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The development of the audience for early film in  
Glasgow before 1914

Andy Dougan

Submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of  
Philosophy

School of Culture and Creative Arts

College of Arts

University of Glasgow

May 2018

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In memory of my father, Andrew Dougan. He encouraged my lifelong love of cinema and many of the happiest hours of my childhood were spent with him at many of the venues written about in this thesis.

## Abstract

This thesis investigates the development of the audience for early cinema in Glasgow. It takes a social-historical approach considering the established scholarship from Allen, Low, Hansen, Kuhn *et al*, on the development of early cinema audiences, and overlays this with original archival research to provide examples which are specific to Glasgow. By using a variety of local sources, for example, newspaper archives, local authority minutes, and audience recollections, this thesis will show that although there were commonalities between Glasgow and various other centres such as Aberdeen, Manhattan, Knoxville, or London, there were also conditions which were specific and unique to Glasgow. In that sense this thesis is a local insight into a national argument.

A secondary aim of this work is the relationship between Glasgow audiences and the moving image. This thesis will examine the sense of civic pride which cinema brought to the city, as well as considering the rise of a new generation of fans. These 'cinema natives' as I term them grew up with the moving image and as such had an enduring connection with the movies.

The thesis is broadly organised in three parts. The first part (Chapters 1-3) charts the history of entertainment in Glasgow as a city of spectacle and display. The Glasgow Fair holiday played an important part in establishing leisure in the city's social calendar and led to the setting up of an entertainment quarter. This section will also consider pre-cinema traditions and the growth of Victorian leisure culture. It will also show how cinema in Glasgow spread very quickly so that within 18 months it encompassed a wide demographic range.

The mid-section (Chapters 4-6) outlines the regulatory framework in which cinema emerged in Glasgow. Once fixed-site exhibition developed from 1908 there was a moral backlash against cinema with a campaign from Glasgow Parish Council aimed at restricting access for children. At the same time there were also national moves to introduce safety regulation. This section examines how the themes of safety regulation and moral regulation were conflated in an attempt to control the audience. It concludes with the introduction of

the Cinematograph Act 1909 and outlines the difficulties of applying this national legislation at a local level.

The final part of the thesis (Chapters 7-9) considers the outcomes of the policy initiatives of section two as understood in both architectural and textual forms. The post-Cinematograph Act climate in which cinema operated created expectations in the audience of what they would see and where they would see it. Cinema architecture became as important as content as 'the cinema-going experience' began to be defined for a Glasgow audience. Finally this section highlights the recollections of those early 20<sup>th</sup> century cinema natives in explaining how the seeds of a lifelong cinema-going habit were sown.

Overall the study will argue the centrality of the audience to the development of cinema and illustrate the importance of the audience, in terms of class and gender, to the emergence of fixed-site exhibition as a dominant force on the Glasgow entertainment landscape.

## Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my supervisors, Dr Ian Goode and Dr Ian Craven, for their constant encouragement and good advice. I am also grateful to Professor Karen Lury for her support at the beginning of this project.

Much of the material gathered here has come from archival sources and I am grateful to the heroic efforts of the staff at the Glasgow Mitchell Library and Dr Irene O'Brien and her colleagues at Glasgow City Archive, as well as staff at the Moving Image Archive, especially Kay Foubister. On the subject of the Moving Image Archive I would also like to thank Janet McBain for her unstinting efforts in gathering material which has proved invaluable here, and also for her early encouragement in the process.

Finally I would like to thank colleagues at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland for their support in completing this work.



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# Introduction

Although Glasgow is not Scotland's capital, it is a city which has an acute sense of its place not only in the United Kingdom, but also in the world. Some might argue that the city has a civic chip on its shoulder, especially in relation to Edinburgh, which has encouraged a cultural drive to be seen as a modern, dynamic, industrial entity. Edinburgh is an intellectual city, the home of the Scottish Enlightenment, a city with a proud and distinguished history; we might argue that in response Glasgow has styled itself as a great industrial city which looks to the future, as a city of development and innovation with international status. In the modern era the recent history of the city has been characterised by a sequence of spectacular events intended to showcase Glasgow to the world and vice versa. The International Exhibition of Science, Art, and Industry was the first of these great showpieces taking place in Kelvingrove Park in 1888.<sup>1</sup> At the turn of the century, in 1901, came the Glasgow International Exhibition, again held in Kelvingrove Park.<sup>2</sup> In 1938 another spectacular event, the Empire Exhibition, was held in Bellahouston Park on the south side of the city, then – one hundred years after that initial exhibition – came the Glasgow Garden Festival of 1988 which regenerated a large part of the city's former Clydeside docklands.<sup>3</sup> Two years later in 1990 Glasgow was European City of Culture and hosted a series of events that reinvigorated the city's cultural life and status. Each of these events attracted spectators in their hundreds of thousands and each of them encouraged a sense of civic pride. More recently the city's international reputation has been enhanced by the opening of the SSE Hydro at Finnieston in 2013 and the hosting of the Commonwealth Games in 2014.

Those first two great exhibitions mentioned above, were designed as celebrations of modernity and technology and the enthusiasm with which Glasgow was prepared to embody these two concepts. This thesis will argue that the enthusiastic embrace of moving

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1 <http://www.theglasgowstory.com/image/?inum=TGSA00341> last accessed December 4, 2017

2 <http://www.theglasgowstory.com/image/?inum=TGSA00366> last accessed December 4, 2017

3 <http://www.theglasgowstory.com/image/?inum=TGSA00416&t=2> last accessed December 4, 2017

pictures by the Glasgow audience may also be viewed as part of this self-same desire to be seen as vibrant, energetic, and modern. It will construct a social history built around a series of considerations in regard to cinema; namely the audience, the venues, the technology, the films, and their contribution to Glasgow's sense of civic pride. This city-level historiography will be constructed through a number of sources drawn from archival research in the city's three main evening newspapers, which provides valuable evidence on not only how the moving image was promoted, but also of how it was received. Newspaper letters pages will also be used, along with the oral accounts transcribed by the Moving Image Archive, to capture recollections of the cinema-going experience while also illustrating the power of cinema in cultural memory. The minutes of Glasgow Corporation and Glasgow Parish Council will provide a parallel account of the official response to moving image exhibition; both supportive and oppositional. Where the historiography extends to the national level Parliamentary archives, specifically Hansard, have been used to characterise the development of national legislation and how that impacted upon local regulation in Glasgow. Archival information has also been used to create maps showing the importance of geography and location in the spread of the cinema audience in Glasgow. The aim of the work is therefore to create a history which engages with the questions to be addressed by a social history as articulated by Allen and Gomery, namely: "Who saw films, how, and why?"<sup>4</sup>

Fuller-Seeley and Potamianos have suggested that the history of cinema attendance 'is characterized by close, detailed studies of specific places, people, and chronologies.'<sup>5</sup> In those terms this thesis offers a social history of cinema in Glasgow turning around a series of case studies of audience development which will be explored through fresh archival research as well as reference to established scholarly sources. The work thus sits in a field delineated by landmark studies from Robert Allen, Douglas Gomery, Miriam Hansen, Jon Burrows and Luke McKernan in their city-specific research.<sup>6</sup> It is also influenced by the more

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4 Robert C. Allen and Douglas Gomery, *Film History: Theory and Practice* (Boston: 2011), pp.156, 157

5 Kathryn H. Fuller Seeley and George Potamianos 'Introduction: Researching and Writing the History of Local Moviegoing' in *Hollywood in the neighborhood: historical case studies of local moviegoing*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008) p.3.

6 Robert C. Allen, 'Motion Picture Exhibition in Manhattan 1906 – 1912: Beyond the Nickelodeon', *Cinema Journal* 18 (1979) pp. 2-15; Allen and Gomery, *Film History: Theory and Practice* (Boston: 2011), pp. 202-207; Miriam Hansen, *Babel and Babylon: Spectatorship in American silent film*, (London: 1991); Jon

national approaches taken by Rachael Low, Trevor Griffiths, Charles Musser, et al.<sup>7</sup> It will, in some instances, confirm their broader findings specifically in regard to Glasgow, and in others provide a new or different perspective, especially in terms of the demographic of the earliest audiences for the moving image and the venues in which it was situated.

In arguing, among other points, that the moving image gained acceptance as a way of Glasgow demonstrating its modishness and modernity it is worth considering what 'modernity' means in terms of this work. The isolation of the moving image as a benchmark of the modern era occurs commonly in studies of the appeal of early cinema. 'Modernity' was, for Charney and Schwartz:

... an expression of changes in so-called subjective experience or as a shorthand for broad social, economic, and cultural transformations, has been familiarly grasped through the story of a few talismanic innovations: the telegraph and telephone, railroad and automobile, photograph and cinema. Of these emblems of modernity, none has both epitomized and transcended the period of its initial emergence more successfully than the cinema.<sup>8</sup>

For Charney and Schwartz cinema marked nothing less than 'an unprecedented crossroads' of all of the various conditions of modernity:

It was a commercial product that was also a technique of mobility and ephemerality. It was an outgrowth and a vital part of city culture that addressed

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Burrows, 'Penny Pleasures: Film Exhibition in London during the Nickelodeon era, 1906-1914' *Film History*, Volume 16, 2004, pp. 60-91, and 'Penny Pleasures II: Indecency, anarchy and junk film in London's 'Nickelodeons', 1906-1914' *Film History*, Volume 16, 2004, pp. 172-197; Luke McKernan, 'Only the screen was silent....', *Film Studies*, 10, Spring 2007 pp. 1-20

7 Rachael Low, *The History of the British Film 1906 – 1914*, (London: 1948); Trevor Griffiths, *The Cinema and Cinema-going in Scotland, 1896-1950* (Edinburgh: 2012); Charles Musser, 'American Vitagraph 1907 – 1901', *Cinema Journal*, Vol 22 no 3, spring 1983, pp. 4-48

8 Leo Charney, and Vanessa R. Schwartz, (eds.). *Cinema and the invention of modern life*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, c1995.) p.1

its spectators as members of a collective and potentially undifferentiated mass public.<sup>9</sup>

Fuller-Seeley has similarly characterised the changes brought on in the process of modernity as 'the shock of the new'.<sup>10</sup> It had profound and far reaching effects on the 'sensorium' of early 20<sup>th</sup> century society, ushering in a world of modernity defined by Singer as:

... a phenomenal world- a specifically urban one-that was markedly quicker, more chaotic, fragmented and disorienting than in previous phases of human culture... The individual faced a new intensity of sensory stimulation.<sup>11</sup>

It can be argued that this modernity is a continuum, it cannot have an end point and, almost by definition, is always ongoing. In those terms then, this thesis will deal with what we might call 20<sup>th</sup> century modernity, within which cinema might be considered as both a symptom and a reflection of Singer's chaotic, fragmented, disorientation. The easy availability of the picture show, and the brevity of its offerings are perhaps most symptomatic of the pace and bustle of this new modern world whose very experience it often described in terms reminiscent of a cinematic presentation:

...the rapid crowding of changing images, the sharp discontinuity in the grasp of a single glance, and the unexpectedness of onrushing impressions.<sup>12</sup>

While this thesis will consider the development of cinema exhibition in Scotland's largest city, it should be remembered that the moving picture is not specifically an urban phenomenon, and especially not in Scotland. The contribution of travelling showmen with

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9 Charney and Schwartz, *Cinema and the invention of modern life* p.3

10 Kathryn Fuller Seeley and George Potamianos 'Introduction: Researching and Writing the History of Local Moviegoing' in *Hollywood in the neighborhood* p.3.

11 Singer quoted by Robert C. Allen in 'Decentering Historical Audience Studies – A Modest Proposal' in *Hollywood In the Neighborhood*, p.24

12 Georg Simmel quoted by Charney, and Schwartz, *Cinema and the invention of modern life* p.3

more rural affiliations such as George Green and William Walker will be considered later.<sup>13</sup> To that end the modernity theory is useful in considering the development of the audience in Glasgow, but perhaps less so elsewhere, since many of the pioneering entrepreneurs were not solely urban exhibitors and the urban and the rural would overlap in terms of their audience demographic. As Caughie points out, for more than half of the population of Scotland, their experience of cinema was in a non-urban setting.<sup>14</sup>

The population of Glasgow grew five-fold– from 77,385 to 395,503 – between 1801 and 1861, in the process, in 1821, surpassing Edinburgh as Scotland’s most populous city.<sup>15</sup> Most of that population growth, according to Maver, came from Irish immigrants and Scottish in-migrants who came to the industrialising city in search of work and a better life. There must surely have been something of a culture shock in the shift from rural Ireland or Scotland to a bustling city that was now styling itself as the Second City of the Empire.<sup>16</sup> As part of Gunning’s characterisation of modernity therefore, with its ‘new technologies of transportation and communication’, the arrival of moving pictures at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century could be read as a very clear symbol of the modern, especially in generating Singer’s ‘new intensity of sensory stimulation’ but also as an encouragement to a new sense of civic identity.<sup>17</sup> Glasgow’s early but abiding relationship with the moving image was a phenomenon which, as will be shown, allowed civic Glasgow to bracket itself with the great modern cities of the world. It is also worth noting, as Fuller-Seeley and Potamianos point out, there had also been, by this time, a change in usage of the word ‘modern’.<sup>18</sup> The meaning shifted from something historic that had been changed for the worse, to a term that came to encompass something that had been improved to become favourable and

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13 For an account of cinema-going in Scotland’s small towns and rural areas see *The Early Cinema in Scotland Research Project* <http://earlycinema.gla.ac.uk/topic/cinema-in-small-towns/> last accessed June 3, 2017.

14 John Caughie, ‘Small Town Cinema in Scotland: The Particularity of Place’ in Judith Thissen and Clemens Zimmermann (eds.) *Cinema Beyond the City* (BFI, 2017) p. 24

15 Irene Maver, *Glasgow* (Edinburgh University Press, 2000) pp. 83-84

16 <http://www.theglasgowstory.com/story/?id=TGSD0> last accessed June 20, 2017

17 Tom Gunning, "Tracing the Individual Body: Photography, Detectives and Early Cinema," in *Cinema and the invention of modern life*. p.15.

18 Fuller Seeley and Potamianos ‘Introduction: Researching and Writing the History of Local Moviegoing’ in *Hollywood in the neighborhood*. p.6

desirable. In those terms then moving pictures, in comparison with still images or the limited movement of magic lantern shows, can be read as the epitome of the modern and therefore highly desirable.

In offering a city-level study of audience development for the moving image in Glasgow it is worth noting that Allen has cautioned against what he calls a 'Gothamcentric' approach in American film historiography:

Gothamcentrism refers to the related tendencies to place the metropolis at the centre of historical narratives of movie going and to encourage the assumption that patterns of movie exhibition and movie going found there can be mapped to a greater or lesser degree upon smaller cities and towns in all parts of the United States at any given moment in the history of American cinema.<sup>19</sup>

To illustrate Allen's point, we might consider the development of cinema in Lexington, Kentucky which, as illustrated by Waller, is very different from Allen's nickelodeon-led Manhattan example.<sup>20</sup> In Lexington the first film performance, on December 15, 1896 at the Lexington Opera House came eight months after Edison's debut screening in New York, is what we might describe as an example of cine-variety. The film screening shown was part of a production by a touring repertory troupe. The Holmes & Wolford Company 'presented about a dozen 'views' between the acts of their featured stage production, a 'sensational melodrama' entitled *The Smugglers*.<sup>21</sup> This particular strategy for exhibiting motion pictures was, according to Waller, fairly typical of the region. Since Lexington had no vaudeville theatres the Opera House became one of the major venues for moving picture exhibition, usually as part of a repertory troupe performance.<sup>22</sup> The Opera House was thus re-functioned as a multi-purpose venue and the development of an audience for moving pictures was a consequence of the presence of touring companies who came to the town.

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19 Allen in 'Decentering Historical Audience Studies – A Modest Proposal' in *Hollywood In the Neighborhood*, p.20

20 Gregory A. Waller, *Main Street Amusements; Movies and Commercial Entertainment in a Southern City, 1896 - 1930*. (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1995). p.3

21 Ibid, p.46

22 ibid

In this sense, the development of cinema in Lexington appears to follow what we might term the travelling showman or impresario model which is closer to that which we will describe for Aberdeen, and very different from the development of the moving image in Glasgow.

The development of cinema in Lexington was marked 'by a desire to embrace twentieth century novelty and cosmopolitanism and, at the same time, to maintain nineteenth century ideals of community and culture'.<sup>23</sup> No such restriction applied in Glasgow which, as will be shown, appeared enthusiastically to embrace cinema and its modernist connotations. Allen's caveat has merit however because in the United Kingdom so much work has been done on the study of London audiences by Burrows, McKernan et al, that there may be a danger of 'Londoncentrism'. But it is important to realise that neither London nor Glasgow are to be taken as universal models for the rest of the country.

By 1929, Glasgow had 127 cinemas which is 'more for its size than any city outside America' and by 1937 the city had 137,000 cinema seats.<sup>24</sup> As can be seen by the maps in Appendix 4, the geographical spread of cinemas is indicative of how the city grew. In 2003, the UGC site in Renfrew Street – now run by Cineworld – was officially the UK's busiest cinema with 1.8 million admissions in the calendar year.<sup>25</sup> *The BFI Statistical Yearbook* categorises cinema attendance on a regional basis rather than city by city, but Central Scotland consistently shows the highest per capita cinema attendance of any area outside of London, with around 3.2 admissions per person per year as opposed to 3.3 in London.<sup>26</sup> The city, as Caughie points out, is, in general terms:

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23 Ibid, p.64

24 A. McIntosh Gray & W. Moffat W, *A History of Scotland: Modern Times- Book 5*, (Oxford University Press, 1989) p.75

25 *BFI Statistical Yearbook* 2010, p.69

26 See also *BFI Statistical Yearbook* 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014

...the epicentre of cinemagoing, cinema building, and film exhibition claiming for itself the term Cinema City.<sup>27</sup>

In considering the development of what has become a very significant audience for moving pictures in Glasgow, it will be suggested that the process involved was evolutionary rather than revolutionary. Attachment to cinema did not emerge overnight in Glasgow; it was, rather, the product of an accretion of differing exhibition practices, varying venues, and diverse audiences. To that end, the thesis will take a calendrical approach in its periodicity rather than a teleological one, considering the development of cinema in the city as an exploration of a series of possible futures. Cinema could have developed in Glasgow as it did in Manhattan, or in London, or even in Aberdeen, for example. Some paths were taken, others were not, and, while it shares possibilities with other loci, it is argued that cinema developed in some ways that are specific to Glasgow. This thesis will therefore offer a study of the venues where cinema originated in Glasgow, and the audiences who attended indexing an evolutionary time-line from the very first screening in 1896 to the start of 1914 where cinema exhibition was a fully-fledged and vital industry. The year 1914 has been chosen as the cut-off point because the advent of the First World War changed exhibition and attendance practices in a manner which is properly the subject of a separate study.

In considering the first part of the question posed earlier by Allen and Gomery i.e. who saw films in this period, the issue of class will occur many times in this work. When we speak of 'working class' or 'middle class' we are broadly using common sense terms based on employment status, but it will be useful to elaborate on these definitions at this stage to provide benchmarks for future use of the terms. According to Picard, Victorian society preferred to have its stratifications clearly demarcated, although this did not always happen in practice.

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27 Caughie, 'Small Town Cinema in Scotland: The Particularity of Place' in *Cinema Beyond the City* p. 24.

The working class was divided into three layers, the lowest being 'working men' or labourers, then the 'intelligent artisan', and above him the 'educated working man'.<sup>28</sup>

In reality, according to Picard, what she calls the 'top of the working class pyramid' could be achieved by a London carriage maker earning five guineas a week, considerably more than most office workers who would self-identify as middle class.<sup>29</sup> On the other hand

...a labourer's average wage was between 20 shillings and 30 shillings a week in London, probably less in the provinces. This would just cover his rent, and a very sparse diet for him and his family.<sup>30</sup>

Both of these men, the carriage maker and the labourer would be described as working class, but the labourer's status can more readily be considered as 'working poor' in that he had the status of employment, but it was barely enough for subsistence. In terms of 'middle class' Picard identifies a similar broad categorisation.

A junior clerk in a City firm might have earned less than £100 a year. The chairman of the Board might have been paid £1,000. But they shared one vital distinction; they were both members of the 'great middle class'. They worked with letters and figures, wore morning coats, stiff white collars and top hats. A skilled engineering workman might earn more than a clerk, but he worked with his hands – he was irredeemably a member of the lower classes.<sup>31</sup>

The stratification of the class system in Victorian society is far from neat, and very fluid even within defined categories, but for the purposes of this thesis we will use the terms

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<sup>28</sup> Liza Picard, 'The Working Classes and the Poor' (British Library) <https://www.bl.uk/victorian-britain/articles/the-working-classes-and-the-poor> last accessed January 29, 2018

<sup>29</sup> *ibid*

<sup>30</sup> *ibid*

<sup>31</sup> Liza Picard, 'The Victorian Middle Classes' (British Library) <https://www.bl.uk/victorian-britain/articles/the-victorian-middle-classes> last accessed January 29, 2018

'working class', 'working poor' and 'middle class' broadly in relation to employment and earning capacity as described by Picard.

Among the key sources for any study of audience development in Britain are two ground-breaking journal articles by Jon Burrows in which the question of class is implicit. Published in 2004 they challenged the accepted wisdom that, in London at least, the Balham Empire had been the city's first dedicated picture theatre when it opened in 1907.<sup>32</sup> Burrows provided evidence that London had a thriving cinema exhibition culture before the advent of the entrepreneurs who would move into fixed-site screening. He highlighted what he called:

...a large-scale profusion of small, cheap, and somewhat rudimentary cinemas which sprang up in a range of premises converted from other uses, mainly shops'.<sup>33</sup>

Burrows characterised these as 'British nickelodeons' or 'penny gaffs' as they had previously been dubbed by Low.<sup>34</sup> In her exhaustive seven-volume work which for many years served as a definitive account of the British film exhibition industry, Low suggested that these penny gaffs were relatively short-lived and were swept away by new safety regulations introduced by the 1909 Cinematograph Act. Burrows provided evidence of this type of show operating from the late 1890s, and also suggested these penny gaffs played an important role in popularising moving pictures.<sup>35</sup> In comparison a study of early exhibition in Glasgow suggests, as will be outlined later, a different process of establishment. Rather than converted store-fronts which, as will be explained, would be

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32 Jon Burrows, 'Penny Pleasures: Film Exhibition in London during the Nickelodeon era, 1906-1914' *Film History*, Volume 16, 2004, pp. 60-91.. This was followed by 'Penny Pleasures II: Indecency, anarchy and junk film in London's 'Nickelodeons', 1906-1914' which appeared in the next issue of *Film History*, Volume 16, 2004,, pp. 172-197.

33 Burrows,'Penny Pleasures II', p.171

34 Rachael Low, *The History of the British Film 1906 – 1914*, (George Allen and Unwin, 1948), p.14

35 Burrows, 'Penny Pleasures', p.62

prohibited by the city's specific regulatory framework, moving pictures developed in a variety of co-opted venues including, in one case, an actual, functioning shop.

While differences can be seen between Glasgow and London, it is also instructive to consider the example of Manhattan where Robert C. Allen's work on America's store-front nickelodeon culture has provoked a lively debate on the class composition of early audiences. Allen, in a key work in 1979, suggested that his survey of 123 nickelodeons in Manhattan found only 42 that were in what we might call immigrant or working class areas.<sup>36</sup> This view was in turn challenged by Ben Singer who suggested Allen had underestimated the number of nickelodeons in Manhattan and mischaracterised the demographic of their location as being middle class.<sup>37</sup> According to Singer, the revisionist view espoused by Allen, that early cinema was more of a middle class entertainment, did not bear scrutiny and he suggested the initial view of a predominantly immigrant or working class audience was closer to the mark. Both Allen and Singer appear to be using broad common-sense definitions of class. This debate continued for several years, drawing contributions from Merritt, Sklar, and others, without any firm conclusions being reached, however the process did throw a great deal of light on the previously under-researched topic of the nickelodeon era in New York.<sup>38</sup>

This thesis will, to a certain extent, replay that debate in considering similar claims for Glasgow where a traditional assumption that cinema was a working-class phenomenon, on further research, does not appear to stand up completely to scrutiny. This thesis will suggest that cinema had an appeal that might be described as 'pan-class'. A great deal of weight, for example, has been placed on George Green's Winter Carnival screening in December 1896 which, because of its low admission prices, made cinema available to the

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36 Robert C. Allen, 'Motion Picture Exhibition in Manhattan 1906 – 1912: Beyond the Nickelodeon', *Cinema Journal* 18 (1979) pp. 2-15.

37 Ben Singer, "Manhattan Nickelodeons: New data on audiences and exhibitors" in Grieveson and Kramer (eds.) *The Silent Film Reader* (Routledge, 2004) pp. 119 – 134.

38 For a fuller account of the debate between Allen, Singer et al see Melvyn Stokes introduction 'Reconstructing American Cinema's Audiences' in M. Stokes and R. Maltby (eds.) *American Movie Audiences from the Turn of the Century to the Early Sound Era* (London, British Film Institute, 1999) pp. 2-25.

masses. This thesis will argue however that there is clear evidence to suggest that the moving image was already well established in Glasgow by the time Green ran his films, but generally at a price which would be beyond the reach of most working-class audiences. There is evidence therefore that the initial audience for the moving image in Glasgow was higher status, which bears out some of Allen's initial assertions even if the venues in which they encountered the moving image were not store-front nickelodeons. George Green, as will be shown, was still an important figure in the development of picture shows since he highlights issues of geographical location and historical usage which were vital to the growth of an exhibition industry, especially in the era of fixed-site exhibition. This debate over the 'ownership' of early cinema is a persistent one and will be a recurring theme in this thesis.

The social make-up of early cinema-going in ethnic terms has been extensively investigated by Miriam Hansen in the United States and Luke McKernan in the United Kingdom.<sup>39</sup> Both authors have raised questions that are considered here in the light of the Glasgow experience. Hansen argued, in her investigation of nickelodeons, that they frequently formed an alternative public sphere for the working-class audience, particularly immigrants:

...audiences who were economically excluded from the mainstream culture of leisure and consumption who brought their own traditions, needs, and configurations of experience to the motion picture shows.<sup>40</sup>

We have already seen from Maver's studies that Glasgow had a substantial immigrant and in-migrant population. This thesis will also suggest that, for at least some of them, the cinema was a comparable Scottish haven from the pressures of urban life and, as outlined in Chapter 4, that behaviour within this alternative public sphere potentially brought

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39 Hansen, *Babel and Babylon: Spectatorship in American silent film*; Luke McKernan, 'Unequal Pleasures: Electric Theatres (1908) Ltd. and the early film exhibition business in London'. Paper given at the Emergence of the Film Industry in Britain conference, University of Reading Business School, 29/30 June 2006 on [http://lukemckernan.com/wp-content/uploads/unequal\\_pleasures.pdf](http://lukemckernan.com/wp-content/uploads/unequal_pleasures.pdf) last accessed July 20, 2017.

40 Hansen, *Babel and Babylon*, p.94

audience members into conflict with a range of self-appointed moralisers. McKernan similarly focuses on the importance of moving pictures to the working poor in his extensive work on London exhibition practices and audience development:

Cinema was defined by its accessibility. Cinemas were so numerous in pre-First World War London that it was difficult to miss them. They were positioned on public thoroughfares, generally among retail areas that were accessible by public transport but frequently close enough to residential areas so that they could be readily reached on foot. Their cheapness removed the restrictions that other entertainments put on the poor and on children. Their proximity to shopping areas, their long opening hours and their position as an alternative to the public house made them acceptable as a place of entertainment for women.<sup>41</sup>

This thesis will therefore necessarily consider the relationship between the cinema and the working poor in Glasgow, understood as a diverse assembly of more specific groups within the working class. Although it will challenge the accepted notion that moving pictures in Glasgow began as a working-class entertainment, it will also suggest that, for some of the reasons outlined by Hansen and McKernan, cinema was appropriated by the working class who considered it their own. In this regard, the audience studies work done by Kuhn and the economic research done by Bakker will provide further background against which the Glasgow experience can be considered.<sup>42</sup> Kuhn's work has suggested that there was a strong sense of appropriation of cinema by the working class and, based on archival first-person accounts, this does seem to have been the case in Glasgow. Economic perspectives are therefore crucial. Bakker, who conducted economic research on Boston audience data, suggested that economics, specifically pricing, had a large part to play in developing the cinema audience. This seems certainly to be true in Glasgow where, it will be suggested, admission prices were ultimately responsible for the creation of two new and distinct

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<sup>41</sup> Luke McKernan, 'Unequal Pleasures', p.4

<sup>42</sup> Annette Kuhn, *An Everyday Magic: Cinema and Cultural Memory*, (London: I.B. Tauris, 2002), Gerben Bakker, *Entertainment Industrialised: The Emergence of the International Film Industry, 1890 – 1940* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008)

audience sectors, namely women and children. It will further be suggested that these new audience sectors, especially the young audience, played a crucial part in the appropriation of cinema by the working class.

Although it draws inspiration from existing scholarship, this thesis will also take into account the views of Abel and Ross on the importance of less familiar sources.<sup>43</sup> Abel described local newspapers as a largely untapped resource for research on early cinema providing direct information not just on key moments in the development of exhibition practices, but also the spread of moving picture exhibition, and the relationship between cinema and variety which, as will be shown, was crucial to the development of cinema in Glasgow.<sup>44</sup> Ross also advocated the use of new materials such as newspapers and business directories in archival research to construct a historiography.<sup>45</sup> In this vein, this thesis will make extensive use of the three main Glasgow evening newspapers – *The Evening Times*, *The Evening News*, and *The Evening Citizen* – in examining trends in exhibition and trying to make inferences or deductions about the audience itself. Glasgow's morning newspapers, especially *The Glasgow Herald*, paid scant attention to cinema, as will be explained later, so the evening papers provide a much fuller picture. Each of these titles had a city-wide circulation and as such offer more information than narrowly-focused local papers such as *The Rutherglen Reformer* or *The Kirkintilloch Herald*, both of which were in circulation at this period, but which concentrated specifically on entertainment in their own, relatively small, distribution area. Although Allen also advocated the use of newspaper archives, at the same time, it is worth bearing in mind what he highlighted as their limits in that they can tell what is showing and where, but not necessarily who is in the audience, although the content and language of the newspaper might provide an

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43 Richard Abel, 'History can work for you if you know how to use it', *Cinema Journal*, 44, No. 1, Fall 2004 pp. 107 – 112, Steven J. Ross, 'Jargon and the Crisis of Readability: Methodology, Language, and the future of Film History', *Cinema Journal*, 44, No. 1, Fall 2004 pp.130 – 133.

44 Abel, 'History can work for you if you know how to use it', *Cinema Journal*, 44, No. 1, Fall 2004 pp. 107 – 112

45 Ross, 'Jargon and the Crisis of Readability: Methodology, Language, and the future of Film History', *Cinema Journal*, 44, No. 1, Fall 2004, pp.130 – 133.

indication of its implied readership.<sup>46</sup> Newspapers are a useful indicator, but they are not in themselves definitive.

By focusing on archival research and using local newspapers, this work will highlight some previously unexplored aspects of cinema in Glasgow, such as the relationship between the expanding 20<sup>th</sup> century retail culture and film exhibition. The way in which cinema was consumed is a related concern, and it will also demonstrate a growing familiarity and understanding of the medium by the audience which created an informed expectation of the cinema experience, and lead to the rejection of some forms popular elsewhere e.g. Hale's Tours, largely on the basis that whatever they were they were not cinema, or at least not in the form of what audiences quickly expected cinema to be. It will also draw upon the listings and early review content of these newspapers to demonstrate a growing sophistication in the discourse surrounding the new medium, even in the era before Griffith. This is the era, from 1896 to 1910, often described as 'early cinema' and generally characterised as a period in which the medium was emerging.<sup>47</sup>

Cinema is therefore imagined within a series of cultural networks, and to fully understand its development in Glasgow, it is of particular importance to consider the historical and geographical context of the city's entertainment sector. The work of Maver and others shows that Glasgow has had a long history as a city of attractions since its foundation in the 12<sup>th</sup> century; but that as working time became more codified through regulation leisure became more important. For an expanding industrial city such as Glasgow this meant its annual holidays were cherished events, which were embedded in the social fabric of its citizens for whom large-scale public entertainments were a welcome diversion and something to be keenly anticipated.<sup>48</sup> The origins of cinema in Glasgow stem from that celebratory culture which in turn led to the early establishment of an entertainment

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46 Robert C. Allen, 'Decentering Historical Audience Studies – A Modest Proposal' in *Hollywood In the Neighborhood*, p.29

47 For a fuller definition of 'early cinema' see Annette Kuhn and Guy Westwell, *The Oxford Dictionary of Film Studies*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012)

48 For a more detailed consideration of the social and economic importance of annual fairs see Trevor Griffiths, *The Cinema and Cinema-going in Scotland, 1896-1950* pp. 31-32

'district' in the city, and it was from this district that cinema, especially fixed-site exhibition, spread throughout the city. An important case study in this respect is that of the 19<sup>th</sup> century showman David Prince Miller, who, in many ways, was a forerunner of figures such as George Green and J.J. Bennell in popularising entertainment for the working poor. The spread of popular entertainment was not unhindered however, and it is also notable that even from these early days there was opposition from what we might term a moral establishment to the notion of the working poor enjoying themselves in particular ways. The nature of the opposition forms a recurring theme in this thesis, but the final outcome, at least where Glasgow concerned, will be shown to be rather exceptional.

This work sits therefore within the ongoing re-evaluation of early cinema prompted by The International Federation of Film Archives (FIAP) conference of academics, archivists, and historians in Brighton in 1978 which encouraged a fresh look at origins and ownership. According to Simon Popple and Joe Kember, early film history as a substantial academic discipline emerged as a consequence of the Brighton event, in which approaches from emerging disciplines such as film studies and its associated methodology of textual analysis generated a series of publications and conferences which altered accepted wisdom in terms of the historiography of early film.<sup>49</sup> It was also a precursor of what has become referred to as New Cinema History which prioritises the cinema-going experience above analysis of film texts:

...a distinction between what might be called film history and cinema history: between aesthetic history of textual relations between individuals or individual objects, and the social history of a cultural institution.<sup>50</sup>

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49 Simon Popple and Joe Kember, *Early Cinema: From Factory Gate to Dream Factory* (London and New York: Wallflower Press, 2004)

50 Richard Maltby, Melvyn Stokes and Robert C. Allen, (eds.), *Going to the Movies: Hollywood and the Social Experience of Cinema* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2007) p.2

The FIAF event considered film roughly in the period from its inception to the beginning of the First World War; this is also broadly the period examined in this thesis, through the prism of a Glaswegian study, although the stronger focus will be on the latter half of that period i.e. 1908 – 1914. The Brighton conference was instrumental in forcing the consideration of cinema in terms of its relationship with its audience. It is this that gave us Gunning's seminal work on the 'Cinema of Attractions' which examined the connection between the moving image and the people from whom it would draw an audience.<sup>51</sup> As a city of attractions and shows it was unsurprising that cinema firmly established itself in Glasgow in the period broadly defined by Gunning i.e. 1895 – 1906.

The history of cinema in Glasgow is one which is inevitably tied up with gender and class, as well as civic propriety and pride. On the one hand, civic Glasgow embraced cinema as a benchmark of its status and modishness but at the same time the notion of mass entertainment for the working poor did not always sit well with the self-appointed moral guardians of the city. This tension produced many attempts at control, some, as we will see, were influenced by what appeared to have been a long-standing sense of Presbyterian rectitude. In Glasgow, this attempt at control manifested itself in a distinctly proscriptive manner. As it had been many times in the past, in dealing with varying forms of mass entertainment, public safety, especially that of children, was used as an excuse to try to safeguard public morals and impose restrictions on the audience via the owners and exhibitors. Whilst the move was ultimately fruitless, and in reductive terms we might say that Presbyterian interference was met with a peculiarly Scottish stubbornness, it inaugurated a long struggle for the cinema owners who, as will be discussed, were also aided by an apparent conflict of interest which perhaps made the final regime in Glasgow more lenient than other UK cities. In the end, a combination of national and local legislation cleared a legal space in which cinema could operate without let or hindrance as long as it abided by terms and conditions. As will be argued in the middle section of this thesis, The Cinematograph Act of 1909 and the setting up of the British Board of Film Censors in 1912,

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51 Tom Gunning, 'The Cinema of Attractions: Early Film, Its Spectator, and the Avant Garde', in *Early Cinema: Space, Frame, Narrative*, by Elsaesser, T. and Barker, A. (eds.) (London: BFI Publishing, 1990) pp. 56 - 62

along with that conflict of interest which benefitted the owners and exhibitors, allowed local authority regulation in Glasgow to head off an attempt to limit cinema attendance; especially among the young who were enthusiastic early adopters of cinema and could hold the key to its future development.

In considering Annette Kuhn's assertion that in London, the working class took an almost proprietary interest in the new medium, there are obvious confirmations in Glasgow.<sup>52</sup> As has been hinted earlier, however, there is also a pan-demographic appeal in Glasgow; the initial audience might reasonably be described as middle class, or perhaps those at the very top of the working class pyramid, and it was not until they were well-established in this demographic that moving pictures then became more commonly associated with the working class. It will be argued here that it was this high-status audience which established a viable economic basis for cinema and allowed the medium to gain a degree of critical legitimacy before it expanded into new demographics, especially those of women and children. This thesis will examine the broad acceptance of cinema in the social fabric of the city and which allowed a cinema audience to be constructed from many elements. It also suggests the possible importance of a range of somewhat unexpected venues.

