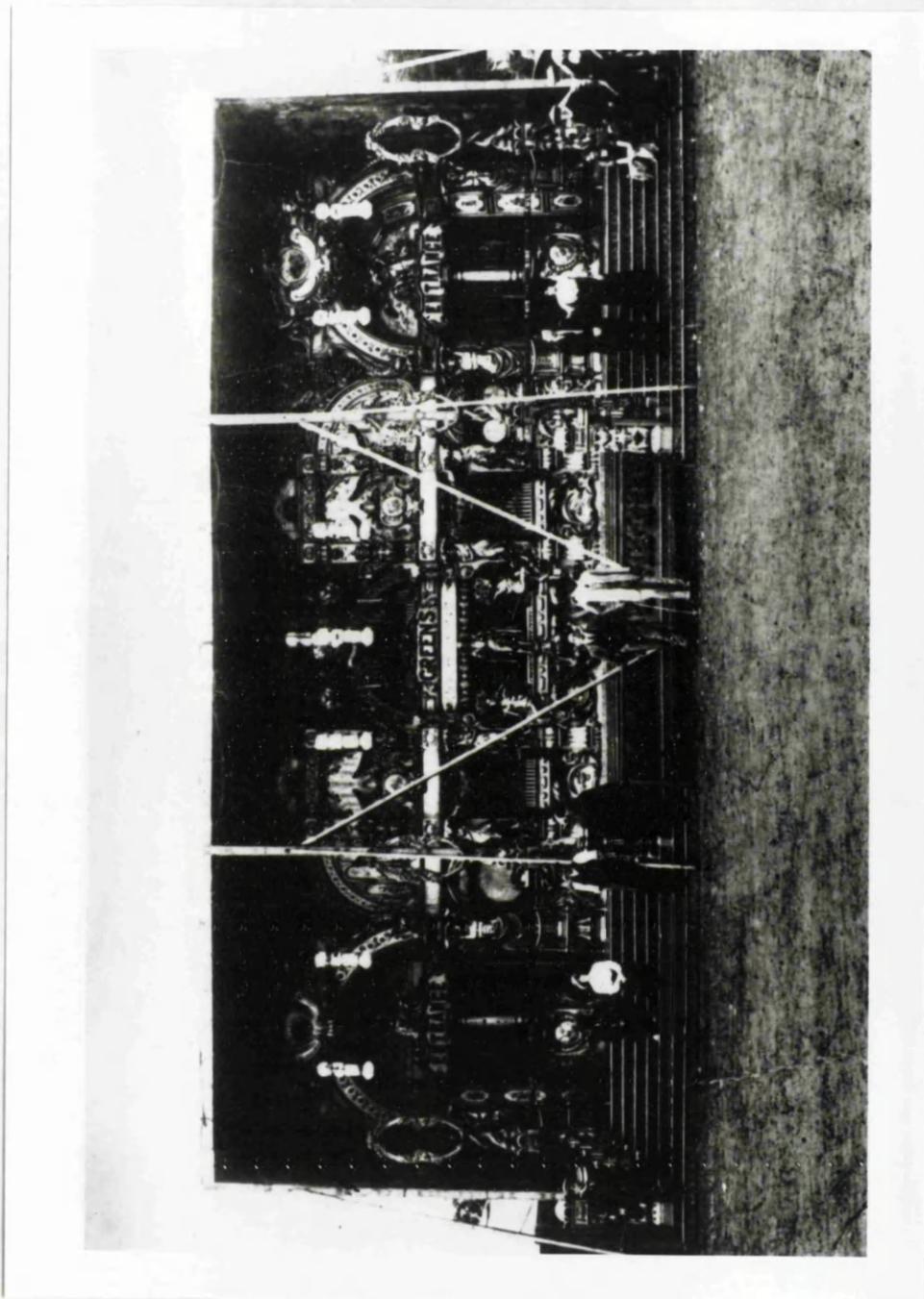
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Wilmot: 22.

<sup>31</sup>The geggie was a portable booth-type theatre made out of wood and canvas and brightly decorated. Small companies used these stages to tour entertainments across the Scottish countryside throughout the nineteenth century.

<sup>32</sup>E H Bostock, owner and manager of a highly successful touring menagerie for a time based at New City Road, Glasgow, and a Glasgow town councillor writes of the early popular appeal of electricity in his autobiography:

## Plate v



George Green's travelling cinema  
c1896.

(Scottish Film Archive)

difficult to see why the operation would have cost up to £8,000.<sup>33</sup> Patrons buying their 1d or 2d ticket would gain entry to a twenty minute programme consisting of a number of films, perhaps no longer than a minute or two in length -- the usual duration available to contemporary technology. Given the use of electric light, however, the projected image was exceptionally clear and certainly better than that available with a Kinetoscope or to those showmen who had used limelight.

Moving pictures first entered a Scottish theatre on 13 April 1896 -- once again in Edinburgh, at Moss's own Empire Palace on Nicolson Street. At this performance he seems to have employed a version of the Edison Kinetoscope -- by now developed to project film towards a screen. Advertising for this event bills the 'Cinematographe' as 'The greatest novelty of the Age .... The latest scientific triumph, showing animated pictures. The rage of London and Paris.'<sup>34</sup> Brendon Thomas<sup>35</sup> points to an interesting contemporary review of the first night of the week long engagement from the *Scotsman* indicating that film in the music halls was by no means an overnight success. The review itself is interesting to quote:

The great advertised attraction for this week at the Empire is an exhibition of the 'Cinematographe' -- a kind of electric magic lantern by which the instantaneous photographs of Edison's wonderful Kinetoscope are thrown upon a screen in the sight of the audience. The Cinematographe has been a great success at the London Empire, and Mr

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Electricity about this time [1889-1890] was all the talk, so it occurred to me that to be up-to-date I must have electric illumination. To have this while it was still a novelty would, I felt, prove a draw to the menagerie. I purchased a portable engine and had a dynamo fixed in another waggon, and soon was producing electric light which I first used publicly at Darlington on November 3rd, 1890. This was a great feature, quite a number of patrons coming to see it alone. But oh! the labour daily in transporting this portable engine, which weighed over 7 tons and which was without springs, over soft and uneven ground.

It was also extremely difficult to get the engine fixed plumb with the dynamo in order to prevent the belt coming off. To guard against the immediate cutting off of electric light in this way, we always kept a few of the ordinary lights going to ensure that the menagerie was not suddenly plunged into darkness, for if this happened a panic might have resulted.

Bostock: 109-110. This 'portable' engine was replaced in 1892 when Bostock invested in a traction engine:

... which, besides providing more power for lighting purposes and being less noisy than the engine I then had, would be capable of pulling two of my heaviest waggons, and would thus permit me to dispense with ten or twelve horses.

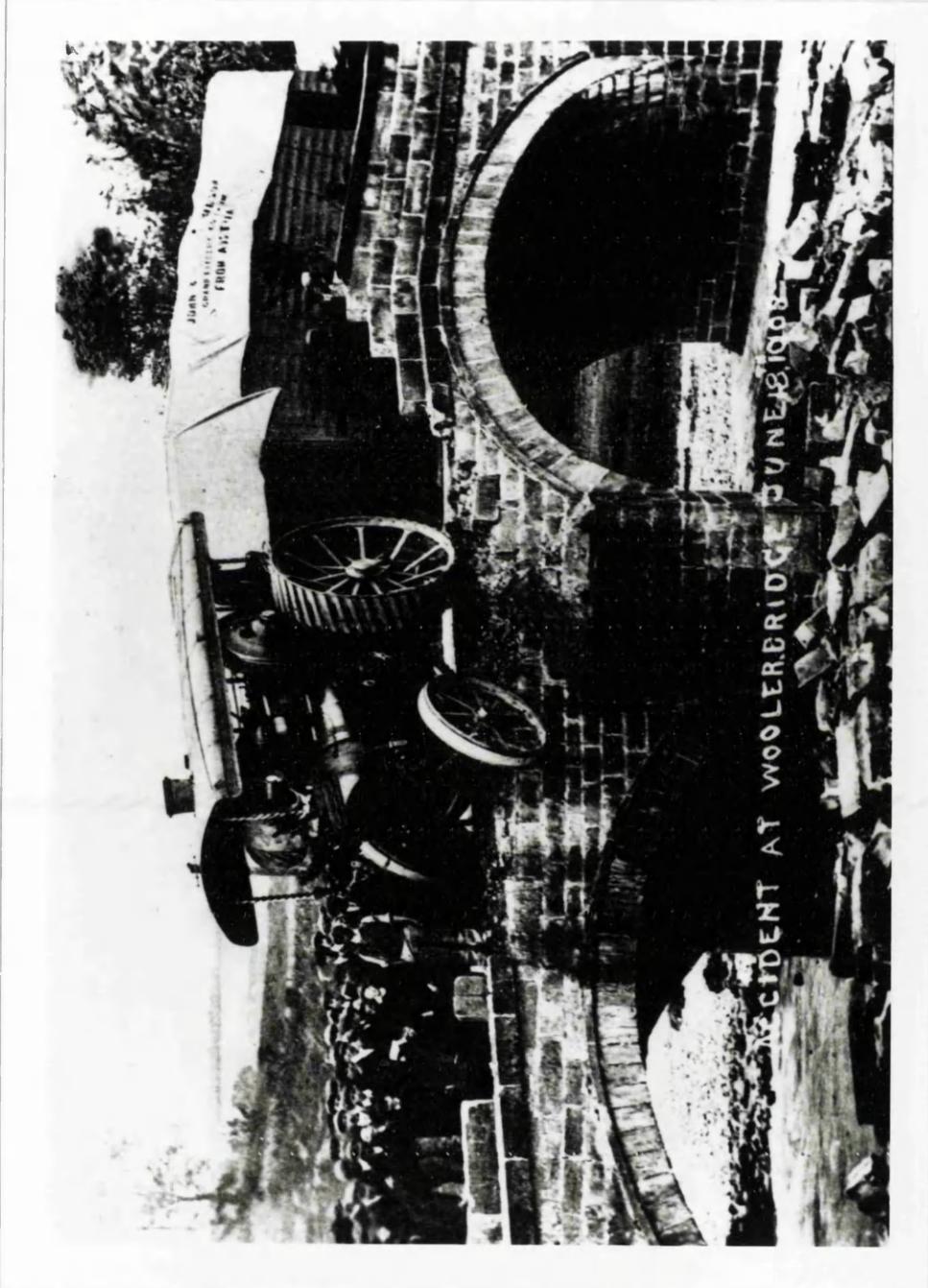
Bostock: 115. The investment was, however, something of a disaster as accident followed upon accident and the new source of pulling-power proved less flexible and less reliable than the teams of horses traditionally employed. The traction engine was sold 'only seven months' after it had been bought. See Bostock: 115-122.

<sup>33</sup>This figure suggested by the chairperson of the Scottish Film Council Charles Oakley in his 1946 introduction to film in Scotland. C A Oakley, *Fifty Years at the Pictures* (Glasgow: Scottish Film Council, 1946): 3. See also Thomas, *The Last Picture Show*: 8; and Janet McBain, *Pictures Past: Recollections of Scottish Cinemas and Cinema-Going* (Edinburgh: Moorfoot, 1985): 21.

<sup>34</sup>Advertisement for the Empire Palace Theatre, Edinburgh, from the *Scotsman* 11 Apr. 1896: 1. Similarly worded listings are again carried by the *Scotsman* from Monday 13 April to Saturday 18 April 1896, the end of the week long engagement.

<sup>35</sup>Thomas, *The Last Picture Show*: 8.

## Plate vi



Wilson's Grand Electric Travelling Show

18 June 1908.

(Scottish Film Archive)

Moss is to be complimented for his enterprise in securing the first appearance of it in the provinces. Unfortunately in Edinburgh last night the exhibition somehow missed fire. These instantaneous photographs are, it may be recalled, printed on a celluloid ribbon, which in the Kinetoscope was made to fly across the lens by means of an electric motor. Underneath was a powerful electric lamp, which rendered the celluloid quite transparent, and a sharp silvery vision was the result. In the Cinematograph views the light seemed not to be powerful enough to render the celluloid sufficiently transparent, and a somewhat indistinct picture in consequence appeared upon the screen -- such as might be thrown if the instrument had not been properly focused. Another defect was that the photographs were passed too slowly before the lens, so that while the action was vivid and life-like, it was, in the dancing and pugilistic scenes especially, of too funereal a character. It was noticed that the lighter photographs showed best upon the screen. Such, for example, was the shoeblack, the policeman, and the sailor, which was the first and the best of the ten scenes exhibited. The cockfight was also exceedingly good, the action of the birds flying at each other with outstretched wings being very realistic. Mr T. Moore Howard, who showed the scenes, apologised for the hitches which had occurred, but claimed at the same time the indulgence of the audience on the ground that the cinematograph was only in its infancy, and that it would take several months yet to perfect. There is, unquestionably, great possibilities in this interesting, scientific toy, if it may be so called, and when it is perfected the Empire audience will no doubt be glad to see it again. Otherwise there was on the programme several interesting items. ... There was a large audience.<sup>36</sup>

The screening of film, of course, only took up a small part of the Empire's variety bill -- which for this week -- beginning 13 April 1896 -- included the Effie Quartet, Pattie Weldon, Cee-Mee and Family, Effie Dean, the 4 M.P.s (the Four Musical Palmers) and Duncan's Collie Dogs. Film, thus, functioning within the pre-existing, and highly successful, music hall industry, and at this point clearly not yet perceived as having a popular or even educational potential outwith this late nineteenth-century entertainment system.

26 May 1896, at the Ice Skating Palace on Sauchiehall Street, saw the first 'theatrical' performance of moving pictures in Glasgow. Here the technically superior Lumière cinématographe was used and press reaction more enthusiastic than it had been in Edinburgh:

The Managers of the Skating Palace are determined to be up-to-date. On Tuesday night they introduced to a Glasgow audience for the first time, the Cinématographe. The fame that has preceded this latest wonder was the means of drawing an exceptionally large gathering, who were all well repaid for their attendance. The Cinématographe consists of a series of Snap-Shot Photos taken at a rate of 900 per minute, shown on a screen. The series enlarged, follows each other with such rapidity,

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<sup>36</sup>'Amusements: The Empire Theatre.' *Scotsman* 14 Apr. 1896: 5. It is interesting to note that on the next week's programme at the Empire in Edinburgh -- beginning 20 April 1896 -- Harry Lauder performed. He was third on the bill.

that it forms one scene with the life fully portrayed. Seven pictures were shown, one being a lady performing the 'Skirt Dance.' A London street scene followed; 'buses, carriages, pedestrians are fully portrayed. You see a carriage or a 'bus come dashing up, horses prancing, and people skipping across the street. A bridge with the people and traffic crossing proved highly entertaining, especially the gentleman with the light overcoat, and a lady by his side. A blacksmith's shop with the men all hard at work; the steam rising from the water when the hot iron was plunged in, proved very effective; the train arriving at the station, passengers alighting, and the lady rushing along the platform to meet her friend, was very amusing; the sea shore, with the waves breaking on the be[a]ch, brought the exhibition to a close, amid the loud applause of the audience. Altogether, the latest invention of the age proved a decided success, and it is sure to attract large crowds to the Palace, brought on, however, a little earlier in the evening, would be an improvement. The marvellous and graceful skating of the champion skater of the world, George A. Meagher, was highly appreciated and he had many imitators afterwards by the various skaters, to the delight of the Balcony spectators.<sup>37</sup>

While the Managing Director of the Ice Skating Palace was Major Tyre,<sup>38</sup> these screenings were run by Arthur Hubner, another important figure in the early development of cinema in Glasgow. Hubner was one of the first to realise the financial possibilities of regular film performances and from this year included films in all his shows at the Ice Skating Palace -- which was temporarily converted into a variety hall. This launched a vaudeville season -- running from 21 October to 5 December 1896<sup>39</sup> -- that boasted a bill typical of any contemporary variety programme:

At the Skating Palace, where, as the advertisements have it, 'there is no skating,' the chief attractions this week are the comedian pianist, W. H. Fox, J. C. Rich, Harry Drew, the Aubyns, the Comical Austins, and the never failing, and always popular, Cinematograph.<sup>40</sup>

Two weeks later: 'The Cinematograph still reigns supreme at the Skating Palace ...'<sup>41</sup>

Such popularity had not been won solely through the placing of the cinematograph in theatres and variety halls but also by the widespread use of geggie-type exhibition

<sup>37</sup>'Town Tattle -- by the Man About Town.' *Quiz* 28 May 1896: 166.

<sup>38</sup>See 'Our Cartoons -- Major Tyre.' *Quiz* 4 June 1896: 191; Cartoon -- 'Major Tyre, Managing Director of Glasgow Skating Palace.' *Quiz* 4 June 1896: 184.

<sup>39</sup>These dates represent the period over which the *Bailie* carries either advertisements for the variety season, or made reference to the attractions in the 'Monday Gossip' column, or both. The exact date for the last performance is, perhaps, not exact. The *Bailie* dated Wednesday 2 December 1896 contains the following comment: 'The managers of the Skating Palace announce that ice skating will recommence on December 12th, and consequently this will be the last week of the Vaudeville season.' ('Monday Gossip.' *Bailie* 2 Dec. 1896: 7.) The *Bailie*, although issued on a Monday is dated for a Wednesday. Given that 12 December 1896 is a Saturday, it has been assumed that '...the last week...' referred to above ends on the following Saturday (that is, 5 December) and not any date in the week following that.

<sup>40</sup>'Monday Gossip.' *Bailie* 4 Nov. 1896: 6.

<sup>41</sup>'Monday Gossip.' *Bailie* 18 Nov. 1896: 6.

sites and the enterprise of the travelling showmen. However, the Ice Skating Palace did secure for film some kind of regular theatrical presence in the Glasgow entertainment scene. Even when skating recommenced, over Christmas of 1896 and on into 1897, the Cinematograph remained a valued feature of Hubner's venue:

The Skating Palace, Sauchiehall Street, is now open from 10.30 till 1, and from 2.30 to 5.30 every day, and from 7 to 10 every evening of the week, Sundays, of course, excepted. Two exhibitions, moreover, are given each evening of the cinematograph, that interesting, nay, wonderful, adaption of photographs to daily life.<sup>42</sup>

Hubner is also noted for realising the entertainment potential of film, as distinct to film-as-scientific novelty as it had generally been perceived -- the *Scotsman* review of the cinematograph at the Empire Palace had, after all, described it as a 'scientific toy.'<sup>43</sup> Hubner was successful despite the fact that the Ice Skating Palace proved ultimately to be a wholly inappropriate venue, both in terms of the space itself and the audience who frequented it. In 1897 Hubner transferred his business to the Britannia (or 'Old Brit') Music Hall in the city's Trongate.<sup>44</sup>

Even in the final years of the nineteenth century, with the cinematograph increasingly and widely available, the screening of film became a key element in the programmes of many variety halls. Moss's Empire Palace Theatre in Glasgow was one of the venues that most consistently acquired films for its patrons. The opening of the Empire Palace Theatre in April 1897 is marked by the *Bailie's* feature on the career of Moss referred to above and by an illustrated feature in *Quiz* featuring cartoon drawings of the theatre and the first night attractions.<sup>45</sup> The theatre, on Sauchiehall Street, was built on the site of a Frank Matcham designed music hall called the Gaiety, which had been demolished the previous year.<sup>46</sup> The star attraction at the opening night -- stressing her financial as well as professional involvement with the Moss Empires -- was Vesta Tilley.<sup>47</sup> Moss himself, however, made just as important an appearance:

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<sup>42</sup>'Monday Gossip.' *Bailie* 3 Feb. 1897: 6.

<sup>43</sup>'Amusements: The Empire Theatre.' *Scotsman* 14 Apr. 1896: 5.

<sup>44</sup>This left the Ice Skating Palace to become the Panorama, then (between 1905 and 1924) most famously the site of Hengler's Cirque. As Alasdair Cameron notes (in *See Glasgow, See Theatre*) the building was a *palais de danse* and then operated as a cinema. The site is now occupied by the Cannon cinema complex. The Britannia too was to go through several guises over the next decades. Hubner -- still managing the New Eastern Alhambra (later Paragon Electric Theatre), at 6, Tobago Street, Calton, Glasgow, which opened 15 November 1897 -- transferred his business to the Alexandra Halls, Cowcaddens in 1899, and the Britannia was variously the Britannia Panopticon, the Trongate Panopticon, the Tron Cinema but most famously the Panopticon under the eccentric management of A E Pickard before finally closing in the around 1938.

<sup>45</sup>'The First Night of the Empire Palace.' *Quiz* (ns 1.14) 8 Apr. 1897: 212-13, 221.

<sup>46</sup>See Cameron, *See Glasgow, See Theatre*: [p16].

<sup>47</sup>Tilley's visit is previewed by a biographical article in *Quiz*. See 'Miss Vesta Tilley 'Quiz'-ed.' *Quiz* (ns 1.14) 25 Feb. 1897: 120.

The new Sauchiehall Street territory was carried by storm on Monday night in the presence of His Moss Excellent Majesty, the Emperor of all the eight 'Empires.'<sup>48</sup>

The Empire, as it came to be known, was one of the most successful of the variety venues in the city, the popularity of which would not diminish until its final closure and ultimate demolition in 1963. In the early period its importance lies not just in the quality of its variety but also in its continuing use of film. As early as 5 May 1897, within its first month of operation, the *Bailie* contains an advertisement for the Lumière Cinématograph as part of the bill at the Empire:

THE ORIGINAL LUMIERE CINEMATOGRAPH, From the EMPIRE PALACE, LONDON. LUMIERE'S CINEMATOGRAPH ... IN AN ENTIRELY NEW SERIES OF PICTURES.<sup>49</sup>

On 2 June 1897, the Empire again features film on its programme. On this occasion it is not a Lumière projector but a Biograph which is in use:

TO-NIGHT and during the Week. INVENTED BY HERMAN CASLER OF NEW YORK. THE BIOGRAPH ... THE LATEST AMERICAN SENSATION IN ANIMATED PHOTOGRAPHS. ...<sup>50</sup>

The event is also described in more detail in the 'Monday Gossip' feature of the same edition:

Quite a 'monstre' -- 'monstre,' not monster -- company is appearing this week at the Empire. The leading feature in the nightly programme is supplied by 'The American Biograph,' the latest sensation in animated photography. All the figures thrown upon the screen by the Biograph are of life size, and consequently the scenes in which they take part have a wonderful sense of reality. Among them are the rush of New York fire-engines to the scene of a conflagration, the whirring of express trains in and out of a station, and the boiling, seething, Niagra Rapids. Various humorous groups are also represented ... these include a pillow fight among children, a boy chasing a kitten, and a negress playing with her little picaninny.<sup>51</sup> Among the general members of the Empire company are the Sisters Preston, [and] George Lashwood ...<sup>52</sup>

<sup>48</sup>The First Night of the Empire Palace.' *Quiz* (ns 1.14) 8 Apr. 1897: 212.

<sup>49</sup>Advertisement. Empire Palace Theatre. *Bailie* 5 May 1897: 12. The programme also includes, at the bottom of the bill, 'VESTA VICTORIA, a Favourite London Comedienne.'

<sup>50</sup>Advertisement. Empire Palace Theatre. *Bailie* 2 June 1897: 11.

<sup>51</sup>The modern reader may find the very idea of this film, as well as the language used to describe it, as somewhat racist. This must be seen, not as suggestive of the reactionary nature of film *per se*, but as a general cultural phenomenon. This, after all, is a society sustaining an entertainment environment that still has strong vestiges of the freak show in place as well as the popular travelling menagerie.

<sup>52</sup>'Monday Gossip.' *Bailie* 2 June 1897: 4.

The engagement of the Biograph was clearly a popular one as it is retained for the next week's programme. The Empire's own advertisement is keen to indicate this success:

The Directors have pleasure in announcing that at very considerable expense they have been successful in retaining THE BIOGRAPH FOR ONE WEEK LONGER.

'THE BIOGRAPH' is without doubt the most Successful Exhibition of Animated Photographs ever witnessed in Glasgow.<sup>53</sup>

Even the *Bailie's* columnist comments on the event:

There will be another six nights, beginning to-night, of the amazing and amusing Biograph, at the Empire Palace. I described, by way of anticipation, a week ago, the characteristics of the Biograph, and the reality, I may now say, has fully come up to the anticipations I had ventured regarding it.<sup>54</sup>

By the end of the year the regular appearance of film in the listings suggests that the success of film as part of an evening's variety bill seems to have been proven; particularly when film of Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee Procession, or anything connected with royalty, or footage of the Greco-Turkish War was featured.<sup>55</sup> By the end of 1897 film had featured, or was to be seen at not just the Empire, but at Hubner's Britannia, Bostock's Scottish Zoo and Variety Circus, New City Road, and at special events like the 'Glasgow Merchants' Cycling Club Grand Bazaar and Fancy Fair' held at the Fine Art Institute on Sauchiehall Street, 9 to 11 December.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>53</sup>Advertisement. Empire Palace Theatre. *Bailie* 9 June 1897: 13.

<sup>54</sup>'Monday Gossip.' *Bailie* 9 June 1897: 5. It is, perhaps, interesting to note just two of the other entertainments available in Glasgow during the week of the Biograph's first week at the Empire: the London influence is clear. The Theatre Royal has:

MR. HARRY PAULTON, JUNIOR'S, COMPANY In the Great Success from the STRAND THEATRE, LONDON, NIOBE (ALL SMILES) by HARRY and EDWARD PAULTON.

Advertisement. Theatre Royal. *Bailie* 2 June 1897: 11. Whilst at the Royalty Theatre was another play which originated in London:

Revival, by Special Arrangement with Mr. Charles Wyndham, of the Popular Comedy, by JUSTIN H. M'CARTHY, THE CANDIDATE, As Played for an Entire Season at the CRITERION THEATRE, LONDON.

Advertisement. Royalty Theatre. *Bailie* 2 June 1897: 11. What these two advertisements might suggest is the appeal of a London show -- both, after all, display their origins at the Strand and at the Criterion. It points to the dominant feeling of the period that the only 'real' theatre was a London theatre and not a provincial or indigenous production.

<sup>55</sup>There are numerous examples for this type of attraction. See -- Advertisement. Empire Palace Theatre. *Bailie* 11 Aug. 1897: 13; Advertisement. Empire Palace Theatre. *Bailie* 27 Oct. 1897: 12; Advertisement. Empire Palace Theatre. *Bailie* 3 Nov. 1897: 14; Advertisement. Bostock's Scottish Zoo and Variety Circus. *Bailie* 1 Dec. 1897: 14; Advertisement. Glasgow Merchants' Cycling Club Grand Bazaar and Fancy Fair. *Bailie* 1 Dec. 1897: 15.

<sup>56</sup>Advertisement. Glasgow Merchants' Cycling Club Grand Bazaar and Fancy Fair. *Bailie* 8 Dec. 1897: 14.

From this point, then, into the new century a similar pattern emerges, with the Empire, the Britannia, the Zoo and Circus regularly screening film and the other music hall venues also making film a frequent feature on bills. Bostock comments on his early use of film:

... at the Scottish zoo as a side-show soon after this was opened in 1897, the charge for admission being 1*d.*, while in the winter of the same year I exhibited a pantomime film (beautifully coloured by hand by a Paris firm), which was seen on both sides of the circus and which proved a great attraction.

During the year moving-picture shows were to be seen on every fairground in Britain. These shows had very elaborate front entrances and they did enormous business, and were the actual fore-runners of the cinemas which, about 1904, sprang up in mushroom fashion all over the country.<sup>57</sup>

### E H Bostock

The career of E H Bostock is representative of the development of popular entertainments as an industry through the period. In a Foreword to his autobiography, *Menageries, Circuses and Theatres*, he is described by E Rosslyn Mitchell as 'a pioneer of modern entertainment as well as a practitioner of older forms.'<sup>58</sup> Just this mix is typical of the way in which the new medium of film was integrated into more established social habits. The Bostock family successfully owned and managed a number of international touring menageries and then circuses throughout the Victorian period and on into the twentieth century. E H Bostock oversaw the shift from the traditional touring circuit and seasonal fairs to permanent venues with a touring element maintained as an important and interconnected business. Bostock's first involvement with theatre-based entertainment, as opposed to touring shows, was in 1892. Noticing the success of a rival with a boxing kangaroo, he secured a contract with a music hall agent and supplied a similar attraction for the Trocadero, London (at a fee of £80 per week). The opening days were a great success, but the animal died after only four performances. The act was so popular, however, that Bostock secured more kangaroos which were trained and then hired out to the music halls. This was followed by a wrestling lion act which was also launched upon the music hall circuit but received greater success with the menagerie operated by Bostock's younger brother, Frank Charles Bostock, when he toured to the United States.<sup>59</sup>

In 1897 Bostock secured a five year lease on the Olympia, New City Road, Glasgow, which, with many alterations and improvements he opened as the Scottish

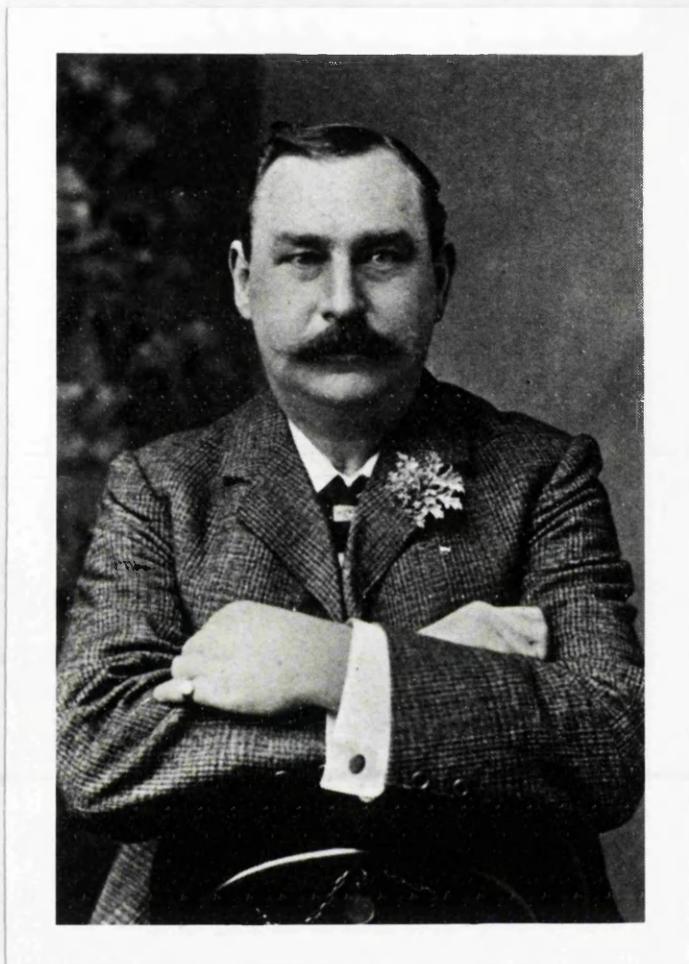
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<sup>57</sup>Bostock: 197-198.

<sup>58</sup>E Rosslyn Mitchell, Foreword. Bostock: viii.

<sup>59</sup>See Bostock: 123-128.

## Plate vii



E H Bostock,  
c 1908.

(from Bostock, *Menageries, Circuses and Theatres*)

Zoo and Variety Circus on 12 May 1897.<sup>60</sup> The huge success of the opening season rather faded towards the end of the first year and, while he re-launched a touring menagerie in England and Wales, with another more or less permanently touring the Continent, Bostock closed the circus for a number of weeks and offered instead a seventeen week programme of 'promenade concerts'<sup>61</sup> and a more traditional variety bill:

Among the well-known instrumental combinations I engaged were the Blue Hungarian Band, the Ladies' Viennese Orchestra and Zette Handel's Ladies' Orchestra, while among the popular Scottish artistes whose services I booked were W. F. Frame, 'The Man U Know'; Mr. and Mrs. Graham Moffat, of 'Bunty Pulls the Strings' fame; Mr. and Mrs. Dickson Moffat, well-known Elocutionists and Sketch Artistes; Miss Jessie Maclachlan, 'The Scottish Queen of Song'; Mr. J. M. Hamilton, 'The Scottish Sims Reeves'; Prince Bendon, the ventriloquist, etc., etc.<sup>62</sup>

The success of this kind of programming is indicated when, in 1902 Bostock extended the lease on the building, with an option to buy. To facilitate improvements to the venue the Zoo and Variety Circus closed on 5 April 1902. The Zoo reopened on 17 May 1902 and after some three months the refurbished Scottish Zoo and Glasgow Hippodrome opened on 21 July -- the theatre itself able to seat some 2,500 patrons.<sup>63</sup> This new venture was managed in partnership with the music hall manager Thomas Barrasford, whose 'twice-nightly' programme at his English venues particularly appealed to Bostock. Barrasford was in charge of engaging acts and managing the music hall element of the productions. The success of the venture is described by Bostock:

For nearly two years we did extraordinary business. The splendid programme, the elaborate furnishings and the low prices of admission -- 1s., 6d. and 3d. -- were a revelation to Glasgow and the West of Scotland, and my partner [Barrasford] and I were naturally very delighted with our success.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>60</sup>Bostock: 149.

<sup>61</sup>Bostock: 155.

<sup>62</sup>Bostock: 155-156. Oakley considers that Bendon was one of the pioneers of film in Scotland as '... he hired halls and showed films accompanied by variety.' Oakley, *Fifty Years at the Pictures: 4*. Indeed it seems to be the case that around the time of World War I, William John Bendon converted the Queen Mary Tea Gardens, at Spiersbridge near Rouken Glen in Glasgow, into a film studio. Evidence for this undertaking is somewhat slight, but Janet McBain suggests that the studios may have been called any of three things -- the Queen Mary Studio, the Ace Film Studio, or Broadway Stage and Cinema Production, Limited -- and that at least one film, *Fuiba' Daft*, was produced around 1921 by Max Leder at these studios. To what extent and for how long Bendon was involved is unclear. Indeed evidence for the participation of other figures whom it is suggested were involved (including Bostock and even John Maxwell) is almost purely anecdotal.

<sup>63</sup>See Bostock: 166-168. These major alterations cost £12,000. The architect was Bertie Crewe, of London, who worked from ideas from Bostock himself. The interior was designed by De Jong.

<sup>64</sup>Bostock: 169.

The *Bailie* agrees with this, noting that:

... for a lengthened period the Zoo Hippodrome has been one of the most popular houses of entertainment in the city, or indeed in all Scotland.<sup>65</sup>

The partnership was, however, ultimately ill-fated. Barrasford continued to expand his theatre interests both in Glasgow and beyond. In Glasgow he became managing director of the Pavilion, Renfield Street, and a partner in the Palace Theatre in the Gorbals -- both in potential opposition to the established Zoo-Hippodrome. In London he invested (with backing from Bostock) in the Britannia Theatre, Hoxton, and in Paris, in the Alhambra. Bostock -- foreseeing greater financial loss ultimately ended the partnership and, in August 1904, quit Glasgow. He continued his business at the Norwich Hippodrome and a newly acquired Ipswich Hippodrome as well as maintaining three travelling menageries. Some ten months later -- on 12 June 1905 -- Bostock returned to take up the management of the Glasgow Zoo and Hippodrome -- officially re-opening on 19 July.<sup>66</sup> Under threat of Moss Empires building a 'New Olympia Theatre' at St George's Cross, very close to the New City Road venue of the Zoo-Hippodrome, Bostock went into partnership with the large theatre chain. Moss Empires would, like Barrasford, provide the acts for the music hall programme on the understanding that they would not build a rival venue so close to this 'Moss Empires and Bostock' theatre.<sup>67</sup> The partnership was inaugurated on 1 October 1905 but was dissolved just over two years later on 10 November 1907. In *Menageries, Circuses and Theatres* Bostock notes his dissatisfaction with the partnership had been felt right from the start:

... a few weeks' experience of the place seemed to disappoint them [his audiences], and they told me that I was not getting nearly such good companies, as I provided when I was on my own account. So the business went down. My partners had two other houses in Glasgow, the Empire and the Coliseum. They had the entire interest in these concerns and only one-half in mine. It was, perhaps, not unnatural that they should give their own houses the best.<sup>68</sup>

The success of the venues operated by Moss and the other stable theatres and music halls in the city ultimately forced Bostock to finally close the Zoo-Hippodrome and sell the Glasgow-based menagerie by auction on 27 April 1909.<sup>69</sup> In the midst of the roller

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<sup>65</sup>'Men You Know.' *Bailie* 12 July 1905: 1.

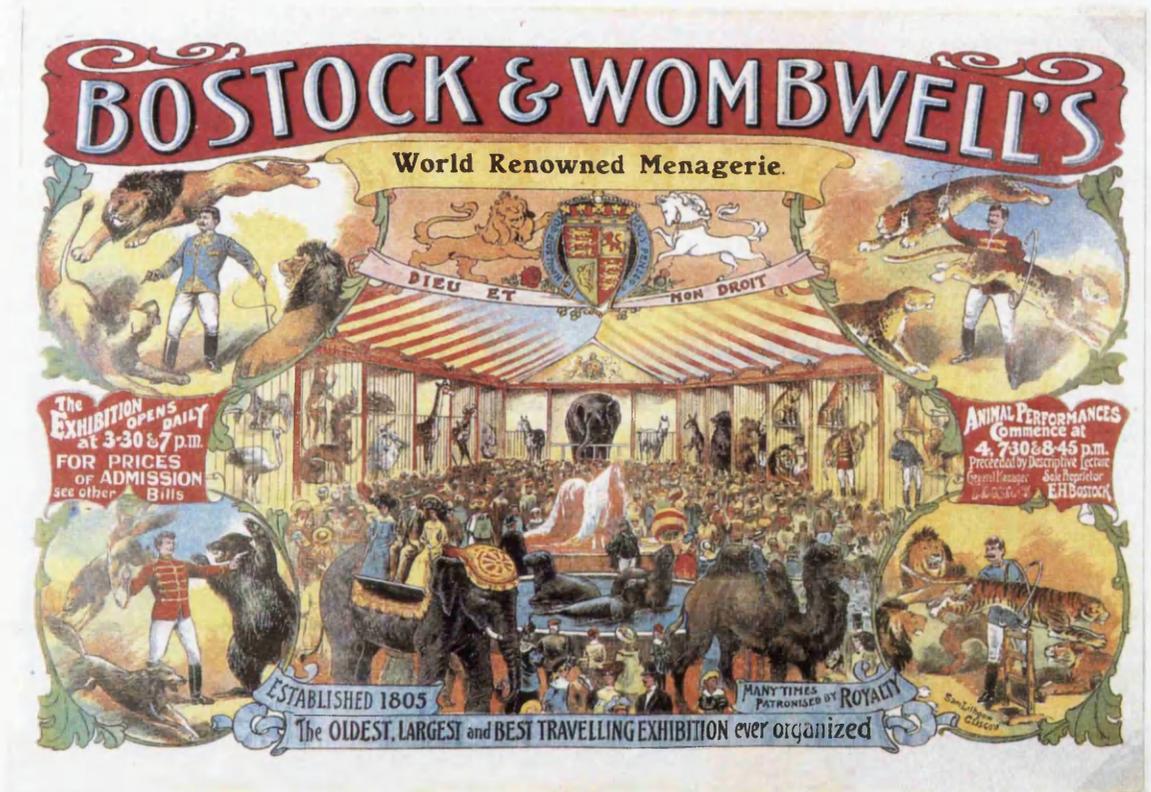
<sup>66</sup>See 'Men You Know.' *Bailie* 12 July 1905: 1.

<sup>67</sup>Bostock: 190.

<sup>68</sup>Bostock: 190.

<sup>69</sup>See Bostock: 191.

## Plate viii



Poster for Bostock and Wombwell's Menagerie,  
New City Road,  
Glasgow, c1910.

*(People's Palace Museum)*

skating craze that hit Glasgow towards then end of the 1900s, Bostock demolished the Hippodrome to make a huge skating rink:

What a gigantic error I made in pulling down the Hippodrome, for hardly had the structure been dismantled than Glasgow was in the grip of the moving-picture craze. The Hippodrome, if I had left it intact, would have been ready even to the operating box, licence for opening, etc. -- an admirable building for the purpose. The fever for roller skating on this occasion was but a passing phase. The demand began to diminish about the New Year after I had been in the business about eight months, and I bitterly regretted my precipitancy in demolishing the Hippodrome.<sup>70</sup>

With great success the venue was then given over for a season to Frank Charles Bostock's Jungle Trained Animal Exhibition. When his brother's company returned to the United States E H Bostock set about refurbishing the venue to reopen the Scottish Zoo and Variety Circus on 4 July 1910, only to see the Circus close on 10 January 1911.<sup>71</sup> Business at the Zoo continued with the added attraction of '... a cinema show in the circus building' which continued until 1 April 1911 when Bostock finally sold his renewed Glasgow-based animal stock to Frank Charles Bostock<sup>72</sup> and let the building first to Henglers, who continued to show films, and then to his nephew, James Gordon Bostock, who opened the venue as 'Joytown' -- an indoors amusement park -- which, although very popular failed to show sufficient profit and closed in May 1912. The venue was occupied variously by trade fairs, the evangelists Chapman and Alexander and by Bostock's own Christmas Fair over the 1913-1914 season and one of his touring menageries over the summer of 1914. During the War the venue was used to billet troops and to store aircraft, but in 1918 Bostock was able to reopen with a roller skating rink, and small menagerie. After the War the touring menagerie immediately set out again across Britain, while towards the end of 1919 Bostock finally sold the New City Road venue to the British Motor Transport Company.<sup>73</sup>

The seeming lack of continued success at the Zoo-Hippodrome draws attention away from the accomplishments of other aspects of the Bostock career and business. A town councillor for the Cowcaddens ward, in which the Zoo-Hippodrome was situated and upon his resignation appointed Justice of the Peace, Bostock was a popular figure around Glasgow.<sup>74</sup> Menageries under his direct or indirect influence toured not just

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<sup>70</sup>Bostock: 193.

<sup>71</sup>Bostock: 193-195.

<sup>72</sup>Bostock notes that the animals were on show at the 1911 Festival of Empire Exhibition in London, at the end of which '... the bulk of the animals went direct to Los Angeles [sic] for film work.' Bostock: 196.

<sup>73</sup>Bostock: 199-212.

<sup>74</sup>In a 'Men You Know' feature in the *Bailie* in 1908 Bostock's candidature is backed enthusiastically: ... Mr. BOSTOCK is a first-rate man of business. His work is work that demands energy, foresight, and a close acquaintance with affairs. ... he must know Glasgow

Britain and the great London fairs, but mainland Europe, America, South Africa, Australia, New Zealand, India and Asia, including Penang, Java, Borneo, Sumatra, Siam and China with nine months spent in Japan.<sup>75</sup> He maintained and controlled the venues in Norwich and Ipswich and expanded into the smaller towns in Scotland -- a 'semi-temporary hippodrome in the centre of Paisley,'<sup>76</sup> another hippodrome in Hamilton,<sup>77</sup> the Pavilion in Wishaw -- all of which operated a variety programme. Later in Blantyre Bostock 'erected a building which, in addition to providing a picture-house, contains two shops and two-dwelling houses.'<sup>78</sup> In addition he also bought the Victoria Hall, Hamilton, the New Century Theatre, Motherwell and the Lyceum Theatre, in Ipswich, 'to eliminate the danger of opposition.'<sup>79</sup> The chain was developed to include music halls and cinemas and by 1927 included the King's Theatre, Greenock, which was refitted and added to 'The Bostock Circuit.'<sup>80</sup> Clearly for managers of music halls the Moss model of operations was the ideal; create a chain of venues and offer the acts engaged an extended tour within the circuit.

### Cinemas and industrial expansion

In the early days of film at venues like those mentioned and then from 1902 at the Queen's, Glasgow Cross, and the Tivoli, Anderston Cross, film was almost always a feature. Usually programmes were as on Bostock's bill, cine-variety in form, mixing a variety of music hall acts with short reels of film. Certainly the most prominent in advertising, and thus presumably the most popular with audiences was still actuality footage: Boer War footage, the funeral processions of Gladstone<sup>81</sup> and Queen Victoria,<sup>82</sup> the Coronation procession of Edward VII.<sup>83</sup>

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and the people of Glasgow -- what the people of Glasgow like, how they desire to be amused, and the prevailing trend of their feelings and tastes on all matters of public import. It is consequently a happy inspiration that led Mr. BOSTOCK ... to determine that he would become a candidate for the vacancy [of the Cowcaddens ward of Glasgow town council]. Mr. BOSTOCK is essentially a Cowcaddens man. He lives and moves in the Cowcaddens. While he has necessarily a general interest in the city as a whole, his special interest is in the ward in which he is one of the largest ratepayers. ... As a member, moreover, of the Town Council, he would bring a fresh eye and a vigorous brain to the consideration and discussion of things municipal.

'Men You Know.' *Bailie* 12 Aug. 1908: 1. Bostock was elected unopposed to the council.

<sup>75</sup>This Far East tour was managed by Bostock's son, Douglas, with a menagerie and circus known as the Royal Italian Circus, which Bostock had bought on 29 July 1913. See Bostock: 217-227.

<sup>76</sup>Bostock: 212. This was opened on 14 October 1906.

<sup>77</sup>Opened 14 October 1907.

<sup>78</sup>Bostock: 212.

<sup>79</sup>Bostock: 213.

<sup>80</sup>Bostock: 300.

<sup>81</sup>The *Bailie* previews one example of this:

The cinematographic pictures, which are being exhibited at the Britannia this week, include the funeral of 'Mr. Gladstone at Westminster,' scenes from the Spanish-American War, 'Jeddah' winning the Derby, and 'A Ride on an Express Train.' Besides the cinematograph, the Britannia bill includes a capital company of variety

In February 1898, however, the *Bailie* comments on a rather different use of film to that of the music hall and entertainment managers. The *Bailie* notes that:

The kinematograph has proved itself to be an agreeable means of spending the time for an hour or two, and consequently opticians and photographic apparatus people have for the time being got 'another string to their bow.' There is one such person in the town who already this season has had quite a hundred engagements for his kinematograph -- once or twice as many as four on the same date -- and at the present he has as many as twenty more engagements to overtake. It is no wonder that he prays that the kinematograph continues to be in the 'fashion' both for public and private entertainments.<sup>84</sup>

The wide-spread dissemination and flexibility of film marks it as a different kind of technology, one that can be used by amateurs not just at the level of audience but also as producer. This use of film by local business and photography enthusiasts notes a first step towards what would be an important development in later decades. The role of film as private entertainment was able to expand from this base of exhibiting bought-in films to include the actual shooting of local events and places by these early and other amateur enthusiasts. The amateur film making sector was to be an important one in the film culture and entertainment system of the Scottish scene.

comedians. Mr. Hubner, by the way, is still maintaining his popular amateur Friday evenings.

'Monday Gossip.' *Bailie* 8 June 1898: 5.

<sup>82</sup>There are numerous examples of bills featuring footage of Queen Victoria's funeral.

Among the pictures in Poole's Myriorama, at present occupying the Wellington Street Circus, are two films of the funeral procession of Her late Majesty, Queen Victoria. They were specially taken, I may say, on Mr. Poole's behalf. The Myriorama is continuing to prove as popular as ever.

'Monday Gossip.' *Bailie* 13 Feb. 1901: 4.

Again for the following week:

A representation, by means of Bio-Tableaux pictures, will be given at the Empire this week of the different event connected with the funeral of Her late Majesty, Queen Victoria. The pictures include the crossing of the Solent, the arrival of the royal coffin at Portsmouth, and the great funeral procession in London, part in which was taken by His Majesty King Edward, the Emperor of Germany, the Kings of Belgium, of Greece, and of Portugal, and representatives from every colony and state in the civilised world.

'Monday Gossip.' *Bailie* 20 Feb. 1901: 4. Bostock's New City Road venue also features similar programme for the next two weeks:

The cinematographic reproductions which Mr. Bostock secured for the Zoo Circus, of the Funeral Procession of Queen Victoria, and the opening of Parliament by King Edward, proved exceedingly popular with last week's audiences, and are being continued for another six days.

'Monday Gossip.' *Bailie* 6 Mar. 1901: 4.

<sup>83</sup>For instance, at the Empire:

Each evening ... animated photographs of the Coronation Procession will be shown by means of the Edisonograph.

'Monday Gossip.' *Bailie* 20 Aug. 1901: 4.

<sup>84</sup>'Monday Gossip.' *Bailie* 16 Feb. 1898: 4.

It was really not until the 1910s that cinemas -- venues wholly or mostly for the projection of film-as-entertainment -- were being created -- by converting theatres, meeting halls, shops. In the Edwardian period cinemas (which were still based on something of a cine-variety formula) -- where they existed -- tended to be located in working class districts of towns and cities: the East-End and the Trongate areas of Glasgow had several early cinemas<sup>85</sup> and a similar pattern may be traced across both Britain and in the United States -- although in both countries the move towards respectability (and a potentially more affluent audience) was swift.<sup>86</sup> The first cinema proper (just screening film that is) in Glasgow's city centre, dating from 1910, seems to have been the Electric Theatre (later Charing Cross Electric Theatre) at 508, Sauchiehall Street.<sup>87</sup> Very quickly the Electric was joined by others -- some grand venues reflecting a great deal of financial investment, others of a smaller scale, or even that which often remains strongest in the collective folk memory, the 'flea-pit' type of cinema. One of the early grand venues (it is described by the *Bailie* as 'the most luxurious cinematograph theatre in Scotland')<sup>88</sup> was the Picture House, at 140 Sauchiehall Street. The Picture House was opened by former Lord Provost Sir John Ure Primrose on 19 December 1910.<sup>89</sup> The *Glasgow Programme* previews the opening ceremony, and describes the new cinema:

To enter into details of the magnificence of this new place of entertainment would be beyond the limits of our space, but we would just like to say a few words on the subject. The front entrance of the building is ornamented by Douulton ware; the seating accommodation is arranged in one central group with wide lateral aisles, the ample spacing giving exceptional comfort[.] There is a Balcony to which access is gained from the Lounge, accommodating 150. There is also a promenade behind the seats luxuriously furnished with settees. The lounge will be a special feature and is intended for use of patrons of the balcony. ...

Regarding the pictures themselves, we understand that all pictures shown will be entirely new and have never been used before. The greatest care will be taken so that all elements of vulgar sensationalism will be discarded. The pictures shown will portray every kind of

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<sup>85</sup>This point is stressed by Oakley:

The first cinemas were located in working-class districts, not the centres of the towns. For instance, in Glasgow they began in the East-End, followed by the South-West, before reaching the city. These early cinemas included: Ralph Pringle's Picture Palace Theatre (now the Queen's Theatre), near Glasgow Cross; J. J. Bennell's B.B. (Bright and Beautiful) Wellington Palace in Gorbals; George Green's Whitevale Theatre in Gallowgate; and George Urie Scott's Annfield Halls in Gallowgate.

Oakley, *Fifty Years at the Pictures*: 5-6.

<sup>86</sup>For an analysis of the American scene see Russell Merritt, 'Nickleodeon Theatres 1905-1914: Building an Audience for the Movies.' *The American Film Industry*. Ed. Tino Balio (London: U of Wisconsin P, 1976): 59-79.

<sup>87</sup>'Monday Gossip.' *Bailie* 11 May 1910: 7.

<sup>88</sup>'Monday Gossip.' *Bailie* 25 Jan. 1911: 7.

<sup>89</sup>See 'What's on This Week? ... The Picture House.' *Glasgow Programme* 19 Dec. 1910: 9.

subject, and a special feature will be made of current and local events, episodes of interest and importance being shown within a short time of their happening.

Everything that could possibly be done for the luxurious comfort and convenience of patrons is being done here, from the providing of Refreshments, Cloak Rooms, etc., to a parcel office, where visitors may send parcels free of charge to await their personal call.<sup>90</sup>

The *Bailie* is also keen to stress the quality aspects of the Picture House:

'The Picture House' ... is the latest addition to our local entertaining establishments. It opens at two o'clock in the afternoon and remains open till half-past ten each night. There is a continuous performance each day, new programmes being presented every Monday and Thursday. Special attention is given by the proprietors of the Picture House, the Provincial Cinematographic Theatres (Ltd.), to the providing of up-to-date films, so that the pictures are always interesting; they have a pictorial interest and also the interest which belongs to the direct representation of actual events. The picture-house contains a pleasant lounge, in which visitors can spend a quiet hour reading or writing.<sup>91</sup>

Further mentions are given to the non-filmic facilities available at the Picture House in the *Bailie*,<sup>92</sup> but it is a programming event that reveals another aspect of the close relationship of film and the theatre in this period.