If we take Gunning's view that cinema is first and foremost an attraction, then this suggests a sense of specialised experience. The development of the cinematic space and the architecture of that space was important in creating a sense of eventfulness, even spectacle, around cinema attendance which enabled it to compete against the legitimate theatre. Using a case study of a prolific but largely unexplored Scottish cinema architect Albert Victor Gardner as an exemplar, this work will look at the relationship between physical spaces and the audience in terms of creating the impression of luxury and faux opulence which adds to the transcendent nature of the early cinema experience. In his work on the cinema space Allen suggests that if architecture is one key component of the

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52 Annette Kuhn, *An Everyday Magic: Cinema and Cultural Memory*, p.221

cinema experience, then content is another.<sup>53</sup> This has led us in this thesis to a somewhat non-traditional interest in film form; one which is less about the development of language, grammar and rhetoric and more to do with pleasure and satisfaction; but which also allows us, even in considering the films themselves, to sit within the orbit of New Cinema History. Using a series of broadly non-canonical films as exemplars this thesis will chart the developments in film form over this period as an aspect of the social relations mediated by the images rather than an aesthetic realisation. It will begin from a period in which the audience marvelled simply that it could see a moving image at all, to the point where we have the beginnings of an informed creative discourse and a general acceptance of what properly constitutes a film in formal organisation.

The overall aim of this thesis is to bring a fresh perspective on the accepted wisdom of how cinema developed in Glasgow. It attempts to offer an alternative view to the notion that it emerged as a working-class entertainment by using fresh archival research showing that its origins and initial audience were in the middle classes and social elite. It will also argue however that, largely because of economic factors, it was able to be appropriated by the working class. Historical precedents of geography and social conditions allowed cinema to take root firmly in the poorer east end of the city, a historical locus for mass entertainment, and it is from here that the moving image emerges in the era of fixed-site exhibition and recolonises its city centre origins. The thesis will also examine the affinity that a generation of what we might call 'cinema natives' felt for the new form and suggest that this audience played a large part in its appropriation by the working classes. It will also argue that the cinema audience in Glasgow did not develop spontaneously because of public demand for the new attraction but was rather gradually constructed and guided by an entrepreneurial class despite, and sometimes because of, moral, legislative, and regulatory mechanisms intended to limit it.

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53 Robert C. Allen, 'Motion Picture Exhibition in Manhattan 1906 – 1912: Beyond the Nickelodeon', *Cinema Journal* 18 (1979) pp. 2-15



# 1 The development of entertainment culture in Glasgow

In constructing a social history of cinema there are a number of questions to be asked. The fundamental question to be put in this thesis is one of those articulated by Allen and Gomery, namely: “Who saw films, how, and why?”<sup>1</sup> This in turn asks us to consider what Allen further described as ‘the social experience of movie going’.<sup>2</sup> In considering a city-level study of cinema’s emergence it will be necessary to look at themes of class, gender, and status, amongst others, in order to gain a sense of how the moving image and its audience flourished in Glasgow. Previous studies of early cinema history in the city have tended to be Great Man histories; usually the man in question was the fairground showman George Green.<sup>3</sup> His contribution will be dealt with more fully in the next two chapters and, while it was considerable, this thesis will recast George Green’s story in the context of other, often less-heralded, pioneers who developed the medium along different routes. Instead it will suggest that issues of historical custom and practice, and particularly geography, played very important roles in the development of Glasgow’s cinema history which, this thesis will argue, exhibits a greater diversity of sources than previously considered. It will also be necessary to consider the conditions from which cinema emerged in a historical context by considering Glasgow’s relationship with leisure and entertainment specifically in terms of the important role played in the city’s social calendar by two major holidays.

The Glasgow Fair and New Year celebrations, especially the summer celebration of the Glasgow Fair, allowed the working classes licence and liberty. The initial opposition to this revelry, which reflected wider anxieties about class and gender, gave rise to a consistent theme in this thesis as it demonstrated cinema’s resilience in the face of attacks from some

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1 Allen and Gomery, *Film History: Theory and Practice*, pp.156, 157

2 Allen in ‘Decentering Historical Audience Studies – A Modest Proposal’ in *Hollywood in the Neighborhood*, p.20

3 See, for example Charles Oakley in *Fifty Years at the Pictures* (Glasgow: Scottish Film, Council. 1946), or Elspeth King ‘Popular Culture in Glasgow’, in Cage, R.A. (ed.) *The Working Class in Glasgow 1750 – 1914* (London: Croom Helm, 1987)

sectors of the Establishment, particularly those who considered themselves as sources of moral authority. This chapter will consider the importance of the Glasgow Fair in the city's cultural life, not least in giving rise to what we might consider to be an entertainment quarter; a defined sense of geography which was key in the emergence of cinema. It will also offer a case study of David Prince Miller; a showman and self-styled champion of the working class. Miller tackled the establishment and became a figurehead in an East End entertainment quarter which, although geographically marginalised, played an important role in laying the foundations of the city's cinema exhibition industry.

Glasgow's history as a city dates from the late 12<sup>th</sup> century when William the Lion granted Glasgow a charter; the exact date is uncertain but it appears to be around 1175.<sup>4</sup> The charter was granted to Bishop Jocelin allowing Glasgow to be established as a burgh with attendant trading privileges, most notably the right to hold a weekly market. As this chapter will demonstrate, almost as soon as Glasgow had been given official recognition it had the beginnings of an entertainment culture and it is from around 800 years of history encompassing various forms of public entertainment that cinema emerged at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

The development of Glasgow's entertainment industry centred on two historic holidays; the Glasgow Fair, in July, and the traditional New Year holiday. These events quickly embedded themselves as keystones in the city's social and cultural calendar. The Glasgow Fair created a climate of raucous celebration. A local poet, Gabriel Neill, writing in 1823, summed up the mood of the July holiday:

Hear, hear! What a discordant Din

Wi' Trumpets, Cymbals, Drums!

The warnin' cry o' "Just begin,"

From every showman comes;

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<sup>4</sup> Irene Maver, *Glasgow*, p.3

“Haste, Tumble in – no time lose-

Fun ridin’ upon Fun – <sup>5</sup>

One local churchman and prominent critic of the Glasgow Fair, J.F.S. Gordon was unequivocal in his condemnation of the revels:

...the woful [sic] scenes of Drunkenness, Immorality, Thefts, Fights, and General Mischief is an abiding Stigma upon those Magistrates, who inconsistently sentenced to punishment so many Youths of both sexes brought before the Bench.<sup>6</sup>

It was not just the perceived hedonistic behaviour of the Fair patrons which annoyed Gordon but also, what he saw as, the lenient treatment meted out by the local authorities. In his later studies of crowd behaviour Butsch suggested that anarchic behaviour is often tolerated by authority as a way of preventing ebullient crowds turning into angry mobs.<sup>7</sup> Even though, by the Reverend Gordon’s account, the revellers appeared to be out of control, it could be argued they still abided by certain basic codes so that the behaviour could be read as an expression of the mood and will of the people to be allowed to let off steam for this period on the understanding they would behave for the rest of the year. Gordon’s frequently-voiced opposition to the consequences of public merry-making was, as will be shown, an early contribution to a steady stream of criticism of popular entertainment which seemed to be aimed more at the status and gender of those taking part than the entertainment itself. It was an argument which would be brought forward many times but without ultimately gaining many concessions.

Glasgow embraced these holiday entertainments as part of a climate of audience engagement with popular culture which continues today; the city continues to have the

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5 ‘Humours of Glasgow Fair’ by Gabriel Neill quoted in *Glasgow and its Clubs* by John Strang (Glasgow, 1857) pp. 229 - 230

6 J.F.S. Gordon writing in *Glasghu Facies* by John M’Ure (Glasgow, 1872) Vol 1 p.579

7 Richard Butsch, ‘Changing Images of Movie Audiences in Explorations’ in *Going to the Movies* by Maltby, Stokes, and Allen (eds.), (University of Exeter, 2007) pp. 293 - 306

highest per capita cinema attendance in the United Kingdom.<sup>8</sup> A direct line can be drawn from this early engagement to travelling showmen such as George Green. However, important as Green is to the development of cinema in the city, there is also an entrepreneurial class of business and retail pioneers who offer a very different pathway to moving image exhibition in Glasgow. Their place in the growth of cinema, as we will argue, is more important than the fairground model of development.

The origins of the Glasgow Fair holiday go back to the 12<sup>th</sup> century when, in 1190, little more than ten years after the granting of the charter bringing Glasgow into existence, the Prior of a group of Franciscan monks, or Grayfriars, established a week-long fair that would run from the first to the seventh of July.<sup>9</sup> There was an element of self-interest in this since the final day of the Fair would involve everyone going to pay tribute to the Prior. Despite its religious origins the main commercial focus of the Fair was a two-day sale of horses and cattle which took place at Stockwell Gait (sic), the main entrance to the city from the south and one of the city's main streets.<sup>10</sup> Even then this part of the Fair holiday was characterised by 'the unsophisticated merry-making of whisky-inspired ploughmen and laughing cherry-cheeked dairy maids'.<sup>11</sup> Stockwell Gait was the place where servants would gather as they sought employment either on the rural estates or within the larger city homes. In that sense the locus and the event became integral to the lives of the working classes in the city and beyond. Although it initially had a rural character the tone of the Fair changed in 1820 with the removal of the Cattle Market to Graham Square and with it the attendant livestock sales. The Fair itself relocated a short distance north to the Saltmarket, just in front of the High Court and opposite the entrance to Glasgow Green, and quickly changed to become largely an entertainment event. By the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century the Fair had come to be regarded as a 'season of fun and frolic' with all attention focused on the southern entrance of the city.<sup>12</sup> Maver asserts that by the 1820s the event had become transformed into a 'carnival

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8 BFI Statistical Yearbook 2010, p.69

9 *Glasghu Facies*, (1872) p.338

10 Wallace Harvey, *Chronicles of St Mungo; or Antiquities and Traditions of Glasgow*, (J. Smith, Glasgow, 1843) p.28

11 *Glasghu Facies*, (1872) p.578

12 *ibid*

extravaganza' which capitalised on the fact that most of the working population was on holiday.<sup>13</sup>



**Figure 1: A cartoon from 1825 showing crowds visiting the array of stalls at Glasgow Fair on the edge of Glasgow Green.<sup>14</sup>**

Where there had been previously cattle dealers and horse traders now came massed ranks of travelling showmen to ply their wares and offer their attractions. Perhaps not by chance the new location for the Fair was also the area used for public execution so in one sense it already had a reputation for providing spectacle and diversion for the masses. Again, we rely on the Reverend Gordon who, according to John M'Ure in his contemporary account of the 18<sup>th</sup> century city, *Glasghu Facies*, was a minister of the Episcopal Chapel in nearby Greendyke Street to paint a vivid picture of the entertainment on offer each July:

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13 Maver, *Glasgow*, p.102

14 *Glasgow Looking Glass*, July 1825. Used by permission of University of Glasgow Library, Special Collections

still the Fair...could always boast of at least a dozen painted *Jezebels*, who in front of the several booths outraged Terpsichore as much in their movements as the Dutch Concert of Hurdie-Gurdies and Fiddles, which guided their *heavy* fantastic toes, set defiance both to Time and Tune! To be sure, there were then, as now, both Giants and Giantesses, Fat Boys and still Fatter Girls, Learned Pigs and Unlettered Dwarfs [sic]; there were also Swings to raise the spirits of already too light-headed Maidens, and Round-Abouts to sicken Children, at the small cost of a Halfpenny.<sup>15</sup>

For Gordon, the Glasgow Fair was an occasion when the city left aside its 19<sup>th</sup> century industrial ambition and reverted to its rural origins. It was an occasion for town and country to mix and mingle with class barriers blurred, if not eroded, albeit temporarily. The July holiday however had the extra attraction of the potential for licentiousness since according to Gordon it 'appeared chiefly got up for the entertainment of the budding beauties of our Spinning and Weaving factories, and for their admiring Swains of the Engineering Shop or Print Work.'<sup>16</sup>

In common with similar events in other major British cities the Glasgow Fair drew showmen, circuses, freak shows, and sideshow attractions from all over the country, some of whom chose to put down roots and in doing so became the foundations of the city's nascent entertainment culture. One such showman was David Prince Miller, whose bombastic autobiography *The Life of a Showman* painted a lively and rumbustious picture of the almost anarchic commercial environment in which such men survived and occasionally thrived.<sup>17</sup> The book is self-serving since it was originally written as a series of articles in 1842 to demonstrate the many challenges faced by showmen as they struggled to make a living. His first professional appearance in Glasgow was in July 1839 after, he claimed, he had walked 56 miles from Dalkeith to the city to ply his trade at the Glasgow

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15 *Glasghu Facies*, (1872) p.578

16 *ibid*

17 David Prince Miller, *The Life of a Showman* (Second edition, 1866) accessed at

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/60201081> downloaded at August 8, 2013

Fair.<sup>18</sup> At the time Miller was severely down on his luck and hoped to make enough money in Glasgow to revive his flagging fortunes. He arrived penniless having spent 'six or seven pounds' in hiring horses to transport his tent as well as paying turnpike fees to make his way to the city. He recalled that the Fair was extremely busy and admits that since his own show was not the most eye-catching he was not optimistic about his chances.

One of the main attractions at the Fair in 1839 was John Henry (J.H.) Anderson the self-styled 'Wizard of the North'. A Glasgow celebrity, he was a showman, impresario, and magician whose signature illusion was the so-called 'gun trick'. This was a stunt which involved having a volunteer from the audience fire a gun at the magician's head, once the smoke had cleared and the noise abated the spectators would be duly shocked to discover that not only had Anderson survived but that he had also caught the bullet in his teeth. Anderson claimed to have invented the trick, but Miller alleged he knew how it was done and claimed to have been performing the trick himself but had discarded it from his repertoire.<sup>19</sup>

...observing the success which attended Mr Anderson's exhibition, I, too, performed the gun trick; my charge was one penny, Mr A's sixpence. He was rather chagrined at my opposing him, and spoke of me in his harangues to the crowd, and also by innuendoes in his bills – a proceeding that advanced my interest materially. Had he been wise he would not have noticed me. To be brief. After the fair, I was in possession of upwards of seventy pounds.<sup>20</sup>

His opportunism at the Glasgow Fair had made Miller's fortune which he then reinvested in his production. He bought scenery, upgraded his booth, hired cast members and toured Scotland for the next year visiting Stirling, Perth, Dundee, St Andrews, Cupar, Kirkcaldy, and

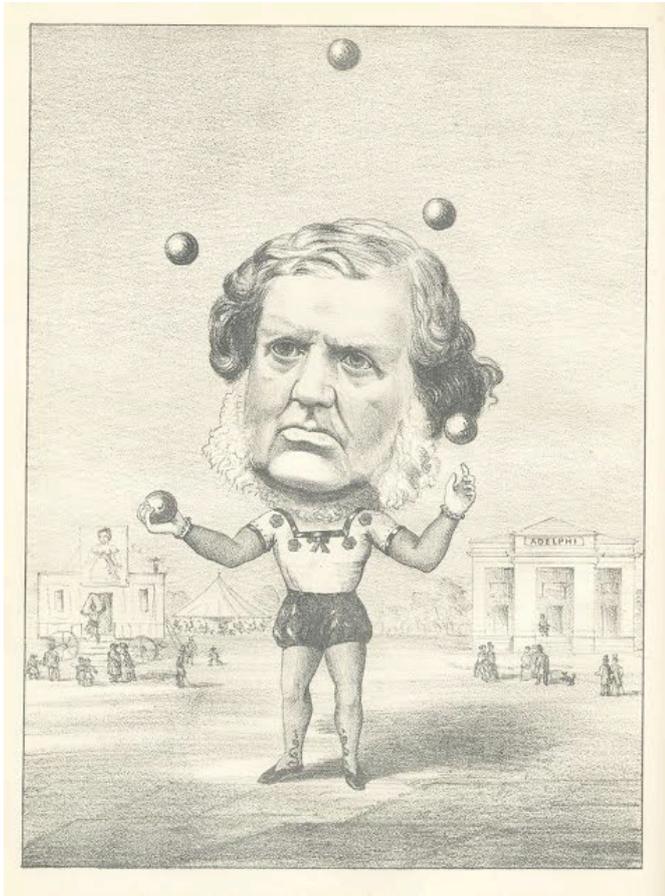
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18 *The Life of a Showman*, pp. 96-97. There is a slight, but not atypical, exaggeration here since the two towns are 46 miles apart, this may also be due to a typesetting error.

19 Jack House, *The Heart of Glasgow* (London, Hutchinson, 1965) p.66

20 *The Life of a Showman*, pp. 96 -7

Dunfermline before arriving in Airdrie where he stayed until the Glasgow Fair of 1840 where he once again set up his booth on Glasgow Green.<sup>21</sup>



**Figure 2: David Prince Miller** <sup>22</sup>

Miller had made an impression on Glasgow audiences and he became a prominent and well-liked figure in the next few years, not least because of an ongoing and very public dispute which he was able to characterise as a struggle between the little man and the forces of the establishment in what would be an emerging relationship between entertainment and authority. The illustration above accompanied a large written profile of Miller in the 'Men You Know' section of the popular Glasgow weekly magazine *The Baillie*. Taken over the life of the magazine this section, as its title suggests, provided a de facto chronicle of the great and the good in the city in whose number Miller could be counted.

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid, p 97

<sup>22</sup> *The Baillie* frontispiece, May 31, 1873

The illustration depicts Miller as literally larger than life as he juggles in the foreground in the costume of a circus entertainer. In the background on the left are the penny theatres from which he started and on the right is his Adelphi Theatre, his major contribution to the entertainment landscape of Glasgow. Given that it was written almost forty years after his first appearance in the city this profile is an indication of the regard in which he was held and his contribution to Glasgow's cultural life:

Our showman's geniality is pure and simple, unmingled with the slightest spice of bitter. David Prince Miller is one of the most amiable of men – modest, simple, good-natured, upright, merry and wise, a laughing philosopher. He is but a showman to be sure and he professes to be no more; but he is one in a thousand. In all Glasgow there is not one voice raised to say anything unkind of Prince Miller.<sup>23</sup>

When Miller began putting on shows dramatic performances could only be presented in theatres which had been explicitly licensed by the Lord Chamberlain. These so-called patented theatres were usually known as Theatres Royal and they guarded their monopoly jealously. Obviously, this legislation discriminated against the travelling showmen who were hounded by licence owners and frequently prosecuted. This struggle against regulation is an indication of the regime into which Miller's successors, the early cinema showmen would enter. The situation would change with the passing of the Theatre Regulations Act in 1843 which opened up theatrical presentation to everyone, but in 1840, when Miller returned to Glasgow, the theatrical patent was held by John Henry Alexander of the Theatre Royal in Dunlop Street. Alexander was so determined to maintain his monopoly he had even, according to Miller, taken action against Punch and Judy shows as well as another man who, allegedly, had put on a theatrical performance in his barber's shop.<sup>24</sup> Given Miller's drive and ambition he and Alexander were bound to clash publicly.

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<sup>23</sup> *The Baillie*, May 31, 1873 p.1

<sup>24</sup> *The Life of a Showman*, p.107

Alexander's view of what constituted drama was, in Miller's opinion, extremely narrow and restrictive and his conduct was, Miller claimed, unbecoming of the dignity of his status as the proprietor of a Theatre Royal. At a time when showmen threatened with prosecution would normally change their performance or abandon it altogether, Miller took a different tack and chose to confront Alexander head-on. In 1840, he staged a series of plays at his newly-upgraded venue at the bottom of Saltmarket, the Sans Pareil Pavilion, which were specifically designed to attract the less well-off, not least through their one penny admission.<sup>25</sup> This dispute can be seen as the beginnings of an argument about the merits of culture, in the definition of legitimate theatre, and entertainment, in the shape of Miller's bowdlerised offerings. This was an argument which would flare up many times in the next 100 years and, as in this original dispute, it was often based on economic anxiety with the new entrant to the marketplace accused of demeaning the entertainment by undercutting the established provider.

Given that Miller had no illusions about how his productions compared with those at the Theatre Royal his actions seemed deliberately designed to elicit a response from Alexander:

This was the man who threatened proceedings unless I desisted from pursuing my vocation – that of showman at a fair, where we played pieces, which if the noise and din which prevailed around had permitted a hearing, no one would have been able to make head or tail of. We performed Richard the Third twenty times in seven hours. Indeed 'twas our boast to the crowd that we excelled in our art, for at any theatre in the Kingdom it would occupy fully two hours and a half to represent the play of Richard the Third, whereas we could perform it in twenty minutes.<sup>26</sup>

It could be argued that what Miller was creating was a putative popular theatre with cut-down versions of legitimate classics which are not dissimilar to what would come to be seen in the early days of cinema in the form of single-reel versions of classic stories. A

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25 <http://www.theglasgowstory.com/image/?inum=TGSA00297> last accessed July 19, 2017

26 *The Life of a Showman*, p.107

consummate showman Miller cleverly cast himself in the role of the put-upon underdog who was being persecuted for trying to bring some entertainment to the masses. It was an argument that won favour with the audience, who appeared to side with entertainment over the legitimate theatre. The Sans Pareil Pavilion seated between 1000 and 1200 people and the penny admission meant it was filled at least three times a day with 'every idle young man who could beg, borrow, or steal this small piece of currency'.<sup>27</sup> Miller and the other travelling showmen waged a long-running campaign to be able to present their own versions of drama, with Miller's battle with Alexander as the focal point of the conflict. It was at this point that Miller wrote his autobiography in serial form to support his campaign.

Although Alexander's argument appeared superficially to be about what we might now describe as intellectual property rights, the real crux of the battle can be seen as his attempt to prevent the legitimization of the Glasgow Fair entertainments by a theatrical location. Ultimately Alexander brought a legal action against Miller and the ensuing drama was staged in the courtroom; staged quite literally since at one point in the proceedings Miller wrote a burlesque pantomime called *The Licensed Murderer* which was played out in the courtroom with Miller's cast members taking on the role of the judge and lawyers. Miller himself played a fairy which, as he admitted, given that he weighed 22 stone provided 'a most splendid specimen of an ariel (sic) being'.<sup>28</sup> The case lasted several months before finally ending in 1842 with the court finding for Alexander and Miller was jailed until he paid compensation to the patent holder. This he initially refused to do and public opinion seemed clearly on his side:

The citizens showed the genuine British spirit, by giving all their sympathy to the weaker combatant overpowered by an intolerant rival. The 'Genial Showman' became the most popular man in the city, and had little levees in prison attended by all who took an interest in the drama and its professors.<sup>29</sup>

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27 Elspeth King, 'Popular Culture in Glasgow', in *The Working Class in Glasgow 1750 – 1914*, p. 155

28 *The Life of a Showman*, pp. 109-10

29 *The Baillie*, May 31, 1873 p.1

After thirteen weeks in prison, and at the urging of his wife who feared for his health, Miller eventually paid Alexander 75 pounds and was set free. The money had been raised by Miller's wife and his friends. His supporters also included the members of the Glasgow Shakespeare Club, a flourishing literary society which included 'many gentlemen of both position and culture'.<sup>30</sup> The support of the Shakespeareans suggests they saw nothing detrimental in Miller's truncated works, and it could be argued they may have had an impact on cultural boundaries making Shakespeare accessible to a wider audience. This leads us to conclude that the court case was another attack based on status and class, since Miller had become a figurehead for popular diversion and entertainment.

The court case and the perceived injustice that had been done made Miller a popular figure not only among the working classes, but also among many of the city's more notable citizens. Not long after his release from prison, the 1843 Act was passed which devolved the powers to grant licences to local councils thus freeing up theatrical presentation not only in Glasgow but throughout the country where similar disputes had been played out in almost every city. Encouraged by some of his more affluent backers, Miller applied for a licence which was granted without objection:

This I counted a very great compliment, considering all circumstances, and I was not a little proud of myself. I had only some two years before entered the city in circumstances and appearance little better than a sort of gypsy showman and had progressed so far in consequence and respectability that I obtained a licence for a theatre in the second city in the empire.<sup>31</sup>

Miller's argument could be read as being carefully constructed; the terms he used constantly characterised him as an outsider, a 'gypsy showman' taking on the forces of the elite establishment on behalf of the working man. He was clearly encouraging the working class to identify with his type of entertainment and to appropriate it as their own. As we move forward we can see that this appropriation by and for the working class can be

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30 *ibid*

31 *The Life of a Showman*, p.111

considered as one of the key drivers of the ultimate popularity of cinema in Glasgow, especially in this part of the city.

The court case had left him in financial difficulties and the money coming in from the Sans Pareil Pavilion was not enough to fund a new theatre. However, Miller's profile and reputation had been so enhanced by his court battle with Alexander that he had no difficulty in obtaining credit from local tradesmen.<sup>32</sup> A theatre was built, scenery constructed, wardrobe bought, a company hired, and on December 21<sup>st</sup>, 1843 the Theatre Royal Adelphi opened for business in Jail Square opposite the entrance to Glasgow Green, not far from the site of the original Glasgow Fair. Perhaps as a riposte to the strictures on the material he had previously been able to present Miller chose a Shakespearean comedy, *As You Like It* for the first performance. In the rush to build the theatre the sight lines had been badly drawn – Miller blamed the architect – and on the opening night, despite having a full house, around half of the audience could not see the stage. This appeared to have no impact whatsoever on their enjoyment of the event, according to Miller:

Notwithstanding this annoyance they sat patiently and quietly to hear what they were unable to witness – a proof of their good feeling towards the success of the concern...<sup>33</sup>

That first season at the Adelphi was popular with regular full houses but Miller still struggled financially. He was over-extended with his creditors and only just managed to meet his obligations. Other incidents marred that first season, not least a fire scare which created a panic in which a patron subsequently died from his injuries and an opportunist thief made off with the box office takings.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid p.112

<sup>33</sup> Ibid p.112

<sup>34</sup> Ibid pp. 112-113



Figure 3: An 1844 playbill for Miller’s Theatre Royal Adelphi <sup>35</sup>

Regardless of how opulent or well-appointed these theatres were, and they were designed to catch the eye, they were still built mainly of wood and canvas. As such fire was a constant threat, as Miller had previously found to his cost. On November 18, 1845, the City Theatre on Glasgow Green caught fire and was razed to the ground; the fire threatened the Adelphi next door which was only saved because firemen began to douse it with water when it became obvious that the City Theatre was beyond saving. Although offering no specific detail, Miller suggested in his memoir that people believed the City Theatre fire was started by some kind of incendiary device.<sup>36</sup> This he claimed kept audiences away from

35 Image sourced from <http://www.theglasgowstory.com/image/?inum=TGSA00297> accessed July 19, 2017.

36 The Life of a Showman, pp.140, 141

the Adelphi who feared that it might suffer the same fate, especially when another theatre, Cooke's Circus, also caught fire. Faced with this decline in business Miller left the Adelphi shortly afterwards to resume his touring life; the theatre was managed by a representative of its creditors. The Adelphi was starting to do well again when, one afternoon in November 1848, it caught fire during rehearsals for a play called *The Ocean Monarch* which was unfortunately subtitled *Ship on Fire*. The fire started in the gallery and quickly spread. By the time the fire brigade arrived the building could not be saved.<sup>37</sup>

The destruction of the Adelphi brought an end to the days of large wooden theatres on Glasgow Green. A drive towards urban renewal culminating in the City Improvement Trust Act of 1866 enabled the corporation in 1870, using the risk of fire as an excuse, to move the penny theatres, the sideshows, and the Fair itself just under two miles further east to Vinegar Hill, roughly as far as it could go and still be in the city. This ended a de facto entertainment quarter that the Fair had sustained for the better part of fifty years. This would not be the first time that the excuse of safety would be used as an attempt to control the entertainment industry. The move from Glasgow Green also re-located what we might describe as Glasgow's entertainment quarter firmly in a locus that was predominantly working-class and it is this locus and its demographic that would be key in the emergence of cinema in the city, especially in the fixed-site era.

This new locus of popular entertainment was an area of desperate social deprivation. Saltmarket and nearby Gallowgate in the East End were among the poorest quarters of Glasgow in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. Arguably, the people who lived there were those most in need of entertainment and diversion, especially if it could be provided at a price that would suit their straitened financial circumstances. To all intents and purposes, the area was home to an underclass clinging to the margins of society (see figure 4); social conditions in the area were vividly chronicled by Alexander Brown. Using the pen name 'Shadow' he offered a series of damning sketches and vignettes of life in the area. There was undoubtedly an element of dramatic licence in Brown's work; dialogue is too well-remembered, incidents evolve too sequentially. Nonetheless his description of a lodging

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<sup>37</sup> Graeme Smith, 'The Theatre Royal Adelphi' <http://www.arthurlloyd.co.uk/Glasgow/TRAdelphi.htm> last accessed January 29, 2018

house in the Saltmarket was genuinely shocking; this was not a locus for the denizens of the demi-monde but rather a place intended for the ordinary law-abiding working poor who were trying to eke out an existence. He described a dark, small and ill-ventilated room at the back of a warren-like structure. There was one small window which he compared to a prison cell, light from one small candle, two beds on the floor, and a 'large, filthy pail' which served as the toilet facility for the whole household.<sup>38</sup> The scandal Brown highlighted was not so much the desperate conditions in which this group of people were living but rather that, since they felt no worse than anyone else, they had accepted their condition.

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<sup>38</sup> Alexander Brown (Shadow), *Glasgow – Midnight Scenes and Social Photographs*, (Murray, 1858) p.67



Figure 4: High Street in Glasgow in 1868<sup>39</sup>

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39 Thomas Annan *The Old Closes and Streets of Glasgow* <https://www.bl.uk/victorian-britain/articles/the-working-classes-and-the-poor> accessed January 29, 2018

A series of pieces of government legislation in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century meant that working people notionally had more time on their hands but with accommodation that was barely fit for habitation the notion of relaxing or socialising at home was out of the question.<sup>40</sup> It is hardly surprising then that there might be a demand for entertainment and there is evidence of demarcation along class lines when it came to the provision of that entertainment. There was a continuing argument about the distinction between respectable diversion, seen as improving, and entertainment, seen as demeaning; the distinction was often expressed in the cost of entry and carried a subtext which suggested that the working poor should not be entitled to any entertainment. During J. H. Alexander's prosecutions of David Prince Miller, for example, it was made clear that Alexander's principal objection was the cost of admission to a theatre such as Miller's and its consequences in terms of clientele:

...held out from their cheapness, great inducement to the lower orders to attend them, and are calculated, from the mode in which they are carried on, to do anything rather than promote the moral welfare of the community.<sup>41</sup>

Similar comments were made by Alexander's lawyers when he also prosecuted Anderson, the self-styled Wizard of the North:

The performances, it may be added, are not less detrimental to public morals...and the extreme cheapness of them (...being not more than one penny) serving to draw large numbers of the young into a vortex of temptation.<sup>42</sup>

It is certain that Alexander's moral outrage was manufactured in the service of his economic argument. The dramatic presentations at his Theatre Royal were not appreciably higher-toned than anything Miller or Anderson would present; although Miller's severely

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40 The Factory Acts of 1833, 1844, 1847, 1850 and 1853 all provided notional limits on working conditions including a 10-hour working day and a half day on Saturday.

41 Prosecution remarks quoted by Elspeth King, 'Popular Culture in Glasgow', in *The Working Class in Glasgow 1750 – 1914* p.155

42 *Glasghu Facies*, (1872) p.155

abridged twenty-minute Shakespeare might be considered disrespectful there was no suggestion that anything other than the essence of Shakespeare was being presented. Alexander's incentive was simply to see a competitor driven out of business and his own monopoly preserved along with its inflated price structure.

There were those however for whom opposition to the penny theatres was more than financial and for some they did represent significant moral hazard. As we have already seen J.F.S. Gordon of the Greendyke Street Episcopal Church was typically vocal and outspoken in his opposition to the type of entertainment presented by Miller and his counterparts:

Penny Theatres, half darkened, were crammed every half hour from 10 till 10, with unkept Hizzies, with whom every filthy Joke and Liberty taken – while coarse Puns and Waggery from the Stage fortified the Depravity which was being carried out. Shameless, pimple-skinned Jades displayed themselves half-nude, and capered and kicked up behind and before – ran upon their toes and stood and spinned [sic] upon one leg; Limmers that, when freed of their Rouge and Make up, as Burns said “would spean a Foal”. In short a mixture was encouraged to commingle whose safety lay in their being kept separate. The whole concomitants were most sapping and destructive...<sup>43</sup>

These comments presumed to set boundaries on class and culture and in gender terms the obvious misogyny of the remarks seemed to be directed as much at the women who took part in the shows as the audience who watched them. His reference to Burns is a particularly savage critique of any woman. ‘Spean’ is the old Scots word for ‘wean’; the quote comes from *Tam O’Shanter* and refers to the witches Tam encounters who are so ugly that they would ‘spean a foal’ i.e. so hideous that they could turn a young horse from its mother’s teat. Gordon here attacked not only the class of the audience, but also of the performers who were trying to earn a living. The notion that Gordon’s attacks were directed at what we might call the underserving poor for spending money on trivial diversion are reinforced by his comments about the theatre itself which emphasised the class distinction. He insisted that what he referred to as ‘the legitimate Drama’ had always

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid, p. 580

been patronised by 'good and educated men' – and by implication he placed himself in their company.<sup>44</sup> This attitude was one that would be common among those who were opposed to working-class entertainment in many forms over the next century.

Gordon was amongst the most outspoken critics of the Glasgow Fair and he could not help but express his delight when the shows and theatres were moved to the East End in 1870:

...every Philanthropist cannot but exult in the final annihilation of the Shows at the Glasgow Fair and laud Sic transit Gloria mundi.<sup>45</sup>

Again, there was an implicit suggestion that the fairground and the show people had not only been moved among the working classes, but also physically marginalised on the eastern edge of the city, so they would no longer offend the sensibilities of the self-styled urban sophisticates.

If the Glasgow Fair was the highlight of the city summer, the other great festive occasion in Glasgow was the New Year holiday. Its origins lay in the 15<sup>th</sup> century fair held in honour of Saint Mungo, the patron saint of the city, which began as a 20-day event running from Christmas Day to January 13<sup>th</sup>. Over the years, as regulation and legislation codified leisure time along with working hours, this had been reduced to a two-day holiday by the middle of the nineteenth century. Where the Glasgow Fair had an aura of Saturnalia possibly brought on by the combination of free time, long hours of daylight and warm weather, the New Year holiday had more of a Bacchanalian air and was largely fuelled by drink. But, as will be illustrated in the next chapter, New Year also allowed the Old Barracks Carnival Ground in Vinegar Hill, just off the Gallowgate, to become a key venue for the development of entertainment and popular culture in Glasgow. As the site of the Winter Carnival, which became a fixture in the fairground calendar, this new 'settlement' in the East End of the city became a de facto community of shows and fairground folk. It was from here that George Green, a travelling showman in the tradition of Miller, launched his enterprise.

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44 Ibid p. 580

45 Ibid p. 581

Travelling showmen, especially those such as George Green, had an important role to play in the development of moving picture exhibition. As outlined by Toulmin their touring shows not only disseminated the new medium and built an audience, but also provided commissions for film makers and generated a supply product to be screened.<sup>46</sup> However the role of travelling showmen such as Green in the emergence of the exhibition industry in Glasgow must be considered along with other routes by which moving pictures were brought to the audience. The importance of Green will be contextualised in the next two chapters, but it will be argued that, far from making a bold leap of faith, Green was in fact entering a market where success might be assured. This thesis will show that although they were broadly united in geographical location, a number of members of the Victorian entrepreneurial class such as Arthur Hubner, Walter Wilson, and A.E. Pickard all separately combined to bring moving pictures to Glasgow audiences in different ways. These involved retail venues, leisure venues, and variety venues which – unlike the itinerant showman – provided permanent locations where films could be seen, and habitual attendance developed. The result is a medium that, it will be argued, transcended class and demographic boundaries. It may ultimately have been appropriated by the working class, and David Prince Miller was instrumental in demonstrating and developing an audience for mass entertainment from which that appropriation took place, but it was not exclusively the province of the fairground masses.

When it settled in the Saltmarket in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century the Glasgow Fair created an entertainment sector, both culturally and geographically, in the historic centre of the city which it sustained for half a century. When the recognised locus nurturing this embryonic popular culture moved eastwards to Vinegar Hill a new, predominantly working-class, entertainment quarter established itself, this time based on the Christmas and New Year festivities. As will be illustrated in the next chapter, the early development of cinema in Glasgow took place across a number of loci; some of which were expected, such as fairground exhibitions at Vinegar Hill, and some which were more surprising, such as a cinema inside a department store. What is certain is that a group of entrepreneurs who

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<sup>46</sup> Vanessa Toulmin, 'Local films for local people': Travelling showmen and the commissioning of local films in Great Britain, 1900 -1902' *Film History*, Volume 13, (2001), pp 118-137

saw the potential of the new medium was about to emerge and, through their efforts, they could ensure the spread of cinema in Glasgow, and with it the emergence of an audience, across a very wide demographic in a relatively short space of time.

## 2 Early exhibition and the entrepreneurs

Having offered in the last chapter a contextual explanation of the cultural, social and geographical background which provided the conditions for an entertainment culture from which cinema could emerge in Glasgow, this section will consider the first public exhibitions of cinema in the city, while comparing them with similar events in other Scottish cities namely, Edinburgh and Aberdeen. This chapter will also look at the rise of the cinema pioneer; entrepreneurs such as Arthur Hubner, the travelling showman George Green, and Walter Wilson who each played a key role in establishing cinema exhibition in Glasgow. Wilson, a hitherto unsung pioneer, in particular offers a new dimension to cinema exhibition by opening one of Glasgow's first semi-permanent cinemas inside his department store. Wilson's Colosseum is a fusion of two of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century's talismans of modernity; the cinema and the department store. Its opening also gives rise to a sense of civic pride in cinema, which brackets Glasgow with some of the great cities of the world in terms of modernity and innovation. This enduring sense of civic pride goes some way to providing an imprimatur to the city's relationship with the moving image. This chapter will aim to show that in Glasgow at least cinema spread very quickly to establish itself across a wide social and class demographic.