The biograph reproduction of 'King Henry VIII' as it is played at His Majesty's Theatre, which was so warmly applauded by Sir Herbert Tree when he witnessed it in London on Friday, will be presented this week in the Picture House ... Sir Herbert Tree is seen as *Cardinal Wolsey*, Mr. Bouchier as *King Henry*, and Miss Violet Vanburgh as *Queen Catherine*. This is an entirely new cinematographic departure. It is one that appeals to the general public, and especially to theatre-goers and admirers of the distinguished actor-manager of His Majesty's Theatre.<sup>93</sup>

The programme is again featured the following week, when the *Bailie* advises that:

No admirer of the theatre ought to miss the opportunity of becoming acquainted with the outward look of Sir Herbert Tree's 'Henry.'<sup>94</sup>

In general, however, the shift into 'cinemas' signalled that film was becoming respectable. The pattern is the same in Edinburgh and Aberdeen. In the capital several cinemas had come into being. Many venues continued to offer a mixed bill of film and variety acts, but the main film theatres in Edinburgh included the Operetta House in

<sup>90</sup>'What's on This Week? ... The Picture House.' *Glasgow Programme* 19 Dec. 1910: 9.

<sup>91</sup>'Monday Gossip.' *Bailie* 28 Dec. 1910: 6.

<sup>92</sup>See 'Holiday Gossip.' *Bailie* 19 Apr. 1911: 6; 'Monday Gossip.' *Bailie* 3 May 1911: 7. This latter reference notes that 'The Wedgewood Tea Lounge of the House is one of the pleasantest resorts to spend an idle half-hour within the boundaries of the city.'

<sup>93</sup>'Monday Gossip.' *Bailie* 1 Mar. 1911: 7.

<sup>94</sup>'Monday Gossip.' *Bailie* 8 Mar. 1911: 7.

Chambers Street (which had begun showing Edison's Animated Pictures in 1900), the Cinema House, opened in 1903 as the North British Electric Theatre, on Nicholson Street and those venues owned by Ralph Pringle. By 1909 Pringle owned a chain of cinemas across several towns. In Edinburgh he owned the Picture Palace, later the Garrick, in Grove Street, the La Scala in Nicholson Street and Pringle's New Picture Palace which had opened at 41, Elm Row on 16 November 1908.<sup>95</sup> (Although A D Mackie writing in the short history of the Gateway Theatre Company believes that the Pringle cinema was not on the site until 1910.<sup>96</sup>) In Glasgow, Ralph Pringle's Picture Palace in Watson Street, near Glasgow Cross, was originally a theatre, but one that Pringle converted into a cinema, although it still operated a mix of film and variety turns.

### Film production

Moss, Hubner and Pringle were not alone in their investments in the development of the music hall. Thomson, in his study *Silver Screen in the Silver City*, quotes an article originally published in 1908 in the trade magazine *Kinematograph and Lantern Weekly* and written by a pioneer of film in Scotland, William Dove Paterson.<sup>97</sup> Like many of those involved in the early development of the commercial possibilities of film, he had begun his career in the 1880s '... before the public in one function or another, more especially the Scottish public, as an elocutionist and concert promoter.'<sup>98</sup> Beginning with a touring operation Paterson recounts his success (commencing in October 1907) as a permanent feature at the Alhambra Music Hall in Aberdeen. The professional nature of the Paterson's operation points to the developments made in the decade or so since film had first been introduced to the theatre-going public at the Empire Palace Theatre, Edinburgh. Paterson continues:

My success I attribute to the following elements to be found in my programme: -- The high ideal of giving only the best of everything, knowing that only the good lasts; changing subjects every week; providing an intelligent dialogue for every picture I show; demanding and commanding perfect silence and attention from the audience during dramatic stories; and joining with real gusto in the fun and acting in my comics. Every week a pictorial trip [using projected still slides] is given

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<sup>95</sup>See Thomas, *The Last Picture Show*: 9, 56, 58. In a somewhat unlikely reversal of the trend to convert theatres into cinemas the Picture Palace in Elm Row was, from 1946, used as both a cinema and a theatre and eventually became a full-time theatre when the Gateway Theatre Company was formed in 1953.

<sup>96</sup>A D Mackie, '41 Elm Row.' *The Twelve Seasons of the Edinburgh Gateway Company: 1953-1965* (Edinburgh: St Giles Press, 1965): 4.

<sup>97</sup>Originally published as 'How I Handle Pictures' by Dove Paterson in *Kinematograph and Lantern Weekly*, 1908, and recounted by Thomson, *Silver Screen*: 36-37. Also quoted by Smout and Wood: 190-192.

<sup>98</sup>'How I Handle Pictures' by Dove Paterson, quoted by Thomas, *Silver Screen*: 36; and by Smout and Wood: 191.

to some place of interest; the [still] slides rest the eyes between the animated films, and also serve to give my voice a rest. I see that local pictures of the moment are made specialities.

I always welcome my audience with a special curtain slide and bid them au revoir by film. I tolerate no show of white sheet [the blank screen] or 'blanking', but keep the screen continually aglow with hand-painted title-slides; in short, I endeavour to keep my audience in Pictureland when once the spell is cast. Should a break occur when running a film my operator flashes the following polite intimation. 'A film slip, please excuse a moment'. 'Ere the audience has time to read the request we are off again, the smart idea commented on, and the sympathy is never broken. The best possible music by the best possible musicians accompanies all my pictures. Being a methodical man and a strict disciplinarian, I insist on the sobriety of my whole staff. I have been a life-long abstainer, and Lady Nicotine claims none of my affections, and it is simply by adherence to those (some would think minor) details that I have been able to handle the pictures so successfully, and retain the favour and confidence of the public so far.<sup>99</sup>

With the shift into theatres, and then converted or purpose-built cinemas, however, there occurred an important and seemingly irreconcilable split in the economy of cinema in Scotland: the loss of a production base. Thereafter, at least within the sphere of the popular feature film, representations and images of the local culture were imported and imposed. The local, the audience, had no real connection with the producers. However, on the level of factual film and then the documentary the producing of film in Scotland did have an important cultural role to play.

One of the other pioneers of film in Scotland was William Walker, like Paterson an Aberdeen based cinematographer. His interest had begun right at the start of film making in 1896 but it was in 1898 that his filming of the Braemar Gathering caught the attention of Queen Victoria. On the 24 October of that year, Walker showed this and other examples of his filming to the royal party at Balmoral.<sup>100</sup> So began a number of visits to the Castle to screen films. Eventually Walker was given the right to call his company 'Walker's Royal Cinematograph.'<sup>101</sup>

<sup>99</sup>'How I Handle Pictures' by Dove Paterson, quoted by Thomas, *Silver Screen*: 36-37; and by Smout and Wood: 191-192.

<sup>100</sup>The bill of films chosen for this event includes *Volley Firing and Charge of the Camerons*, *Train Arriving at Ballater* and *Highland Fling by Children*. The 'PROGRAMME OF CINEMATOGRAPHIC and OPTICAL LANTERN EXHIBITION' features not only a selection of films (both factual and fantastic) but 'Between the Cinematographs, Floral and Classical Tableaux and Dioramic Effects will be displayed.' The programme reproduced in McBain, *Pictures Past*: 10-11.

<sup>101</sup>Walker's company on a visit to Glasgow is featured in the columns of the *Bailie*:

Walker & Company's Royal Cinematograph, which was so popular on its last appearance in the city, pays a return visit on Saturday, 18th, and Monday, 20th October [1902] to the St. Andrew's Halls.

'Monday Gossip.' *Bailie* 15 Oct. 1902: 6. The same issue also features an advertisement for these event:

... WALKER & COMPANY'S ROYAL CINEMATOGRAPH AND ELECTRIC DRAMA. Eight times engaged by Royal Command, and as exhibited in the Royal Polytechnic and Queen's Hall, London. COMPLETE PANORAMA OF CORONATION CELEBRATIONS, ROYAL BRAEMAR GATHERING, only to be seen at this Exhibition;

What is interesting about Walker's operation, and that described by Dove Paterson, is the mix of the production and exhibition potentials of film. What is also important is that this integration is not unique. It was commonplace, if not normal practice, among the early travelling projectionists not only to buy or (from around 1910) to rent films but also to make their own products. Projector/cameras were available in Scotland from 1896 and it was easy and, for cinema operators relatively cheap to make short reels for local consumption -- a type of production that later came to be known as 'local topicals'. Janet McBain, of the Scottish Film Archive, describes local topicals as:

... locally made newsreels designed, it is true, for cinema consumption, but on a limited basis. It might be fairer to call them amateur produced cinema advertising films, for in most cases they were filmed by cinema managers or projectionists, not professional cameramen [sic], with a hired or borrowed camera. They were shot on 35mm so that they could be screened in cinemas and they were in the nature of 'exclusives' being shown only in the cinema for which they were made.<sup>102</sup>

A major crowd puller proved to be the filming of a local event -- even something as simple as workers leaving a local factory or a local group's outing, a town's gala day or sports day -- and then the screening of the footage a day or two later; audiences being keen to spot themselves and their friends on screen.<sup>103</sup> One example of a programme of film featuring locally produced footage is advertised in the pages of the *Glasgow Programme* in 1906:

The New Century Animated Pictures entered on their fifth week in Glasgow last week. Among the novelties which are shown on the screen are two which must have considerable interest for Glasgow people. These are films taken of the inspection of the Boys' Brigade<sup>104</sup> and the [sic] departure from Glasgow Harbour of the Allan liner Mongolian with a number of Canadian emigrants on board.<sup>105</sup>

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A DAY IN THE HIGHLANDS ... CORONATION NAVAL REVIEW, and many other SCENES ...

Advertisement. Walker's Royal Cinematograph. *Bailie* 15 Oct. 1902: 14. The St Andrew's Hall is again the venue when in 1904 Walker's company returns with 'An up-to-date and consequently an interesting cinematographic display.' ('Monday Gossip.' *Bailie* 30 Mar. 1904: 7.) The film is described as of 'JAPAN and the JAPANESE. JAPANESE BATTLESHIPS IN ACTION AND WAR SCENES.' (Advertisement. Walker's Royal Cinematograph. *Bailie* 30 Mar. 1904: 16.)

<sup>102</sup>Janet McBain, 'Men With Bees in their Bonnets: Amateur Film in Scotland.' ts. Essay. 1989.

<sup>103</sup>One of the earliest producers of these local topicals was George Green. His slogan was 'Come and see yourself as other see you.' Janet McBain, 'Home-Made History.' *Scots Magazine* July 1986: 376.

<sup>104</sup>This type of event and indeed this particular event was a favourite subject for local cinematographers. The 'Cartoon Supplement' of *Bailie* includes a sketch of the 1908 Boys' Brigade inspection in Glasgow. One of the figures drawn is a 'cinematographer ... bent on taking it all in.' ('Cartoon Supplement.' *Bailie* 6 May 1908: cartoon supplement 1.)

<sup>105</sup>'New Century Animated Pictures.' *Glasgow Programme* 14 May 1906: 5.

The bulletin indicates that the film programme would move on to the Gilfillan Hotel in Dundee from 29 October 1906.

By the end of World War I, however, these small scale companies and the travelling shows had all but disappeared -- as by that time many of the leading companies had established themselves more securely in their own theatres and cinemas. As early as 1902, for instance, the Greens had expanded from their base of the Glasgow Vinegar Hill site of the winter and summer fairs and bought the Whitevale Theatre near-by in the city's Gallowgate and by 1920 had acquired or built seven cinemas in the Glasgow area. The traditional aspect of both the fairs and Green's involvement with the fairs is indicated by the *Glasgow Programme*:

A sure sign of the approach of the Glasgow Fair is the bustling activity at the Vinegar Hill Carnival, the mecca during the holidays of thousands of the city's workers who are spending their vacation and money in the town. For months the show-ground is deserted, but at the Fair and New Year the caravans return, stalls and shows are erected, and for a week or so the ancient Gallowgate is crow[d]ed with young people en route for the Carnival, or else returning overladen with 'prizes.' This year arrangements are being made to cope with huge crowds, when the usual attractions in the way of hobby-horses, the switchback railway, ghost illusions, and dolly shows will be supplemented by motor car roundabouts, and a variety entertainment. The carnival is an institution inseparably associated with Glasgow holidays, just as the microscopic goldfish in the glass bowl is the accepted sign of prowess there. Mr. Green works hard for the people in the way of entertainments, and richly deserves his well-earned success.<sup>106</sup>

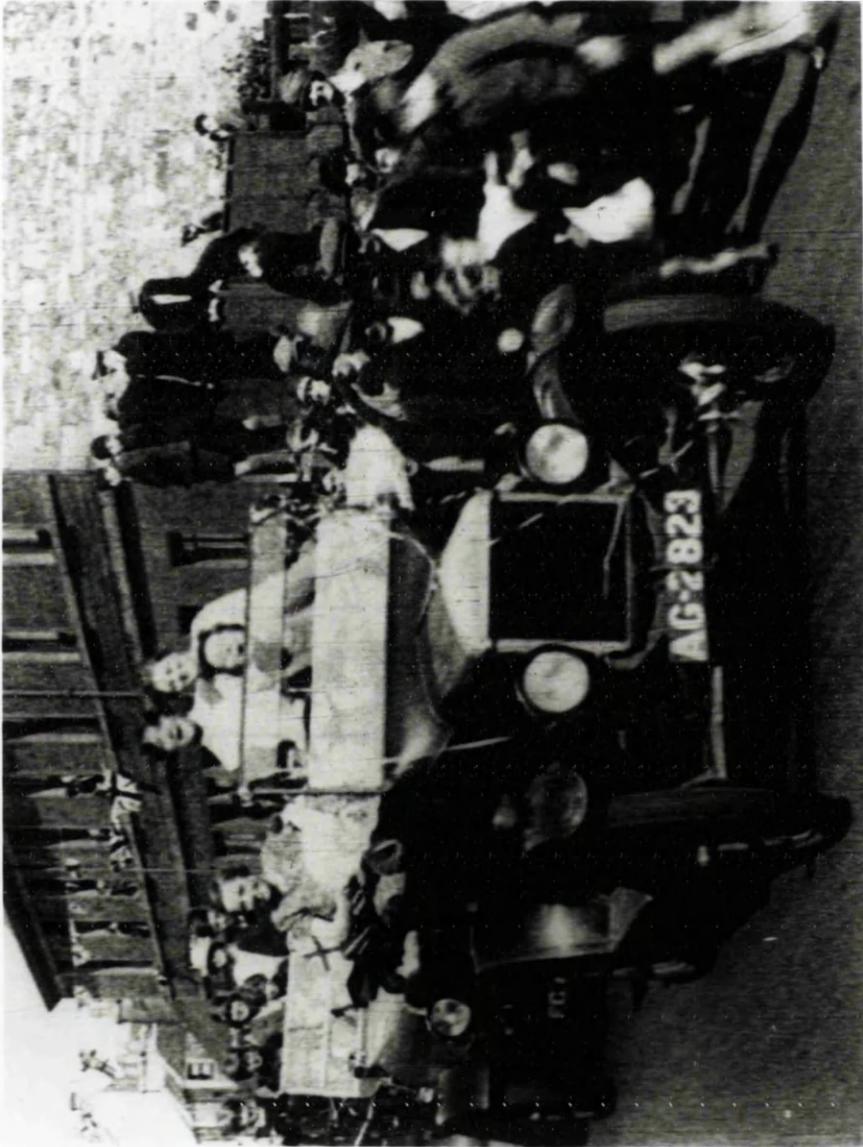
While the production of local topicals did continue in small local cinemas for a some time longer, in general, these production skills were quickly lost. Where the practice was continued, and examples survive, a unique view of the social activities and civic interests of small communities is available.<sup>107</sup> It is interesting to note that an exhibiting company like Green's did experiment with production and that the potential box office draw of screening footage even of the cinema queue was not lost on some of the more enterprising of cinema managers. In 1914 there was a single attempt at a fiction film and then, more successfully, a further development of the early local topicals. Towards the end of the 1910s, Greens began the regular production of the *Scottish Moving Picture News* -- the first uniquely Scottish news bulletin in the modern media -- to be screened along with the national Pathé and Gaumont newsreels. How long this remarkable production project lasted is unclear, but certainly not into the sound era. For a while at least, however, it offered a uniquely indigenous view of the Scottish scene.

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<sup>106</sup>'Glasgow Notes: ... Green's Carnival at Vinegar Hill.' *Glasgow Programme* 16 July 1906: 4.

<sup>107</sup>The Scottish Film Archive contains a unique and valuable collection of such films.

## Plate ix



The Ardrossan and Saltcoasts Players  
return in triumph from winning the Belasco Cup.  
This is a still taken from a local topical made by Harry Kemp.

(Scottish Film Archive)

While exhibition skills certainly developed and cinema audiences grew enormously, the fundamental lack of native commercial production meant that the techniques of an actual film making profession in this country were all but lost.<sup>108</sup>

### Cinema culture

A key year for cinema history is 1909 -- the year of the Cinematograph Act. A new licensing system to enforce safety regulations was introduced. This act hastened the end for the fairground cinemas as it required that the projector be housed in a separate room from the audience.<sup>109</sup> By 1911 there were fifty seven venues in Glasgow alone which had been granted licences to use cinematographic equipment.<sup>110</sup> It should be pointed out, however, that the majority of these were licensed Corporation public halls which would only occasionally be used for film screenings. The Act was actively enforced throughout the country, because of the safety aspect it encouraged. A 1911 edition of the *Glasgow Programme and Exhibition Journal* reports on one such prosecution:

A prosecution under the Cinematograph Act of 1909 was brought before Sheriff Shairp in Ayr Sheriff Court when the accused James Aitken M'Queen, cinematograph operator, 80 Grahame Street, Glasgow, and the charge was that on 18th March in the Institute Hall, Irvine, he used an inflammable film to exhibit pictures without having placed it in a fire proof enclosure, but was standing exposed in the hall, which was not a hall licensed under the Act.

The Fiscal said the respondent knew that the hall was one for which an attempt had been made to get a licence, and it had been refused. It was a hall where, it had been a panic and a crowd of children had suddenly wished to get out, the results would have been disastrous.

The Sheriff imposed a fine of £10, with the option of 40 days' imprisonment.<sup>111</sup>

Looking back on the 'Glasgow Amusements During the Year' of 1911 the *Glasgow Programme* ... comments on the rise of cinemas in Glasgow:

Perhaps the next most eventful thing [after the 1911 Exhibition] in connection with our city, has been the rapid rise in the popularity of the

<sup>108</sup>This had, and indeed still has, serious ramifications for an indigenous film culture in Scotland. It is, however, true to say that the amateur film making movement provided an important space in which there is some kind of ongoing tradition, and one that will feed into the development of a Left cultural project in the 1930s.

<sup>109</sup>The Cinematograph Act, 1909, is also useful in that from that year records were established indicating the number of venues licensed in each authority under the terms of the Act.

<sup>110</sup>This figure is suggested in two sources: Chris Doak, *Klondyke of the Cinema World*. Unpub. dissertation for the Glasgow School of Art, 1979: 24. (Held in the Scottish Film Archive.); Elspeth King, 'Popular Culture in Glasgow' *The Working Class in Glasgow: 1750-1914* ed. R A Cage (London: Croom Helm, 1987): 173.

<sup>111</sup>'Amusement Notes: ... Cinema Films: Glasgow Operator Fined.' *Glasgow Programme and Exhibition Journal* 22 May 1911: 8.

Picture Houses; it is said that there are close on one hundred of these places open every evening in the city of Glasgow and suburbs, and they are not all so well conducted as those in Sauchiehall Street, but on the whole there is no doubt they are exercising an educative effect on the mass of the people. Also on the other hand they are reducing the attendances very much at our better class Theatres and Halls.<sup>112</sup>

By 1913 the figures had risen to eighty five licensed venues -- approximately twenty eight of these being public halls.<sup>113</sup> In Edinburgh, 1913 alone saw the opening of ten cinemas, one of which, the Palace on Prince's Street, cost £10,000<sup>114</sup> while a further 'Ten cinemas opened [in Edinburgh] in 1913 and four more in the pre-war months of 1914.'<sup>115</sup>

Across Scotland cinema going was now very much a habit -- exhibitors were building ever more cinemas with ever more lavish interiors. Marble decoration, carved wood, plush seating, orchestra pits and even tea rooms could be incorporated into designs.<sup>116</sup> Sometimes managers would employ accomplished orchestras for their cinemas; this acting as another of the features that might attract audiences in the ever more competitive area of film exhibition. In Glasgow's La Scala (opened in October 1912) patrons could enjoy afternoon tea whilst viewing the latest film -- the tea room being part of the balcony.<sup>117</sup> Hobsbawm makes an interesting comment on the social use of cinemas during this interwar period:

The cinema took the place of both gin-palace and music-hall as the poor man's dream substitute for luxury. The gigantic and baroque Granadas, Trocaderos and Odeons, their names hinting at languor and luxury hotels, their cushioned seats opening vistas of million-dollar spectacles and huge organs rising to blow out heavy sentiment amid changing coloured lights, rose in the working-class districts with the rate of unemployment. They were probably the most effective dream-producers ever devised, for a visit to them not only cost less and lasted longer than a drink or a variety show, but could be -- and was -- more readily combined with the cheapest of all enjoyments -- sex.<sup>118</sup>

<sup>112</sup>'Glasgow Amusements During the Year: A Retrospect.' *Glasgow Programme and Exhibition Journal* 11 Dec. 1911: 18.

<sup>113</sup>Figures derived from 'List of Premises licensed under the Cinematograph Act, 1909, and the Accommodation therein' issued by the Office of Public Works, dated 12 July 1913. Held in the Strathclyde Regional Archives (ref: D-OPW 61/3).

<sup>114</sup>Thomas, *The Last Picture Show*: 11.

<sup>115</sup>Thomas, *The Last Picture Show*: 10.

<sup>116</sup>*Cathedrals of the Movies* by David Atwell offers a detailed study of the development of the interior decoration of cinemas from earliest days. David Atwell, *Cathedrals of the Movies: A History of British Cinemas and Their Audiences* (London: Architectural Press, 1980).

<sup>117</sup>This is something of a revival of one of Arthur Hubner's early practises at the Ice Skating Palace.

<sup>118</sup>E J Hobsbawm, *Industry and Empire: An Economic History of Britain Since 1750* (1968. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1969): 186. Paul Thompson also notes the early connection between the cinema and sex:

[One] situation in which ingenious youthful combination was quite common was the cinema. Teenagers had numerous devices for slipping in free (also to the music hall), and in quite a few cinemas they used the cover of darkness to create general uproar. It

The 1910s and 1920s were also the period of the recognition of new markets to exploit -- a particular success being that of children's performances. In Glasgow, Hengler's ran Saturday afternoon screenings but the most famous of all was Bennell's 'Bright and Beautiful Pictures' at the Wellington Palace Halls on Commercial Road, in the Gorbals. where up to 3,000 children could enjoy films at the Saturday afternoon 'BBs.'

Cinemas had quickly become a revolutionary force in entertainment and popular culture. Many more people went more often to the cinema than had ever gone to the music hall or theatre. In addition women and children could often go independently to see films in a way that had been socially less acceptable in relation to theatres. Cinemas tended to open in the afternoons as well as the evenings, and the extra attraction of tearooms may have been a draw for at least the middle class. With increasing regularity the smaller music halls might be forced to convert to a cine-variety bill, become a full time cinema or simply close altogether. However, it was really not until after World War I that cinema became *the* entertainment of the people -- in spite of, or because of, the fact that by the end of the War American films dominated the market place.<sup>119</sup>

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was partly the gloom, as well as its comparative novelty, which made the cinema in the 1900s a focus for adult anxiety about the sexual morality of youth. There were reports published by such bodies as the National Council of Public Morals deploring what these unsupervised groups of young people might be led to think of in such conditions.

Paul Thompson, *The Edwardians: The Remaking of British Society* (London: Paladin Granada, 1977): 75.

<sup>119</sup>The Great War affected the European film industries in a number of ways. France and Germany had both established successful film producing industries. France, in particular, maintained a hierarchical structure dominated by major studios (the two largest being Gaumont and Pathé) but, like Germany, able to encompass a large number of independents. One of the immediate problems for both industries was the mobilisation of personnel: on the production side the studios' film crews and administrative staff were called up; on the exhibition side the staff of cinemas and their audiences were mobilised, found their communities destroyed or simply had more pressing concerns. For these industries the immediate change that war brought about was the virtual cessation of commercial film making. The changes demanded by the War were particularly marked in France. Until then it was at the centre of world film activity; perhaps the dominant force in the development of both film-as-industry and film-as-art. When France so suddenly ceased producing film a gap in other the market was revealed for an industry not so immediately caught in the chaos of war. An opportunity was presented for American film makers and production companies. The French film industry was an advanced system that had quickly acknowledged the importance of distribution to its economic infrastructure. With the War a crucial part of its market was closed off -- half the European market was lost to the French industry thus contributing to its severe economic problems: companies found it increasingly difficult to distribute pre-existing stock, let alone exhibit new productions. The independents could not survive these straightened circumstances and the industry contracted to the extent that even the two major powers, Gaumont and Pathé, only survived by making films on a hugely reduced scale. The independent sector was all but eliminated. During the War film was an important medium used by both sides for war purposes -- including reconnaissance and propaganda. As is so often the case military investment in research and development in both film and wireless communications laid the foundations for advances after the war: in terms of film smaller, lighter cameras and faster film stock combined with experience in film as source of information for both the military and for the public eager for news of the conflict gave film a modern edge, perhaps a political purpose, that had been missing in its entertainment use up to that point.

Beginning at the turn of the century, then, the increasingly favoured cultural product was imported from an economically more powerful society and industry and was at the cutting edge of commercially exploitable technology. It was, basically, American movies. The demise of the variety stage was a slow one. For several decades the balance of cine-variety bills was more or less the norm for variety hall managers to provide for their patrons.

Programmes for the Coliseum, Eglington Street, over the period of its operation give an example of this. The Coliseum is, perhaps, of particular interest. It had an auditorium designed by Frank Matcham and was built as part of H E Moss's circuit. It was operated from 1905 until around 1929 by Moss Empires Limited and then by Scottish Cine and Variety Theatres. It operated a mixed bill of both film and variety, while also being a popular venue for touring opera companies (it was said to have the best acoustics of any theatre in Glasgow). The opening of the Coliseum is featured prominently in the pages of the *Bailie*. The opening of this variety theatre on 15 December 1905 coincides with the announcement of Moss's knighthood 'for his services to the entertainment industry.'<sup>120</sup> The *Bailie* describes the scene:

Sir Edward and Lady Moss were simply overwhelmed with congratulations on their new honours at Friday's opening Coliseum function. Lady Moss is taller than the new Knight, and most distinguished-looking. She wore handsome sables with her simply made black cloth gown, and a black and white hat. I admired the business-like way she went about, both before and behind the scenes, inspecting everything and everywhere.

The new entertainment palace is quite surprisingly spacious, and luxuriously appointed. The prevailing scheme of decoration is cream, gold, and rose-colour. There are great blocks of pure alabaster around the stage, and white and green tiling appears on the lower walls of pit and gallery, where the papering is of real Japanese make and design. The main entrance hall has a mosaic paving with rich red and gold decorations, and there are beautiful thick-pile carpets in stalls, circle, and the respective salons. The circle is particularly rich in cosy corners fitted with lounge chairs. There is plenty of space between the pit seats, which floor has a fine slope; the gallery is also specially deep and spacious, and with leather covered seats. Everywhere are waiting rooms and exit doors, and no possible comfort has been overlooked alike for audience and artistes.<sup>121</sup>

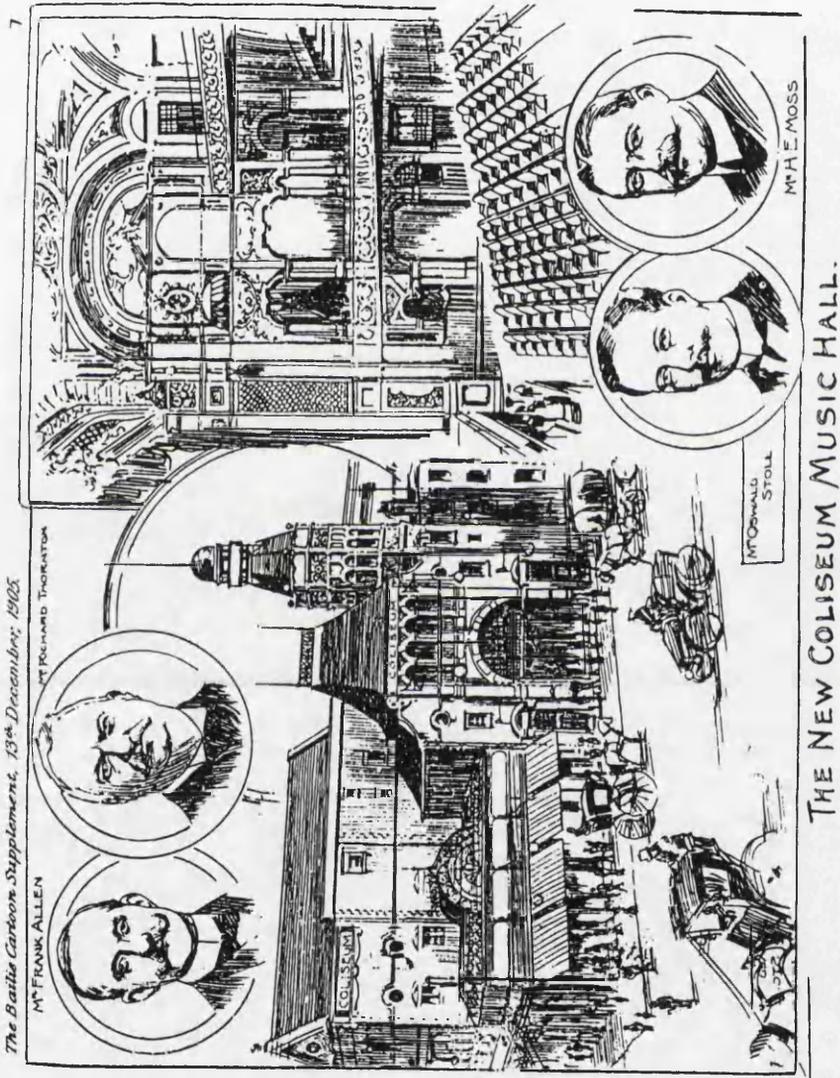
The Coliseum was also the venue for the first full-length talking picture ever screened in Scotland, on 7 January 1929. It was the Al Jolson film *The Singing Fool*. This is an important date for the Coliseum -- the first screening of a talkie and the first day on which the theatre would become a venue wholly devoted to screening film; a

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<sup>120</sup>Hartnoll: 659.

<sup>121</sup>'Monday Gossip.' *Bailie* 20 Dec. 1905: 6.

Plate x



The new Coliseum music hall,  
Glasgow, 1905.

(Glasgow Programme, 11 December 1905)

full-time cinema. Charles Oakley's short history of film in Scotland describes the scene:

At the opening it was accompanied by a second feature, but the advertisements next day apologised to the hundreds who had been turned away, announced that the second feature had been dropped, and that *The Singing Fool* would be shown at 1, 3, 5, 7 and 9. The film's run continued until 9th February, was perhaps the most hectic in the history of the Scottish cinema, and at its end the cinema's staff were given special recognition by the proprietors for the considerate way they had handled the hundreds of thousands who had queued up during those remarkable weeks.<sup>122</sup>

The balancing of both theatre and variety bills was, by the coming of sound, proving to be less successful than had previously been the case. The Coliseum itself was really too large to remain viable as a theatre in the 1930s -- it was licensed for a capacity audience of 2,225 -- and it was just too far from the city centre. It is perhaps less than surprising to note that the Coliseum finally closed as a cinema again because it was too big.<sup>123</sup>

It would, perhaps, be fair to say that only the top end of the variety market survived the period intact -- and only then by distancing themselves entirely from the growth of cinema. For instance, the Alhambra, Waterloo Street, maintained a reputation as a theatre which 'specialise in high class Variety'<sup>124</sup> and had a strong tradition of pantomimes starring such well know Scottish performers as Harry Gordon, Alec Findlay and Will Fyffe.<sup>125</sup> The Alhambra and such distinctively local enterprises as the Metropole survived as variety theatres for some time after the point that most of their competitors had transferred their business to cinema. It is only in these sectors of the industry that one may perceive the operation as being distinctively Scottish -- or at least potentially so.

The work of Robert C Allen and of Jeanne Thomas Allen on the early development of the film industry in the United States of America offers useful points of contrast and comparison with the development of an industrial mode for at least the exhibition sector of the industry in Scotland. It is interesting to note that in Scotland the skills fostered

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<sup>122</sup>Oakley, *Fifty Years at the Pictures*: 13-14. He also adds that:

An amusing story has survived about the length of the queues. A passenger boarded a Langside tram at the Central Station and asked if it would take him to the Coliseum. The conductor replied, 'Aye, but if it's the queue you want, you'd better take the Kirklee caur. The end of the queue's now at Charing Cross.'

Oakley, *Fifty Years at the Pictures*: 14.

<sup>123</sup>It has now suffered the fate of many of the cinemas of the period which survived intact the development culture of the 1960s. It is a bingo hall.

<sup>124</sup>Cameron, *See Glasgow, See Theatre*: [14].

<sup>125</sup>This tradition was maintained in the post-War period and into the 1950s and 1960s when the theatre, by then owned by Howard and Wyndham, staged the *Five Past Eight* shows and the *Wish for Jamie* pantomimes.

by cinema were those of the exhibitor and then of the distributor and not, as was the case in the other arts, in the field of production. (This contrasts with the production base that was set out to be created through the introduction of broadcast radio, and even with the skills base established by the amateur drama movement.) Jeanne Thomas Allen writes that:

The emergence of film in late nineteenth century America was closely tied to the mass theatrical entertainments from which it was launched as a business and as a mass art. Film's incorporation into the vaudeville program and eventual eclipse of vaudeville by the 1920s presents an instance of inter-media symbiosis and competition.<sup>126</sup>

Within a narrowly defined entertainment environment a similar model operates in Scotland. However, extend the locus of attention to a wider experience of cultural practice, an environment that extends to other media and genres, and a more complex interaction emerges which develops alongside the role of the amateur and the increasing importance of the public service and cultural mission discourses that the period begins to articulate.

The cinema habit affected almost all of Scotland -- even in smaller towns cinemas were springing up. From the Borders into the Highlands another trend was developing: theatres were either converting into cinemas or just closing down completely. Dundee's two theatres became cinemas leaving Aberdeen's His Majesty's Theatre the only live theatre venue north of the Forth.<sup>127</sup> This mainstream sector was now operating to an almost exclusive degree of commercialisation and industrialisation. It found its identity as part of the capitalist economy, was profit led and judged in terms of box office and, in the small production sector, in terms of overseas trade. Family run chains and individual screens were still common but the tendency was the shift towards the centralisation of exhibition power.

In 1929, just before the cultural and economic onslaught of sound, Glasgow alone had 127 cinemas.<sup>128</sup> Dundee as many as 28 in the 1930s serving a population of under 200,000. One name that unites both these cities is that of Green: their chain of cinemas expanded to include Green's Playhouse, in Renfield Street, Glasgow, and the Playhouse in Nethergate, Dundee, which opened on 4 March 1936.<sup>129</sup> These were the biggest cinemas outwith North America at that time. The opening of Green's

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<sup>126</sup>Jeanne Thomas Allen, 'Copyright And Early Theater, Vaudeville, And Film Competition.' *Film Before Griffith*, ed. John L Fell (Berkeley: U of California P, 1983): 176.

<sup>127</sup>Indeed it was Aberdeen that saw intense and long-lived rivalry between two local chains -- Donald's, run by James F Donald and family, and Aberdeen Picture Palaces run by Bert Hedgley Gates. This battle continued from around the time of World War I until 1941 when the chain run by the Donalds finally bought out their rival. See Thomson, *Silver Screen*.

<sup>128</sup>See Harvie, *No Gods ...*: 121.

<sup>129</sup>The name Playhouse is obviously a Green's favourite as it was also used for their Ayr cinema.

Playhouse in Glasgow, in 1929, is an indication not only of the exhibiting success of the Greens but also of the dominance -- both financial and cultural -- of cinema over other media of entertainment by that time. It had a reported capacity of between 4,200 and 4,400, a full orchestra pit and was luxuriously appointed in reds and golds, down to and including the carpet -- a specially woven Templeton's carpet declaring 'It's Good. It's Green's.' The Playhouse also had other facilities including the Geneva Tearooms and above the cinema auditorium was a ballroom.

Small chains of cinemas, some like the family run Greens, could be found across the country, mostly in the central belt but not exclusively so. In the North the smaller and more remote communities were better served than might be expected. Under the auspices of the Highlands and Islands Film Service travelling projectors and films toured to parts of the country not served by a local cinema but able to find a village hall or any large room that might serve the purpose. On a slightly larger scale, Inverness was to become an important link in the history of Scottish film as Caledonian Associated Cinemas was initially based in the town. The company was founded in 1935 operating nine cinemas, all in the North East, under the control of A B King. By 1950 the chain could boast 49 cinemas.

The general introduction of sound pictures was an exciting and challenging advance for the entertainment industries. Experiments with different systems for providing moving pictures with a parallel sound track had been carried on from the start of the commercial exploitation of film (as, indeed, had experimentation with colour systems, such as Kinemacolour<sup>130</sup>). One such prototype sound system was featured at the Panopticon, Glasgow, in 1907:

Mr. A. E. Pickard, the proprietor of the Panopticon, in Trongate, has secured a novelty which is entitled the Chronophone, and it is claimed that its introduction is the first in Scotland. The Chronophone is worked by electricity, and is an ingenious combination of the Gramophone with the Cinematograph, the movement of the one synchronising with those of the other. By the aid of the Cinematograph fac-simile representations of great artistes (Music Hall or Theatrical as the case may be) are thrown on the screen, while simultaneously the Gramophone reproduces their voices. The movements of the machine are so minutely adjusted that they act in perfect unison. The Chronophone is to find a permanent place in the daily programme at the Britannia, and doubtless it will prove a source of great delight to Mr. Pickard's many patrons.<sup>131</sup>

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<sup>130</sup>This was a process using just red and green colours. It does, however, link into the increasing industrialisation of the entertainment industries. In an article 'The Natural Colour Animated Pictures.' *Glasgow Programme and Exhibition Journal* 7 Aug. 1911: 8, it notes that:

The exclusive right of showing 'Kinemacolour' animated pictures has been acquired by Moss' Empires, Limited, and will shortly be shown at the Grand Theatre ....

<sup>131</sup>'Glasgow Notes: Britannia Panopticon.' *Glasgow Programme* 21 Jan. 1907: 6.

Despite the huge popularity of talking pictures when they were finally introduced commercially by the film industry and the rise of the picture palaces, 1929 and the sound revolution did have its victims. In just the immediate aftermath around 15 cinemas in Glasgow closed -- in the main unable to afford the vast cost of equipping their auditoria with sound. Sound also provided the way into cinema exhibition for a theatre chain like Moss's and Stoll's. These were the organisations with the economic depth to afford to equip their theatres for sound -- indeed as has been mentioned it was the Moss owned Coliseum that first introduced sound film to Glasgow, a unique publicity coup as well as a business success. Such success, pointing out the popular appeal of talking pictures is discussed in contemporary trade papers:

The one outstanding feature of the present 'talkie' situation is that exhibitors have come to the conclusion that if they are to keep up their end in the existing state of competition, they must bow to public demand. On his return last week from America, Herbert Wilcox expressed the view that in the States patrons have accepted 'talkies' as the only form of entertainment. This, of course, may be regarded as an ex patre statement, but its truth is born out by the experiences of British exhibitors who have played *The Singing Fool*. The phenomenal success of the film in London and Glasgow has led to a rush for installations of the Western Electric System and within a few weeks there will be at least fifty installations in operation.<sup>132</sup>

Despite the closure of some existing cinemas, the cinema going habit was as strong as ever in Scotland and although audiences still preferred the American product British studios did produce some popular favourites, although this is not at all clear in a letter published in *Kine Weekly* on 3 November 1932. Richard Williamson of the New Savoy Theatre at 203, Hope Street<sup>133</sup> writes:

Film producers and renters in London are all racking their brains to discover why it is that 90% of British pictures flop in Scotland. The reason should be obvious to anyone with a grain of intelligence: the filthy language is one. Another reason is the majority of British talkies are devoid of entertainment.<sup>134</sup>

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<sup>132</sup>*Kinematograph Theatre* 21 Feb. 1929; quoted in Linda Wood, ed., *British Films: 1927-1939* (London: BFI, 1986): 15.

<sup>133</sup>Although the magazine gives his address as the Park Cinema, this is actually untraceable.

<sup>134</sup>Letter to *Kine Weekly* 3 Nov. 1932; and quoted in Wood: 28. The letter continues to complain of the stereotypical characters to be seen in British films:

Beautiful scenery is not amusement. Funereal conversations are boring. The fop with his Oxford accent and the inevitable eyeglasses, and the Cockney with his 'Gor blime me' sense of humour get the bird on every occasion.

A similar preference for American films is described in *The Steamie* by Tony Roper:

*Magrit:* ... see yon bloody British pictures.  
*Doreen:* Ah know, they're loupin i'n't they?  
*Magrit:* We went to the Rex about a week ago tae see ... eh whit wis it called eh Fred McMurray and eh ...  
*Doreen:* 'Double Indemnity'.

Such criticism was not restricted to the cinema trade papers, however. Writing in support of the League of Audiences St. John Ervine compares cinema going with the manifest educative and improving potential of the theatre:

The reason why so many moving pictures are unutterable trash is that the audience which habitually witness them are largely composed of people whose sense of drama has not been developed in the theatre. The stupid film-fan is a person who has never been inside a theatre. A great increase in playgoers who are also film fans would inevitably result in a swift improvement in the quality of the moving picture. It is for this reason that I support the League of Audiences. I wish to see the cinema made intelligent.<sup>135</sup>

British cinema was, however, at least beginning to depict real and working class life in Britain -- encouraged to some extent by the ramifications of the 1929 Quota Act. This was a fundamentally protectionist strategy that necessitated that distributors rent and exhibitors screen a proportion, a quota of up to 20%, of British films. The Act was generally viewed as unsuccessful, however, as there were too many loopholes. What exactly constituted a 'British' film? It did little, as was the intention, to divert money towards indigenous production and what it did encourage came, rather dismissively, to be referred to as 'Quota Quickies' -- that is a film made in Britain, generally quickly and cheaply, in order to bolster that proportion of screen time which was British. This is not to suggest that there were no productions of quality and distinction during the period. British cinema did produce, for example, a number of dramas during the 1930s, some of which even worked around notions of social realism. Towards the end of the decade, for example, a number of challenging films were released -- *Edge Of The World* a 1936 Michael Powell film and two Victor Saville

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*Magrit:* It was great wint it?  
*Doreen:* It was marvellous.  
*Magrit:* But did ye see thon thing that was oan wi' it?  
*Doreen:* Aye, Ron Randell leanin' up against a lamp post smokin' a fag.  
*Magrit:* He tells ye the bloody story before ye've seen it.  
*Doreen:* Aye'n'en he flicks the fag away, supposed tae be tough. 'N' says 'It was moorder'. They cannae fight right either, know how in the yankee pictires they belt wan another dead hard wi' their fists n'at see if there's a fight'n' the British wans, they wrestle aw the time.  
 ...  
 They never touch wan another. I mean in the yankee pictures they actually dae hit wan another. You can see them dae it.  
*Magrit:* Oh aye. Jimmy Cagney's a rerr wee fighter. Can ye imagine Jimmy Cagney in wan ae they British pictures. He'd murder the whole lot o' them.

Roper, *The Steamie*: 213-214. *Scot Free: New Scottish Plays*. Ed., Alasdair Cameron (London: Nick Hern, 1990).

<sup>135</sup>St. John Ervine, Foreword to Alfred Wareing, *The Audience Assists* (London: League of Audiences, 1935). Quoted by Alasdair Cameron, *Alfred Wareing and the League of Audiences* (Unpublished MA thesis: City University, 1985): 25.

productions, in 1937 *South Riding* and in 1938 *The Citadel*. Along with another British film, *The Lion Has Wings*, this latter production was, according to figures published in *Kine Weekly* (on 11 November 1940), cinema's biggest money maker of 1939 in Britain. Indeed production had developed rather successfully during this period: an article in the *Evening News* (5 August 1935) notes that:

The British film business is growing so fast that it is finding itself short of nearly everything it requires -- except money! There are not enough studios, stars, technicians of all sorts, directors writers or cameramen [sic]. It is estimated that £2,500,000 will be spent on British films this year. ... In all some 200 pictures will be made [in Britain] this year -- equally nearly half of Hollywood's output.<sup>136</sup>

No government legislation, however, was going to compete successfully with the industrial model and products of Hollywood: an industrial dominance acknowledged for some years. Even in 1924 the *Bailie* could point to the problems facing the British film industry:

British film producers are getting a move on. The claim of America to produce the biggest and most attractive of the world's cinema pictures has been challenged in downright earnest. For years that country has excelled us in this department of art. But the sleepers have awoke. Already the Yankee's virtual monopoly of world-thrillers has been seriously endangered. Before long we shall be able to compete with him on equal terms, and possibly to excel him in nine cases out of ten. It is a boast, but a legitimate boast, that there is nothing the American can do in any branch of art, commerce, and industry that the Briton cannot do better, provided he sets his mind to it and receives sufficient encouragement from the public and the press to 'go one better' than his rivals.

The time was opportune for the opening of the present campaign. Most people had long been tired of the average American film, which is now almost nauseously stereotyped in subject and incident. They wanted something fresh, preferably something national, provided the subject was adequately picturesque and forceful. Scotland provided a wealth of material for the initiation of the experiment. That explains how *Rob Roy* and *Prince Charlie* have been chosen up to date for pictorial treatment.

Gaumont's Ltd. clearly possess a shrewdly selective eye. Both these films are equal, if not superior, in human interest and skilful presentation to the most popular American pictures now on view.

Next week we are to see at the Coliseum the splendid screen version of 'Mary, Queen of Scots.' Miss Fay Compton plays the role of our saddest and sweetest of Queens. Nearly twelve months were devoted by Mr Denison Clift and Ideal Films Ltd. to the preparation of this magnificent film, and the scenes are reconstructed with actual pictures of Edinburgh and Stirling Castle and Holyrood. In the scene depicting the attack on the Queen and her capture hundreds of Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders took part. ... The care which has been shown in the details

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<sup>136</sup>*Evening News* 5 Aug. 1935; quoted by Wood, *British Films: 1927-1939*: 39.

is a proof of the appreciation which our big film producers have for the educative value of their work.<sup>137</sup>

This was not a new area of cinematic interest in Scotland, however. In 1911 the *Glasgow Programme* ... comments on earlier interest in 'A New Scottish Industry' and what was increasingly perceived as the typically Scottish subjects:

A Glasgow Cinematograph film firm are undertaking a production of 'Rob Roy' and 'Jeannie Deans' (the popular Scottish dramas) for exhibition purposes. The films will be made on the historic ground at the Clachan of Aberfoyle. This is practically a new industry in Scotland, and the success which it promises to attain is such that it is expected that the above will represent only the beginning of a series of Scottish plays and dramas which this company will produce. The company engaged will number over eighty in all, and will camp at Aberfoyle.<sup>138</sup>

Such a scale of operations was never likely to threaten the hegemony of the American industry

### New exhibition trends

In Britain exhibition skills were still high. With actual cinema attendances boosted by the arrival of sound and then colour the business community rushed to capitalise. New cinemas were built. New industry leaders came to the fore. In a BBC radio talk of 31 March 1938, John Grierson, while celebrating a flurry of (documentary) film making, comments that, 'Down in London the most powerful single figure in the film world is John Maxwell, a Scotsman ...'<sup>139</sup> That this most important figure is the head of the Associated British Cinemas (ABC) chain of cinemas perhaps points to the exhibition skills developing in Scotland.

ABC was a company that could trace its roots back to Glasgow in 1916 and a company called Scottish Cine And Variety Theatres, formed by lawyer, John Maxwell. The company owned a number of theatres -- including, as has been mentioned, the Eglington Street Coliseum. The success of the group was unparalleled and expansion across Scotland (to include a subsidiary company, Kirkaldy Entertainments Company, with five cinemas in that one town) was equalled only by the acquiring of an equivalent company -- Associated British Cinemas -- in England. ABC Limited was registered as a subsidiary of the British International Pictures on 26 November 1928 -- with an initial capital of £1million. It was a company with its own links back to the distribution

<sup>137</sup>'Under the Limes: A Review of Plays and Players.' *Bailie* 16 Apr. 1924: 4.

<sup>138</sup>'Amusement Notes: ... A New Scottish Industry.' *Glasgow Weekly Programme and Exhibition Journal* 10 July 1911: 8.

<sup>139</sup>John Grierson, *Men and Matters: Film Making in Scotland*. Radio talk: transmitted 31/3/1938. ts. BBC Radio Scotland Scripts: STA Kg Box 5/5.

network of the French company Pathé. The two companies merged in 1932 forming one of the biggest exhibition circuits in the country, equalling Gaumont-British owned by J Arthur Rank.<sup>140</sup> This company itself would merge with ABC's main rival, the Odeon circuit under the leadership of Oscar Deutsch. Odeon quickly expanded into Scotland -- building new cinemas and converting old ones to the signature art deco house style (complete with faience tiling). Odeons in Scotland include the Glasgow Odeon, formerly the Paramount and purpose built as a cinema in 1934, opening in January 1935, and the Odeon in Edinburgh, formerly the New Victoria.<sup>141</sup>

On a smaller scale, family-run chains like the Poole's or the Singleton's continued to profit. In one impressive 1937 deal George Singleton sold his entire circuit of 10 Glasgow cinemas to Odeon. The particularly shrewd element in this move was that he was able to rid himself of some old and outmoded properties while being able to recreate his chain by building new and modern cinemas outwith the centre of the city, all with house name of Vogue. It was a policy much modelled on the Odeon way of modernisation. In a move of equally impressive acumen Singleton's only city centre property was one rather different to other cinemas. One of the last cinemas to be built before the War, and of distinctive deco style, the Cosmo in Rose Street, Glasgow, was opened in May 1939, providing 'entertainment for the discriminating.'<sup>142</sup> This policy, of screening a high proportion of European and 'art' films, and the symbol of the

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<sup>140</sup>Rank who had, incidentally, acquired Moss Theatres in November of the same year, 1932. Gaumont-British had also won control of another leading circuit of venues (the General Theatres Corporation -- GTC) in 1929 and was keen to gain control of this other rival:

... with the principal object of preventing Moss Empires from converting to films and thus rivalling their own chain of cinemas, they [Gaumont-British] bought control of Moss and merged it with GTC, thus creating a massive new circuit which was far larger than its rivals.

Wilmot: 62.

In 1932, at the time of the take-over, Wilmot states that the Moss chain numbered thirty-eight theatres (Wilmot: 62). By 1939 the Moss-GTC chain had closed twenty-five theatres (Wilmot: 69). At the start of the 1930s the main rival continued to be the Stoll circuit which had converted its venues to film almost immediately in 1929 -- but by the 1930s Wilmot believes that the Stoll circuit had been reduced to nine theatres (Wilmot: 62).

<sup>141</sup>Deutsch's opinions on the possibility of television is referred to in an article reporting the 1938 conference of the National Association of Theatrical and Kiné Employees.

'Mr Oscar Deutsch made no wild prophesy,' said Mr Finnegan [President of the Association], 'when he stated that it was his opinion that the time was quite close when at least 300 cinemas in the United Kingdom would be equipped for exhibiting television. ...

'The news-reel gives the things as they were, but there is nothing so old as yesterday's news. That is why television will stir the public's purse and loosen its purse-strings. As the technique of television is perfected, projectionists will be in the happy position of becoming keymen [sic] under the new régime.'

'Television's Future in the cinema: Theatrical and Cine Employees Confer.' *Glasgow Herald* 26 July 1938: 6.

<sup>142</sup>'The Cosmo ... opened ... to provide entertainment for discriminating cinema-goers.' Promotional leaflet, 'Mr Cosmo's 5th Birthday.' Held by the Scottish Film Archive, Glasgow. (SFA Written Archives: 1/8/4).

bowler-hatted 'Mr. Cosmo' mark this cinema out as somewhat unique.<sup>143</sup> The plan to open the Cosmo is reported in the *Herald*:

A new type of cinema entertainment is to be available in Glasgow early next year.

It will take the form of a repertory cinema, providing programmes of special interest. These programmes will include selected Continental films, revivals of outstanding British and American films, documentary films, and the famous Walt Disney 'shorts.'

Already about 20 Continental films have been booked, and for the opening programme the French film, 'Le Carnet du Bal,' which has been running for some months in London, has been selected.<sup>144</sup>

In many ways what is most revealing about the mainstream cinema culture is that it is just that -- a culture based on cinemas, on exhibition and not on film, on production. The American product dominated and was less than interested in the actual depiction of Scotland. A similar lack of interest may be traced in the products of the British film producers -- although there are some notable exceptions including Michael Powell's *Edge of the World*. Despite the rise of the exhibiting companies and the large number of studios and production companies centred around London, the production base did not reach the levels of the American industry. In addition it tended not to be an integrated system. A bid to attain such an industrial structure was attempted by Rank -- when the company, already successful in the field of exhibition, invested in production. The commercial dominance of American distributors was ultimately secure and any move towards an integrated system under British control was too late to make any real impact on the hegemony of American finance. Where such moves were made, as with Rank, it was only maintained with support from and in agreement with one of the American majors. The popular appeal of American films dominated the market place and the imagination of the public. Images were imposed from a culture with little regard for the indigenous representations of the markets in which they operated. The local economies operated by managers like Hubner and Bostock and even the more expanded industries operated under the companies originated by Moss and Stoll were ultimately unable to contain the industrialisation of film. In Britain film was profitable for exhibitors; but in the economic reality of the film industry production and distribution was tied up by the American studios.

This economic dominance and the cultural impasse it offered other markets was ripe for the intervention of an alternative: as with the theatre environment a 'progressive' film culture was required to counter and to compliment the established structures.

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<sup>143</sup>Today the building is, of course, the Glasgow Film Theatre, but its 'art house' tradition is one established in the 1940s.

<sup>144</sup>'New-Style Cinema for Glasgow.' *Glasgow Herald* 27 Aug. 1938: 6.

### Alternative film cultures

In terms of a film culture that would re-examine the form and the content of that medium, in a way similar to that undertaken by those involved with theatre and the written word, participation in production and the discovery of relevant images of Scotland and Scots proved to be even more difficult than in the drama. What proved less difficult was the re-creation of the audience. The beginnings of a real alternative, worked out through institutional practices, began from the late 1920s with the founding in Scotland of the film society movements.

The Scottish Film Council (of the British Film Institute<sup>145</sup>) was established in September, 1934. Its remit was both cultural and educational -- among its aims was a commitment 'To encourage the use of film as an educational and cultural medium'<sup>146</sup> -- and yet it had no staff, no premises and an annual grant from the BFI of only £100.<sup>147</sup> By 1935 the Scottish Film Council (SFC) was organised into four committees: Education, Entertainment, Amateur Cinematography and Social Service. The minute books of both the full Council and the various panels describe the goals and the limitations these cultural agencies faced.

At an Edinburgh meeting of the Council, on 10 November 1934, four preliminary panels are established with working remits:

1. Education Panel.... Remit: To enquire into the use of film in education; to influence public opinion to appreciate the value of films in education; to advise educational institutions and other organisations and persons as to sources and conditions of supply, types of films and apparatus, and the conditions of production, distribution and exhibition.
2. Entertainment Panel.... Remit: To secure views from the public as to the type of film required; to encourage the repe[r]tory theatre movement; to obtain public support for films of unusual merit which do not obtain appreciation from the ordinary cinema-going public.
3. Social Services Panel.... No decision has been taken on the remit of this panel, but it was agreed that one of its concerns should be with matinees of films for children, and for this purpose there should be a close liaison with the Education Panel.
4. An 'ad hoc' Committee to prepare the Council's publicity material, which will include a statement of the Council's aims.<sup>148</sup>

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<sup>145</sup>The British Film Institute (BFI) itself 'was fully incorporated on 30th September 1933.' John Buchan, Introduction. *Twenty-One Years of the Scottish Film Council* (Glasgow: Scottish Film Council, 1955): 4.

<sup>146</sup>*Twenty-One Years of the Scottish Film Council*: 2.

<sup>147</sup>See Charles Oakley, 'How the Scottish Film Council Began.' *Twenty-One Years of the Scottish Film Council*: 5.

<sup>148</sup>Minutes: 10 Nov. 1934. *Scottish Film Council: Minute Book: June 1936 - December 1938*. Held by the Scottish Film Archive, Glasgow. (SFA Written Archives: 1/1/250.)

The Education Panel, later the Education Co-ordinating Committee was chaired by T A Blake, the Entertainment Panel by Forsyth Hardy and the Amateur Cinematography Panel by Stanley Russell. By the next meeting of the Council, in Glasgow, the Social Services Panel, chaired by Miss M G Cowan, of the Edinburgh Cinema Enquiry Committee, submits a draft remit:

The Social Services Panel shall endeavour to ascertain and satisfy the needs of the various social organisations as far as these refer to films. It will seek to do this, in co-operation with the appropriate bodies, by:

- (a) securing in co-operation with the British Film Institute, the Film Trade, and the Education Panel, a list of entertainment films suitable for exhibition at children's matinees ...; by considering and putting into effect systems by which these could be marked as being considered by the Scottish Film Council suitable for exhibition to young persons ...; by assisting ... in the organisation of special exhibitions of the films to young persons.
- (b) developing the use at social clubs and centres dealing with matters of social interest, such as home-economics and first-aid treatment, the cost of renting the films to be in accordance with the financial resources of these bodies.
- (c) preparing and having available for consultation a list of films dealing with the activities of juvenile organisations, securing the exhibition of these films, and encouraging the production of such films by amateur cinematographers.
- (d) appointing a sub-committee to meet representatives of the Churches to ascertain for what purposes and in what ways they wish to use films.
- (e) furthering any other objects appropriate to the work of the Panel.<sup>149</sup>

From this rather woolly statement of its sphere of responsibility the Social Services Panel established a role almost in parallel with that of the Education Committee. But this statement did lead on to an important assessment as to the role of the Council itself:

... it was agreed that the Council is essentially a co-ordinating body, which is not to do work it is satisfied is, or can be, done by other bodies, but that it is also to fill vital gaps.<sup>150</sup>

For the locus of film activity in Scotland at that time one 'vital gap' was filled at this same meeting when the Amateur Cinematography Panel was set up:

To discuss the possible collaboration of amateurs in the production, to establish machinery whereby the films already made might be utilised, and to explore the possibilities of employing the services of amateurs in

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<sup>149</sup>Minutes: 20 Dec. 1934. *Scottish Film Council: Minute Book: June 1936 - December 1938.* (SFA Written Archives: 1/1/250.)

<sup>150</sup>Minutes: 20 Dec. 1934. *Scottish Film Council: Minute Book: June 1936 - December 1938.* (SFA Written Archives: 1/1/250.)

connection with the work of scientific and other films requiring protracted camera work.<sup>151</sup>

Scottish interwar film culture has now come to be closely associated with the development of the documentary form and the figure of John Grierson in particular. (Indeed as Peter Miles and Malcolm Smith note: 'Grierson it was who first coined the word 'documentary', which he defined as 'the creative treatment of actuality.''<sup>152</sup>) Certainly Grierson and many of those he brought to the work with him, first at the Empire Marketing Board and then at the GPO Film Unit, were Scots and many of the films they made were of Scottish subjects. But this is only one element in the story of film in Scotland. Where Grierson's documentaries developed the notion of film-as-public service, film-as-educative, other groups were equally examining film-as-art. Scotland was at the forefront of this remarkably popular movement. 1925 saw the founding of the London Film Society.<sup>153</sup> On 22 November 1929 the Glasgow Film Society was founded with an initial membership of 80 (but rising to over 400 by 1932-1933).<sup>154</sup> In the following year the Edinburgh Film Society was formed.<sup>155</sup>

The film societies remain important as they were able, often with much complicated manoeuvrings, to screen films banned by the censors. As has been briefly referred to the 1909 Cinematograph Act introduced legal requirements as to the safety of film screenings. This Act conferred upon the local authorities the right of inspection of cinemas (and other venues used to show films) to ensure that fire precautions had been made. From 1912 the British Board of Film Censors (BBFC) could advise the local

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<sup>151</sup>Minutes: 20 Dec. 1934. *Scottish Film Council: Minute Book: June 1936 - December 1938.* (SFA Written Archives: 1/1/250.)

<sup>152</sup>Peter Miles and Malcolm Smith, *Cinema, Literature and Society: Elite and Mass Culture in Interwar Britain* (London: Croom Helm, 1987): 188.

<sup>153</sup>Rachael Low highlights the social and cultural importance of the Film Society, drawing attention to its membership:

It was founded by Ivor Montagu and Hugh Miller and run by the film critic Iris Barry. It number amongst its celebrated founder members Lord Ashfield, Anthony Asquith, the film critic G. A. Atkinson, Lord David Cecil, Edith Craig, Roger Fry, J. B. S. Haldane, Julian Huxley, Augustus John, E. McKnight Kauffer, J. M. Keynes, the film writer Angus Macphail, George Bernard Shaw, John St Low Strachey, Lord Swaythling, Dame Ellen Terry, Ben Webster and H. G. Wells. The Council included Iris Barry, Sidney Bernstein, Frank Dobson, Hugh Miller, Ivor Montagu, Walter Mycroft, and Adrian Brunel. The Society intended to show films not otherwise available in the belief that there was a large serious minority audience which, with critics and film makers, would like to keep abreast of new developments in film making. Jibes from the ignorant that the Society studied freaks and failures died away as the industry found that it did not compete with the ordinary cinemas, but complimented them.

Rachael Low, *The History of British Film: 1918-1929* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1971): 34.

<sup>154</sup>See Forsyth Hardy, 'The Film Society Movement in Scotland.' *Twenty-One Years of the Scottish Film Council*: 26.

<sup>155</sup>The early struggles of the film societies in Edinburgh and Glasgow, as well as Aberdeen and Dundee are briefly described by Hardy, 'The Film Society Movement in Scotland.' *Twenty-One Years of the Scottish Film Council*: 25-32.

authorities as to the content of any film but it remained the decision of each local authority whether to grant a licence to exhibit the film. It was this, rather unco-ordinated form of censorship, that shaped part of the history of the interwar film culture. In 1926 Eisenstein's *Battleship Potemkin* was censored, in 1928 Pudovkin's *The Mother* and by the beginning of World War II the BBFC had censored eight early Soviet productions. But as the final implementation of censorship was up to the local authorities differences occurred across the country, from authority to authority and from election to election. The grounds on which films might be censored certainly shifted across the period coming to focus more squarely on films with, apparently, clear political content. Referring to debate around a version of *Oliver Twist* the *Glasgow Herald* of 30 January 1923 contains this notice:

Mr T. P. O'Connor has been taking the public into his confidence with regard to the principles observed by the British Board of Film Censors, of which he is president. 'The test applied to all films,' he says, 'is whether they are calculated to demoralise the public, extenuate crime or vice, or shock the just susceptibilities of any sector of the public.'<sup>156</sup>

As private clubs, however, the film societies were able to screen not just non-commercial productions but banned films as well: for instance, *Battleship Potemkin*, *Storm Over Asia*, *The Passion Of Joan Of Arc*.

While these groups were primarily interested in the screening of films each group attracted a small number of amateur cinematographers and then a number of small groups interested in actual film making; for instance, the Meteor ('Shooting Star') Film Producing Society, with a studio at 234 Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow, and which, in 1933, organised the first Scottish Amateur Film Festival (SAFF). Meteor was a remarkable society because of the consistent emphasis placed on actual film production. The programme for the 1933 SAFF, the final of which was held on 14 October in the Athenæum Theatre, Glasgow, notes the aims of Meteor: 'To produce films; to hold exhibitions of films; to assist amateur cinematographers with their hobby; to promote cinematic art.'<sup>157</sup> The Programme goes on to discuss the 'Origins of the Film Festival':

The Meteor Film Producing Society started its life less than a year ago

...

Last May [1933] the Council of the Society decided that the best way in which most members could take part in production was to start simultaneously producing three pictures. Following this came the suggestion of a Scottish Amateur Film Festival. Such a suggestion was a complete innovation in the annals of the Cinema World. However, the

<sup>156</sup>'Principles of Film Censorship.' Editorial. *Glasgow Herald* 30 Jan. 1923: 8.

<sup>157</sup>Programme. *1933 Scottish Amateur Film Festival*. (SFA Written Archives: 2/3/8.)

idea was thoroughly investigated, and after various producing centres in Scotland had been approached no less than eight pictures were submitted, although one was subsequently withdrawn. The films, therefore, which will be shown to-night have survived a round of elimination, because the number of films entered for the Festival are too many to be shown in one evening.<sup>158</sup>

The adjudicator for the event was Victor Saville. He had to judge a final programme of four one-reel films: *Fickle Fortune*, 'an episode in the life of Rob Roy,'<sup>159</sup> from Bearsden Film Club; *Maritime Moments*, 'the story of a motor-boat cruise,'<sup>160</sup> from Glasgow Amateur Ciné Club; *Hair*, 'a tale of imagination,'<sup>161</sup> from Meteor; and another Meteor entry, *All on a Summer's Day*, the 'cinematic presentation of a city typist's holiday.'<sup>162</sup> This first festival is described in a 1936 article on 'The Scottish Film Festival' which notes that the first Festival prize went to the Meteor Film Society's thriller *Hair*.<sup>163</sup>

Some five months after the Amateur Cinematography Panel of the SFC was set up, and after a number of meetings of the Amateur Cinematography Panel, Stanley Russell, also a representative of the 'Meteor' Society, reports back to a full Film Council meeting held in Edinburgh, the aims of the Panel:

1. To co-ordinate the activities of organisations or clubs in Scotland concerned with amateur cinematography.
2. To hold exhibitions, competitive or otherwise, of films produced by amateurs.
3. To bring parties, individually or collectively, into contact on questions of amateur cinematography, and,
4. In any other way to promote the development of amateur cinematography in Scotland.<sup>164</sup>

The minutes also note that 'The Meteor Film Producing Society's offer to the Council that it [the Scottish Film Council] should now take over its [Meteor's] Annual Festival was accepted.'<sup>165</sup>

Whilst the ongoing problem of finance and staffing did eventually ease, the SFC did find that that sector of the industry which was most highly developed, and indeed profitable -- the exhibitors -- tended to either ignore it or, at best, view its activities with

<sup>158</sup>Programme. 1933 *Scottish Amateur Film Festival*. (SFA Written Archives: 2/3/8.)

<sup>159</sup>Programme. 1933 *Scottish Amateur Film Festival*. (SFA Written Archives: 2/3/8.)

<sup>160</sup>Programme. 1933 *Scottish Amateur Film Festival*. (SFA Written Archives: 2/3/8.)

<sup>161</sup>Programme. 1933 *Scottish Amateur Film Festival*. (SFA Written Archives: 2/3/8.)

<sup>162</sup>Programme. 1933 *Scottish Amateur Film Festival*. (SFA Written Archives: 2/3/8.)

<sup>163</sup>Ian S Ross, 'The Scottish Film Festival' *Scottish Stage* 4.6 (January) 1936: 5.

<sup>164</sup>Minutes: 25 May 1935. *Scottish Film Council: Minute Book: June 1936 - December 1938*. (SFA Written Archives: 1/1/250.)

<sup>165</sup>Minutes: 25 May 1935. *Scottish Film Council: Minute Book: June 1936 - December 1938*. (SFA Written Archives: 1/1/250.)

some degree of suspicion. In particular the exhibitor in the 1930s may have felt that the Social Services Panel had a covert interest in censorship. According to the account given in *Twenty One Years Of The Scottish Film Council*,<sup>166</sup> John Grierson suggested to the SFC that it formed the first Films of Scotland committee:

He [Grierson] suggested creating a fund of £20,000 to finance the making of Scottish films. The matter was discussed at two meetings of the Council, but was [in 1936] passed on to the Empire Exhibition's General Council, whence it went to the Scottish Home Department.<sup>167</sup>

Perhaps the most influential role taken on by the SFC during the 1930s was the involvement in production, most importantly for the 1938 Empire Exhibition. For that event the SFC ran a small cinema in the Scottish Pavilion (North) but its most important role was as sponsor in the Films of Scotland screened in the main cinema at Bellahouston, the Empire Cinema.<sup>168</sup> The involvement of Grierson through the SFC brought together the leading documentary film makers of the period. Contemporary press reports were enthusiastic:

The excellent quality of the documentary films that have been specially prepared for exhibition in this attractive cinema [the Empire Cinema] is seen in the the G.P.O. Film Unit's 'North Sea,' shown yesterday afternoon [2 May 1938] to a company that included M. Cavalcanti, the producer, and Harry Watt who directed. This film presents a real-life incident in narrative form and makes a fresh and richly potential departure for the British documentary school.<sup>169</sup>

The SFC's ability to provide within its expanding educational and cultural roles with the development of the film societies and the establishment (in 1939) of the Scottish Central Film Library. However, it remains true to say that, at least in its early years, the SFC failed to provide a service that could provide institutional support and effective cultural weight for the whole spectrum of film and cinema activities in Scotland. It failed to have any relevant role in the world of the mainstream industry (it was probably just too small to be even taken seriously by the commercial interests of

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<sup>166</sup>Oakley, 'How the Scottish Film Council Began.' *Twenty One Years of the Scottish Film Council*: 11-12.

<sup>167</sup>Oakley, 'How the Scottish Film Council Began.' *Twenty One Years of the Scottish Film Council*: 12.

<sup>168</sup>Oakley notes that:

The [Scottish Film] Council had no part in the third cinema, which was organised by the steel industry, but its success led to its organiser, W. E. Dickie of Breadmore's joining the Council and forming its fifth panel, which was to concern itself with the needs of industry.

Oakley, 'How the Scottish Film Council Began.' *Twenty One Years of the Scottish Film Council*: 11.

<sup>169</sup>'The Exhibition Cinemas: Ocean Radio Drama.' *Glasgow Herald* 3 May 1938: 3.

the entertainment industry) and was not itself involved in professional production. Yet the desire to foster, or at least be part of, an integrated industry was there. However, due to economic factors as well as cultural ones the SFC instead developed a support mechanism for the alternative movement of the period -- the Scottish film societies.

The problem, some perceived, with the film societies was that they essentially fostered bourgeois notions of art and culture -- effectively splitting art from politics, a division untenable for many of the amateur film makers of the time. However, the film societies and, in particular, those involved in film making did contribute to the establishment of the idea of film as more than entertainment:

The movement fulfils several useful functions: it creates a body of serious students of the cinema, it encourages experiment, and it trains technicians, directors, and actors who may, if youth and opportunity is on their side, graduate into the professional ranks.<sup>170</sup>

So there was a space in the film scene for a more explicitly political use of the medium, and further to allow workers to view this same type of film for less than it would cost to join one of the film societies. This became possible under the auspices of the Workers' Film Societies, established in London from 1929. In the early 1930s a number of Workers' Film Societies opened up across Scotland -- Glasgow's and the Edinburgh Workers' Progressive Film Society were both founded in 1930 and other branches soon followed in St Andrews and in Dundee. To join the Edinburgh society cost annually just 6s for the unemployed and 12s for those in work. While the workers' film societies did encourage actual film making their most important function was that of screening and discussion. Only in Glasgow, however, did some kind of workers' film group survive beyond around 1933 (and only there because on the failing of one manifestation of the film society another would be established in its place). Like the film societies, the workers' film societies survived at the whim of the local authorities who could refuse to license the screening of any film. To combat the vagaries of the licensing process exceptionally strict membership rules were enforced. In Glasgow, for instance, to introduce a non-member or guest to any screening (but with a maximum of 100 at any one meeting) a ticket had to be bought a minimum of two days in advance from a specified agent's shop. The ticket had to be bought by a full member of the society, who could only buy two such tickets for any performance. Authorities were not slow to seek out any irregularities and to stop the Sunday meetings.

While the film society movement -- concentrating on viewing film-as-art -- continued throughout the 1930s and beyond, the more politicised Left film groups had

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<sup>170</sup>'Stage and Screen: The Amateur Film Festival.' *Glasgow Herald* 20 May 1938: 10.

a particularly difficult time -- this only improving to any degree in the latter part of the decade. Technical improvements (particularly the development of 16mm film stock) and the hardening of political attitudes, galvanised by the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War, combined to make Left film a point of unification for many.

Kino was founded in 1933 by, among others, Ivor Montagu, as a section of the Workers' Theatre Movement. From 1936, however, Kino was less a distribution and administrative group and more explicitly an agitational and educational force within the Left political scene. The central company of Kino Films, Limited, was certainly the largest distributors of working class films between the Wars, distributing some 158 different films in the 1930s. Based at Collets' Bookshop, Glasgow Kino (formed in 1935) was very much involved in the active and agitational use of film. Their progressive booking policy ensured that any trade union or workers' group could have relatively easy access to a wide range of political films ranging from Soviet dramas to contemporary reports and newsreels from Spain. While the screening of Soviet, American, Spanish, Irish and Czech material was certainly an important and useful agit-prop tool, Glasgow Kino were also involved in the film making side of things. It was they who distributed *Hell Unlimited*, a powerful anti-war 16mm short, which attacked the armaments manufacturers and was made by Helen Biggar and Norman McLaren at the Glasgow School of Art. It won a prize at the 1937 SAFF.

Both Biggar and McLaren are important figures in the development of Left culture and of film culture generally. McLaren had already established something of a reputation as an amateur film maker. A McLaren film, *Seven Til Five*, won the first prize at the second SAFF in 1935. In the 1936 his abstract film *Colour Cocktail* shared the honours in the category 'Interest Films By Individuals' with a film called *Happy Days* made by T Lawrence, a Dundee based amateur film maker.<sup>171</sup> After completing *Hell Unlimited*, McLaren went with Ivor Montagu to film in Spain before returning to work under Grierson at the GPO Film Unit and then finally making his reputation international through his work at the National Film Board of Canada.

Helen Biggar, meanwhile, was to have a much closer relationship to the development of a Left culture in Scotland. She was a member of the Communist Party and to the forefront of the Kino group. Her political commitment combined profitably with her Art School training to lead her into design work with the GWTG. She worked

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<sup>171</sup>Despite success in the official Festival, McLaren's film received less enthusiastic criticism from the *Scottish Stage*'s film reviewer:

I'm afraid I cannot see as much in this little abstract effort as Mr. Grierson says he does. It has no discernible plan to it, except that it is cut to match a gramophone record -- and most of this seems fortuitous. It certainly cannot be accused of box-office angle.

Morrison Smith, 'The Third Scottish Amateur Film Festival: A Review of the Scottish Entries: ... *Colour Cocktail*' *Scottish Stage* 4.7 (February 1936): 16.

with the artist Tom Macdonald on the design for the GWTG project *On Guard For Spain*. Biggar's contribution to Left theatre in Glasgow continued beyond the demise of the GWTG in 1940 as she and many of that group's members, including Macdonald, became involved with the development of Glasgow Unity.

Helen Biggar also directed Glasgow Kino's own production -- *May Day 1938 -- Challenge To Fascism* -- a film perhaps following the example of a Clarion Film Society depiction of the 1937 May Day celebrations in Glasgow. This film made frequent appearances at the Clarion Scouts' regular Sunday film shows. Biggar's film had a semi-newsreel style and was intended to set the Glasgow Green rally in some kind of wider political context. Made with money raised by the local Labour movement, the film mixes scenes of the actual gathering with dramatised scenes of a Glasgow family's day out to the rally and extracts depicting contemporary world events. It is not wholly unexpected to find that the members of the family are played by actors of the GWTG.

The film's completion is noted in the *Herald*, which also gives some indication of the political context in which Biggar worked:

The Glasgow Kino Film Group gave a private preview last night of 'Challenge to Fascism,' the Group's own film of the 1938 Glasgow May Day procession, and 'Birth of an Empire,' a film dealing with the Italian conquest of Abyssinia. The May Day picture is a documentary study of the organisation of the annual socialist procession. In the Abyssinian film the bombing of Red Cross units and hospitals by Italian airmen is shown. The picture is authentic.<sup>172</sup>

The Glasgow film was less than successful, failing as an agit-prop piece. Kino itself was in something of a decline. It was still possible to see Left film in Scotland but it was distributed and supported on a much smaller scale than had been the case in the few years at the end of the 1930s. The purpose of such groups, to involve people in an active enjoyment of and participation on film culture is similar to the social aims of the amateur drama groups of the same period. Using language reminiscent of that employed around the development of the Repertory Theatre, the *Glasgow Herald* discusses the role of the cinema audience:

There are two types of film audience -- the active and the passive. The active audience has some conception of cinema potentialities, some curiosity about the film's intention, some interest in its technique. The passive audience is only an audience in the sense that it pays for admission. It accepts the political opinions of certain penny newspaper magnates.

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<sup>172</sup>'Stage and Screen: May Day Film.' *Glasgow Herald* 1 July 1938: 10.

There can be little doubt as to which of the two is the more likely to squeeze the last ha'porth of value from its films.<sup>173</sup>

The audiences which fit into the category of 'active' are clearly perceived to be that of the film societies, the SCDA groups. This is developed in an Editorial in the *Herald*, commenting on the coincidence of the BDL final and the Empire Amateur Film Festival in Glasgow in May 1938:

At the many conferences held for the discussion of social and ethical questions the view is often expressed that the proper use of leisure is among the most important concerns of the age. The amateur film and the amateur production of a play are products of leisure time well and creatively filled. The drama is a truly communal activity; the amateur's relation to it is well enough defined, and need not be recapitulated. But in the cinema the rôle of the amateur is less well understood. There he [sic] is trying his skill in all forms of film, from experiment to abstract movement to simple travelogues in colour. But it is becoming clear that his forte is the medium-length film that combines documentary with human interest.

Amateur cinematography of the serious kind is a more specialised and less public activity than amateur drama. But its influence, radiating from the festivals, should gradually increase, and, in conjunction with that of the specialist film societies and the educational film movement, gradually act as a leaven on the immense public that follows the silver screen.<sup>174</sup>

The discourse of cultural mission may deliver 'everything that is best in every department of human knowledge, endeavour, and achievement'<sup>175</sup> but it encourages an addition requisite -- that the audience be active in the creation of meaning. This involvement and participation may be at both the moment of production and reception. However, as the political edge, the political motivation to cultural activity as used by the

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<sup>173</sup>'The Film World: Glasgow Festival of Amateur Pictures.' *Glasgow Herald* 13 Oct. 1933: 7.

<sup>174</sup>'Editorial: Drama and Film Festivals.' *Glasgow Herald* 2 June 1938: 10. The article continues:

The larger the number of amateur film-makers there are, the wider should be the basis of intelligent appreciation in the cinemas. There is also a more directly practical issue. In the two forms most easily attempted by the amateur -- the simple documentary and the educational picture -- there are ample opportunities for doing work that may be effective far beyond the limits of the household, the social circle, or the cine club. A number of clubs have done documentaries at the request of institutions and public bodies, and a group of valuable films has been added to the general stock.

With the passing of the British Drama League's twelfth annual festival a period of stock taking may ensue. On Monday evening [30 May 1938] the adjudicators referred to the paucity of new one-act plays of a good standard. It is just possible that creatively-minded writers do not feel impelled to put their best work into the strict limits of the one-act play of less than 40 minutes' playing time. In the theatre at large there is a good deal of experiment going on, especially in verse forms and the treatment of sociological themes, and none of it is suitable for the festivals as run at present. The appeal for new one-act plays must be addressed specifically to those playwrights who have grown with the community drama movement and concentrated upon the one-act form. There should perhaps look for inspiration beyond the confines of the movement.

<sup>175</sup>J C W Reith, *Broadcast Over Britain* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1924): 34.

Left is dissipated after World War II, action increasingly becomes isolated around the role of just the audience.<sup>176</sup> Amateur activity in terms of just the drama, for instance, suffers with the development of the subsidised theatre and the consolidation of repertory movement as the dominant form of provincial theatre in Britain.<sup>177</sup>

In the Scottish context the expansion of indigenous theatre activity (particularly with the intervention of CEMA but dating from the 1930s) was not paralleled by an equal expansion in film production. The industrial model adopted by film (with film as mass entertainment) concentrated production and economic power in Hollywood and, with less success, in London and, as a consequence, was predicated against the development of a fragmented or devolved production base. Film activity in Scotland was split between the explosion of (imported) film as entertainment and the development of a mass audience base and the activity of the amateurs and the Left film makers. The general social and administrative centralisation that the period moved towards was countered in terms of Scottish theatre by moves towards professional indigenous activity -- the expansion of the Little Theatres, the continuing role of broadcasting, the development of an audience for new Scottish work -- could not be matched in the medium of film. Its industrial, technological and economic development was irrevocably tied to the demands of an international entertainment environment.

### **A new environment**

In the course of the first two decades of the twentieth century film and cinemas had been integrated into the cultural and social life of the developed economies. The entertainment system had reacted to contain and to absorb the impact of the new medium. Film entered the entertainment industries through the activities of the existing popular theatre tradition -- in terms of the development of exhibition and reception there is a kind of logical development from travelling shows, to music halls, to cine-variety and purpose-built cinemas. As the tradition of popular entertainments became increasingly industrialised, through the creation of theatre circuits, so the music hall was transformed into the respectable variety theatre. A similar pattern may be traced with the impact of film -- particularly with the shift from cine-variety bills to the development of the new cinemas, some clearly designed to appeal to respectable society. The existing and successful theatre circuits were able to expand into cinema

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<sup>176</sup>Unity Theatre is, however, an important exception to this. See Colin Chambers, *The Story of Unity Theatre* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1989). Glasgow Unity has been discussed by John Hill, *Glasgow Unity Theatre* (Unpublished MA Thesis. Glasgow University, 1975); Hill, 'Towards a Scottish People's Theatre: The Rise and Fall of Glasgow Unity.' *Theatre Quarterly* 11.27 (1977); Hill, 'Glasgow Unity Theatre: The Search for a Scottish People's Theatre.' *New Edinburgh Review* 40 (1978); Cameron, *Study Guide ...*: 67-85.

<sup>177</sup>In effect amateur drama becomes increasingly perceived as a bourgeois leisure pursuit and is reduced to 'am-dram' and light opera societies. It is only with the rise of 'community drama' that a political context has been reasserted within non-professional theatre.

ownership and were thus able to dampen the effects of film (particularly in terms of the economics of the exhibitors). It was only over a somewhat longer period of time, and particularly after the collapse of the European film (producing) industry in the course of and after the Great War, that cinemas came to displace stage entertainments and so to dominate the public entertainment experience.

As this happened, however, the very nature of the system was changed. The diverse but essentially popular and entertaining ethos that had dominated the experience of the theatre-based arts at the end of the Victorian period was replaced by a much more fragmented set of ideologies. On the one hand the hedonistic spectacle and imposed ideas of the Hollywood film increasingly controlled the market place of popular entertainment, mainstream theatre was increasingly under threat both in the main producing centres and as a touring product and the popular entertainments of the regions existed in a more and more reduced state; on the other a discourse, that might be described as embodying or projecting a cultural mission, was increasing the defining experience of the indigenous arts in Britain.

## BBC Radio in Scotland

'The rise of cinema is spectacular enough, but is a pedestrian story compared with the rise of radio.'<sup>1</sup>

The increased intervention of the state in regulation of society and of society's culture in the twentieth century is highlighted by a general and underlying tendency towards institutional centralisation. Of all cultural activities it is perhaps broadcasting which most clearly reveals this to be so. While structure and policy were only latterly imposed upon the media of cinema and theatre, from its beginnings wireless broadcasting in Britain was carefully regulated. This chapter will chart the early development of wireless broadcasting, the second of the 'public technologies' to intervene into the British entertainment system, but will focus on the Scottish experience in detail. Within the Scottish scene the early years of the BBC parallel the period of the literary renaissance and contemporary political debates of socialism and nationalism: how did the BBC contribute to the debates around identity that developments in the theatre environment identified and responded to; did this develop into a 'national' form, that used the indigenous culture; and what was its relationship to London?

Histories of broadcasting tend to have a distinct London bias -- in other words they all but completely ignore developments in Scotland (apart from the one exception of *The March Of The 'Forty Five*), and yet the early broadcasting infrastructure ensured that each regional centre could advance the boundaries of radio in more exciting and challenging ways (certainly in different ways) than the production centre in London. This critical bias, however, is perhaps only symptomatic of a more general social tendency to displace diversity within British culture and to focus on a metropolitan vision, a core-legitimised version of culture which discounts the regional and the local as parochial. This tendency is thrown into relief at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century when social and cultural requirements, technological and political contexts reset the role of the state and its institutions (and the BBC is one of the most powerful in the system) as fundamental to the dissemination of culture. In this indigenous and local cultural activities may fall outwith the legitimised cultural capital of the state, and yet be fundamental to the identity used and referred to by the region. This is the perceived lack for 'Scottish culture' within the context of British arts. Increased centralisation and bureaucratisation of the arts community and cultural institutions towards the metropolitan core can produce an intractable gap between the respectable culture of the centre and the barbaric, parochial, dangerous arts of the periphery: a periphery which may then be recast as 'other'. Within that context,

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<sup>1</sup>Maurice Gorham, *Broadcasting and Television Since 1900* (London: Andrew Dakers, 1952): 17.

however, the same technological, political and social advances are imposed and experienced but they will be interpreted and used with reference to the local and the indigenous as well as to the national and the international. To discount the distinctiveness of much of Scottish culture is, within a centralist model, justified.

At the start of broadcasting there existed a remarkable degree of devolution in the structure of the BBC. This was gradually reduced across the period, being particularly formalised in the Regional Scheme of the late 1920s and early 1930s. The technological improvements this resulted in did, however, allow remarkable wireless events, for example the 1937 production of D G Bridson's *The March of the 'Forty-Five* and the BBC's world-wide coverage of the 1938 Empire Exhibition. Broadcasting also acts as a focal point for the wider experience of the arts, politics and society of its world view. In structure and programming the broadcast system operated by the BBC both reflects the nation-as-encountered and interprets and projects images of the society's ideal. Hall discusses the ideological role that the BBC adopted:

Broadcasters ... had to discharge the public responsibility of reflecting the culture of the whole people as an organic national culture while, at the same time, defending traditional values and standards and educating popular taste towards its 'better self'. This was a conception of *national* [British] culture modelled on the state itself (which is supposed to balance all interests within itself, and act disinterestedly) rather than on the market.<sup>2</sup>

The desire to distance the product and the project from the raw market aligns the broadcasters with the period's general cultural shift towards the cultural mission and the state's explicit intervention into arts provision.

At the outbreak of World War II, the BBC had already developed as a major sponsor of culture and the arts, and may be seen to embody the increasingly influential ideology of cultural mission, of culture as useful, as important, as powerful. The BBC produced programmes (plays, music, talks, news) available to the broad spectrum of the population. In scale of output and audience reach the BBC operated a much larger production centre than any cultural institution associated with the other media. Radio programming was shaped by a determinedly improving discourse, a discourse that other cultural agencies aspired to attain. Even before the formalisation of cultural policy in Britain, the BBC had 'forged for itself an identity as a national cultural institution.'<sup>3</sup> The geographic and demographic spread of the BBC's output -- with early power devolved to the regions -- offered a model for cultural activity that other groups sponsored by state, industry and the Left could not hope to equal: indeed, even when

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<sup>2</sup>Hall: 43.

<sup>3</sup>Hall: 44.

CEMA was established in 1941 its effect was initially biased in favour of the metropolis. Developments in the infrastructure of broadcasting parallel the wider moves towards a centralised and managed cultural and economic environment. It is through charting the early stages of broadcasting that the importance of the state's sponsorship of culture mission might be evaluated, and further, through reference to the 'regional' dimension, and in particular the Scottish broadcasters, that an understanding of the complex and interconnected nature of the contemporary entertainment environment might begin to be put into place.

The intervention of film into the entertainment environment of the late-Victorian period influenced changes in the general experience of culture, but the use, the reception of the cultural product remained loosely within the structures of exhibition that the existing theatre and entertainment environment already operated. The intervention of broadcast radio shifted the very nature of the arts by at once dividing and unifying audiences, who might spread over wide geographical areas and, as the dissemination of wireless grew, be of different social and class backgrounds. As wireless developed the underlying ethos of public service broadcasting became increasingly overt and the ideology of the cultural mission found its clearest institutional base yet.

It was probably the essentially domestic aspect of the reception of wireless that caused this tension around its development and its control. Almost by definition, 'public technology,' as Williams describes it,<sup>4</sup> exists in a shared community context. Radio, on one level a potentially national (and even international) experience, enters the domestic environment with a stealth and habitualness quite unlike the development of other public domain technologies -- photography, film, and even the telephone. Radio can be both a shared and a very private technology and, as such, allowed development in many different ways, although often dependent on the political will and ideological context of the societies it entered. Thus, in the USA the free-internal market and the easy dominance of capitalism combined with the sheer size and population-spread of the country allowed for the 'chaotic'<sup>5</sup> development of the many unregulated commercial broadcast stations in a pattern inappropriate to the British context. Unlike the other media, broadcasting was immediately perceived by the state as a valuable and powerful commodity. The unregulated model of early commercial broadcasting as experienced in North America proved a strong and lasting warning to the British state of what the wireless business, left to its own devices, might create. The potential of the new media was equally appreciated by industry, commerce and government. It is the implicit role

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<sup>4</sup>Williams, *Television*: 32-33.

<sup>5</sup>Jonathon Hill, *Radio! Radio!* (Bampton: Sunrise Books, 1986): 36.

of the latter that marks out the development of broadcasting as quite different to the development of the other media during the period.

Broadcasting in Britain began with, and indeed to some extent still maintains, this ethos of public service broadcasting -- what might popularly be referred to as the Reithian values of information, education and entertainment. James McDonnell offers a four point working definition:

Reith conceived of public service broadcasting as having four facets. Firstly, it should be protected from purely commercial pressures; secondly, the whole nation should be served by the broadcasting service; thirdly there should be unified control, that is public service broadcasting should be organised as a monopoly; and finally, there should be high programme standards.<sup>6</sup>

Within such a cultural orthodoxy the role of the broadcasters was an influential one. Asa Briggs comments on 'Reith's desire not to divide 'the great audience' more than was necessary.'<sup>7</sup> Particularly around World War II this unity was one encouraged for patriotic reasons and reflected within the operations of the BBC and the cultural life of the nation generally. Even by 1932, however, the distinctive ethos of British broadcasting had decisively entered society's cultural imagination. A 'Men You Know' feature on Reith in the *Glasgow Weekly Herald* considers that:

Sir John Reith has always taken a higher view of broadcasting than that which regards it merely as an entertainment, in spite of many criticisms, interested and otherwise, he has maintained that high conception of his duties which makes the B.B.C. a model for the world to follow. Sir John's faith in broadcasting is unbounded. He foresees through it the breaking down of national prejudices and limitations, and believes that it will be a potent incident towards knitting the whole world into one democratic unit.<sup>8</sup>

Writing in *Broadcast Over Britain* Reith himself is more succinct:

I think it will be admitted by all that to have exploited so great a scientific invention for the purpose and pursuit of entertainment alone would have been a prostitution of its powers and an insult to the character and intelligence of the people.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>6</sup>James McDonnell, *Public Service Broadcasting: A Reader* (London: Routledge, 1991): 1.

<sup>7</sup>Asa Briggs, *The History of Broadcasting in the United Kingdom: volume 2: The Golden Age of Wireless* (London: Oxford UP, 1965): 36.

<sup>8</sup>'The Man You Know -- by 'The Bailie' -- Sir John Reith.' *Glasgow Weekly Herald* 21 May 1932: 8. Article in bound collection of 'Men You Know' features (new series) held in the Glasgow Room, Mitchell Library, Glasgow (Ref. G920.04). Compare this internationalist role for broadcasting with the aims of the Empire Exhibition of 1938 as described by Neville Chamberlain in the *Empire Exhibition: Official Guide* ([Glasgow?]: [Empire Exhibition, Scotland?], 1938): 71. See below: chapter seven.

<sup>9</sup>Reith, *Broadcast Over Britain*: 17.

It was a philosophy that valued those cultural products which might be termed 'high art' -- early BBC schedules copied the programming strategies of the experimental stations of 2MT and 2LO under Marconi and featured classical music, news bulletins and talks. Interestingly, however, this seems, at least in intention, and in terms of its cultural project, closely tied to other social trends in the interwar period in Britain. At certain levels it may be linked to aspects of the contemporary campaigns or movements of social improvement -- most obviously the claim that 'drama is good for you'. The theme adopted is one of responsibility and morality:

As we conceive it, our responsibility is to carry into the greatest possible number of homes everything that is best in every department of human knowledge, endeavour, and achievement, and to avoid the things which are, or may be, hurtful. It is occasionally indicated to us that we are apparently setting out to give the public what we think they need -- and not what they want, but few know what they want, and very few what they need. There is often no difference. One wonders to which section of the public such criticism refers. In any case it is better to over-estimate the mentality of the public, than to under-estimate it.<sup>10</sup>

It is possible to see aspects of the industries of film and theatre as part of a perceived cultural mission -- educative, perhaps with Fabian fringes but really not aligned to the Left which was operating with a different set of criteria.<sup>11</sup> It is politically less aggressive than a Left culture and usually less financially secure than a mainstream or established cultural producer which operates with a highly developed and industrialised infrastructure. The art producers with a perceived cultural mission may include the repertory theatre movement, the Scottish National Players, the Scottish Community Drama Association and, in terms of film, the Film Societies, and the documentary movement of the 1930s.<sup>12</sup> It is perhaps also the area within culture that might move towards and/or is attractive to state support -- financially in terms of more or less direct state subsidy or institutionally -- for instance the documentary movement being supported within the bounds of the Empire Marketing Board (EMB)<sup>13</sup> and then

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<sup>10</sup>Reith, *Broadcast Over Britain*: 34.

<sup>11</sup>For the Left film and theatre exists as part of a political project in which the arts are to play an active part in social process -- in the belief that such actions will be effective in contributing to social change. This picks up on issues of revolution and culture in crisis -- art must totally re-evaluate and redefine itself with regards to content, audience, organisation and form.

<sup>12</sup>For Scotland the links across the media forms are important, particularly so in this strand of cultural practise:

Ere long the Scottish National Players made regular appearances at the microphone, and helped to encourage amateur drama, encouraged by the Scottish Community Drama Association. This is perhaps the first example of the influence of broadcasting on a particular facet of national life, and brought to both urban and rural areas, an enthusiasm for drama which was creative and beneficial at a time when literary effort was becoming frustrated and barren after a spate of war stories.

Melville Dinwiddie, *The Scot and His [sic] Radio* (Edinburgh: BBC, 1948): N.pag.

<sup>13</sup>Stephen G Jones puts this support into perspective, however:

the GPO Film Unit. This shift, this tendency towards government or state involvement, is certainly what happened to film with a cultural mission, it is less clear if a similar movement occurred within the drama. For certain players it did, particularly around World War II and the development of the CEMA. For instance, Bridie at the Citizens' clearly wanted to be perceived as producing nationally, or at least culturally, significant work in order to gain institutional recognition and hence subsidy -- a similar desire may be charted in the creation of the Drama School at the Royal Scottish Academy for Music and Drama.<sup>14</sup>

Broadcasting, then, might be seen to be part of this sector: a sector which perceives itself as important, as useful. Reith stresses this in a memo of November 1925. The 'Memorandum of Information on the Scope and Conduct of the Broadcasting Service', was written for submission to the Crawford Committee 'to show the desirability for the conduct of Broadcasting as a Public Service, for the adoption and maintenance of definite policies and standards in all its activities, and for unity of control.' 'Rightly developed and controlled,' Reith wrote:

[broadcasting] will become a world influence with immense potentialities for good -- equally for harm, if its function is wrongly or loosely conceived ... It must not be used for entertainment purposes alone ... He [sic] who prides himself on giving what he thinks the public want is often creating a fictitious demand for lower standards which he will then satisfy ... The advent of Broadcasting was regarded with suspicion if not hostility in certain quarters and some definite boycotts were even attempted. Progress was, however, maintained ... There is neither end nor satisfaction for, no matter what may have been accomplished, there is so much more still to be done ... Even those who are most definite in their appreciation of the Company's attitude, recognise the desirability of its being a public service not only in deed but in constitution, but not in such a way that the initiative and enterprise through which the present position has been attained shall be fettered unduly.<sup>15</sup>

From earliest discussions on the nature of broadcasting in Britain a discourse of public service is worked into the ideology and infrastructure of the BBC. It is further within

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Despite the fact that the EMB's film unit grew from two people at the very beginning of the 1930s to over 30 by mid-1933, no more than 2.5 per cent of the Board's total budget was sanctioned for film in any one year.

Jones, *The British Labour Movement and Film*: 18.

<sup>14</sup>This is where part of the cultural mission strand of the cultural system in Scotland moved towards as regards the theatre. Other elements were mobilised politically and shifted towards categories around the Left towards Workers' Theatres groups and aspects of the SCDA movement, particularly around the work of Joe Corrie. The BBC featured the work of at least some of these practitioners, for instance, Corrie's *Kamera!* (Corrie, *Kamera!*. Radio drama: transmitted 28 Mar. 1938. ts. BBC Radio Scotland Script: STA Kf Box 4/7), the winner of the 1929 SCDA Festival (see 'Scotland.' *BBC Yearbook: 1930* (London: BBC, 1930): 97) and the Scottish National Players.

<sup>15</sup>Reith's 'Memorandum of Information on the Scope and Conduct of the Broadcasting Service'; quoted by Briggs, *The BBC: The First Fifty Years* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1985): 85.

this area of the experience of the contemporary media -- that with a discernible cultural mission -- that issues of nationalism and national identity become points of debate and discussion. Yet the BBC as an institution seemed to connote a metropolitan outlook, a centralised structure that broadcast from London to the provinces, and at the same time drew towards it all that was best, or most appropriate, from elsewhere. (It is a kind of classic core-periphery model of cultural theory.) This, however, was not a wholly accurate view of how the BBC, at least in the very early period, functioned -- and interestingly it was also, for a while at least, a key area of debate within the BBC itself. What existed in this very early period of broadcasting was an unexpected devolution of production power.

In 1948 the then Director-General of the BBC, Sir William Haley, spoke of the pre-eminent experience of broadcasting in Britain finding that:

The aim of the BBC must be to conserve and strengthen serious listening. ... While satisfying the legitimate public demand for recreations and entertainment, the BBC must never lose sight of its cultural mission.<sup>16</sup>

This 'cultural mission' to educate, to inform and to entertain was one deeply rooted in the structures, policies and programmes of the BBC.

### Early broadcasters

Despite the dominant mythology of broadcasting in Britain, centring on this the public service ethos of the BBC, the very earliest broadcasts were carried out under a set of very different ideologies. On the one hand was the socially important but economically insignificant role of the amateurs. Industrially much more influential was the other role, that taken on by the manufacturers of wireless equipment. The key company was the Marconi's Wireless Telegraph Company, Limited, but the other important players included the Radio Communications Company (whose own experimental broadcast station was based at Slough, with the call-sign 2AA) and the Metropolitan-Vickers Electrical Company, Limited. It was Marconi's, however, which was at the forefront of actual broadcast developments, with the stations of 2MT and 2LO both being established within that company's structure.

The 2MT station was very much an experimental operation, giving radio amateurs something to tune in to even if that was just a Morse signal, but one that was also popularly successful, particularly with its concert programmes. In fact, it had licence from the Postmaster General (PMG) '... to broadcast 'vocal and gramophone selections

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<sup>16</sup>Note by William Haley, 'Home Programme Policy'; quoted by Asa Briggs, *The History of Broadcasting in the United Kingdom: volume 4: Sound and Vision* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1979): 80.

and calibration signals for amateurs' ....'<sup>17</sup> It was operated by a subsidiary of the Marconi organisation, the Wireless Telegraph Company, Limited, from 14 February 1922 until 17 January 1923, and broadcast from the village of Writtle in Essex. The station's programming included musical concerts and talks as well as the first ever wireless play -- an extract from Edmond Rostand's *Cyrano de Bergerac* directed by Agnes Travers and broadcast 17 October 1922.<sup>18</sup>

In early 1922 Marconi's were granted another broadcast licence to install 'a 100 watt wireless telegraphy broadcasting station at their Head Office of Marconi House in the Strand, London. Its call-sign was to be 2LO.'<sup>19</sup> Broadcasting under this call-sign was, like the 2MT transmissions, experimental. The reception area was more or less just the London area and, as with the 2MT broadcasts, listeners would tune into just short transmissions (only up to an hour) of studio programmes with the occasional outside broadcast.<sup>20</sup>

The development of radio was closely tied to the commercial and business interests of the manufacturers of trade and domestic wireless equipment, and wholly dependent on the development of its hardware. This is reflected in the founding of the key broadcasting institution in Britain, the BBC:

... in 1922 a consortium of manufacturers, who would provide programmes under terms agreed with the Post Office and the Government, was formed as the British Broadcasting Company. The keys to this agreement were the granting of monopoly to the Company and the decision to finance broadcasting by the sale of licences for receivers. In the period 1925-1926, through continuous controversy and negotiation, what had been essentially a public utility company was becoming a true public broadcasting corporation: the BBC which received its charter in 1926.<sup>21</sup>

There followed, then, a seemingly easy transfer from industry-led experimental broadcasting to the half-way public service institution of the British Broadcasting Company, and then to the incorporation of that company by Royal Charter. This and the consequent extension of state involvement was the result of the Crawford

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<sup>17</sup>Quoted by Alan Jenkins, *The Twenties* (London: Book Club Associates, 1974): 185.

<sup>18</sup>Hill, *Radio!*: 34. The Director and the Chief Announcer of 2MT was Captain Peter Pendleton Eckersley. His career in many ways links all the strands of the early development of wireless broadcasting. As Jonathon Hill notes he was a Royal Flying Corps wireless equipment officer during the War, then an enthusiastic wireless amateur who worked in Marconi's Aircraft Department (Experimental Section). He went on from 2MT to become the BBC's first Chief Engineer in the days of pioneering activities as a national broadcasting system.

<sup>19</sup>Hill, *Radio!*: 34. Interestingly Hill notes that the studio, on the top-most floor of Marconi House, had been a cinema theatre.

<sup>20</sup>Again the Chief Announcer of 2LO under Marconi was to achieve greater success when 2LO became the first station of the BBC in November 1922. Arthur Burrows (Uncle Arthur) was the BBC's first Director of Programmes.

<sup>21</sup>Williams, *Television*: 32-33.

Committee established in 1926 to discuss the future of broadcasting. Stephen G Jones notes that the Committee:

... though paying tribute to commercial achievements, ... rejected a free and uncontrolled system and instead 'proposed that broadcasting be conducted by a Public Corporation acting as a trustee of the national interest, and consisting of a Board of Governors responsible for seeing that Broadcasting was carried out as a public service'.<sup>22</sup>

In the early 1920s one of the existing models of national broadcasting was the USA example where there were no government controls and the expansion of wireless broadcasting stations across the country was left unregulated. In Britain the government and the office of the PMG did not want to follow this path because of the lack of control they would wield in such a completely unregulated broadcast system. The manufacturers too were more interested in working towards a broadcasting structure where they would have some kind of input and influence. The PMG developed a plan whereby broadcasting would exist under one single (and administratively centralised) body:

On October 18th [1922], the British Broadcasting Company was at last formed. It comprised 300 British manufacturers and dealers in wireless receivers and accessories headed by the so-called 'Big Six': British Thomson-Houston Co. Ltd., the General Electric Co. Ltd., Marconi's Wireless Telegraph Co. Ltd., Metropolitan-Vickers Electrical Co. Ltd., the Radio Communication Co. Ltd., and the Western Electric Co. Ltd. It was registered on December 15th 1922 and although its licence was not issued until January 18th 1923 it was retrospective and gave permission to broadcast for two years as from November 1st 1922, two weeks before the actual inauguration of broadcasting.