The lack of a definitive account of the development of cinema in Glasgow means that over the years a number of historical inaccuracies have remained unchallenged about which was the first screening of moving pictures in the city. There is, for example, a body of work which accepts that the first screening of moving pictures in Glasgow was at the Winter Carnival organised by George Green on his site at Gallowgate in the east end of the city.<sup>1</sup> Oakley, for example claims that the Gallowgate screening was the first in the whole of Scotland, although he concedes that Edinburgh and Aberdeen may have rival claims.<sup>2</sup> Oakley dates the Green screening as December 1895, as do Bruce and King.<sup>3</sup> None of these

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1 Oakley, p.4

2 *ibid*

3 David Bruce, 'The History of Film and Cinema' in Blain and Hutchison (ed.) *The Media in Scotland* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2008), p.72 and Elspeth King, 'Popular Culture in Glasgow' in *The Working Class in Glasgow 1750 – 1914*, p. 172.

claims seems credible, since they would place the Glasgow screening ahead of, or at least contemporaneous with, the first public exhibition of cinema by the Lumière brothers in Paris on December 28, 1895.<sup>4</sup> Charles Oakley suggests that the initial confusion over who was actually first comes from the extravagant claims of rival exhibitors and ‘the sponsors of the rival systems . . . having been inclined to ignore the achievements of their competitors’.<sup>5</sup>

Given the historical connotations we have already established between the East End of Glasgow and the entertainment industry it is hardly surprising, as will be outlined later in this chapter, that Green set up his business there. However, he was by no means the first to screen films in Glasgow and this chapter will show that the city in fact already had a well-established relationship with moving pictures before Green opened his doors. In this spirit, the chapter will attempt to clarify the timeline for early Glasgow moving picture exhibitions and in doing so demonstrate that moving pictures established themselves in the city very quickly. In highlighting several key events in a relatively short space of time, this section will demonstrate the impact of this new scientific marvel in catching the imagination of the public in such a way that within twelve months of the first screening the future of cinema in Glasgow seemed assured. Perhaps more significantly in terms of audience history of moving pictures, these initial screenings will be shown to have attracted a diverse demographic.

This embedding of cinema in a local popular culture seemed to have occurred more quickly in Glasgow than in other widely cited case studies such as those of Manhattan or London where large-scale cinema-going does not appear to have taken hold, in some cases, until almost ten years after the introduction of moving pictures.<sup>6</sup> In the period usually characterised as that of either ‘pre-cinema’ or ‘early cinema’, from 1895 to around 1903, moving picture exhibition in and around Glasgow was divided between screenings in existing entertainment sites co-opted for use by the new medium e.g. theatres and variety

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4 [http://www.earlycinema.com/pioneers/lumiere\\_bio.html](http://www.earlycinema.com/pioneers/lumiere_bio.html) last accessed April 10,2017

5 Oakley, p.1

6 See Allen, ‘Motion Picture Exhibition in Manhattan 1906 - 1912: Beyond the Nickelodeon’, *Cinema Journal* 18 (1979) pp. 4-7 and Burrows, ‘Penny Pleasures: Film Exhibition in London during the Nickelodeon Era, 1906 - 1914’, *Film History*, Vol. 16, (2004), pp. 60-63.

halls, and the touring shows given by showmen in other public spaces, such as church halls or community halls, or local authority venues. The operators of these exhibitions were similarly diverse. As well as George Green, his contemporaries in Scotland included 'President' George Kemp, a business rival with whom he later forged an alliance, William Walker from Aberdeen, and William John 'Prince' Bendon along with showmen from England touring their own idiosyncratic cinema shows. These travelling shows included Jury's, T.J. West's Edinburgh-based Modern Marvels, and A.J. West's Naval Films who were also extremely popular in Scottish towns.<sup>7</sup> Taken together this group may be seen as the emergence of an entrepreneurial class; a significant number of like-minded individuals operating at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century who were attempting to exploit the commercial potential of what was for many, including *The Scotsman* newspaper, still largely regarded as a scientific toy.<sup>8</sup>

Diffusion was by no means automatic. Moving pictures were the latest in a long line of optical entertainments which had become popular in the late Victorian era.<sup>9</sup> These devices included the zoetrope and the phenakistoscope, both of which provided the illusion of movement through crude animation techniques involving, respectively, spinning drums and spinning discs. The mutoscope, in contrast, was a hand-cranked, coin-in-a-slot machine, which created images that appeared to move by virtue of flicking photographs or drawings on a rotating drum past a viewing aperture. It is commonly characterised as a 'What the Butler Saw' machine in reference to its predominantly salacious content. The most popular form of contemporary optical entertainment was undoubtedly the magic lantern. This featured an image projected from a glass slide and it was even possible by using a combination of levers and shutters to create the sensation of limited movement. Magic lantern shows were extremely popular across all levels of late Victorian society. They

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7 Oakley, p.4

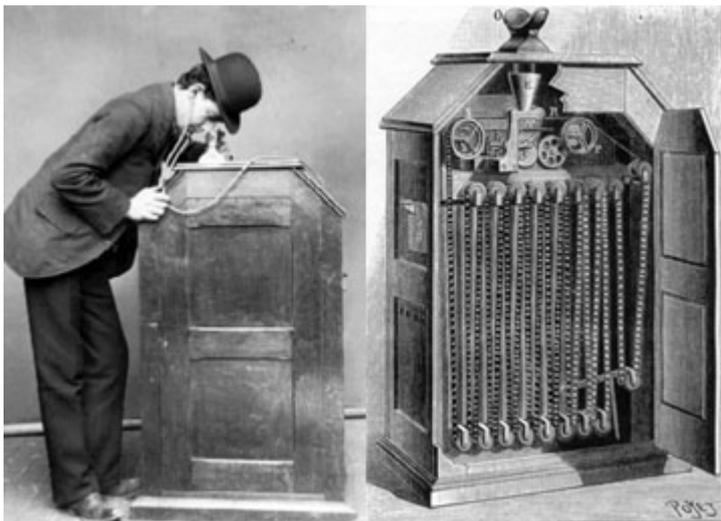
8 *Scotsman*, April 14, 1896 p.5

<sup>9</sup> For more information on Victorian optical toys see the online exhibition at <https://www.oxfordsparks.ox.ac.uk/content/victorian-optical-toys-online-exhibition> last accessed on December 17, 2017

were projected in grand theatres or small local halls and smaller versions of the magic lantern were used in schools or for domestic entertainment.<sup>10</sup>

Against this backdrop, cinema developed universally. In the United States the inventor Thomas Edison pressed ahead with his own work, filing a caveat at the Patents Office in October 1888 confirming that he was developing a device that ‘would do for the eye what the phonograph does for the ear’ i.e. record and reproduce moving images.<sup>11</sup> The prototype for this new device known as a kinoscope, from the Greek noun ‘kineto’ for movement and verb ‘scopos’ to watch, was filed in August 1891, and the first public display came at the Brooklyn Institute of Arts and Sciences on May 9, 1893.<sup>12</sup>

The Kinoscope featured a strip of film containing sequential images that would then be passed over a light source and viewed, normally from above, through an aperture. For the viewer, this created a convincing and naturalistic impression of movement.



**Figure 5: The kinoscope in use and a cutaway showing its interior**<sup>13</sup>

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10 For a more detailed history of the magic lantern see ‘An Introduction to Lantern History; parts 6 – 8’ on The Magic Lantern’s Society website <http://www.magiclantern.org.uk/history/> last accessed July 11, 2016. See also ‘Lantern Lecturing’ in Velez-Serna, M. ‘Film Distribution in Scotland before 1918’, (Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Glasgow, 2012), pp. 78 – 84.

11 <https://www.loc.gov/collections/edison-company-motion-pictures-and-sound-recordings/articles-and-essays/history-of-edison-motion-pictures/origins-of-motion-pictures/> last accessed July 11, 2016

12 *ibid*

13 [http://reflexions.ulg.ac.be/cms/j\\_5740/fr/glossaire?letter=K](http://reflexions.ulg.ac.be/cms/j_5740/fr/glossaire?letter=K) last accessed July 11, 2016

The kinetoscope was housed in a wooden box roughly four feet tall with an aperture at the top for the user to view the action:

Inside the box the film, in a continuous band of approximately 50 feet, was arranged around a series of spools. A large, electrically driven sprocket wheel at the top of the box engaged corresponding sprocket holes punched in the edges of the film, which was thus drawn under the lens at a continuous rate. Beneath the film was an electric lamp, and between the lamp and the film a revolving shutter with a narrow slit. As each frame passed under the lens, the shutter permitted a flash of light so brief that the frame appeared to be frozen. This rapid series of apparently still frames appeared, thanks to the persistence of vision phenomenon, as a moving image.<sup>14</sup>

The Kinetoscope proved a success and ‘parlours’ and ‘arcades’ sprang up in major American cities. Inevitably it crossed the Atlantic and some 18 months after its debut in New York the device came to Scotland when, in December of 1894, the H.E. Moss Christmas Carnival at the Waverley Market in Edinburgh introduced the Edison Kinetoscope to Scotland as one of its main attractions.<sup>15</sup> Exhibition was scarcely ‘theatrical’ in any accepted sense of the term however. The Kinetoscope image could generally only be seen by a single viewer at any time so although it may be considered the first display of a moving image in Scotland it is important to make a distinction between this and a cinematic screening experienced by a collective audience which will be the focus of this thesis.

After the success of the Kinetoscope, H.E. Moss was also responsible for what is generally regarded as the first theatrical exhibition of moving pictures in Scotland when he premiered the Lumière Cinematographe at the Empire Theatre in Nicolson Street in Edinburgh on April 13, 1896 for a run that was to include six evening performances and one matinee.<sup>16</sup> The

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<sup>14</sup> David Robinson, *From Peep Show to Palace, the birth of American film*, Columbia University Press in association with the Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., c1996. p.34

<sup>15</sup> Adrienne Scullion, ‘The cinematograph still reigns supreme at the Skating Palace’ in Fitzsimons and Street (ed.) *Moving Performance: British Stage and Screen, 1890s – 1920s* (Trowbridge: Flicks Books, 2000), p.81

<sup>16</sup> Ibid, p.82

screening took place as part of a variety bill but the Cinematographe was promoted as the star attraction. Heralded in the advertising material as 'the greatest novelty of the age' it was described in glowing terms:

The latest scientific triumph showing animated pictures. The rage of London and Paris. Pictures endowed with life. <sup>17</sup>

The wording of the advertising copy is interesting in that this is the first time we see the presence of cinema, per se, being equated with the acme of modernity, as part of a claim for civic status. If Edinburgh has 'animated pictures' it is implied then it stands comparison with great cities such as London and Paris, therefore there is a sense of civic achievement in the presence of moving pictures and a claim of significant status which may be shared by the audience through the simple act of attending. The contribution of cinema to the civic status of any city has, as will be highlighted later, an important part to play in the popularity of cinema in Glasgow whose cultural identity, as we have suggested, was very different to Edinburgh.

As Moss might have expected the Edinburgh event attracted a large audience but in practice the response was less enthusiastic than he had surely been hoping for. *The Scotsman* acknowledged that similar exhibitions had been very successful at Moss's Empire Theatre in London, but that the screening in Edinburgh had, in the words of its unnamed correspondent, 'missed fire'. In trying to explain the new phenomenon to his readership the reporter conflated two popular existing entertainments. For him the Cinematographe was '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'.<sup>18</sup>

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

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<sup>17</sup> *Scotsman*, April 13, 1896 p.1

<sup>18</sup> *Scotsman*, April 14, 1896 p.4

Cinematographe. . . 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 have been thrown if the instrument had not been properly focussed. 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.<sup>19</sup>

From the newspaper account, it seems likely that some of the problems for the audience were caused by the use of limelight which was common in variety theatres, as opposed to the more powerful electrical sources used in larger fairground bioscopes. This dimmer light source would impact the ‘throw’ of the projector, and the distance at which the image could be clearly seen. Entrepreneurs would move swiftly to overcome this limitation. George Green, for example, converted a steam boiler from a fire engine into a generator to provide a strong, reliable power source for his travelling shows. This may be why the manager of the Empire, Mr T Moore Howard, felt it necessary to apologise for the technical hitches in the screening. Howard, according to *The Scotsman*, begged the Edinburgh audience’s indulgence because the Cinematographe was in its infancy. The newspaper did conclude presciently that the new scientific toy unquestionably had great possibilities, and might be worth seeing again once it had been perfected.<sup>20</sup>

Alongside technical and social diversity, the composition of the material screened was also very diverse. According to the newspaper account, there were ten films in that Edinburgh screening and the information from the *Scotsman* correspondent suggests it was a varied bill. He cites scenes of dancing and pugilism, as well as a cockfight, which was ‘exceedingly good, the action of the birds flying at each other with outstretched wings was very realistic’. The highlight of the evening however was a film featuring ‘the shoeblick [sic], the policeman, and the sailor’, which he described as the best of the ten scenes, exhibited. However, the correspondent was much more effusive in his praise of the variety bill which supported the screening, especially of a trapeze act which for ‘neatness, dash and daring

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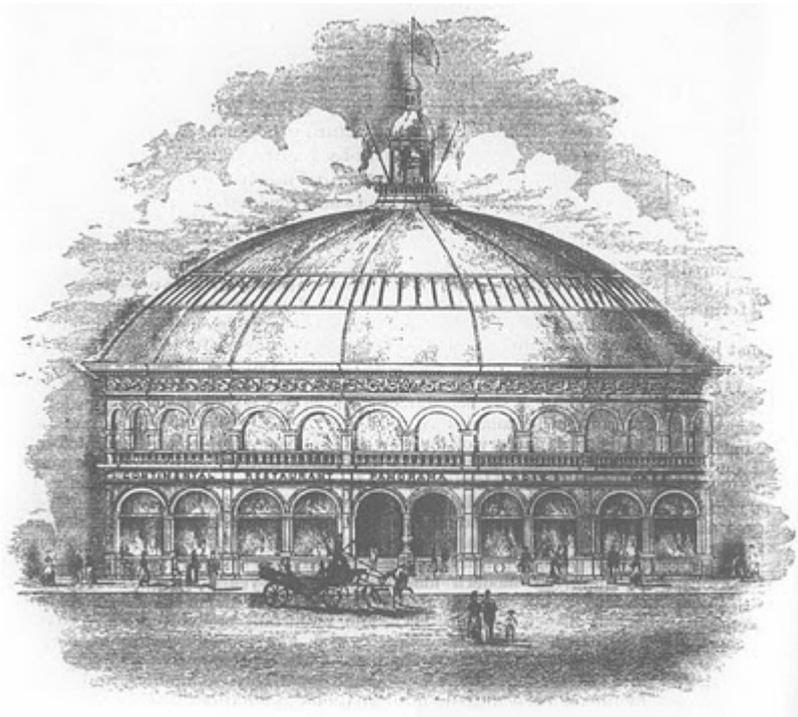
<sup>19</sup> ibid

<sup>20</sup> ibid

would be difficult to match' and a performing dog which was 'a testament to the teachableness [sic] of animals'.<sup>21</sup> It is interesting to note that in its first public outing in Scotland, moving pictures were presented as part of a variety bill offering perhaps an early indicator of where the tastes of its local audience were thought to reside.

Some six weeks later, the first theatrical performance of moving pictures in Glasgow took place at the Ice Skating Palace on May 26, 1896. The venue was Glasgow's newest and most prestigious having opened only ten days before. The prospectus for The Glasgow Real Ice Skating Palace Ltd had been published the previous October.<sup>22</sup> The former Panorama building at the west end of Sauchiehall Street on the corner of Scott Street was to be turned into a Skating Palace:

...such as has proved so attractive to the general public and so profitable to the Shareholders in London, Paris, Brussels, and Munich...<sup>23</sup>



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<sup>21</sup> *Scotsman*, April 13, 1896 p.4

<sup>22</sup> *Glasgow Herald*, October 9, 1895 p.4

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*

**Figure 6: The Ice Skating Palace c.1896** <sup>24</sup>

This is another example of an entertainment venue being categorised as a source of civic pride and a demonstration of the city's modernity. When the venue finally opened on May 16, 1896 the advertisements proclaimed it as 'a palace of pleasure' and 'Glasgow's most fashionable rendezvous'.<sup>25</sup> In that respect the decision to showcase the technological marvel that was moving pictures in a venue that described itself as the most modish in the city provides clues not just to the status of the moving image, but also the audience which was being targeted. This was an attraction intended for the social elite, or those who aspired to that demographic. The working class would not be excluded so long as they could afford the price of a ticket which would presumably be within the financial compass of those at the top of Picard's 'working class pyramid'.<sup>26</sup>

Admission to the ice cost two shillings which made it considerably more expensive than the best music halls of the period – historically the Skating Palace was one of the city's more expensive venues – and effectively priced it out of the range of most of the working-class audience.<sup>27</sup> Even a ticket for the spectators' gallery cost a shilling, again making it a relatively expensive endeavour compared to other venues. So, it would seem that the initial screening was being promoted as a premium product at 'Glasgow's most fashionable rendezvous' and priced accordingly. It seems reasonable to assume that this initial audience was drawn from what we might consider to be the legitimate theatre audience rather than the music hall demographic. As will be made clear later, admission prices can be seen as a key determinant of early cinema-going and it is not until prices were reduced considerably that working-class audiences begin to embrace moving pictures in larger numbers.

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<sup>24</sup> *The Curling History Blog* <http://curlinghistory.blogspot.co.uk/2010/04/glasgow-real-ice-skating-palace.html> last accessed July 7, 2017

<sup>25</sup> *Glasgow Herald*, May 23, 1896 p.6

<sup>26</sup> See Introduction, p.22 for Picard's account of Victorian class structure

<sup>27</sup> For details of contemporary music hall prices see Paul Maloney, *Scotland and the Music Hall, 1850 – 1914* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), p.224.

The moving picture screening, ten days after the venue opening, was promoted in advertisements in *The Glasgow Herald* and its sister paper *The Evening Times*.<sup>28</sup> Curiously perhaps by today's standards there was no pre-publicity, the advertisements for the picture show only appeared on the day, the previous day's advertisements had mentioned only the attractions of the ice.<sup>29</sup> Similar copy was used in both newspapers and extolled the virtues of the attraction in suitably hyperbolic terms. 'The Cinematographe' was described as coming 'Direct from London' again bracketing Glasgow with another great metropolis; and promoted as 'The Century's Sensation; The Rage of the Season' and featured 'Scenes from Actual Life'. The advertisements also referenced 'incidental entertainments on the stage' including 'Cyrus and Maud; Inimitable Musical Grotesques', as well as 'Geo. A Meagher, Champion Skater of the World, on the ice'.<sup>30</sup> The presence of Meagher, and a variety act such as Cyrus and Maud, may have been a hedge against the sort of technical issues which had affected the Edinburgh screening. Adverts also appeared in *The Evening News* and *The Evening Citizen* which had the same wording but in a slightly smaller type face taking up slightly less space. This may have been for reasons of cost but we have no way of knowing; *The Evening News*, with a certified circulation of 72,309 styled itself as having the largest circulation in Scotland so advertising rates may have been greater.<sup>31</sup>

The Ice Skating Palace was at that time managed by Arthur Hubner who would become an important figure in Glasgow's cinema history. There is a clear distinction between the choices of venues for the premiere exhibition in the two cities; the Empire in Edinburgh was a variety theatre which would cater to a very mixed audience with a range of prices, whereas the Skating Palace was clearly a more upmarket venue catering to, at the very least, a more middle-class clientele. Whilst we have no way of knowing why these two

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28 *Glasgow Herald*, May 26, 1896 p.6; *The Evening Times*, May 26, 1896, p.1.

29 *Glasgow Herald*, May 25, 1896 p.6

30 *Glasgow Herald*, May 26, 1896 p6; *The Evening Times*, May 26, 1896, p1

31 *Evening News*, June 1, 1896 p.1

venues were the first to take the technological leap, the distinction is worth noting even at this early stage.

Although the Edinburgh screening had used the Lumière terminology – ‘Cinematographe’ – in its advertising the actual show appears to have been given using Edison’s equipment.<sup>32</sup> The Glasgow event however did use the Lumière Cinematographe itself and included several films that we can infer were also shown at the Lumière event held at the Regent Street Polytechnic in February 1896, the first moving picture screening in the United Kingdom. According to *Quiz* magazine, which appears to have the first published account of the event, the screening at the Ice Skating Palace in Glasgow featured seven films:<sup>33</sup>

. . . 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 beach, brought the exhibition to a close, amid the loud applause of the audience.

A write-up of the screening appeared in *The Glasgow Herald* a few days later. This, as will be seen, would turn out to be a rare piece of coverage of cinema in this newspaper and we can assume that it was covered due to its news value rather than any artistic consideration. The review pointed out that the venue was proving very popular not just for participants but for spectators as well, although it said the warm midsummer weather may have contributed to that:

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32 Oakley, p.2.

33 *Quiz*, May 28,1896, p.166

Another attraction is that of the Cinematographe, which may be said to create living, moving pictures. It is worked by electric light and throws pictures on the screen at a rate of 900 a minute. The effect of this is that the figures move rapidly, as in life. First the figure of a skirt dancer is thrown on the screen, forming a graceful exhibition in itself. This is followed by 'Westminster' and 'A Blacksmith's Shop', in which a realistic effect is created by a man thrusting red-hot iron into water, followed by rising steam; 'Blackfriars Bridge', 'The Arrival of the Calais Express', and 'The Sea at Admiralty Pier, Dover'. The pictures are taken from snap-shot photographs. Of course, the series may be extended indefinitely, and alterations may be made from time to time by the management.<sup>34</sup>

From these descriptions, it is possible at least to attempt to identify some of these films from what we know of the wider work of the Lumières. The scenes of the blacksmith were probably those of *Les Forgerons* (1895), a title which was included in the original Lumière screening in Paris while the 'Skirt Dance' may have been *Danse Serpentine* from 1896. There was no mention of the screening in *The Evening Times* or *The Evening News* but *The Evening Citizen* carried two sentences in its roundup of entertainments the following week:<sup>35</sup>

The wonders of the cinematograph are still being demonstrated and the music and the skating makes a visit to the 'palace' a distinct pleasure.

The non-specific but generally laudatory nature of the copy suggests that this may have been material provided by Hubner or one of his staff for inclusion in the newspaper. Whatever the reason only *The Glasgow Herald* provided any significant detail of what was screened.

Significantly the response to the screening in Glasgow of a train film was radically different from the accepted narrative of how these films had previously been received by audiences

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<sup>34</sup> *Glasgow Herald*, June 2, 1896 p.4

<sup>35</sup> *Evening Citizen*, June 2, 1896, p.4

elsewhere. The writer Maxim Gorky, in an often-cited reference, famously described the moment when Russian audiences saw film of a train:

Suddenly something clicks, everything vanishes and a train appears on the screen. It speeds straight at you – watch out! It seems as though it will plunge into the darkness in which you sit, turning you into a ripped sack full of lacerated flesh and splintered bones and crushing into dust and broken fragments this hall and this building, so full of wine, music, and vice.<sup>36</sup>

This story of audiences screaming at the sight of a train appearing to burst through the wall has become something of a foundation myth of early cinema. The reality of the Glasgow screening, however, appears to have been quite different. Had there been scenes of near riot these would surely have been reported but neither *Quiz* nor *The Glasgow Herald* makes any mention of any disturbance. Given that Queen Street railway station had been open since 1842 and Glasgow Central since 1879 it seems reasonable to assume that Glasgow audiences were fairly inured to the sight of steam trains arriving and departing.

There are no reports of any technical hitches and, describing the event as a decided success which was sure to attract large crowds, *Quiz* remarked that the audience were well repaid for their attendance.<sup>37</sup> The two events on opposite sides of the country may have been equally popular in drawing crowds but in terms of reception the Glasgow screening seemed to have been much more successful than the performance at the Edinburgh Empire. This appeared to have been in large part a result of the Lumière system being technically superior to the Edison system.<sup>38</sup>

According to both *The Glasgow Herald* and *The Evening Times*, there were three skating sessions daily but the Cinematographe would only feature in the evening session. Arthur Hubner immediately realised the potential of the new entertainment and by the autumn of 1896 moving pictures had become a regular feature of the programme at the Ice Skating

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<sup>36</sup> Maxim Gorky, *Nizhegorodski listok*, July 4, 1896 in Harding and Popple (ed.) *In the Kingdom of Shadows* (Cygnus Arts, 1996) p.5

<sup>37</sup> *Quiz*, May 28, 1896, p.166

<sup>38</sup> Oakley, p.2

Palace. Indeed, by early 1897, the screenings were billed as an attraction in and of themselves, by which point over and above the ice skating, the Skating Palace was featuring twice-nightly screenings of moving pictures.<sup>39</sup> Expansion of operations followed quickly. In the same year Hubner acquired the lease of the Britannia Panopticon in Trongate and took with him the idea of screening films as part of his variety offerings.<sup>40</sup> As will be considered in the next chapter this move, and his attendant pricing strategy, played a large part in establishing moving pictures as an affordable working-class entertainment; so in that sense Hubner is a genuine pioneer in establishing moving pictures on the Glasgow entertainment landscape.

Attention to these entrepreneurs enables some basic chronology to be rewritten. As mentioned earlier, Oakley mistakenly credited Glasgow with the first moving picture screening in Scotland, ahead of Edinburgh and Aberdeen. Edinburgh, as has been shown, was first, and moving pictures came to Aberdeen after Glasgow. As Thomson points out, there is a degree of confusion about the first screening in Aberdeen.<sup>41</sup> The date most commonly given is September 30, 1896 when it was alleged that the bookseller and lanternist William Walker had arranged a screening of moving pictures at the Palace Theatre in Bridge Street. The date has become notorious because of a fatal fire at the Theatre on that night in which six people died.<sup>42</sup> Although Walker's cinematograph equipment was stored in nearby premises and he had supplied the acetylene for the limelight which may have acted as an accelerant, Thomson says Walker's films were not on the bill that night. According to Thomson, the date of the first public screening in Aberdeen cannot be definitely established, although there was a screening for the press in the Music Saloon of Messrs Marr Wood in Union Street on October 16, 1896.<sup>43</sup> More definitely however on November 24, 1896 a screening by Walker in the city's Music Hall featured lantern slides, moving pictures, songs and recitals on the theme of 'A Night with Charles

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<sup>39</sup> *Evening Times*, February 1, 1897, p.8

<sup>40</sup> Paul Maloney, *The Britannia Panopticon Music Hall and Cosmopolitan Entertainment Structure* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), pp. 64,65

<sup>41</sup> Michael Thomson, *Silver Screen in the Silver City* (Aberdeen, Aberdeen University Press, 1988) pp. 9-12

<sup>42</sup> *Scotsman*, October 5, 1896, p.7

<sup>43</sup> Thomson, p. 11

Dickens'.<sup>44</sup> Thomson also asserts that prior to Walker's Dickens evening, the Alhambra Theatre at the corner of Guild Street and Exchange Street had engaged an R.W. Paul Theatrograph for the week beginning October 26, 1896.<sup>45</sup> So as in Edinburgh and Glasgow, moving pictures made their debut in Aberdeen in a co-opted space, a variety theatre, perhaps suggesting an initial audience more in keeping with Edinburgh than Glasgow. However, as will be discussed in Chapter 3, after this initial outing moving picture exhibition in Aberdeen moved in a rather different direction.

Such a diffusion of cinema through theatrical venues and fairground shows is well documented in established histories but other, less familiar trajectories may be detected. One of the most unusual and ultimately influential sites for early cinema exhibition in Glasgow was in a department store. Walter Wilson's Colosseum Warehouse at the corner of Jamaica Street and the Broomielaw, close to the river at the southern end of the city centre, had become something of a Glasgow landmark before cinema appeared. This was a busy mercantile area with a mix of major outfitters such as Paisley's, which supplied naval and school uniforms, hotels, banks, and Wilson's store, which ran from number 60 – 70 in Jamaica Street, added to the footfall in what was already a bustling commercial area.<sup>46</sup>




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44 Ibid p.12

45 Ibid p.12

46 Glasgow Post Office Directory 1908 - 09, pp. 888,889

**Figure 7: Jamaica Street c.1897, Wilson's Colosseum is the tallest of the buildings<sup>47</sup>**

Wilson, who had begun his career in the Gorbals as a hat maker, had opened the Colosseum in 1878.<sup>48</sup> He had a knack for publicity and promotion, which he used to drive customers to his warehouse where his advertised speciality was in selling retail goods at wholesale prices. Having himself come from humble origins he was noted for his philanthropy, especially in providing for the city's many underprivileged children. In 1887 to mark Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee, for example, he chartered a flotilla of steamers to take 20,000 of the city's poorest children on a trip down the Clyde Coast. In the same year, he also threw an open-air picnic in Glasgow Green for 40,000 deprived children.<sup>49</sup> He may be considered as an innovator in the style of the great retailing showmen such as Harry Gordon Selfridge, and was one of the first major retailers in the city to use newspaper advertising, for example. As a pioneer user of the internal combustion engine, Wilson brought some of the first cars to Glasgow, even offering an automobile delivery service.<sup>50</sup>



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47 Image located at <http://www.glasgowhistory.com/jamaica-street.html> last accessed on April 25, 2016

48 *Evening Times*, June 22, 2013 p. 7

49 *ibid*

50 *Glasgow Herald*, December 8, 1896 p.1

**Figure 8: Walter Wilson** <sup>51</sup>

His renown can be inferred by Wilson's inclusion, by name, in Jefferys' history of British retail trading where the Colosseum is included among a clutch of large retail outlets which blossomed across the United Kingdom at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>52</sup> Jefferys points out that stores targeting the working classes, such as the Cooperative with their commitment to cheapness and open pricing, had done away with previously established practices such as haggling but department stores such as Wilson's had now done away with these practices for middle-class clientele.<sup>53</sup> This new style of department store was, according to Jefferys, very definitely targeting the growing middle class in large cities, not only in its pricing strategy but also in terms of pleasant shopping conditions and added attractions or wide ranges of stock.<sup>54</sup>

The Colosseum was what might now be called a retail destination and is described in contemporary accounts in the sort of lavish terms that illustrate Jefferys' contention:

The Colosseum caters to the wealthier classes who, alive to the saving effected in buying at the modem [sic] small profit cash warehouses, now follow the fashion in dealing in such stores as this, and for each and all of its patrons it is never lacking in some novel addition to the long array of attractions which have made it one of the most popular of the giant warehouses of Glasgow. The appointments, fittings, decorations, and general plan and arrangement of all the magnificent showrooms are of the most perfect character in every detail. The perfection of order, system, and regularity also is apparent on every hand, and the whole of the great mercantile machine, watched over at every point by

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51 The Robert Pool Collection, used with permission

52 James Jefferys, *Retail Trading in Britain: 1850 – 1950* (Cambridge: 2011, reissue) pp. 326, 327

53 Ibid, p.328

54 Ibid, p.329

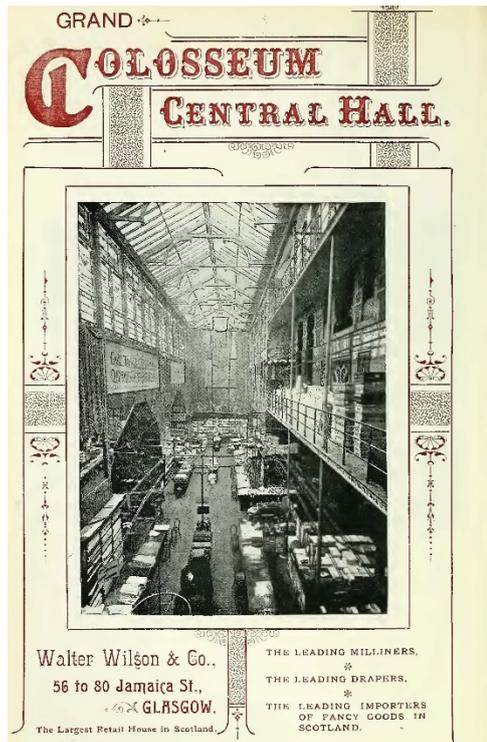
a perfect army of employees, works with a smoothness that is a magnificent tribute to the efficiency of the managerial and executive staffs.<sup>55</sup>

This description of the Colosseum is presented in language that seems more familiar to a theatrical experience; the account of the layout of the store 'perfect in every detail' makes it sound almost like an exhibition or staging, and in one sense this was the case because Wilson can be considered as something of a showman in the traditions of Arthur Hubner and William Walker. Shopping had hitherto been regarded as a chore performed for necessities; the lack of domestic refrigeration or anything but the most basic kind of food preservation meant that food shopping, in particular, was a daily task. By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the notion of shopping as a leisure pursuit began to emerge however; it was acceptable to stroll around shops just as people had promenaded a few years previously.<sup>56</sup> In a crowded urban environment, stores such as Wilson's, with their airy atriums and colonnades, provided a much-desired public arena within which to see and be seen within, which was light and reasonably spacious, while also affording protection from the Scottish elements. Even the origins of the name Colosseum, harking back to classical Rome, evokes notions of space and grandeur suggesting that Wilson wanted a visit to his store to be a memorable experience.

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<sup>55</sup> *Index of Glasgow Firms* (1888) located at [http://glasgowwestaddress.co.uk/1888\\_Book/Wilson\\_Walter\\_&\\_Co.htm](http://glasgowwestaddress.co.uk/1888_Book/Wilson_Walter_&_Co.htm) last accessed July 11, 2016

<sup>56</sup> Erika D. Rappaport, "A New Era of Shopping": The Promotion of Women's Pleasure in London's West End', in Charney and Schwartz (eds.) *Cinema and the invention of modern life*, p.131.



**Figure 9: The Grand Hall and atrium of Wilson's Colosseum** <sup>57</sup>

The arrival of the department store meant that the whole concept of shopping was undergoing significant change in the transition from the Victorian to the Edwardian era, as Rappaport explains.

For much of the Victorian era, shopping had been often denigrated as a wasteful, indulgent, immoral, and possibly disorderly female pleasure. Selfridge and other Edwardian entrepreneurs rewrote the meaning of this indulgence. They used publicity, particularly the print media, to turn disorder and immorality into legitimate pleasures, transforming anxieties into profits. Shopping was advanced as pleasurable and respectable precisely because of its public setting, which Edwardian business presented as a context for female self-fulfilment and independence.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> The Robert Pool Collection, used with permission

<sup>58</sup> Rappaport, "A New Era of Shopping" p.131.

If shopping had become a fashionable pastime for the Victorian middle classes and those of what might be termed the aspirational working class, then these were the people for whom the city's new department stores were most significant and, in a city of competing attractions, Wilson's store provided all sorts of entertainments and diversions in addition to the supply of retail goods. As well as being aimed at the middle classes, these new stores were especially interested in one particular sector of the middle class demographic: women. This could be seen in what is regarded as the zenith of this new era of retailing with the opening of Selfridges in London in 1909.<sup>59</sup> To promote his store Gordon Selfridge replicated many of the tactics Wilson had used in Glasgow, not least full-page newspaper adverts. We have no way of knowing but since Selfridge had pioneered many of these promotional ploys in his time at the giant Marshall Fields store in Chicago in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century Wilson may have got the idea from him.<sup>60</sup> What both the Colosseum and Selfridges had in common was a significant contribution to the expansion of the leisure sphere, especially for women. One of the attractions brought in by Wilson was a tea room with an orchestra which was introduced at an early stage, to give people a reason to visit his store other than simply to purchase necessities. This, according to Nava:

...expanded the class spectrum of its targeted customers and helped enfranchise the middle to lower classes into the world of consumer citizenship.<sup>61</sup>

This expansion of the class spectrum in the retail environment can also be read, as will be demonstrated shortly, as fulfilling the same function in the cinema environment and contributing to its pan-class appeal.

One of the rituals of the Glasgow calendar, especially for children, was the annual Christmas World's Fair at Wilson's Jamaica Street store. This involved a lavish display of toys amid fountains, grottos and dioramas etc. which provided free entertainment for many of the

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59 Mica Nava, 'The cosmopolitanism of commerce: Selfridges, the Russian Ballet and the tango 1911 – 1914' *International Journal of Cultural Studies* Vol 1, Issue 2, 1998 pp. 164, 165

60 Ibid, p.165

61 Ibid, p.165

city's children while at the same time luring their parents into a retail environment. The highlights of his Christmas Carnival in 1896 were a reproduction of a street in an old German town and a 'cinematograph entertainment' which Wilson's son Arthur, in a self-published memoir of his father, claimed as the first in Glasgow:

...we turn into one of the latest innovations as far as these exhibitions are concerned, namely the cinematograph, and an excellent entertainment is here provided for young and old alike. The views are excellent. They include a street scene in Paris; Boulevard des Italiens, Paris; Czar passing down the Champs Elysee, Paris; a view entitled 'Two Strings to Her Bow', a street fight, a steamer leaving Dover Pier for Calais, a Cavalry scene, and others.<sup>62</sup>

The first announcement of moving pictures being exhibited at Wilson's Colosseum came in an ad on the front page of *The Glasgow Herald* on December 3, 1896. It promoted 'The Colosseum Fancy Fair' featuring several novelties including 'The Cinematograph'. Unusually, especially given Wilson's penchant for showmanship, the screening was mentioned in relatively low-key terms. There was none of the flamboyant terminology associated with earlier screenings at the Skating Palace, for example. We might however infer that since Hubner had been successfully screening moving pictures at an up-market venue in Glasgow for almost eight months by this stage, there would be a degree of familiarity with the technology among Wilson's audience. The Cinematograph at the Colosseum screened each day at 11.30, 1.30, 4.30 and 6.00 pm.<sup>63</sup> Apart from the novelty of the non-traditional setting, the significance of Wilson's screenings is that admission was free. Clearly this was part of his promotional campaign for the Christmas retail period and, in fact, most of the advertisement was taken up extolling the virtues of his wide range of boxes of Christmas cards and the one million books which he claimed to have in stock. It is reasonable to assume that these free screenings would have seen the first exposure of many Glaswegians to the moving image and we might also assume that this would be accessible to a much wider demographic than at the Skating Palace.

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62 Arthur Wilson, *Walter Wilson, Merchant* (Glasgow: 1920) pp. 146, 147

63 *Glasgow Herald*, December 3, 1896, p.1

Wilson advertised prominently in the *Herald* on a daily basis and varied the copy from day to day to highlight various retail offers. The next mention of the cinematograph screenings came a week later but with a significant difference.<sup>64</sup> The advertisement which ran on December 11 confirmed that admission to the Colosseum Fancy Bazaar was free, except for the Mirror Maze in the North Annexe and the 'wonderful cinematograph in the south annexe precisely at 11.30, 1.30, 4.30 and 6.00 pm'. Wilson was now evidently charging 3d admission to his screenings. No indication of the rationale behind the change can be found but it could be assumed that the attraction was proving so popular that an admission price could now be levied. Even at 3d, the price was still much cheaper than the Skating Palace, for example, and judging by the tone of subsequent advertisements charging for admission did not appear to have impacted the popularity of the screenings

*The Glasgow Herald*, would later repeat Arthur Wilson's erroneous claim that these were 'the first motion pictures ever seen in Glasgow'.<sup>65</sup> The younger Wilson's mistake may have been due to writing a quarter of a century after the event, but first or not, the *Herald* recalled the occasion as an instant success:

The show, as may be imagined, was a great curiosity in which interest was whetted by news of the excitement it was causing in London. The animated pictures had definitely arrived in London, Paris and New York in the previous year.<sup>66</sup>

Although the newspaper feature was written in 1937 to mark the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of films in Glasgow and was a year late since it was dating the anniversary from Wilson's screening, there is nonetheless a definite sense in its retrospection that the arrival of cinema had indeed brought with it a note of prestige that had helped Glasgow to make its mark on the world. Here we see, especially with the benefit of 40 years of hindsight, that an establishment newspaper such as the *Herald* still equated cinema with concepts of progress and modernity that elevated Glasgow and confirmed its status as a thoroughly

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<sup>64</sup> *Glasgow Herald*, December 11, 1896, p.1

<sup>65</sup> *Glasgow Herald*, August 30, 1937 p.10

<sup>66</sup> *ibid*

contemporary metropolis. Cinema, in short, was still viewed as a valuable addition to the city's civic profile, which its citizens could admire and in which they could participate on mass terms. In addition, Wilson's in-store cinema appeared to have been the first in Britain, a title later mistakenly claimed by Selfridges in London when it announced plans for an in-store cinema in 2014.<sup>67</sup>

Distinctions between Wilson's cinema exhibition and the nickelodeon culture which established moving picture exhibition in the United States as described by Allen for example, are instructive in this respect.<sup>68</sup> It is generally accepted that there is little such tradition of storefront exhibition in the United Kingdom. Burrows has identified several venues in London in the early days of cinema which were set up in empty shops as a means of evading the London County Council safety regulations and there is evidence that similar shop-front venues were set up in other English cities.<sup>69</sup> However as described by Low, these were discreet, often fly-by-night ventures, which could not be considered to have any real continuity. George Pearson's account of one such venue outside a derelict greengrocer's, quoted by Low, gives a sense of the ad hoc nature of the venture:

The hawk-eyed gentleman on a fruit crate was bewildering a sceptical crowd. In that shuttered shop there was a miracle to be seen for a penny, but only twenty-four could enter at a time; there wasn't room for more. . . I joined twenty-three other sceptics inside. Stale cabbage leaves and the smell of dry mud gave atmosphere to a scene from Hogarth.<sup>70</sup>

This exciting but nonetheless squalid experience of the "penny gaff" – so called because of their admission price - could not be considered as remotely equivalent to what Walter Wilson was offering at his Jamaica Street emporium. There may have been isolated incidents but there is no significant evidence for the presence of penny gaffs in Glasgow in

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67 <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/article-2743561/Watch-till-drop-Selfridges-department-store-opens-world-s-store-cinema-showcasing-classic-new-releases.html> last accessed April 10, 2017

68 Robert C. Allen, 'Motion Picture Exhibition in Manhattan 1906 – 1912', pp. 4-7

69 Jon Burrows, 'Penny Pleasures', pp. 62-68

70 Rachael Low and Roger Manvell, *The History of the British Film 1896 – 1906*, pp.38-39

particular or in Scotland as a whole.<sup>71</sup> This may be surprising given that the penny geggio, which might be considered the theatrical precursor of the penny gaff, was a vital part of the Glasgow entertainment spectrum in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. However, the regulatory framework which existed under the auspices of Glasgow Corporation perhaps mitigated against the penny gaff and this will be discussed in Chapter Four.

We might also consider that entry to the market in Glasgow was somewhat restricted in that major city centre spaces would not lend themselves to the penny gaff, meanwhile those of an entrepreneurial spirit were more likely to rent public halls, such as the Waterloo Rooms, with which Glasgow was very well served. If cinema was to be seen as part of the civic culture of Glasgow, then the Hogarthian nature of a downmarket penny gaff probably would not attract those who went to the Colosseum, or shows put on by Green and other showmen.

There was one thing that Wilson and the penny gaff proprietors had in common however, namely their promotional expertise. Kember talks of the popularity of early cinema or pre-cinema being predicated on the nature of the relationship between the showman and his potential audience.<sup>72</sup> It was, Kember suggests, often the showman's discourse rather than the film itself that drew the crowd and generated revenue. In the case of the Glasgow Colosseum, the retailer Wilson was in his own way a showman; an impresario with a department store serving as his theatre. His reputation for quality, innovation and cutting edge attractions framed the discourse that lured his audience, in this case his customers. Unlike those London shop-front venues, his audience came mostly from the middle classes or those who aspired to that demographic; his warehouse, or exhibition space, with its fine china tea services and genteel orchestras was designed deliberately to attract these people who at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century found themselves with disposable income and the leisure time to decide how they might spend it. For some cinema provided a glimpse of the future, for others it was a window to an aspirational lifestyle but altogether moving pictures represented the very incarnation of modernity. Film, according to Kember, was an integral part of the 'expanded expressive repertoire' of late 19<sup>th</sup> century life, formed within a

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71 Griffiths, p.33

72 Joe Kember,, *Marketing Modernity* (Exeter: 2009) p. 120

culture which was becoming increasingly consumerist.<sup>73</sup> Walter Wilson's Colosseum in December 1896 provides a crucial nexus, and perhaps equally importantly, a location, for this fusion of entertainment and commerce. Film became such an established part of the Colosseum offer to the public to the point where Wilson had a 500-seat theatre installed in the store which remained open until 1904.<sup>74</sup>

It is not surprising from such perspectives that film would find a semi-permanent home at the Colosseum, it is perhaps surprising however that none of the city's competing department stores followed Wilson's example. As Kember concludes, the key to the success of early film institutions lay in the way that they integrated existing commercial imperatives seamlessly into the lives of consumers, as well as having the flexibility to respond to the changing demands of those customers.<sup>75</sup> Department stores would also provide exhibitors in Glasgow with a model for a potential clientele in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, as cinema competed with other city centre attractions such as legitimate theatre.

Women were vital to the new consumerist culture and therefore to department stores. Chaney describes department stores as a world of women, referring to their presence on both sides of the counter.<sup>76</sup> As department stores continued to recruit large numbers of women, so female customers felt familiar and secure in that environment; a public space had been created where respectable women could venture without compromising their reputation. Later, with the advent of custom-built fixed-site cinemas in the city centre from around 1910, similar recruiting policies were also employed which may have provided encouragement to women cinema-goers that these were places of safety; the bulk of cinema staff in this period were women and they were almost all employed in customer-

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73 Ibid p.6

74 Scottish Cinemas Database <http://www.scottishcinemas.org.uk/database2.php> last accessed December 17, 2017

75 Joe Kember, *Marketing Modernity*, p.212

76 David Chaney, 'The Department Store as Cultural Form', *Theory Culture Society*, 1:22, 1983 pp. 22 - 31

facing roles.<sup>77</sup> In advice to would-be entrants into the exhibition market, *The Kinematograph Weekly* trade publication strongly recommended hiring women.

It is best to put a woman in charge of the box office because women are apt to be more reliable, and in part because they ask for less money.<sup>78</sup>

It seems that by situating film in such a respectable site as the Glasgow Colosseum, Wilson not only integrated cinema into the legitimate commercial life of the city but also provided the new medium with an imprimatur of respectability in offering it up for the delight and entertainment of a better-off clientele.

This chapter has shown so far that by the end of 1896 moving picture exhibition was well established in Glasgow with Wilson's Colosseum screenings not only tapping into the middle-class audience of the Skating Palace but also providing free admission – albeit for a short time – which could extend the demographic and make moving pictures available to those who could not afford the higher admission at Hubner's establishment in Sauchiehall Street. It is at this point that the man who is erroneously identified by some as the founder of cinema exhibition in Glasgow entered the market with a decision that seems, on the evidence presented so far, more to be about exploiting a successful existing trend rather than pioneering a new one.

George Green was born in Preston into a fairground family. He had learned the trade and the arts of showmanship from his father who operated a roundabout. Green and his wife and children toured the country with their own attraction, a carousel of horses. In 1891, he was based in Fairway Field in Oldham, Lancashire with his wife and three children along with his brother, sister-in-law and other members of his extended family. He is described as a 'roundabout proprietor of Preston, Lancs' and aged 29.<sup>79</sup> However, by 1894 Green had

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<sup>77</sup> For more detail on female employment in cinemas in this period see David R. Williams 'Ladies of the Lamp: The Employment of Women in the British Film Trade during World War 1', *Film History*, Vol. 9, No. 1, (1997), pp. 116-127

<sup>78</sup> *How to Run a Picture Theatre* quoted in Luke McKernan 'Only the Screen was Silent....', *Film Studies*, Issue 10, Spring 2007, p.5

<sup>79</sup> Travelling Showmen and other travellers, 1891 located at <http://members.shaw.ca/pauline777/1891.html> last accessed July 21, 2016.

settled in the Glasgow district of Vinegar Hill in the east end of the city with his family and this had become the base of his operations which were centred on the Winter Carnival. In the autumn of 1896 George Green went to London to search for new attractions and novelties for the winter event and, according to his son Herbert, returned with two things:

...samples of a new toffee for his children, as he said, "Like lead paint with nuts in it" – It was French Nougat; and a machine that projected moving photographs on to a screen, like moving magic lantern slides. He bought it from Robt. W. Paul who was an electrical and scientific instrument maker, whose workshop was in Hatton Gardens.<sup>80</sup>

Paul had first demonstrated his apparatus, which he called 'The Theatrograph', in February 1896. Green was also aware that Paul's apparatus had been a major attraction at the London Olympia and The Alhambra in London in March of that year which doubtless encouraged its acquisition. Since Herbert dated the acquisition as 'autumn of 1896' we may also conclude that his father must have been aware of the success Arthur Hubner was already enjoying with moving pictures at the Skating Palace. The actual price Green paid is not recorded but Herbert recalled that the apparatus sold for between £50 and £80. To gain a sense of perspective the annual wage of a labourer in 1889-90 was £63 while that of a skilled tradesman was between £88 and £94, so this was a considerable outlay.<sup>81</sup> As Herbert recalled, his father and his technicians fitted out Paul's machine with a carbon arc lamp and tested it in one of the animal houses during the early part of December when the fairground was closed.

The films involved were *The Skirt Dance*, *The Blacksmith*, and *The Rough Sea at Dover* which varied in length from 30 feet to 60 feet i.e. running for less than a minute each. There was one other film entitled *The Highland Dancers*, which was a so-called 'endless film' in that the ends of the film were joined together so that it would run continuously through the

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80 Letter from Herbert Green to Henry Simpson, January 8, 1945 Moving Image Archive 5/8/42, p.3

81 Bakker, p.116

machine without stopping. In Herbert's account, he and his brother John, played an instrumental part in the test:

. . . *The Skirt Dance*, *The Blacksmith*, and *The Rough Sea at Dover* all worked well but *The Highland Dancers*, an endless film, having been taken at 30 pictures per second the then American speed, instead of the British 16 pictures per second, was just slow motion. My brother and I, as school boys, were allowed to take turns, and could not make them dance quickly enough. It was hard turning and made us perspire, and our arms ached.<sup>82</sup>

This was an early indication of one of the problems that beset the cinema industry at its inception, namely a lack of technical standardisation. American films were shot at almost twice the speed of British films which meant they could not be shown without some effort. Some variation was to be expected since early cameras were hand-cranked but even so there was considerable debate about the ideal frame rate for shooting and projecting silent films and it would be some time before this was standardised at 16 – 18 frames per second.<sup>83</sup>

The elder Green appeared satisfied with the test, following which the lenses and condenser of the equipment were wrapped in silk for protection and, along with the films, were taken back into the family home and carefully locked in a box for safe-keeping. A few weeks later they would be taken out for the Christmas Carnival of 1896.<sup>84</sup> The event that year took place in one of the circus buildings at the fairground:

The Screen was across the ring with the machine behind to help the illusion. Part of the show was the squirting of the screen with water to make it transparent. There were no titles, but a pianist and an announcer...Two big nails sufficed for the spools for rewinding. The films ran into one half of those

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82 Letter from Herbert Green to Henry Simpson. p.2

83 For a more technical explanation of the frame rate debate see Kevin Brownlow, 'Silent Films: What was the Right Speed?' *Sight & Sound*, Summer 1980 pp. 164-167

84 Oakley in *Fifty Years at the Pictures* (p.1) suggests that the Carnival screening took place at Christmas 1895 but since this would have preceded the Lumière screening in Paris he is obviously mistaken. Herbert Green's letter confirms the date of the Carnival screening as 1896.

old fashioned luggage baskets that are held together with a strap carrier. In addition to the films already mentioned we had *Freddy's First Smoke*, *A Chimney Stalk* [sic] *Falling*, and *Leonard and Cushion*, a French boxing film.<sup>85</sup>

According to Herbert Green, *Freddy's First Smoke* featured a boy pulling faces and becoming sick while in *A Chimney Stalk Falling*, a little dog ran across the screen which, coupled with the scenes of clouds of rising dust generated a loud reaction from the audience. The lack of standardisation meant the boxing film proved problematic since it was shown on film with a different style of sprocket holes from the other two and the film had to be physically held against the sprockets as it ran through to ensure it could be seen. Notwithstanding this minor technical issue, the Carnival screenings were judged to have been a success and Green soon repeated the exercise. This time, rather than wet the screen, the projector was placed in the audience with a rail round it to provide some clear room to operate.

The Winter Carnival had opened on Boxing Day, 1896 and the advertisements had appeared in *The Evening Times* the day before<sup>86</sup>. Although it had carried advertisements promoting the Skating Palace screenings there was no advertisement for the Carnival in *The Glasgow Herald*, the more up-market of the city's newspapers, which suggests that Green may have been targeting a more working-class demographic. The advertising copy itself announced the grand re-opening of the Old Barracks Winter Carnival 'after extensive alterations have been made'. It also highlights some of the attractions which include 'a large lion house' as well as 'fireworks displays and outdoor spectacles', while promising that the grounds are lit by 'changing electric lights'. What is curious with hindsight is the lack of any mention of moving pictures in any of the advertisements in the two-week run, especially considering the effort and expense Green had gone to in acquiring the necessary apparatus. The advertisements reveal that admission price for the Winter Carnival was only 1d, although after 6.00 pm and on weekends the price rose to 2d. Again, this suggests the event was aimed at a working-class audience and in many respects, represented a continuation of the sort of attraction put on by David Prince Miller in a locus geographically

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<sup>85</sup> Letter from Herbert Green to Henry Simpson, p.3

<sup>86</sup> *Evening Times*, December 25, 1896

close to where he had staged his shows. A suitable venue and cost thus combined to provide moving pictures in a place where people were well-used to entertainment at an affordable price.

In economic terms George Green's entry into the market created a genuinely competitive environment for moving picture exhibition in Glasgow. One of the key factors associated with generating habitual behaviour is a fixed network of loci at which that behaviour can be indulged on a regular basis. In Glasgow, for the first two weeks of 1897, moving pictures could be seen at specific times in three separate venues; the Skating Palace, the Colosseum, and the Winter Carnival. In these settings Hubner, Wilson, and Green were now in competition for an audience on a regular basis and marketing soon reflected that. Although all three men had purchased newspaper space to promote their screenings these advertisements were relatively small in size, no bigger than the normal theatre or music hall equivalents. On January 4, 1897, just as Green's Carnival reached the end of its run Walter Wilson took out an advertisement in *The Evening Times* which spread across two columns and ran the length of the broadsheet newspaper page.<sup>87</sup> With such dimensions it was probably the biggest piece of newspaper advertising taken to promote moving pictures at that stage. In contrast to his initial, somewhat low-key description of his new attraction, the tone adopted was nothing less than an extravagant hailing of 'The Wonder of the Age – The Great Cinematograph'.

This extraordinary invention is the marvel of the century. The following realistic scenes may be seen at every exhibition in the new theatre in the Colosseum Annexe.

The English Channel at Dover – the Ostend steamer and the Calais mail steamer are seen to sail away until lost in distance – Scenes of everyday life in the boulevards of Paris – Animated railway station scene – A street fight with boys – Leap Frog – A Funny Comedy – Two Strings to Her Bow – The Lancers on the march – The Czar in Paris showing the Czar and Czarina with ten thousand

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<sup>87</sup> *Evening Times*, January 4, 1897, p.8

animated soldiers and sightseers – The Spanish Fair – The drummers – Spanish market place – The Fighting Bulls etc.

This, as far as I have been able to trace, may also be the first detailed cinema programme to be outlined in a Glasgow newspaper. It told not only where the moving pictures could be seen but also highlighted, in advance, what was going to be shown, and thus represented a shift away from promoting cinema technology to promoting filmic content. For the first time, it would appear, audiences could make an informed choice about what they wanted to watch and where they wanted to see it. Within a few weeks, the Skating Palace had expanded its screenings to twice nightly – at 8.15 and 9.15 - although the adverts still made no mention of what was being included in the programme.<sup>88</sup>

George Green very quickly began to devote more of his time and effort to this new medium, to the point where it became more of a priority than his carnival rides. By 1894, although he was still touring his fairground shows, Green had put down roots in Glasgow and made the city his permanent home.<sup>89</sup> He believed firmly that what was popular in Glasgow could just as easily work elsewhere and he soon made plans to tour his new entertainment. Herbert Green's letter suggested that his father's first travelling show took place in the spring of 1898. The apparatus was dismantled and along with the pavilion, including seating, was packed onto four trucks. Green had re-purposed a fire brigade boiler which he used to generate steam to drive the dynamo providing power for the projector.

Green and his show headed for the north-west of England; the choice of location was presumably because it was an area he and his family knew well and where they still had connections after operating the fairground circuit there for years. Among those connections were the Blackburn-based photographers Sagar Mitchell and James Kenyon who also owned a movie camera and had become pioneers of the new genre of local topicals, to be discussed in more detail later. According to Herbert Green, his father commissioned Mitchell and Kenyon to shoot film of workers leaving the mills on Maundy

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<sup>88</sup> *Evening Times*, February 1, 1897 and February 8, 1897 p.8

<sup>89</sup> Janet McBain, 'Green's of Glasgow: 'We Want "U" In', *Film Studies*, Issue 10, Spring 2007, pp. 54-57

Thursday to 'spin out the supply of films'.<sup>90</sup> These were then screened at the Fair on Easter Monday and advertised with the slogan 'See Yourself as Others See You'.<sup>91</sup>

When he exhibited at the Blackburn Easter Fair George Green had forty showings on Easter Monday alone.<sup>92</sup> The Mitchell and Kenyon material, although it had been added simply to augment the supply of titles, proved very popular and marked the beginning of a lengthy commercial relationship between Green and the photographers-turned-film makers. It also offered some insight into the work of the pioneering entrepreneurs in that they were commissioning rather than authoring work. Since Green knew the north west of England well, and could gauge the market, Herbert Green recalls that after success at Blackburn, the show travelled by rail to Preston, Ulverston, Barrow, Penrith and then back to Scotland. As well as the films they had shown in Glasgow, *Arrival and Departure of a Railway Train*, *Fingal's Cave*, and *A Beauty Contest* were also screened, along with an unnamed film about a French milkman with a dogcart in which, according to Herbert Green, somebody called the dog, the cart was capsized, and a cat licked up the spilled milk. The film which he characterised as *Arrival and Departure of a Railway Train* might have been the famous Lumière film *L'Arrivée d'un Train en Gare de la Ciotat* (1895) but we have no definitive way of knowing. Herbert Green also recalled that the Barrow show included more local topicals and 'people came again and again to see themselves or their friends'; this recognition factor would become a key component in the popularity of early moving picture screenings.<sup>93</sup> Many of his contemporaries may have suggested that they too saw the possibilities of moving pictures as a commercial venture, but they are equally clear from an early stage that George Green was the first to capitalise on those possibilities and make them a reality.<sup>94</sup>

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90 Letter from Herbert Green to Henry Simpson, p.3

91 Janet McBain, 'Mitchell & Kenyon's Legacy in Scotland' in *The Lost World of Mitchell and Kenyon: Edwardian Britain on Film* by Toulmin, Popple, and Russell (ed.) (London, 2004), p.114

92 Letter from Herbert Green to Henry Simpson, p.3

93 This is covered extensively in Vanessa Toulmin and Martin Loipderdinger, 'Is It You: Recognition, Representation and Response in Relation to the Local Film', *Film History*, Volume 17 (2005) pp. 7-18.

94 Appreciation of George Green by Rev. T. Horne, *World's Fair*, December 4, 1915, p.5

Green became absorbed by the cinema business, ultimately came off the road, and settled permanently in Glasgow where he opened his first fixed-site venue, the Whitevale in Gallowgate, not far from the Carnival showgrounds. The Whitevale became the Green family home with the Greens and their three sons and four daughters moving into the flat above the theatre. In addition the land around the theatre was used as a park for showmen's caravans with Mrs Green collecting a shilling a week for each pitch.<sup>95</sup> There is some debate as to when this venue opened; Oakley suggests it was opened in 1902.<sup>96</sup> Archival research however suggests that Green opened the Whitevale initially as a variety theatre in 1904.<sup>97</sup> It was not until 1908, at a time when permanent cinema exhibition sites were taking hold in Glasgow that it started to screen films as part of a variety bill.<sup>98</sup>

Contemporaries credit Green with an innate understanding of the demands of the audience and where that audience might be found, which explains why he would choose the densely-populated Gallowgate for his first investment in fixed-site cinema. But by initially situating himself in the East End, whether he knew it or not, George Green was continuing a historic tradition:

All his theatres were established in the heart of the working-class districts. He knew just what his patrons wanted and therein lay his immense popularity...He took a great interest in the cinema trade, which he had seen grow from the day when it was but a side show attraction to the important factor it is today in the entertainment world. He might well be called the pioneer of the trade in Scotland, for nearly every town and village which boasts of a picture house today were first introduced to the movies at Green's Portable Cinematograph.<sup>99</sup>

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95 Janet McBain, Notes for 'The Lost British Newsreel – Scottish/British Moving Picture News' unpublished conference paper, March 2002

96 Oakley, p.4.

97 *Evening Times*, March 2, 1904, p.8

98 McBain, Green's of Glasgow: 'We Want "U" In', pp. 54-57

99 Appreciation of George Green by Rev. T. Horne, p.5

From the foundations laid by George Green, the family would go on to create a vertically-integrated operation which encompassed production, distribution, and exhibition of films. George Green died in 1915 but the family name would become synonymous with cinema in Glasgow, not least because of the famous Green's Playhouse which, with 4000 seats, was the largest cinema in Europe when it opened in Renfield Street in the city centre in 1927.<sup>100</sup>

Being domiciled in the city, together with his sense of Glaswegian preferences, clearly helped Green to shape his content. As he was well aware among the most popular items on a motion picture screening in this period were the 'topicals', filmed records of major events which enabled audiences who had been hundreds or even thousands of miles away to share some of the experience of those who were there. To begin with it was the large historical events that captured the imagination but as cinema developed these topical films became increasingly local. Green, as has been stated, worked extensively with Mitchell and Kenyon in the north-west of England, and in Aberdeen, William Walker, who will be discussed more extensively in Chapter Three, was also enjoying success with his own 'local films'.<sup>101</sup> With these films the reception moved more from a shared experience of 'the other' to the thrill of recognising the familiar. As Low put it:

Once the people realised that the cinema could undertake the regular recording of events it became recognised as an indispensable part of the public service, although in a sense disguised always as entertainment. Only thousands could participate in the big national events: but by means of the living representations of the camera millions could now feel nearer to them.<sup>102</sup>

The Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria in June 1897 was one such topical that became a landmark event in the development of cinema in the United Kingdom. The success of the filming of the Derby the previous year which had been shown in the London Alhambra only hours after the race had been run at Epsom had created a demand for topical events and the national celebration of the Queen's sixty years as monarch attracted many of the

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100 McBain, 'Green's of Glasgow: 'We Want "U" In', pp. 54-57

101 Michael Thomson, *Silver Screen in the Silver City*, p. 17

102 Low and Manvell, *The History of the British Film 1896 – 1906*, p.61

country's film pioneers. It is not known exactly how many companies chose to film the event but the BFI Archive lists work from R. W. Paul, the Lumière Company, the British Cinematographe Company, the Prestwich Manufacturing Company, and a number of other unidentified film makers.<sup>103</sup> According to Low, the event was covered by every camera available. R. W. Paul's 1898 catalogue, for example, listed 12 forty-foot films covering the event and made specific mention of those which could be joined together to make longer sequences. These films were screened by showmen and exhibitors around the country including Glasgow. The Diamond Jubilee film was subsequently seen as 'the first film to really excite Scotland' according to Oakley.<sup>104</sup> The Glasgow event was organised by Glasgow and West of Scotland Amateur Photographic Association, a well-established group which had been founded some years earlier in 1885. The then president of the Association John Chalmers had decided that their annual show would be the perfect opportunity to screen the film of the Royal Procession.<sup>105</sup> The choice of a moving image for the annual show is less surprising than it might seem. The discourse surrounding film in these early days, especially that surrounding topical film, was still couched in terms more familiarly used in discussing still images. As Turvey points out, catalogues of early film referred to them as 'this picture' or 'this photograph' with the word 'film' being used only infrequently. In addition, aesthetic discussions seemed to concentrate on sharpness and clarity of reproduction and definition, as one might expect in a discussion of a still photograph.<sup>106</sup>

The Association hired the Fine Art Institute midway along Sauchiehall Street for the event, which was a much bigger venue than usual for their annual show. A Mr Priestly (sic), who had shown the films with some success in London, was engaged for the Glasgow screening and John Chalmers himself, who had acquired a reputation as a film projectionist, acted as

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103 <http://search.bfi.org.uk/search-bfi/queen%20victoria's%20diamond%20jubilee> last accessed April 10, 2017

104 Oakley, p.3

105 *Glasgow Herald*, September 1, 1937 p.11

106 Turvey, G. 'Panoramas, parades and the picturesque; the aesthetics of British actuality films, 1895 - 1901', *Film History*, Vol. 16, (2004), pp. 10,11

a technical consultant.<sup>107</sup> The show ran from September 26 until October 13 and was heavily promoted in advertisements in *The Glasgow Herald*.

Do not miss seeing the ANIMATED PICTURES by the improved KINEMATOGRAPHE

QUEEN'S DIAMOND JUBILEE PROCESSION (15,000 pictures taking 17 minutes to pass), STIRRING SPANISH BULL FIGHT, CHAMPION HIGH DIVING FEATS. Every evening at 7.45 prompt.<sup>108</sup>

Although the screening was described as using the 'improved kinematographe', further examination of the newspaper advertisements for the Fine Art Institute in September suggests that the screening was given using the Motophotoscope which was billed as the 'entertainment of the season'.<sup>109</sup> The Motophotoscope was a projector which had been developed earlier in the year by William Charles Hughes.<sup>110</sup>

The Diamond Jubilee screening was later recalled in *The Glasgow Herald* by James Baillie, who would go on to become President of the Association, and was in the audience as a young man:

... the film was shown, generally at the close of a lantern lecture. So far as I remember it lasted about half an hour. In spite of some flickering we gazed on it not only with delight but with amazement. It seemed too marvellous to be true. The projector had to be worked by hand, and after the audience had dispersed the film was rewound in the same way. This was a difficult job and

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107 *Glasgow Herald*, September 1, 1937 p.11

108 *Glasgow Herald*, September 20, 1897 p.6

109 *Glasgow Herald*, September 1, 1897 p.6

110 <http://www.victorian-cinema.net/hughes> last accessed April 14, 2017

one night it broke. Mr Priestly gave me a bit to take home. I still have two squares in my possession. <sup>111</sup>

James Baillie's comments are early evidence of the transcendent nature of the early cinema experience, something we can gauge from the fact that these two frames of film have almost totemic significance, to the point where he not only kept them for forty years, but was proud to have done so. Others may have felt similarly enthralled because although the charge for admission was relatively expensive at one shilling – twice the price of a seat at a theatre or variety performance - the hall was packed every night and after paying all their expenses, the Association made a profit of £500.<sup>112</sup> The event ran for a fortnight and despite playing to full houses it was unable to meet demand. At the end of the run in the Fine Art Institute, in an early indication of the portability and transferability of the medium, the enterprising John Chalmers booked the film in for several weeks more at the nearby Athenaeum in Buchanan Street, where it continued to play to enthusiastic audiences.

Continuance of LANTERN LECTURES and ANIMATED PICTURES by the MOTOPHOTOSCOPE from the GLASGOW INTERNATIONAL PHOTOGRAPHIC EXHIBITION (including Diamond Jubilee Procession, over 15,000 pictures)

Admission 3s, 2s, 1s <sup>113</sup>

The admission price – three times as much as had been charged at the Fine Arts Institute – can be seen as a reflection of the popularity of the event, an example of demand dictating the price. After its run at the Athenaeum Chalmers eventually toured the show around various venues across Scotland. <sup>114</sup> The *Glasgow Herald* in 1937 described the event as 'the first topical pictures to be displayed in Glasgow' and while there is no way of confirming

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111 *Glasgow Herald*, September 1, 1937 p.11

112 *ibid*

113 *Glasgow Herald*, October 6, 1897

114 Oakley, p.3

that, there seems little doubt that Charles Oakley's description of the film as the first one to grip the imagination of the audience appears credible.

To sum up, Arthur Hubner, Walter Wilson, George Green, and John Chalmers each had differing roles to play in bringing moving pictures to early cinema audiences in Glasgow. Their activities also underlined the diversity beneath their unifying form. Already there are suggestions of what we might consider as three strata of audience; Green's Winter Carnival was aimed at the working classes, Hubner's Skating Palace and Wilson's shopping experience would also cater for the middle classes, and the screening from the West of Scotland Amateur Photographic Association was surely aimed at the professional classes and above, or at least the cultural elites. It is important to remember that it was perfectly possible to move within these class strata since the only barrier was the price of the ticket. This combination of circumstances counters well-established claims that early cinema was primarily a proletarian phenomenon, and allows cinema, in Glasgow at least, to embed itself not simply as a diversion for the working classes or an indulgence for the better off but as a genuinely accessible and enjoyable experience for all, thanks to its flexibility as a commercial proposition for urban populations. What was still lacking at this point was a sense of a permanent locus where one could expect to see the moving image exclusively. At this stage the moving picture phenomenon could be viewed in several loci, each with its own specific audience but none entirely dedicated to the moving image. While this situation proved beneficial in terms of embedding cinema across a wide demographic it did mean that, at least at this stage, there was no unique, defined, 'home' for the moving image, nor was there any defined sense of cinema architecture that might distinguish the cinematic experience. Thanks to its entrepreneurs there was however a broad base from which cinema could build and take hold in Glasgow, becoming not only a source of popular entertainment but also a significant element in any bid for civic status. It would also encourage, as we will consider next, the transition from an itinerant entertainment to one of fixed-site permanence with which Glaswegians could form an even more abiding relationship.

### **3 The move towards permanent exhibition sites.**

The previous chapter considered in some depth the diversity of the audience in Glasgow for the moving image in the pre-cinema era. It has been shown that cinema established itself across a broad demographic in a fairly short period of time. In addition, it has been suggested that, revising existing scholarship, the audience for moving pictures was not necessarily drawn exclusively from the working class. Early venues such as the Skating Palace in Sauchiehall Street and Walter Wilson's Colosseum department store were initially what might be described as high status venues, although it was Wilson who opened cinema to a broader pan-demographic audience by not charging admission; a practice he quickly abandoned. By the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century therefore moving pictures in Glasgow had a burgeoning audience; what it did not have was a permanent home, which posed difficulties in building an audience based on habitual repeat attendance.

If this new habit was to develop then the activity needed a locus which could be readily identified with the moving image. Apart from those at the Colosseum and the Skating Palace, screenings tended to be in co-opted venues on a temporary basis. One obvious halfway house between the itinerant showman and the dedicated cinema exhibitor was the practice known as cine-variety in which the moving image began to encroach on territory more normally occupied by the music hall audience. This chapter will argue that cine-variety boosted cinema in Glasgow by providing a familiar setting and space for this new phenomenon and familiarised the live entertainment audience with the cinema experience. In moving on to the establishment of fixed-site cinema, this chapter will also consider the accepted forms of exhibition development as outlined by Allen, Singer, Burrows and others and attempt to show that the Glasgow experience is different in some respects, especially in comparison with other Scottish cities such as Aberdeen. As cinema began to situate itself in a number of permanent homes around the city we can see the beginning of an emerging discourse in the way it presented itself to its audience which will also be covered in this chapter.

In her seminal work on the British film industry Rachael Low places the beginning of permanent cinema exhibition in the United Kingdom on a regular basis at 1906, with the introduction of Hale's Tours in Oxford Street in London, as well as the introduction of films

at a Piccadilly restaurant emulating trends already apparent in France.<sup>1</sup> Low also quotes an article from *Kinematograph Weekly*, announcing the opening of the Balham Empire as the 'first theatre in the country entirely devoted to films'.<sup>2</sup> Subsequent research, most notably by Burrows, suggests this may not have been the case and rather than the fixed-site exhibition sector emerging fully formed in 1907, that there was what we might term a transitional phase as moving pictures embedded themselves in the public consciousness.<sup>3</sup> In London, according to Burrows, this was marked by impromptu, opportunistic exhibition sites which were set up in empty shops frequently located in the poorer areas of the city. Whilst there is little to no evidence of such a culture of storefront cinema in Glasgow, partly because of a regulatory framework which will be discussed in the next chapter, clear traces remain of a similar transitional period of film exhibition in the Scottish city. This took the medium from an occasional attraction to a permanent part of the entertainment landscape with its own sense of eventfulness and a definite audience experience in a recognisable type of exhibition space.

As noted in Chapter Two, in a period of little more than a year between the first public screening at the Skating Palace in Sauchiehall Street in May 1896 and the enormously popular Glasgow and West of Scotland Amateur Photographic Society exhibition of the films of Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee procession at the Fine Art Institute, the moving image became established as a feature of the entertainment landscape in Glasgow. Significantly, it was a form of entertainment that seemed to appeal to all ages and across all social demographics, although more discrete audience sections were probably apparent. Rather than taking root solely as a working-class entertainment, as scholarship has taken it to have done in areas such as Manhattan, Chicago, and London, in Glasgow at least moving pictures appealed across barriers of age, gender, and social class from the outset. However, if it was to thrive in a competitive entertainment environment then it would surely have first to embed itself in at least one demographic. This chapter will consider the forces, both social and economic, which allowed that to happen and an exhibition industry to flourish.

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1 Low, *The History of the British Film 1906-1914*, p.15

2 *Ibid*, p.16

3 Jon Burrows, 'Penny Pleasures,' pp. 60-91

At this early stage of its development, we are perhaps still considering what we might term the 'novelty phase' of cinema in which the very action of movement was to be delighted in for its own sake, rather than any particular fascination with the content depicted in these early films. Regardless of any consideration of narrative or non-narrative style, the sheer spectacle of a moving picture show was a draw in its own right, especially as it now appeared to offer a window to the world beyond the narrow confines of the quotidian routine. But even in the face of competition from rival pre-existing entertainments, the motion picture thrived and grew, first in a symbiotic relationship with its competitors, then overtaking them entirely and staking its claim via a raft of dedicated, fixed-site venues which might reasonably be termed cinemas in the now accepted sense of the word.<sup>4</sup> There is good evidence to suggest that even by Low's benchmark date, and the opening of the Balham Empire, cinema was already becoming a regular fixture of the Glasgow entertainment landscape.

In 1880 Herbert Crouch opened a venue in Argyle Street in Glasgow, near the Britannia Panopticon. Crouch's Wonderland exhibited a mixture of waxworks, automata, mechanical exhibits and human freaks.<sup>5</sup> By 1898 he had added moving pictures to his attractions:

Immense attraction

Return visit of the SMALL BABY, the great sensation when last here. Just the show to delight thousands of ladies and children. Refined.