The B.B.C. was a limited liability company licensed under the Wireless Telegraphy Acts to conduct a broadcasting service "to the reasonable satisfaction of the Postmaster General." It was constituted with a capital of £100,000, of which £60,000 was contributed in equal parts by the six main wireless manufacturing firms who each had representation on the Board of Governors.<sup>23</sup>

The industrial roots of the BBC -- with the companies of Marconi, Metropolitan-Vickers, General Electric, Radio Communications, Hotpoint, Western Electric along with Burndept and Siemens -- may seem to be at odds with the ethos of public service broadcasting that very quickly the programming policy developed. This new institution, a 'broadcasting authority thinly disguised as an arm of private enterprise yet bearing a curious resemblance to an officially blessed monopoly,'<sup>24</sup> provided the

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<sup>22</sup>Jones, *Workers at Play*: 105.

<sup>23</sup>Hill, *Radio!*: 36.

<sup>24</sup>A Boyle, *Only the Wind Will Listen* (London: Hutchinson, 1972): 128.

foundations for the development of, not just public broadcasting in Britain but, public service broadcasting and, indeed, acted as a model for all arts production and dissemination. That such a commercial and industrial genesis was so quickly effaced, however, might point to the eventual absorption of all 'public technology' into the hegemonic ideologies of its social and cultural context. In the few years of its operation as a limited liability company the huge development of broadcasting as a force of social organisation and cultural dominance was extraordinary. Two things may exemplify this: the scale of wireless dissemination (by 1927, the year of the Charter, there were 2,395,183 licences held in the United Kingdom<sup>25</sup>) and the government's reaction around the General Strike of 1926, whereby it was acknowledged by both BBC and government the potential influence of broadcasting on the nation.<sup>26</sup>

The input of industry into broadcasting was not, however, limited to the London centres but was a key element in the structure of the whole institution of the BBC. Just as Marconi owned and the BBC operated 2LO; 5IT, the second main station serving Birmingham was owned by the Western Electric Company; 2ZY, the third main station serving Manchester owned by Metropolitan-Vickers Electrical Company. Although these companies had tried experimental stations their broadcasting ambitions were contained within the BBC structure. It was, however, the ongoing experimentation of the Marconi organisation in particular that gave most to the development of the BBC's broadcasting capabilities and coverage. After the opening and successful introduction of wireless on a regional and a local level, Marconi in collaboration with the BBC and 2LO, began experimenting with a long-wave transmitter based at their Chelmsford establishment. 5XX began experimental broadcasting nationwide on 21 July 1923, with a concert by Dame Clara Butt. However, it was not really until 27 July 1925, with the transfer of broadcasting operations to Daventry, that the irregular broadcasts of 5XX were fully regulated and its programming established as a real alternative to the regional activities of the established broadcasting infrastructure. 5XX transmitted a simultaneous broadcast of 2LO programming and a smaller proportion of their own productions. It was thus the only 'national' channel available in Britain -- but its success also signalled the increasing, and ongoing, centralisation of the BBC -- for although situated in the Midlands it was transmitting the London station's output. This centripetal policy was rather confirmed in 1925 with the establishment of '5GB', or 'Daventry Experimental'. Although this initially transmitted just to Birmingham and the Midlands these developments were the first stage in the BBC's Regional Scheme. The basic idea behind this scheme was to have a series of very powerful transmitters at key

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<sup>25</sup>This figure, which represents a distribution of 21.7 licences per 100 families, is taken from the BBC's own figures. See 'Licence Figures.' *BBC Handbook: 1940* (London: BBC, 1940): 106.

<sup>26</sup>For a brief summary of the events of 1926 see Burton Paulu, *Television and Radio in the United Kingdom* (London: Macmillan, 1981): 35-36.

locations throughout the UK each of which, like the Daventry transmitter, would provide two different broadcast programmes. The National Programme would be essentially the same for all areas of the country, and the Regional Programme which would more suit the needs of the particular geographic area it served. In 1929 the Regional Scheme was formally inaugurated by introduction in the Home Counties of a choice between the National and the London Regional wavebands. In 1931 the North National and the North Regional went into service and on 2 May 1932 the Scottish National and the Scottish Regional were broadcast<sup>27</sup> from the transmitter near Westerglen Farm. This provided a good quality of broadcast reception for at least the Central Belt, although the Northern area was less well served until the establishment of the Burghead transmitter on the Moray Firth in 1936.

### Broadcasting comes to Scotland

Broadcasting under the auspices of the British Broadcasting Company began in November 1922 -- from London to London and the surrounding counties. This station was, of course, still based in the Marconi Building, but in May 1923 the BBC's 2LO station moved to the Savoy Hill studios that they maintained until the opening of Broadcasting House in May 1933. On 6 March 1923 the sixth of the initially proposed eight 'main stations' opened. This was 5SC of the British Broadcasting Company and was based in Rex House at 202 Bath Street, Glasgow.<sup>28</sup> Under the initial structure of national coverage run by the BBC there were two types of broadcasting station -- main and relay. A main station produced most of the programming on its schedules itself, in-house as it were. It would maintain production and administrative staff to enable this to happen and only pick up on a 'SB' (a simultaneous broadcast) from another station for big or prestigious events -- major orchestral concerts or large-scale drama evenings. The relay stations were a recommendation of the Sykes Committee (published 1 October 1923) to increase the number of potential listeners without substantial increase in programming costs. Scotland had only two, one at Edinburgh (opening 1 May 1924, with the call-sign 2EH and G L Marshall as Station Director) and the other at Dundee (2DE opening 12 November 1924 with E W Heddle as 'the first and only Station Director at Dundee'<sup>29</sup>). They produced only a small proportion of their own material, perhaps one evening per week, the rest of the time being SB from another main station. This, of course, meant that such stations were very much cheaper than the running of a main station which had to produce more or less seven full days of

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<sup>27</sup>On 376 and 288 metres respectively on the medium wave.

<sup>28</sup>The transmitter itself was, in fact, at the Port-Dundas Power Station. Rex House was only used by the BBC for some eighteen months, from 7 November 1924 5SC production operations transferred to studios at 18 Blythswood Square, Glasgow.

<sup>29</sup>George Burnett, *Scotland on the Air* (London/Edinburgh: The Moray Press, 1938): 3.

programmes each week for each of the eight main stations. *BBC Fact Sheet: Number 44: BBC Scotland*<sup>30</sup> states that after the opening of 5SC 'Aberdeen, Edinburgh and Dundee soon were added to the growing network of semi-independent 'local' stations.' Melville Dinwiddie, from 1933 to 1957, the senior manager of the BBC in Scotland, the Scottish Regional Director, mentions the 'sense of rivalry [between the stations] which was beneficial.'<sup>31</sup> It is this 'semi-independence' that seems at odds with the centralist development of the broadcast media in Britain, and reveals the early broadcasts from the regional broadcasters as rather unique. Interestingly, in terms of distinctive regional broadcasting, all stations, main and relay, produced their own daily *Children's Corner* with their own local presenters, initially referred to as Aunties and Uncles.<sup>32</sup>

Broadcast radio, or at least indigenous broadcast radio, is usually perceived as coming to Scotland with the opening of the BBC main station in Glasgow on 6 March 1923. While this was certainly the first permanent station to broadcast, wireless users in Scotland had been able to listen to two local Glasgow-based broadcast services prior to the launch of 5SC. One was operated very much in the tradition of the enthusiastic amateurs, the other much more associated with business.

The former, a 10 watt experimental station, broadcast from 1922 with the call-sign of 5MG:

In 1922 Frank M. Milligan, already trading in wireless receivers, and George Garscadden, who distributed household appliances from Rex House, 202 Bath Street, took out a licence to operate Station 5MG. At first, Mr. Garscadden's daughter Kathleen was sent ... to the microphone operated by J. M. A. Cameron in 141 Bath Street to read, play or sing.<sup>33</sup>

These evening broadcasts were to provide wireless users with something to tune in to but did become more ambitious over time. Those who became involved, as presenters, singers or as production staff, were brought together by Garscadden's involvement with the Park Parish church, where she was the leading soprano. The minister of the

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<sup>30</sup>BBC Publication (undated). Held in the Reference Library, BBC Scotland, Queen Margaret Drive, Glasgow.

<sup>31</sup>Dinwiddie: N.pag.

<sup>32</sup>One of the earliest 'Aunties' was Dundee's Auntie Gwen (who also feature in the Glasgow *Children's Corner*). Auntie Gwen became more famous in her real persona of Wendy Wood -- a prominent supporter of the Scots National Movement in the late 1920s. Children's programming was consistently a major element in output from Scotland. The Glasgow station is even credited with being the first BBC station:

... to broadcast children's plays with children taking part, and the first to give a children's pantomime from the studio, in which young members of the Radio Circle [a kind of wireless club for young listeners] formed the cast and chorus.

'Scotland: ... The Early Days in Scotland.' *BBC Yearbook: 1933* (London: BBC, 1933): 241.

<sup>33</sup>BBC, *Early Days of Broadcasting in Scotland* ([Glasgow?]: BBC Scotland, 1973): N.pag. This booklet was published by BBC Scotland to celebrate 50 years of broadcasting in Scotland.

Park church was the Rev Dr George Reith (whose son was John Reith, just newly appointed the General Manager of the BBC) and the organist was Herbert A Carruthers.<sup>34</sup>

The other early wireless station was, perhaps surprisingly given the marked ideology of public service that so dominates contemporary interpretations of the social and cultural use of wireless, a commercially sponsored venture. In London, 2LO had opened just in time for the 1922 Motor Show. As a marketing gimmick Daimler had installed wireless sets in their luxury limousines. For the Scottish Motor Show, just months later in January 1923, it was discovered that the in-car radios were not powerful enough to receive the 2LO signals. 5MG did not operate during the day and, in any case, the advertising potential of the in-car wireless experiment would be more if organised in a different way. In Glasgow, therefore, a new wireless station was installed at the Daimler Company's new garage in Hughenden Road, Kelvinside, Glasgow, and broadcast with the call-sign of 2BP. The station existed primarily to promote this in-car wireless system developed by Daimler in co-operation with the Marconi Company, and marketed as the 'Daimler-Marconiphone'. The wireless system was launched in Scotland at the 1923 Scottish Motor Show which ran from 26 January to 3 February at the Kelvin Hall, Glasgow. The event receives a good deal of coverage in the *Glasgow Herald*. Both this and the newspaper's regular 'Wireless Column' give some idea of what the scheme was like.

The opening of the Daimler garage itself is announced in the *Herald* on 10 January.<sup>35</sup> At first the technology is not fully understood and how it might be discussed is a problem and, as a result, full of uncertainties. In an article 'Wireless Telephones For Cars,' the *Herald* comments on another aspect of the new available technology and notes that:

In connection with the Motor Show which opens in Glasgow this week it is expected that an interesting demonstration of a possible application of wireless telephony will take place. The arrangements have not yet been completed, but it is proposed that motor cars should be fitted with receiving and transmitting sets, and that demonstrations of their working should be given. The intention at present is to fit a receiving set in a car which will be in the Kelvin Hall, and to fit a certain car with both receiving and sending apparatus. The second car will tour throughout the city, keeping in touch with the car in the Kelvin Hall by means of its wireless equipment. A further suggestion is that a temporary broadcasting set should be installed in the city, so that messages from that could be picked up by the receiving station in the Kelvin Hall and also by the car which it is proposed should tour the city. A series of demonstrations could thus be given. The project suggests that within a few years it may be possible to enjoy the music of the opera while

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<sup>34</sup>See BBC, *Early Days of Broadcasting in Scotland*: N.pag.

<sup>35</sup>*Glasgow Herald* 10 Jan. 1923: 6.

engaged in a country tour by motor car, to keep oneself continually informed of the news of the hour, or to carry on a business conversation while travelling.<sup>36</sup>

The scheme, for the use of wireless in cars, receives further comment over the ensuing days:

Among the new cars on view at the newly opened showroom and depot of the Daimler and B.S.A. motor car companies at Hughenden Road, Kelvinside, Glasgow, is one which is equipped with the Daimler-Marconiphone, a specially designed wireless receiving set produced by the Marconi Company in co-operation with the Daimler Company. For the purpose of demonstrating the working of the set a temporary broadcasting station has been erected at the Daimler Company's premises in Hughenden Road. Although the station has been working on the low power of from 10 to 20 watts, excellent results have been obtained.<sup>37</sup>

The car to which the receiver set has been fitted is a 30 horse power seven-seater landaulette of a well known Daimler model. On the roof of the car is the aerial, which consists of a small square of copper foil, and is quite inconspicuous. In later models it is intended that the aerial will be concealed inside the roof of the car. The main part of the apparatus is placed under the driver's seat, and access to it is given by a panel opening into the body of the car. Beside the seat inside the car is a small box containing the switches controlling the apparatus -- the sockets for the connections to the four head-telephones which enable four persons to "listen-in." Special precautions have been taken to prevent interference or "screening" by the sparking plugs, magneto, and dynamo affecting the working of the set.<sup>38</sup>

Whilst the in-car wireless itself appears clumsy, and a less than practical accessory for safe motoring, the temporary transmissions from the Daimler centre, intended initially to demonstrate the Daimler-Marconiphone, were available to any wireless user able to tune in to the signal. The transmissions of the 2BP station certainly benefits from the contemporary excitement around wireless broadcasting particularly strong in Glasgow, and Scotland as a whole, with the imminent opening of the British Broadcasting Company's Glasgow main station. The type of programming undertaken by 2BP seems very similar in content and style to the BBC stations already in operation (those in London, Manchester, Birmingham and Newcastle), and to the model used by the programme makers at 5SC when it began on 6 March of the same year:

A temporary wireless station, from which a broadcasting service will be given from to-night until the end of next week, has been erected at the

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<sup>36</sup>'Wireless Telephones For Cars.' *Glasgow Herald* 22 Jan. 1923: 6.

<sup>37</sup>This was indeed a very low level of power. When 5SC opened on 6 March 1923 it operated with an available power of one and a half kilowatts.

<sup>38</sup>'Broadcasting Sets For Motor Cars: A Daimler Company Innovation.' *Glasgow Herald* 25 Jan. 1923: 10.

premises of the Daimler Motor Company (Limited), Kelvinside. The wireless installation has been erected by the Marconi Company for the Daimler Company, who are operating the station during the Motor Show by special permission of the Postmaster-General. The primary purpose of the station is to demonstrate the possibilities of wireless in connection with receiving sets in motor cars, but a broadcasting service is also to be given. For owners of crystal sets and others of limited range in Glasgow the service will give the first opportunity for picking up broadcasting signals. The temporary Daimler station, the call [sign] of which is "2 B.P." and which is working on a wavelength of 290 metres, has, during trials in the last few days, been heard clearly within a radius of over 10 miles of Glasgow. ... This broadcasting transmission was originally arranged for the benefit of motorists wishing to try the Daimler motor carriages, which are being shown at the forthcoming motor exhibition, equipped with Daimler Marconiphone reception apparatus. In view, however, of the very large numbers of "listeners-in" in the Glasgow area, the concert programme has been considerably amplified. ...<sup>39</sup>

The *Glasgow Herald*, when publishing the schedules of the various wireless stations refers to 'concerts', and so this not just descriptive of the actual programmes but is also connotative of what the content and the culture of wireless during this early period was perceived to be about. Programmes being transmitted from 2BP fit into this ideological scheme -- classical music and opera, but also more popular elements including the daily early evening show presented by Lupino Lane<sup>40</sup> and the 'Children's Story,' one of which was J J Bell's *Wee Macgregor* -- complete with BBC-modelled 'Aunties' and 'Uncles' including Auntie Meg, Uncle Tom and Uncle Harry.<sup>41</sup> Programme previews go on to describe two talks given from the 2BP 'studio'. Both point to the public service functions that wireless, it seemed, had to fulfil:

The Church is apparently not behind-hand in taking advantage of scientific inventions in broadcasting its messages, and yesterday afternoon [28 January 1923] large numbers who are in possession of wireless receiving sets had the opportunity of hearing a special address by the Rev. Dr. G. H. Morrison,<sup>42</sup> which was given from the Daimler station in Kelvinside.<sup>43</sup>

This broadcast receives comment in the *Glasgow Herald* of 31 January 1923:

Numerous messages which have been received at the Daimler station show that the work has been eminently successful. ... The quality of the

<sup>39</sup>'Wireless Concerts: From Glasgow.' *Glasgow Herald* 24 Jan. 1923: 10.

<sup>40</sup>Lupino Lane was appearing as the Knave of Hearts in the pantomime *The Queen of Hearts* at the Alhambra in Glasgow over the Christmas season of 1922/23.

<sup>41</sup>They are billed in listings for the final evening's broadcasts including 'Children's Stories', broadcast between from 6.30 to 7.00pm on 3 February 1923. 'Programmes For To-night and To-morrow.' *Glasgow Herald* 3 Feb. 1923: 4.

<sup>42</sup>Morrison was the minister of the Wellington Church, Hillhead, Glasgow.

<sup>43</sup>'Wireless Column: The Daimler Station: Sermon Broadcast.' *Glasgow Herald* 29 Jan. 1923: 14.

transmission has been excellent. A personal friend of the Rev. Dr. G. H. Morrison, who gave an address on Sunday, said that he could recognise the tone and inflection of the speaker's voice.<sup>44</sup>

A similar point is made upon the opening of 5SC on 6 March 1923. The *Glasgow Herald's* review of 7 March comments:

One of the most striking features was the ease with which speakers could be recognised by their voices .... Bearing in mind that broadcasting is still in its infancy, the success of the initial programme was outstanding.<sup>45</sup>

The second notable broadcast from 2BP was by the Lord Provost of Glasgow, Sir Thomas Paxton, given on 30 January 1923. It is reported in some detail in the *Herald* and again is interesting because of the emphasis Paxton places on the public service role of wireless:

Through the medium of the Daimler Company's temporary broadcasting station ... Sir Thomas Paxton, Bart., the Lord Provost, last night gave a brief address on the recent developments in the application of wireless telephony. ... He [Sir Thomas] could foresee enormous developments of broadcasting and could conceive many of the advantages which it possessed. The most important of these was that it brought within the reach of peoples and districts widely separated information and intelligence of an important character. The Lord Provost then referred to the inestimable advantage which the invention would be to people who were bedridden and unable to move from their homes by enabling them to keep in touch with outside interests. If one contemplated the future of nations it would be seen how important the invention might be in great and momentous diplomatic discussions where vital issues were at stake and immediate decisions were imperative. ...

At the conclusion of his speech the Lord Provost, accompanied by Lady Paxton, 'listened-in' to the transmission of music by means of a receiving set fitted in a Daimler car.<sup>46</sup>

The regular broadcasts of this commercially orientated wireless station were, variations on the early type of broadcasts which Scottish wireless enthusiasts could already 'listen-in' to as they were broadcast from the BBC's existing main stations. Programme schedules for 2BP are given in the *Glasgow Herald* every day of the station's operation, that is from 25 January to 3 February 1923, and given equal billing with the listings of the BBC stations. That of 29 January is broadly representative:

<sup>44</sup>'The Glasgow Station's Success.' *Glasgow Herald* 31 Jan. 1923: 11.

<sup>45</sup>'5SC' Speaks: Broadcasting From Glasgow.' *Glasgow Herald* 7 Mar. 1923: 11.

<sup>46</sup>'The Lord Provost's Speech Broadcast: Success of the Glasgow Station.' *Glasgow Herald* 31 Jan. 1923: 11.

Programme of the temporary broadcasting station of the Daimler company: --

- 5.30 Miss Mona Vivian
- 6.00 Mr Lupino Lane
- 6.30 Mr John Dickson, 'cellist
- 6.45 Children's Story
- 7.00 Close Down
- 7.30 Miss Maud MacLean, soprano; Mr James Anderson, baritone; Miss Peggy Rae, mezzo-soprano.
- 8.00 Miss Jessie Livingstone, soprano; Miss Mabel Denham Smith, soprano.
- 10.00 Close Down.

Accompanists -- Mr Charles Simpson and Miss Elsa Whyte.<sup>47</sup>

The broadcasts by both 5MG and 2BP were listened to much further afield than had been expected. 5MG reached as far as Dundee,<sup>48</sup> and 2BP was even more successful:

Letters have been received stating that the concerts transmitted from the Daimler Company's temporary transmitting station, "2BP," at Glasgow have been clearly picked up in Edinburgh, Dunfermline, and Inverness.<sup>49</sup>

Apart from the pleasure afforded by the concerts to 'listeners-in', the temporary services gave an opportunity to many to experience the delights and the difficulties of broadcasting.<sup>50</sup> The 2BP station proved to be a transitory feature of the airwaves, but 5MG was more influential. With the imminent opening of the BBC Glasgow main station the continuing activity of 5MG, and its 'family links' with the BBC, perhaps encouraged Reith to use this experimental station -- its plant and its broadcasters -- as the basis for 5SC:

The B.B.C. emerged not only with 5MG's studio equipment, but with J. M. A. Cameron as the engineer to operate it. From George Garscadden they leased the top floor and attic of Rex House for studio and offices.<sup>51</sup>

### The BBC in Scotland

As has been mentioned, histories of broadcasting and the BBC tend to be histories of broadcasting from London and so are somewhat prejudiced towards highlighting the many firsts and achievements emanating from the metropolitan studios. However, because of the structural independence of the regional centres this core-specific

<sup>47</sup>Programme listings from the *Glasgow Herald* 29 Jan. 1923: 14. All times are pm.

<sup>48</sup>BBC, *Early Days of Broadcasting in Scotland*: N.pag.

<sup>49</sup>'Wireless Column: The Daimler Station.' *Glasgow Herald* 29 Jan. 1923: 14.

<sup>50</sup>See 'Broadcasting From Glasgow: Success of the temporary Station.' *Glasgow Herald* 5 Feb. 1923: 12.

<sup>51</sup>BBC, *Early Days of Broadcasting in Scotland*: N.pag.

approach tends to overlook the importance of broadcasts produced outwith the perceived cultural centre. The BBC's two Scottish main stations were at the forefront in the development of broadcast radio communication -- and particularly in the development of distinctive regional (or national) radio as well as the development of radio drama as a distinct genre. The progress made in the early period was particularly influential. Despite the importance of this short time in broadcast history, it is rather difficult to discover what the very early months at 5SC, or indeed any of the other stations were like. One of the reasons for this is that the *Radio Times*, the public journal of the BBC, did not start publication until 28 September 1923<sup>52</sup> -- and while newspapers like the *Glasgow Herald* did publish daily programme schedules these more often than not fail to contain production details, cast lists, producers and so on. Even publications like *Popular Wireless Weekly* were more interested in the technical aspects of broadcasting than in the entertainment aspect of wireless, which the more popular *Radio Times* discussed. The success of the *Radio Times* seems to have been assured with the first edition, of which Jonathon Hill notes that 'within a few days over 250,000 copies had been sold.'<sup>53</sup>

Even in the pre-5SC period the *Glasgow Herald* did much to inform its readers about wireless developments taking place in the broadcasting stations already in operation, to educate wireless enthusiasts as to the technical aspects of the new medium and to create an atmosphere of anticipation for the opening of their own local station. The *Herald* ran a weekly wireless column (published on Mondays) which encouraged enthusiasts to write of the more technical aspects of radio broadcasting, a feature of which was the regular correspondences about 'listening-in' to distant broadcasting stations, initially those transmitting from England, then further afield in mainland Europe and then even extending to North America. The opening of 5SC is discussed for months in advance, but reaching a level of great excitement as March 1923 approached:

The Glasgow Corporation has, I understand, informed the British Broadcasting Company that it will permit the erection of a broadcasting station at Port-Dundas, on the site originally applied for. Details of the agreement have yet to be arranged, but a start is being made straightaway with the work, and the bulk of the gear, which is being provided by the Marconi Company, is already on its way. Much spade work has been done by an advance guard of experts, and it is anticipated that the station will be ready for testing in four or five weeks' time. Broadcasting proper will in that event be possible on or after the 1st of March. The company is particularly anxious that the station should be

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<sup>52</sup>It is all but impossible to discover what the first decades of Scottish broadcasting sounded like as programmes went out live. Even later, when technological developments would have made it easier to record sound broadcasts, this was either simply not done or perhaps the tapes used were later wiped when they were needed for another production.

<sup>53</sup>Hill, *Radio!*: 44.

completed in time for the opening of the grand opera season in Glasgow, for, according to the high official with whom I discussed the matter to-day, nothing has tended more to popularise wireless than the outstanding success which has, particularly during the past week, attended the broadcasting of opera at Covent Garden.<sup>54</sup>

This article, from 23 January 1923, continuing under the heading of 'Equality With London', confirms that the Glasgow-based station will be as powerful as the London transmitter -- one and a half kilowatts, with the ability to expand to three kilowatts. The comparison with the London production centre is, then, clearly drawn. There are, however, important differences which the *Herald's* London Correspondent is keen to stress:

It will ... be possible for listeners-in in all parts of Scotland to hear the Glasgow programmes. These will be drawn up on lines precisely similar to those in London, with one important exception, which Sabbatarians may, if they will, attribute to a sympathy with their views - - there will not, according to present arrangements, be any broadcasting on Sundays.<sup>55</sup>

By the time 5SC was officially opened, some six weeks later, however, Sunday broadcasting was a permanent feature of the wireless service -- although with perhaps less talk than on other days of the week.<sup>56</sup>

Much of the coverage given to the development of wireless technology and its use centres on the technical aspects of the process, and on the skills of the wireless enthusiast trying out new or home-made equipment. Even in the *Glasgow Herald's* Wireless Correspondent's columns space is sometimes used to reflect on the great changes broadcast radio must command:

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<sup>54</sup>'London Correspondence: Glasgow Broadcasting Plans, by Our London Correspondent.' *Glasgow Herald* 23 Jan. 1923:4.

<sup>55</sup>'London Correspondence: Glasgow Broadcasting Plans: Equality With London, by Our London Correspondent.' *Glasgow Herald* 23 Jan. 1923: 4. The article concludes:

Another station is contemplated at Aberdeen to cater for the North-East of Scotland, and it is unlikely that more than these two will be erected by the company in Scotland. The claims for Edinburgh have been overshadowed by those of Glasgow, but the listeners-in of the Capitol will suffer no disadvantage beyond the possible necessity of buying slightly better receiving sets than will be required for Glaswegians.

<sup>56</sup>Sunday broadcasting continued to be something of a sensitive issue. From 1933 to 1957 the Scottish Regional Director was Church of Scotland minister Melville Dinwiddie. In 1938 the *Glasgow Herald* reports on 'Sunday B.B.C. Music':

The B.B.C. in Scotland have decided to defer to Sabbatarian traditions and modify, where necessary, the programmes of light music that are relayed on Sundays from the Scottish Regional station. Appropriately, Mr Melville Dinwiddie, the regional director, who was formerly a minister of the Church of Scotland, is to act with other officials as censors, and if in their judgement the Sunday morning programmes are 'too Continental' they will be modified.

'An Editorial Diary: Sunday B.B.C. Music.' *Glasgow Herald* 18 June 1938: 10.

Progress in wireless has latterly been of a rather breathless sort, and there are not unwelcome signs of an interval in which, while certainly there will be no definite halt, there may be pauses enabling us to look round and "admire the view." This is all to the good, for too much "boom" is not to the real advantage of any useful development, and during the past 12 months wireless has been going ahead at such a pace that a slower rate of marching, in at any rate the early part of this year, will be beneficial. In a few weeks the broadcasting system proper will have been extended to Glasgow ... and with that fulfilment of long deferred hopes many Scottish amateurs will be able to settle down quietly to the enjoyment of what wireless can give without the drawbacks and the strained efforts attendant, as a rule, upon attempts to listen-in to very distant stations. Success when achieved, as it should be quite easily, will not be as exciting, but in the calmer atmosphere of simple and comfortable reception on a crystal or a valve or two it may well be that improvements will be thought out, and new trains of discovery laid, which will benefit the world of amateur wireless quite as much as many of the high-pressure experiments of last year.<sup>57</sup>

In Scotland at least (and, of course, the *Herald's* Wireless Correspondent is based in London) the pace of change did not let up, particularly in the nature of the broadcast itself which for the first time in 1923 was an indigenous and more or less identifiably Scottish product.

As with all stations in the first years of institution-based broadcasting (that is, broadcasting under the auspices of the British Broadcasting Company) the staff at 5SC had to be involved in all aspects of the running of the station. This included administration, production, publicity and public relations (particularly through the *Radio Times*) as well as taking part as performers in actual studio productions. Herbert A Carruthers was the Station Director of 5SC, his responsibilities included announcing and even acting but, with his musical background,<sup>58</sup> he was also the conductor of the Station Orchestra and appeared as Uncle Bert for the station's *Children's Corner*. Mungo M Dewar was initially an announcer, doubling as Uncle Mungo. Announcer A

<sup>57</sup>'Wireless: On Going Slow, by Our Wireless Correspondent.' *Glasgow Herald* 29 Jan. 1923: 14.

<sup>58</sup>See *Radio Times* 5 Oct.1923: 64. Carruthers, like many of the important figures in the life of contemporary Glasgow, is the subject of a 'Men You Know' feature in the *Bailie*. It notes: He is a gifted musician. An Edinburgh boy ... he started his musical career as a choir-boy in St Mary's Cathedral....[After study he] was appointed sub-organist of the Cathedral.

... Mr Carruthers obtained a commission in the Royal Marines, and was promoted to the rank of captain....

Coming to Glasgow he was appointed organist in Park Parish Church ....

Since the Man You Know under took the duties of Broadcaster in Chief and director of the Glasgow Station, he has devoted his whole attention to the one object of maintaining the cultural value of his work at a high level and gilding the educational pill with a fascinating and entertaining gloss. There is a great future for broadcasting. Already we have had the finest operatic singers in Glasgow, stars from the British National Opera Company, and on Friday of this week 'The Merchant of Venice' is to be broadcast.

There is no doubt that the winter of our discontent in the industrial life of Glasgow will be mitigated by the gladdening wave-lengths from 5SC.

'Men You Know.' *Bailie* 5 Sept. 1923: 3-4.

H Swinton Paterson was Uncle Alec and Kathleen Garscadden, Auntie Cyclone, later Auntie Kathleen. She was also in charge of Women's and Children's programming -- and, therefore, one of the first female producers to work for the BBC. The first 5SC *Woman's Hour*, produced by Garscadden, was broadcast less than a month after the opening of the studio on 2 May 1923. As mentioned, J M A Cameron was the station's Engineer in Charge -- later he became the Scottish Regional Director. Of the original 5SC staff at least Carruthers, Garscadden and Cameron had worked for 5MG and had links with the Park church and John Reith's father.

One of the first histories of BBC broadcasting was published as early as 1924 by C A (or Cecil) Lewis, then 'Organiser of Programmes, B.B.C.' as well as being the particularly popular Uncle Caractacus of 2LO and the *Radio Times*. His book, *Broadcasting From Within*, contains as its final section short commentaries on the senior members of the BBC's staff. On Carruthers Lewis writes:

Mr. Carruthers has been seen struggling to please the Glasgow listeners ever since the station opened in March last year. I say struggling because it is notorious that the Scotsman [sic] expects his money's worth. I think every Glasgow listener will acquaint [sic] the station director, however, of any shortcomings in this respect.<sup>59</sup>

5SC was also one of the centres at the forefront of more technical aspects of early programme making. On 19 March 1923, 5SC staged the first 'OB' (outside broadcast) in Scotland. They were able to broadcast live part of an opera being performed by the British National Opera Company at the Coliseum, Eglinton Street, Glasgow.<sup>60</sup> This had already proved a popular broadcasting idea when it had been initiated by the Marconi Company's experimental station, the London Broadcasting Company (the Marconi operated 2LO) in January 1923. The success of this programme is acknowledged by the 'Wireless Correspondent' of the *Glasgow Herald*:

Last week a very notable wireless event took place, the significance of which is at present, perhaps, not fully realised. On Monday night [8 January 1923] for the first time portions of the opera which was being performed at Covent Garden were transmitted from Marconi House by the London Broadcasting Company, and the experiment proved so remarkably successful that further transmissions of the same sort have been made nightly and are being continued. ... reception has been amazingly satisfactory. Using two valves with a telephone, and four

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<sup>59</sup>C A Lewis, *Broadcasting From Within* (London: George Newnes, 1924): 168.

<sup>60</sup>The British National Opera Company perform for three nights at the Coliseum. Their programme included *Das Ring Der Niebling*, Bach's cantata *Phoebus and Pan* and *Il Trovatore*. At the same time the Carl Rosa Company was in the middle of a five week season at the Theatre Royal, Glasgow.

## Plate xi



The original 5SC staff --  
Herbert A Carruthers, Alec H Swinton Paterson,  
Mungo M Dewar and Kathleen Garscadden.  
(from *Early Days of Broadcasting in Scotland*)

with a loud-speaker, the writer, who lives 20 miles from London, has been taking in these operatic excerpts with complete enjoyment ...<sup>61</sup>

These broadcasts were audible much further afield than that indicated by the writer of the column. Correspondence to the *Glasgow Herald* (on the following weeks, 15 and 22 January 1923) show that wireless owners in Scotland were 'listening-in.' These broadcasts, although restricted to the enthusiast scanning the airwaves for a signal, were in their character clearly very much part of the public service ethos that so dominates contemporary thought as to the use and nature of radio. Indeed the type of material being transmitted by the experimental stations was almost indistinguishable to that used by the BBC in the very early years. The *Glasgow Herald* writer even picks up on this prejudice:

What can be done [as regards outside broadcasts] in the case of Covent Garden can be done in that of many other centre of musical or vocal entertainment or instruction, while doubtless in due course church and chapel services will come to be broadcasted for the benefit, more particularly, of patients in hospitals or nursing homes and of dwellers in remote country districts.<sup>62</sup>

The first 5SC outside broadcast, however, was of extracts from a performance of Wagner's *Das Rheingold* on 19 March 1923 transmitted from the Coliseum, Glasgow. For this a single microphone was installed at the stage's footlights. There was no rehearsal with no test run or sound balance worked out. The singers' performances just went straight on to the air. A BBC booklet celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of BBC Scotland may comment on the wrong opera (although *Die Walküre* was broadcast on 29 March), but it does capture the mood of the moment:

Everything happened quickly at the B.B.C. If you could open up on March 6th from the studio with one microphone, possession of a second mike a fortnight later obviously means you can now do an Outside Broadcast -- of what? Simple. The British National Opera Company are appearing at the Coliseum Theatre in Glasgow.

Opera has never been broadcast before [sic]. 5SC will do the first act of "Die Walkure." [sic] How? Straightforward. Your studio microphone feeds into control room, and is linked by line to your transmitter and aerial at Glasgow Corporation Tramways Pinkston Power station at Port Dundas. Book two telephone lines to the Coliseum. Put your second mike in the footlights, rig a double-throw switch in control room. The announcer speaks in the studio; you throw the switch, and opera comes out of Port Dundas.

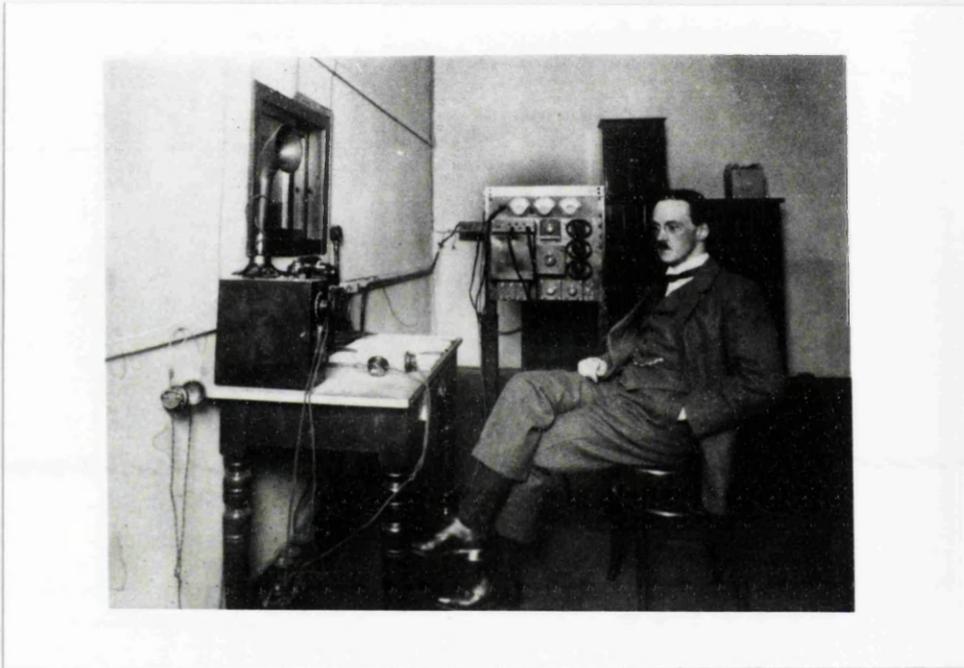
No 'balance' between orchestra and soloists, no rehearsal. Result? Sackfuls of mail from delighted listeners.<sup>63</sup>

<sup>61</sup>'The Opera Transmissions.' *Glasgow Herald* 15 Jan. 1923: 6.

<sup>62</sup>'The Opera Transmissions.' *Glasgow Herald* 15 Jan. 1923: 6.

<sup>63</sup>BBC, *Early Days Of Broadcasting In Scotland*: N.pag.

## Plate xii



J M A Cameron  
at the original 5SC control room equipment, 1923.  
(from *Early Days of Broadcasting in Scotland*)

This might suggest that the broadcast was a something of a spontaneous event, that the British National Opera Company were fortuitously performing in Glasgow just as 5SC became equipped to cope with non-studio bound programme material. Instead the event had been long anticipated and, almost certainly, as long planned for. An article, 'The Proposed Glasgow Station,' previewing the BBC's 5SC, on 20 January 1923 in the *Glasgow Herald* comments that:

It is expected that arrangements will be made to broadcast the performances of the British National Opera Company on the occasion of their visit to the Coliseum, Glasgow, in March. The broadcast will be arranged on lines similar to the broadcasting of the operas from Covent Garden, London ... .<sup>64</sup>

Broadcasting, whilst often being spontaneous and live, was also a technically and socially complex medium. This use of available technology is central to the actual social use of radio by broadcasters and 'listeners-in'. The development of the use and the production of broadcasting material is clearly a concern for critics of all kinds, including a BBC practitioner like Carruthers who is aware that the incredible development of broadcasting on the early years of the 1920s does need to be thought through. The *Glasgow Herald* reports an address given by Carruthers some five months after the opening of 5SC:

Broadcasting, he said was an innovation that no one had really had a chance to learn much about it. We believe that upwards of 50,000 people listened-in to the Glasgow station each evening. As yet they had succeeded in merely a little interest in broadcasting, but that interest would grow to such a large extent that broadcasting would become indispensable. ... Their objects were two-fold, first, to provide something that would entertain and interest, and, second, to create a new industry. Both objects had been achieved to a very large extent. They wanted to expand the sphere of their operations. He was in touch with a large number of leading educationalists and hoped to arrange for many of them to give short talks on the subjects upon which they were particularly qualified to speak. ... Referring to the broadcasting of [stage] plays, Mr Carruthers said he had direct evidence in the form of extracts from letters that 2000 people who had heard a portion of some play by wireless had visited the theatre in order to enjoy the full play. There were signs that the opposition of the theatres to broadcasting was giving way.<sup>65</sup>

This was a real, if unlikely, threat by theatre managers to deny the BBC access to broadcasting stage plays:

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<sup>64</sup>'The Proposed Glasgow Station.' *Glasgow Herald* 20 Jan.1923: 10.

<sup>65</sup>'Future of Broadcasting: Work of the Glasgow Station.' *Glasgow Herald* 15 Aug. 1923: 7.

The ban which the Theatrical Managers' Association have placed on the broadcasting of plays, music and other entertainments leaves the British Broadcasting Company placid and serene. "We regret it, but it leaves us unruffled," said a prominent official of the Broadcasting Company to a Press representative on Saturday morning [28 April 1923]. "We don't want to fight, but, by jingo, if we are forced to it we are ready."<sup>66</sup>

Even the *Bailie* has a comment on the continuing dispute between the theatres and the BBC: 'The theatre managers have made the mistake of their lives in trying to boycott the BBC.'<sup>67</sup>

One of the results of this dispute was to encourage the BBC to produce its own drama and variety output, and to create its own performers and 'stars'. Drama is one of the key areas where debates around which the development of the distinctive form of radio centres. Focusing on dramatic and narrative forms highlights a point of tension around the representation of the nation and the national that compliments arguments around the development of a national or an indigenous theatre. While the development of news and current affairs broadcasting, indeed even weather reports, are important nation-building elements of broadcasting (defining the boundaries of the real and imagined community, discovering the 'other' in the legitimised world view) radio drama moves beyond the generic restrictions of reporting fact. Radio drama unites the contemporary with the established literary canon, the play adapted from the stage or from another source with that written especially for radio, the fictional play with the feature, the historical with the mythic. Drama is a crucial point of cultural crossover in terms of texts and personnel both during this early period and indeed up to the present day. Drama is also at the core of much recent critical work on the history of broadcasting.<sup>68</sup> The first ever drama production to emanate from BBC was on 31 August 1923 and was a performance of *Rob Roy*, although initially perceived as 'in the nature of an experiment'<sup>69</sup> because of its ambitious scale, it nevertheless proved to be quite a success as it was repeated just over a month later on 6 October 1923. This event coincided with the first edition of the *Radio Times*, a useful source of information as to the impact of the play:

One of the most interesting radio events of the week will be the broadcast version of *Rob Roy*, which is to be transmitted from Glasgow to three other stations -- Newcastle, Cardiff, and London -- when this romance of old Scotland, adapted for broadcasting by Mr. R. L. Jeffreys [sic] will be unfolded in a way never dreamed of by its originator, Sir Walter Scott, even in his most imaginative moments!

<sup>66</sup>'Broadcasting To Go On.' *Glasgow Herald* 30 Apr. 1923: 6.

<sup>67</sup>'The BBC Boycott.' *Bailie* 14 Jan. 1925: 8.

<sup>68</sup>See Peter Lewis, ed., *Radio Drama* (London: Longman, 1981); John Drakakis, ed., *British Radio Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1981).

<sup>69</sup>'Rob Roy' By Broadcast Wireless.' *Glasgow Herald* 31 Aug. 1923: 4.

Every player has been chosen specially to suit the requirements of broadcasting. The chorus numbers will be sung by a large choir of members of the Glasgow Lyric Club, while the band of the 1st Royal Scots Fusiliers will support the station orchestra.

To Listen [sic] to the story of the doughty Highland chief, to hear the old choruses and minstrel lays sang with true Scottish fervour, and to listen to the bagpipes played as only Scotsmen can play them -- this will be an unprecedented pleasure for thousands south of the Border.<sup>70</sup>

It is, perhaps, interesting to note that this first venture into broadcast drama in Scotland did not employ the much used adaptations of the plays of William Shakespeare, often adapted by Cathleen Nesbitt based at 2LO, which tended to be the most popular form of drama, at least for the station producers, in use at the time.<sup>71</sup> Commenting on the London development of radio drama Val Gielgud notes that in the first year or so of broadcasting 'Shakespeare remained the indispensable ballast of respectable output.'<sup>72</sup> In Gielgud's oft cited *British Radio Drama:1922-'56: A Survey*, the London-based drama producer writes:

It is frequently asserted that the first novel to be adapted as drama for the microphone was Conrad's *Lord Jim*, which Cecil Lewis handled with notable success in February 1927. In fact the first novel adaptation was made from Kingsley's *Westward Ho!* in April 1925. It ran for seventy minutes, and was produced by Howard Rose.<sup>73</sup>

Perhaps though 5SC -- some eighteen months prior to the production of *Westward Ho!* -- had achieved this first?

Only indirectly is *Rob Roy* an adaptation of a novel; instead Jeffrey adapted a version of the National Drama. Although it may not be an overt move towards the creation of a generic form that is uniquely radio drama, it is, in someways, more significant in terms of a distinctive Scottish contribution to the development of broadcast drama and, of course, a milestone in the history of 5SC.<sup>74</sup> To confirm its

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<sup>70</sup>*Radio Times* 28 Sept. 1923: 28.

<sup>71</sup>Such productions were generally very popular. A production of *The Merchant of Venice*, transmitted 7 September 1923, with a cast that includes T M Eadie Palfrey, George Ross, Charles R M Brookes, D M Stewart, R E Jeffrey, J Livingstone Dykes, Jean Smith and Herbert A Carruthers (listing details 'Wireless Concerts: To-day's Programmes.' *Glasgow Herald* 7 Sept. 1923: 6), receives this criticism in the next day's *Herald*:

An outstanding feature of the wireless programme broadcasted from Glasgow station last night was a specially arranged version of 'The Merchant of Venice.' The task of arranging the play for wireless transmission had been admirably carried out by Miss Kathleen Nesbit [sic], and it was produced under the direction of Mr R. E. Jeffrey. ... The transmission of the play was carried out with great success.

'Wireless Concerts:'The Merchant of Venice' By Wireless.' *Glasgow Herald* 8 Sept. 1923: 13.

<sup>72</sup>Gielgud: 19.

<sup>73</sup>Gielgud: 21.

<sup>74</sup>However, it should be note that in 1938, commenting on the opening of the new Broadcasting House in Queen Margaret Drive, Glasgow, the Director-General of the BBC, F W Ogilvie says that:

status as a version of the National Drama the *Radio Times* is the key source. On the one hand is the programme listing which details the characters and cast list, on the other the editorial comment made in the magazine. This very first edition of the *Radio Times* promotes '... Glasgow's already famous version of the Scottish Opera *Rob Roy* ... a ninety minute excerpt of which will be simultaneously radiated from all other stations.'<sup>75</sup> In the subsequent edition of the magazine reference is made to the 'wireless version of the famous national play, *Rob Roy*, which was received with great cordiality by listeners in Scotland.'<sup>76</sup>

To turn to the Glasgow station's programme listing. The cast list includes some of the key players in the development of both radio drama and radio acting in the Scotland. Indeed the casting causes comment before and after the broadcast. In a preview article attention is drawn to the fact that, 'In selecting the cast an effort has been made to secure persons with appropriate voices for each of the characters -- English, Glasgow, or Highland.'<sup>77</sup> But such efforts may not have been wholly successful. The *Glasgow Herald's* 'Wireless Column' of 10 September quotes a correspondent, 'Glasgow', who:

Refers with warm approval to both the relaid [sic] news bulletin from 2LO and the performance of "Rob Roy" at 5SC on August 31 ult. ... With the "Rob Roy" performance the only fault found by "Glasgow" was the English accent of most of the supposed-to-be Scottish characters.<sup>78</sup>

... broadcasting history was made in Glasgow, for it was from the city, he [Ogilvie] believed, that school broadcasting began. And it was from Glasgow that the first play specially written for broadcasting was put on the air. Appropriately enough, the play was 'Rob Roy.'

'Broadcasting House.' *Glasgow Herald* 19 Nov. 1938: 11.

Indeed in the BBC's own publication, *BBC Yearbook: 1933*, a number of Glasgow broadcast 'firsts' are detailed, including first schools programming, the first adaptation of a Greek play (Sophocles's *Antigone* translated by Professor Harrower of Glasgow University) and 'The first broadcast play, *Rob Roy*, [which] was given there in August 1923.' See 'Scotland: ... The Early Days in Scotland.' *BBC Yearbook: 1933*: 241.

<sup>75</sup>*Radio Times* 28 Sept. 1923: 12. The repeated broadcast was only SB to Newcastle, Cardiff and London and not 'all other stations.'

<sup>76</sup>*Radio Times* 5 Oct. 1923: 42.

<sup>77</sup>'Rob Roy' To Be Broadcast.' *Glasgow Herald* 23 Aug. 1923: 5.

<sup>78</sup>'Wireless Column: Glasgow Notes by Our Wireless Correspondent.' *Glasgow Herald* 10 Sept. 1923: 6. The *Radio Times* lists the event as follows:

7.30[pm] -- *Rob Roy* -- Broadcast version to be transmitted by the wireless from Glasgow -- Characters -- HOSTESS, Susie Maxwell; ROB ROY MACGREGOR, R. E. Jeffrey; MR. OWEN, J.A. Gibson; FRANCIS OSBALDISTONE, J. Gregor MacGregor; SIR FREDERICK VERNON, T. M. Eadie Palfrey; [DIANA VERNON] SPEAKER, Nan Scott; DIANA VERNON, SINGER, Edith Brass; DOUGAL, John Kaid MacLean; BAILIE NICOL JARVIE, George Ross; RASHLEIGH OSBALDISTONE, D. M. Stewart; MACSTUART, W. G. Stephen; MAJOR GALBRAITH, J. Livingstone Dykes; JEAN MACALPINE, Susie Maxwell; CAPTAIN THORNTON, L. R. Piper; HELEN MACGREGOR, Mrs. R. E. Jeffrey.

SPEAKER OF PROLOGUES, MR. HERBERT A. CARRUTHERS. The Chorus Numbers will be sung by a large choir of the LYRIC CLUB, Glasgow, by kind permission of the President and Committee.

Despite this dissent the general success of the production is clear from the contemporary review:

The wireless programme broadcasted from Glasgow station last night created a great deal of interest over a wide area as it included a special wireless adaptation of the popular Scottish play "Rob Roy." The piece ... was the most ambitious attempt of the kind yet made from any broadcasting station in the country. The transmission of the play proved highly successful and fully justified the great pains which the company took to secure the best results. Reports from various quarters show that the actors and vocalists were heard clearly and distinctly throughout the Glasgow area.<sup>79</sup>

The event was also reviewed outwith the columns of the broadcast press. The *Bailie*<sup>80</sup> comments on its wider context in Glasgow's theatre history:

"Ma Conscience!" The classic exclamation of Bailie Nicol Jarvie has been repeated in every corner of the globe. It is wearing on to a hundred years since Sir Walter Scott listened with delight to the playing of his own creation in Edinburgh, and there is no doubt that the genius of Charles Mackay did much to make "Rob Roy" a stage production of unique appeal. Occasion was taken in the Jubilee issue of this journal last year to note the interesting coincidence of that the first issue of the paper in 1872 contained a critique of the Scottish play, and that fifty years later, in 1922, a revival of "Rob Roy" had been received in the city with unabated interest. It was a safe prediction that the play would continue to enjoy its pride of place in Scottish drama, but it was not then in the mind of the writer of that article that "Rob Roy" would be so soon given to the world by the wonderful new medium which is destined to have such a revolutionary influence on the artistic and cultural life of the nation. The broadcasting of "Rob Roy" in the Glasgow, or Scottish, area on Friday evening was the most ambitious attempt of the kind that has yet been made by any of the BBC stations in the country, and judged by the new standard of criticism that must now be employed in this connection, it can be set down at once as a complete success. The interest aroused in what was virtually an experiment was quite extraordinary, and evidence has poured in from all parts of the country that the play, with its musical embellishments, yielded the highest pleasure to listeners not only in the crowded centres but in the lone shielings and remote clachans of Scotland. ...<sup>81</sup>

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THE WIRELESS STATION ORCHESTRA will be considerably augmented for this occasion. LEADER OF ORCHESTRA, J. A. FELLOWES.

THE MILITARY BAND OF THE FIRST ROYAL SCOTS FUSILIERS will play the necessary military music (by kind permission of the Commanding Officer). The pipes will also be from the above Regiment.

The Vocal and Instrumental music for the production will be under the direction of MR. EDWIN MOIR (HON. CONDUCTOR, THE LYRIC CLUB). The whole production will be produced and directed by Mr. R. E. Jeffrey, who has adapted this well known play for wireless transmission.

10.45[pm] -- Close Down.

*Radio Times* 28 Sept. 1923: 23.

<sup>79</sup>'Broadcasting 'Rob Roy'.' *Glasgow Herald* 1 Sept. 1923: 9.

<sup>80</sup>The *Bailie* has a real debt to the text of *Rob Roy* given its slogan of 'Ma Conscience!'