LOUIS the extraordinary elephant-legged man

Kinematographe and a host of other wonders.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Oakley, p.3, pp. 7,8

<sup>5</sup> Maloney, *Scotland and the Music Hall, 1850 – 1914*, p.68

<sup>6</sup> *Evening Times*, February 2, 1898, p.8

Another advertisement, in *The Evening Citizen*, the smallest one on the listings page, offered 'Cinematograph; latest war films'<sup>7</sup>. Admission was 6d for adults, with a reduced price of 3d for children. The cinematograph was listed last behind a list of freaks and waxworks, but consultation of the newspapers suggests it would soon become a regular offering and by 1899, Crouch's Wonderland was offering two separate moving picture shows daily at 3.00pm and 8.00pm.<sup>8</sup>

Apart from Crouch and his regular screenings there were certainly other opportunistic exhibitions by travelling showmen such as this one at the Queen's Rooms in La Belle Place, just beyond Charing Cross.

Return visit of West & Son's Patriotic Entertainment/'Our Navy'/Marvellous animated photographs/As shown before Her Majesty/Graphically described by Mr H. Wright Scadden.<sup>9</sup>

Again, there is evidence of diversity in the target demographic of these two types of shows. Crouch's offering was relatively cheap and close to the East End, while West's show in a more salubrious area, according to the newspaper advertisement, was charging up to 3s. a seat, although admission on the night was available at 6d. Crouch's bill included waxworks and freak shows while West offered patriotism and a narrator who was presumably familiar enough to have been billed by name. It is reasonable to assume that these shows were aimed at two entirely different audiences. The middle-class attraction to the moving image continued to be seen in locations such as The Waterloo Rooms in Waterloo Street in Glasgow, (another up-market venue which would soon become better known as the location of the Alhambra Theatre) which in 1900 advertised a 'Sunday concert illustrated by limelight pictures'.<sup>10</sup> Although this may have been a magic lantern performance, it does sound as if a moving picture element might have been included. An advert from 1901 for

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<sup>7</sup> *Evening Citizen*, February 26, 1900, p.6

<sup>8</sup> *Evening Times*, February 6, 1899, p.8

<sup>9</sup> *Evening Citizen*, February 26, 1900, p.6

<sup>10</sup> *Evening Times*, February 5, 1900, p.8

The Waterloo Rooms is much more definitive, as it announces the presence of Hubner's Animatograph in a programme which contained '*Joan of Arc and Scenes in the Holy Land*'.<sup>11</sup> This latter title may have been the Lumière film *Leaving Jerusalem by Railway* (1897) but we have no way of knowing for certain. The fact that the attraction was advertised on the strength of Arthur Hubner's name was perhaps a firmer indication of the profile which moving pictures had attained, thanks to regular exposure at Hubner's Skating Palace. As we will see later, Hubner had by this stage moved on to run the Panopticon but his reputation at the Skating Palace may still have held some cachet for the potential audience at the Waterloo Rooms.

Despite these screenings, the overall development of cinema exhibition in Glasgow was not yet defined in any fixed path. In some ways, it shared the model of other Scottish cities such as Aberdeen. As outlined in the previous chapter, William Walker, who staged the first moving picture exhibition in the city, went on to become synonymous with film in the North-East of Scotland. He was best known for screening films for Queen Victoria at Balmoral which allowed him subsequently to bill his show as 'Walker's Royal Cinematograph'.<sup>12</sup> Other showmen in the city followed in Walker's wake, although none achieved Royal patronage, and a small but thriving exhibition industry developed, with public halls and municipal venues being hired to put on screenings. Thomson suggests, not unreasonably, that the catastrophic fire at the Palace Theatre on the eve of the proposed first film screening in Aberdeen may have deterred theatres from featuring cinematograph shows on their bills, leaving the exhibition industry to take initially a more itinerant path.<sup>13</sup> We have no way of knowing but, given different circumstances, the exhibition model in Aberdeen may have followed a similar path to that of Glasgow. Certainly, as will be seen later in this chapter, Walker was no stranger to the city and his show was a popular attraction when he came south.

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11 Oakley, p.5

12 Thomson, p.13

13 *ibid*

Although it had initially begun in co-opted venues the natural home of moving picture in Glasgow in these early days of exhibition was by contrast the variety stage. The model in the United States was that of cinema exhibition developing from the smaller more intimate nickelodeon parlours; the model in Glasgow however was that of cinema colonising an existing entertainment space. If we consider the example of the first screening in the city at the Ice Skating Palace, as described in Chapter Two, the moving image may have been the highlight of the performance but it was supported by a variety bill. Maloney suggests that moving pictures were embraced enthusiastically by variety theatres, not just because of an obsession with technology but also because the aura of modernity they introduced allowed variety to distance itself from the slightly seedier reputation of the old music halls of the 1860s and 1870s.<sup>14</sup> By the turn of the century, according to Maloney:

...most Scottish variety theatres featured a cinematograph, bioscope, palacescope, or other system with advertising often stressing the topicality of the material.<sup>15</sup>

This, we might argue, put cinema on a similar footing as theatre or variety from a very early stage and thus, for the audience, the transition from one form of entertainment to the other would have appeared logical and therefore relatively seamless. There may also have been reciprocal benefits for some of the acts on the variety bill who would be exposed to a new audience which may have increased their popularity.

Maloney asserts that the moving image was a commonplace on variety bills by the advent of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Examining this suggestion with archival research centred on local newspapers in Glasgow is informative. At this point, the city had three main evening newspapers – *The Evening Times*, *The Evening Citizen*, and *The Evening News* – all of which carried entertainment and variety advertising on a regular or semi-regular basis. *The Glasgow Herald*, a morning newspaper, carried advertisements mostly for legitimate theatre with individual attractions, such as the initial screening at the Skating Palace, being treated as exceptional one-off events. The month of February was chosen as a ‘normal’

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<sup>14</sup> Maloney, *Scotland and the Music Hall, 1850 – 1914*, p.76

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid*, p.77

exhibition month in which special festive attractions or seasonal closures would not distort the findings. The results, as shown in Appendix 2, demonstrate that moving pictures slowly but steadily gained a significant presence on the entertainment landscape through their presence on variety bills.

Just as the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria in 1897 had proved a talismanic cinematic event in Glasgow, the monarch's funeral in February of 1901 proved another landmark moment in terms of moving picture exhibition. The Poole family, for example, had taken up residency at the former Hengler's Circus in West Nile Street with their Myriorama, a travelling panorama, which Jim Poole was at pains to explain should not be confused with the cinematograph.<sup>16</sup> No matter the distinction between the two forms, film of Queen Victoria's funeral was billed as a leading attraction at the Myriorama, only a matter of days after the event in London. The funeral took place on February 2, 1901 and on February 5 *The Evening Times* was advertising:

Two special films of the late Queen Victoria's funeral procession now showing at Poole's Myriorama.<sup>17</sup>

The films played as part of the Myriorama show for its whole four-week run, although a distinction was always made in the advertising copy, presumably at Poole's insistence, between the 'cinematographic' part of the show and the 'myrioramic' aspect. *The Evening Times* described the films as 'an interesting addition to the exhibition' which suggests that the films were shown separately.<sup>18</sup> The showings were sufficiently popular to warrant nightly screenings at 7.45 with additional matinees on Wednesday and Saturday, and advice to reserve seats in advance at Marr Wood ticket sellers in Buchanan Street to avoid missing out.<sup>19</sup> As with the Diamond Jubilee, the demand remained unsatisfied by the original run and within a few days of the Poole show ending, William Walker had brought his version of the film to Glasgow as part of a tour which took in Greenock, Port Glasgow,

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<sup>16</sup> Griffiths, p.22

<sup>17</sup> *Evening Times*, February 5, 1901 p.6

<sup>18</sup> *Evening Times*, February 12, 1901 p.6

<sup>19</sup> *Evening Times*, February 13, 1901, p.8

Motherwell, Hamilton and Paisley.<sup>20</sup> The Glasgow screening was at the St Andrews Halls, a celebrated concert venue, and attracted a capacity crowd.

It was evident from the large turnout that they have gained a large reputation with their show...a film in relation to the latter (the death of Queen Victoria), the procession at Cowes and the Bluejackets conveying the coffin from the gun carriage to the yacht Alberta, in which the Misses Donaldson sang the duet He Wipes the Tear from Every Eye, was especially effective.<sup>21</sup>

Although there is clear evidence of the moving image colonising existing venues it is obvious that it was still a relatively expensive entertainment. According to advertising copy admission prices for the Walker screening at the St Andrew's Hall, for example, ranged from 2s for the best seats to 6d for the cheap seats. These were obviously not aimed exclusively at the working class since, as we can see from Maloney's research, these were the standard prices for variety halls.<sup>22</sup> The variety sector operated a mixed economy in terms of prices – there were cheap seats available – but by the end of the 1890s saw itself as a respectable i.e. middle-class entertainment.<sup>23</sup>

There was however an increasingly important source of cheap entertainment for the working classes in the shape of municipal concerts. The Temperance movement had made a virtue of providing inexpensive entertainment at the weekend for the working classes on the basis that it kept them away from licensed premises and offered some hope of improvement. The Abstainers' Union began a series of concerts in 1854 and these continued uninterrupted until 1914.<sup>24</sup> In the 1870s these were augmented by similar events run by the Good Templars Harmonic Association, and by the end of the century Glasgow

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<sup>20</sup> *Evening Times*, February 25, 1901, p.8

<sup>21</sup> *Evening Times*, March 4, 1901, p.6

<sup>22</sup> Maloney, *Scotland and the Music Hall, 1850 – 1914*, pp. 223-225

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid* pp.79-81

<sup>24</sup> King, p. 163

Corporation had begun to run its own regular Saturday concerts.<sup>25</sup> The events were extremely well attended and, instead of alcohol, tea and pastries were served. This led to them being commonly referred to as ‘the bursts’ because of the habit of blowing up the paper pastry bags and bursting them to add to the applause.<sup>26</sup> Admission prices were much reduced compared to variety prices, as low as a penny in some cases. For example, one screening at the National Halls in the Gorbals, featured:

...a cinematographic display of all the latest pictures of historic and local interest under the direction of Mr J.C. Chalmers<sup>27</sup>

The admission prices here were just 1d and 2d, with a free programme as well. This particular show had been organised by John Chalmers, the man who had shown the Queen Victoria Diamond Jubilee film at the Glasgow Athenaeum. For many members of the working classes in Glasgow their first exposure to cinema would have come at such an event. Their low cost made them affordable, especially for a family, and the imprimatur of the Corporation or the Good Templars would have provided a guarantee of respectability. The influence of these events in providing a working-class audience for cinema cannot be quantified, but equally it should not be underestimated as a trend parallel to more middle-class diffusion.

In what we might term the more mainstream industry venues such as The Britannia Panopticon at Trongate and larger variety theatres such as The Alhambra or the Coliseum – a Stoll Moss variety venue not to be confused with Wilson’s Department store – in Eglinton Street to the south of the city centre began to feature moving pictures as yet another attraction on their variety bills. The Coliseum was a particularly ‘up-market’ theatre which Maloney describes as one of the new generation of luxurious venues known as ‘Palaces of Varieties’ built towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century as a variety boom took

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25 Griffiths, pp.34, 35

26 King, p.163

27 *Evening Times*, February 7, 1902, p.8

hold.<sup>28</sup> It was very definitely aimed at a respectable middle-class audience, and it featured cinema prominently as part of an eclectic bill.

Figure 10: Coliseum Programme, October 29, 1906<sup>29</sup>

The venue provides a valuable exemplar of broader trends with a line-up which is typical of this period. The Coliseum shows ran for an hour and 50 minutes and took place twice nightly at 6.55pm and 9.00pm with an additional matinee performance on Thursdays. According to the programme, which sold for a penny, the venue could attract 40,000 patrons each week. In terms of running order, there was a dramatic performance - Mrs Brown Potter and Co in *Mary Queen of Scots and the murder of Rizzio* – along with Boswell’s Stage Circus, a variety of comedians – Kennedy Allen, Barney Armstrong, The Haytors, and

<sup>28</sup> Maloney, *Scotland and the Music Hall, 1850 – 1914*, p.57

<sup>29</sup> Moving Image Archive 5/31/5

Three Prestons, a banjo act – Stanley and Greenop, and a couple of speciality song and dance acts in the shape of The Maples and Dick and Dorothy. This varied line-up was presumably designed for the diversity of its appeal to as wide an audience as possible. Finally, after all of this came ‘The American Bioscope – New series of up to date subjects’. There is no specific detail concerning what was to be screened, possibly because of the lead time in the publication, but what the audience was being offered here with ‘up to date subjects’ was undoubtedly newness and topicality. It is also worth noting that it is the type of technology - ‘The American Bioscope’ – which was being advertised, suggesting a growing familiarity on the part of the audience with relative types of projection equipment.

As the Coliseum advert confirms film screenings normally came at the end of the programme, and Low has suggested that these were used as ‘chasers’ to let the audience know the performance had ended and that they should leave the theatre.<sup>30</sup> The implication was perhaps of film’s novelty dwindling and of audiences losing interest. Allen, however, has produced a comprehensive argument which, with the benefit of later research, casts serious doubt on Low’s ‘chaser’ theory.<sup>31</sup> In brief, he suggested that little evidence exists to show that films were becoming sufficiently unpopular, and that he had been unable to find a single instance of any theatre owner using them in this way. In addition, he also dismissed the notion that films fell out of favour through repetition of a small number of titles. It does seem unlikely, as Allen asserts, that any theatre owner would pay for an attraction simply to clear the hall when the simple expedient of turning up the lights would do just as well.

Although Allen’s study is based on the American experience there is little local evidence to suggest a dip in the popularity of cinema in Glasgow, indeed given the increasing presence of film on variety bills and within municipal concerts we might infer that film was gaining in popularity in the city. Theatre owners and managers prominently displayed ‘animated pictures’ or a similar term in their advertising material even to the extent of specifying which type of equipment would be used. Publicity material for the Britannia Panopticon,

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30 Low, *The History of the British Film 1896 1906*, p.37

31 Robert C. Allen, “Contra the Chaser Theory” in Fell (ed.) *Film Before Griffith* (University of California Press, 1983) pp.107 - 109

for example, stressed the presence of 'the American Bioscope' while Hengler's in Sauchiehall Street extolled the use of 'the newest and best animated pictures'.<sup>32</sup> Moving pictures were plainly being used to attract audiences in Glasgow, not to deter or evacuate them. As for the availability of product, Oakley suggests that as early as the end of 1896 a 'surprisingly large number of films were available'.<sup>33</sup>

The chaser theory perhaps unfairly suggests a lack of sophistication on the part of the patrons. If the film came at the end of the performance it is more likely that the technological complexity of screening moving pictures made it more reasonable to feature them at the end rather than create what might be a significant break in the running order. In addition, if we consider those who were experiencing motion pictures in a traditional variety setting for the first time, it might make sense to begin with the familiar and have everything build towards the moving image as the climax of the event.

The growth of cine-variety indicated a considerable movement between types of exhibition space; to begin with, films were screened in co-opted sites such as skating rinks, carnival tents, retail spaces, and public halls but now there was a change to a more dedicated locus. We might argue that cine-variety introduced audiences to the concept of moving pictures in a setting with which they would feel familiar and, at a time when cinema was still struggling to come to terms with critical discourses shaping its sense of identity, enabling audiences to more easily come to terms with the new medium. Cinema thus remained an attraction but it re-defined the environment in which it operated, adopting one which might be more familiar to a new audience. As it did so several influential managers emerged who were increasingly sensitive to the specific possibilities of film as a medium in such settings.

One of the stalwarts of cine-variety in Glasgow was the showman E.H. Bostock who operated a zoo and circus at his site in New City Road in Cowcaddens just to the north of the city centre. Bostock would later incorporate a fixed-site cinema into his empire, but from as early as 1903 was offering a 'splendid series of animated pictures' at what were

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<sup>32</sup> *Evening Times*, February 3, 1908, p.8

<sup>33</sup> Oakley, p.3

essentially variety venues.<sup>34</sup> As cinema became more popular, Bostock by 1905 used cinema as a loss leader offering free shows as a draw for his other attractions.<sup>35</sup> He was able to do this because, as will be shown later, he was not screening expensive first-run films but, rather, older films which were available cheaply because of their age and condition. Nonetheless, regardless of the content, free moving pictures widened the potential audience in the working-class area in which Bostock's venue was located.

Perhaps the clearest indication of the acceptance of moving pictures as an integral part of popular entertainment culture in Glasgow, and their engagement with the audience, can be seen in a promotion run by the Hippodrome variety theatre in Sauchiehall Street, in February 1904. Film screenings had already become a regular and popular part of the Hippodrome bill with one contemporary review pointing out that 'a display of animated pictures forms, as usual, a prominent feature in the programme'.<sup>36</sup> The Hippodrome was by then employing moving images in other imaginative ways, as announced in the *Evening Times*:

A cheque for 20 pounds [sic]...has been hidden in an easily discovered spot by the roadside on the outskirts of Glasgow. Animated pictures of the treasure ground and its surroundings will be seen twice daily...Come and see if you recognise the locality and by following the clues which the pictures distinctly portray your judgement may detect the exact spot where the cheque is waiting for you which you can take to the bank named on it and lift the money.<sup>37</sup>

There was a suggestion here of a fairground-style promotion being brought indoors. However, the treasure hunt clues came in the form of 'animated pictures of the treasure ground and its surroundings' which meant that patrons could see specially-shot film to guide them to the prize.<sup>38</sup> This is an extension of the thrill of recognition of the factory gate

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<sup>34</sup> *Evening Times*, February 3, 1903 p.8

<sup>35</sup> *Evening Times*, February 6, 1905 p.8

<sup>36</sup> *Evening Times*, February 2, 1904, p.6

<sup>37</sup> *Evening Times*, February 1, 1904, p.6

<sup>38</sup> *Evening Times*, February 1, 1904, p.6

film projected at a local fair, which will be examined later in Chapter Eight, but this time there was a reward in that if they were able to interpret the clues sufficiently well there was a chance of winning a considerable amount of money. The projected image here was not something to be feared or run from, instead it was to be appreciated and in this case decoded. In crude terms the audience had to understand that the images they were seeing were of actual places in a real city, in this case Glasgow, and it was up to them to decipher them. The ability to run this promotion successfully, which was presumably a one-off since there do not appear to be any further advertisements, suggested a developing level of intimacy between the audience and the projected image. The Hippodrome continued to screen moving pictures as part of its offer as the sector developed quickly. The Pavilion Palace of Varieties, for example, also opened in 1904 in Renfield Street as one of the new variety theatres mentioned earlier by Maloney. 'Animated pictures' was a regular part of the bill and, perhaps significantly, admission to the Pavilion was as low as 3d, making it one of the more affordable city centre venues.<sup>39</sup> The Panopticon at Glasgow Cross also continued to show films and the price there was as low as 2d.<sup>40</sup>

The economics of the nascent exhibition industry appeared to be playing a major role in allowing the sector to thrive and it would appear that one of the key drivers remained Arthur Hubner, the man behind the first moving picture screening in Glasgow. While still connected to the Skating Palace, Hubner bought another Lumière projector and began to show films at the Britannia Panopticon in Trongate on August 25, 1896.<sup>41</sup> The following year he took over the management of the venue itself. The Panopticon was in an unfashionable part of town and, as Maloney explains, Hubner was unable to compete in terms of the attractions he could offer against these new Palaces of Varieties. However, he was able to compete in terms of an aggressive promotion strategy which pitched his venue as a plucky underdog, and also in terms of greatly reduced prices.<sup>42</sup> In a newspaper profile his reduced

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<sup>39</sup> *Evening Times*, February 6, 1905, p.8

<sup>40</sup> *Evening Times*, February 4, 1907, p.8

<sup>41</sup> Paul Maloney, *The Britannia Panopticon Music Hall and Cosmopolitan Entertainment Structure* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), pp. 64 -66

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid*, p.66

prices were spun as a way of standing up for the working man against what the newspaper characterised as:

...West End prices that no working man can afford. Mr Hubner stepped into the breach, and taking the Britannia Theatre in hand – always a favourite with the working class – took the tide at the flood and led on to fortune. It was a good thing for the working class, and a good thing for him; and today the Britannia stands as the only working-class music hall in Glasgow.<sup>43</sup>

The article pointed out that these low prices were good for the audience but also good for Hubner since it allowed his venue to thrive in the face of stiff competition.

Overall it might be expected that with a demonstrably popular product, such as moving pictures, showmen and venue owners might try to increase prices to maximise profits. There is, as has been shown through examination of newspaper advertisements, clear evidence of prices coming down in the period from around 1900, as cinema increased in popularity. This is an ideal example of price elasticity of demand as categorised by Gerben Bakker in his research on cinemas in Boston in 1909.<sup>44</sup> Bakker's research benefits from a large amount of information; he considered pricing, seating capacity, ticket sales across many entertainments, from high culture such as opera to lower-status entertainments such as burlesque, and worked out a relationship between ticket pricing and customer demand. There does not appear to be any similar amount of data available for Glasgow. It does seem reasonable, however, to conclude that given broad similarities in the spread of entertainment available, the same tendencies might be exhibited in two cities which are similar in size and background i.e. they are both major ports with significant immigrant populations and a large working-class demographic.

During the second industrial revolution falling working hours, rising disposable income, increasing urbanisation, expanding transport networks and strong population growth resulted in a sharp increase in the demand for

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43 Glasgow Programme, June 20, 1898 p.4, quoted in Maloney, *The Britannia Panopticon Music Hall and Cosmopolitan Entertainment Structure*, p.66

44 Bakker, pp.121 - 129

entertainment.... Large cities would offer a cascade of entertainment at staggered prices and qualities including opera, concerts, theatre, vaudeville, variety, music hall, circuses and burlesque.<sup>45</sup>

Bakker's description of an American city's entertainment offering in the 1900s, except for burlesque, could be broadly applied to Glasgow at the same period. In reductive terms Bakker shows that in terms of elasticity – the relationship between admission price and popularity – high-priced events, such as opera, are relatively price inelastic and there is little potential consumer surplus. However lower-priced entertainments are price elastic in that they enjoy a large consumer surplus in the shape of an untapped audience that can be encouraged by a lower price:

...demand becomes elastic when the ticket price of cinema is reached. This suggests that there was a great potential for technologies or product categories that could deliver entertainment at low prices, as demand responded heavily to it. It is possible that large groups of consumers, who otherwise could not afford spectator entertainment, would enter the market at these prices. Increasing urbanisation probably concentrated the consumers enough spatially to make such lower-priced venues feasible over time.<sup>46</sup>

Earlier in this chapter it was stated that if cinema was to thrive in the face of a competitive entertainment environment, then it would have to embed itself in at least one demographic. It did establish itself in the middle class for those initial screenings at the Skating Palace and Wilson's Colosseum but Bakker's research suggests that, thanks to price elasticity of demand, there was a large consumer surplus and therefore a potential audience among the working class. Bakker's findings, as will be discussed later in this chapter, also have implications for the development of two other new and important demographics for the exhibition industry.

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45 Ibid, p.2

46 Ibid, p.127

The combination of economics, geographical precedent, and historical tradition suggests therefore that cinema would do best by situating itself in an area of expanding working class, namely the East End of the city. As demonstrated in the previous chapter, George Green had become convinced of the potential of cinema as more than a passing novelty and he acquired the Whitevale Theatre in Dennistoun not far from his base at Vinegar Hill in the East End. Green's acquisition of the Whitevale and the subsequent decision to turn it into a 950-seat 'picturedrome' is an indication that the east end of the city was now becoming an important locus in the development of cinema in Glasgow. Thousands of people had seen moving pictures at the Carnival or at Glasgow Fair by the earliest years of the new century, and the Green family had put down deep commercial and personal roots in the area. In commercial terms, it was not surprising that this area became the location of the first fixed exhibition cinema site in Glasgow, which appears to have been Pringle's Picture Palace in Watson Street in the Calton district, just east of Glasgow Cross.



**Figure 11: The Star Theatre of Varieties, which became Pringle's Picture Palace, Glasgow**

The venue had opened in 1878 as a music hall but was the scene of a disaster in 1884 in which 14 people, mostly children, died in a crush. It was renamed and re-opened by Ralph

Pringle as a 1200-seat cinema in 1907.<sup>47</sup> Another cinema, The Star Palace, was opened by a Mrs Blair in the former Bridgeton Town Hall a year later in 1908 thus cementing the area as an early moving picture exhibition district.<sup>48</sup>

The history of cinema exhibition in Glasgow thus far qualifies some key received wisdoms. According to Allen and Douglas Gomery, using two American cities as examples, cinema tends to emerge from poor working-class areas; it is initially what we might describe as a slum entertainment.<sup>49</sup> The pan-class nature of the audience we have already described seems to offer a corrective to this suggestion as far as Glasgow is concerned, however there did appear to be a consumer surplus which might be exploited. Certainly most of the early fixed-site cinemas in Glasgow had the advantage of a large working-class constituency on their doorstep and, as will be shown later, their programming and pricing policy to some extent reflected this. The East End of the city was the traditional locus of the carters – the Victorian haulage industry – and various hauliers were based there along with attendant trades such as blacksmiths, horse traders, and hay merchants.<sup>50</sup> Engineering, both light and heavy, had also been a significant employer in the area since the early 1800s. Parkhead Forge, which was established in 1837, became the largest steelworks in Scotland and employed more than 20,000 workers at its peak.<sup>51</sup> Most people lived and worked close to home so we can infer that there would be a large audience which would be available to this new, affordable entertainment.

We have already considered early assumptions in America that the nickelodeon was the province of the working classes. Challenging this view provoked a lively academic debate between Allen, Singer, and several others on who ‘owned’ cinema in audience terms. This debate continued for several years without any firm conclusions being reached, however in the process a great deal of light was thrown on the previously under-researched topic of

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<sup>47</sup> Scottish Cinema Database located at <http://www.scottishcinemas.org.uk/glasgow/startheatre.html> last accessed July 1, 2017

<sup>48</sup> *ibid*

<sup>49</sup> Allen and Gomery, *Film History: Theory and Practice* (Boston: 2011), pp. 202-207

<sup>50</sup> [http://parkheadhistory.com/?page\\_id=3168](http://parkheadhistory.com/?page_id=3168)

<sup>51</sup> [http://parkheadhistory.com/?page\\_id=510](http://parkheadhistory.com/?page_id=510)

the nickelodeon era in New York.<sup>52</sup> We have seen that this thesis has echoes of that debate in considering the situation in Glasgow where the traditional assumption of cinema as a working-class phenomenon appears wide of the mark. We have shown that the moving image was well established in Glasgow by the time of George Green's often cited Winter Carnival screenings, but it was established in an audience that could afford the initial high prices. However, by the time Green came off the road and set up a permanent base at Vinegar Hill, admission prices had come down and the moving image was within the financial reach of the working class as a regular entertainment and not just a special treat.

The availability of an audience seems to have been the key determinant in the establishment of early fixed-site cinemas in the city and on this basis the East End represented a logical focus for initial investment. It may well be that cinema in Glasgow expanded in different directions to accommodate different audiences. Certainly, the development of the major city centre cinemas at the beginning of the second decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was intended to create an entirely different experience from premises such as Pringle's Picture Palace and this shift will be examined in more detail later.

By the end of 1908 there appear to have been ten fixed-site exhibition spaces in Glasgow which were wholly or significantly associated with cinema.<sup>53</sup> These were Pringle's Bijou Hall in Cowcaddens, The Panopticon in Trongate, Pringle's Picture Palace in Calton, Crouch's Wonderland in Argyle Street, The Palace and The Wellington Palace, both in Gorbals, the Star Palace in Bridgeton and The Whitevale nearby, as well as The Lyceum in Govan. In addition, Hengler's Circus in Sauchiehall Street which had been showing films in the off-season since 1904 was still in operation. Four of the sites noted – The Panopticon, Pringle's Picture Palace, The Star Palace and The Whitevale – could be considered to be in the East End of the city. The Palace and Wellington Palace, along with The Lyceum were south of the River Clyde, while Pringle's Bijou Hall was just to the north of the city centre. It should be said however that the bulk of these sites were located in predominantly working-class

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52 See Melvyn Stokes 'Reconstructing American Cinema's Audiences' in M. Stokes and R. Maltby (eds.) *American Movie Audiences from the Turn of the Century to the Early Sound Era* (London, British Film Institute, 1999) pp. 2-25.

53 Scottish Cinema Database located at <http://www.scottishcinemas.org.uk/database2.php> last accessed July 18, 2017. See also Appendix 4 pp. 441 – 450.

areas and can reasonably be assumed to have drawn their clientele from among the poor and the working classes. Such a conclusion is implied by their pricing structures. Admission to the Panopticon was 2d while admission to Pringle's Picture Palace was 2d, 3d, 4d, or 6d.<sup>54</sup> In contrast, the cheapest seat at Hengler's Circus in the same week was 6d with prices rising to two shillings.<sup>55</sup> The Glasgow Parish Council, which would shortly make a significant contribution to the development of cinema in Glasgow, quoted admission prices of 1d to 6d as a contributory factor in the popularity of cinema with the working class.<sup>56</sup> Pricing does appear to have raised issues of class and status especially in comparison with theatre which may have reflected unfavourably in these early days on the wholesomeness and suitability of cinema as a legitimate entertainment.

At the start of 1908 only two Glasgow sites, The Panopticon and Pringle's Picture Palace, advertised regular cinema screenings in the *Evening Times*, one of the local evening newspapers. They were joined on the listings pages by Pringle's Bijou Hall when it opened in March of that year. Differences are apparent across the respective insertions. The ads placed by Ralph Pringle's organisation stress the 'high-toned' status of the entertainment on offer rather than the admission price, which suggests an attempt to differentiate his halls from the others by stressing their respectability and, by implication, their suitability for women and families.

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<sup>54</sup> *Evening Times*, February 3, 1908, p.8

<sup>55</sup> *Glasgow Herald*, February 3, 1908, p.8

<sup>56</sup> *Forward*, Saturday, March 15, 1913, p.2



Figure 12: A newspaper ad for Pringle's Picture Palace dating from April 1908 <sup>57</sup>

It is becoming apparent that local newspapers, particularly the *Evening Times*, which seemed to feature moving pictures more prominently and regularly than the *Evening Citizen* or *Evening News*, played a key role in establishing cinema in the city. As well as the paid listings which advertised the programme, the newspaper also carried editorial copy on what was on offer at particular venues. To begin with providers stressed the newness of their product. The Panopticon promised 'the very latest dramatic and comic films' on its American Bioscope equipment whilst at the same time promoting its main attractions, The Auxetophone and The Chronophone, both early forms of phonograph. <sup>58</sup> Hengler's, when it began its seasonal screenings, promoted 'the newest and best animated pictures'. <sup>59</sup> The titles of the films were sometimes mentioned but just as frequently left unremarked upon as the audience was instead being sold newness, freshness, and originality often with a glimpse of cutting-edge technology. There were no stars mentioned at this stage and few genres although, as will be discussed later, they did become part of the maturing

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<sup>57</sup> Pringle's Picture Palace ad located at <http://www.arthurlloyd.co.uk/Glasgow/Shakespeare.htm> last accessed July 18, 2017

<sup>58</sup> *Evening Times*, February 10, 1908, p.8

<sup>59</sup> *ibid*

relationship between cinema and its audience in Glasgow. The popularity of the new medium exerted itself very quickly. By February of 1909 the write-up for Pringle's Bijou Hall in Cowcaddens, which had opened the previous year, stated:

At Mr Pringle's popular establishment in Cowcaddens a splendid programme of animated pictures is provided this week. This novelty seems to have 'caught on' in this district judging from the patronage bestowed on this class of entertainment.<sup>60</sup>

It seems likely that this copy might have been provided by Pringle himself, or one of his managers, but notwithstanding the potential vested interest there is a sense of cinema becoming popular even if it is described in slightly equivocal terms as 'this class of entertainment'. On the same page in the newspaper animated pictures apparently 'add to the enjoyment of the evening' at The Panopticon as well as the venue's normal variety programme.

Cinema was clearly beginning to attract media coverage, although this was by no means uniform even within the newspaper sector. *The Glasgow Herald* which was the city's newspaper of record largely ignored moving pictures. It did carry occasional advertisements for special events, such as that first screening at the Skating Palace, so the avoidance of cinema may have been an editorial decision rather than a commercial one. A study of the index of the newspaper from 1896 – 1906 i.e. the first ten years of moving pictures in Glasgow, elicits no mention of the 'cinematograph' or any related term. By contrast the *Glasgow Herald* index contains a list of every dramatic performance staged in the city, and this would suggest that for the *Herald* editor moving pictures were not worthy of the attention of his readers. News stories about cinema begin to appear from 1907 but these are generally critical, concerned with accidents or fatalities in moving picture venues and these will be examined in more detail later.

Cinema was represented much more prominently and favourably in the *Evening Times*, a popular evening newspaper which was sold and read throughout the city. Although *The*

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<sup>60</sup> *Evening Times*, February 16, 1909, p.9

*Evening Citizen* and *The Evening News* also carried advertisements, these appeared randomly throughout the newspapers' ad pages. In *The Evening Times* the cinema listings were an established part of the newspaper's furniture, appearing on the same page each night and being carried in the same order on the page. Such standardisation would prove very important in creating habitual attendance in that prospective audience members could quickly and easily find their local venue and generally discover what was screening. From 1903, the newspaper carried regular advertising for moving pictures at Bostock's Zoo Hippodrome, and from 1904 the newspaper began to include comment on the films as part of its review of the show. Given that the cinema ads appeared on the same page of the newspaper every night, it seems fair to assume that by 1908 cinema-going was well established as part of the local entertainment landscape. The size of the respective cinema ads was by then comparable to those advertising theatres, which suggests either that they were equally attractive to the audience or that picture house owners were trying to pitch their attractions as serious rivals to this more established medium.

As well as the paid listings advertising the programme, the newspapers also carried editorial copy on what was on offer at Glasgow cinemas. This copy was either provided by the picture house owner from the film company catalogue, or, occasionally, generated by a journalist from the newspaper who had been to see the film. To begin with details of programmes were scant but, as can be seen in Appendix 2, enough evidence survives to form an opinion of how these films were presented to their audience and latterly how they might have been received. Cinema advertising appeared in the newspaper daily from Monday to Saturday; the cinema programme initially changed every Monday, and the write-up appeared in the newspaper every Tuesday. Taken together however the Monday advertisements and the Tuesday 'reviews' provide a reasonably representative account of cinema-going activity in Glasgow in this period. None of these assessments was by-lined, so we have no way of knowing how independent they were but their very presence suggests, even in basic terms, the beginnings of a discourse which carries with it the notion that the act of attending a cinema was significant in itself and worthy of comment and that the films were worthy of critique.

Picture house owners presented varied programmes which offered something to suit all tastes and which changed frequently, possibly as a hangover from the programme changes

variety audiences had become used to, and possibly also to spread the risk so that an unpopular film would not play for very long. There is also a sense of what a cinema programme should be with some films being given more weight than others; phrases such as 'chief film' began to occur in reportage suggesting that there was a hierarchy in the cinema programme as there would be on a variety bill, for example. Hengler's in Sauchiehall Street proclaimed that 'the display of animated pictures...presents another change of subject for the current week. These are of a wide range as regards interest and amusement'<sup>61</sup>.

The broad range of films on offer from a wide range of countries may also have succeeded because of the diversity of the audience. According to Maver, Glasgow in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century was a city with a large migrant population from Ireland and Italy as well as experiencing Lowland and Highland rural migration towards the city.<sup>62</sup> Maver further suggests that in 1851 more than 18% of the city was Irish-born and most of them settled in the East End of the city. Although Maver concedes that they did not form the defined migrant enclaves in Glasgow that occurred elsewhere, some of Glasgow's early cinema sites, especially in the poorer East End, must have functioned as locations in which people could meet and enjoy an attraction that was not dependent on their familiarity with the language or social norms of their new environment. In a study of American nickelodeons Hansen suggests these venues served a specific function for the underprivileged in that they provided an 'alternative public sphere' where shared 'responses to social pressures, individual displacement and alienation could be articulated in a communal setting'.<sup>63</sup> Hansen focuses on the experiences of the new immigrant and the recently urbanised working class. She paints a compelling picture of people displaced from the artisanal rhythms of their previous lives and instead forced to live under the increasingly tyrannical regime of the clock. This was undoubtedly a stressful experience and one which would be hard to cope with:

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61 *Evening Times*, February 25, 1908, p.9

62 Maver, *Glasgow*, pp.83 - 85

63 Miriam Hansen, *Babel and Babylon*, p.103

...immigrants were barred from most institutions of the dominant public sphere, whether by reason of language, custom, class, or lack of means and leisure time'<sup>64</sup>

As Hansen points out cinema no doubt played a part in the upheaval of old traditions in the rush towards modernity but at the same time it might offer an oasis, in which this transition could be dealt with and made less threatening, especially in the company of others who are similarly affected. In this sense, she is correct in describing early cinema as an alternative public sphere. Hansen painted a romantic picture of the American nickelodeon as a coping mechanism in which mothers would disappear into movie theatres for an hour at the end of a day's work in the same way that they might have sat and gazed out of the window or appreciated the rural tranquillity of their former home. However, in a city such as Glasgow where, according to Maver, the Irish settled in the East End abutting the Italian community, and Jewish migrants settled on the south side, there may have been some similarity of experience with cinema sites. As will be shown in the next chapter, the tendency for some mothers to use the cinema as an impromptu crèche was one of the factors at the heart of a moralist anti-cinema campaign.

By the end of the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century cinema was then no longer a sensation simply because the images moved. It was beginning to develop a context and language of its own, and a critical foundation which would increasingly manage its meaning. From 1912, for example, *The Evening Times* began to separate out the reportage on cinemas from the theatre and variety columns, by creating its own space under the heading 'Electric Theatres'. Within a short time, as will be discussed later, signs appeared of the emergence of a star culture where the names of several actors appear frequently in reviews – the Italian comedian Foolshead and the Western hero Bronco Billy to name but two - suggested that the audience was familiar enough with their work for this to be a draw in itself. The programme also became more and more reliant on story films and these, anecdotally, seem pitched at the female audience. The Picture House, in addition, stressed that it had films

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64 ibid

featuring the latest French fashions to ensure that ‘lady patrons are especially catered for’.<sup>65</sup>

The importance of women to the cinema audience in Glasgow might be read as an unintended consequence of the price elasticity demonstrated by Bakker. Unlike other Scottish cities such as Dundee or Aberdeen where large numbers of women were employed in the textile and fishing industry respectively, there was no similar employment sector in Glasgow. In Dundee, because of their work in the jute mills, women, especially young women, enjoyed economic power and independence. According to Browne and Tomlinson, in 1901 there were 127 women for every 100 men in the city, and the employment figures show almost 28,000 women in textiles, overwhelmingly in jute, out of a total of 40,000 operatives.

Dundee *circa* 1900 was unusual in this numerical predominance of women and the prevalence of married women’s employment. Though there were more men than women in the total labour force, employment openings for men were limited by the small number of male job openings in jute, and many men joined the forces, emigrated, or worked away from the city. The employment opportunities available to women meant that they also played a prominent role in many household economies.<sup>66</sup>

Browne and Tomlinson also point out that ‘informed opinion’ and organisations such as the Dundee Social Union (DSU) were opposed to married women being employed because of the implications of childcare. This conjures up an image of a group of young women with real economic independence; they had money and agency in how it could be spent. We can assume that a lot of that money was spent in cinemas because the Women Citizens’

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<sup>65</sup> *Evening Times*, Tuesday, February 21, 1911, p.9

<sup>66</sup> Sarah Browne, and Jim Tomlinson, ‘A Women’s Town?’ in *Jute No More; Transforming Dundee* by Tomlinson and Whatley (eds.) <http://edinburgh.universitypressscholarship.com.ezproxy.lib.gla.ac.uk/view/10.3366/edinburgh/9781845860905.001.0001/upso-9781845860905-chapter-005> , p.2 last accessed May 18, 2017

Association called for a survey to 'assess the moral tone of films shown in the city'.<sup>67</sup> These young women could easily afford to spend money on a night at the cinema, the same could be said of women in Aberdeen who were able to earn their own money on the shore-based tasks of the fishing industry.

Their counterparts in Glasgow however, without any economic independence and reliant on the housekeeping provided by the husbands, had no such freedom. Their working day was also much less regimented since it was dictated by whatever household tasks might need to be done.<sup>68</sup> Cinema offered them a flexible entertainment and, with price elasticity and a consumer surplus lowering the cost of admission by around 1908, it also became affordable in terms of whatever few pence could be eked out of the weekly budget. It seems likely that, in Glasgow at least, housewives would form part of Bakker's consumer surplus and the spread of cinemas into working class areas gave them the opportunity to indulge themselves. The same might be said for children for whom a trip to the cinema was something as affordable as a packet of sweets and was within the compass of their pocket money. Women and children both became key targets for the cinema industry and, as will be shown in the next chapter, just as in Dundee they also became targets for moral disapproval. In turn the female audience gave the cinema experience the imprimatur of decency and wholesomeness and allowed for the growth of cinema in Glasgow as a predominantly family entertainment thus acquiring the respectability it had craved.

To conclude, we have shown that by the end of its first decade, cinema in Glasgow had achieved a degree of permanence. As a consequence of repeat showings in defined loci it had also discovered its audience and was engaging confidently with them to develop the habitual cinema-going that would ensure its future. Economic factors, principally affordability of admission, allowed a definite affinity between moving pictures and the working class, especially among women and children. However, despite the medium's new-found popularity, or perhaps because of it in some sectors of the audience, the centuries-old issues which had beset David Prince Miller were about to be raised again. While others saw cinema as an exciting development and a source of civic pride, there are those who

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67 Ibid, p.6, last accessed May 18, 2017

68 Griffiths, p.5

came to see it as a moral hazard and a sustained campaign was about to be launched with the intent of controlling and regulating the new entertainment.

## 4 A moral backlash and the threat of proscription

In the ten years since the first screening of moving pictures at Hubner's Skating Palace in May 1896, moving pictures had proved to be a success for the new entrepreneurial class of exhibitor/managers such as Hubner, Green, Wilson, and Bostock. As we have suggested the development of cinema exhibition in Glasgow showed similarities and differences when compared to other major metropolitan areas. To take an American example, in Boston, according to Merritt, nickelodeons situated themselves in busy commercial areas whereas Gomery suggests that in Milwaukee nickelodeons emerged in established shopping areas or close to mass transit lines.<sup>1</sup> In London, meanwhile Burrows has written extensively about what we might consider to be the UK equivalent of the nickelodeon, the penny gaff, an exhibition site set up in a converted storefront.<sup>2</sup> We have established in this work to date that there was no tradition of penny gaffs in Glasgow, but we have also shown that cinema established itself in Glasgow across a wide demographic in an exceptionally short space of time. Hubner's first show, Wilson's Colosseum screenings, Green's Winter Carnival, and the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria ensured that the moving picture experience was offered to a large part of the population in a relatively short time. At the end of this first decade however the exhibition industry was about to undergo a step change with the arrival and establishment of permanent fixed-site cinema and with it a drive towards a more gentrified clientele.

Allen has talked about Manhattan undergoing 'an important qualitative change in motion picture exhibition between 1908 and 1912' and this chapter will argue that a similar transformation took place in Glasgow.<sup>3</sup> One of the major contributions of fixed-site cinema to the success of the exhibition industry was its very permanence. A dedicated venue where films could be screened on a regular basis, as opposed to cine-variety, meant that programmes could be booked, and the audience could have a reason to return thus

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1 Merritt and Gomery, both quoted in Allen, 'Motion Picture Exhibition in Manhattan 1906 – 1912', p.3

2 Burrows, 'Penny Pleasures: Film Exhibition in London during the Nickelodeon Era, 1906 - 1914', *Film History*, Vol. 16, pp. 60-91

3 Allen, 'Motion Picture Exhibition in Manhattan 1906 – 1912', p.9

creating a habit. The accessibility of continuous performances as opposed to fixed show times in live venues, and the ability to change programmes several times a week, also meant that cinema was an entertainment that was there at the convenience of the audience. McKernan suggests that continuous performance was key to the development of the cinema audience, especially in working- class areas.

The cinema was always there. One could drop in at any time; it was never far for one to travel to a cinema. It was cheap enough that for all but the most indigent it became a 'loose change' choice rather than one determined by strict budgeting. One did not have to dress up, or to arrive at a particular time, or in any way to behave in an exceptional manner in going to the cinema. It was completely egalitarian. The degree to which the cinema fitted in with people's own sense of time, as distinct from the managers of other entertainment options or other forms of social activity (or, of course, the workplace), lay at the core of its attraction. In this, the development of the continuous show was crucial. <sup>4</sup>

As Bakker has also shown the reducing admission price made cinema available to customers who had previously been priced out through economic circumstance, specifically women and children. Apart from the cheapness of a ticket we can suggest the ever-changing novelty and its ready availability was one of the main attractions for cinema's increasing popularity with children; however, there were those who saw cinema as a danger to the young for a variety of reasons, and this chapter will concern itself with the attempts to make cinema a proscribed activity for young people. It will draw together evidence from a number of sources; anecdotal memories, scholarship, and archival accounts to try to present an overview of a key moment in the development of cinema exhibition in Glasgow.

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<sup>4</sup> McKernan, 'Unequal Pleasures: Electric Theatres (1908) Ltd. and the early film exhibition business in London'. p.4

The arrival and growth of fixed-site exhibition in Glasgow in the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century may be one of the reasons for what Maver describes as the medium's 'meteoric rise' in popularity in the 1900s.<sup>5</sup> For Maver, cinema had captured the imagination of the people of Glasgow and, in addition, had shown itself to be a profitable business enjoying an extremely high profile. Devine also describes cinema at this period as having 'magical and universal appeal'.<sup>6</sup> The social historian Elspeth King suggests that by 1910 'going to the pictures had become an established habit in Glasgow.'<sup>7</sup> <sup>8</sup> In addition, if we correlate the presence of cinema with 'civicness', characterising it as an outward symbol of a city's progressiveness, it is perhaps no coincidence that several councillors who were members of the Independent Labour Party (ILP) on Glasgow Corporation were themselves cinema owners.<sup>9</sup>

Although we may argue that cinema exhibition in Glasgow appears to have developed a multi-layered approach in terms of the audiences it attracted, from working-class carnival crowds to aspirational middle-class shoppers, there was one demographic group that embraced moving pictures more enthusiastically than any other; children. As cinema moved to fixed-site exhibition, most permanent premises located themselves in areas of densest population; children therefore found themselves drawn to an attraction that was convenient, accessible, appealing, and, perhaps crucially, cheap. Reliable figures for this early period are difficult to source, but McKernan suggests it is likely that as much as half of the London cinema-going audience in the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was made up of children and adolescents.<sup>10</sup> This seems consistent with the American figure suggested by Pearson and Uricchio who assert that in New York in 1910:

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<sup>5</sup> Maver, *Glasgow*, p.188

<sup>6</sup> T.M. Devine, *The Scottish Nation 1700-2007*, (London: 2000), p 360

<sup>7</sup> Elspeth King, 'Popular Culture in Glasgow', in *The Working Class in Glasgow 1750 – 1914*. p. 143

<sup>8</sup> All of these claims would appear to be borne out by the number of cinemas in the city as seen in Appendix One, pp.293 - 296.

<sup>9</sup> Elspeth King, 'Popular Culture in Glasgow', in *The Working Class in Glasgow 1750 – 1914*. p. 143

<sup>10</sup> McKernan, Luke, 'Only the screen was silent....', *Film Studies*, 10, Spring 2007 pp. 1-20

half a million children went to Manhattan nickelodeons every day, some schools reported 60% of pupils went once a week, another survey suggested that 62% of children went once a week or more with 16% going every day.<sup>11</sup>

It seems reasonable to assume that the proportions in Glasgow would not be appreciably different. Certainly, *The Evening Times* felt that the popularity of cinema with a young audience was worth highlighting in its comments on the Charing Cross Electric Theatre:

...it was evident that this place of entertainment is becoming decidedly popular. It was seen yesterday from the number of children present in the afternoon that it has formed quite a happy hunting ground judging from the way in which they showed their approval.<sup>12</sup>

Sullivan, in her study of American nickelodeon attendance, suggests that their owners and managers perceived children as the key demographic in building audiences.<sup>13</sup> Nickelodeons were attractive to children not only because of their affordability but because the short programmes made them a diversion which could easily be accommodated within the recreational day either after school, at the weekend, or during school holidays. The patterns that Sullivan identifies in American cities such as Cleveland, New York, and Portland seem to be credibly replicated in Glasgow where film exhibitors quickly saw the potential of this young audience and began to cater for them exclusively. Special matinee or morning screenings were arranged on Saturdays and holidays, and reduced prices for children were introduced into the ticketing scheme.<sup>14</sup> One of the most popular screenings

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11 Roberta E Pearson and William Uricchio, 'The Formative and Impressionable Stage: Discursive Constructions of the Nickelodeon's Child Audience' in M. Stokes and R. Maltby (eds.) *American Movie Audiences from the Turn of the Century to the Early Sound Era* (London, British Film Institute, 1999) p.65

12 *Evening Times*, Tuesday, February 7, 1911, p.9

13 Sara Sullivan, 'Child Audiences in America's Nickelodeons, 1900-1915', *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television*, Vol 30, No. 2, June 2010, pp. 155 – 168

14 Moving Image Archive 5/7/97 Tape transcript from interview with David Gouk at the People's Palace, Glasgow, (original tape recording held by People's Palace) (Nov 1975)

was run by J.J. Bennell at the Wellington Palace cinema in the Gorbals which attracted as many as 3000 children every Saturday afternoon.<sup>15</sup> We can also surmise that in an increasingly competitive cinema landscape such as Glasgow the children's screenings would surely also be a way of creating brand loyalty; if children returned regularly to a site then it might become the venue of choice for a family outing. This is a targeting of a generation that we could refer to as 'cinema natives'; a generation born with the technology and forming a lifelong habit of regular attendance.

The more enlightened also considered moving pictures as being more than just an entertainment for children and there were educators, industry figures, politicians and churchmen who quickly recognised the educative potential of moving pictures. One of the earliest arguments for picture houses as an improving factor in the lives of Glasgow's children is provided by Bennell, who started his career as a salesman for Sidney Carter's Pictures in the early 1900s, before settling in Glasgow to set up his own company, BB Pictures. His first site was the Wellington Palace in Commercial Road in the Gorbals which he opened on December 23, 1907; two years later he opened the Gaiety at Anderston Cross in Glasgow along with two sites in Dundee. He would later open picture houses in Edinburgh, Greenock, Perth and Airdrie. BB Pictures – known locally as 'Bright and Beautiful' – catered specifically for family audiences, and Bennell personally selected his programmes on the basis of high quality and improving entertainment.<sup>16</sup> At Bennell's children's matinees a specially-composed 'BB Pictures' song was sung, extolling the virtues of the programme.

Sullivan asserts that American children took an almost proprietary approach to their chosen nickelodeon site, and the 'BB song' tends to suggest that children in Glasgow embraced similar brand loyalty. For Bennell's young clientele a visit to the Wellington Palace would have been among the highlights of the week. Audience member Flora Stevenson, who

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15 Janet McBain, *Pictures Past*, (Edinburgh: 1985), p.58

16 J.J. Bennell biography, Moving Image Archive located at <http://ssa.nls.uk/biography.cfm?bid=10003> last accessed July 17, 2017

became a regular cinema attendee from the age of seven, recalls the atmosphere at a Bennell matinee:

There must have been an awful lot of children and they were all very noisy and this man appeared and he used to come to the very front and hold his hands up and made it silent...and then he started singing. He would sing and we were singing and it wasn't good enough for him. It went on four or five times, he was killing time to get all the noise out of our system I presume. It was good fun, good fun, and if the picture was no good we stamped our feet, we did what all the others did.<sup>17</sup>

For children, the cinema space was one of liberation with few of the strictures of the domestic environment, the classroom, or even the factory. Children had agency in this space and, left mostly unsupervised, could become active as a social group with very little intervention from adults. This produced a largely unfiltered and immediate response to the programme on screen:

It was a great treat to go out with my big brother to start off with and it was a tremendous treat to get to the pictures, you know, a tremendous thing. Although I don't remember an awful lot about the actual pictures I liked the atmosphere and..... singing and joining in. It was good...They'd (shout) 'Watch your back' they did that quite well, 'watch your back'. I mean that was the thing that went on all the time and ... of course someone came down and put the flash lamp on ... We shushed for a wee while but not very long but it was good fun.<sup>18</sup>

From the accounts of the children, the weekly matinee was looked on with indulgence and most families made the attempt to ensure that a penny was provided as pocket money to

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17 Flora Stevenson, Moving Image Archive Paper Collection 8/53

18 *ibid*

allow the child to visit the cinema. One of Flora Stevenson's contemporaries recalls being given 2d a week in pocket money which was specified as 'a penny for the pictures and a penny for sweets'. She also points out that 'you got a lot of sweets in those days for a penny 'which is perhaps an indicator of the level of competition that existed in the pocket money economy.<sup>19</sup>

Even allowing for the popularity of cinema, and recognition of its educative potential, there was however a counter-narrative which saw cinema as a pernicious influence which presented a potential moral hazard to children and young people in urban centres such as Glasgow. According to Maver, as has already been pointed out, by the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the population of Glasgow was around 329,000 – having grown from just over 77,000 half a century previously – and almost half of those who lived in the city were under 20 years old. At a time when Glasgow was growing exponentially as the self-proclaimed Second City of the Empire there was a price to be paid:

The scale of industrial development was such as to create some of the most congested and unsavoury living conditions in Europe, with practical solutions to the attendant social problems initially uncoordinated and piecemeal. Over time, however, there emerged a cohesive, influential and predominantly middle-class reform movement which attempted to stem what they perceived as the moral as well as material disintegration of urban society. Guided by an ideology strongly underpinned by evangelical Protestantism, the reformers consciously depicted slum children as the poignant symbol of innocence corrupted, and argued that regeneration should focus, above all, on reclaiming the health and moral welfare of the young.<sup>20</sup>

For these Presbyterian reformers the urban child, especially the slum child, became a totemic symbol of innocence and purity. There was a growing societal feeling that childhood was a distinct and specific phase of life which had to be protected and nurtured.

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19 Mrs Smillie, Moving Image Archive Paper Collection 8/52

20 Maver (1997). 'Children and the Quest for Purity in the Nineteenth Century Scottish City'. *Paedagogica Historica: International Journal of the History of Education*, (October 2012), p.801.

Legislative measures limiting child labour such as the Factory Act of 1850 and the introduction of the Education (Scotland) Act of 1872, which made education compulsory, further enshrined the notion of childhood as a period in which a moral agenda could be imprinted on young minds. Moving pictures, with its connections to variety and fairground culture, could be considered as low status entertainment potentially inhibiting that ambition. The showman and cinema owner E.H. Bostock later suggested that this made cinema an obvious target for the purity lobby which claimed that it formed a distinct threat to the development of the child; children who spent their nights in cinemas, it was argued, would be in no fit state to learn at school the following morning.<sup>21</sup>

Similar views had been expressed in the United States with the so-called 'child savers' who had highly romanticised notions of childhood. There were many who saw children in the terms coined by historian Susan Tiffin when she described them as 'a saintly redeemer, bringing harmony to the family, comfort to the miserable, a sense of purpose to the aimless, religion to the doubter, and love to the misanthrope'.<sup>22</sup> While the view in Scotland was less sentimental there was no doubt that children were seen as the key to the future moral certitude of the nation and therefore must be protected from harmful influences at all costs.<sup>23</sup> Such sentiments frequently clashed with those of more libertarian groups. The moralising elites had paid scant attention to cinema in its early days; in the United States it was dismissed as 'a scientific novelty, a didactic instrument, or at worst a harmless amusement'.<sup>24</sup> Once it became popular, in the terms Sullivan describes previously they began to pay attention. Pearson and Uricchio talk of a sense of panic about the new form and its potentially dangerous effects on a young audience. There were complaints about

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21 E.H. Bostock, *Menageries, Circuses, and Theatres* (Chapman and Hall: London, 1927) p.198

22 Susan Tiffin, 'In whose best interest: child welfare in the Progressive era' quoted in Sullivan, 'Child Audiences in American Nickelodeons'. pp. 157, 158

23 Maver, *Glasgow*, pp. 185 - 186

24 Pearson and Uricchio, 'The Formative and Impressionable Stage: Discursive Constructions of the Nickelodeon's Child Audience' in *American Movie Audiences from the Turn of the Century to the Early Sound Era*. pp. 64-74.

hygiene, eye strain, and the danger of fire, and luridly titled articles such as *The Menace of the Movies* appeared:

In this dust-laden atmosphere.... the audience, mainly women and children, are seated for an hour or more, breathing in contamination from the breath of others and from the lack of cleanliness in the place....it must not be forgotten that a great many children spend several hours each week in these places and that no precautions at all are taken to keep them from being sources of danger to one another.<sup>25</sup>

In Glasgow, as we have shown, the introduction of fixed-site cinemas in the east end of the city coupled with the much-reduced prices, especially for children's matinees, had created a new-found audience. As in the United States, once the moral elites become aware of the salience of cinema in children's leisure, they began to take notice and tried to act. On Saturday, March 15, 1913 the radical newspaper *Forward* published a lengthy article condemning attempts by local authorities in Glasgow to restrict the entertainment opportunities available to the working classes. The article was headlined 'The Social Purity Humbugs' and the author is identified only as P.J.D. Its agenda is clear from the opening paragraph:

For some time past the church-going, starvation wage-paying employers of Glasgow have been busy trying to get bye-laws passed dictating when and how the workers of Glasgow will eat ice cream, hot pies and fish suppers, drink lemonade and enter picture shows...The latest dodge of these advocates of morality by compulsion is to get picture shows brought under the eye of those who see dirt everywhere.<sup>26</sup>

The story in *Forward* had been prompted by a meeting of Glasgow magistrates which was attempting to restrict the entry of children to picture houses in the city. The suggestion

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<sup>25</sup> Walter Pritchard Eaton, 'The Menace of the Movies', *American Magazine*, September 1913, p.52. Quoted by Pearson and Uricchio p.68

<sup>26</sup> *Forward*, March 15, 1913, p.2

under consideration from the city authorities was that no child younger than 14 years of age should be allowed to be in a picture house after 9.30pm, unless accompanied by a parent or guardian. It was also suggested that, notwithstanding this curfew, unaccompanied children under 14 should be seated in a reserved part of the picture house and that 'red lamps' be placed throughout the hall so they could be seen. A fire inspector was also to be appointed to make regular checks of fire-fighting equipment to ensure they were fit for purpose.<sup>27</sup> This linking of moral and physical safety would become a feature of the campaign against cinema over the next few years with a number of examples, which will be cited subsequently in this work, gaining public notoriety.

As has been noted similar responses had been evident in the United States where many towns and cities had attempted to restrict the access of children, especially unaccompanied children, to movie theatres. This usually involved banning children under a certain age, usually 16, without adult accompaniment.<sup>28</sup> In New York there were moves which anticipate the scenario about to be enacted in Glasgow. Rosenbloom points out that cinema had been a fixture in New York since the 1890s but no one really paid close attention until around 1907 as moving pictures had begun to spread beyond the urban ghettos and immigrant neighbourhoods.<sup>29</sup> They were, she asserts, a public form of entertainment and because of their public character, they became a centre of controversy.<sup>30</sup> The centre for this public concern was New York where in 1908 Mayor George McLellan chose to close the theatres on Christmas Eve to make a political statement. By instituting the ban on a Christian holiday, he was, according to Rosenbloom, trying to make the point that most theatres were owned by Jews who would not be observing the holidays. Nickelodeon owners quickly went to court and got the ruling overturned.<sup>31</sup> Not long after McLellan's move there were other attempts to get theatres to

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27 Glasgow Magistrates Committee meeting, October 27, 1910 (Glasgow Corporation minutes, print 43, p.2473)

28 Sara Sullivan, 'Child Audiences in America's Nickelodeons, 1900-1915', p. 156

29 Nancy J. Rosenbloom, 'Between Reform and Regulation: The Struggle over Film Censorship in Progressive America: 1909 – 1922' *Film History* Vol 1 No 4 (1987) p.307

<sup>30</sup> *ibid*

31 Jon Lewis, *Hollywood V. Hard Core: how the struggle over censorship saved the modern film industry* (New York University c. 2000) p.87

close on Sundays. Theatre owners responded by showing uplifting films but some churches also started screening uplifting movies in their services and, according to Lewis, these were proving more popular than the commercial cinema shows. In the end the People's Institute of New York, a reformist organisation, decided to intervene by bringing the church, educators, the exhibition industry, and other interested parties together to form a censorship agency.

As Allen has pointed out, in his studies of cinema audience development in the American South, attitudes to the moving image were often coloured by religious persuasion:

Religious attitudes toward moviegoing in the first decades of the twentieth century reflect a larger moral and theological struggle occurring across Christian denominations as believers attempted to reconcile belief and personal behavior, righteousness and secularity within modernity. And religion played an especially significant role in southern culture.<sup>32</sup>

Considering Glasgow at roughly the same period we can see similarities in Maver's contention that the rise of cinema in the 1900s was the catalyst for a 'sustained campaign to fend off corrosive cultural influences'.<sup>33</sup> She suggests that the cinemas were bracketed with ice cream parlours and Italian-run cafes as potential loci of moral hazard for the population. Italian cafes had grown rapidly in Glasgow from 89 in 1903 to 337 in 1905 to take a key place in local culture and it is estimated that by 1905 there were 5000 Italians living in Glasgow.<sup>34</sup> The highlighting of Italian-run cafes has overtones of the same sort of bigoted sentiment as the Mayor of New York's anti-Semitic point scoring – the Italians were Roman Catholic in a predominantly Presbyterian society - but notwithstanding the implicit racism the objections in Glasgow were usually concealed as a concern for public safety. The

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32 Robert C. Allen, 'Decentering Historical Audience Studies – A Modest Proposal' in *Hollywood In the Neighborhood*, p.26

33 Maver, *Glasgow*, p.188

34 <https://web-beta.archive.org/web/20160326043605/http://www.educationscotland.gov.uk/higherscottishhistory/migrationandempire/experienceofimmigrants/italian.asp> last accessed July 7, 2017

cafes opened on Sunday and, although they did not serve alcohol, their opening times extended beyond licensing hours and it was felt this could prove a temptation to the young of both sexes.<sup>35</sup>

Although it eventually came to light only in March 1913 the Glasgow Parish Council meeting to regulate cinema admission highlighted by *Forward* was the culmination of a campaign that had been running for as long as five years, and had been under consideration by Glasgow magistrates for at least three years. Taking an editorial view *Forward* declared itself against these measures not so much because of their prohibitive nature but because of the 'insult conveyed in them to the working classes'. This perceived insult presumably concerned either the entitlement of the working classes to leisure time or the freedom to choose how they might spend that free time. The article went on to claim that the recommendations were the work of Glasgow Parish Council, and revealed that the Council had been concerned about the effect of picture shows on the poor and working class in the city for several years.

The decision by Glasgow Parish Council to concern itself with the screening of moving pictures may seem curious, however there is a historical context to be considered in what the historian T.M. Devine calls 'the parish state'. Devine asserts that the Church of Scotland, the established religion, influenced secular Scottish society in three main areas; discipline, education, and social care.

People at the local level would be much more likely to experience the impact of the Presbyterian Church in all aspects of their lives than the influence of a distant state in London or Edinburgh.<sup>36</sup>

In education terms, the parish school was the cradle of the Scottish education system in which much of the teaching was scripture based. Nonetheless 'reading literacy was

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35 Maver, *Glasgow*, p.188

36 Devine, *The Scottish Nation 1700-2007*, p.84

widespread and education available in most parts of the country at low cost'.<sup>37</sup> The parishes also provided an extensive network of social care to support the poor and indigent. This extended from cradle to grave in that foundlings were looked after and paupers buried, in between the parish could also be responsible for paying school and university fees, looking after the insane, supporting students at university, and providing pensions for the elderly and infirm.<sup>38</sup>

Devine is right to suggest that 'the parish state' played a more significant role in the lives of ordinary Scots than any other part of the establishment. There is no doubt that the Church of Scotland had become used to having a significant say in Scottish life, which may explain the actions of Glasgow Parish Council in trying to persuade Glasgow Corporation to legislate against cinema. The rapid growth and expansion of leisure activities, such as cinemas and cafes, could be seen to be challenging the authority and influence of the church. Devine does point out that by the 19<sup>th</sup> century the influence of the Churches on social issues appeared to have been crumbling; The Poor Law Amendment Act (1854), for example, took the exclusive responsibility for the care of the impoverished out of the hands of the church, similarly the arrival of universal state elementary education in 1872 transferred powers to lay boards.<sup>39</sup> But Devine cautions specifically that it would be a mistake to think this terminated the influence of religious values in civic life. The members of these new secular authorities were elected and this allowed:

...elected churchmen and committed laymen to maintain the relevance of religious ideals in Scottish public life. In fact, far from religious erosion, the Victorian Age saw a quite remarkable and hitherto unprecedented fusion between Christian ethos and civic policy. Many of the great urban issues of the day, such as poor housing, sanitation, crime and the provision of public utilities were dealt with from an overtly religious perspective.<sup>40</sup>

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37 Ibid, p.98

38 Ibid, pp. 100-101

39 Ibid, p.365

40 Ibid, p.365

As this work will subsequently argue it was these committed laymen, including former stalwarts of the Sunday School movement, who appear to have been the driving force behind Glasgow Parish Council's stance against cinema. According to *Forward* the Parish Council had commissioned a report as early as 1908:

Five years ago the Glasgow Parish Council became alarmed that picture houses were mostly in darkness. That immediately suggested immorality, so they decided to conduct *a private investigation into the picture houses in the poorer parts of the city* (emphasis in original). The swell resorts in Sauchiehall Street were left alone.<sup>41</sup>

The date of the study is significant since it coincides directly with the onset of fixed-site cinema exhibition. Ralph Pringle had only just opened his Picture Palace in the East End, generally regarded as the first permanent cinema site in the city in 1907, and by the end of 1908 there were no more than ten cinema sites in total.<sup>42</sup> Around half were in the East End and, despite *Forward's* anger, there were no 'swell resorts in Sauchiehall Street' at this stage. Hengler's Circus towards the Charing Cross end of Sauchiehall Street did show films, but generally in the off-season or as part of a variety bill.

Without revealing its source *Forward* claimed to have had a copy of the report for some time, went on to publish allegedly verbatim extracts, and in the process identified some of the investigators who had visited picture houses in the East End of the city and the Gorbals on the south side. One Parish Council member, William Watt, claimed after one of his investigatory visits there was little in the show to elevate the mind and commented that what there was, 'is drowned by the vulgar performance'.<sup>43</sup> Watt pointed out the admission charge was low, ranging from 6d to a shilling implying that this may have contributed to the demographic make-up of the audience, observing that:

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<sup>41</sup> *Forward*, March 15, 1913, p.2

<sup>42</sup> See page 109

<sup>43</sup> *Forward*, March 15, 1913, p.2

...In many instances girls aged 8 to 12 years had infants in their arms and other younger children under their charge. They were all of the poorer working class children; many of them barefoot and ragged. There was a small percentage of women and most of them had infants in arms; beshawled and bareheaded. The remainder were made up of men of the working class and young lads and lasses. I would describe the whole as a 'motley crowd' the member of which could apparently ill afford the modest copper or coppers for admission...The talk indulged at times is rather indecent. In one hall a filthy remark was shouted from the gallery. The manager at once caused the lights to be turned on and offered 2/6 to anyone who would point out the person who shouted the remark and said such conduct would not be tolerated there; but there was no response to his offer and I must say that there was no repetition of the language that night.<sup>44</sup>

The comment about young girls with babies in their arms seems to echo Hansen's comments about the cinema being an alternative public sphere. If these young girls were charged with looking after younger siblings then a cinema at least ensured they would be warm, dry, and out of the elements. As we have seen from some of the accounts of children's matinees, the turning on of the light thus making it impossible for the film to be seen appears to have been the ultimate sanction to restore order.

Another investigator, M.E. Cairns, claimed to have visited a number of different picture shows in the East End of the city. Cairns said he was most concerned about the number of young children attending the second house performance at these venues i.e. one which would have traditionally begun around nine o'clock in the evening. Cairns also alleged that it had been said that a 'certain amount of immorality takes place in the darkened hall at the back while the pictures are being shown'.<sup>45</sup> Like his colleague William Watt, Cairns' account focused on the social demographic of the audience. He claimed that it represented the lower working class and cited instances of unwashed children in their 'dirty mother's

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44 ibid

45 ibid

arms'. He also alleged criminality was taking place by claiming to have seen 'bookies' runners' i.e. couriers who carried illegal bets from punters to bookmakers and ferried back any winnings, among the audience. The final component of the audience according to Cairns were 'elderly modellers', old homeless men who were living in the Model Lodging Houses of which there were a number in the East End of the city. Cairns continued:

The atmosphere in the halls is bad as nearly all the male patrons smoke. The men appear to come as they left off work; I mean there is not any attempt to be clean in any degree which in itself is bound to have a bad effect on the younger portion of the audience. The women folk are filthy as to clothing and person, in the most of cases they bring an infant in arms, or a toddler, while the language of the people is vile.<sup>46</sup>

These appear to be little more than *ad hominem* attacks on picture house audiences which amount to a collection of unsubstantiated, circumstantial accusations which lack any substance or credible documentation. *Forward* points out that there was not a single corroborated fact to support any of the accusations made. One investigator claimed to have found just one incidence of bad behaviour – an alleged 'filthy remark' – in seven visits to East End picture houses.<sup>47</sup> This would seem to indicate the opposite of the Parish Council's argument and that, although raucous and exuberant, picture house audiences were actually quite well behaved. The choice of venues for inspection is also significant. Effectively the examiners visited cinemas in poor areas and found them full of poor or working-class people. In many respects, these attacks were similar to those made by the Reverend Gordon around the Saltmarket area on David Prince Miller and his fellow showmen some fifty years earlier which were highlighted in Chapter One. Those critiques also singled out women as does the Parish Council study which seemed to reference a panic around gender as well as class.

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<sup>46</sup> *ibid*

<sup>47</sup> *ibid*

Although Glasgow Parish Council obviously saw cinemas as licentious spaces, the study of early cinema has offered other framings. Hansen has characterised the cinema as a haven for hard-working women and, although she was speaking specifically of the American nickelodeon experience, there may be some similarities in Glasgow.<sup>48</sup> What Hansen might see as poor or immigrant women seeking respite from their daily lives, the Parish Council investigators interpreted as evidence of idleness, sloth, and poor parenting. It is hardly surprising either that working men in a working-class area would dress ‘as they had left off work’. It is not unreasonable to suggest that wardrobe choices would be limited and that the social protocols of cinema-going in the East End of the city would be somewhat different from those in the city centre or the more aspirational elegance of the West End.

Even so, taking the investigators’ evidence at face value, a number of positive conclusions might just as easily be reached. We might consider that these poorly-dressed men with their ‘filthy’ women and their babes in arms might all be related. Rather than a social ill, the investigators might be describing a picture house in terms that Hansen might recognise as a refuge of relative darkness, seclusion, and warmth. Such groups might be low-income families on a legitimate family outing and, significantly, if the men were in the picture house then they would not be in a pub which surely would be the last place the Parish Council would want to see them. As far as women were concerned they had nowhere else they could go without eliciting some form of restriction or censure so for them at least the picture house was a haven. As Glasgow social historian Elspeth King points out:

When almost every theatre in Glasgow had on its bills ‘Infants in Arms not admitted’ the popularity of the picture houses with young mothers was high. Temperance legislation and moral censure had all but driven women out of public houses in Glasgow and there were very few places for mothers with young children.<sup>49</sup>

The tension between the cinema and the public house referenced by King was a very real consequence of the impact of the Temperance Movement on Scottish society at this time; in Glasgow in particular the Movement had been a compelling force in the fabric of the city

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48 Hansen, p.108

49 Elspeth King, ‘Popular Culture in Glasgow’, in *The Working Class in Glasgow 1750 – 1914*. p. 173

since the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. According to Maver this was crystallised by the drive to bring clean drinking water to the city from Loch Katrine after a devastating cholera epidemic in 1848, with the consumption of alcohol being seen as a symbol of the pernicious and corrupting influence of tainted water.<sup>50</sup> Pressure from evangelical organisations prompted by the Glasgow Sabbath School Union had been instrumental in bringing about a wholesale change in Glasgow's licensing regulations in 1850; this included closing pubs on Sundays and limiting their opening hours as well as imposing strict conditions on the granting of licences. Pubs had been turned from potentially immoral unregulated spaces into highly regulated spaces; albeit ones which were now the domain of the 'less respectable male working classes' from which women had been driven both as customers and potential employees.<sup>51</sup>

Emboldened by their success against the licensed trade the campaigners may have been encouraged to attempt a similar transformation of cinemas. It seems ironic however that rather than inveigh against the medium, one way perhaps of stemming an alleged tide of intemperance might have been to encourage family attendance at the cinema, as the Good Templars and other bodies had several years earlier. From the Parish Council's own findings, it would appear that there were many family groups at the screenings it had surveyed in the East End of Glasgow. It is self-evident that in straitened times there would not be enough money to go around for what would appear to be frivolous pursuits. If it came to a choice between the pub and the cinema the Parish Council should surely have been supporting the cinemas rather than condemning them; this suggests further that their criticism is not so much an attack on cinema, or pubs for that matter, but rather a criticism of the urban poor's right to leisure and entertainment.

As a counter to what was happening in Glasgow, the English evangelical magazine *The Quiver* took a very different view in terms of the competition between the cinema and the public house:

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50 Irene Maver, 'Children and the Quest for Purity in the Nineteenth Century Scottish City.' p.812

51 Devine, *The Scottish Nation 1700-2007*, p.355

Two pence cannot be spent by the same person twice, and where there are only two pennies left to spend, if the showman gets them the brewer cannot. A councillor of a provincial town told me that since the opening of a picture theatre in his neighbourhood the takings of a Saturday evening of a local pub had fallen off to the extent of eleven pounds.<sup>52</sup>

*The Quiver* was a quasi-religious magazine set up by publishing entrepreneur George Smith as an improving journal for the working poor.<sup>53</sup> It also solicited the opinion of various prominent churchmen and religious figures and found them broadly supportive of cinema, especially in its potential for education. The Rev. Carey Bonner, General Secretary of the Sunday School Union, in London, was one of several who suggested that the church should make its own films to spread its message:

There is no doubt then that the cinematograph can be made a valuable educational instrument. Here is an opportunity for some far-seeing Christian business man to make it possible for films to be made illustrating high-class and virile religious stories such as would attract young people...I believe the popular 'craze' for moving picture shows could, rightly directed, become an instrument for helping the Kingdom of God.<sup>54</sup>

From a layman's perspective, albeit one with a declared interest, the prominent picture house owner J.J. Bennell was generally unimpressed by Glasgow Parish Council's claims. Many of his sites were in poor areas and Bennell knew his audience, as well as the difficult circumstances in which many of them lived their lives. In addition to cheap children's screenings Bennell's other innovations included a loyalty scheme which rewarded children with free tickets, and at Christmas children who went to the Wellington Palace were given free boots and socks. Bennell was inclined to defend his core audience:

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52 Denis Crane, 'The Picture Palace: How Are We to Regard It.' *The Quiver*, 47:5 (1912: Mar) pp. 453 - 460

53 <http://www.victorianweb.org/periodicals/quiver/cooke.html> last accessed July 13, 2016

54 Crane, p. 454

With reference to the allegations of uncleanness made against picture house patrons it is not every workman who has the facilities for a bath possessed by a Town Councillor or a Magistrate and one of the advantages of the picture show is that the worker can walk into the picture show just as freely as he can walk into the public house and get pleasure in his visit. Instructing and entertaining pictures which lift him away from his sordid surroundings and relieve his mind from his monetary and other difficulties are more to be encouraged than the public house bar with its moral and physical deteriorative attractions.<sup>55</sup>

Amid such defences, *Forward* resumed its attack on the Parish Council and what it termed the 'servile State' legislation of the Glasgow Magistrates in its next issue with a front page story headlined 'Podsnap's Attack on the Picture Houses'.<sup>56</sup> The headline is a reference to John Podsnap, a character from the novel *Our Mutual Friend*, who Charles Dickens had used to satirise the middle-classes and who had lent his name to the descriptive noun 'Podsnappery', a type of Victorian middle-class self-serving smugness. In terms more familiar to a Glasgow audience, *Forward* might well have described the Parish Council's actions as those of the 'unco guid', namely people who are excessively righteous and more than keen to pass judgement on those they deem to be less so.<sup>57</sup>

The local equivalent of the American child savers might be found among followers of the Scottish theologian Thomas Chalmers who outlined his philosophies in his 1821 volume *The Christian and Civic Economy of Large Towns*. Chalmers took an evangelical approach to social reform and advocated direct action in pursuit of social harmony; a view which resonated with the middle and upper tiers of Glasgow society whose desire for urban regeneration perhaps masked an equally strong desire for social cleansing so that slum children in particular could be saved and set on the right path.<sup>58</sup> These were the exponents

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55 *Forward*, Saturday, March 22, 1913 p. 1

56 *ibid*

57 Robert Burns, Address to the Unco Guid, or the Rigidly Righteous, 1786

58 Maver, 'Children and the Quest for Purity in the Nineteenth Century Scottish City.', pp. 818-824

of 'Podsnappery' of which *Forward* was so critical and, in common with the child savers in the United States, they frequently attempted to enforce standards that simply could not be met.