<sup>81</sup>'Men You Know.' *Bailie* 5 Sept. 1923: 3.

Initially the production's success is rewarded when it is repeated and this broadcast to other BBC stations. The technology of the period meant that the recording of a production was, if not impossible, then at least impractical. To repeat *Rob Roy*, then, meant that the whole production had to be restaged and the performance again broadcast live. Positive response to this was immediate. The next edition of the *Radio Times* (5 October 1923) includes coverage of the opening of the Aberdeen station, the seventh main station. The northern-most of the BBC's stations had studios at 15 Belmont Street, Aberdeen, was given the call-sign 2BD and opened on 10 October 1923. In the *Radio Times* section 'People in the Programmes' the following announcement is made:

Mr. R. E. Jeffrey has been appointed the Director of the new British Broadcasting station at Aberdeen. It will be recalled that a few weeks ago Mr. Jeffrey produced a wireless version of the famous national play, *Rob Roy*, which was received with great cordiality by all the listeners in Scotland. The officials of the Broadcasting Company were so impressed by Mr. Jeffrey's evident mastery of stage-craft [sic], that overtures were made to him to ally himself permanently with the B.B.C..<sup>82</sup>

Other members of early 2BD staff included W D Simpson, A M Shinnie (who appeared in early *Children's Corner* as Uncle Sandy), Winifred Manners (Auntie Win) and H J McKee (Uncle Harry). From the *Radio Times* it is clear that the first night announcer was in fact Glasgow's Herbert Carruthers, featured the pipe band of the Gordon Highlanders and that the opening address was given by the Marquis of Aberdeen. The launch programme (the details of which are, in fact, given under the Glasgow listings in the *Radio Times*) was SB to Glasgow.

In some ways, the most interesting of the two Scottish main stations in the very early period is Aberdeen<sup>83</sup> -- mainly because of the presence and lasting influence of R E Jeffrey and his evident commitment to indigenous production, to new writing and to developing and exploiting the skills of particular actors. Both Scottish main stations pioneer work that is only later picked up on by the metropolitan studios, in particular the creation and use of a 'repertory company' of actors, also a feature of the Dundee relay station's operation.<sup>84</sup>

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<sup>82</sup>People in the Programmes.' *Radio Times* 5 Oct. 1923: 42.

<sup>83</sup>Aberdeen was responsible for a number of broadcasting 'firsts' including the first Gaelic broadcast on 2 December 1923. See Dinwiddie, *The Scot and His Radio*: N.pag.; and *BBC Fact Sheet: Number 44: BBC Scotland*. Later in the 1920s a fortnightly series of programmes, of Gaelic song, stories and talk, an Aberdeen feature was 'supplemented by a scheme to bring before the microphone the best-known Gaelic choirs in Scotland.' See 'Scotland: ... Gaelic.' *BBC Handbook: 1929* (London: BBC, 1929): 89. The series continued into the 1930s. See 'Scotland.' *BBC Handbook: 1930* (London: BBC, 1930): 97.

<sup>84</sup>The first play to be broadcast from Dundee was J A Ferguson's *Campbell of Kilmohr*, produced 9 January 1925 by Fred Bruce. The cast was Ellen Abbot, Mae Cham, Charles Ireland, Edward Martin and Bruce himself. See *Radio Times* 2 Jan. 1925: 75. The first play from Edinburgh

**Plate xiii**

**R E Jeffrey.**

*(from Early Days of Broadcasting in Scotland)*

R E Jeffrey initiated much in the expansion of drama broadcasting both at 5SC as producer and at Aberdeen as Station Director before moving to London to head drama productions there. During this time he published a number of articles on radio drama, primarily in the *Radio Times*<sup>85</sup> Jeffrey entered broadcasting after a career as elocutionist, lecturer in public speaking and acting ('... as a leading actor in the provinces he has played "Raffles" some four hundred times.'<sup>86</sup>). His acting career, which also led to theatre production, points to an important crossover for broadcasting and for theatre as the new medium developed:

In 1920 he leased the Aldwych Theatre in London and presented there "MacBeth," with Mr. J K. Hackett and Mrs. Patrick Campbell in the leading rôles. In conjunction, too, with Mr. Gilbert Porteous he presented "La Tosca" with Ethel Irving, and assisted with Viola Tree in the production of "The Unknown." During this period he also produced his own play "The Dragon."

In addition, he has written some six other plays and produced them in the provinces and in Scotland, particularly at the Glasgow Theatre Royal.

...  
[For the BBC] he has produced several Scottish sketches and comic operas, and has succeeded in gaining the enthusiastic support of Scottish musicians and educational authorities.<sup>87</sup>

Jeffrey's early productions, mostly from Aberdeen, like the productions from 5SC, follow, in some measure, the kind of play that found favour in Scotland, particularly with the amateur theatre groups. The broadcasters produce a large number of one act plays, predominantly comic, and often with a local dimension -- in terms of setting or language used. An early 'Scottish Night' from Glasgow, on 24 June 1924, featured a typical programme of three plays -- a production model used by the Scottish National Players. Indeed, this evening of *Glenforsa* by John Brandane and A W Yuill, *The Mother* by George Blake and *The Crystal Set* by John H Bone, although not listed as such, is clearly mounted by the Players -- the casts include Elliot C Mason, R B Wharrie, Jean Taylor Smith, Meg Buchanan and Grace McChlery.<sup>88</sup> The evening is also previewed in the *Radio Times*:

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featured 'The Community Players in *Pople's Experiment* a comedy in one act by R. A. Roxburgh.' Broadcast on 25 June 1924, the cast was D. R. Harvey, R. A. S. Thompson, Jean Kerr, Miss J. B. Donaldson and Peggy Bickerstaff. See *Radio Times* 20 June 1924: 551.

<sup>85</sup>See, for example, 'Wireless Drama.' *Radio Times* 6 June 1924: 438-439; 'The Need for a Radio Drama.' *Radio Times* 17 July 1925: 151; and Jeffrey's 'Foreword.' Gordon Lea, *Radio Drama and How to Write It* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1926).

<sup>86</sup>'BBC Personalities: Mr. R. E. Jeffrey, Station Director, Aberdeen.' *Radio Times* 14 Mar. 1924: 460.

<sup>87</sup>'BBC Personalities: Mr. R. E. Jeffrey....' *Radio Times* 14 Mar. 1924: 460.

<sup>88</sup>See *Radio Times* 20 June 1924: 535.

An interesting item in the Glasgow programme on Tuesday, June 24th, will be a one-act play entitled *The Mother*. The author, Mr. George Blake, who is a novelist as well as a playwright, came from Glasgow six weeks ago to be acting editor of *John O'London's Weekly*. Before coming south he was closely associated with the Scottish National Players, who have broadcast more than one item in their repertoire from the Glasgow Station in the past. *The Mother* is a grim and tragic tale of Hebridean life, but it is, in its nature, eminently suited for broadcasting purposes, being crisp in dialogue and direct in action.<sup>89</sup>

The chamber pieces that the Players tended to produce were popular wireless productions. They first performed for 5SC on 8 April 1924 with another three play programme. At that time the *Radio Times* declares that 'The Scottish National Theatre Society presents the Scottish National Players' in *A Valuable Rival* by Neil F Grant, *The Dawn* by Naomi Jacob and Harold Chapin's *The Philosopher of Butterbiggins* -- the casts again included Mason, McChlery and Wharrie, as well as Nan Scott and Morland Graham. This three-part structure to an evening of drama was one typical for both broadcasting and amateur drama. Increasingly, however, single plays, and longer plays became more the norm for the wireless, but the shift was a slow one. When the Scottish National Players performed they generally presented a three or two play programme.<sup>90</sup>

The short comic plays that these two main stations in Scotland produced were generally plays written for theatre production, but increasingly, and in parallel with the situation in the amateur theatre, short plays written for wireless production were written by enthusiastic amateur writers, and further, were written by those who were to perform in them. This was the case at both 5SC and 2BD where Jeffrey, Dufton Scott and Halbert Tatlock wrote plays and sketches to subsequently appear in them or to produce them. In addition to the Scottish plays that both theatre and radio used this crossover extended to other favourite texts of the amateur theatres and of the SCDA. Scottish broadcast favourites with their origins in the theatre and, more particularly, the amateur theatre were *Campbell of Kilmohr* and *The Philosopher of Butterbiggins*, supplemented by any number of adaptations of Scott. Eugene O'Neill's one act play *In the Zone*, another popular text for amateur performers, was first produced on radio in Scotland by the '5SC Repertory Company' on 23 April 1924 as part of a 'Nautical Night.'<sup>91</sup>

Once in charge at Aberdeen Jeffrey is rather innovative -- and while he certainly uses the expected repertory of Shakespearian texts he consistently mixes this with a

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<sup>89</sup>'People in the Programmes: Hearing.' *Radio Times* 20 June 1924: 529.

<sup>90</sup>The first radio performance of Gordon Bottomley's *Gruach* on 16 September 1924 is presented together with Cormac Simpson's *Scobie Better Himself*. See *Radio Times* 12 Sept. 1924: 489, 495.

<sup>91</sup>*Radio Times* 18 Apr. 1924: 141.

more local fare. All the stations' broadcast schedules tend to be structured around a particular topic -- Popular Music Night, British Composers Night, Shakespearian Night -- and these themes tend to be fairly similar across the country. Jeffrey introduced evenings which were, almost by definition, distinctively Scottish. He staged Doric Evenings, Scottish Evenings, Students' Evenings (using the talents and resources available to him from the students of Aberdeen University) and the Literary Evenings which were eventually picked up by the *Radio Times* as a distinctive and popular part of both the Aberdeen and the Glasgow programmes.<sup>92</sup> One of the earliest thematic evenings from Aberdeen was the 'Scotch Night' of 30 November 1923. The *Radio Times* lists 'An auld Scotch Night, in an auld Scot's Hoose, wi' auld Scotch songs, Stories and Folk. Written and arranged by Mr. R. E. Jeffrey.'<sup>93</sup> Broadcasting here using local popular and folk culture as a hook for listeners.

An early character to feature in Aberdeen schedules was 'Mr McWhackle' (played by Jeffrey). This seems to have functioned as a dramatised bracketing device to contextualise an evening's programming. In one programme this is less than subtly achieved when 'Mr. McWhackle buys a Receiving Set, His Freens frae Aiberdeen visit him and they all listen.'<sup>94</sup> However, on other occasions he 'visits a travelling fair'<sup>95</sup> and 'visits a country concert' which is closed 'with a local amateur competition' -- this enabling, within a dramatised narrative, a programme of local music and song.<sup>96</sup> Drama is, therefore, used to create a familiar context for radio. More specifically using the codes and the conventions of the dominant form of (theatre) drama in Scotland at the time, radio producers familiarize their medium, to allow audiences a way into listening to both music and drama on the radio. After all, radio is a new medium entering the domestic space for the first time. It is only after both producers and listeners learn the basic vocabulary of drama on the radio and radio drama that more ambitious productions and more demanding narratives can be attempted.

In addition, away from London there is, perhaps, a greater need to turn to the local and the indigenous as the products of the London publishing and West End theatre scenes are too distant and too expensive. The economic appeal of local culture is then repeated in the enthusiasm of the culturally marginalized artist to gain access to new and bigger audiences. Within Scottish theatre arts the project is two fold, both literary and industrial, cultural and economic: to disinter and to re-present the marginalized texts and

<sup>92</sup>See 'Official News and Views: Broadcast Story Recitals.' *Radio Times* 22 Aug. 1924: 355.

<sup>93</sup>*Radio Times* 23 Nov. 1923: 331.

<sup>94</sup>*Mr. McWhackle buys a Receiving Set* produced from Aberdeen 15 March 1924 with a cast that includes regular 2BD actors Dufton Scott, Christine Crowe and Daisy Moncur. *Radio Times* 7 Mar. 1924: 423.

<sup>95</sup>*McWhackle and Mains Family Visit a Travelling Fair* arranged by Dufton Scott and produced from Aberdeen 4 July 1924. *Radio Times* 27 June 1924: 17.

<sup>96</sup>*Fourth McWhackle* [sic] *Evening* was broadcast from Aberdeen on 19 April 1924. *Radio Times* 11 Apr. 1924: 103.

forms of Scottish culture; and to provide access to a professional medium for writers and performers limited to an amateur theatre. Within this attempts at producing culturally significant texts (for example, adaptations of the national drama) are indicative of a desire to actually mobilise notions of 'Scottishness' -- it certainly shows a very early ability to look beyond the usual dramatic fare of extracts from the plays of William Shakespeare.

Many of the early one-act plays and sketches produced by the Scottish broadcasters develop from the canon of 'Scots comedy' that was the backbone of indigenous amateur theatre in Scotland in the 1920s. Andrew P. Wilson, first director of the Scottish National Players and a regular adaptor of plays and novels for radio production, created an enduring comedy double-act in *Sandy and Andy*, 'the radio philosophers,' whose roots are very much within this tradition and genre. This theatre connection is reaffirmed by Wilson's publication, around 1947, of six *Sandy and Andy* scripts, originally written for radio production but now 'Specially edited for production as duologues on the concert platform ....'<sup>97</sup> Many of the amateur drama groups were attracted neither to 'difficult', complex drama, nor to full-length plays. The staple fare for such groups, as with the Scottish National Players, tended to be short (one-act) comedies, heavily situation-based and peopled by Scots stereotypes. The theatrical importance of these local plays, with their narrative origins in Chapbooks and theatrical precursors in geggie and music hall comedy, is highlighted by Cameron:

No matter how inconsequential these dramas are in literary terms, they were immensely popular and also important in introducing people who were not regular theatre-goers to drama, presenting as they did no language problem to people unused, or hostile to received pronunciation. The plays had no pretensions to art; they were recreation and entertainment ....<sup>98</sup>

Just this atmosphere of familiarity and easy recognition was one courted by the broadcasters, particular in terms of the early drama output, and one discernible from contemporary production details. Dufton Scott writes a number of Aberdeen set comedies, including *Lawyer and Client* a twenty minute 'Humorous Sketch',<sup>99</sup> Halbert Tatlock a series of sketches, including the 'Glasgow Shopping Series' with one short

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<sup>97</sup>Andrew P. Wilson, *Sandy and Andy: the Radio Philosophers by the Garden Gate* (Galashiels: John McQueen and Son, [1947?]).

The Scottish Theatre Archive at the University of Glasgow holds a major collection of extant Radio Scotland scripts including editions of *Sandy and Andy* radio scripts dating from 1936, 1942, 1946 and 1947 are to be found in the Scottish Theatre Archive.

<sup>98</sup>Cameron, *Study Guide* ...: 42.

<sup>99</sup>*Lawyer and Client* feature Jeffrey and Dufton Scott in the title roles and was broadcast 23 May 1924. *Radio Times* 9 May 1924: 273.

play concerned with *Buying a Crystal Set*.<sup>100</sup> As broadcasting develops (and as producers and audience become more experienced) the character of radio plays changes. Productions become longer and a subgenre of plays based closely on fact is developed -- that is dramatised accounts of historical incidents and characters (for example, a series of famous Scottish trials are dramatised, including *The Trial of Deacon Brodie* by Alec Macdonald,<sup>101</sup> and *The Trial of Thomas Muir* by W Cumming Tait,<sup>102</sup> again, *The Thin Red Line: The Royal Scots* is described as 'A Chronicle Play of the Regiment,' is written by John Gough, author of a number of similar plays,<sup>103</sup> and *March of the 'Forty Five*, to which this study will return, might also fit into this rather loose category). In fact, this type of radio production would evolve into the radio feature.<sup>104</sup> While this evolution of radio drama was not confined to Scottish broadcasting it is, perhaps, interesting to compare the parallel development of Scottish drama for the stage.

In the period from the 1920s until the outbreak of War new Scottish writing develops from the mass of 'Scottish comedies' associated with the SCDA to the new writing associated with the Curtain. In type it is a shift from a diet limited in scope to one more demanding of actor and audience, in simplistic terms from the plays of T M Watson and, for instance, *Beneath the Wee Red Lums*, towards a theatre system able to encompass writers like Robins Millar and, perhaps more influentially, Robert McLellan. The dramaturgical development is also from one-act sketches and comedies (for one-dimensional characters) towards the kind of full-length plays written by McLellan with at least the beginnings of complex characterisation that may be seen in the character of the King in *Jamie the Saxt*.. The type of historical play, full of secondary characters and often with some basis in fact, that McLellan writes for the Curtain, while certainly part of the general tendency of Scottish theatre to use the nation's history as source material, also parallels the development of the feature in broadcasting, a type of drama production which became a prominent part of the programming skills of the Scottish broadcasters many of whom had experience in

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<sup>100</sup>*Buying a Crystal Set* the second in the 'Glasgow Shopping Series was 'Specially written for broadcasting and produced by Halbert Tatlock' and was broadcast on 1 November 1924. *Radio Times* 24 Oct. 1924: 209.

<sup>101</sup>Alec Macdonald, *The Trial of Deacon Brodie: A Play Based on the Report of the Famous Trial* was produced from Edinburgh by Gordon Gildard. Radio feature: transmitted 1 Dec. 1933. ts. BBC Radio Scotland Script: STA Kk Box 4/4.

<sup>102</sup>W Cumming Tait, *The Trial of Thomas Muir*. Radio feature: transmitted 2 Apr. 1935. ts. BBC Scotland Radio Scripts: STA Kk Box 5/4.

<sup>103</sup>John Gough, *The Thin Red Line: The Royal Scots*. Radio feature: transmitted 20 Nov. 1938. ts. BBC Radio Scotland Scripts: STA Kk Box 10/10.

<sup>104</sup>The development of the radio feature is discussed by a number of practitioners. See, for example, Gielgud: 47-52; Robert Kemp, 'Feature Programmes' *This is the Scottish Home Service* ed. Robert Dunnett (Edinburgh: BBC, 1946): 13-15; and *BBC Features* ed. Laurence Gilliam (London: Evans Brothers, 1950).

Scottish theatre: for example, Norman Bruce, the first artistic director at the Curtain, became a producer within the BBC.

While Gielgud may well be correct in the belief that the first novel adapted for sound broadcasting was *Westward Ho!* he is, perhaps, wrong when he says that the first repertory company in the BBC was based in London.

In the same year [1925] a small Repertory Company of actors was formed, though it did not survive, and the idea, was only to be crystalised in practice by the circumstances of the Second German War.<sup>105</sup>

This 1925 company was organised from London with Jeffrey as producer and actually toured the other main stations mounting productions as they went. (This might be seen as a rather superfluous act given the medium and the technology that they were using. It is, however, one repeated by other groups. On 7 September 1931, during one of their regular summer tours, the Scottish National Players performed George Blake's *Clyde Built* at the Aberdeen Exhibition for broadcasting from 2BD.<sup>106</sup> It was staged in full costume to a 'studio audience' who were situated behind a glass front within the actual studio.) In fact the first repertory company in the BBC was the one already established by Jeffrey in Aberdeen in the opening months of 1924. Their first billing as the '2BD Repertory Players' was for *Scenes And Characters From Dickens* broadcast 14 February 1924. The *Radio Times* list the programme as containing 'musical entr'actes' and that:

The scenes and characters presented in this programme will be taken from: *Oliver Twist, Nicholas Nickleby, The Old Curiosity Shop, Pickwick Papers, David Copperfield*. ... [with an interval] talk on 'Charles Dickens -- Reformer.'<sup>107</sup>

No cast list is given for this particular evening. However, from later productions of the '2BD Repertory Players' it is possible to deduce the core group that made up the team -- and then to see that these same actors and announcers had in fact operated from the Aberdeen station from its earliest weeks. The company was more often than not headed by Jeffrey himself (as producer, adaptor, writer and/or actor) and, perhaps, the first female director to work at the BBC, Joyce Tremayne, and then a pool of players (some of them the station's announcers, for instance, W D Simpson, H J McKee, and A M Shinnie, others not). Those who appeared most regularly, in the period until Jeffrey's departure in July of 1924, included Christine Crowe, G R Harvey, E R R

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<sup>105</sup>Gielgud: 21-22.

<sup>106</sup>See 'Scotland: ... Scots Plays and Music.' *BBC Yearbook: 1933: 253*.

<sup>107</sup>*Radio Times* 8 Feb. 1924: 263.

Linklater,<sup>108</sup> Daisy Moncur, D S Raitt and Flossie Tavener with up to a dozen other regulars.

The feature *Farewell, Belmont Street* draws attention to the 2BD Players as one of the highlights of the first fifteen years of wireless broadcasting from Aberdeen:

It was R. E. [Jeffrey] who started the 2BD Players, who had a wide and most ambitious range of productions. — Shakespeare was the first playwright to be honoured with an Aberdeen production, and during 1923 and '24 the 2BD Players put on practically everything from 'Everyman' to 'Between the Soup and the Savoury'.<sup>109</sup>

The first drama output of the new Aberdeen station was, indeed, *An Evening Of Excerpts From Shakespeare's Plays* on 8 November 1923. This might be seen as less original than was expected upon Jeffrey's appointment, but actually the production is not as straightforward as it appears. On the same evening London is producing a programme billed under the theme of a *Shakespeare Event* which is SB to other main stations. The bill of extracts for Aberdeen is quite different and so Jeffrey's independence is underlined as for this first drama evening at 2BD the programme is 'arranged and produced by Mr. R. E. Jeffrey, St[at]io[n]. Director.'<sup>110</sup> The evening consisted of a programme of short extracts from the plays interspersed by music (by Rosse, Mendlessohn and Gounod) and interrupted for 15 minutes by the national news (SB from London) at 9.30pm and the local news and weather at 9.40pm. The extracts used were *The Merchant Of Venice* (act 1, scene 3 and act 4, scene 1 -- abridged), *Romeo And Juliet*: the balcony scene (act 2, scene 2 -- abridged), *Henry V* (act 5, scene 2 -- abridged) and *Hamlet*: the chamber scene (act 3, scene 4 -- abridged). The evening, which began at 7.30pm, ended after the *Hamlet* extract at 10pm.<sup>111</sup> This kind of Shakespeare event was something of a stand-by for the early schedules. Quite clearly, however, such drama productions are not conceived of as just radio drama but are used as a more accessible version of the high culture theatre product. Gielgud acknowledges this as a problem for the early broadcasters<sup>112</sup> but continues by noting that:

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<sup>108</sup>During this period Eric Linklater was a student at Aberdeen University.

<sup>109</sup>Arthur Black, *Farewell, Belmont Street*. Radio talk: transmitted 29 Oct. 1938. ts. BBC Radio Scotland Script: STA Kc Box 11/3. *Between the Soup and the Savoury* 'A comedy in one act by Gertrude Jennings' first was produced by Joyce Tremayne at 2BD on 29 February 1924, with the cast of Flossie Tavener, Daisy Moncur and Christine Crowe. (See *Radio Times* 22 Feb. 1924: 349.) *Everyman: A Morality Play* was first performed at Aberdeen on 18 April 1924 with a cast of G R Harvey, McIntosh Mowatt, Joyce Tremayne, Eric Linklater, Elma Reid, Daisy Moncur, R G McCallum, D S Raitt, Flossie Tavaner and R E Jeffrey. (See *Radio Times* 11 Apr. 1924: 101.)

<sup>110</sup>*Radio Times* 2 Nov. 1923: 195.

<sup>111</sup>Programme details from the *Radio Times* 2 Nov. 1923: 195.

<sup>112</sup>Gielgud: 19-20.

The year 1924, however, still saw the beginnings of the turn of the tide; of a genuine appreciation of the realities and possibilities of the the new medium. In January of that year R. E. Jeffrey produced the first play actually written for broadcasting -- *Danger*, by Richard Hughes, in the ingenious setting of a coal-mine. ... [A *Comedy of Danger* is described as a] brief but effective tragedy.<sup>113</sup>

5SC was not slow to follow the model offered by 2BD. The appeal of the system is clear -- for the months of January and February of 1924 Aberdeen's spoken word and drama output is markedly greater than that of the Glasgow centre of production. Glasgow's own repertory company is first billed as such for a Literary Night featuring *Pride And Prejudice*: 'Percival Steeds, B. A., in a Story Recital of *Pride And Prejudice*, [by] Jane Austen. ... Scenes presented by the '5SC' Dramatic Company.'<sup>114</sup> While Steeds narrated the story, the members of the company performed in dramatised adaptations of scenes depicting 'The Proposal of Mr. Collins' and 'Lady Catherine's Visit.'<sup>115</sup> This was broadcast from 5SC on 14 March 1924. As with the first billing of the 2BD Repertory Players there is no cast list for this production. However, if the search is extended to the other drama texts performed from 5SC at this time some idea of those actors who made up the 'Dramatic Company.'<sup>116</sup> The producer in charge of most of the early drama output from the Glasgow studio (certainly until March 1925) was George Ross -- and it is interesting to note that under him the 5SC Dramatic Company go through various guises, for instance *Irish Tiger*, 'A one act play by J. Maddison Morton' part of an 'Irish Programme' for St. Patrick's Night (broadcast 17 March 1924), is 'Produced by George Ross and '5SC's' Repertory Company.'<sup>117</sup> From mid-1924 Halbert Tatlock begins to produce his own writing and that of others' -- and beginning with *Pole To Pole* (broadcast 1 April 1925)<sup>118</sup> this is sometimes billed as being produced by 'Halbert Tatlock and his Dramatic Company.' Each seem to be the 5SC Dramatic Company by any other name.

Both of the Scottish main stations' repertory companies do seem to be some kind of real and also successful attempt at creating genuine repertory structures within the BBC. And it is the input of R E Jeffrey which does seem to be the catalyst for this development to be introduced and then put to work. Yet within available commentaries

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<sup>113</sup>Gielgud: 20. This play was broadcast 15 January 1924. One of the actors to perform in this radio drama production was Peggy Ashcroft.

<sup>114</sup>*Radio Times* 7 Mar. 1924: 425.

<sup>115</sup>Steeds was a well known elocution teacher in Glasgow. In the mid 1920s he was to give Molly Urquhart her first elocution lessons. See Murdoch: 25.

<sup>116</sup>Those actors who most frequently appeared in the period until 1925 include: J Livingstone Dykes, Louis Greig, Bernardine MacDonald, Gladys MacDonald, Madge Mackenzie, T M Eadie Palfrey, Victoria Radford, George Ross, W G Stephen, Halbert Tatlock, Lester Warwick and Nana Young.

<sup>117</sup>*Radio Times* 14 Mar. 1924: 467.

<sup>118</sup>This was a general title for an evening of two short plays and musical interludes. '*Something Up To Date* by Halbert Tatlock and his dramatic company. ... [And] *Le Jour De Tous Les Sots* specially written for broadcast and produced by Halbert Tatlock.' *Radio Times* 27 Mar. 1925: 15.

on the development of radio drama as a distinctive, vibrant and identifiable form or genre, this seemingly central figure is, if not missing, then at least marginalised within histories and criticisms of radio drama. This seems to stem from the centrality of one book in this critical field -- Gielgud's *British Radio Drama: 1922-1956: A Survey*.

In July 1924 Jeffrey is transferred from Aberdeen to London '... to take charge of the production of broadcast plays.'<sup>119</sup> This is how Gielgud describes the ensuing events:

There followed in July [1924] the appointment of R. E. Jeffrey as Productions Director, and the establishment of a regular department for the presentation of broadcast plays.

In those days, and, indeed, for sometime afterwards, the B.B.C. displayed a considerable inferiority complex in its hankering for the support of 'outsiders' to 'ginger up' its permanent staff, and perhaps give a more respectable air to an organization that might seem to have been rather hurriedly 'jumped up.' In October 1925 Donald Calthrop, with the authority of his reputation as stage producer and first-rate character actor, was appointed "in order to strengthen the dramatic side of broadcasting and to bring in new ideas," just as at a later stage the singular if amicable figure of George Grossmith was to hover in the background as "unofficial adviser" to the department. The latter was, quite simply, ineffective. And I fancy that the combination of Jeffrey and Calthrop can hardly have been either fortunate or happy. It is merely on record that Calthrop left the Corporation in January 1926.

Meanwhile, with the addition to the staff of Howard Rose in July 1925, there appeared on the radio-dramatic scene the man who was to share with Jeffrey so many of the burdens of the real pioneering job, and in due course over the many years of his B.B.C. service to have the satisfaction of seeing in great measure accomplished what he had done so much to initiate.

...  
It should also be recorded that during what may fairly be called the Jeffrey-Rose period there appeared embryos of practically all the the later and well-known offspring of the Drama Department. ...<sup>120</sup>

In London, then, Jeffrey was at the centre of the established theatre industry and at the most bureaucratized production centre in the BBC system. Both were to prove less than invigorating for him. Indeed, the London studios were also not the structure that appealed to Cecil Lewis, who did not stay as a producer with the BBC long after his initial successes. Interestingly Gielgud had been something of a fan: 'I have it on considerable authority of Lord Reith himself that it is to Cecil Lewis that primary credit should be given for the first impulse towards the broadcasting of Drama.'<sup>121</sup>

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<sup>119</sup>*Radio Times* 13 June 1924: 483. In Aberdeen he is succeeded by Neil McLean. See Black, *Farewell, Belmont Street*. Radio talk: transmitted 29 Oct. 1938. ts. BBC Radio Scotland Script: STA Kc Box 11/3.

<sup>120</sup>Gielgud: 20-21.

<sup>121</sup>Gielgud: 17-18.

Jeffrey was interested in the creation of a distinctive type of radio drama, a radio drama noted for its quality and sense of reality.<sup>122</sup> Certainly he enthusiastically used the forms and genres that were available and were popular within the culture of the time. To this end he tried to use the model of theatre production associated with an 'improving' idea of culture. His model but not his strait-jacket was essentially the repertory theatre, its organisation and its canon and the variation of that operated by groups like the Scottish National Players. The radio drama that Jeffrey developed was created in terms familiar to audiences but not restricted by the forms used by theatre companies. His medium was radio not theatre -- but it was from the best of the repertory system that he developed some kind of understanding as to what contemporary drama on the radio could be like: it involved a core group of performers who could come together quickly and work efficiently with perhaps very short rehearsal times; it used both classic texts and new writing; and developed a loyal audience for its products. This quickly became the model familiar to Scottish radio producers and indeed audiences. An extreme example of this is that described in *Early Days Of Broadcasting In Scotland*:

A telephone call could muster the Scottish National Players or the famous Ayrshire team from Ardrossan and Saltcoats, who'd show up at the studio with their current production and, without further rehearsal, simply put it on the air.<sup>123</sup>

This reveals as much about the type of drama these groups produced as it does about radio programming in the 1920s.

The members of these groups and other amateur actors did make up the nucleus of the performers used by 5SC in the 1920s. As such the experience of working within the context of Scottish broadcasting was a further step in the creation of a proficient professional theatre industry in Scotland. Performances by the Scottish National Players *per se* and members of the group in other productions did indeed become a typical feature of the drama output. The underlying point is that following on from the decade of amateur theatre that Scotland had experienced since the demise of the Glasgow Repertory Theatre the development of broadcasting in Scotland -- the development of radio drama, of short stories re-told on air, of features programming, of serials -- helped to re-create an atmosphere conducive to the creation of indigenous professional theatre. John Drakakis argues that:

From its inception in the early 1920s, radio drama was in direct competition with established theatre drama, and it has always, implicitly

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<sup>122</sup>See Briggs, *The Birth of Broadcasting*: 201.

<sup>123</sup>BBC, *Early Days Of Broadcasting In Scotland*: N.pag.

## Plate xiv



Members of the Scottish National Players  
in a drama production at the BBC in the early 1930s --  
Harold Wightman, Jean Taylor Smith, Grace McClery and Jean Faulds.

(from *Early Days of Broadcasting in Scotland*)

or explicitly, sought to measure its achievements against those of the theatre, and of literature generally.<sup>124</sup>

However, it must be argued that in Scotland it was the two media, radio and the stage, working in partnership that enabled drama on radio to develop quickly and to encourage development towards a professional theatre. Nevertheless, it is certainly the case that the expansion of broadcast radio was seen in some quarters of the theatre world, most notably by the theatre managers as threatening. Briggs notes that:

'Live' broadcasts from theatres and music halls had been banned -- with only occasional exceptions -- from 1923 to June 1925, when a strictly limited agreement had been signed [by the BBC] with Walter Payne, the chairman of Moss Empires and the president of the Society of West End Theatre Managers: individual artists had hitherto to find their broadcasting activities severely curtailed by clauses in their contracts forbidding them to broadcast while their contracts were in force, or by intimidating letters threatening no future theatre contracts should they perform on air. ... In March 1927 a furious campaign against the BBC was launched by [Charles] Gulliver [of the London Theatres of Variety], Sir Oswald Stoll of the Palladium, and R H Gillespie of Moss Empires. Abandoning their unqualified opposition to broadcasting as such, they demanded large block sums for the 'use' of their artists and threatened that that they might seek to open a broadcasting station of their own.<sup>125</sup>

Inevitably the BBC won the day. In practice the theatres and music halls, under pressure from both film and radio, needed the publicity the new medium more. Performers too were keen to work for the BBC, both to earn more money (directly in fees and indirectly from any new business radio exposure brought) and to expand their skills towards radio acting and performing. The BBC too was keen to expand its own drama productions, develop its own talented broadcasters. Further negotiations ensued and:

In October 1928 a much more important general agreement was signed with George Black, recently appointed Director of the General Theatre Corporation, ... who subsequently in 1932 made a merger with Moss Empires organisation and thereby became the controller of most of Britain's best music halls. Although Walter Payne tried to persuade Black to stand out against the BBC ... regular fortnightly performances from Black's biggest theatre, the Palladium, began in October 1928.<sup>126</sup>

The negotiations reflected the centralised nature of both the new broadcasting institutions and the older theatre and music hall interests. Indeed even in terms of just

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<sup>124</sup>Drakakis, 'Introduction.' Drakakis, *British Radio Drama*: 1.

<sup>125</sup>Briggs, *The Golden Age of Wireless*: 77-78.

<sup>126</sup>Briggs, *The Golden Age of Wireless*: 82.

radio drama the metropolitan view of the nature of and need for an indigenous theatre in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland was less than supportive. Val Gielgud describes the magnet attraction of London for performers and other arts producers, as well as suggesting the necessity of experience the theatre and the performing arts as a whole and interconnected industry:

Even before Broadcasting took its place among the other media of entertainment London had become the Mecca, the haven desired, for the successful artist. In the face of film competition the provincial music-hall and the provincial theatre circuit together passed into decline. Success in the West End of the Metropolis became the criterion. Local triumph and prestige were regarded only in so far as they provided passports to a wider, a more glamorous sphere. It was to London that the writer or the actor of promise inevitably gravitated. There were the publishers, the agents, the managements, the contacts with Hollywood, indispensable to acknowledged success. ... The whole basis and, indeed, justification of Regional Broadcasting was to exploit Regional talent; to maintain and demonstrate the virtuosity of specifically Regional characteristics. Considered in terms of Outside Broadcasts, of Talks, of Feature Programmes, the task was as practical as it was worthy. In terms of Drama -- and I would suggest to some extent of Music -- it was quite another story, quite another problem.

In Scotland, in Wales, and in Northern Ireland it was a problem simplified by the undeniable existence of an endemic national drama. By metropolitan standards it might be limited both in quality and importance. But it had its own audience. It was part of recognized national cultures. Its claim to reasonable representation in the broadcasting field was unarguable. ... by and large, the dramatic enterprise of B.B.C. Regional Authorities was always hampered by an inevitable lack of precise definition as to what it was designed to accomplish.<sup>127</sup>

The broadcasting infrastructure of the very early period -- prior to the developing Regional Scheme -- would not have been faced by this problem. Programming during this period had a close and even organic relationship with the local culture it served. It may well have been limited by both technology and by experience but it did exist, to a greater extent, outwith the centralising forces that the BBC was to move towards. The policy of centralisation -- stripping the regional centres of their independence and producing power -- was criticised by David Cleghorn Thomson, Regional Director of Scotland, in a letter to Reith as early as March 1929. 'One's wings are being clipped,' he wrote, 'and one is being debarred from flight in so many directions.'<sup>128</sup> Neil McLean, Jeffrey's successor at Aberdeen, was even more vociferous in his opposition, considering that under the Regional Scheme, '... the Scottish point of view is not

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<sup>127</sup>Gielgud: 127-128.

<sup>128</sup>Letter from David Cleghorn Thomson to John Reith, 5 Mar. 1929. Quoted by Briggs, *The Golden Age of Wireless*: 321. Also recounted in Briggs, *The BBC: The First Fifty Years* (Oxford: Oxford U P, 1985): 134.

adequately represented.’<sup>129</sup> The *BBC Handbook: 1933* describes the implementation of the regional scheme under the telling heading of ‘A Policy of Centralisation’:

In September 1932, the Scottish Broadcasting organisation completed the final stage of its development, from the original four comparatively short-range stations, to a completely organised and co-ordinated programme service covering the majority of the population of Scotland. ... A system of co-ordination was instituted; the several stations ceased to broadcast talks, concerts, and services independently to the same extent, and were concentrated on the task of specialising in their individual and characteristic contributions to an all-Scotland programme pool, special attention being paid to the search for local folk talent and traditions.<sup>130</sup>

The financial basis on which this policy was to be built was minimal. Briggs notes that:

In Scotland ... the whole programme allowance when Andrew Stewart became programme director in 1935 amounted to £520 a week, reduced to £470 in the summer months. The differentiation disappeared in the later 1930s.<sup>131</sup>

#### Radio drama: *The March of the 'Forty-Five*

The technical developments that enabled the Regional Scheme to be introduced and operated successfully certainly had ramifications for the infrastructure of broadcasting organisation in Britain. It also had effects on individual productions. One of the most popular of drama productions, which also reveals the heights to which radio production had developed in the period from 1922, was *The March of the 'Forty-Five*. Written by D G Bridson, it was produced by Bridson and Gordon Gildard from two separate production centres on 28 February 1936 -- just months before the introduction by the BBC of a television service from Alexandra Palace in London.<sup>132</sup>

Bridson was a writer and producer who began working for the BBC in Manchester in 1935. *The March of the 'Forty-Five*, perhaps his most successful work,<sup>133</sup> was a

<sup>129</sup>Letter from Neil McLean, 29 May 1929. Quoted by Briggs, *The Golden Age of Wireless*: 322; see also Briggs, *The BBC: The First Fifty Years*: 134.

<sup>130</sup>‘Scotland: ... A Policy of Centralisation.’ *BBC Yearbook: 1933*: 245.

<sup>131</sup>Briggs, *The Golden Age of Wireless*: 338

<sup>132</sup>See the file *Notable Scottish Broadcasting Dates*, compiled by Archie P Lee and held in the Reference Library, Broadcasting House, Queen Margaret Drive, Glasgow.

<sup>133</sup>Bridson’s autobiography notes that:

It was broadcast nine times over the next thirty-three years and played back over closed circuit more times than I care to remember. During most of that time it was available as a BBC Transcription recording, and thus broadcast repeatedly in the United States and all parts of the Commonwealth. Judging from BBC statistics, it must have been heard by anything up to a hundred million listeners ....

D G Bridson, *Prospero and Ariel: The Rise and Fall of Radio: A Personal Recollection* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1971): 57.

drama, written mostly in verse, but with songs and prose passages of dialogue, telling the story of Charles Edward Stewart's march on England during the 'Forty-Five rebellion.

The production is notable for, perhaps, two main reasons. One was certainly the feature made of verse. Radio drama had experienced verse drama before, after all it did produce Shakespeare regularly from very earliest days, but contemporary verse drama was a great novelty. T S Eliot's *Murder in the Cathedral* had first been performed at the Canterbury Festival in June 1935, but it was really only from the 1940s and after World War II that figures like Louis MacNeice and Dylan Thomas became well-known as writers of poetry and verse drama for radio.

It was not just the form and the language of the drama that marked out *The March of the 'Forty-Five*. The play is written in four parts: part one 'The Highland Endeavour' is set in Scotland, and with the advancing Scottish army; part two 'The Turn of the Tide' set in England and with the Duke of Cumberland's army; part three shifts between both armies and is sub-titled 'Time's Last Syllable'; a short final 'Epilogue' completes the play. In production part one and the Scottish scenes of part three were played in and produced by Gildard from the Glasgow studios, with part two, episodes of part three and the epilogue produced by Bridson from the BBC's North studios in Manchester. It was technically and dramatically an ambitious project - linking two cities with as much seamlessness as possible.<sup>134</sup> Bridson's vision was, however, equally ambitious. In *Prospero and Ariel*, his account of his time at the BBC, Bridson comments on the production (and suggests the influence of film on the arts):

My idea in writing *The March of the 'Forty-Five* ... had been to do for radio something comparable in its way to what had been done for the cinema by D. W. Griffith or Cecil B de Mille. I wanted to tell a dramatic story, panoramic in scope, and to make it more immediately exciting than anything that had been heard before. I wanted to make the listener become emotionally involved; I wanted to make him [sic] grip his chair and get caught up in the action.<sup>135</sup>

In its use of music, crowds and Scottish legend *The March of the 'Forty-Five* is rather like the earlier production of *Rob Roy*. Indeed the success of the 1936 play is

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<sup>134</sup>It is possible that *The March of the 'Forty-Five* was broadcast from three different production centres. In the short history of *Early Days Of Broadcasting In Scotland* it comments on this play: ... by the end of 1935 the B.B.C. Scottish Orchestra was established and soon adapted itself to the special needs of radio. Inside a few months, from its studio in Edinburgh it was providing the incidental music for actors who were linked to them from studios in Manchester and Glasgow for 'The March of the '45' -- a world classic of its time.

BBC, *Early Days of Broadcasting in Scotland*: N.pag.

<sup>135</sup>Bridson: 57-58.

also rewarded with a swift repeat production on 10 November 1936.<sup>136</sup> The success of the Scottish contribution is acknowledged by Bridson in glowing terms:

... undoubtedly the impact of the programme on listeners was mainly due to the inspired production of the Scottish cast by Gordon Gildard. ... I have heard many exciting moments in radio, but few so strangely exciting as my first hearing of what he had done with the verse. As declaimed by the Scottish narrators, Douglas Allen and Rex de la Haye, it came down the line from Glasgow like a Highland river in spate. This was radio with all the stops out -- crowds, pipes, orchestra, choir and gunfire adding their quota to the whole effect.<sup>137</sup>

Gildard himself writes about producing the play in *Scotland on the Air*. Describing the Scottish side of the production he notes that:

Two speech studios, two effects and an orchestra studio were used, the narrators being in one speech studio and the cast in another. Thus it was possible to present the narrators as a separate entity and on a different plane, and to define them for the listener as soon as they spoke. It might be thought that when a number of studios are in use the resultant mixture might tend to sound mechanical and the linking obvious, and this is just what the producer when operating the DC panel [dramatic control panel] has to guard against. His [sic] mixture from two or more studios must be blended to form a perfect whole.<sup>138</sup>

*The March of the 'Forty-Five* attained a level of development and a scale of production that was put under threat by the new form of television. However, the medium of radio was partially reprieved by the coming of war in 1939 which ended television broadcasts until after the peace. With the outbreak of war regional broadcasting as it had developed from the Regional Scheme of the late 1920s ended:

On the outbreak of war in September 1939, the Scottish Region, in common with the other Regional Programmes of the BBC, was merged into one Home Service for the United Kingdom. This provision was later supplemented by the Forces Programme; but the exigencies of war made it possible for either programme to do much in the way of meeting the special needs of the pre-war 'regional' audiences.<sup>139</sup>

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<sup>136</sup>The script and some production details, including cast, for this revival is held in the Scottish Theatre Archive at Glasgow University. D G Bridson, *The March of the 'Forty-Five*. Radio play: transmitted 10 Nov. 1936. ts. BBC Radio Scotland Script: STA Kg Box 2/11.

<sup>137</sup>Bridson: 59. These same actors are listed in the extant copy of the script for the second production of the play transmitted on 10 November 1936. The cast also includes Eric Wightman, E J P Mace and R E Kingsley. See Bridson, *The March of the 'Forty-Five*. Radio play: transmitted 10 Nov. 1936. ts. BBC Radio Scotland Script: STA Kg Box 2/11.

<sup>138</sup>Gordon Gildard, 'Producing a Play.' Burnett, *Scotland on the Air*: 78.

<sup>139</sup>John Highet, *Scotland on the Air: Aspects of Scottish Broadcasting* (Glasgow: University of Glasgow, 1949): 1.

This action, it was argued, would mean that ‘individual transmitters could not be used as navigational beacons by enemy aircraft.’<sup>140</sup> The BBC cut regional broadcasting immediately war was declared and this only edged back into the schedules gradually and never with the same organic naturalness of the original broadcast structure. After this a Scottish element was never assumed, always something to aspire towards and work for.

Despite the success and the local popularity of 2BD one of the results of the Scottish Regional Scheme had been that Aberdeen was down-graded to a relay station. However, production did continue and in 1938 the BBC in Aberdeen transferred to new and bigger studios. To mark this event a programme of reminiscences *Farewell, Belmont Street* was broadcast on 29 October 1938.<sup>141</sup> Written by Arthur Black, produced by Alan Melville and presented by Andrew Stewart, the programme featured input from Moultrie Kelsall, a former Station Director at Aberdeen, Harry Gordon, Black himself, Christine Crowe and R E Jeffrey.<sup>142</sup> The programme was reviewed in the *Herald* and criticised for ‘over-run[ning] its allotted time by no less than 12 minutes.’<sup>143</sup> However, the reviewer also comments that:

Aberdeen, since the very earliest days of broadcasting, has provided a share of good entertainment out of all proportion to its size as a station. Its lighter fare has maintained a higher standard of efficiency and humour than the “pooling” of Scottish stations may allow the general public to grasp, and its incursions into the realm of more serious drama have frequently had outstanding results. “The Aberdeen Animals” have probably appealed to a wider audience in England than any other regular feature of Scottish broadcasting.<sup>144</sup>

And last but not least, Aberdeen has been the only studio in Scotland to make consistent use of dialect -- as opposed to mere local accent --

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<sup>140</sup>BBC, *Early Days of Broadcasting*: N.pag.

<sup>141</sup>Arthur Black, *Farewell, Belmont Street*. Radio talk: transmitted 29 Oct. 1938. ts. BBC Radio Scotland Script: STA Kc Box 11/3.

<sup>142</sup>To whose name the *Glasgow Herald* reviewer adds in parentheses ‘The Golden Voice of the Silver Screen.’ ‘A Radio Commentary: Aberdonian Retrospective.’ *Glasgow Herald* 31 Oct. 1938:8.

<sup>143</sup>‘A Radio Commentary: Aberdonian Retrospective.’ *Glasgow Herald* 31 Oct. 1938: 8.

<sup>144</sup>The Aberdeen Animals featured in the children’s programming from 2BD. Howard Lockhart notes that:

... although the Aberdeen Animals existed for only a few years before their demise on the outbreak of war in 1939 .... Their impact, for a once-weekly broadcast, was quite extraordinary, and they rank among the most popular fictional characters in Scottish radio.

Howard Lockhart, *On My Wavelength* (Aberdeen: Impulse, 1973): 29.

The use of a regular group of fictional characters was a development of the sketch and story format of the very early children’s programmes presented by numerous Aunties and Uncles -- BBC production staff in performance guise. The ‘Aberdeen Animals’ was the creation of Moultrie Kelsall. As well as being the director of the Aberdeen station, Kelsall produced much of its drama output and featured as Brer Rabbit for *Children’s Hour*. Other performers included Christine Crowe (as Granny Mutch), Arthur Black (as Grandfather More), Howard Lockhart (as Howard Hare) and the writer of many of the adventures Alan Melville (as Mr Mole).

and hence has perhaps contributed more to the spirit of purely national broadcasting than any other city north of the Tweed.<sup>145</sup>

### **Radio: and how to write about it**

One of the problems associated with the development and popularisation of wireless broadcasting was finding the vocabulary to deal with the new medium. One of the basic problems was to find the words to describe the activity of 'listening' -- various phrases were tried, for instance, 'listening-in' was an activity for 'listeners-in,' who tuned in for programmes initially 'broadcasted' by the British Broadcasting Company. Beyond that, however, there were wider questions as to the use, the possibilities and the limitations of the new medium which had to be addressed. The enthusiasm with which broadcasting was received is not to be denied, however. Reviewing the opening night of 5SC, that is 6 March 1923, the *Glasgow Herald* details that:

A new era in wireless telephony in Scotland was inaugurated last night when the Glasgow station of the British Broadcasting Company was opened with every indication of its being a pronounced success, the opening ceremony being performed by Sir Thomas Paxton ... It did not need the stirring strains of the "Rouse" to awaken the interest of those who were "listen-in" in the city and throughout the country, but on grounds of sentiment no happier introduction could have been contrived by the officials of the company than that out of the stillness should be wafted to Scottish ears the vaunting air of "Hey! Johnnie Cope." It was a wonderful and unique experience: a thrilling and moving moment in the great drama of scientific achievement, that harnessing of the powers of Nature to the service of humanity. It takes no great stretch of imagination to visualise the thousands of "listeners-in" up and down the country eagerly tuning in their sets and, tense and expectant, awaiting the first message from the new station. Swifter than Mercury from high Olympus the strains of the pipes bore their message to John O'Groats and Maidenkirk, ushering in a new medium of social life and of expanding civilisation.<sup>146</sup>

The use of wireless is a current point of discussion. An Editorial from February 1923 in the *Glasgow Herald*, 'Broadcasting and Rural Life,' adds to the discussions:

Broadcasting and listening-in are hardly sufficiently developed as yet to have any definite effects on the social life. But their progress is assured and rapid, and with the constant improvement in the methods both of transmission and receiving, and the establishment of new broadcasting stations, the popularity of the movement is likely to increase enormously within the next six months. The difficulties that have still to be overcome are greater in thickly populated centres than in isolated places, and in cities the "broadcasted" entertainment can never prove a serious rival to the theatre and the concert hall. But if in rural districts and small towns receiving sets become almost as common as telephone

<sup>145</sup>'A Radio Commentary: Aberdonian Retrospective.' *Glasgow Herald* 31 Oct. 1938: 8.

<sup>146</sup>"5SC' Speaks: Broadcasting From Glasgow.' *Glasgow Herald* 7 Mar. 1923: 11.

installations there may be a disturbing reaction on social life. The householder who can hear items by the best performers in Glasgow, Manchester, or London may be less disposed than ever to tramp or drive through rain or snow to hear the modest efforts of local vocalists or amateur actors. ... Thus broadcasting may have an even more devastating effect than the cinema in centralising and standardising entertainment and taking the heart out of local talent. It would be a regrettable consummation, for the best kind of entertainment, after all, is self-entertainment. But the personal element which works most powerfully in rural districts, may be counted on to redress the balance in favour of the local entertainer, who also will be stimulated by competition with his unseen but illustrious rivals. And if the lure of a dance is added to the local concert even Melba and Lauder will hardly keep the listener-in at home.<sup>147</sup>

On a larger scale, then, the very nature of broadcasting was a problem to be solved. In the early period it was an activity for enthusiasts and for those conversant with the technology. The wireless column which the *Glasgow Herald* ran in the 1920s focused on the technical aspects of the medium with somewhat less attention being paid to the social and programming aspects of wireless, this being more haphazardly dealt with in listings related material and occasional features.

One of the earliest theorists of broadcast wireless, and one regularly cited thereafter, was the German critic Rudolph Arnheim. His book *Radio*<sup>148</sup> offers a view of the potential and the use of wireless that is quite different to many writers on radio in Britain: for instance the articles on drama written by R E Jeffrey in the *Radio Times* and in contemporary histories of the BBC, like Lewis's *Broadcasting From Within*. All these writers do, however, acknowledge the revolutionary potential of national (and international) wireless broadcasting. Jeffrey tends to concentrate on the role of radio as artform:

The birth of a new art is always fraught with much labour, and speculation as to the development of the new-born is of much interest to all those to whom the word 'art' means anything.<sup>149</sup>

Ten years later Arnheim can describe the early impact of radio:

The results of even the first few years' experiments with this new form of expression can only be called sensational. An alluring, exciting world has been revealed, containing not only the most potent sensuous delights known to man [sic] -- those of musical sounds, rhythm and harmony -- but capable of reproducing actuality by transmitting real sounds and, what is more, commanding that most abstract and comprehensive of all means of expression: speech.<sup>150</sup>

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<sup>147</sup>'Broadcasting and Rural Life.' Editorial. *Glasgow Herald* 3 Feb. 1923: 8.

<sup>148</sup>Rudolph Arnheim, *Radio*. Trans. Margaret Ludwig and Herbert Read. (London: Faber and Faber, 1936.)

<sup>149</sup>R E Jeffrey, 'Foreword.' Lea: 11.

<sup>150</sup>Arnheim: 14-15.

Such a view reflects the excitement generated by the coming of broadcast radio but also reveals the areas in which Arnheim foresees radio's success. In *Radio*, he extends his analysis of the development of the form of wireless in the realm of the aesthetic, and other actual technological developments. He writes:

I have given little thought to the problem of how long wireless will exist and be capable of development in the form I describe. For even if, as is highly probable, television destroys the new wireless form even more radically than sound film destroyed the silent film, the value of this esthetic [sic] experience remains unimpaired, indeed it appears as as if even in artistic practice this new form of expression need not entirely disappear; we see, for instance, in a few serious experimental films of the last few years, as a consequence of the the separation of sound-strip and picture-strip, which which proves to be a good thing if the film is to remain as as an art form, that the sound strip in this kind of isolation arrives quite logically at wireless-forms. The declamation of the pedantic unseen commentator in the documentary film of to-day has been superseded (under a few art directors) by dialogue and sound-montage, speaking chorus, etc -- forms invented for the radio play.<sup>151</sup>

Now whether the development of the documentary form of film making was quite so closely related to the forms of radio, as Arnheim suggests, is, perhaps, debatable. The fact remains that they are perceived as a number of media able to borrow and develop ideas from each other and from other forms and their typical genres. Indeed just this point is made by Laurence Gilliam in his study of *BBC Features*:

It [broadcasting] spent its first ten years happily cutting and adapting works created for other forms of art, entertainment or instruction.<sup>152</sup>

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<sup>151</sup>Arnheim: 17. Just this concern is dismissed by the *Bailie* in its discussion of 'Man You Know' Herbert Carruthers:

... it has been affirmed by any number of people that broadcasting would sound the death-knell of the stage, the platform, and even the pulpit. We have met such gloomy fore bodings before -- the camera, the gramophone, the cinema, each of these inventions, in its full expression, was going to put the particular type of artist whose province was invaded in the ranks of the unemployed. Disturbing prognostics of that description ought not to be taken too seriously, and it is not a little surprising that certain people in the dramatic profession 'got the wind up' when broadcasting appeared on the horizon. The mental balance has been considerably restored in these alarmist quarters. There is no occasion for thinking that the BBC has entered the field to displace the old institutions which have catered for the artistic education and entertainment of the people. We are witnessing merely an enlargement of the field of democratic cultural influence, and the stage, the platform, and the pulpit are bound to benefit in the end by this new and incalculably potent agency.

The cinema has been teaching us the beauty of action without words; broadcasting gives us the converse -- words without action.

'Men You Know.' *Bailie* 5 Sept. 1923: 3.

<sup>152</sup>Gilliam: 9.

Again Arnheim writes that, 'Only two arts renounce the eye entirely and deal exclusively with the ear: music and broadcasting.'<sup>153</sup> Arnheim attempts to develop a general theory as to the nature and use of radio that is then worked through representative generic forms of the medium. One of these is drama. He comments that:

In radio drama, even more forcibly than on the stage, the word is first revealed as sound, as expression, embedded in a world of expressive natural sounds which, so to speak, constitute the scenery. The separation of noise and word occurs only on a higher plane. Fundamentally, purely sensuously, both are first and foremost sounds, and it is just this sensuous unity that makes possible an aural art, by utilising word and noise simultaneously.<sup>154</sup>

Arnheim's vision of radio drama is not the specific genre that Gielgud at the BBC was keen to develop.

Despite being a new medium, at the cutting edge of domestic and commercially exploitable technology, radio has always been limited by its enforced relations to other media and generic and literary forms (film and television, news gathering and drama). In the area of radio drama these points of reference have been consistently points of problematic influences and prejudice. The development of radio drama was both dependent on broadcast technology and the desire of writers to write specially for radio. Moultrie Kelsall, writing on 'Scottish Radio Drama' in 1946, considers that:

Broadcast plays are of two types -- those that have been written for the stage and are produced on the air with the minimum of alteration required to make the action intelligible to the listener, and those that are specially written for broadcasting. ...

About stage plays on the air there is little to say. There is no doubt that we should do them for the sake of the millions of listeners who would not otherwise be aware of them. But production on the air is at best a partial substitute for a theatre production, and I would advise nobody to stay at home and listen to, say, 'Tobias and the Angel' who had an opportunity of seeing it competently produced in the theatre.

But about plays written for broadcasting there is much to say, for they are the stuff of which real broadcast drama is made -- they, together with the Feature programmes, are the only distinctive contributions which Broadcasting can make to the Arts. They are, at their best, the only things that are not translatable into any other medium. In these two forms alone we can turn the limitations of our medium into a new freedom.<sup>155</sup>

In the period of development from the early 1920s into the 1930s, the BBC began to produce plays that were specially and uniquely suited to radio production. In Scotland the shift the one-act sketch is superseded by plays both historical in content and

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<sup>153</sup>Arnheim: 22.

<sup>154</sup>Arnheim: 27-28.

<sup>155</sup>Moultrie Kelsall, 'Scottish Radio Drama.' Dunnett, *This is the Scottish Home Service*: 10-11.

contemporary and, in particular, with the work of first John Gough but then most influentially of Robert Kemp to develop the feature as a flexible form of radio able -- to shift time space with ease and well-suited to include music and song.

Indeed, in 1938 the predominance of the historical as source for radio plays was questioned by the BBC's Andrew Stewart, who instead favoured the use of the feature format to depict history:

Our dramatic programme is based on the selection of plays which crystallise something of the Scottish character, and which at the same time show imagination in the choice of themes, characters, the treatment of these characters, and the technique of weaving it all into a human pattern. In this field we had almost no guide or tradition. Before the Great War there were about five Scottish plays -- "Rob Roy," "Beside the Bonny Briar Bush," "Campbell of Kilmohr," "Marigold," and "Archie." The last three of these were the products of the Glasgow Repertory Theatre. ...

What restricted much of our dramatic work in the past was its preoccupation with the historic and romantic. It is a peculiar and, I think, unhealthy sign in Scotland that writers should hark back for their inspiration, and their plays which tend to be like stage-costume drama are remote from anything we know as life. Perennial and exclusive interest in the Forty-Five and Mary, Queen of Scots, might appeal to a romantic minority of "old wives," but to nobody else. This is not to say that if a brilliant historical play is written it is not welcome. It is; but only when the imagination of a first-class artist illuminates the theme, and there is real distinction in writing. For the rest, I am convinced the more effective, moving and human way of dealing with our history is in a factual treatment .... There is something compelling and humanly illuminating in presenting contemporary accounts of the happenings and the actual words of the principal people that is not in romantic imaginings.<sup>156</sup>

At least in the Scottish context, the line between radio play and the radio feature is a narrow and an imprecise one.

The early years of broadcasting by the BBC seemed to have radio being used to fulfil a project that was about the dissemination of high culture, to 'improve' the audience by exposure to classical music, educated talks and, in the field of drama, adaptations of the classics from the world of 'literature', that is the texts of the established canon, and the legitimate stage (this quite outside, if not counter to the cultural projects of Modernism which clearly reject the very notion of the 'canon'). Asa Briggs focuses on this point noting that: 'All broadcasting was 'educative' if not 'educational'.<sup>157</sup> In Scotland, as elsewhere in the BBC structure, this most often, in the first few years of broadcasting at least, the drama element took the form of

<sup>156</sup>Andrew Stewart, 'Directing the Scottish Programme.' Burnett, *Scotland on the Air*: 41-42.

<sup>157</sup>Briggs, *The BBC: The First Fifty Years*: 69.

adaptations of the plays of Shakespeare. Relatively quickly, however, broadcasters turned to adaptations of firstly classic novels and then adaptations of moments and biographies from history, which was developed, in turn, as the radio feature. But more often than not the desire was implicitly educative or at least knowingly *about* culture, as with 5SC's use of the Scottish National Players (instant Scottish content, instant Scottish nationality to the forefront, and instantly the cultural prestige of the stage).

The point of producing Shakespeare's plays is equally clear. They are sound cultural markers for theatre, carry cultural baggage that is at once educative, improving, English and strongly narrative in form. Indeed, as Drakakis points out in his essay 'The Essence That's Not Seen: Radio Adaptations of Stage Plays':<sup>158</sup>

... Sir John (later Lord) Reith himself, while regretting the overdependence of early dramatic broadcasts upon 'theatre effect', could also regard radio as a supreme means of 'popularizing' the one dramatist to whom both the theatre and the world of literature could lay equal claim, Shakespeare.<sup>159</sup>

The ongoing problem for radio has been that this project has proved just too successful. Drakakis, again referring to Reith's suggestion quoted above, notes that, within radio drama, the continued use of the 'classics' may be interpreted as a:

... bid to attach radio firmly to an already established pattern of cultural values, thereby upholding and preserving the aesthetic judgements of the very institution it threatened to displace.<sup>160</sup>

The fundamental desire was, as Gielgud notes,<sup>161</sup> to acquire the prestige of an established art form in a new and relatively untried medium. The same desire to gain cultural prestige through the import of non-radio specific cultural forms may well hold true for the BBC in general. However, it is a problem that is acknowledged by Jeffrey -- then Productions Director of the BBC -- as early as 1926. He observes that:

Radio Drama has a great future. The future lies not only with those lone souls who spend their time and thought in front of the microphone, suffering the slings and arrows of uninformed criticism, but also with those millions to whom the microphone, via transmitter, broadcasts their efforts. The listener's part is in learning "how to listen," a most important point.

It is my hope that Radio Drama in its real form -- not a bastard cultivation from the stage -- will become a source of inspiration to its heterogeneous broadcast audience. A little has been done; much remain

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<sup>158</sup>Drakakis, 'The Essence That's Not Seen: Radio Adaptations of Stage Plays.' Lewis, *Radio Drama*: 111-133.

<sup>159</sup>Drakakis, 'The Essence ...': Lewis, *Radio Drama*: 112.

<sup>160</sup>Drakakis, 'The Essence ...': Lewis, *Radio Drama*: 112.

<sup>161</sup>Gielgud: 19-21.

to do. Public-spirited playwrights especially are required; the broadcast has no nightly box-office. A new form of drama cannot be developed without a new form of play as its vehicle.<sup>162</sup>

This desire for radio to be used, and acknowledged as a unique, and even discrete, medium in many ways effaces the context of its evolution. Even acknowledging the problem of accurate dating,<sup>163</sup> broadcast radio emerged into the midst of a society and set of cultures facing Modernism: Modernism, with its new, confident and experimental mixing of genres, of materials and of media, and its reassessment of the literature and culture of the past. As a technology-based form, using the products of other arts practices (classical music, stage drama, adaptations of the novel), radio was potentially a truly 'Modernist' medium -- and yet the desire to render it within a discourse of 'public service' seems to efface this potentially vibrant role. Indeed even artists working within the broad spectrum which is Modernism did not pick up on the potentials of radio in the way that they successfully reused the stage, poetry, the novel, music, film, fine and commercial art. Perhaps this returns the critic to Terry Eagleton's point that twentieth-century modernism is more a response to nineteenth-century realism. Radio, developing out of a technology of the nineteenth century, did not evolve to a state of social and cultural use until the twentieth century, and, in particular, the 1920s with the development of broadcast radio. It had then first of all to establish its structures and its grammar (much like film in the late 1890s and 1900s) before it would be politically productive to re-analyse its forms within a framework of Modernist practice. Radio broadcasting and radio drama in particular did not truly establish its codes and conventions until the 1930s. The 1920s were very much experimental years for radio -- finding its role within the available technology, its place within an already unbalanced cultural system and the development of the institutional frameworks in which it was to function. In Britain this was a more or less government legitimated monopoly of the airwaves and so the output was carefully guarded against the exposure of productions which would not fit into the establishment's ideology of consensus. For all of its history the technology of broadcast radio has been developing and improving; and at least until the development of the domestic television was at the forefront of what Raymond Williams describes as a version of public technology. However, for radio forefront technology did not transfer to cutting-edge content.

Introducing Williams's ideas into his overview of radio drama, Drakakis comments that, 'The progress of radio drama in its very early stages was hampered by inadequate technology.'<sup>164</sup> Is this a valid point to make? Certainly a more advanced technology

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<sup>162</sup>Jeffrey, 'Foreword.' Lea: 11-12.

<sup>163</sup>See, for instance, Malcolm Bradbury and James McFarlane 'The Name and Nature of Modernism.' *Modernism: 1890-1930*: 19-55.

<sup>164</sup>Drakakis, 'Introduction.' Drakakis, *British Radio Drama*: 6.

would have allowed different developments, perhaps in different directions with greater ease and efficiency. But technology must evolve, and it must be learned. Early radio cannot possibly have been 'hampered' by the very means which made it possible. Certainly in the 1920s technology was both enabling and (only in retrospect) limiting. But it was developing. In terms of radio drama the key point of technical innovation was the 1928 introduction of the 'dramatic control panel'. Until that point radio drama was, more or less, a variation on stage drama denied its direct visual presence. Indeed this was the case not just in terms of the texts produced. More concisely Drakakis quotes Howard Rose of the BBC's London Drama Department commenting that, 'our theatrical upbringing died hard with all of us.'<sup>165</sup>

The dramatic control panel allowed radio to develop a way of telling, a grammar that owed little, if anything, to the stage but rather more to the already established rhetoric of film narrative. Using the dramatic control panel to fade-in and fade-out action, bringing together sounds from several different types of sources and studios, controlling the level at which listeners could hear not just individual voices but also crowds and background sounds and music -- all this made radio a more flexible medium for the drama producer and for the writer or potential writer of radio plays and features. Innovation using this piece of equipment initially focused on London, increasingly the centre of all BBC operations and more often than not the only centre where the new would be introduced and tested.

The Drama Department's initial productions using the new control panel were left to the tried-and-tested talents of established figures within broadcasting. The first production to make use of the control panel was Lance Sieveking's *The First Kaleidoscope: A Rhythm Representing the Life of Man from Cradle to Grave*, broadcast 4 September 1928. Over the next few years Tyrone Guthrie too was to make use of the facilities provided by the dramatic control panel with his two plays *Squirrel's Cage* and *The Flowers Are Not For You To Pick*. This willingness to experiment and to expand the form was typical of Guthrie, between 1927 and 1929 producer with the Scottish National Players:

... when the British Broadcasting Corporation opened their station at Belfast [on 14 September 1924], he started there as a producer, announcer and organiser of talks. It was at Belfast the the Man You Know [Guthrie] realised the possibilities of broadcasting as a medium for plays. Obviously wireless drama, like the cinema, had to develop along different lines from the stage, and this was a fact which [had?] not not [sic] been fully realised at the time. Wireless plays were simply stage plays with the action cut out.

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<sup>165</sup>Drakakis, 'Introduction.' Drakakis, *British Radio Drama*: 4.

## Plate xv



Cecil Lewis  
working at the dramatic control panel.  
(from Geilgud, *British Radio Drama*)

Working on this basis, Mr. Guthrie evolved an entirely new technique, which, broadly speaking, used a background of words and sounds instead of a background of scenery.<sup>166</sup>

Drakakis interprets the function of the dramatic control panel as allowing:

... radio drama to dissolve both temporal and implied spatial boundaries, thus extending its powers of aural suggestion, and offering parallels in sound only of what dramatists such as Strindberg and Brecht had already begun to explore in the theatre and that film had utilised almost from its inception.<sup>167</sup>

Discussing the development of the social role of broadcasting, Raymond Williams comments that:

... the critical difference between the various spheres of applied technology [around the turn of the century] can be stated in terms of a social dimension: the new systems of production and of business or transport communication were already organised, at an economic level; the new systems of social communication were not. Thus when motion pictures were developed, their application was characteristically in the margin of established social forms -- the sideshows -- until their success was capitalised in a version of an established form, the motion-picture *theatre*.<sup>168</sup>

The development of radio was wholly dependent on the development of its hardware, and so closely tied to the commercial and business interests of the manufacturers of trade and domestic wireless equipment. This is reflected in the founding of the key broadcasting institution in Britain, the BBC.

... in 1922 a consortium of manufacturers, who would provide programmes under terms agreed with the Post Office and the Government, was formed as the British Broadcasting Company. The keys to this agreement were the granting of monopoly to the Company and the decision to finance broadcasting by the sale of licences for receivers. In the period 1925-1926, through continuous controversy and negotiation, what had been essentially a public utility company was becoming a true public broadcasting corporation: the BBC which received its charter in 1926.<sup>169</sup>

Despite the growth of the BBC in terms of broadcast hours and as an institution at the centre of society, this conservative attitude was still apparent. In a conference on

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<sup>166</sup>'The Man You Know -- by 'The Bailie' -- Tyrone Guthrie.' *Glasgow Weekly Herald* 5 Nov. 1932. Article in bound collection of 'Men You Know' features (new series) held in the Glasgow Room, Mitchell Library, Glasgow (Ref. G920.04).

<sup>167</sup>Drakakis, 'Introduction.' Drakakis, *British Radio Drama*: 5.

<sup>168</sup>Williams, *Television*: 17-18.

<sup>169</sup>Williams, *Television*: 32-33.

'Broadcasting as a Factor in Scottish Life,' held in Peebles at the beginning of May 1938, speakers, including representatives of the BBC, discussed various aspects of radio usage. One speaker is reported not only to attack the BBC's output of the 'alleged Scottish drama that made me shudder,'<sup>170</sup> but to attack the current affairs policy of the broadcasters.

News broadcasts [it was argued] were not the proper function of the B.B.C. and should be confined to very important or late items which did not ordinarily appear in the newspapers

What he [Herries] would like from the B.B.C. was ideas. He would like to think that behind that most elaborate organisation was a company of live and interesting adventurers who were searching for something new and would lead us in exciting excursions to the realms of the unknown or the little known.<sup>171</sup>

This rather mystical demand, excluding both Scottish drama and news coverage, might be seen as somewhat eccentric but does perhaps point to an underlying lack of satisfaction with the quality and the scope of contemporary broadcasting: after all BBC officials were still warning of the dangers of broadcasting:

"We in the B.B.C.," said Mr [George] Burnett [Scottish Public Relations Officer of the BBC], "think that there is too much listening. People would be better off if they listened for shorter periods in one day."<sup>172</sup>

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<sup>170</sup>Conference delegate J W Herries quoted in 'Broadcasting Scottish Life.' *Glasgow Herald* 9 May 1938: 9.

<sup>171</sup>'Broadcasting Scottish Life.' *Glasgow Herald* 9 May 1938: 9.

<sup>172</sup>'Broadcasts to Schools: Adult Listeners.' *Glasgow Herald* 7 May 1938: 6. Equally the role of the woman listener was rooted in a conservative and repressive ideology of home maker and mother. This restrictive vision is even promoted by the female producer of the Scottish editions of *Children's Hour*. Christine Orr's contribution to the conference is reported by the *Herald*:

... she believed that broadcasting was providing women with a chance to absorb culture on an unprecedented scale.

Background listening -- having the wireless set on while one was doing something in the room and trying to listen at the same time -- had been condemned. But there was surely a right kind of background listening.

For the woman alone in a little house, ironing and baking would go more smoothly to a light musical background. The voices of comedians and 'uncles' and 'aunts' were a co-operation of friendliness. They made an atmosphere of companionship during the day.

'I maintain,' she said, 'that women have a right to use the radio as a background to work.'

I was a serious mistake, Miss Orr went on, when the listener took himself [sic] for granted, because there could not be good broadcasting without good listening. Women had a responsibility there.

The woman in the house could plan the family listening. She could adjust the meal times to suit a special programme. She could see that everything in the room was comfortable before a broadcast started -- fire made up, lights turned discreetly low if necessary, chairs ready.

She could discipline herself to care for a good quality of listening. She could train children to become good listeners, instead of developing into grumblers or the spoonfed.

In concluding the conference George Burnett said that, 'the B.B.C. wants to give a real national service to the country.'<sup>173</sup>

This project was to be enabled further by the transfer of broadcasting headquarters in Scotland from the outmoded offices on Blythswood Square, Glasgow. This was marked by a radio feature *Farewell, Blythswood Square*, broadcast on 14 May 1938 -- a programme 'blending reminiscence, old programme excerpts, technical developments, illustration, information, and personalities into a pleasantly human chronicle,' according to the *Herald* reviewer.<sup>174</sup> The generally positive review notes that:

There was just enough recapturing of the old 5SC days to show how amateurish they were (or, alternatively, how unexacting were listeners) and to imply that we ought to be grateful for contemporary studio marvels. It was interesting to notice, too, that the highlights in entertainment in the ... [programme] were provided by the comedy excerpts in the drama and variety sections; it would appear that Scottish comedy of character, when it is good, is very good indeed.<sup>175</sup>

It is perhaps of interest to note that the reviewer draws attention to at least one 'omission'<sup>176</sup> in the programme. The missing name was that of David Cleghorn Thomson. In 1924 it was realised that the scale of expansion of the BBC in Scotland combined with the stations' distance from London meant that the centre could lose touch with the outlying stations. D Millar Craig was appointed Liaison Officer, the Assistant Controller (Scotland), with the responsibility of supervising the activities of the Scottish stations and the Belfast station. In the spring of 1926 he is transferred to the Music Department in London and in March Thomson is appointed from the *Radio Times* as 'Liaison Officer, Scotland.' Under the Regional Scheme reorganisation, from 27 October 1926, Thomson is redesignated 'Northern Area Director.' He rose to become the first Scottish Regional Director on 30 September 1928.<sup>177</sup> This period of successful promotion ended on 30 April 1933 when disagreements arose over the running, policy and expenditure, of the BBC Scottish Orchestra. Both Thomson and Moray MacLaren resigned over the issue.

'Broadcasting Scottish Life.' *Glasgow Herald* 9 May 1938: 9.

<sup>173</sup>'Broadcasting Scottish Life.' *Glasgow Herald* 9 May 1938: 9.

<sup>174</sup>'A Radio Commentary: A Scottish Farewell.' *Glasgow Herald* 16 May 1938: 10. An article on the move is featured in the *Herald* on 14 May 1938. See 'Farewell Blythswood Square: End of Chapter in the History of Broadcasting in Scotland: Memories of Glasgow Pioneer Days, by a Special Correspondent.' *Glasgow Herald* 14 May 1938: 10.

<sup>175</sup>'A Radio Commentary: A Scottish Farewell.' *Glasgow Herald* 16 May 1938: 10.

<sup>176</sup>'A Radio Commentary: A Scottish Farewell.' *Glasgow Herald* 16 May 1938: 10.

<sup>177</sup>Although it might have been as late as 14 July 1930. Information drawn from the BBC file *Notable Scottish Broadcasting Dates*.

1938, then, saw the transfer of operations for both the Aberdeen studios and the Glasgow operation. In Glasgow operations moved from the centre of town to the new Broadcasting House on Queen Margaret Drive in Glasgow's West End -- officially opened on 18 November by Walter Elliot, the Minister for Health. The new studios provided the BBC in Scotland with, according to Scottish Regional Director, Melville Dinwiddie, 'One of the finest broadcasting centres in the world'<sup>178</sup>; according to Elliot 'a new citadel for art in the West of Scotland.'<sup>179</sup> The programme to mark the opening of the new Broadcasting House<sup>180</sup> was one of speeches (from BBC officials, Dinwiddie, Elliot and Lord Provost Dollan), followed by Will Fyffe in the studio, the Orpheus Choir, the premiere of James Bridie's first play for radio and a performance by the BBC's Scottish Orchestra. Bridie's *The Kitchen Comedy*<sup>181</sup> is rather poorly critiqued by the *Herald*:

There came to life in it a convincing Perthshire manse kitchen on a night of [a] November storm. In the kitchen there came to life a group of vigorously individual talk, clearly characterised, with oddly interesting minds. There was some Scottishly fiery talk, streaked with comedy, but not very substantial, about the riddle of the universe. But nothing happened; there was no action.<sup>182</sup>

With the input of technical innovation and through experience and experimentation radio drama and the demands audiences made of radio drama had advanced quite remarkably across the period. It had evolved to become a quite different genre to stage drama -- and the demands it made of the writer were for some new skills still to be assimilated.

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Both film and wireless broadcasting may be described as public technologies -- but both fit into this category in rather different ways. In its reception, and within the context of a film industry, the technology of film exists within the collective public domain -- mostly clearly demonstrable in the guise of the cinema. However, film may also be experienced on an individual and creative level -- on the level of production. The individual amateur cinematographer can use film, artistically, experimentally and for more conventional documentary purposes. Quite crucially, the product may also be reserved for personal consumption. This is quite different to the function and use of radio. As a social technology radio seems to be experienced most within the context of

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<sup>178</sup>'New Radio Era for Glasgow.' *Glasgow Herald* 12 Nov. 1938: 13.

<sup>179</sup>'A Broadcasting Landmark.' Editorial. *Glasgow Herald* 19 Nov. 1938: 10.

<sup>180</sup>See 'Radio Commentary: Celebration of the Sober Side.' *Glasgow Herald* 19 Nov. 1938: 8.

<sup>181</sup>James Bridie, *The Kitchen Comedy*. Radio drama: transmitted 18 Nov. 1938. ts. BBC Radio Scotland Script: STA Kf Box 6/5.

<sup>182</sup>'Radio Commentary: Celebration of the Sober Side.' *Glasgow Herald* 19 Nov. 1938: 8.

private and domestic space. More accurately the experience of its reception is fragmented. The moment of reception may appear to be individualised -- to one listener, or one group tuned-in to one wireless set -- but this is a fantasy, it is in fact, or at least potentially, an experience shared by all with access to the technology of the receiving set. Access to reception of both technologies is potentially universal. For film access to some degree of involvement with production is possible for all. However, access to the technology of radio is only partially complete. Despite the role of the amateur in the development of the apparatus of wireless, in terms of broadcasting radio is very protective of access to the airwaves. The domestic nature of the receiving technology makes the social and political potential of the broadcaster a valuable commodity -- this leading to the development of specialised broadcasting institutions who professionalise the medium excluding the amateur and ultimately also those with opposing principles and ideologies. This industrialisation may also be apparent within the film industry but is more ideologically loaded for wireless broadcasting which invades the domestic and can variously single out the listener as isolated and alone or encourage the listener to participate as part of a nation, united and together. The space for a personal use of the technology of radio is restricted to reception and almost completely excludes the participatory involvement of the individual in production and experimentation. The space to experiment that the technology of film can allow is not equalled by the experience of radio. In this period of the history of broadcast radio, then, there is but limited experience of pushing the boundaries of the form. In all but the use of technology, broadcast radio evades the aesthetic of modernity.

As a public corporation the BBC was independent from direct government intervention, yet dependent on the state apparatus, not just in terms of funding but also as the point of social and cultural ratification. The shifts in the organisation of the British state, towards greater involvement in the everyday lives of its citizens, engenders increasing centralisation for the agencies that directly and hegemonically shape the character of the nation. In the interwar period the state oversaw such a centralisation of society: the economy was managed at the metropolitan centre; increasingly the BBC too was organised and operated from London. The example was one not lost and the emergent cultural industries and agencies. Independence was seemingly possible (as with the Scottish Film Council), but this independence was illusory. With the rise of CEMA the arts may have been financially empowered but the purse-strings were held at the metropolitan core. Despite the increased indigenous arts activity in other areas, this seemingly confirmed London as the centre of the cultural life of the nation. The BBC offered an institutional model for the new cultural agencies; one that effaced the regional in favour of the centralised, the national, the British:

... it served, at one and the same time, to maintain the cultural standards and values of the dominant class-cultures by organizing them into a single 'voice', while incorporating the other class and regional 'voices' within its organic and corporate framework.<sup>183</sup>

Experience and the advances made in broadcast technology across the period distract attention from the underlying contraction of the regional wireless services the BBC produced. The audience reach and the scope, scale and quality of the programme output may have developed and grown but broadcasting at the end of the period was a much more limiting product than the initial structure had promised. The diversity of programming, each station producing a whole range of types of programming (news, talks, music, drama), that the early structure operated, empowered the local in a way that later services could not equal. The voice of the BBC was essentially a metropolitan one. The splitting of the airwaves into the National and the Regional marginalised the indigenous products, debasing the local into the parochial; the perceived lack of status for the regional is suggested by its early sacrifice at the outbreak of war in 1939. The lacks in metropolitan culture perceived by the theatre in the interwar period (lacks countered by the rise of the local repertory and amateur theatre movements) might be seen to be equally relevant for broadcasting during the period. The demands of the regional, however, were diffused by the centralising ideology the state sponsored in the 1930s. The period's tendency towards the managed economy and the hegemonic and direct intervention of the state in the lives of its citizens is paralleled in the role of the broadcasters. The BBC was the cultural producer at the centre of this economic nexus.

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<sup>183</sup>Hall: 44.

### **Part three: Conclusions**

## The Empire Exhibition of 1938

‘Scotland at home to the World.’<sup>1</sup>

Just as the Great War marked a rupture for the arts and culture of the Edwardian Age so World War II marked a violent watershed for the cultural projects and tendencies that had gone before. The end of the 1930s saw the easing of the economic recession that marked the decade as a period of social disruption and economic upheaval. Nevertheless it was a period of political tension on an international scale, tension that the decade’s first European war, the Spanish Civil War, could not diffuse. Some of the forms, styles and practices of this period would not survive into the peace while other trends would develop out of all expectation.

In many ways the Empire Exhibition of 1938 is a convenient event to mark the end of the period. It provides a clear point of summation of the culture of the early decades of the twentieth century. Within a year of its closing (it opened between 3 May and 29 October 1938) World War II was violently under way and that which might be recognised from the values, prejudices and aesthetic experimentations of the 1920s and 1930s were all but swept away as a new sensibility was instigated. It marked the end of Empire, or at least the unironic celebration of Imperial achievement and reveals how the society viewed itself in a way no single manufactured or artistic product can. It sponsored so much, was so much a part of the value system of British experience, was so clearly a social marker that it occupies a unique centrality within any overview of the Scottish experience of the world, of the Empire, of Britain and, indeed, of Scotland itself in the 1930s. The Empire Exhibition may be seen as a focal point for the whole period under discussion drawing together many of the groups and institutions that cluster around that set of discourses developing a cultural mission, dealing with national identity and promoting commercial and industrial expansion.

The Exhibition draws together the two strands of this study. The new forms of entertainment and communication developed in the period from the 1880s (in particular film and radio) are by 1938 fully integrated into patterns of social activity -- they have developed as successful and far-reaching industries, influential and popular markers of the community’s preferences and prejudices. In parallel the experience of cultural mission -- essentially underlying so much of the period’s indigenous arts activity and institutions -- is rendered quite explicit with the direct intervention of the state in project funding and as general sponsor of the event, an event which, like the period itself, integrates genres, forms and media into a complex and diverse cultural environment.

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<sup>1</sup>Lord Elgin -- President of the Exhibition -- describing the event. Quoted in the *Glasgow Herald* 28 Apr. 1938: 7.

The period from the end of the nineteenth century until the outbreak of World War II has been identified as one wherein the foundations were laid for the explicit intervention of the state in the cultural institutions and activities of Britain; a period when the sector of arts activity described as encompassing a perceived cultural mission began to gravitate towards establishment status and even state sponsorship. While the BBC, through Reith, revealed an explicit project of public service broadcasting, many contemporary social, political and cultural groups shared a parallel ideological commitment to the importance and the social significance of cultural activity as a useful and beneficial activity for society to support and to participate in. The Empire Exhibition is very much the point at which both cultural representations, the arts and industry, the state and the market come together in a context of the new -- it is a paradigmatic moment for the modern use of the technologies, forms and media. It is constructed as a contemporary Exhibition, one very much of its time. It uses the design, the ideas, the ideologies that have underwritten much of the Scottish experience of the society and the culture of the twentieth century.

### Setting the scene

On 27 September 1938 the Queen and the two Princesses visited the Empire Exhibition.<sup>2</sup> Later in the day the Queen went on the launch the *Queen Elizabeth*, the largest liner in the world, from the shipyard of John Brown's at Clydebank. This was the sister ship of ship 'No 543' (the *Queen Mary*). In the early part of the decade this ship had come to symbolise the industrial and economic malaise that swept Scotland and most of the developed world. In 1930 work began on a £4.8 million 81,000 ton liner for the Cunard-White Star flag. The financial reverberations of the Wall Street Crash forced work to stop on the new ship. The craftsmen were all made unemployed and from 1931 until 1933 the unfinished hull of '543' lay untouched on the stocks while the surrounding community struggled to survive the catastrophe. A 1957 radio programme (number 16 in a series of programmes with Scottish themes)

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<sup>2</sup>The involvement of the Royal family had been important at least in terms of publicity for the entire project. However, the *Herald* did try to politicise the visit for the opening ceremony:

The civic homage that will be paid in Glasgow to-day [3 May 1938] to their Majesties will lack nothing in cordiality from the fact that the Socialists are the party in power in the Corporation.

Time was when the Socialist town councillor was apt to be cynical over demonstrators of loyalty at royal visits but that attitude has completely gone with the change in political fortune that has invested the party with more public responsibility.

Truly interpreting the spirit of the constituencies the Socialist section of the Corporation, apart from the small I.L.P. group perhaps, will join gladly in demonstrative welcome of the King and Queen.

'Socialists and the Royal Visit.' *Glasgow Herald* 3 May 1938: 6.

written and presented by Edwin Muir describes the images he remembers of Clydebank during the worst of the Depression:

I went down to Clydebank; ten years before I had passed through it every morning to reach the office of a shipbuilding firm where I worked then. Clydebank had been very busy at that time. Now everything seemed to have stopped. ... knots of men were standing at the street corners with their hands in their pockets as if to show that there was nothing else they could do with them. Crowds of children played lackadaisically in the empty streets; they and the children had the ascetic look of the underfed. ... The smokelessness and the emptiness made me think of the Glasgow Fair, when for once in the year the city lies clear and idle in the sun; but this was a Fair with a curse on it that kept people sitting in their houses or standing about the street corners. And behind it all there was the feeling of unrelenting poverty and life at its lowest ebb.<sup>3</sup>

In Glasgow local MP David Kirkwood was active in the Labour group instrumental in getting work restarted. However, it was ultimately the intervention of the National Shipbuilders' Security Corporation, under Sir James Lithgow, and the Bank of England cutting capacity in the industry that allowed things to improve and work to recommence on the ship. With the launch of the *Queen Mary* in 1934 (fitting out was completed in 1936), the beginning of work on the *Queen Elizabeth* and her launch in 1938 and the prospect of more work (although this was mostly for the military; such work described by Neil Baxter as 'the false salvation of Glasgow's heavy industry'<sup>4</sup>) the economic outlook for the Clyde and for all of Scotland was brighter than for many years -- and yet the events of the summer of 1938, the summer of Chamberlain's failed diplomacy, cast a long shadow.

The Scottish economy had suffered greatly in the 1930s -- indeed in the early part of that decade it had experienced a deeper depression than any other area in Britain.<sup>5</sup> Smout describes the situation:

The years after 1920 were dominated by the slide of the Scottish economy into depression and the concomitant growth of long-term unemployment, affecting not merely the unskilled and lasting not only a few months or a year or two, but affecting whole communities and lasting many years. The depression, of course, was not confined to Scotland, though it was a good deal worse there. As early as 1923, unemployment in Scotland stood at 14.3 per cent compared to 11.6 per cent in the UK as a whole, at the bottom of the slump, 1931-3, more

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<sup>3</sup>Edwin Muir, *Sketch Book of the Thirties*. Radio programme: transmitted 20/1/1957. ts. BBC Radio Scotland Scripts: STA KJ Box 4/5.

<sup>4</sup>Neil Baxter, '1938' in Perilla Kinchin and Juliet Kinchin, eds. *Glasgow's Great Exhibitions: 1888, 1901, 1911, 1938, 1988* (Wendlebury: White Cockade, 1988): 128.

<sup>5</sup>Brand: 77-78.

than a quarter of the work force in Scotland was out of a job, compared to a little over a fifth in the UK.<sup>6</sup>

The response of local government (in the form of the Convention of Royal Burghs) and the business sector to these problems was the creation of the Scottish National Development Council (SNDC). Established in May 1930 the Council involved the nationalists Sir Alexander MacEwen and the Duke of Montrose.<sup>7</sup> However, this voluntary group expanded to include business owners and managers as well as trade union leaders. By 1931 it operated under the leadership of prominent Glasgow industrialists Sir James Lithgow and Sir Steven Bilsland. (Lithgow being the Chair of the Executive Committee of the SNDC.<sup>8</sup>) Such an organisation fitted well into the trend for the planned economy, received a degree of government funding in 1932 and encouraged the government towards the Special Areas Act of 1934, described by Brand as 'the first of a series of measures arising out of the belief that governments could manipulate the economy by way of a regional policy.'<sup>9</sup> In Scotland the planning idea was developed through the Scottish Economic Committee (SEC). Initially a sub-committee of the SNDC, membership of the SEC included representatives of the STUC. It was through the operations of the SEC that the Empire Exhibition was promoted, as was the later formation of Films of Scotland. Before the outbreak of World War II suspended the SEC's activities it also developed the Scottish Industrial Estates and the Scottish Special Housing Association.<sup>10</sup> It was, however, the Empire Exhibition which brought together all the strands of the economic debate, industrial developments, cultural activities and a new and positivistic outlook towards a better age. The Exhibition was officially proposed at a meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee of the SNDC in June 1936. From the start the project was

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<sup>6</sup>Smout, *A Century of the Scottish People*: 114. Smout is keen, however, to place these figures in a more precise context:

Up to this point [1933], however, it is possible to argue that Scotland was not badly off compared to other regions with a similar dependence on the traditional staples [of heavy industry and mining]. ... until 1933, the nearest neighbouring region, north-east England, had consistently higher unemployment. After that date, however, though Scotland approximately halved her unemployment rate to 13.5 per cent by 1939, due largely to military spending on rearming the fleet, her relative position worsened. In Scotland between 1927 and 1929, unemployment had been only about a tenth higher than the UK average: between 1937 and 1939, it was a third higher. Scotland failed in particular to maintain her position compared to the north-east, where unemployment by 1939 had actually fallen below the national average.

Smout, *A Century of the Scottish People*: 114-115.

<sup>7</sup>Harvie, *No Gods ...*: 49.

<sup>8</sup>'The Man You Know by 'The Bailie' -- Sir James Lithgow.' *Glasgow Weekly Herald* 21 July 1934. Article in bound collection of 'Men You Know' features held in the Glasgow Room, Mitchell Library, Glasgow (Ref. G920.04).

<sup>9</sup>Brand: 78.

<sup>10</sup>See Harvie, *No Gods ...*: 51.

conceived of as 'a daring and ambitious challenge to Scottish enterprise'<sup>11</sup> and a 'scheme to advance Scottish enterprise, prestige and industry.'<sup>12</sup>

The aims of the Exhibition were clearly stated:

1. To illustrate the progress of the British Empire at home and overseas.
2. To show the resources and potentialities of the United Kingdom and Empire Overseas to the new generations.
3. To stimulate Scottish work and production and direct attention to Scotland's historical and scenic attractions.
4. To foster Empire trade and a closer friendship among the people of the British Commonwealth of Nations.
5. To emphasise to the world the peaceful aspirations of the peoples of the Empire.<sup>13</sup>

These high ideals are reinforced by William Gallacher in a radio talk broadcast during the final month of the Exhibition, on 3 October 1938. While enthusiastic about the entertainment aspects of the event, Gallacher warns:

... let us not forget that the foundation of the Exhibition is 'industry' -- that important activity upon which our economic life is based. The Exhibition is an Empire Exhibition designed to demonstrate the arts and crafts, the power and capacity for production and the industrial achievements of the British Empire, and in a particular way to bring before the eyes of the Scottish people the many varied and important products of industrial Scotland.<sup>14</sup>

While the very worst of the Depression seemed to be over Colin McArthur correctly draws attention to the feeling that 'the economic discourse of the Exhibition constantly throws glances over its shoulder to the bleak conditions within which the Exhibition was conceived.'<sup>15</sup> The recurring strands of the economic discourse within the Exhibition are of the industrial nation, the modern nation, the nation at the forefront of technical innovation, social improvements and world events, with technology and industrial development offering a means of escape from the worst the Depression. However, as McArthur discusses, 'the modern thrusting economic discourse must constantly negotiate the other, historically hegemonic, discourse which conceives of Scotland in different terms.'<sup>16</sup> The cultural reference point for indigenous representations, familiar from at least the 1911 Exhibition, is of Scotland enmeshed in

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<sup>11</sup>'Transformation at Bellahouston: ... Built in Fourteen Months.' *Glasgow Herald* 3 May 1938: 10.

<sup>12</sup>'Transformation at Bellahouston: ... Plan Launched.' *Glasgow Herald* 3 May 1938: 10.

<sup>13</sup>*Empire Exhibition Scotland 1938: Official Guide*: 66.

<sup>14</sup>William Gallacher, *Empire Exhibition: Visitors' Book*. Radio talk: transmitted 3/10/1938. ts. BBC Radio Scotland Scripts: STA Kc Box 8/2.

<sup>15</sup>Colin McArthur, 'The Dialectic of National Identity: The Glasgow Empire Exhibition of 1938': 127.

<sup>16</sup>McArthur, 'The Dialectic of National Identity': 127.

the semiotics and the ideologies of tartanry and the kailyard. The Exhibition articulates a complex 'dialectic' formed in the nexus of the modern, the industrial, the commercial needs of the country and the set of images that historically depict and that function (denotatively and connotatively) to *mean* Scotland.

### Organising the Exhibition

The organising structure of the Exhibition points to the importance of industry, voluntary sector and media input. The President of the event was Lord Elgin, Earl of Elgin and Kincardine. Member of the Executive Committee (along with Sir James Lithgow and Sir Steven Bilsland) and the Chair of the Council of Management and Administrative Committee was Cecil M Weir -- a leading engineer. The General Manager -- in charge of the day to day running of the event -- was Captain S J Graham, who came from the Exhibitions Division of the Department of Overseas Trade. There were, in addition, a series of committees set up to organise and administrate sections of the Exhibition.<sup>17</sup> The committees included Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Colonial Empire, Finance and Guarantee Fund, Highlands, Publicity, Empire and Industrial Contacts, Scientific and Technical, Women's.<sup>18</sup> In terms of the arts, however, the key ones are the Film Committee, the Film Sponsors Committee, the Fine Art Committee, the Music and Entertainments Committee.<sup>19</sup> Members of the Film Committee included George Blake, John Grierson, A B King, Eric Linklater, Dr O H Mavor (James Bridie) and C A Oakley. Grierson, King, Mavor and Oakley were also on the Film Sponsors Committee. The Music and Entertainment Committee was larger consisting of fifty-seven individuals. The Convener was E Rosslyn Mitchell, and other members included Mavor, Robins Millar, Percival Steeds, Andrew Stewart, Hal D Stewart, Bertha Waddell and R B Wharrie. Through its organising infrastructure and the members of its committees the Exhibition provides a point of focus for the discourses and preoccupations of the Scottish cultural scene between the wars. Figures associated with theatre activity (amateur and professional), with the cinema industry and the indigenous use of film, with broadcasting, and by extension with the ideologies

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<sup>17</sup>Information as regards the make up of the committees and the executive is drawn from the *Empire Exhibition Scotland 1938: Official Catalogue*.

<sup>18</sup>Despite suffrage and the greater opportunities for education and a career available to women the 1938 Exhibition's projected roles for women generally is restricted to those of mother and home maker. The Women of Empire Pavilion, organised by the Women's Committee, concentrated on the domestic, on fashion and on arts and crafts, this a less than progressive development since both the 1888 and 1901 Exhibitions had included Women's Industries sections, showing at least something of contemporary working women.

<sup>19</sup>The complete list of Committees is: Accommodation; Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry; Catering; Colonial Empire; Film; Film Sponsors; Finance and Guarantee Fund; Fine Art; Garden Club; Highlands; Horticulture; Hospitality; London Advisory; Music and Entertainments; Press Club; Publicity, Empire and Industrial Contacts; Scottish; Scientific and Technical; Season Tickets -- Advisory; Services; Sites and Buildings; Space and Exhibits; Sports and Amusements; Transport; and Women's. *Empire Exhibition ... :Official Catalogue: 57-73*.

that lie behind these activities (the repertory theatre, the amateur theatre, the use of the local, the idea of a national culture) suggest that the Exhibition might provide more than an unproblematic use of Scottish culture, images and ideas.

Gallacher's radio talk concludes by reminding listeners that:

The Scottish Development Council, which is a voluntary and non-political organisation has for its aim and object the greater development of Scottish industry, and to this end the Empire Exhibition has been created.<sup>20</sup>

The Exhibition, like the earlier Glasgow Exhibitions, had a commitment to promote not just short term tourism but manufacturing industry and commerce, to encourage investment, to forge links within and without the Empire and, while the context is one of economic planning, the social history it reveals shows that it also draws together the experiences and prejudices of the cultural mission. As well as its immediate commitment to education it also provides a context for the final of the British Drama League's 1938 contest, the final of the Amateur Film Festival, performances by the Scottish National Players and the government sponsored documentary films made under John Grierson. The wider cultural significance of such an event was not lost on any sector of those involved. In his letter to the Exhibition Neville Chamberlain, the Prime Minister and Honorary President of the event, writes:

Throughout the world exhibitions are an accepted medium for displaying in miniature the culture, life and industry of the countries in which they are held. But the Members of the British Commonwealth of Nations are in an exceptional position by virtue of the special relationships which bind them together. It is for this reason that we are able to present here a picture of the many countries of the Commonwealth.

The Exhibition has, therefore, a special significance, it has also, I think, a special value at this time. For now, more perhaps than at any other time, there is need for mutual understanding and co-operation between the nations. We of the British Commonwealth can give a living example of the principles.

We are pledged to work for peace and progress in the world, and it is my hope that this Exhibition will make its contribution to that end. By helping the peoples of the Empire to know and understand one another, it will strengthen their power of common effort. By letting the people of other countries see something of ourselves, it will help them appreciate more clearly our work and aims.

Yet, if the Exhibition is not for Scotland alone, it is right to remember that Scottish initiative and enterprise and money have brought it into being. This is most fitting. Scotland has in the past made a notable contribution to Imperial development. In her present effort I see an earnest desire to add to that contribution. I see in it also, and I hope,

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<sup>20</sup>Gallacher, *Empire Exhibition: Visitors' Book* Radio Programme transmitted 3/10/1938. ts. BBC Radio Scotland Scripts: STA Kc Box 8/2.

our visitors will see, a sign of her own vigour, and of her resolve to keep, in the twentieth century, the notable place in world affairs which she won for herself in the years which went before.<sup>21</sup>

### Imagining the Exhibition

Another supporter of the Exhibition, the Secretary of State for Scotland and one of some forty-one Honorary Vice-Presidents, was Walter Elliot who on the eve of the opening of the event comments that:

What impresses me most is the 'dynamic quality' of the Exhibition. It is the realisation of a country which is alive and a city which is a power.

...  
We believe we have something to show the world when it comes, as it will come, to visit us. The modern spirit of light, speed and colour is here framed for a few months in the most beautiful natural setting.<sup>22</sup>

To be the Second City of the Empire was a somewhat less reassuring and secure position than it had been for the Glasgow which hosted the earlier Exhibitions. The city was struggling to maintain the image of being a 'power' -- but then the Empire as a whole was struggling just as hard in the face of 'the disintegration of old imperial certainties.'<sup>23</sup> Nevertheless, the call on the modern *zeitgeist* points to the perceived role the Exhibition was to have in presenting Scotland and Glasgow as part of the energy of the new.

The social and cultural pulls upon the 1938 exhibition, as McArthur notes, are in at least two different directions -- one about traditional representations, the other modern and industrial. Such a split proved to be equally problematic for the 1911 Exhibition. As mentioned, the profits of this event were to finance a Chair of Scottish History at Glasgow University. Bruce P Lenman, writing on the movement to introduce the teaching of Scottish history to the universities and the subject's subsequent development, notes the Scottish content of the Exhibition raises issues that are again relevant for the 1938 event:

The incoherence of the exhibition from the rattlesnake pit to the bogus Highland village 'An Clachan' and Prince Charlie's inevitable walking stick, reflected a basic dilemma of the movement. The new chair was meant to be different not just by being Scottish but also by embodying a new approach to historical reality, emphasising folk values. The term 'folk' implies participation in a tradition, but agreement on what constituted the Scottish tradition was far to seek. Supporters of the chair ranged from supporters of modern Scottish economic history to

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<sup>21</sup>Letter from Neville Chamberlain. *Empire Exhibition 1938: Official Guide*: 71.

<sup>22</sup>Walter Elliot quoted in 'Exhibition Weekend Hustle: Race Against Time at Bellahouston.' *Glasgow Herald* 2 May 1938: 13.

<sup>23</sup>Baxter, '1938': 130.

inhabitants of the Celtic twilight never-never world which was waxing potent around Glasgow ....<sup>24</sup>

The pull of the traditional was as strong in 1938 and just as imprecise in its 'imaginings'. The scale of the 1938 Exhibition was vast, much more ambitious than any of the earlier Glasgow events. Taking up 175 acres of Bellahouston Park in Glasgow, the *Official Guide* notes that, 'There are over 100 palaces and pavilions, and scores of smaller buildings' for visitors to enjoy.<sup>25</sup> There was a total staff of 876.<sup>26</sup> Official advance press releases point to some of the expected highlights, including the iconic Tower of Empire, better known as 'Tait's Tower':

A 300-ft. steel Tower perched on a hill 170 feet above sea level will offer from three projecting galleries a magnificent panorama of the Exhibition and the surrounding countryside. Two 18-passenger lifts will travel to the top in less than a minute; at the same base, built on stilts, will be the Tree-Top Restaurant with the tables set among the branches of the trees. When completed the Tower will be the highest covered structure in Britain.

... Spectacular water displays and floodlighting in colour will change the Exhibition into a wonderland by night. A 400-ft. lake placed between the Dominions and Colonial Sections and containing scores of fountains will use 12, 5000 gallons of water a minute. Six underground pumping stations will provide water for fountains and cascades.

Ten power stations will distribute electricity for the million-candle-power illuminations. Thirteen miles of underground cables and 240 miles of wiring will be used. All buildings and trees will be floodlit in colour, and from the top of the Tower a battery of searchlights will send out a beam visible over a radius of 100 miles.<sup>27</sup>

The Exhibition drew together many of the real and imagined strands of Scottish life in the interwar period. It collected together the great advances in industry which the age had in many ways failed to interpolate at the level of the workers because of the severe unemployment of the 1930s; it brought together new and traditional manufacturing and craft skills; on the one hand celebrating technology and process, on the other caught in an enduring and problematic view of craft and manual arts. It was to show the Colonies and Dominions, all areas of the Empire to each other, but also clearly desired to reveal Britain as the cultural and economic centre of the structure. In this model Scotland is rather uneasily placed between belonging to the exploitative core (and as

<sup>24</sup>Bruce P Lenman, 'The Teaching of Scottish History on Scottish Universities.' *Scottish Historical Review* 52.154 (1973): 177. Also quoted by Brand: 78.

<sup>25</sup>*Empire Exhibition 1938: Official Guide*: 74.

<sup>26</sup>Alastair Borthwick, *The Empire Exhibition Fifty Years On: A Personal Reminiscence* (Edinburgh: BBC Scotland/Mainstream, 1988): 7.

<sup>27</sup>Selections from *Scotland's Empire Exhibition: Facts You Want To Know About It*. This is the first of a series of information leaflets.

such aligned to capital and to industry) and as part of the natural, the organic, that which is untainted by the Modern. This proving to be a recurrent problem.