The follow-up article, again by-lined P.J.D., claimed the Parish Council was acting as part of a broader conspiracy against working-class entertainment; against picture houses, for admitting children, and against ice cream shops and Italian cafes, for opening on a Sunday. *Forward* claimed that the vested interests of the church and the music halls had aligned, albeit improbably, in this instance and both were motivated by money. The church, because money that should be going into the collection plate was going to the picture house box office, and the music halls because they were similarly losing trade to the new attraction. *Forward* predicted that the attack would fail and warned that in political terms it was a dangerous move by magistrates facing an election later in the year. The newspaper claimed that the desire for the working classes for education and improvement would ensure that the picture house would ultimately prove more attractive than the music hall.

The working class is now no longer satisfied with the high-kicking, suggestive stories, smutty songs, and dialogues which some of the music hall owners thought was entertainment. In the picture shows the working class can see drama, fiction, geography, natural history, history, and science portrayed in an entertaining, educative and amusing fashion. This, too, at one-third of the prices charged by the music halls.<sup>59</sup>

Whilst price was undoubtedly a factor in the popularity of picture houses, the context of the entertainment also played a part. The reputation of the old-style music halls meant that they were not places of family entertainment and, as we have seen, the introduction of the moving image on to variety bills was a way of improving the status of the variety theatre. In addition, women endangered their reputation by going to a music hall:

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59 *ibid*

In such music hall environments... where the nightly promenades served as a meeting place for prostitutes and their clients, single women were apt to be mistaken for prostitutes; of themselves in a similar, if less explicitly articulated, situation.<sup>60</sup>

The campaign by Glasgow Parish Council can be read as entirely focused on class as it appears to have been concerned with criticism of the perceived morality of the audience rather than the product being placed before them. There was also however regular criticism of the content of some cinematograph films, especially fight films which were either filmed or restaged boxing bouts, but the Parish Council does not appear to have taken a strong view on film as a medium. In this sense, they share the perspective of the Band of Hope, the youth arm of the Temperance Movement, which frequently used magic lantern shows to put across its message and had experimented with cinematograph shows as well.<sup>61</sup> Examination of Glasgow Parish Council minutes in the period from 1908 to 1913 frequently highlight cinematograph shows being provided as festive treats in the hospitals controlled by the Council. The regular Christmas cinematograph screenings at Stobhill Hospital in the north of Glasgow, which catered mainly for children, were particularly well received. This of course may be read simply as middle-class beneficence to the less well-off rather than any endorsement of the cinema as such. Certainly, the environment for the hospital screening would be very different to that of an East End cinema.

Even so the Parish Council's attitude to cinema seems initially to have been distinctly *laissez faire*. Study of the minutes however appears to indicate that the Parish Council's attitude changed with the election of James Cunningham as chairman in 1910, a leading member of the Council who had previously been convenor of the Law and Finance Committee. Cunningham was also prominent in the Sunday School movement and would go on to be president of the Sunday School Union.<sup>62</sup> The Chalmersian view saw Sunday or Sabbath

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60 Lisa Shapiro Sanders in Higson (ed.), *Young and Innocent? The Cinema in Britain 1896-1930* (Exeter: 2002) p.99

61 Devine, *The Scottish Nation 1700-2007*, p.366

62 James Cunningham obituary, *Glasgow Herald*, January 21, 1938 p.13

Schools playing a leading role in a vigorous educational programme aimed at diverting the very young away from undesirable activities and imposing a sense of moral rigour. Parish Council Clerk, James Russell Motion, was a permanent employee and he was well known in Glasgow for his views on the 'relief and management of the poor'.<sup>63</sup> Motion, who was also Inspector of the Poor, was a prominent if self-styled social reformer and in Cunningham as chairman he appeared to have found a kindred spirit. A study of the minutes of the Parish Council committees in the first quarter of 1911 indicates that its officers were involving themselves more in moral matters. There had been no great sense of picture houses as a moral hazard before then but in the first few months of Cunningham's tenure the Parish Council launched investigations into 'immoral houses' i.e. brothels, children at cinematographs, the opening hours of ice cream parlours, and children taking part in street trading.<sup>64</sup> Motion would write a pamphlet which was published by the Parish Council in 1911 entitled, *Memorandum of a Social Evil in Glasgow and the State of the Law for Dealing with Certain Forms of Immorality*.<sup>65</sup> The investigation of cinema audiences may thus be read as part of a general crusade against a perceived climate of immorality in Glasgow driven by Motion as an over-reaching moral authority. We have seen that the Parish Council had made a *prima facie* case for cinema as a moral hazard to the young but it would now press its argument in a tenacious campaign. Before considering the effectiveness of this campaign and its outcome it will be necessary to provide some context in the form of the regulatory framework governing cinema in Glasgow at this period. It will also be necessary to consider one other important factor, namely the membership of Glasgow Corporation, and, in particular, its magistrates, to highlight a major conflict of interest on the part of key councillors.

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63 Biography of James Russell Motion located in Glasgow Digital Library at <http://gdl.cdli.strath.ac.uk/eyrwho/eyrwho1271.htm> last accessed July 7, 2017

64 Glasgow Parish Council, Finance and Law Committee, February 1, 1911, D-HEW.2 1911, also February 9, 1911, D-HEW.2 1911

65 This pamphlet is an extensive and highly detailed account of prostitution in Glasgow. As in the investigation into cinema sites it features first-hand accounts by Parish Council 'investigators'. It also conflates the twin vices of prostitution with ice cream shops suggesting that the cafes were recognised venues for assignations between the young women and their clients. Details of Motion's pamphlet can be found in *Scottish Women: A Documentary History, 1780 – 1914* by Breitenbach, Fleming, Kehoe and Orr (ed.) (Edinburgh University Press, 2013) pp. 58 - 60

Although moving picture exhibition was a relatively new phenomenon which would not be regulated in its own right until the Cinematograph Act of 1909, which will be discussed at length in the next two chapters, there were existing measures to control any site which wished to exhibit motion pictures. In Glasgow cinema sites came under the remit of the Further Powers Act of 1892 which granted annual licences at the discretion of the magistrates subject to a safety and fire inspection. It is worth noting that this piece of regulation more than anything else prevented the establishment of penny gaffs in Glasgow. In 1908, when the Parish Council began its enquiry, anyone who wanted to show moving pictures 'in any theatre, music hall, or any other hall in the city' would require a report from the Master of Works, the Chief Officer of the Fire Brigade, and the Electrical Engineer.<sup>66</sup> So it seems there was an existing framework of legislation in place to deal with the Parish Council's concerns in safety terms. In addition, as we will see, several members of the Independent Labour Party on Glasgow Corporation had strong connections with the cinema industry. Taken together this ensured that whatever control the Glasgow Parish Council was looking for would not be ceded easily by the Corporation.

The article in *Forward* claimed that the secret Parish Council investigation had taken place in 1908. That may have been the case but there was no official reporting of any such investigation until 1910. At a meeting of the Parish Council's Finance and Law Committee on November 30, 1910 it was reported that a sub-committee had been set up to look at cinematograph entertainment.<sup>67</sup> It seems likely that the November 30 meeting was acknowledging the existence of the committee in *post hoc* fashion since the Town Council had already received a letter from the Parish Council at the end of October 1910:

...from the Inspector and Clerk of the Parish of Glasgow with a report by one of his officers as to the number and class of children attending cinematograph

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66 Griffiths, *The Cinema and Cinema-going in Scotland*, pp. 57 – 58. See also Julia Bohlmann, 'Regulating and Mediating the Social Role of Cinema in Scotland', 1896 - 1933 pp. 63-66

67 Glasgow Parish Council, Finance and Law Committee, November 30, 1910, D-HEW.2 1910

entertainments in the city and the nature of several of these exhibitions. The committee continued consideration of the subject matter ...'<sup>68</sup>

The Magistrates Committee met again a fortnight later and agreed that the matter should be considered by a special sub-committee comprising Baillie Archibald Campbell as Convenor with four other Baillies, including James Alston. The Magistrates Committee also gave this sub-committee the remit to meet the Parish Council representatives to discuss the matter further.<sup>69</sup> The Parish Council representatives attended the initial Magistrates Committee meeting in October, at which the organisation formed its own sub-committee to deal with their grievances; this sub-committee consisted of the Parish Council chairman James Cunningham, the Clerk James Motion, and two other Parish councillors, Messrs. Ross and Dunn. The two sub-committees met on November 30, 1910 along with John Lindsay, the Depute Town Clerk of Glasgow and the Chief Constable, Captain Stevenson. After lengthy discussion, it was agreed that there should be a second meeting, this time with the addition of members of Glasgow and Govan School Boards.<sup>70</sup> This second meeting took place in January 1911 and it was at this meeting that the question of children in picture houses came under consideration. According to Parish Council minutes the original suggestion was that regulations be enforced to stop children going into picture houses; this appears to have been a move for an outright ban on children being allowed in under any circumstances.<sup>71</sup> When councillors asked for the reason for the ban, it is alleged they were told that the increasing popularity of picture shows meant that attendance and revenue at Glasgow Sunday Schools had decreased dramatically.<sup>72</sup> Children, when they had money, preferred to spend it on an entertainment like a picture show rather than put it in the Sunday School collection.

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68 Glasgow Magistrates Committee meeting, October 27, 1910, Glasgow City Archive C1 3.43 p.2473

69 Glasgow Magistrates Committee meeting, November 27, 1910, Glasgow City Archive C1 3.43 p.162

70 Glasgow Parish Council, Finance and Law Committee, February 1, 1911, D-HEW.2 1911

71 Glasgow Parish Council, Finance and Law Committee, February 9, 1911, D-HEW.2 1911

72 *Forward*, March 15, 1913 p.2

The Parish Councillor who called for the ban is not identified either in the Council minutes or the newspaper reports. Given the strong ties between Parish Council Chairman James Cunningham and the Sunday School movement, and his membership of the sub-committee, we may speculate that the suggestion was his, however there is no conclusive evidence. Baillie James Alston, a member of the Independent Labour Party, argued that the picture houses were a force for good, claiming that drunkenness had decreased in the East End of Glasgow and quoting the Chief Constable in support of his argument. He claimed to have made 35 visits to various picture houses in Glasgow during his council duties – many more than had been made by Parish Council inspectors - and been impressed by the new entertainment:

What struck me most was the quiet orderly conduct of the audience. There was no shouting nor disgusting remarks of any kind made. In only two cases was I known to be a magistrate. The shows were all attended by great numbers of children who were most orderly indeed. I saw no immorality either in pictures or in the conduct of the audience, and I saw no picture which I would not have taken my wife and family to see...So far as conduct is concerned, the picture house audience compares more than favourably with that of the music hall. There is more shouting in the latter than in the picture houses. As to the allegations of immorality there have only been some 19 prosecutions against picture houses in three years. Six of these were tried before me at the instance of the various managements which shows they are diligent in maintenance of good conduct...it may be mentioned that the men concerned in these charges are the same class who are always appearing in Courts charged with having indecently exposed themselves. These men are the product of our time not of the picture houses.<sup>73</sup>

Alston was in favour of Glasgow following the example of Milwaukee in the United States which he said ran municipal picture shows as an aid to educating the working class. He

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<sup>73</sup> *Forward*, March 22, p.1

himself claimed to have learned more in thirty minutes watching films on the life and work of the honey bee in a picture house than he would have in 20 lectures.<sup>74</sup>

In the event, the Glasgow Magistrates did not act on this matter with any great degree of urgency. A number of town councillors, especially those of the Independent Labour Party, were owners of picture houses including George Singleton who owned the Vogue in Rutherglen and was the patriarch of one of Scotland's most famous cinema families, while another magistrate James Welsh was the secretary of the Glasgow Branch of the Cinematograph Exhibitors Association.<sup>75</sup> There were no objections to what may be seen as a potential conflict of interest but it is reasonable to assume that there would be no great desire among some councillors to support an action that may damage their livelihood. The Chief Constable's report was generally favourable as far as picture houses were concerned and did not strengthen the Parish Council's case. The report pointed out that picture houses were an affordable entertainment and the size of the audience and the frequency with which it attended was testament to their popularity.<sup>76</sup> The Parish Council argument was somewhat diminished when Chief Constable James Stevenson took the view that no harm was being done to children by cinema; he argued the opposite, coming down on the educative side of the debate:

To the children they are a very great attraction and delight, and being such an attraction, they must have an educative influence on their mind good or bad. The picture shows are of various kinds, some merely amusing, some sensational, some instructive, the greater proportion are amusing or sensational. No pictures which could be regarded as indecent or suggestive are

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<sup>74</sup> *Forward*, March 15, p.2

<sup>75</sup> King, in *The Working Class in Glasgow 1750 – 1914*, p 143. See also Velez-Serna, 'Film Distribution in Scotland before 1918' p.157

<sup>76</sup> For more on attitudes to children and cinema see Sarah J. Smith, *Children Cinema and Censorship* (Cinema and Society. London: I.B. Tauris, 2005) pp. 77 – 105 and Terry Staples, *All Pals Together* (Edinburgh University Press, 1997), and Griffiths, *The Cinema and Cinema-going in Scotland*, pp. 72-73

shown ...There have not been any traces of wrong-doing traceable to suggestion by the pictures.<sup>77</sup>

The sub-committee was finally able to consider the matter in March 1913, and drew up a series of recommendations regulating the attendance of children at picture houses which had been highlighted in the original *Forward* report:

These are to the effect that no children under 14 years of age be allowed to remain in a picture house after 9.30 p.m. unless accompanied by a parent or guardian; that children of 14 years and under who are unaccompanied by a parent or guardian shall sit in a reserved part of the hall, and that children who frequent a particular hall shall be practised at fire drills, as at schools, so that in the event of a panic they may march out in an orderly manner. It is also recommended that sufficient red lamps be placed in each hall to allow all parts of it being seen and that a fireman in uniform be appointed to inspect regularly all the fire appliances in the various picture houses to see that these are always in proper working order.<sup>78</sup>

The question of fire drills had not been mentioned anywhere in the Parish Council investigations which expressed no apparent concern for the safety of the audience, merely its character. However, as will be subsequently shown, the awareness of a potential fire risk had grown in the lengthy period in which this had been under discussion, putting the magistrates under some pressure when, in 1912, they were asked to consider what measures they imposed to deal with fire safety. Councillor Gibson asked magistrates to ensure that the spaces between the seats were wide enough to allow people to safely run out of the building in the event of fire. He was told by Baillie Paxton that several magistrates had asked for a meeting to consider the safety of these venues as far as children were

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<sup>77</sup> *Forward*, March 22, 1913 p.1

<sup>78</sup> *Glasgow Herald*, March 12, 1913 p.10

concerned.<sup>79</sup> It is reasonable to assume that the recommendations about fire drills were an attempt to respond to these concerns.

Normal council procedure dictated that the report from this March sub-committee would be considered by the next full committee meeting and the *Forward* newspaper article was clearly designed to stir up public opinion, especially among Labour supporters. There was a marked difference in tone between the reports in *Forward* and other contemporary accounts; newspapers such as *The Glasgow Herald* consistently take a dry view befitting a journal of record, whereas the radical views of *Forward* are expressed in more polemical terms. An unnamed picture house owner, for example, quoted anonymously 'for business reasons' in the *Forward* article, claimed that the Parish Council was completely wrong in suggesting that picture houses were dens of immorality. This owner claimed his clientele were working-class but often attended in family groups.

Men bring their wives and families to the picture shows when they would not take them to the music hall. Is it likely these men would bring those they love best to picture houses if they were the kind of place imagined by the Parish Council and the Magistrates? I think not.<sup>80</sup>

Given that the speaker is anonymous we have no way of knowing whether the quote is genuine or editorialising on behalf of the reporter. Nonetheless there was no conclusive evidence in the Parish Council report that children were being put at risk by being in picture houses.

Commercial interests were also well represented in the debate. The recently constituted Glasgow and District Cinematograph Exhibitors Association (CEA) also made its views clear in a memorandum, signed by its president J.J. Bennell and vice-president George Green, presented to Glasgow magistrates in June 1912. It argued that the existing regulations were protection enough:

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<sup>79</sup> *Glasgow Herald*, December 143, 1912 p.12

<sup>80</sup> *Forward*, March 22, 1913 p.1

The provisions for the safety of the public in cinematograph halls are as complete as it is humanly possible to make them.<sup>81</sup>

Bennell had become an influential figure in the cinema industry. He anticipated the need to represent his view of the Glasgow cinema audience and in that sense his opinions can be taken as representative of the industry rather than those of a self-interested picture house owner. It is obvious from Bennell's comments that picture house owners were unhappy with the moves being contemplated by the city magistrates. Bennell pointed out that under the new rules it would be acceptable to take money from an unaccompanied child for a nine o'clock performance and then be forced to eject the child half an hour later. Any rule insisting that children be accompanied would also be easily side-stepped according to Bennell:

...the common kindness of heart of the people will render this rule futile as every child wishing to enter a picture house will very soon persuade an adult to act as its parent or guardian for the time being. This holds out an inducement to the child to be deceitful which is a trait the Magistrates should not encourage. Nor must the Magistrates imagine that the children kept out of picture houses would be immediately packed off to warm beds in comfortable homes. In all probability they would be found in the streets not only at 9.30 but at 11.30pm. To my mind they are better in the picture shows than in the streets.<sup>82</sup>

Although he may have been unaware of it, Bennell's prediction reflected the situation in the United States as regards accompaniment laws being 'systematically evaded because [of the impossibility] of enforcement'.<sup>83</sup> His comments were endorsed by Alexander Gilchrist, a Justice of the Peace and picture house manager, who ran the Eglinton Electreum on the South side of the city. He was in favour of regulations to improve public safety such as the recently-passed Cinematograph Act but he objected strongly to what he termed the

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81 *World's Fair*, June 15, 1912, p.10

82 *Forward*, Saturday, March 22, 1913 p.1

83 Sara Sullivan, 'Child Audiences in America's Nickelodeons, 1900-1915', pp. 156, 157

'harassing regulations' proposed by the Magistrates. Mr Gilchrist did not accept there was any inherent moral hazard caused by the picture houses or their patrons. He claimed to have been in the business for fifteen months and to run two shows nightly, with accommodation for 600 people at each. During all that time, he insisted he had seen or heard nothing derogatory in the conduct of any of the thousands of people – adults and children – who attended the shows.<sup>84</sup>

The most extreme argument against the Parish Council's case came however from another unidentified source in the *Forward* article, an alleged 'widow woman' who worked in a mill to provide for her eight children.

The picture houses have been a veritable God-send to women like myself. Prior to their advent poverty kept me from getting any entertainment; now I can get to a picture show every week for two pence, my children for a penny. For this small outlay we enjoy two hours excellent entertainment which is always something to look back upon and to expect in what would otherwise be a monotonous and sordid existence. Let the picture houses flourish!<sup>85</sup>

The widow's testimonial is of course only as verifiable as the incident of the 'filthy remark' quoted by the Parish Council investigator. Even if we give both equal weight, *Forward* remained convinced that the views of Bennell, the Chief Constable, and other councillors and picture house owners would be enough to see the recommendations defeated when they finally came before the full Magistrates Committee.

The campaign by the Parish Council was a sustained attack on the industry from a sector of the establishment, albeit one whose influence was waning. On the other side was a conflicted local authority with some members obviously trying to protect vested interests. In the middle was a cinema audience which, despite all attempts to investigate and control

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<sup>84</sup> *Forward*, Saturday, March 22, 1913 p.1

<sup>85</sup> *ibid*

their attendance, appeared to be unaffected by the row as cinema-going grew in popularity.

The Magistrates Committee finally reached a decision when it met again on April 11, 1913 to consider the recommendations of its sub-committee. It also heard from a lawyer, a Mr Ballantyne, acting on behalf of the Cinematograph Exhibitors Association who told the Magistrates that local picture house owners were willing to accept the recommendations for a 12-month trial period. However, the picture house owners pointed out that there would be practical difficulties in carrying out 'one or two' of the sub-committee's recommendations.<sup>86</sup> The specific recommendations to which Ballantyne alluded were not outlined in contemporary accounts but having the hall lit throughout with red lights, conducting fire drills for children, and having a member of the fire brigade on duty at every performance would be bound to create logistical and practical difficulties. There was room for compromise on both sides and after some discussion the Magistrates Committee agreed on four conditions that would have to be met in any future application for a licence issued under the Cinematograph Act.

I – That no child under 14 years of age shall, unless accompanied by a parent or guardian, be permitted in premises licensed under the Cinematograph Act after 9.30 pm

II – That provision shall be made in such premises for separate seating accommodation for children under 14 years of age who are not accompanied by their parents or guardians;

III – That provision shall be made to the satisfaction of the Engineer of the Electricity Department for the efficient lighting of such premises by coloured lamps; and

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<sup>86</sup> *Glasgow Herald*, April 13, 1913 p.5

IV – That the fire appliances in said premises shall be regularly inspected by a member of the fire brigade.<sup>87</sup>

Since cinematograph licences were renewed on an annual basis this regulation meant that in effect within a year all children would be barred from Glasgow picture houses for the late show unless they were accompanied by an adult.

The situation in Glasgow was not isolated and taken in comparison with other towns and cities was more accommodating to the cinema owners than it might have been. Only a few weeks after the Glasgow legislation was passed the Home Secretary Reginald McKenna had a private meeting with a delegation from the Cinematograph Exhibitors Association of Great Britain and Ireland.<sup>88</sup> The picture house owners were complaining about the extent to which local authorities were imposing ‘harassing conditions’ on their industry which were not being imposed on other entertainments. One example highlighted by the delegation was Liverpool where local conditions severely limited the hours in which they could be open, children were banned after 6.30 pm, and films could be censored by the local police. McKenna gave the owners a sympathetic hearing and promised to consider those issues which fell within his remit.<sup>89</sup> Other local authorities in Scotland took the Glasgow model as a template. The schoolteachers’ union, and the Educational institute of Scotland, both used the Glasgow regulations as a precedent to encourage Edinburgh council to follow suit. This it duly did in May 1914, agreeing to add to cinematograph licences the condition that ‘a child under twelve years of age shall not be allowed to remain in such premises after nine o’clock pm unless accompanied by a parent or guardian’. In Fraserburgh, the restriction was more draconian still which children of school age banned from entering cinemas after nine o’clock whether they were accompanied or not.<sup>90</sup>

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87 Glasgow Magistrates Committee, April 10, 1913, C1 3.48 p.1226

88 Bohlmann, p.41

89 *Glasgow Herald*, April 30, 1913 p.10

90 Griffiths, pp.75-76

These final recommendations from Glasgow magistrates bear all the hallmarks of a local authority instituted compromise in response to a move conflating the moral protection of children with their physical protection. The new conditions would not be too onerous on picture house owners; there might be some reduction in revenue from children, but the regulations on lighting and fire safety had been softened considerably and were now broadly in line with the headline terms of the recently-passed Cinematograph Act. In that sense, this was an appropriate local response to a piece of national legislation. The new revenue that would presumably come from a larger clientele being attracted to the cinema as a safe and family friendly space would offset any shortfall in trade arising from unaccompanied children being excluded.

Although Glasgow Parish Council may have won the day their victory was a hollow one. The regulations they sought so vigorously were passed, but not enthusiastically enforced. Magistrates had made it plain that the regulations might indeed be unenforceable in practice and the Cinematograph Exhibitors Association had been told by licensing authorities that 'so long as exhibitors did their best to comply with the rule, its observance would not be rigidly enforced'.<sup>91</sup> Indeed the regulations were so seldom enforced that another attempt at regulation was made in 1926, this time by the United Free Church Presbytery of Glasgow, which was plainly unaware that regulations already existed. In the end, the attempt to regulate cinemas had been much less successful than the efforts to control the licensed trade and although the Parish Council had been vocal it remained a minority view and cinema in Glasgow continued to flourish. There is also the sense of the relationship between the cinema and the newspapers being defined here by the press effectively acting as the voice of the audience. Thereafter the demand for the moving image would not be constrained by any moralising force and continued to grow. By 1911 Oakley says there were 57 houses, including municipal venues, which were licensed for cinema.<sup>92</sup> According to Glasgow Corporation figures outlined in Appendix 1, by 1913 that number had grown to 85.<sup>93</sup> However, having seen off the need for moral regulation, as we

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91 Oakley, p.7

92 *ibid*

93 Glasgow City Archive, Licensed Glasgow cinema sites 1913 D-OPW 61.5

will see in the next chapter, the industry also realised there was a pressing need for safety regulation if it was to continue to thrive.



## 5 The threat of fire and the introduction of safety legislation.

The defeat of the attempt by Glasgow Parish Council to restrict and control attendance at cinemas through regulation, which was discussed in the last chapter, was a victory for the city's burgeoning film exhibition industry and also for the growing cinema audience. The Parish Council had attempted to bring in a level of moral regulation and had used the guise of public safety to do this. Notwithstanding their actions there were however genuine public safety concerns and the pressing need for some degree of regulation will be considered in this chapter. The Parish Council may have insisted that cinema posed a moral hazard to children and young people but, as this chapter will highlight, there was incontrovertible evidence that inflammable film stock, uncontrolled crowds, and the ever-present threat of fire was a real and present danger to cinema audiences of all ages but especially, as we will see, to the young.

This chapter will offer two case studies; one of which has been cited as the cause of safety legislation, although we will argue this is not necessarily the case, and another case study which was a more likely driver of regulation. The legislative progress of the safety measures is also examined in depth taking us to the point where, even when what became the Cinematograph Act of 1909 was drafted, there would still be difficulties in enforcement. The intention of the regulation was to create a standardised system of safety that could be utilised by Glasgow and almost every other licensing authority in Britain; it was in effect to introduce measures that would tidy up the piecemeal nature of local legislation at a national level, imposing a uniform standard of regulation throughout the country. As will be explained, the imprecision of the drafting of the Act meant that conditions could be attached at a local level.<sup>1</sup>

The risk of fire was a constant hazard for entrepreneurs in the early days of cinema exhibition. The film stock itself was made of cellulous nitrate which was not only highly

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<sup>1</sup> Margaret Dickinson and Sarah Street, *Cinema and State: The British Film Industry and the Government 1927 -1984* (London: 1985) p.7

flammable but occasionally prone to spontaneous combustion. A cellulose nitrate fire burned extremely fiercely and was difficult to extinguish. In addition, the beam of light that shone through the film to project the image onto the screen used the traditional theatrical illuminant of limelight. This involved a flame from a gas jet being directed onto a lump of lime which then gave off a very bright white light.<sup>2</sup> If the film was too close to the burning lime or if it got stuck, even momentarily, as it ran through the projector there was a serious danger that it would burst into flames. There was often little separation between the projection apparatus and the audience, which posed the additional risk of the projector being bumped or knocked over and the reels of film catching fire. The Cinematograph Act, when it was introduced, was originally intended as a public safety measure. The subtitle of the legislation was 'An Act to make better provision for securing safety at Cinematograph and other Exhibitions'. That it ultimately was used for other purposes should not detract from its original intention.

One of the incidents cited as an initiator of the Act is the Paris Bazaar fire of 1897.<sup>3</sup> The annual Charity Bazaar was one of the highlights of the Parisian social calendar, raising money for a variety of good causes. On the afternoon of Tuesday, May 4 there were around 1600 people in the venue on the Rue Jean-Gojoun, most of them women.<sup>4</sup> This was barely 18 months after the world's first cinema exhibition by the Lumières and there was a film to be screened as part of the entertainment. Around four in the afternoon with the festivities at their height the projector burst into flames. The fire quickly spread and the building became an inferno. The death toll was 124, of whom 119 were women and it is suggested that the elaborate gowns made of highly flammable fabric fuelled the flames.<sup>5</sup> According to McKnight, around 200 other people were injured and the elite classes were plunged into mourning. The Paris disaster was undoubtedly shocking but it took place in 1897 in the earliest days of cinema; it seems unlikely that this would prove the motivating force for a

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<sup>2</sup> Brown S. 'Censorship Under Siege' in Lamberti E. (ed.) *Behind the Scenes at the BBFC*, (British Film Institute, 2012), p.3

<sup>3</sup> Oakley, p.7

<sup>4</sup> McKnight, E. 'Fortunes and Feminine Duty: Charity in Parisian High Society 1880–1914'. *The Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 58, pp. 482-484

<sup>5</sup> Ibid p. 483

piece of legislation in a different country more than ten years later. There would be other tragedies in the United Kingdom which stirred public opinion more directly and the cumulative effect, especially since they also involved the deaths of so many women and children, would provide a damning weight of evidence in favour of some kind of safety legislation.

By coincidence Glasgow had its first recorded cinema fire at around the same time as the Paris inferno, although the impact was much less serious. George Green's son Herbert recalled a fire in their booth at the Carnival showground in the East End of the city:

We had a fire and a rush for the exits; but as the whole 6 films did not consist of more than 250 feet no harm was done.<sup>6</sup>

Green offered no explanation for the cause of the blaze but did say that although the projector was in its usual place in the middle of the audience there was a handrail around it which would appear to rule out anyone jostling the equipment. Green also misremembered the date, claiming in his letter that it was in May. However, he also pointed out that the screening was to take advantage of the holiday for Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee which was on June 20, 1897. Given that the letter was written some fifty years after the event the lapse is understandable.

There appear to have been two other recorded fires at moving picture screenings in Glasgow; one at Hengler's Circus in 1908 and another at the Gaiety Theatre the following year, neither however caused any injury.<sup>7</sup> Although that first fire at Green's screening, along with subsequent incidents, was minor with no reports of injuries, Glasgow's showmen were well used to the dangers of fire. It had been, as has been previously highlighted, a spate of serious fires in the 1840s which led to the entertainment quarter being established in the East End of the city, where Green had founded his various enterprises. Fires at the City Theatre, Cooke's Circus and the Adelphi Theatre in the Saltmarket between 1845 and 1848 had put other premises in the city centre at serious

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<sup>6</sup> Letter from Herbert Green to Henry Simpson, January 8, 1945, p.3

<sup>7</sup> Griffiths. p.58

risk. As has also been outlined earlier, in two of the incidents – the City Theatre fire and the one at the Adelphi - the theatre was left to burn as firemen concentrated their efforts at saving nearby buildings and preventing the spread of the blaze.

Fire, and the threat of it, was a constant danger in public spaces but, ironically, there was also a fascination about fire and fire brigades in screen content of the period. Porter's 1903 film *The Life of an American Fireman* is an enduring classic and many film makers captured footage of horse-drawn brigades turning out to attend emergencies to the delight of audiences all over the world. In Glasgow, in 1897, R.W. Paul made a film, *Glasgow Fire Brigade*, at the fire service headquarters in Ingram Street which is described in stirring tones in Paul's catalogue:

Glasgow Fire Brigade – In this film the horses are seen being harnessed to the engines, as the latter are brought out by the firemen. The engines are driven rapidly past the camera, followed by a car full of firemen, and a crowd of excited people.

Code word – Called      Length: 100 feet      Price 75s. <sup>8</sup>

The same page of Paul's catalogue also includes, under the heading 'Fire Scenes' a film entitled *Sensational Fire Engine Collision* 'showing six machines the last of which collides with the camera producing a most astounding effect'. A fire was a spectacular event which exerted a compelling fascination on cinema audiences and it was treated as melodramatically on screen as it was in the media. A major fire was a national story and, as in the row over the Glasgow Parish Council campaign, local newspapers once again found themselves playing a role in a narrative that would shape the future of the audience experience.

*The Glasgow Herald* had reported at some length on a fire at a cinematograph show in England in September of 1907.<sup>9</sup> The incident took place at Newmarket Town Hall on

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<sup>8</sup> Moving Image Archive, SSA/4/5/73

<sup>9</sup> *Glasgow Herald*, September 9, 1907 p.9

Saturday, September 7. Several hundred people were crammed into the space for a cinematograph exhibition. According to newspaper reports, as the crowd left the hall at the interval the apparatus was jostled and knocked over. The flame from the projector ignited one of the films and the fire spread quickly. By good fortune the head of the local fire brigade was at the screening; he found the fire hose and began to douse the fire as the manager ran out of the hall carrying the burning film while the operator turned off the gas supply. Despite their prompt action a number of people were caught up in the incident, some fatally. One victim, Mrs Starling, described in the newspaper copy as a 'young married woman', appeared to have suffered the same fate as the unfortunate women of the Paris Bazaar in that her clothes caught fire. According to the *Herald* her clothing 'was burned to cinders' and she died in hospital the following morning. Two others, a young woman called Martha Draffin and another young girl Clara Ashby, described as a 'domestic servant', were also very badly burned and died later of their injuries bringing the death toll to three. As with the Paris fire there remains a noticeable stress in the reporting on the danger to female audience members; men were presumably expected to be able to take care of themselves. Altogether 300 people were treated for burns or crush injuries; this was despite the efforts of the police and other officials who were praised for their actions in trying to calm the ensuing panic. The initial incident was reported in the *Herald* on Monday September 9 and headlined as '*The Cinematograph Disaster*'; the following day's edition carried more details of the incident following the opening of the inquest into Mrs Starling's death.<sup>10</sup>

The late Mrs Starling's husband was a key witness. He and his wife had been quite close to the apparatus which he said had been balanced on boxes. His evidence suggested that the film had ignited during a reel change and as people cried 'Fire!' the crowd rushed to the exits. It is presumably at this point that the apparatus was knocked over; his evidence claimed that the apparatus was so flimsy that a 'little wind would have blown it over'.<sup>11</sup> Mr Starling attempted to rescue his wife but, as one of the two exit doors was locked, he was prevented from doing so. As the crowd surged to the other door Mrs Starling was pushed onto the flames setting herself alight while her husband was swept away by the crowd and

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<sup>10</sup> *Glasgow Herald*, September 10, 1907, p.8

<sup>11</sup> *ibid*

out of the hall. Mrs Starling was brought out of the fire and taken to a nearby hospital but died some hours later. The inquest resumed later in the month where it heard evidence from Frank Simpson, the captain of the local fire brigade who had been in the venue.<sup>12</sup> He said the fumes were so bad that he had difficulty staying in the hall to battle the blaze; other witnesses also spoke of the suffocating atmosphere. Simpson confirmed that the apparatus had not been overturned at first but had been knocked over in the rush to escape. Another witness said that he saw the operator open 'the lantern door' (sic) and that a piece of hot lime fell out which either 'rolled or was kicked' into the spools of film which caught fire. The inquest also heard that the cinematograph was not enclosed by any railings and that although two gangways had been left clear, the exhibitor had filled one up to sell extra tickets. These issues of crowd control and overcrowding, and the proximity of the highly flammable film to the audience, illustrated precisely the issues that the national legislation would attempt to regulate.