In many ways this somewhat paradoxical position is paralleled in two of the Scottish attractions at the exhibition itself. Two of the most popular displays were 'Tait's Tower' and 'The Clachan': the one representative and symbolic of the dominant aesthetic movements of the period -- striking in design it dominated the Exhibition; the other characteristic of a life that was irredeemably lost, if indeed it had ever existed. The two features isolate the dialectic at work within the Exhibition in particular and the whole of Scottish culture and its practice in general. The Clachan functions as a distillation of a collective folk memory, nostalgic and essentially safe. The Tower of Empire, 'the very essence of modernity,'<sup>28</sup> is outward-looking and bold. McArthur, drawing attention to the seeming discordant clash the two features represent, considers that: 'The Clachan and the Tower of Empire are the polar points of the dialectic which threatens to render individual Scots schizoid ....' Nevertheless, in Exhibition literature, the Clachan is perceived to be '... one of the most distinctively Scottish parts of the whole Exhibition.'<sup>29</sup> Recalling Smout's statistics as to the demographic shifts of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century it is clear that Central Belt visitors who went to the Exhibition may have had a strong personal reaction to the imagined Highland village. Indeed many of these same people would return to their Highland home communities for the Fair holidays to work on the land. This, indeed, is part of the historical impulse behind the persona of Lauder and of Fyffe, must be part of the appeal of plays like J F Ferguson's *Campbell of Kilmohr*, John Brandane's *The Glen is Mine* and, indeed, is at the centre of the narrative of Neil Gunn's *The Ancient Fire*<sup>30</sup> The rural was still an important part of the lived experience of many Scots -- but was more commonly and more easily mythologised than the urban experience. However, the myth of the rural that the clachans of both the 1911 and 1938 Exhibitions present are not uncomplicated versions of the mock-tartan discourse. While nostalgia may predominate, a reality of Highland life may be wrought from the celebration of linguistic distinctiveness, the clear-eyed understanding of the failings of rural housing

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<sup>28</sup>McArthur, 'The Dialectic of National Identity': 129-130.

<sup>29</sup>'Women's Topics: At The Exhibition.' *Glasgow Herald* 1 Apr. 1938: 10.

<sup>30</sup>Murdoch records the role of drama in the Clachan itself:

... Molly [Urquhart] was involved with a project connected with the 1938 Empire Exhibition, held in Bellahouston Park. The Scottish Pavilion contained a representation of a clachan, or small Scottish village, and it was suggested that a group of short plays, such as might be given by a local club to such a rural community might be presented. Molly [Urquhart], with the Ross and Cromarty Association, assembled a cast ....

Their efforts did not meet with much encouragements, for the audiences were small in number, though one reporter stoutly asserted that 'the plays submitted were comparable to any one-act plays in the English language.'

Murdoch: 51-52. Other sources seem not to feature these productions.

## Plate xvi



The Clachan,  
Empire Exhibition, Scotland, 1938.

(private collection)

and the projected financial investment in Highland crafts and industry. Both the myth and the reality of the rural function as an important counter to the view of industrial Scotland and the latterly pervasive myth of the urban, with all Scotland being reduced to images of (post-) industrial Glasgow. The crisis of the Depression may have engendered a celebration of the industrial, the heroic worker, the skilled craftsman, the urban community and most clearly an image of 'Red Clydeside', but in the early part of the twentieth century this was still matched by the reality of urban Scotland and its often struggling heavy industries, housing problems and political agitation, an arena of problem and crisis. (It is, most especially, with demise of the industrial Central Belt that its images and myths come to be celebrated and celebrated nostalgically.) In this cultural development the rural was increasingly perceived as the picturesque and the unproblematic. In depiction and use, if not in underlying intent, the predominant image of the Highlands that both the Exhibitions provide is of the essentially backward-looking mock-tartan kind.

The Exhibition's Official Guide introduces the Clachan in atypically emotive prose but nevertheless in language sympathetic in tone and ultimately aware of the pressure imposed upon the traditional by the new :

Few places in the world have been more surrounded with glamour and romance than the Highlands and Islands of Scotland. Poets, men [sic] of letters and artists have lavished their praises on the hills, lochs and islands of the West; and the exile from these parts has a tradition of nostalgia, approached only by that of the ancient people of Israel:

*An Clachan*, the Highland village, will raise many memories in the minds of returned exiles and will give to others some impression of the real old Scotland, the Land of the Gael, the Scotland that is fast passing before the relentless onrush of modernity.<sup>31</sup>

In terms of architecture the point of extreme contrast to the Clachan is Tait's Tower: the one vernacular, rural domestic building; the other at the forefront of international public design. However, even this most modern of building achievements is described lyrically in the *Official Guide's* introduction:

*'And they said: Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven ...'*

Ever since primitive man placed one stone upon another to form the first crude temple, columns and towers have played a prominent part in the architectural visions of mankind. The Tower of Babel, the pyramids of Ancient Egypt, the minarets of the East, the Gothic spires of Europe, and the sky-scrapers of Manhattan all testify to man's aspiration towards the heavens. To-day, following the invention of steel and concrete, the possibilities in this form of construction are greater than ever before,

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<sup>31</sup>'The Clachan.' *Empire Exhibition ...: Official Guide*: 121.

and the Tower of Bellahouston Park is an essay in this new and exciting field.

Nothing in the Exhibition has so caught the public imagination as the Tower. And justly so. Unprecedented problems had to be solved and daring feats of skill performed before the architect's idea could be translated into reality. The finished effort, dominating the Exhibition as it soars 300 feet above the crest of Bellahouston Hill, is symbolic of all that is enterprising, and is the crowning achievement of the imagination which envisaged the Empire city of Bellahouston rising from the wooded slopes and the spacious lawns of a beautiful public park -- that of Mr. Thomas S. Tait, F.R.I.B.A., architect-in-chief of the Exhibition, who had the collaboration of Mr. Lancelot H. Ross, M.C., F.R.I.B.A., and Mr. James Mearns, M.I. Struct. E.<sup>32</sup>

After focusing on the more technical aspects of the building, the guide to the Exhibition continues under the sub-heading 'Natural Focus Point':

In form and position the Tower represents the natural focus point of the whole Exhibition. As Wordsworth put it:

*'This height a ministering angel might select:  
... the amplest range  
Of unobstructed prospect may be seen.'*

As revealed to the visitor gazing down from its galleries, the exhibition presents the appearance of a city of palaces and pavilions designed in the simple lines and curves typical of modern architecture and knit together by wide avenues: a city of light, colour, spaciousness, spectacle and gaiety. The wider prospect is even more more impressive. On a clear day an 80-mile view is obtainable: the peaks of the Highlands to the north, the estuary of the Clyde to the West, and the streets and factories of Glasgow to the south-east -- all are within the gaze of the visitor.<sup>33</sup>

While the Tower is representative of a new world (but a world that still maintains a perspective on the values and the morality of other times, indicated by the Biblical and literary reference points), the *Official Guide* explains that the Clachan is of an older order, a composite of the rural architecture of various regions in Scotland. Despite the emphasis placed on it as authentic it is of course a reproduction. (*The Official Guide* notes that, 'The village is the creation of Dr. Colin Sinclair. Plaster casts were taken from actual walls to reproduce cottages typical of Argyll, Skye and the Outer Isles.'<sup>34</sup>) As with the myth of Brigadoon, the overall effect of the Clachan is as fantastic representation of 'Scotland'. However, just this criticism is countered by Sir Alexander MacEwen, who as chair of the Highlands Committee of the Exhibition, officially opened the Clachan on 17 May 1938.<sup>35</sup> He points out that the money made in

<sup>32</sup>'The Tower.' *Empire Exhibition ...: Official Guide*: 107.

<sup>33</sup>'The Tower.' *Empire Exhibition ...: Official Guide*: 109.

<sup>34</sup>'The Clachan.' *Empire Exhibition ...: Official Guide*: 121.

<sup>35</sup>Reported as 'Inauguration of the Clachan.' *Glasgow Herald* 18 May 1938: 8.

entrance fees and in profits from sales of foods and crafts would benefit the Highland home industries movement and An Comunn Gaidhealach and thus encourage Highland development in ethnographically sympathetic ways:

'I do believe that the Highlands have something to offer people in these days,' Sir Alexander maintained. 'The black houses which are represented in the Clachan would not pass the test of a sanitary inspector, but they were the homes of an ancient and lively civilisation and the shrine of a spiritual tradition which we will do ill to lose.'

The village which was recognised [by Cecil Weir] to be a symbol of the roots and origins of the Scottish people, showed that in the highlands there was something separate and distinctive and worth preserving.<sup>36</sup>

The vision of life in the Highlands that MacEwen describes is not the usual one familiar to discourses of tartanry but describes an accurate view of the quality of life in the Highlands as wanting in the modern age. Even the vision of the culture of the Highlands is presented with a more tenable and authentic tone. The Exhibition's *Official Guide*, however, is generally more concerned with preserving the myth of the Highland rural idyll than pursuing the anthropological thesis it suggests and even promotes with the sponsorship of Highland culture and commerce. The *Guide* continues:

On the face of the brae overlooking an 'unclassified' country road the cottages cluster. Some are white walled, some grey with age, moss and lichen. By the roadside, near the little bridge which crosses the burn where the hill-paths converge, stands the Post Office cottage, a gabled but-and-ben with a shop attached. Higher up is the Skye cottage thatched with *fianach* (moorgrass); the so-called 'black house,' with walls six feet thick, sturdy functional design; and the *ceardach*, or smithy cottage, Hebridean in type, situated, conveniently enough, near the Inn, *An Tigh Osda*, in which the visitor may regal himself with bread and bannocks, *sgadan* and *bradan*, Coll cheese, and a *sрубag* from the teapot.<sup>37</sup> Standing a little apart from its neighbours is a cottage which is a modernised version of the traditional type, and is in harmony with the Highland setting. Yet it is designed to conform to modern

<sup>36</sup>'Inauguration of the Clachan.' *Glasgow Herald* 18 May 1938: 8.

<sup>37</sup>The visitor to the Clachan was somewhat limited as to the refreshments available. Exhibition publicity declares that:

A tea-room in the Inn will serve only Highland meals -- herring, porridge, carageen (sea-weed Custard), crowdie (milk cheese) and oatmeal bannocks.

*Scotland's Empire Exhibition: More Facts About It: Broadsheet No. 2.*

This interest in 'traditional' Scottish food was also extended to the Women's Pavilion where its preparation was an attraction competing with various fashion shows:

Scotland's traditional dishes will be made daily in the farmhouse kitchen in the Women's Pavilion and in the Inn at the Highland Clachan. Bannocks, oatcakes, porridge, marrack (oatmeal fried in fat), crowdie (sour milk cheese), carageen (sea-weed custard) and broth will be on the menu.

*Scotland's Empire Exhibition: More Facts About It: Broadsheet No. 3.*

standards of health and sanitation, and equipped with a bathroom, scullery and drains -- unheard of luxuries in the old days.

The burn flows into a 'sea loch.' A jetty projects into the water at one end; a gabbart is drawn up on the beach; a fishing boat rides easily at anchor off-shore; nets, lobster creels, anchors, ropes and similar gear lie about.

Almost on the edge of the loch rises the chief's castle, externally a convincing ruin, but equipped internally to accommodate social gatherings and *ceilidhs* on the large scale. A Celtic scheme of decoration has been adopted for the interior, a feature being the mural painted by Miss Molly MacEwen, depicting the story of Deidre.

Visitors to the Clachan should not fail to procure a copy of the official Clachan publication, *The Highlands and The Highlanders*, in which distinguished Scots scholars describe the customs and occupations of the old Highlands and essay a glance into the future.<sup>38</sup>

The tension is between the language used in the guide, images of the clachan in Exhibition postcards, the use of this section by visitors and then the call made upon academic scholarship. It is an unresolved point of friction.<sup>39</sup> On the one hand the *Official Guide* upholds and expands the myth of the rural; on the other MacEwen's approach is unsentimental and firmly rooted in the contemporary experience of the rural. The problem of representation is, then, not just the dichotomy of the industrial and the urban on the one hand, and the rural myth on the other, but also in the use and reception of the rural.

The *Official Guide* describes the rest of the Clachan further:

On the other side of the loch are the remains of a pre-Reformation church -- or *Cill* -- reminiscent of the faith which had its cradle in the West. The church is modelled on that at Kilmory, Knapdale, with the Macmillan cross at its portals, and the holy well on St. Maolrubha's well at Aisig, Skye.

A Gaelic-speaking population occupies the clachan, the men mending the nets, making creels and weaving, and the women tending their homes and spinning the yarn on the wheel. The smith stands by his anvil. In the outbuildings of the Inn there is a collection of Highland tweeds and native crafts which are both for exhibition and sale.

When evening has fallen, and the peat fire flame is burning brightly, and the soft, plaintive songs of the Islanders are heard blending with the stillness, it calls for no great effort of the imagination to savour something of the mystic quality of the Isles of the West.<sup>40</sup>

One of those who was part of the 'Clachan experience' was the 'Typical Highlander' -- a retired farmer, Alexander MacCulloch, from Oban and 'formerly well known as a competitor in the heavy events at the Highland Games ... [and] a fluent

<sup>38</sup>'The Clachan.' *Empire Exhibition ...: Official Guide*: 121-122.

<sup>39</sup>McArthur finds a similar set of images in other exhibitions, products and agencies, including a 1983 in-shop promotion supported by the Scottish Development Agency. See McArthur, 'The Dialectic of National Identity': 117-134.

<sup>40</sup>'The Clachan: ... Ancient Church.' *Empire Exhibition ...: Official Guide*: 122.

Gaelic speaker.’<sup>41</sup> This version of the ‘sturdy Celtic Highlander’ fitted well into the myth of the Highlands portrayed by the Exhibition and the Clachan. It was also used for the pageants and opening ceremony where, it was announced, ‘Highland dress will be the ‘correct thing’ for gentlemen entitled to wear it.’<sup>42</sup> The tendency towards the kitsch and the fantasy of some lost Golden Age of Scottish life is somewhat countered by the stress placed on the issues of language, the development of new rural housing, and the rural industries -- but nevertheless the most powerful image is the mock-tartan. The parallels with the 1911 Clachan are clear: the same anthropological spirit behind the event which in its use, in the images preserved, is debased into discourses akin to those of tartantry.

While the Clachan may be seen as a typical occasion of crisis in the semiotics of Scotland, it is described and used without irony and remains, in contemporary description, an unproblematic representation. This is at odds with contemporary reviews given of the 1938 version of *Kidnapped*<sup>43</sup> which is criticised for its clichéd view of Scotland, and compared unfavourably to Cavalcanti’s *North Sea*:

Two films that touch closely upon Scottish life, literature and traditions, the 20th Century Fox version of ‘Kidnapped’ and Cavalcanti’s ‘North Sea,’ are now ready for general distribution throughout the country.

In the one Hollywood has dished up a ludicrous travesty of a Scottish literary classic, and in the other the brilliant G.P.O. Film Unit director has depicted an incident in the lives of an Aberdeen trawler’s crew with a sincerity and dramatic power that border upon greatness.

In the one film hocus-pocus reigns; in the other truth and beauty.<sup>44</sup>

This gap in the perception of the locally produced myth and that imposed from (or reinterpreted by) outside cultures is again evident in the event of ‘Scotland Day’ at the Exhibition:

Saturday [24 September] will be ‘Scotland Day’ at the Exhibition and all patriotic Scotsmen wearing kilt will be admitted free to the Clachan --

<sup>41</sup>‘Typical’ Highlander for the Clachan.’ *Glasgow Herald* 27 Apr. 1938: 10.

<sup>42</sup>‘Highland Dress at Opening: King Approves Wearing of the Kilt.’ *Glasgow Herald* 29 Apr. 1938: 9. The *Herald* continues that:

The Duke of Montrose stated yesterday [28 April 1938] that His Majesty the King had graciously signified his approval of the kilt being worn by those entitled to wear it.

‘I myself will wear the kilt,’ the Duke added, ‘and hope that others will follow this example ... so that we may convey a living impression to our many visitors of Lord Elgin’s happy phrase, ‘Scotland at home to the world’.’

<sup>43</sup>This version of the Robert Louis Stevenson novel was directed by Alfred L Werker and produced as *Kidnapped -- The Adventures of David Balfour* through Twentieth Century Fox. It starred Freddie Bartholemew.

<sup>44</sup>‘Stage and Screen: ‘Kidnapped’ and ‘North Sea’.’ *Glasgow Herald* 24 June 1938: 8. A later comment notes that this version of *Kidnapped* ‘... is a warning of what can happen when an uninstructed foreign unit runs loose in the heather.’ ‘Editorial Diary: The Screen and the ’45.’ *Glasgow Herald* 20 October 1938: 8.

but any woman in kilt or tartan skirt will have to pay the usual admission charge.

The Clachan Committee, while wishing to see as much tartan as possible in the Clachan on that day, are not prepared to set any records by encouraging women to wear the kilt.

A member of the committee stated yesterday that 'the kilt was never meant for women.'<sup>45</sup>

The vision of Scotland presented by the attraction was indeed a popular one -- on the first day some 9,000 people visited the Clachan.<sup>46</sup> By referring to the accounts of the Empire Exhibition<sup>47</sup> it is clear that by the end of the Exhibition the Clachan had been a successful feature of the event. It had earned £37,178: 5: 2 in gate money, £41:17: 3 in other admissions, and £290:10:- in season tickets, including all other income (from the concert hall, donations, rents for the vending concessions, commission from various sales, including guides and brochures<sup>48</sup> and the final realisation of assets) the Clachan had a total income of £40,146: 7: 6. The expenditure was calculated to be £16,148: 2: 1,1/2 -- with the actual cost of the plant ('Cost of Castle, Cottages, Loch, Burn and Paths, Hoardings, Water Pumps and Supply Piping, Electrical Installations and Switchboard and Floodlighting.'<sup>49</sup>) the major burden at £10,106:10: 9.<sup>50</sup> The accounts make clear that the Clachan did benefit the bodies it was intended to support. With a divisible surplus of £23,998: 5: 4,1/2, both An Comunn Gaidhealach and Highland Home Industries were given £7,000 each.<sup>51</sup>

Equally Tait's Tower did not only catch the imagination of the community and visitors alike but was a popular and successful feature in terms of generating income. Accounts indicate that the cost of 'Buildings and Layout of Ground: ... Tower of

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<sup>45</sup>'Scotland Day' at Bellahouston.' *Glasgow Herald* 21 Sept. 1938: 15. Scotland Day is also previewed by Alastair Borthwick in one of the series of talks *Round the Tower*. He comments that: The Committee's point of view is that there is no more precedent for kilted women than there is for women in trousers, and so they are giving free admission to men only.

Borthwick, *Round the Tower*. Radio talk: transmitted 22/9/1938. BBC Radio Scotland Scripts: STA Ki Box 5/10.

<sup>46</sup>'Visitors have Time 'To Stand and Stare': More Leisurely Scene at Bellahouston.' *Glasgow Herald* 5 May 1938: 13.

<sup>47</sup>Various account books for the Empire Exhibition are held in the University of Glasgow Business Archives (reference: UGD 212).

<sup>48</sup>Income from sales also details £31:15: 6 from 'Sales of Horse Shoes by Blacksmith,' and 1s.8d. from 'Sales of Peats.' See Accounts Document. 'Empire Exhibition, 1938: An Clachan: Statement Showing Divisible Surplus.' (G U Business Archives reference: UGD 212/7/3.)

<sup>49</sup>Accounts Document. 'Empire Exhibition, 1938: An Clachan: Statement Showing Divisible Surplus.' (G U Business Archives reference: UGD 212/7/3.)

<sup>50</sup>Accounts Document. 'Empire Exhibition, 1938: An Clachan: Statement Showing Divisible Surplus.' (G U Business Archives reference: UGD 212/7/3.)

<sup>51</sup>Of the remaining profit £5,641 was retained by Empire Exhibition, Scotland, 1938 and the remaining £4,357: 5: 4 was 'Lodged on Deposit Receipt in the name of 'Empire Exhibition, Scotland -- 1938 (on account of Highlands Committee).' Accounts Document. 'Empire Exhibition, 1938: An Clachan: Statement Showing Divisible Surplus.' (G U Business Archives reference: UGD 212/7/3.)

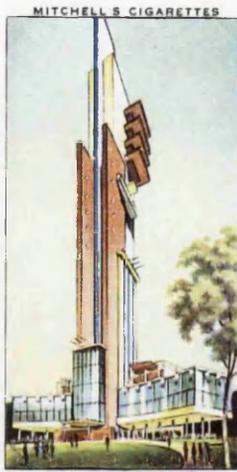
Plate xvii



ENTRANCE—MOSS PARK



THE LAKE



THE EMPIRE TOWER



THE UNITED KINGDOM GOVERNMENT PAVILION



THE CITY OF GLASGOW PAVILION



THE PALACE OF ARTS



THE CONCERT HALL

Scenes from the Empire Exhibition, 1938.

(private collection)

Empire and Restaurant' was £40,557:12: 8.<sup>52</sup> The admissions to the Tower produced an income of £29,647: 5: 6.<sup>53</sup>

### Exhibition events

As with the programme of entertainments at the 1911 Exhibition, the 1938 event was host to a number of theatrical events. The major pageant at the Exhibition was the *Scottish Pioneers of Empire Pageant* held in the Concert Hall from 31 May to 4 June. This event, written by William Jeffrey and George Mills and directed by Parry Gunn, involved performers from many of the local amateur drama clubs, and included such established names as Jean Taylor Smith, Pat Sandeman, William Henry, Anne C Barr, E J P Mace, Harry Kirkham<sup>54</sup> and Maud Risdon, a pantomime favourite at the Theatre Royal earlier in the century.<sup>55</sup> The pageant depicted scenes of the Darien expedition, the trial of Thomas Muir, the Relief of Lucknow and emigrants leaving the Hebrides bound for Canada. Weir, in a letter to the *Glasgow Herald*, comments on the germane nature of the subject matter:

There could not be anything more appropriate at an Empire Exhibition than this story of Empire-building by Scots .... In this historical pageant, entertainment and education march hand in hand.<sup>56</sup>

This linking of 'entertainment and education' was a concern for the whole of the Exhibition and must underlie all arts practice that might be considered to promote the values of the cultural mission. It is an ideology that underlies much of the arts and cultural activities of the period from the independent theatres, to the repertory theatre, amateur theatre and film as well as on into the BBC.

The Empire Exhibition draws together the various strands of the contemporary media to an extent that had never been possible with the previous great exhibitions based in Glasgow.<sup>57</sup> The Exhibition unites film production and exhibition, broadcasting, variety, puppet shows, music and theatre -- with involvement by the Scottish National Players and the Scottish Community Drama Association -- as well as

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<sup>52</sup>Accounts Document. 'Empire Exhibition, 1938: Statement of Income and Expenditure, for period ended 31st October, 1942.' (G U Business Archives reference: UGD 212/7/2.) This is the final statement of account from accountants Mclay, McGibbon and McAllister. The figures must be taken with a somewhat jaundiced eye for -- with call on the guarantee fund, represented by a bank overdraft -- they balance perfectly with a turn over of £1,288,206:13: 6.

<sup>53</sup>Accounts Document. 'Empire Exhibition, 1938: Statement of Income and Expenditure, for period ended 31st October, 1942.' (G U Business Archives reference: UGD 212/7/2.)

<sup>54</sup>'At the Exhibition.' *Glasgow Herald* 27 May 1938: 10.

<sup>55</sup>See Alastair Borthwick, *Round the Tower*. Radio talk: transmitted 30/5/1938. ts. BBC Radio Scotland Scripts: STA Kc Box 10/5.

<sup>56</sup>Letter from Cecil M Weir. 'Pageant of Empire.' *Glasgow Herald* 26 May 1938: 9.

<sup>57</sup>That is the Exhibitions of 1888, 1901 and 1911 -- all of which were held in the Kelvingrove Park in Glasgow. See, for instance, Kinchin and Kinchin (with Baxter) in, *Glasgow's Great Exhibitions*.

fine art with the Palace of Arts.<sup>58</sup> The Exhibition was a venue for many concerts and variety shows -- Sir Thomas Beecham and the London Philharmonic Orchestra, the Lerner Quartet and Paul Robeson all took part in the Celebrity Week at the Concert Hall from 29 August to 3 September<sup>59</sup> (this a return visit for Robeson who had already sung in the Concert Hall in May), a choir festival was held in the Film Theatre in the last week of September,<sup>60</sup> the Mod took place in the Concert Hall from 27 September,<sup>61</sup> there was a pipe band contest<sup>62</sup> and celebrities like Anna Neagle, Donald Bradman and the Australian cricket team, Charles Laughton and Elsa Lanchester all made visits to Bellahouston. In addition Queen Mary was an enthusiastic supporter of the event visiting three times in the space of one week in September.

Although the Exhibition featured an Amusements Park (operated by Billy Butlin after the idea was rejected by the Green family -- who thought that the park was too far from the city centre and that not opening on Sundays would make the investment unprofitable) and clearly operated a programme of events to entertain visitors and attract more people to the event,<sup>63</sup> it was still perceived as potentially educative and

<sup>58</sup>The Palace of Art was one of the few buildings to survive the end of the Exhibition. Indeed it and the Peace Cairn are the only exhibits to actually remain on site.

<sup>59</sup>*Exhibition News: Weekly Bulletin* 19 Aug. 1938.

<sup>60</sup>*Exhibition News: Weekly Bulletin* 5 Aug. 1938.

<sup>61</sup>*Exhibition News: Weekly Bulletin* 5 Aug. 1938. In a September edition of this publication the Mod is again previewed:

Next week thousands of Gaelic-speaking Highlanders will invade the Empire Exhibition. All Gaeldom will be in Glasgow for the 42nd Mod, which is the annual festival of song and folklore for the Highlands and Islands.

*Exhibition News: Weekly Bulletin* 23 Sept. 1938.

<sup>62</sup>*Exhibition News: Weekly Bulletin* 26 Aug. 1938.

<sup>63</sup>The attractions of the Amusement Park are recorded by an *Evening Citizen* report:

Everywhere were gadgets for turning you upside down, rolling you round and round, shaking your liver, in short, putting you in any position other than the normal one. Here man (and that means woman too) is twisted, thrown, bumped and shaken, and he likes it. If you doubt me, go and see for yourself. Watch him come off the most fearsome-looking machine smiling and happy, and asking for more and getting it. No wonder that poets sing of the wonderful Spirit of Man.

Now come with me to the Stratoship, a cigar-shaped 'aeroplane' that seats about six or seven. It is attached to a long arm and has a propeller. When you are securely strapped into a cage arrangement, off you go, the motion being something like a plane beginning to rise. It's all very pleasant -- and then your 'plane' suddenly rolls right over, and before you know where you are you're sitting up gasping -- and then over you go again.

If the Stratoship is a thrill, the Rocket Railway is even more thrilling. ... You've probably seen that act known as the Wall of Death in which a motor-cyclist goes round a 'well' at a tremendous speed. This is the Rocket Railway on a smaller scale.

...  
Now for the Octopus. It is a machine with long steel arms reaching into the air. On the end of each arm or tentacle -- there must be about twenty of them -- is a chair that holds two. The passengers are carefully fastened in, and the Octopus begins to waggle its tentacles. Up they go, down they go, and all the time the seat is revolving. It may not be your form of enjoyment, but you are in the minority, for it was highly popular yesterday. As one man came off, after several rounds, his eyes were sparkling, and he said, simply: 'It's a wow!'

improving. This is suggested in the decision by the Glasgow Corporation, after some protracted discussions, to allow 100,000 school-children, who might not otherwise been able to attend to be taken as guests of the Corporation.<sup>64</sup> There exists an series of memos and letters between the management of the Exhibition and the Corporation of Glasgow concerning the gifting of these tickets (a scheme supported by both sides) and another scheme to grant an equal privilege to unemployed men of the city. One internal memo between the Treasurers Department of the Exhibition and the General Manager (Graham) notes that:

We are of the view that the 100,000 special tickets be issued to Glasgow Corporation at a price of 3d. each as we feel sure that revenue will accrue to the Exhibition which might otherwise not be received and the visit of the children will be of considerable value to them.<sup>65</sup>

Such benefit was extended to the 3,500 'unemployed men on the Able Bodied Roll of the Corporation Public Assistance Department'<sup>66</sup> but with less enthusiasm than for the children's scheme. The Treasurer's Department writes to Graham:

We are of the view that there are objections on principle to the proposal as it might be extended to all able-bodied unemployed but suggest that as Glasgow Corporation are so intimately connected with the Exhibition the necessary number of free tickets might be issued to them for distribution to unemployed men as they in their discretion might determine.<sup>67</sup>

This suggests that the cost of visiting the Exhibition was restricting. Tickets were available in various types. A season ticket cost 25s for adults and 12s6d for those under 18 years of age on 30 April 1938. (It was an inconsistency, perhaps, that concessions for single-admission tickets were only available to those under 14 on the 30 April 1938.) Single-admission tickets cost 1s and 6d for concessions. A similar problem was faced in the Concert Hall where prices had to be reduced. At the opening of the Exhibition prices were arranged in three price bands:

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'All Work and No Play!' by Argus.' *Evening Citizen* 5 May 1938; reprinted in Simon Berry and Hamish Whyte, eds, *Glasgow Observed* (Edinburgh: John Donald, 1987): 223-224.

<sup>64</sup>*Exhibition News: Weekly Bulletin* 2 Sept. 1938.

<sup>65</sup>Memo, 2 July 1938, from Treasures Department (of the Exhibition) to the General Manager. (G U Business Archives reference: UGD 212/7/1.)

<sup>66</sup>See letter 28 June 1938, from Robert Richmond, Deputy Town Clerk, to Graham. (G U Business Archives reference: UGD 212/7/1.) Richmond suggests that the Liaison Committee, set up within the Corporation to work with the Exhibition authorities,

... feel that if the Exhibition Authorities could see their way to give to these men and to their dependents one ticket of admission each, the gesture would be very highly appreciated in Glasgow.

<sup>67</sup>Memo, 2 July 1938, from Treasures Department (of the Exhibition) to the General Manager. (G U Business Archives reference: UGD 212/7/1.)

Scale A covers celebrity concerts and recitals by famous artists and for such programmes the charges will be -- Stalls 10s; balcony and terrace 7s6d; amphitheatre 5s; and unreserved seats 2s6d.

Twice nightly programmes such as the opening week [featuring a variety show with Will Fyffe] are graded under Scale B in which the prices are -- Stalls 3s, balcony 2s, terrace and amphitheatre 1s6d and unreserved seats 1s. Saturday prices may be slightly higher.

Choral evenings are covered by the prices in Scale C -- Stalls 2s, balcony, terrace and amphitheatre, 1s6d; unreserved seats 1s.<sup>68</sup>

The Concert Hall, which had a seating capacity of almost 1,800, was a popular venue for performers like Robeson (who all but sold out twice) and the tenor Alfred Piccaver and violinist Fritz Kreisler and the major orchestras -- the London Symphony under Sir Henry Wood, the BBC Symphony under Sir Adrian Boult, as well as Beecham and the London Philharmonic -- but for the more ordinary performance, including choral work and the BBC Scottish Orchestra under a less well known conductor, houses were very small. Even the very early show featuring Will Fyffe was hardly a box office success. The prices were criticised for being too high (in addition to the concert ticket audiences had to pay their entry fee for the Exhibition itself) and the hall itself too cold.<sup>69</sup> It had been designed as a temporary venue for use during the summer months and so did not have any heating built in. Unfortunately the summer of 1938 was, in Glasgow, both cold and wet:

During the week strong criticism has been expressed regarding the chilly atmosphere in the Concert Hall of the Empire Exhibition at evening performances, the high price of admission and the lack of publicity and advertising for some of the programmes, and the complaints of the critics have been strengthened by the small attendances at concerts on the first three evenings.

On Monday evening [17 May] 140 people were present in the hall .... There were fewer on Tuesday, and on Wednesday -- when the concert was provided by the B.B.C. Scottish Orchestra -- there were still fewer.<sup>70</sup> The comparison was made with the St Andrew's Halls, the established Glasgow concert venue, where tickets were no more than 7s6d. Two months into the run of the Exhibition and the prices for the 'celebrity concerts' were reduced to 7s6d, 4s, 3s, and 2s.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>68</sup>'Concert Hall Prices: Three Scales of Charges.' *Glasgow Herald* 28 Apr. 1938: 7.

<sup>69</sup>Bob Crampsey notes that prices for the concert hall were:

... felt to be seriously over-inflated. To listen to a symphony concert in Glasgow's excellent St Andrew's Halls would not involve more than a maximum expenditure of 7/6d -- and the St Andrew's Hall were heated!

Crampsey, *The Empire Exhibition of 1938: The Last Dunbar* (Edinburgh: Mainstream, 1988): 116. Indeed, the charges for the main cinema at the Exhibition were just 6d for adults and 3d for children, while the other cinemas were in fact free of charge. See 'Exhibition Stimulates Film Activity.' *Bellahouston News* 3 (December, 1937): 4.

<sup>70</sup>'Concert Hall Complaints.' *Glasgow Herald* 20 May 1938: 8.

<sup>71</sup>*Glasgow Herald* 15 June 1938: 9.

On 24 May 'Harry Gordon and his entire Aberdeen Company'<sup>72</sup> was successful operating on a price scale of 3s6d to just 1s<sup>73</sup>: 'Harry Gordon and his Aberdeen company attracted large audiences at both houses in the Concert Hall last night.'<sup>74</sup>

### Exhibition art and design

Despite the Corporation building the Palace of Arts<sup>75</sup> and the input of the Fine Art Committee, it may be argued that in many ways the really exciting use of 'art' in the Exhibition was not in the Palace of Arts at all but in the overall look of the Exhibition. This was commented upon by many of the visitors and the Press, including the local papers in Glasgow:

The beauty of the lay-out and the architecture, the harmony of the varying colours used, the modernity and up-to-dateness of the buildings and exhibits have been praised by distinguished visitors from almost every country in the world.<sup>76</sup>

Praise was also forthcoming from the architecture journals:

The *Architectural Review* considered that Bellahouston marked 'a final departure from the monumental clichés of the Beaux Arts school', while the *Architects' Journal* described it as 'the best designed Exhibition which has yet been held in Britain'.<sup>77</sup>

This was partly achieved by the clear vision of the chief architect Thomas S Tait -- whose recently built St Andrew's House in Edinburgh was the new administrative centre for the Secretary of State for Scotland. Tait supervised a team that included Jack Coia, Basil Spence, Esme Gordon, Margaret Brodie,<sup>78</sup> T Waller Marwick, Lancelot H Ross. Whilst each individual structure was not necessarily a discrete and exciting structure, nor each piece of sculpture nor each statue appropriate or even challenging, together and in their context a new and potential vision was projected as to what public

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<sup>72</sup>See the advertisement for the show *Glasgow Herald* 24 May 1938: 1. In April Gordon had been performing at the Pavilion in a show called *Radio Inversnecky*. ('Glasgow Theatre: ... The Pavilion.' *Glasgow Herald* 12 Apr. 1938: 10.) It was during this show that Gordon had introduced a new song, 'Doon Bellahouston Way.' ('Harry Gordon Attracts Large Audiences.' *Glasgow Herald* 25 May 1938: 14.)

<sup>73</sup>Advertisement. Exhibition Concert Hall. *Glasgow Herald* 24 May 1938: 1.

<sup>74</sup>'Harry Gordon Attracts Large Audiences.' *Glasgow Herald* 25 May 1938: 14.

<sup>75</sup>At a cost of £33,284:19: 2. See Accounts Document. 'Empire Exhibition, 1938: Statement of Income and Expenditure, for period ended 31st October, 1942.' (G U Business Archives reference: UGD 212/7/2.)

<sup>76</sup>*Empire Exhibition Scotland (1938)* (Glasgow: *Daily Record* and *Evening News*, 1938): N.Pag.

<sup>77</sup>Rudolph Kenna, *Scotland in the Thirties* (Glasgow: Richard Drew, 1987): 75.

<sup>78</sup>Brodie was an important figure in the transformation of Bellahouston Park into the Empire Exhibition. The only woman that Tait employed as architect, she designed the Women of Empire Pavilion but was also the on-site architect for the construction phase of the project.

building might move towards. Tait describes the ideas behind the look of the Exhibition:

There is only one way of describing what we want at Bellahouston, and that is -- 'The Grand Manner'. The whole Empire will be taking part, so we must build accordingly. The pavilions must be imposing, but at the same time bright and gay.<sup>79</sup>

With a mere eighteen months to take the project from ideas and sketches to opening, the building demanded not only a clear vision but the skills and techniques to make it work. The designs from Tait and his team were executed with the new techniques of steel or wooden frames clad with an outer layer of asbestos-cement sheeting, all of which could be pre-fabricated to save on-site construction. (This technique was very much part of the new building vocabulary which, from the 1920s, Le Corbusier had been developing.) The look that this design technique encourages is described by Tait:

Good building and good architecture are simply the honest use of the materials you have to handle. A concrete building should be as different from one made of brick as an oil painting is different from a watercolour. Consequently, when an architect has suddenly to switch from building in a permanent way with steel and stone to temporary structures of light steel, wood and asbestos, he [sic] has to reorganise his ideas. If he simply imitates permanent architecture, he will create something as ridiculous as a Greek temple of reinforced concrete. Big temporary buildings mean a new technique.

The buildings at Bellahouston are, therefore, ones which are suited to the function they have to fulfill [sic] and the materials from which they are made. They are long and low, because light steelwork lends itself to big spans. They have great sweeping lines, partly because steelwork is suited to the purpose and partly to take advantage of the effect and dignity and lightness which can be so obtained. And they have been easily erected and will be easily dismantled. Some people may call them modernist. That is a word I do not like. In this case it means nothing, for the design has been conditioned by function and materials, and not by time.<sup>80</sup>

Such techniques, allowing large flat or curved surfaces, encourage the expressive use of colour in the building and decoration of the pavilions:

Colour will be exploited as never before. All the buildings will be characteristically shaded: the Palace of Engineering in blue and grey to symbolise steel, the Palaces of Industry in rich reds and browns to symbolise the life-giving products of the industries represented therein,

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<sup>79</sup>Thomas S Tait, *Empire Exhibition, Scotland: Planning the Exhibition*. Radio talk: transmitted 9/8/1937. ts. BBC Radio Scotland Scripts: STA Kc Box 8/3.

<sup>80</sup>Tait, 'Planning the Empire Exhibition'; quoted by Baxter, '1938': 134.

the Royal Suite in regal gold and purple, and the pavilions of the Colonies in all the various hues of the Orient and the Tropics.<sup>81</sup>

In addition at nightfall the buildings and the fountains were lavishly illuminated with coloured lighting effects. The War, of course, ended this free use of materials, colour and lighting leading the way to a more utilitarian view of the public.

In architecture and design the Exhibition offers a hint of what Modern public building might have become. By this point -- the end of the 1930s -- the influence of the avant garde of Modernism had reached the design vocabulary of many of the architects commissioned to work on the Exhibition and was being integrated into more mainstream building and design work. Nevertheless, the more traditional art exhibit was perceived as an important element particularly to the 'Scottish' aspect of the event -- although it is interesting that again this 'Scottish' contribution is associated with the past and with 'masterpieces'. *Broadsheet No. 2* previews the show:

A £1,000,000 art show to which the King has sent two pictures will be staged in the Palace of Arts. The show will feature the Scottish Old Masters and the works of modern British artists. Raeburn's masterpiece, *The MacNab*, valued at over £25,000, will be on view.<sup>82</sup>

The role of the Scottish Committee is also of importance relating as it does to the indigenous role of the Exhibition. The view of art-based culture that the committee promoted was not without its excesses yet in general it does fit into the 'Great Man' tradition of what Scottish culture might be about. The Scottish Pavilions were a case in point. An article in the *Bellahouston News*, an advance publicity free-sheet, notes that:

A selection committee -- Dr. O. H. Mavor (James Bridie), Mr. R. M. Allardyce and Dr. David Baird Smith -- has chosen five famous Scots

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<sup>81</sup>*Scotland's Empire Exhibition: More Facts About It: Broadsheet No. 3.* In some aspects this desire to present a complete environmental experience and artistic vision was taken if not to extremes then at least over seriously:

The avenues within Bellahouston Park will be surfaced with red asphalt, in which white and pink granite chips will be embedded. This composition prevents sun-glare.

*Scotland's Empire Exhibition: Facts You Want To Know About It : Broadsheet No. 1.*

Kenna notes further details on the expressive use of colour in the Exhibition:

An integrated colour scheme was carried out in paint, floodlights, flowers and banners; the Palace of Engineering was finished in steel grey and steel blue; warm cream and red shades had been chosen for the Palace of Industry West, while the Women of Empire Pavilion was painted in pastel shades of rose and cream, the interior being finished in French grey -- 'a colour chosen, after consultation, as being kindest to feminine complexions'.

Kenna: 75.

Charles McKean also notes that the two Scottish Pavilions 'were dramatic in dark blue.' McKean, *The Scottish Thirties: An Architectural Review* (Edinburgh: Scottish Academic, 1987): 186.

<sup>82</sup>*Scotland's Empire Exhibition: More Facts About It: Broadsheet No. 2.*

for commemoration [in statue form] in Scotland's display. These are Livingstone, Watt, Carlyle, Scott and Burns.<sup>83</sup>

The statues and decorative art on show at the Exhibition while essentially ornamental were also perceived to have an informative or, more often, a symbolic edge. On the subject of the statues chosen by the committee for the Scottish Pavilions the *Scottish Pavilion: Official Guide* notes that:

The statues of Burns, Carlyle, Livingstone, and Watt [and Scott] which decorate the facade of the North Pavilion provide a reminder of other famous Scots who ... deserved well of their country. The five statues, by Scott Sutherland and D. R. Bissett, present portraits comparatively free from idealisation, permitting visitors to form a sane notion of the outward semblance of the men who contributed so greatly to Scotland's fame and glory.<sup>84</sup>

While murals and relief-work were features of many of the exhibits -- the Wool Pavilion was decorated by large sculpted sheep, the design of both the Industry (North) and the Catholic Pavilions were the work of Jack Coia (the former with supervision from and collaboration with Thomas Tait and Gordon Tait), with the latter decorated with colourful religious murals -- such decoration was often most distinctive around the areas of nationhood and corporate identity. On the one hand the sculpture and statues of the Scottish Pavilion; on the other the ICI Pavilion, designed by Sir Basil Spence, are useful points of reference:

St. Andrew, the patron saint of Scotland, will be seen in the South Scottish Pavilion as man and as boy. A 25-foot statue will depict him as a lad on the prow of a vessel. Behind this the venerable figure of the saint will be seen sand-blasted in the roof-high window, his cross extending diagonally from corner to corner, giving the impression that he is guarding the youthful Scotland.<sup>85</sup>

This statue of St Andrew was designed by Archibald Dawson.<sup>86</sup> The ICI Pavilion, designed by Spence, featured three towers each detailed in relief-work to represent the elements of air, earth and water.

The Scottish Pavilion at the Exhibition was divided into two parts, the North and the South Pavilions -- both designed by Spence, but like every other building with the close involvement of Tait.<sup>87</sup> Sir Hector Hetherington, Principal of Glasgow University

<sup>83</sup>*Bellahouston News* ('Being a Broadsheet of Information about next year's Empire Exhibition') 3 (December, 1937): 4.

<sup>84</sup>Eric de Banzie, 'Statuary and Decoration.' *Scottish Pavilion: Official Guide*: 7.

<sup>85</sup>*Scotland's Empire Exhibition: More Facts About It: Broadsheet No. 3.*

<sup>86</sup>*Empire Exhibition ...: Official Guide*: 118.

<sup>87</sup>See *Empire Exhibition ...: Official Guide*: 115, which gives full credit to Tait; and McKean: 189, which says that both Scottish Pavilions -- that is the exteriors -- were designed by Spence.

## Plate xviii



Scenes from the Empire Exhibition, 1938.

(private collection)

at the time, was the Chair of the Scottish Committee. He introduces the Scottish exhibits:

The North Pavilion shows the services provided by Scottish statutory bodies -- health, housing, transport, education and the rest. The South Pavilion shows memorials of Scottish history together with examples of the special domestic arts of Scotland and of the great range of services organised in Scotland by the Voluntary agencies which take so great a part in British national life.<sup>88</sup>

This shows the traces of the organising bodies behind the Exhibition -- industry and the SEC, the various voluntary organising committees. The Pavilions also featured distinctive interior decoration -- the north Pavilion designed by Basil Spence, the South by Mervyn Noad.<sup>89</sup> Hetherington concludes his introduction to the Scottish Pavilions with some indication of the improving ethos behind the event:

It is the hope that those who have had a hand in this work that the Pavilions may achieve in some degree the purpose which inspired their making -- that all who see them, especially the young people of our own land, may be stirred to affectionate pride in the past and present of Scotland, and encouraged to seek and to serve its future.<sup>90</sup>

One of the exhibits in the Scottish Pavilion (South) was from the Hunterian Museum of Glasgow University. This exhibit, limited to one exhibition case, was concerned with the Roman occupation of Scotland and artefacts remaining from that period. This was organised by Ann S Robertson, in 1938 the Bellahouston Scholar at the University,<sup>91</sup> but later curator at the Hunterian Museum, retiring in 1975 as Keeper of the Roman Collections and Coin Cabinet and Titular Professor of Roman Archaeology at the University.<sup>92</sup> The Exhibition also provides a context for other art and museum activities and, by providing such a framework, also provides a shaping ideology, one of improvement and almost certainly with some kind of cultural mission - - again a mission to inform and educate. This is suggested in the official letter of thanks from the Scottish Committee to those who contributed to the historical exhibits in the Scottish Pavilion (South). In the letter, from Henry Ellis, the Organising Secretary, on the behalf of Hetherington, he congratulates those involved adding that:

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<sup>88</sup>H J W Hetherington, General Foreword. *Scottish Pavilion: Official Guide* ([Glasgow?]: Scottish Committee, Empire Exhibition, Scotland, 1938): 6.

<sup>89</sup>*Empire Exhibition ...: Official Guide*: 118. However, McKean attributes to Noad the interior design of the Scottish Pavilion (North).

<sup>90</sup>Hetherington, General Foreword. *Scottish Pavilion: Official Guide*: 6.

<sup>91</sup>*University of Glasgow: University Calendar: 1938*. (Glasgow: University of Glasgow, 1938): 31. Letters to Robertson from the Exhibition authorities -- generally from Henry Ellis, the Organising Secretary -- are held in the University of Glasgow Archives (reference: D661).

<sup>92</sup>*University of Glasgow: University Calendar: 1974-75*. (Glasgow: University of Glasgow, 1974): 69.

There is little doubt that the exhibits in the historical section not only aroused the keenest interest and admiration but also stirred the people of Scotland to affection and pride in their country.<sup>93</sup>

### Theatre, film and broadcasting at the Exhibition

Into such a context, that of social activity with a cultural mission, it is easier to understand the roles ascribed to the finals of the 1938 amateur film and drama competitions.

It is understood that for the first time in the history of the British Community Drama movement the final festival in the British Drama League will be held in Glasgow in 1938. This is the first time in the history of the festival that it will take place outside London and is an indication of the importance of the Exhibition.

As usual, five teams will compete in the final festival -- one representing Scotland, one Wales and three from England. Amateur drama bodies from city, town and village will converge on Glasgow in May, when this event takes place.<sup>94</sup>

Despite the relocation of the event to Glasgow the organisation of the competition to find the British Drama League winner for 1938 was as usual -- regional heats and finals providing five teams for the final competition. The finals of the SCDA competition were held in the Lyric Theatre, Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow, between 7 May and 9 May 1938. The winners of this final was the Ardeer Recreation Club, who performed Eugene O'Neill's *In the Zone* produced by Harold L Wightman, and the second-placed group was the Jewish Institute Dramatic Club in Fay Ehlert's *The Undercurrent*<sup>95</sup> The importance of the event is indicated by the coverage given to the event in the newspapers, the *Glasgow Herald* not only reports and reviews the event but also publishes an editorial comment on the standard of the competition:

Last week the cream of the amateur dramatic teams that participated in the twelfth festival of community drama organised by the Scottish Community Drama Association took part in the final round of the festival in Glasgow. Of the ten entrants, at least six put up entertaining shows, each really worth a modestly priced ticket, and three of them attained a standard of excellence that in their case breaks down any qualitative distinction between the amateur and the professional stage.

Standards at the Festival vary from year to year, but it is perhaps true to say that there has been a general levelling up. Even in teams from rural areas it is rare to find the 'gawky' performances with which the amateur stage was at one time apparently content. A creditable

<sup>93</sup>Letter, 17 Feb. 1939, to Ann S Robertson. University of Glasgow Archives (reference: D661). There exists another personal letter of thanks from Ellis to Robertson of the same date. It is less formal in tone and suggests that the letter quoted above was indeed the official letter sent to all exhibitors in the historical section.

<sup>94</sup>'Drama Festival for Glasgow.' *Bellahouston News* 3 (December, 1937): 4.

<sup>95</sup>'Community Drama Festival Winners.' *Glasgow Herald* 11 Apr. 1938: 9. The *Herald* also carried reports on the previous days of competition; see *Glasgow Herald* 8 Apr. 1938: 15; 9 Apr. 1938: 12.

knowledge of the elements of acting, stagecraft and play-writing has become widely diffused.

In the rural areas the scope and opportunities available for creative dramatic work are limited, and the Festival perhaps canalises their main line of activity. Community drama in its truest form may be found there. In the cities the amateur movement is much more expansive. Its interest in the Festival is sectional, and it is the basis of several groups of the 'Little Theatre' variety that specialize in certain types of play -- in plays in the Scottish vernacular, in plays written by Scottish authors, or in plays of types that seldom get a chance on the commercial stage. It is in the work of such groups that the ultimate justification for the attention now paid to the organised amateur movement is now found.<sup>96</sup>

The Ardeer group went on to the Drama League final held at the Theatre Royal, Glasgow, on 30 May 1938. At that event five teams competed in front of the adjudicators James Bridie, Norman Marshall and Marie Ney. In the event the winning team was the London group of the Midland Bank Dramatic Society, who produced Donald Carswell's *Count Albany* -- perhaps a politic choice of Scottish play for finals held in Glasgow.

The amateur film festival was reset to become an international event -- and the finals took place in the same week as the BDL final.

Important developments in the plans for films at the Exhibition are announced. A cinema in which documentary and other films are to be shown will be administered by a committee, composed of representatives of the Exhibition, the Scottish Office, the G.P.O. Film Unit, the Commissioner for Special Areas (Scotland), and other bodies and individuals who have contributed in meeting the cost of erecting and equipping the cinema. Programmes will be approximately one hour's duration, and the prices of admission will be 6d. (adults) and 3d. (children).

...  
The Scottish Film Council has organised for the British Film Institute an Empire Amateur Film Festival, to be held on Sunday, 28th May. Preliminary meetings will be held during the week at the Exhibition. Mr. Alfred Hitchcock has agreed to act as adjudicator. Several valuable cups and a number of quaichs will be awarded.

The Social Services Panel of the Scottish Film Council is organising a conference on 'Films for Children' to be held in the Exhibition on a Saturday during September.

It is recalled that the Scottish Office recently announced that a fund was being collected for the making and showing of Scottish films. Mr. John Grierson is acting as adviser to the production of the films, which will deal with various aspects of Scottish life and achievements in industry, science, arts, and civics. A committee has been set up by the Scottish Development Council in connection with this scheme.<sup>97</sup>

<sup>96</sup>'The Drama Festival.' Editorial. *Glasgow Herald* 11 Apr. 1938: 12.

<sup>97</sup>'Exhibition Stimulates Film Activity.' *Bellahouston News* 3 (December, 1937): 4.

For the competition 79 films (from Britain, India and Australia) were entered into the preliminary round which took place at the Exhibition, with the final adjudication by Hitchcock being held in the Lyric Theatre, Glasgow, on 28 May.<sup>98</sup>

The festival is really a development from the annual Glasgow festival, the recognised Mecca of the British amateur film world. The local festival has not been held this year, its functions being merged in next week's Imperial venture.<sup>99</sup>

In the event the major prize of the competition was won by a Stoke-on-Trent film maker, Herbert J Arundel who produced a short thriller called *The Smuggler's Cave*<sup>100</sup> The *Herald*, again acknowledging their popularity and perceived importance, has an editorial comment on the two events:

The teams taking part in the British Drama League Final Festival played under the best conditions to a crowded and interested audience, and though a smaller public supported the Empire Amateur Film Festival, interest and enthusiasm left nothing to be desired. In the future an Exhibition should not be necessary to make the city the venue for two such vital amateur artistic activities.<sup>101</sup>

The importance of these two amateur competitions was the impact of a whole concept of what culture might be in a society. It is not the element of competition *per se* that distinguishes interwar cultural activity (although this was an important structural device) but the expansion of the cultural franchise of 'audience'. Competition creates an infrastructure in which diverse community groups come together to experience cultural activity, to perform and to discuss. Competition and its attendant institutions (the SCDA, the BDL, the SAFF) provide a sounding-board for members and a point of reaction for groups (like the Tron and the Curtain and GWTG) with different projects and agendas. For all these participatory groups the common emphasis is the recreation of the role of the audience. The ideology of cultural mission, active throughout the period, identifies a project in which the social emphasis remains firmly on involvement, improvement and education. The system of comment and reward, reaction and debate which places activity into a dialogue insists on the pro-active involvement of spectators

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<sup>98</sup>See 'Stage and Screen: The Amateur Film Festival.' *Glasgow Herald* 20 May 1938: 10; 'Stage and Screen: Film Festival.' *Glasgow Herald* 27 May 1938: 10.

<sup>99</sup>'Stage and Screen: The Amateur Film Festival.' *Glasgow Herald* 20 May 1938: 10.

<sup>100</sup>'Amateur Film Festival: Success of English Entries: Advance in Colour.' *Glasgow Herald* 30 May 1938: 8. The finals were judged to be a success by the adjudicator Alfred Hitchcock (described by the *Herald* as 'Britain's ace director of screen thrillers and a Falstaff in personal appearance.' 'Stage and Screen: Film Festival.' *Glasgow Herald* 27 May 1938: 10). His enthusiasm extended to the sponsorship of a new prize for future competitions. He donated a trophy and a cash prize of £10 for the next five festivals to be awarded to the best fiction film in competition. 'An Editorial Diary: A Practical Tribute.' *Glasgow Herald* 30 May 1938: 12.

<sup>101</sup>'Drama and Film Festivals.' Editorial. *Glasgow Herald* 2 June 1938: 10.

away from mere positions of reception, passivity and consumption, and towards a wider and in many ways more democratic experience and use of the arts.

The cinema mentioned by the *Bellahouston News* was the main film theatre at the Exhibition able to seat 525 of an audience<sup>102</sup> and designed by Alister MacDonald.<sup>103</sup> The *Official Guide* describes this new cinema:

The semi-circular foyer is entirely constructed of glass. The auditorium is fan-shaped and is so treated that attention is focused directly from every part. The proscenium opening is 19 feet by 20 feet, and is flanked on either side with a concave-shaped column with a light fitting in the base. A fully equipped stage twenty-six feet deep, with dressing rooms, caters for the theatrical side of the programme. In addition, there is an apron stage and orchestra pit.<sup>104</sup>

The programme of this the main cinema at the Exhibition was a continuous programme of predominantly documentaries and newsreels:

[Programmes] ... will comprise one Scottish film, one G.P.O. Film Unit picture, two coloured cartoons (a Mickey Mouse and a Silly Symphony), one newsreel and one Dominion film -- six films in all. The programmes will be changed every day during a fortnight .... The Dominion film, however, will be changed with each showing of a programme, so that in one day films from Canada, Australia, Africa, and the South Seas may be seen.<sup>105</sup>

The general excitement that the Exhibition produced certainly extended to include the films for the cinema:

No fewer than 70 Gaumont-British films, including a series of 36 Scottish subjects, are being dispatched to Glasgow to-night [3 May 1938] by special courier. The last of the Scottish films, that dealing with the Millport Marine Research Station, left the process room at three o'clock this afternoon. ... I am assured that never before has any country attempted to 'put itself across' by films so intensively as Scotland means to do from to-morrow onwards. Special programmes made up entirely of Scottish films and covering every aspect of life and work north of the Tweed are to be shown in one or more of the cinemas every day.<sup>106</sup>

This policy of Scotland depicting and promoting itself through the medium of film was one continued after the Exhibition and on into the post war period by Films of

<sup>102</sup>'The Exhibition Cinemas.' *Glasgow Herald* 3 May 1938: 3.

<sup>103</sup>See, for instance, 'Glasgow's First Newsreel-Cinema.' *Bellahouston News* 6 (February, 1938): 4. Alister MacDonald was also the architect behind the Peace Pavilion and the son of Ramsay MacDonald.

<sup>104</sup>'Film Theatre.' *Empire Exhibition ...: Official Guide*: 196.

<sup>105</sup>'The Exhibition Cinemas.' *Glasgow Herald* 3 May 1938: 3.

<sup>106</sup>'London: Day by Day: Exhibition Films.' *Glasgow Herald* 3 May 1938: 10.

Scotland. The Empire Cinema was also the venue for both SCDA theatre groups and the Scottish National Players when they performed at the Exhibition for the drama fortnight during the month of May.<sup>107</sup> The Scottish National Players performed three plays in the week beginning 23 May 1938. The plays were *Rory Aforesaid*, *C'est la Guerre* and *A Valuable Rival* -- 'each,' according to the *Herald*, '... characteristic of Scottish drama during the past 20 years.'<sup>108</sup> The previous week had been given to performances by a number of amateur groups, some of whom had been in competition at the final of the SCDA competition earlier in the month.<sup>109</sup> The *Herald* describes this as 'an ambitious step on the part of the amateur drama movement.'<sup>110</sup>

The venue for the drama fortnight -- like the other buildings on the site -- was, it must be remembered, a temporary one -- built for the Exhibition. As such it received support from government agencies. The cinema was funded and supported through:

... the co-operation of the Scottish Office, the G.P.O. Film Unit, the Ministry of Labour, the Commissioner for the Special Areas of Scotland, and the Scottish Advisory Council on Physical Fitness who, with the Exhibition Association, are sponsors of the scheme.<sup>111</sup>

In presenting a mixed programme of 'newsreels, cartoons, and the best of the available documentary films'<sup>112</sup> the cinema was following the programming strategy of the main commercial cinemas of the period, although it clearly did not complete the usual model with a feature film. Indeed the cinema screened silent films as well as sound films, something rather unusual for mainstream cinemas in 1938. The main documentary films screened during the Exhibition were the Films of Scotland made under the SEC and SFC, although other information films were screened including two Ministry of Labour films.<sup>113</sup> While films screened at the Exhibition are certainly important occasions in Scottish film production, just as significant is the funding of these films (indirectly) from government. They offer representations of Scotland, images of Scottish life, but all within a wider context of education; indeed the

<sup>107</sup>It was also suggested that Children's Theatre might be staged in the Film Theatre in June or July, but this seems not to have taken place. See 'The Exhibition Pageant and Plays ... S.N.P. Plays.' *Glasgow Herald* 22 Apr. 1938: 10.

<sup>108</sup>'The Exhibition Pageant and Plays ... S.N.P. Plays.' *Glasgow Herald* 22 Apr. 1938: 10.

<sup>109</sup>Plays performed included Donald Carswell's *Count Albany*, act one of Barrie's *What Every Woman Knows*, as well as other Barrie plays *Shall we Join the Ladies* and *The Old Lady Shows Her Medals*, Bridie's *The Pardoner's Tale*, and the winner of the SCDA final O'Neill's *In the Zone* performed by the Ardeer Recreation Club Dramatic Society. See 'The Exhibition Pageant and Plays ... The S.C.D.A. Programme.' *Glasgow Herald* 22 Apr. 1938: 10. Reviews are included in the *Glasgow Herald* for the whole week of the event -- from 17 May 1938.

<sup>110</sup>'Community Drama Teams: Performances at the Exhibition.' *Glasgow Herald* 17 May 1938: 7.

<sup>111</sup>'Glasgow's First Newsreel-Cinema.' *Bellahouston News* 6 (February, 1938): 4.

<sup>112</sup>'Glasgow's First Newsreel-Cinema.' *Bellahouston News* 6 (February, 1938): 4.

<sup>113</sup>See 'Ministry of Labour Films: Unemployed Play in 'Documentaries'.' *Glasgow Herald* 1 June 1938: 9.

responsibility of the films is to inform. The context of their screening is revealed by Norman Wilson in his 1945 guide and catalogue to documentary films made in Scotland:

The inadequacy of Scotland's screen picture became acutely apparent in 1938 when the Empire Exhibition was nearing completion in Glasgow. Tricked out in a brave array of palaces and pavilions was all the produce of the industry and genius of the country; but the spirit of the people, the special qualities of the national character that are revealed only in the intimacies of everyday life, the social problems which people both make and brave, demanded the interpretation and analysis of the cinema. ... To make good this deficiency a Films of Scotland Committee was set up and a sum sufficient to finance the production of seven films was obtained from various public and private sources. John Grierson was appointed production adviser and the films that resulted -- *The Face of Scotland*, *Wealth of a Nation*, *The Children's Story*, *Sea Food*, *They Made the Land*, *Scotland for Fitness*, *Sport in Scotland* -- were important not only on their merits, but for the fact that they represented the first co-operative attempt to present Scotland to the world in terms of reality.<sup>114</sup>

The importance of the films in revitalising the debate about Scotland on film and as a film producer is stressed in the reporting of a major screening of the first group of films held in the La Scala cinema, Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow, on 29 October 1938. At the subsequent press event the Secretary of State for Scotland, John Colville spoke on the intent of the Films of Scotland Committee (of the Scottish Development Council) 'to stimulate the production and circulation of Scottish films of national interest.'<sup>115</sup> The *Herald* reports Colville's speech:

In 1934 there were over 20,000,000 attendances at the cinemas in Great Britain every week, and the public spent £45,000,000 every year 'going to the pictures.' The cinema was not only a form of entertainment; it had emerged as a great medium of education.

...  
But we in Scotland have our own stories to tell, our own attitude to the life to interpret. We knew that the cinema now took its place with literature and the stage as a vehicle for expressing the spirit of a people.

...  
The [Empire] Exhibition had given life to the Scottish spirit and stimulated Scotland to go forward with the job of social and economic reconstruction. The films now available would reinforce this stimulus and help to give it direction. ...

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<sup>114</sup>Norman Wilson, *Presenting Scotland: A Film Survey* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh Film Guild, 1945): 13. *Face of Scotland* was directed by Basil Wright; *Wealth of a Nation* by Donald Alexander; *The Children's Story* by Alexander Shaw; *They Made the Land* by Mary Field; and *Scotland for Fitness and Sport in Scotland* by Stanley L Russell. The final film was *Sea Food* and although neither the film nor published sources name a director it is clear that the film was made by the Pathé company.

<sup>115</sup>John Colville reported in 'Putting Scotland on the Screen.' *Glasgow Herald* 29 Oct. 1938: 6.

The potentialities of the Films of Scotland Committee were almost unlimited.<sup>116</sup>

This is supported by a *Herald* editorial on Colville's speech, which refers to the important role played by the Exhibition in the making of the six original Films of Scotland:

The Exhibition in Bellahouston Park -- the creation of which helped to inspire the setting up of the Films of Scotland Committee -- closes today [29 October], but, as Mr John Colville has pointed out the spirit of enterprise manifested in it must survive and continue the task of social and economic construction. The cinema, through educational, documentary, and, to some extent, fiction films, is in a position to reinforce that spirit; and it is therefore desirable, if not imperative, that the committee's first programme of films should be followed by a second.<sup>117</sup>

The article continues:

The positive aims that inspire the making of short films dealing specifically with Scottish industries, land, and people are plain and sensible. Among them are the desire to take a full and business-like advantage of the cinema's immense powers as a propagandist, to convert the erroneous and over-sentimentalised treatment of Scotland found in some fiction films and travelogues, to reveal the romance and heroism of the people as they go about their daily tasks, to display the land's wealth, beauty, and to focus attention on growing points in the nation's life.<sup>118</sup>

The Exhibition certainly is perceived by the local media (in particular, by the press and the BBC) as a celebration of the fact of Empire and the developing role of Scotland contributing to that and the economy of the modern industrial world. More often, however, interest is given to the uniquely Scottish elements of the event, anecdotal accounts of what awaits the visitor, the excitement of the many events and happenings than does the writer or the presenter concentrate on the economic strategy behind the event. The BBC's involvement in the Exhibition was on two levels -- they had an exhibit on site and they broadcasted regularly from Bellahouston.<sup>119</sup> The BBC's broadcasts included the transmission of the opening ceremony to both Britain and the rest of the Empire, and the same evening the first *Night Out at the Empire Exhibition*

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<sup>116</sup>John Colville reported in 'Putting Scotland on the Screen.' *Glasgow Herald* 29 Oct. 1938: 6.

<sup>117</sup>'Scottish Films Appeal.' Editorial. *Glasgow Herald* 29 Oct. 1938: 10.

<sup>118</sup>'Scottish Films Appeal.' Editorial. *Glasgow Herald* 29 Oct. 1938: 10.

<sup>119</sup>Many of the newspapers also had pavilions, including one for the Outram Press titles (the *Glasgow Herald*, *Evening Times* and *Evening Citizen*), the *Daily Record* Pavilion, the Pavilion of *The Times*. One of the best known of the commentators to broadcast from the Exhibition was the American journalist Ed Murrow. See 'An Editorial Diary: Telling America.' *Glasgow Herald* 7 June 1938: 8.

was 'a microphone tour of the buildings intended to provide a sound panorama of the scenes at Bellahouston Park.'<sup>120</sup> Indeed, the BBC preview a whole range of live programming:

Many broadcasts are to be made during the run of the Exhibition. Programmes will be relayed from the concert hall, bandstand, and theatre, and there are to be religious broadcasts and interviews with distinguished visitors.<sup>121</sup>

Enthusiastic response from listeners (and potential listeners disappointed that they were unable to tune in to an Empire broadcast of the Exhibition appeals and programme from the Westminster Halls<sup>122</sup>) led to a further announcement:

The B.B.C. announces that it has completed arrangements for many broadcasts from the Empire Exhibition (Scotland) 1938 and will as the Exhibition progresses take every suitable programme opportunity of informing listeners about the Exhibition, of interviews with distinguished visitors, of tours of the Exhibition, of church services, of broadcasts from the concert hall, the band stand and the theatre.

It is expected that on average eight Exhibition programmes will be broadcasts every week during the six months that the Exhibition lasts.<sup>123</sup>

On 18 April 1938 the BBC broadcast a programme, *The Making of the Exhibition*, describing the work already put in to make the event happen. The criticism of that programme reveals as much about how broadcast radio had developed in the 16 years of its operation in Britain as it does about the Exhibition. The programme:

... traced its [the Exhibition's] entire development from the post-depression excitement of 1936 to the last-minute anticipation of April, 1938. Incidentally, we must congratulate the B.B.C. on the publicity it has afforded the Exhibition. London needed some prodding; but even they finally woke up to the fact that such a place as Scotland existed, and did their best.<sup>124</sup>

Last night's review was recorded, and such a method of presentation, however unavoidable, is bound to lose some extent in vitality. Not only does the listener realise that he is hearing merely the sounds made by a gramophone needle, but the speakers themselves seem less alert and natural.' However, the variety of voices and simplicity of presentation balanced the drawback, and an astonishing number of facets were included in the half-hour programme. One was

<sup>120</sup>'Radio Tour of Park on May 3.' *Glasgow Herald* 8 Apr. 1938: 8.

<sup>121</sup>'Radio Tour of Park on May 3.' *Glasgow Herald* 8 Apr. 1938: 8.

<sup>122</sup>'Exhibition Broadcast 'Mystery': Heard Only on Empire Programmes.' *Glasgow Herald* 8 Apr. 1938: 13.

<sup>123</sup>'B.B.C. Broadcasts from Exhibition.' *Glasgow Herald* 9 Apr. 1938: 13.

<sup>124</sup>This rather caustic comment is perhaps typical of the perception of the regions that the metropolitan broadcasters had fallen into in the years since the implementation of the Regional Scheme.

surprised to hear Captain Graham and Mr Tait apparently plan out the entire grounds in the course of a three minute conversation, but presumably the speed of their inspiration must be attributed to dramatic licence.

Of the voices heard, which included those of Mr Walter Elliot, Lord Elgin, and Lord Inverclyde, that of the female commentator on the visit of their Majesties to the site was refreshingly unexpected, while Alastair Borthwick managed to infuse all his usual enthusiasms into his descriptions.<sup>125</sup>

In addition to this BBC programming from Bellahouston included *Empire Exhibition: Visitors' Book*, a talk by William Gallacher focusing more on the economic and industry importance of the Exhibition;<sup>126</sup> a *Children's Hour: Exhibition Extra* by Ida Rowe on 29 July;<sup>127</sup> a series of excursions *Round the Tower* from 4 May narrated by Alastair Borthwick;<sup>128</sup> and *The Lights go Out*, a programme recording the final moments of the Empire Exhibition.<sup>129</sup> The BBC's own exhibit -- 'a three dimensional poster'<sup>130</sup> -- is described in the *Official Guide*, which, of course, draws attention to the colours of the pavilion:

The exhibit combines 'story-telling,' statistical information and decorative effect. The background colouring of the pavilion is in two tints, primrose-yellow and grey-blue, against which are shown enlarged photographs, lettering and other detailed exhibits. The central curved feature shows technical details and statistical information about the number of licensed -- 580,400 in 1923, when the B.B.C. was founded, and 8,537,866 in January 1938. The design begins with the evolution of radio, illustrated with photographs of the men [sic] who have contributed to its progress. One exhibit illustrates 'wireless waves' .... There follow illustrations by means of photomontage of all the activities and services of the B.B.C.; foreign relations, publications, talks, television, musical and dramatic performances, news, time signals, weather forecasts, religious services -- a 'wide-angle' view of broadcasting as it is in its full development. The listener himself is not forgotten, and there is an exhibit of 'do's and don'ts' in the use of receiving sets.<sup>131</sup>

<sup>125</sup>'Radio Commentary: Looking Back at Bellahouston.' *Glasgow Herald* 29 Apr. 1938: 11.

<sup>126</sup>Gallacher, *Empire Exhibition: Visitors' Book*. Radio talk: transmitted 3/10/1938. ts. BBC Radio Scotland Scripts: STA Kc Box 8/2.

<sup>127</sup>Ida Rowe, *Children's Hour: Exhibition Extra*. Radio talk: transmitted 29/7/1938. ts. BBC Radio Scotland Scripts: STA Kc Box 10/5. Scottish Theatre Archive, University of Glasgow. It is perhaps interesting to note that in this programme some of the Aberdeen Animals (Howard, Mole, Miss Mouse and Granny Mutch) pay a visit of the Empire Exhibition. The first part of the Exhibition they visit is the Clachan.

<sup>128</sup>Alastair Borthwick, *Round the Tower*. Radio talks: a series of nine talks transmitted 4/5/1938 to 22/9/1938. ts. BBC Radio Scotland Scripts: STA Ki Box 5/10.

<sup>129</sup>'Radio Commentary: Lights Out at Bellahouston.' *Glasgow Herald* 29 Oct. 1938: 8.

<sup>130</sup>'B.B.C.' *Empire Exhibition ...: Official Guide*: 207.

<sup>131</sup>'B.B.C.' *Empire Exhibition ...: Official Guide*: 207.

This fits neatly into the traditional approach of presenting broadcasting through the other media. It is rooted in the practicalities of wireless broadcasting, but enlivened by pictures of the BBC as social and cultural institution -- public service broadcaster to the world. From this pavilion an open session wherein visitors were able to question George Burnett was broadcast live on 7 July -- the *Herald's* reviewer notes that one question concerned the arrival of television in Scotland.<sup>132</sup>

Melville Dinwiddie, the Scottish Regional Director in office at the time, records his impressions of the role of the Exhibition in his 1948 book, *The Scot and His Radio*:

For us in Scotland, the Empire Exhibition of 1938 marked the turning point of years of poverty, hardship, and idleness, and its Opening by the King was an occasion of great significance, the culmination of a very big national effort. The BBC Pavilion displayed the work of broadcasting and formed a central point of numerous broadcasts from the Concert Hall, Amusement Park, and other features of the Exhibition. Scotland was well on the way to regain her national consciousness. She was determined no longer to be classed as northern 'province' of England but, by the character of her people and efficiency of her industry, to be regarded with that respect due to a nation with a long tradition and high traditions.

The conception fitted perfectly into the position which broadcasting in Scotland sought to achieve as a 'nation' within the United Kingdom, as part of a great British Corporation, but with an independence and autonomy of direction which permitted the widest reflection of the country's resources and, at the same time, shared in the best artistic effort of Britain as a whole.<sup>133</sup>

In the *BBC Handbook: 1939* the BBC's involvement with events at Bellahouston is described:

When the Empire Exhibition opened at Wembley in 1925, broadcasting in this country was only two years old. Even at Wembley, however, the BBC had its quarters, and a number of broadcasts were made. With a further thirteen years of experience the BBC was able to do very much more for Scotland's Empire Exhibition in 1938. The BBC had its own small pavilion, housing a travelling exhibit descriptive of its work; and this pavilion served as a focal point for many outside broadcasts. As far back as June 1937 a series of talks was given on the organizing and planning of the Exhibition. News bulletins steadily followed the progress on the site since building began, and later on there was a series of talks in the Scottish Programme under the title 'Back Stage at Bellahouston'. There were feature programmes about past exhibitions held in Glasgow, and on 28 April a documentary feature, consisting largely of material recorded on the site, describe the current Exhibition in the making. The opening ceremony, with The King's speech, was broadcast on 3 May. Many more Exhibition programmes followed, including weekly visits to the various pavilions, news and gossip about visitors to the Exhibition, running commentaries on such notable

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<sup>132</sup>'Listeners 'On the Air': B.B.C. Official Answers Questions.' *Glasgow Herald* 8 July 1938: 6.

<sup>133</sup>Dinwiddie: 13-14.

occasions as the visit of the Lord Mayor of London, and concerts from the Concert Hall, of which one was given by the BBC Symphony Orchestra under Sir Adrian Boult.<sup>134</sup>

The BBC provided its own pavilion and exhibit -- an exhibit designed to be reconstructed for any number of later events and tours -- which meant that the Corporation apparently only paid for its facilities -- £5.5s for fire extinguishers, £13.6s.7d. for electricity and £1.17s.6d. for water.<sup>135</sup> This contrasts sharply with the charges made to the Highland Land League who had a small 'kiosk' (18ft x 12ft) for which the rent alone was £144<sup>136</sup> -- while the large (200ft x 130ft) pavilion for William Breadmore drew a rent of £625.<sup>137</sup> The Breadmore Pavilion was one of the largest private exhibits at the Exhibition. Indeed, it contained one of the three cinemas at Bellahouston. It was a small cinema, seating only 232 of an audience and showed 'a continuous programme of documentary and advertising pictures ... with almost perpetual changes.'<sup>138</sup> Entry to this cinema was free. As was entry to the smallest of the cinemas (seating only 124) situated in the Scottish Pavilion (North) which was equipped only to screen silent (or 'sub-standard'<sup>139</sup>) film. This cinema was organised by the SFC and its Social Services Panel -- and screened public information films, housed lectures and was intended to hold special events 'such as a week devoted to the history of the cinema.'<sup>140</sup>

### Results: achievements and failings

The enterprise, although shaped by the ideas of education and improvement and supported by national and local government, was ultimately a commercial enterprise that was keen not to call on the guarantee fund set up at the outset of the project and subscribed to by both individuals and institutions in Scotland. Indeed the call for subscribers was so successful that within six months it had raised £750,000. Local authorities, banks, major industries, small businesses, enthusiastic individuals were attracted by the popular and commercial success of all Glasgow's previous exhibitions.

<sup>134</sup>'The B.B.C. at Bellahouston.' *BBC Handbook: 1939* (London: BBC, 1939): 27-28.

<sup>135</sup>Account books for the Empire Exhibition *Space Rent Ledgers* (in two volumes A-L and M-Z). Held in the University of Glasgow Business Archives (reference: UGD212/2/1 and UGD212/2/2). BBC details in volume 1 (G U Business Archives reference: UGD212/2/1).

<sup>136</sup>*Space Rent Ledgers*: volume 1 (G U Business Archives reference: UGD212/2/1).

<sup>137</sup>*Space Rent Book*: (G U Business Archives reference: UGD212/2/3).

<sup>138</sup>'The Exhibition Cinemas: ... A Bijou Cinema.' *Glasgow Herald* 3 May 1938: 3.

<sup>139</sup>'The Exhibition Cinemas: ... A Bijou Cinema.' *Glasgow Herald* 3 May 1938: 3.

<sup>140</sup>'The Exhibition Cinemas: ... A Bijou Cinema.' *Glasgow Herald* 3 May 1938: 3. Whether such a formal week-long event was held is unclear. However, on 5 September (and possibly in the period thereafter) a selection of early films was shown in the cinema of the Scottish Pavilion (North). The programme included a Charlie Chaplin film, *The Champion*, as well as the 1903 film *The Great Train Robbery* and a Mary Pickford film *Simple Charity*. In addition actuality footage from the National Film Library was screened. See 'Programme of Four Early Films.' *Glasgow Herald* 6 Sept. 1938: 10.

## Plate xix



'Tait's Tower' -- The Tower of Empire,  
Empire Exhibition, Scotland, 1938.

(private collection)

In addition to the guarantee fund central government contributed directly to the cost of the Exhibition, financing both the UK Pavilion and contributing £20,000 to the costs of the two Scottish Pavilions, the Dominions and the Colonies all paid for their own exhibits as did the industrial and commercial exhibitors. The cost of the event was estimated to be around £10 million -- and the ultimate loss of around £128,000 recorded by the Exhibition meant that the guarantors were ultimately each called upon to contribute 3s 6d in the pound to meet the deficit. This loss may be perceived as a tiny proportion of the cost, however, as this was the first of Glasgow's exhibitions to lose any money at all it came as a great shock to both the guarantors and other supporters of the event.

In summing up the impact of the Exhibition the *Herald's* editorial is enthusiastic:

The purpose of the Exhibition was to display the resources of Scotland and of the Empire, and in this the Exhibition has succeeded splendidly. It would be difficult to overestimate the value of the part played by Mr. T. S. Tait, the architect of the Exhibition, for his imagination in adapting an admittedly favourable site to a design that was at once simple, direct, and conceived in the modern idiom. Even on days of rain, Bellahouston still contrived to remain gay and fresh. The lesson will not be lost on Scotland that form and colour in architecture can be very effective antidotes to the worst features of our climate.<sup>141</sup>

The writer, however, does have criticisms:

The impression remains that the hand of tradition lay rather heavily on the Exhibition. The Scottish custom of putting up the shutters at an hour when in other countries people are beginning to enjoy their evening's pleasure surprised and irritated many of the visitors and not a few Scots as well. There is some reason, too, for supposing that a more persuasive and comprehensive technique of publicising the Exhibition and its attractions might have brought more visitors.<sup>142</sup>

In all it is noted that 12,593,232 people visited the Exhibition,<sup>143</sup> a figure far short of the attendance of 20 million hoped for when the event was planned. Despite this the event was successful enough to support plans to reopen the exhibits for the summer of 1939. Another, more feasible plan was to retain Tait's Tower as a permanent feature in the park. The increasing threat of war put paid to these and other schemes to preserve and maintain parts of the Exhibition, indeed it was the possibility that enemy aircraft might use the Tower as a navigation aid that hastened the end of the single most

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<sup>141</sup>'Farewell to Bellahouston.' Editorial. *Glasgow Herald* 31 Oct. 1938: 10.

<sup>142</sup>'Farewell to Bellahouston.' Editorial. *Glasgow Herald* 31 Oct. 1938: 10.

<sup>143</sup>'Empire Exhibition's Record.' *Glasgow Herald* 31 Oct. 1938: 11.

imaginative part of the event. The order to demolish the Tower of Empire was issued in July 1939.<sup>144</sup>

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The experience of the Exhibition was one that examined the positive aspects of 1930s technology and industry, society and culture while effacing the problems of the Depression years. The interests of industry, commerce, the media, the arts and the public generally were all represented and displayed at the event -- although presented within a context of imperial and centralist politics, thus excluding the very real impact the Left had had on the shape of the 1930s. The Exhibition, like the wider canon of representations of Scotland, is caught between conflicting images of what the nation means and is. But this problem is not one restricted to the twentieth century and the intersection of new technologies and new aesthetics. The split, the divided, the schizoid is a traditional theme and recurrent view of Scotland in both folk culture and literature (the most obvious examples have been identified as Stevenson's *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* and Hogg's *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner*) and is described and discussed by historians and critics (Henry Thomas Buckle and Tom Nairn are just two examples). It offers, perhaps, a dialectic full of potential for the artist but reflexively disturbing for the reader.

The Exhibition was one of the modern world. It was an exhibition that used and expanded the technology and the forms of the new century: the industrial exhibits boasted the newest advances of science; the pavilions of the commercial exhibitors sold the latest consumer items; film was used by commercial exhibitors and by the organisers to illustrate and to promote; communications were exploited to their utmost, linking the Empire through wireless and publicising the event at home; the construction of the Exhibition itself used new building materials and techniques and created an aesthetic for the time. All these elements were brought together to promote both the industry of the Empire and to develop understanding. With the almost immediate outbreak of war the industrial trends of the 1930s shifted. Economic activity was reset to account for military requirements and the consequent mobilisation and conscription of society towards the war effort. In the short term the economic developments through international cooperation, which the Exhibition sought to promote, were lost to the more ambiguous economic expansion of war-spending. The vision of Empire which the Exhibition celebrated did not survive a second world war. The architectural versatility and excitement described in the buildings of the Exhibition was forgotten in the cessation of construction through the war. Later, design and public architecture were to be found wanting in the austerity of the post-war period. The aims that the Exhibition determined at the outset seem to have fallen without success.

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<sup>144</sup>Baxter, '1938': 167.

Yet the event, its scale, its energy, its sheer being seems to have captured the 1930s at a point where society is about to move on to develop a new role for the arts, for culture within the public domain. The educative role that the Exhibition developed was one in some ways merely suggested by the 'Objects of the Exhibition.' It is more fully expressed in the arts practices and cultural products that the Exhibition encompassed. The access to cultural products, images and representations that the Exhibition illustrates was not lost in the context of war; quite the opposite was the case. The war period begins to insist more strongly than ever the role that music, drama, film and radio must have in the defining of the nation, the supporting of the collective will, in short, the role that the sphere of entertainments and culture must have in the preservation and development of the imagined community of the nation.

In this the major theme to intervene is that of education, of information, of public service. In the experience of the war and in the later reconstruction this became fully centralised and organised for the national good through the Ministry of Information and the BBC.<sup>145</sup> The cultural mission was seemingly collapsed into an ideology of propaganda and contained within establishment conservatism. Within such a context the political associations of the cultural mission of an earlier decade were stripped away as counter to the hegemony of the dominant ideologies of consensus, unity and sacrifice. The problem for Scotland was that with the outbreak of war a 'Scottish' identity (no matter how problematic) had to be renounced in favour of the wider identity of Britain at war. With the outbreak of war the community, the 'nation' meant Britain. It was to be many years before once again the concerns of cultural practice, social need and political will were to meet in the productive alignment of the early twentieth century, and produce sufficient popular support to encourage concern for Scotland as a nation and, by extension, to engender debate around national (and political) identity.

The 1938 Empire Exhibition stands between two quite different eras in the political, social and cultural experience of Britain. In terms of politics, the preceding period had seen the end not just of Liberalism but also of Home Rule as a viable form of constitutional change: Britain's complete break with Ireland showed the stark option available to nationalists who were latterly seemingly shrinking from both political and cultural activity. The somewhat reactionary consensus of the years of the national government found further focus around the war but disintegrated with the 1945 election returning a Labour Government -- a government decisive and effective where the Ramsay MacDonald administration of 1924 had been split and weak. The persistence of the Left (in the form of the Labour Party, the Communist Party, and the various cultural and social groupings) was sorely tested in the interwar period, but had maintained a voice throughout the Depression, and emerged as a strong and viable

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<sup>145</sup>Interestingly for a short period at the beginning of 1940 Reith was Minister of Information.

alternative to Conservatism, Liberalism and indeed Nationalism. Parliamentary shifts reflected more fundamental changes in the shape of the nation. The years from the 1880s had seen the shift from *laissez-faire* government to the point in the twentieth century where the state was a powerful and immediate force in the everyday lives of the population. The sphere of state influence had expanded in the intervening decades bringing society to the brink of nationalisation, the welfare state and state funding for the arts. In this the points of identification for the community might have been expected to have shifted greatly, but, at least within Scottish representations, not just the function of myth but its manifestations had remained more static than society's modernisation might have encouraged. The points of imagining might in the course of the period become more inclusive of the new but they remained firmly rooted in the codes and conventions of the past, indeed, to the point of replication. (On the one hand, the centrality of modern architecture in the 1938 Exhibition compared to the marginalisation of contemporary design in 1901 points to a greater willingness to experiment with the new; on the other, the image of the Clachan has been identified as a central and repeated feature of both the 1911 and 1938 Exhibitions.)

One of the features of an exhibition is that it can act as an emblematic show case, a distillation of the best of the contemporary society, or at least the version of contemporary society that the state's hegemonic and direct influence would wish to promote. The social policy and economic strategies of the 1930s -- the creation of planning and strategy groups like the SEC and the SNDC -- lead with some degree of logical progression towards the systematic celebration of contemporary industry, culture and Empire that is the 1938 Exhibition. The social context of the Exhibition is one of domestic economic and industrial reconstruction, in which imperial achievements efface contemporary domestic and colonial tensions, although trade remains at the base of international co-operation both before the war and after.

In terms of the cultural impact and milieu, what most differentiates the start of the period and the end is the use of the media. While it is important to draw attention to the pageants of the 1911 Exhibition (as indicative of the perception of history and myth in the wider society, and the general state of theatre-based activity), they function in a quite different context to the pageants of 1938. The Pageants Committee of the 1911 event construct a programme of events that exist very much in isolation. The Pageant of Empire is just one element of a wider programme of theatre, film and variety entertainments, it is not an isolated instance of theatre but exists in a context in which the wide spectrum of arts are used to educate as well as to entertain. In 1938 the theatre, film and broadcast activity are together essential to an understanding of the wider event and its context.

This determined integration of the different forms of entertainment and the modern media not only contributes to but shapes and defines the 1938 event. This is, perhaps, paradigmatic of the wider experience and synthesis of culture and technology developed by the middle of the twentieth century. Society expects and demands that meaning is communicated in both the form and content of the text or the event. How it uses and how it interacts with the cultural and commercial potentialities of the communications industries and the theatre projects of its contemporary world view reveal the advanced level of cultural understanding that society as a whole had achieved since the first exhibition of film had added to the entertainment environment at the end of the nineteenth century. From that point, the increased commercialisation of one part of the theatre system developed alongside an increased politicisation of another aspect of the medium, which subsequently evolved along a number of different paths towards the establishment of the repertory model, the expansion of the role of the amateur, and the Left as arts sponsors and producers. In addition, the intervention and the ongoing advancement of domestic communications technology and the development of the scope and the quality of wireless broadcasting furthered the general availability and multiplicity of cultural forms.

The 1938 Exhibition may be understood through an acknowledgement of its place in society's developing understanding and use of different media but is to be contextualised further with reference to political and social developments which highlight the state's increasingly active involvement with the organisation and the identity of the nation. Just this essentially cultural concern must lie at the root of the state's explicit involvements with arts legislation and subsidy but is necessarily implicit in the arts projects and cultural environment of the period from the 1880s to World War II.

## Conclusion

'To be modern is to live a life of paradox and contradiction.'<sup>1</sup>

This thesis set out to investigate a period of Scottish history that set the agenda for contemporary cultural politics. The mix of political and cultural debate, technological advancement and the emergence of new entertainment industries along with the increasing interest of the state in cultural systems marks the early-twentieth century as an important, if ultimately elusive, period for criticism to investigate.

In parallel with the period's other changes, the political life of Britain was radically altered during the period. The political revolutions of mainland Europe may not have been repeated in Britain but nevertheless the changes in the make up of domestic politics was one area which shifted society towards a new world view. While Victorian politics had been engaged with the expansionist phase of colonialism and the British state had grown wealthy as the age's great imperial power, the interwar period was more occupied with maintaining a holding strategy over the administration of the colonies. It was domestic politics and crises in Europe that were to prove more fundamental to the political experience of the period. Domestically the infrastructure of the parliamentary system was transformed. The traditional split between Tories and Whigs disintegrated with the success of socialist politics. The class split of Left and Right allowed little room for the home rule debate that had marked national politics up to the Great War. This was confirmed when the contemporary success of Irish nationalism sent warning shock-waves through British politics, serving as a stark example of the excesses cultural and political nationalism might engender.

This example, however, proved to be something of a double-edged sword. Scottish nationalism, which never attained the militant motive power of the Irish movement, increasingly became a minority interest, argued about away from parliament within smaller political groups. While the formation of the National Party of Scotland and then the Scottish National Party provided nationalists with a clearly defined point of unification, the new parties also left political nationalism in the legislative wilderness, divided from the traditional support of the parliamentary Labour and Liberal parties. The consolidation of parliamentary politics around the management of the economy and the increasing crisis of foreign policy marked the more interventionist role adopted by the state. Centralist tendencies in economic policy and the threat of European war placed greater emphasis on domestic consensus and national unity than facilitating the devolutionist potentialities as in earlier decades. Scottish nationalism retreated in

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<sup>1</sup>Marshall Berman, Preface, *All that is Solid Melts into Air* (London: Verso, 1983): 13.

reaction to the advancing involvement of the state in the cultural life of the British nation.

In terms of cultural activities this may be seen in the development of theatre during the period. Where touring theatre had merely exploited the infrastructure of theatre buildings and the audience's demand for a range of entertainments, the rise of repertory enfranchised the regions and the provincial audiences in revolutionary ways. The early phase of the reintroduction of producing theatre to the regions may have been carried on the coat-tails of the independent theatres of London and made use of a similar repertory, but very quickly new indigenous writers were found to write new plays to compliment and to contrast with the easy model of 'new drama' and the new European classics. However, the Glasgow Repertory, unlike the Abbey did not establish its reputation with new writers. None of the theatres established in Scotland in the period were able to carry out the Abbey's success of integrating the political and cultural agendas. The element of national identity that the drama of the Scottish National Players and the Curtain did investigate was a response to the perceived lacks in the cultural life of Scotland. Although the politicisation of indigenous culture that had marked the Irish scene was never repeated in Scotland, theatre culture, in particular, still found the centrality of national identity, of Scottishness, important for all the new developments during the period. Indigenous culture was not politicised in Scotland to the degree that the Irish movements had been -- this despite the efforts of the literary renaissance writers and, in particular, of MacDiarmid. For Scottish culture at large the language issue, for example, was not even totemic.

One of the positive results of new Scottish theatre in the period is the close relationship that the theatre producers were able to maintain with the audience. Film operated on a rather different level. The expansion of cinemas, evolving from within the established network of music halls, provided a new medium of entertainment and information for audiences. The new social life this engendered was relatively cheap for audiences and promised a healthy return for exhibitors. In Britain, however, this return tended not to be reinvested into the creation of the fully integrated system that provided the basis of Hollywood's cultural and economic expansion. The lack of an industrial infrastructure denied the peripheral cultures of the world access to the screen. Indigenous voices and images of Scotland on film proved scarce and, where they existed at all, were consistently problematic. However, the lack of a professional film making culture does encourage amateur activity to meet a real social and cultural need. The development of amateur theatre is paralleled by the development of amateur film culture. In this the energised factor is again the 'audience' who are remade as active producers and not just passive consumers.

The role of the Left in education and arts sponsorship combines with the repeated desire to develop a democratic culture to recreate the audience. The activation of audience into producers (either directly in terms of joining in or indirectly in terms of active readership and informed spectatorship) is perhaps the most important element of the new cultural activity that the period generates. The ideology behind this must be that identified as the cultural mission. In terms of production, though, the input was really not in terms of issues of national identity but tended to be loosely connected with Left politics or were part of the trend identified as culturally and socially useful.

This discourse of the cultural mission is perhaps most clearly articulated in the development of the BBC, which in its initial infrastructure engaged directly with issues of national identity. In Scotland the empowerment of the regional producing centres worked in conjunction with the most progressive of the amateur theatre groups to lay the foundations for a professional theatre industry and encourage new writing for both theatre and radio use. The scheduling requirements of the early broadcasters working within the public service requirements of Reith's BBC were able to exploit parallel cultural groups with parallel cultural projects, with agendas suitable to be appropriated for broadcast needs. The technological challenge of broadcasting was met by a local challenge to recreate Scottish theatre culture.

The combined and parallel activities of the broadcasters and the theatre practitioners had put into place a Scottish theatre culture poised to become fully professional. Performers had trained and developed their craft within the best examples of the amateur theatre groups (the Scottish National Players, the Tron and the Curtain) and had been able to develop new skills through the demands of broadcasting: this a direct result of the early devolved broadcasting structures empowering regional producing centres. Writers had found new theatres with policies to encourage new writing and a new medium ready to reflect and to develop this experience. By the end of the 1930s radio had helped revitalise Scottish theatre and a new cultural environment had evolved. With the emergence of a modern media system audiences too had been exposed to the great variety of both traditional and new Scottish culture. Their expectations as to what this culture could become had been raised through the combined activities of theatre and wireless practitioners, the experience of mainstream entertainment film and the ongoing experimentations of amateur and documentary film makers.

The positive empowerment of audience in certain of the media is not paralleled with the influence of the public on the cultural imperialism of the Hollywood film industry. Dominant film culture falls outwith the ideology of Scottish or British culture and mutates to become a hegemonic power and cultural imperialist for all European culture. This had been acknowledged by the 1927 Cinematographic Films Act but by then the

industrial model operated by Hollywood was already near maturity and industrial expansion and the colonisation of the British producers was the studios' easy response.

The social importance of the cinemas was still to be acknowledged at a local level and it is on the level of exhibition that British cinema culture was still developing at the outbreak of World War II.

Despite the limited role played by discourses of Modernism within British culture, it is nevertheless the case that an ethos of modernisation pervades the period. In all aspects of life advancements are made which change the quality and the very nature of life for society in positive and useful ways.

The ideal of a balanced cultural system was never a possibility when limited to just film culture. However, by the end of the 1930s something of an unequal compromise was being established. In terms of production American majors dominated the scene. Increasingly, important and popular British films were being made and a British film industry was developing as a cultural and economic reality. This was complimented by the formation of agencies like the BFI and SFC whose creation suggests the important social role that the state viewed film as serving. The centrality of film as a conveyor of information and propaganda had been affirmed from earliest days but the peacetime status of film was assured with the state's funding of documentary film for the Empire Exhibition. It is on this level of information and documentary (with film promoting a discourse of public service and cultural mission) that an indigenous film culture in Britain has most clearly been associated. The importance of such a film culture is increased when it is viewed as just one element of a cultural system that encompassed a discourse of public service.

Film culture and cinema culture shift from unregulated free-for-all at the start of the period towards a mixed economy at the end. There emerges a system regulated by different sets of structures and agencies. There emerges a media culture highly industrialised and/or state monitored. Film develops on at least two levels: as industry governed by the market and the ideology of capitalism; and as an artform, a part of culture, with an important social role to play in the education and well-being of the nation. Both discourses provide structure and organisation to the medium of film, and may be seen to posit preferred and ideologically-loaded readings of the products of both sectors. The path is one equally relevant for all culture during the period. If Modernism was an aesthetic of and about the chaotic then it is managed in a British context by the active limitation of its sprawl. A diversity of arts, of cultures, of ideas is pruned and trained by state supervision and intervention to create a preferred world view, the world view promoted at the Empire Exhibition.

This study has presented a period of diverse political and social shifts, in which culture is variously seen as a point of radical experimentation and as part of the general

industrialised and capitalist economy. Within a context of social and political change the nature of culture and the roles available to culture negotiate a difficult path. The crisis in culture may be partially isolated by debates within the Scottish scene.

Contemporary Scottish politics reveals a continued interest in nationalism, or at least national identity, a determined use of left ideology and a willingness to engage in socialist politics. On the one hand Scotland is concerned (politically and culturally) with nationalism and issues of national identity; on the other the expansion of the British state engenders political and cultural centralisation. The shift towards the latter is ultimately (if temporarily) decisive. The period charts the imposing of meaning onto the potential chaos of Modernity. Culture shifts from a deregulated self-supporting system to one regulated by state control and capital interest.

The evolution of culture and society that this thesis has charted is brought to crisis with the outbreak of World War II. The arts activities, media environment and cultural policies of the early part of the twentieth century are reset by the immediate demands of war. Culture is explicitly activated to the war effort of each of the powers. In Britain popular culture is appropriated by the state as nationally important. In this the BBC is further converted to popular broadcasting.

The centrality of state subsidy in the creative life of Britain empowers the artist in ways that prior to 1941 and the formation of CEMA were impossible. Success is not measured in just box office returns but through a more general equation that takes account of the social importance of the arts and their contribution to the general well-being of the community.

It was not just the demands of war that encouraged direct state intervention in the culture industries. The foundations were already established. The media of the early twentieth century produces an arts environment economically split between the industrialised capitalist system of film and the increasingly pressurised music hall and variety stage and a new type of arts activity maintaining a cultural mission. The success of the BBC and the growing influence of the amateurs and the little theatres acted as an important alternative to the economic and cultural colonisation of Hollywood and the theatrical and dramaturgical strait-jacket of the West End theatre. Of different but equal importance the early infrastructure of broadcasting and the grassroots theatre activity of the amateurs maintained the importance of national identity in a cultural context at a point when the concept had been rendered politically impotent.

Nationalist politics were influential and provocative into the 1930s. When, like socialism, they became formalised and de-fused into modern party politics the options for cultural and political nationalism were lost within a British drive towards public service culture and its ultimately centralising drive. The Left was culturally active throughout the period but engagement with the actual production of theatre and film, in

Scotland at least, was deferred too long. By the time Glasgow Unity came together in 1941 World War II had ensured the state's direct intervention with culture. CEMA was to sponsor arts activity across the whole of the country but it was a culture that fitted into the ideology promoted by the state's flag-ship cultural institution, the BBC. Glasgow Unity's version of public service arts was rather different to the BBC, even in its wartime populist guise. The definition of the public was fundamentally different. (In Glasgow the audience identified by Bridie's new subsidised theatre were 'citizens' not 'workers'.)

The trends in the ideology of cultural mission identified as implicit within the general experience of the arts during the period become crystallised in moments of cultural excess. The Empire Exhibition distils representation and production into a social package that empowers cultural producers and sponsors. In this context the role of audience is not pro-active in the formation of meaning but finds its place within a more traditional hierarchy of reading, with the audience very much the object of the social discourse.

In the period from around 1890 until 1939 the very nature of cultural provisions and the entertainment business within Britain were quite simply revolutionised. The outlets for entertainment available at the end of the period were all but undreamt of at the start. Music hall and even variety theatre may have been in terminal decline with the twin media of film and radio available to almost every home in Britain; Hollywood cinema dominated the market place and already exercised a powerful and hegemonic influence on the cultural life of Britain; even television had appeared on the horizon. Indigenous producing theatre was again a feature of provincial Britain. Repertory theatre had spread with greater and lesser degrees of success across the country; Little Theatres were able to encourage new writing and new points of access for performers and producers. The increased power and influence of the cultural industries showed in relief the important role the state could have in the formation of opinion. The avenues for direct state funding were opened with the Empire Exhibition and the explicit funding of documentary film for that event.

Despite this expansion of the media environment, the end of the period saw Scottish culture just as problematic as ever but nevertheless in a potentially strong position. Indigenous theatre was financially precarious but enthusiastically supported by performers, writers and audiences. The role of the BBC in Scotland in the process of professionalising of the indigenous theatre was set to be hastened with the formation of the Citizens' Theatre. Despite the economic and cultural power of American film and the ever-present threat of Anglicisation, Scottish culture offered a much more diverse experience, a much richer media environment than had been the case earlier in the century.

The underlying trend that the period reveals is of a shift towards the greater regulation of cultural activities and the active involvement of the state in the social and cultural life of the nation. It is commonly suggested that positive state intervention into the cultural life of Britain only emerged during World War II with the formation of CEMA. This, indeed, is the privileged moment for arts policy in Britain in the twentieth century but foundations for such a policy were already in place. Indeed, its successful implementation was only possible because the groundwork described in this thesis had been firmly laid. Without the infrastructure of theatres and cinemas, without the experience of arts with something of a cultural mission, without the active and positive role that the audience had been encouraged to adopt, without a growing group of experienced actors and performers, directors and producers the policies of CEMA would have fallen on stony ground. These were all factors that the interwar period had encouraged and nurtured. The positive attitudes towards the arts and culture generally adopted by society in the interwar period powered the state's new role. Without it a new arts policy would have been unsupportable and vulnerable to the vagaries of modern capitalism. Instead the response was positive and, being built on solid foundations, established a strong tradition in Britain of the usefulness and the social necessity of direct state funding of the arts.

## Bibliography

This thesis has made use of the archives of various libraries and collections including: Glasgow University Library; Strathclyde University Library; Stirling University Library; the Mitchell Library; the Strathclyde Regional Archive; and the National Library of Scotland.

### Theatre

The Scottish Theatre Archive, held by Glasgow University Library, has been the primary collection referred to for material dealing with theatre in Glasgow and Scotland. The Archive holds collections of plays, press cuttings, ephemera and other material pertaining to the Glasgow Repertory Theatre, the Scottish National Players, the Curtain, the Park, Glasgow Unity Theatre, the Citizens' and extends to include material illustrative of popular theatre in Scotland. In addition the Glasgow Room, at the Mitchell Library, holds an interesting and valuable collection.

### Cinema

The Scottish Film Archive provided useful information about early film activity in Scotland. The Archive's Paper Collection was the primary source for material about the Scottish Film Council, amateur film activity and the Scottish Amateur Film Festivals. In addition, the Mitchell Library's Glasgow Room also holds information about the early film societies and the Strathclyde Regional Archive information and photographs of early cinemas and theatres.

### Broadcasting

An important primary source has proved to be the collection of BBC Radio Scotland Scripts held by the Scottish Theatre Archive. A useful guide to Scottish broadcasting has been *Notable Scottish Broadcasting Dates*, an ongoing information file initially prepared by Archie P Lee, and held in the Reference Library, BBC Scotland, Queen Margaret Drive, Glasgow. This small collection provided invaluable material for this study, in particular, publicity materials prepared for various broadcasting anniversaries:

*BBC 40 Scotland* (BBC: Edinburgh, 1963) a folder containing publicity material for the fortieth anniversary of the BBC in Scotland. It also contains the texts of speeches delivered at a lunch to mark the occasion.

*1923-1973: The Fiftieth Anniversary of the BBC in Scotland*. This pack contains the script of an anniversary feature *Edinburgh Celebration*, broadcast 1 May 1974, and a collection of press releases under the title *50 File*.

The BBC's own journals and publications have been referred to for this thesis. These include: *Radio Times*; *BBC Handbook* (1928, 1929, 1938, 1939, 1940); *BBC Yearbook* (1930, 1931, 1932, 1933, 1934); and *BBC Annual* (1935, 1936, 1937).

### **Exhibitions**

Ephemera and exhibition guides are held in the Glasgow Room, at the Mitchell Library, and in the Special Collection Department, Glasgow University Library. In addition, the Scottish Business Archive, Glasgow University, holds letters, accounts and other valuable information pertaining to the 1938 Exhibition. Glasgow University Archives also contains some useful material.

### **Newspapers and Journals**

A number of contemporary newspapers and journals were consulted. These included: *Glasgow Herald*; *Evening Times*; *Scotsman*; *The Bailie*; *Quiz*; *Scottish Stage*; *Scottish Amateur Theatre*; *Amateur Theatre*; *Scottish Player*; *Chapbook*; *Scottish Nationalist*; *Scottish Patriot*; *The Thistle*; *Liberty*; *Scots Independent*; *Pictish Review*; and *Left Review*. Political journals and pamphlets were found in the Mitchell Library and in the various collections held by Glasgow University Library.

Periodicals and journals which provided secondary information and comment included: *Bulletin of Scottish Politics*; *Cencrastus*; *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television*; *New Edinburgh Review*; *New Left Review*; *Scottish Labour History Society Journal*; *Scottish History Review*; *Scottish Literary Review*; and *Theatre Quarterly*.

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