In his evidence the cinematograph owner, a Mr Greenwood, said he had nine years' experience of such shows and that the arrangements for the Newmarket screening were no different from any others. The machine was set up in the usual way and Greenwood said they only used a fireproof box for the projector if the owners of the halls asked for it; by implication, this had not been the case at the Town Hall. Greenwood said every precaution had been taken but that there had been a 'terrible thud' against the apparatus by people leaving the hall and this had smashed the lime and ultimately started the fire. The jury retired for only twenty minutes before delivering a formal verdict that Mrs Starling had died from 'shock caused by burns occasioned by accidental outbreak of fire caused by panic'. They did however add a significant rider which would have serious implications for the industry:

The jury are of the opinion that sufficient precautions were not taken by the company for the safety of the public and that the Urban District Council, who

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<sup>12</sup> *Glasgow Herald*, September 19, 1907, p.7

let the Town Hall, should in future exact the same provisions as the London County Council require in letting their halls for these entertainments.<sup>13</sup>

The Newmarket incident was shocking and, given the amount of coverage it received in a Glasgow newspaper, evidently a subject that was of concern and interest to a national readership. Barely four months later, at the beginning of 1908 another tragedy involving a cinema audience again captured the attention of the whole country. This incident, in Barnsley, was all the more affecting because of an increased death toll and that all of the victims were children. There was no fire. This time the disaster was caused by the other great threat in a crowded auditorium; crushing. Again the story was extensively reported in *The Glasgow Herald* across three columns on its main news page; an exceptionally large amount of coverage reflecting the impact of the catastrophe.<sup>14</sup>

According to the accounts in the *Herald*, The Harvey Institute, a municipal hall in Barnsley, had been holding popular Saturday afternoon cinematograph shows for children for several weeks. Local schools were targeted by flyers which cost a penny and appear to have doubled as an admission ticket. These tickets gave access to the gallery but it was possible to bring the flyer along to the show and by paying a small, unspecified, premium, upgrade to a seat downstairs in the main body of the hall.<sup>15</sup> Newspaper reports suggest that most of the patrons came from poor or working-class backgrounds, and therefore chose the cheaper option of the penny ticket for the gallery. On Saturday, January 11, 1908 the screening of 'the world's living pictures' was due to start at three o'clock and children had been gathering outside for up to an hour before the doors opened. The construction of the hall meant that it had two separate entrances; one for the main hall at the front of the building and the other for the gallery which was at the side of the building. This gallery entrance was described in the article as a 'brick case' built onto the side wall of the Institute with a staircase which took a number of sharp right and left hand turns through several landings before reaching the corridor which allowed access to the gallery. A janitor was placed at the bottom of the stairs to regulate the crowds going in and another was

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<sup>13</sup> *Glasgow Herald*, September 19, 1907, p.7

<sup>14</sup> *Glasgow Herald*, January 13, 1908, p.9

<sup>15</sup> *ibid*

stationed at the top of the stairs, just by the corridor entrance, to take the money. Crucially neither man could see the crowds beyond the landing immediately above or below them.

The man at the bottom of the stairs, Mr Atroy and his colleague at the gallery entrance, Mr Rain, had worked together on these screenings many times without incident. It was their usual practice for Atroy to allow the children to move up in groups of around twenty to manage the crowd. According to the newspaper report, on this occasion the gallery had filled up, but children were still coming in, having bought tickets. Rain took the initiative to send them back down telling them they would be admitted to the main body of the hall. However, he had no way of communicating with Atroy who was still sending children up. The children going back down stairs started to rush fearing they would miss the beginning of the show; there was a collision with the audience coming up the stairs, at the turn leading off one of the landings a child tripped and fell, and others were brought down by what was described as an 'avalanche of humanity' by the Press Association correspondent whose report appeared in the *Herald*:

It was some little time before anyone in authority realised what had occurred and when at length the landing of the fatal bend was reached the children were piled four, five, or even six deep...Screams from the less injured but sorely affrighted children, heart rending moans from some of the dying, and agonising wailings and questionings and entreaties of mothers who had rushed to the spot on the first report of mishap blended with the sympathising cries of onlookers as one after another was brought out into the open, some to be embraced and borne away by disconsolate mothers, others to be passed on to the hospital, and yet others to the hospital mortuary.<sup>16</sup>

Sixteen children were killed and many more were injured. The death toll could have been much higher but for the presence of mind of Atroy who ran round to the main entrance and told the projectionist to put on the first film to distract the children. When this had ended, he then made an announcement from the stage to the effect that there had been

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<sup>16</sup> *ibid*, p.9

an accident, that the show was cancelled, that no one in the audience was in any danger, and he then encouraged them to file out quietly which they did.



**Figure 13: A commemorative postcard issued following the Barnsley disaster. It shows the building, the staircase, and some of the victims.<sup>17</sup>**

The report of the disaster which appeared in *The Glasgow Herald* was provided by the Press Association and would have been used in some form or other by every major newspaper in the country. The King and the Prince of Wales sent telegrams expressing their shock and horror, respectively, at the disaster. Prayers were said for the dead and injured in every church in the region the following morning, and there was a call for a public subscription to defray the costs of the funerals for the families, most of whom were poor or working class.

In the immediate aftermath, blame was apportioned indiscriminately. One reporter suggested the families were at fault and the disaster was ‘a terrible retribution on happy go lucky parents and heedless other persons’.<sup>18</sup> Other suggestions in the newspaper

<sup>17</sup> <http://lukemckernan.com/2014/10/12/the-barnsley-disaster/> last accessed March 24, 2016

<sup>18</sup> *Glasgow Herald*, January 13, 1908, p.9

account were more considered but the bulk of the blame seems to have implicated the lack of any uniform regulation for such events; no one it seems could be certain whether responsibility for safety and security lay with the organiser, the hall owner, the local corporation, or the county council. It was suggested, as had been the case at Newmarket the previous September that a standard was needed. The mood of the period was caught in the sermon given by the Bishop of Wakefield the day after the disaster. If from this catastrophe, he suggested, better ways were learned of protecting children's lives 'that might be part of the good that might come out of this evil'.<sup>19</sup>



Figure 14: The Yorkshire Post coverage of the disaster.<sup>20</sup>

As the full details of the Barnsley tragedy were being revealed another cinematograph disaster, this time in the United States, also caught the attention of Glasgow newspapers. More than a hundred people died in a fire at the Rhoads Opera House in Boyerstown, Pennsylvania which might have been enough to merit a mention in British newspapers in its own right. However the recent fire at Newmarket, the similarity to the disaster at

<sup>19</sup> ibid p.10

<sup>20</sup> [www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk](http://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk) via <http://lukemckernan.com/2014/10/12/the-barnsley-disaster/> last accessed March 24, 2016

Barnsley, and the fact that many of the dead were children meant the story featured prominently in the *Herald*.<sup>21</sup> According to newspaper accounts local Sunday School students were performing a play at the Opera House as part of an evening's entertainment which also included a cinematograph screening. The apparatus was at the back of the hall, when halfway through the screening the gas cylinder exploded causing the crowd to surge forward in panic towards the stage. As they did so, one of the children on stage kicked over one of the kerosene lamps which had been used as footlights; the lamp fell into the auditorium setting light to the front of the stage. The audience was effectively trapped between two fires. By the end of the evening, the death toll was reported as 32 men and boys, and 56 women and girls. It later became apparent that as many people had died in the crush as were burned to death.

The deaths of so many children in such harrowing circumstances came at a time when, as we have already seen in the work of Maver and others, for the middle classes, the status of the child had become a potent symbol of social reform and moral regeneration:

...the reformers consciously depicted slum children as the poignant symbol of innocence corrupted, and argued that regeneration should focus, above all, on reclaiming the health and moral welfare of the young.<sup>22</sup>

While Maver is speaking specifically of Glasgow, the example can be extended throughout the United Kingdom and is exemplified by the passing of the Children Act 1908. The legislation had several parts covering areas such as infant life protection; the prevention of cruelty; the refining of the roles of industrial and reformatory schools; the creation of the juvenile courts; and other provisions such as the banning of under-fourteens from public houses and limiting the sale of alcohol and tobacco to minors.<sup>23</sup> The Barnsley cinema disaster was prominently cited in the Parliamentary debate on the legislation by Herbert

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<sup>21</sup> *Glasgow Herald*, January 15, 1908, p.7

<sup>22</sup> Maver, 'Children and the Quest for Purity in the Nineteenth Century Scottish City', pp 801-824

<sup>23</sup> Bradley et al 'Youth and Crime: Centennial Reflections on the Children Act 1908'. *Solon Online Journal*, Volume 3, No.2, Nov. 2009, p.3 accessed July 29, 2014  
<http://www.pbs.plymouth.ac.uk/solon/journal/Issue%203.2/Editorial%20Children%20Act%201908%20final.pdf>

Samuel, the Liberal MP for Cleveland who was then Under Secretary of State at the Home Office. Samuel was one of the principal architects of the legislation and was responsible for driving it through Parliament and led the debate in the House of Commons.<sup>24</sup> He said the Home Secretary, Herbert Gladstone, was especially concerned about the ‘catastrophes that occur from time to time’ at places of entertainment for young children:

The recent catastrophe at Barnsley, where a large number of little ones met their death, and others both in this country and abroad, have brought home to his mind the necessity for the provision of some greater security for the safety of children attending in large numbers entertainments of this character.<sup>25</sup>

Samuel said it was his intention to introduce a clause at the committee stage of the Bill which would specifically prevent a repeat of the Barnsley tragedy. His clause would apply to any entertainment at which more than 100 children were present and, where the children were required to use stairs to access any part of the building:

...it shall be the duty of the person who provides the entertainment to station and keep stationed on the stairs a sufficient number of adult attendants, properly instructed as to their duties, to prevent more children or other persons being admitted to any such part of the building than that part can properly accommodate and to control the movement of the children and other persons admitted to any such part whilst entering and leaving, and to take all other reasonable precautions for the safety of the children.<sup>26</sup>

Samuel’s amendment echoes the sentiments of the newspaper coverage of the Barnsley disaster, and in its original wording it would have had serious implications for cinema exhibition, where even for the smallest exhibitor an audience of 100 children would not seem exceptional. That may have been why Samuel settled on the figure. However the

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<sup>24</sup> Parker, R, ‘The Hope is in Children’, *The Therapeutic Care Journal* June 1, 2010, <http://www.childrenwebmag.com/articles/child-care-history/%E2%80%98the-hope-is-in-children-the-times-671908> accessed August 14, 2018

<sup>25</sup> Hansard, *HC Deb 24 March 1908 vol. 186 col. 1290*

<sup>26</sup> Hansard, *HC Deb 24 March 1908 vol. 186 col. 1291*

clause was somewhat watered down in the committee stage of the legislation and finally read that 'a sufficient number of adult attendants' should be present if the audience consisted mainly of children; since the language was unquantifiable this part of the legislation was so vague as to be meaningless.<sup>27</sup> Given support from all sides of the House, the Bill, with a few minor amendments, had a relatively smooth passage through the Commons before being agreed by the House of Lords on December 3. The Children and Young People Act 1908 went onto the statute book and was implemented in April 1909. Even as this piece of legislation was being enacted, MPs were already debating another statute that would have a more profound impact on the cinema exhibition sector.

In January 1908, in the wake of the Barnsley disaster, Walter Reynolds of the London County Council (LCC) Theatres and Music Halls Committee proposed that a deputation from the Council approach Herbert Gladstone, the Home Secretary, with a view to give local authorities greater control over cinema exhibitors in particular. The argument was that film shows were a demonstrable fire hazard and should be controlled officially.<sup>28</sup> As the inquests into the tragedies at Newmarket and Barnsley illustrated there was no clear, cohesive, uniform legislation for the industry. The coroner's inquest at Newmarket had suggested that the LCC model be followed nationally, while the welter of recrimination following the Barnsley disaster was heartfelt if non-specific about the need for action. It has been frequently suggested in existing scholarship that Reynolds, who was perceived to be a friend to the nascent film industry, should be regarded as the 'father of the Cinematograph Act'.<sup>29</sup> Burrows' subsequent research however takes a much harsher view, but also a more credible one.<sup>30</sup> Reynolds appears to have been a notorious self-publicist who was keen to be seen at the heart of the legislation. Burrows' view, and this appears to be supported by the Parliamentary record is that the statute arose directly from the Children Act and the

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<sup>27</sup> Low, *The History of the British Film 1906-1914*, p.59

<sup>28</sup> Burrows, J 'The 1909 Cinematograph Act: Some Myths Debunked', *Picture House*, No. 35, 2010 pp. 3-7

<sup>29</sup> See Low, *The History of the British Film vol. 2* pp 60-61; David Williams 'The "Cinematograph Act" of 1909', *Film History* 9:4 (1997); Neville March Hunnings, *Film Censors and the Law* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1967); Smith, *Children Cinema and Censorship* (2005).

<sup>30</sup> Burrows, J 'The 1909 Cinematograph Act: Some Myths Debunked', pp. 3-7

fact that Herbert Samuel again led the debate would appear to bear this view out.<sup>31</sup>

According to Burrows the legislation was drafted by senior Home Office civil servants:

The Act was drawn up by W.P. Byrne, the Assistant Under Secretary, G.A. Aitken, a Senior Clerk, and F.L.D. Elliott, the Private Secretary to Herbert Gladstone. Aitken and Elliott were specialists in the administration of law relating to children, and had both been instrumental in the framing of...the 1908 Children's Act. Clearly, the fact that large numbers of children attended early film shows was a significant consideration in the Home Office's approach to this issue.<sup>32</sup>

The men responsible for the technical regulations were Major A.M. Cooper-Key, His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Explosives since 1908 and an expert on the storage of petroleum spirit, and Captain A.P. Desborough who specialised in the investigation and prevention of industrial explosions.

Reynolds meanwhile was attempting to negotiate what appears to have been a conflict of interest. While he claimed to have brokered the initial meeting with Herbert Gladstone at the Home Office, he was also involved with a device which he claimed would render the threat of cinema fire obsolete. This, according to Burrows, was essentially a water tank suspended above the apparatus which could be used to instantly douse any fire. It also, according to David Williams produced 'more dissent than enlightenment' on its public demonstration in London in December 1908.

...there were so many experts there that they soon split into little disputing groups. The device itself was a receptacle filled with water and suspended above the cinematograph much like a flushing cistern. Beneath it was a sprinkler that was activated by a cotton cord. When flames burned through it, the sprinkler valve opened and drenched the apparatus, thus putting out the fire. Many of its critics declared that there were other ways of putting out the

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<sup>31</sup> Hansard, *HC Deb 21 April 1909 vol. 3 cc.1595-9*

<sup>32</sup> Burrows, 'The 1909 Cinematograph Act: Some Myths Debunked' p.4

flames than drenching a valuable piece of equipment in water and destroying perhaps £50 worth of film.<sup>33</sup>

Despite the mixed reception from the trade, some of which may have been predicated on cost and a reluctance to prioritise customer safety over replacing technology, Reynolds nonetheless used his influence with the LCC to have a clause written into their regulations that insisted that exhibitors would have to include 'some apparatus for immediately and automatically extinguishing fire in the event of the film becoming ignited'. He also wrote to newspaper editors extolling the virtues of this device. His claims appeared in *The Glasgow Herald* under the headline '*Cinematograph Fire Dangers Ended*'.<sup>34</sup> The issue with the device being promoted by Reynolds was that, according to Burrows, it was very effective in ruining electrical equipment but less effective in extinguishing burning celluloid. Reynolds eventually stepped down from the LCC in October 1908 because of what Burrows has characterised as a perceived conflict of interest.

During that period of bureaucratic inactivity between the meeting at the Home Office on February 26, 1908 and any legislation being brought forward, there was another high-profile fire; this time in London. On Boxing Day, 1908 a fire broke out at a cinema in Stratford. Although there were no fatalities there was again a serious panic and seventeen people were injured. *The Glasgow Herald* again carried the story prominently on its main news page with the headline '*Cinematograph Panic*'.<sup>35</sup> Gale's Electric Bioscope was situated on the first two floors of a three-storey building on the High Street across the road from Stratford Fair Ground. Given that it was the festive period there were a number of shows planned at the Bioscope and the fairground was also extremely busy. According to the newspaper there were two shows being screened at 7.30 on that Saturday night, one on each floor. The second storey screening had an audience of around 150 people, including

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<sup>33</sup> Williams, D. R 'The "Cinematograph Act" of 1909: An Introduction to the Impetus behind the Legislation and Some Early Effects', *Film History*, (1997), Vol 9, No. 4 p.343

<sup>34</sup> *Glasgow Herald*, July 29, 1908, p.9

<sup>35</sup> *Glasgow Herald*, December 28, 1908, p.5

many women and children since this would presumably be a family destination. There were a further 100 or so people at the screening in the downstairs venue at the same time:

The hall was immediately filled with smoke and flames, and this made the audience panic-stricken. Cries of 'Fire' were raised and a stampede for the doors took place. The cry of 'Fire' was repeated upstairs, and in an instant both audiences were in full flight for the doors and windows...The staff of ten men, seven of whom were upstairs, behaved admirably. They opened all the emergency exits, shouted to the people to be calm, and endeavoured to get the children out first. Their efforts in this direction were not, however, successful, because in rushing down the stairs one of the women stumbled and fainted, and immediately men, women, and children tumbled over her prostrate body forming a shrieking, struggling human barrier at the foot of the stair.<sup>36</sup>

With the aid of volunteers, theatre staff, and firemen the building was cleared in a very short time. One of the injured, Lizzie Johnston, described the scene in the upper theatre:

...there was a cry of 'Look out', followed by another shout of 'Fire'. Everybody got up to look and see what was the matter. One or two started screaming and rushed for the stairs. They were followed by others, and then there was a terrible scene, for the little children fell down and the bigger ones acted silly, instead of picking them up, and rushed over them. There was a great stampede, and the place seemed full of smoke. But by the time I was out I saw no more.<sup>37</sup>

Afterwards the owner, Mr Gale, said the fire had been caused by 'two electric wires coming into contact' and he praised his staff for their prompt action. There was general agreement that the action of the staff and the fact that the cinema had four emergency exits had contributed to the swift resolution of the incident. The cinema itself was largely undamaged. The cinematograph apparatus was contained in an iron box which had

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<sup>36</sup> *ibid*

<sup>37</sup> *ibid*

prevented the flames from spreading which suggests that there was a developing sense of caution among some operators, but the smoke and fumes were still enough to create panic. There were no fatalities but seventeen people were injured, again many of them young people, however the general tone of the coverage was that the incident could have been much more serious and that disaster had been averted.

An attempt at legislation was finally made in April 1909 with the debate again led by Herbert Samuel who said that the legislation had two aims.<sup>38</sup> The first was to provide safety from fire when inflammable films were used, including having the apparatus enclosed and fire extinguishing equipment on hand. The second was to ensure that the premises where the shows took place were licensed, and he suggested this could be done either by the county council, the county borough council, or the Lord Chamberlain. He cited the LCC model as an effective control both in preventing a number of serious panics that might otherwise have occurred:

But there is a great number of places both in and outside London which are unlicensed, and altogether without control; many of them are dangerous in structure, and no adequate precautions are taken against fire, and unless they are brought under control disaster is sooner or later almost inevitable. There have been several panics owing to fires arising from cinematograph films catching fire in other countries, although happily in England we have been free from them, but if the unregulated condition of these places of entertainment is allowed to continue, sooner or later disaster is almost certain to take place.<sup>39</sup>

The legislation was not unopposed. Replying to Samuel, the Conservative MP for Liverpool West Derby, William Watson Rutherford, said this was a bill which proposed 'grandmotherly and, in many cases, entirely unnecessary precautions' that were supposed to be for the public good but which would in fact cause hardship for certain individuals,

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<sup>38</sup> Hansard, *HC Deb 21 April 1909 vol. 3 col. 1597*

<sup>39</sup> *ibid*

presumably hall owners. Watson Rutherford was also at a loss as to why cinema had been singled out for legislation as opposed to other classes of entertainment which were not:<sup>40</sup>

For instance, there is all that class of entertainment where magic lanterns of different kinds, and gases which are liable to explode, and specially liable to take fire are used, and when you read this Bill through and find that these cinematograph entertainments are specially picked out, and have a Bill all to themselves, you wonder why it is so. I am credibly informed that the people who are running these different entertainments are fully aware of the risks attached to this particular kind of apparatus, and that precautions are taken in every possible way.<sup>41</sup>

Watson Rutherford raised a legitimate question when he asked why cinema should be treated in this way. In comparison, the content of theatres was controlled by the Lord Chamberlain's Office but the actual venues themselves were not as strictly regulated as the cinema. Perhaps there was still, as E.H. Bostock previously alleged, the taint of the low entertainment about the cinema. In this sense it was perhaps an attempt to control an audience which was perceived to be lower class, ignorant and by extension heedless of risk or hazard. He was wrong however when he went on to insist that 'in this country there has not been a single case of fire arising from any of these entertainments at all'.<sup>42</sup> Although Herbert Samuel strenuously assured him this was not the case; Watson Rutherford was adamant in his view. He also felt that the House was not being given sufficient time to debate the matter. Although he claimed it was not his intention to talk out the Bill, Watson Rutherford's intervention did exactly that; the debate exceeded its allotted time and could not proceed as planned. The legislation had to come back to Parliament and was finally passed at the end of the year with the first set of regulations published on December 20, 1909.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> See Bohlmann, pp. 38 - 44

<sup>41</sup> Hansard, *HC Deb 21 April 1909 vol. 3*, col. 1598

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Burrows, 'The 1909 Cinematograph Act: Some Myths Debunked', p.4

In its final form the Act said that inflammable films could not be screened for the public without a special licence from an appropriate authority.<sup>44</sup> Unlicensed exhibitors would be fined £20 for the first screening and a further £5 for each day the unlicensed shows continued. The police were also given powers of entry under the Act to check whether such shows were taking place. Overall the legislation stressed controlling the technology of cinema exhibition. Along with the Act there was a set of regulations about the operation of cinematograph shows; these included siting projectors on firm, fire-proof supports, and placing projectors in fire-proof enclosures which the audience could not reach. Films had to be encased in metal boxes and those in use in the projector had to be set in closed, metal containers. The projector light could be electric or limelight, but if limelight was used then approved types of gas cylinder were specified. There were also regulations banning smoking in the projection box and requiring that appropriate firefighting equipment – one sand bucket, one damp blanket, and two water buckets – were kept on hand.

Kuhn suggests that the case for fire safety was overstated and that Watson Rutherford may have had a point. Her contention appears to be that safety was being used as a pretext to gain censorial control of the cinema. She suggests, quite correctly, that at no point in the Parliamentary debate are actual statistics for fire cited and adds that ‘This could well be because in fact there had been no major incidents of this kind’.<sup>45</sup> This does not seem to be borne out by other evidence. The fire at Newmarket and the more recent incident at Stratford, not to mention the crushing tragedy in Barnsley, would surely have been fresh in the minds of Parliamentarians. The evidence for the risk and incidence of fire, especially to young children, seemed clear. Apart from the incidents cited here there were also fires attributed to nitrate stock at film offices in Cecil Court in London and at the Hepworth Studios at Walton on Thames.<sup>46</sup> Neither of these was a public venue but they did serve to underline the issue of fire safety.

On December 23, 1909 the Town Clerk of Glasgow A.W.Myles delivered a report to the Magistrates Committee making them aware of their responsibilities under the new

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid p.3

<sup>45</sup> Kuhn, *Cinema, Censorship and Sexuality. 1909 – 1925*, (London: 1988) p.16

<sup>46</sup> Brown ‘Censorship Under Siege’ p.4

legislation.<sup>47</sup> It was agreed by the Committee that the Corporation's Master of Works Thomas Nisbet be appointed to inspect any premises seeking a licence under the Act. However before the magistrates could act on the new regulations they had been withdrawn. What Burrows describes as 'elementary errors' had been included in the regulations; these included getting the prescribed voltage for safe operation wrong and insisting that the enclosed projection boxes had to be directly ventilated to the outside to allow smoke and fumes to escape. This latter condition was completely impractical for anyone who was screening a show in hired premises. Burrows suggests the mistakes were because of undue pressure from external sources, not least the Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, Sir Edward Henry, and that Gale's Bioscope had been the tipping point.<sup>48</sup>

The local authority characterised the Stratford fire as a low-key incident and this was reflected in the official Home Office response which merely noted their report without recommending any action. The Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, Sir Edward Henry, took a much more serious view in a letter to the Home Secretary in February 1909. Henry was concerned about the safety aspect but was much more concerned about the moral aspect. Stratford at that time was a working-class area with a large immigrant population. Henry told Gladstone that many of these shows were attended by a large number of 'foreign children of the lowest class' who were effectively being taught how to commit crime:

In these circumstances, I would urge that the Secretary of State should consider the introduction into Parliament – without delay – of a measure with the object of securing that all places of Public Entertainment where money is paid for admission should be placed under some proper control.<sup>49</sup>

According to Burrows the wording of the legislation that had been drafted for what would become the Cinematograph Act had been ready since February 1908, just a few weeks after

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<sup>47</sup> Glasgow Magistrates Committee minutes, Glasgow City Archive GB2 120/SSA/5/7/344

<sup>48</sup> Burrows, 'The 1909 Cinematograph Act: Some Myths Debunked', p.5

<sup>49</sup> *ibid*

the Home Secretary had met Reynolds and the delegation from the LCC. Nothing had been done with it since then but Sir Edward Henry's letter placed some urgency on the matter; a copy of the proposed legislation was sent to him for his consideration. It was suggested that the Bill could take effect by August 1910 but Henry insisted that it be done much earlier. This may account for the mistakes that appeared in the Regulations when they finally appeared at the end of 1909. Sir Edward Henry had evidently seen an opportunity to subvert a piece of safety legislation for a moral purpose; in that respect he would only be the first to spot a weakness in the Act which, as has already been pointed out, would allow the considerations of safety to be conflated with moral restriction.<sup>50</sup>

The Cinematograph Act had been drafted in haste and, as this chapter has shown, under extreme pressure from some sectors of the establishment. The aim had been to set up a regulatory framework that could be applied uniformly throughout the country. However, the lawmakers did not make adequate provision for Scotland's separate and distinct legal system, nor, as we will see in the following chapter, did it take into account the regional variations in that legal system, such as those which applied in Glasgow. In the end, although the Cinematograph Act had been passed, it would be considerably more difficult to implement.

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<sup>50</sup> Dickinson and Street, *Cinema and State*, p.7



## **6 The Cinematograph Act and the problems of national legislation at a local level.**

The previous chapter argued that, on safety grounds alone, there was a need for regulation which was recognised early in the emergence of the exhibition industry. The Cinematograph Act was broadly welcomed by cinema owners and exhibitors, not least as a means of providing a degree of protection and raising the standards of the industry thus allowing higher admission prices. But in cooperating with the passing of the Cinematograph Act, the exhibition industry found itself under pressure from other directions, especially after a landmark court case on the issue of Sunday opening. This chapter will look at the pressures to extend the new levels of regulation as personal safety and public morality became further enmeshed. The popularity of cinema for working-class audiences created genuine fears among the establishment. There was a wide sense that cinema audiences could not be trusted and would be swayed towards imitative behaviour. A key focus for these concerns came in the new popularity of so-called 'fight films' which will be considered here along with a case study of the most notorious of them; the fight between Jack Johnson and Jim Jeffries for the heavyweight boxing championship of the world. The implications of this bout would be felt internationally, from the United States to the United Kingdom and especially in Glasgow where the Parish Council was, as seen in Chapter Four, already especially exercised about the effects of cinema upon young audiences.<sup>1</sup> The Parish Council's concerns, which had echoes in a similar but unrelated campaign in New York, ended up defining the conditions under which cinema would operate in the city for many years.

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<sup>1</sup> See Chapter Four, pp. 129 - 159

When it was introduced the Cinematograph Act of 1909 would turn out to have unintended consequences for the exhibition industry. Even though this new legislation was a statutory instrument that would control their sector the general mood among cinema exhibitors had been supportive and almost universally positive. This optimistic response was founded largely on the belief that the legislation was intended to address only safety issues and would therefore provide a degree of certainty and security in the mind of the audience. There was also a belief that the legislation would in some way standardise aspects of exhibition, legitimise the fledgling industry, and drive out fly by night exhibitors:

Anything...which tends to remove the reproaches that have so often been levelled at the bioscope business, must affect everyone whose heart is in his work, and who takes his business seriously. For the mere dabbler and the casual speculator, the bioscope trade has no need.<sup>2</sup>

The implication was clearly that 'dabblers and casual speculators' would be forced out of the industry by the burden of compliance, thus bringing to an end the era of the penny gaff or the converted storefront. This was a view endorsed by Walter Reynolds who, although no longer involved with the LCC, had still remained vocal in the trade press. However, in one of his public utterances he, perhaps unwittingly, raised an underlying danger within the legislation. In a column in one trade paper he wondered whether this new power, about to be devolved to local authorities, would enable them to have a say in the content of the entertainment provided as well as influence over the premises in which it would be screened:

It is the duty of the police to stop any entertainment of a doubtful character, but certainly the council would have the power when the licence came up for renewal once in twelve months, to refuse to licence places which had presented undesirable shows. The knowledge that they possessed that power

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<sup>2</sup> *Bioscope*, April 1, 1909, p.4 quoted in Low, Volume 2 p.61

would be another powerful factor in securing a high class of entertainment, to the general good of the trade.<sup>3</sup>

The definition of an 'undesirable' show was left deliberately vague; given that this appears in a trade publication it is reasonable to assume that the key element in desirability was the admission price and that owners of permanent cinema sites did not want to be undercut by any fly by night speculators.<sup>4</sup>

Such concern soon spread nationally. Although the Town Clerk, Mr Myles, had made Glasgow Corporation aware of its responsibilities under the new Cinematograph Act in December 1909, the redrafting of the legislation meant his recommendations were held in abeyance. The Act was finally passed by Parliament and approved by the Secretary for Scotland on March 10, 1910. At the following month's meeting of Glasgow magistrates, Myles delivered another memorandum on the Act and also suggested that magistrates meet local film exhibitors to discuss their response to the legislation.<sup>5</sup> Broadly speaking Myles's briefing summarised the new Act for councillors and then highlighted specific conditions for the sections covering buildings and enclosures, as well as specific conditions which would involve interested officials i.e. the Master of Works, the Electrical Engineer, the Chief Officer of the Fire Brigade, and the Registrar of the Police. These conditions were to be incorporated into licences issued by the Council.

Exits shall be provided and maintained to the satisfaction of the Master of Works of the City. All the exit doors shall be fitted with automatic bolts, of a pattern and in a position approved by him, and all passages, staircases, and lobbies shall be kept lighted so long as the public are present, and such lighting shall be on a separate system from that used for the general lighting of the premises.

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3 *Kinematograph and Lantern Weekly*, February 11, 1909, p.1063 cited in Hunnings, N.M. *Film Censors and the Law*, 1967, p.45

4 The campaign by cinema owners to raise prices and drive out unlicensed competition is covered extensively by Burrows, most notably in 'Penny Pleasures' and 'Penny Pleasures II'

5 Glasgow City Archive C1 3.42 pp. 1125 - 7

1. All exit doors shall, so long as the public are present, be indicated by a fixed lighted transparency bearing the word 'Exit' clearly and distinctly marked.
2. All curtains covering doors or in passages shall be hung on sliding rings, and shall be parted in the centre, and shall not trail on the ground.
3. The seating shall be so placed that there shall be a space of at least one foot between the front of one seat and the back of the next measured between perpendiculars, and where chairs are used they shall be battened together in lengths of not less than four or more than twelve chairs.
4. The public shall be allowed to leave the premises by all exit and entrance doors, which must open outwards.
5. Where so ordered by the Magistrates Committee, such number of firemen as may be determined by them shall be in attendance during each performance, and the licensee shall pay such sum for their services as the Magistrates Committee shall fix.
6. A push bell shall be provided to enable the operator within the enclosure to communicate with the person who has control of the general lighting of the auditorium outside and away from the audience.
7. The stipulations contained in Article 5 (1) a, b, d, e, and f of the regulations dated March 10, 1910 made by the Secretary for Scotland shall be carried out to the satisfaction of the Master of Works, and those contained in c shall be carried out to the satisfaction of the Chief Engineer of the Electricity Department of the Corporation.
8. The premises shall not be opened under the licence on Sundays.

9. In special cases the Magistrates Committee may dispense with or modify such of these conditions as they see fit.<sup>6</sup>

One of the stipulations, covered under condition number eight, specifically precludes Sunday opening which can be read as an explicit link between safety and morality. Most local authorities appeared content to follow the example of the LCC who treated cinema licences in the same manner as music hall licences i.e. that it would effectively be a six-day licence with no opening on Sunday.<sup>7</sup> Other areas which were not covered by the regulations included any conditions about the presence of children in the audience, or any consideration of the content being displayed.

By virtue of a separate legal system, the Secretary for Scotland at the time, John Sinclair, took a much closer reading of the Cinematograph Act. Rather than replace local legislation, which was the case in many English authorities, Sinclair determined that the Act was predominantly a piece of safety legislation to supplement existing rules rather than supersede them.<sup>8</sup> As noted in Chapter Four, anywhere in Glasgow that wanted to screen a film was already strictly regulated by the Further Powers Act of 1892 which included conditions such as an annual inspection and reports from the Chief Fire Officer, the Master of Works and the Electrical Engineer.<sup>9</sup> It could be argued that for the most part the conditions of the Cinematograph Act, as applied to Glasgow, were no more rigorous than the existing regulations. The memorandum presented to the council in April 1910 is an amalgam of the conditions of the Act and the existing criteria, with the crucial addition of the clause about Sunday opening and the catch-all Clause 9. The Corporation could include conditions governing opening on the Sabbath because of a landmark court case in March 1910 in which the Scottish courts ruled that the ban on Sunday opening which existed under previous regulations had not been supplanted by the Cinematograph Act. The court ruled that the 1909 Act amended previous regulation but only in terms of public safety; this

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<sup>6</sup> Extracts from Glasgow Magistrates Committee records accessed at Moving Image Archive SSA/5/7/344

<sup>7</sup> Hunnings, *Film Censors and the Law*, p.49

<sup>8</sup> See Bohlmann, pp. 54 – 57, also Griffiths pp. 57-60

<sup>9</sup> See p.170

decision was never challenged and it meant, according to Griffiths, that everything other than safety was covered by the existing legislation.<sup>10</sup> In effect this meant local authorities in Scotland could use the Act for physical regulation to provide a measure of control over the cinema space, but they were unable to use it for social regulations to control the content that was being shown there.

It is also worth noting that although the Act had been passed in its redrafted form it was not applied universally, even in Scotland. Differences could and did exist at a very local level. Paisley, only a few miles away from Glasgow, stipulated that the Town Clerk be given a week's notice of any cinema exhibition, the projector should be in a fireproof box which was subject to inspection by the firemaster, and the exhibitor had to ensure that 'all reasonable precautions have been taken against accident and danger to the public'.<sup>11</sup> In Aberdeen the council chose to apply the same regulations as were in force for music halls; they could not open on Sundays and opening hours were limited to 11.00 am to 11.30 pm. There is no mention of where the projector should be placed but all employees had to be trained in the use of firefighting equipment, and all inflammable material had to be rendered non-inflammable. Duplicate lighting was to be employed, there was to be no exceeding of the licensed capacity, and 'Full Up' signs were to be displayed clearly in areas where there were no seats left; these last conditions are presumably an attempt to guard against a repeat of the Barnsley disaster.<sup>12</sup>

It is difficult to gauge the impact of the Cinematograph Act on the physical built environment for cinemas in Glasgow. The records of the Glasgow Dean of Guilds Court are frustratingly incomplete or inaccessible in this regard however in his annual address in 1910 the Dean of Guild, Francis Henderson, does not mention any issues.<sup>13</sup> Since the report covered the period from September 1, 1909 to August 31, 1910, which took in the dates in which the act was introduced, it might be reasonable to expect any consequential issues to have been raised. Henderson's address however is generally concerned with the lack of

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10 Griffiths p.60

11 Anon. *The Modern Bioscope Operator*, (London: 1910), p.142

12 Ibid, pp. 136, 137

13 *Glasgow Herald*, September 30, 1910, p.9

building activity in the city. Similarly, the official history of the Dean of Guilds Court in Glasgow made no mention of any further complications raised by the Act in terms of cinema building.<sup>14</sup>

Although settled by the Scottish courts Sunday opening remained a contentious issue in England. The LCC's six-day licence policy had used the Cinematograph Act to prevent the Bermondsey Bioscope from opening on a Sunday and the cinema had taken the council to court. The magistrates' court found in favour of the cinema which suggested that the LCC had no legal authority to regulate public morality under the Act. This was an important decision since it separated public morality and public safety and cinema owners were understandably encouraged by the verdict but the LCC pursued the case at appeal. On December 9, 1910, much to the surprise of the industry, the Divisional Court ruled in favour of the Council finding that the magistrates' court's decision that the Council's action had been *ultra vires* was wrong.<sup>15</sup> Not only did this prevent the Bermondsey Bioscope from opening on Sunday it meant that the Act could in fact be used as a blanket measure to deal with issues other than those explicitly stated in the wording of the statute. A legal instrument designed for health and safety had now been co-opted with legal endorsement to act on an issue of moral authority.<sup>16</sup> But this was not the case in Scotland.

As outlined in Chapter Four Glasgow Parish Council, had been conducting its own investigations into cinema audiences in the East End of the city and on October 10, 1910 they made their first formal representation to the Corporation. A meeting of the Magistrates Committee on the 27<sup>th</sup> of the month was informed that the Inspector and Clerk of the Parish Council had submitted a letter:

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14 Andrew M. Jackson, *Glasgow Dean of Guilds Court: A History* (Glasgow: 1983)

15 *Glasgow Herald*, December 10, 1910, p.5

16 Dickinson and Street, *Cinema and State*, p.7

... with a report by one of his officers as to the number and class of children attending cinematograph entertainments in the city and the nature of several of these exhibitions.<sup>17</sup>

As previously mentioned the Glasgow magistrates, in what would become a lengthy process, agreed to continue the matter for further consideration and it would be a further three years before the issue of children in Glasgow cinemas was finally resolved. It is interesting that, in the same manner as Sir Edward Henry in his 1908 letter to the Home Secretary in which he insisted children were being taught to become criminals by what they saw at the cinema, the Parish Council submission made class as much of an issue as youth.<sup>18</sup> This was indicative of a move away from the provision of safety and into a more censorious climate which presumed that the cinema audience, which in most areas was largely working-class, could not be trusted or allowed to see certain types of entertainment for fear of moral corruption. There appeared to be a growing concern about the moral fibre of the nation, and a presumption that it might be easily influenced among the lower classes, with cinema as a new popular entertainment repeatedly mentioned as a potential contributory factor.

One of the major concerns was a genre of pictures that became known as 'fight films'. These were films of boxing matches which had generally been recorded live, although in some cases reconstructions were used, to be distributed to cinemas around the world. The event which had the most significant impact was that of the World Heavyweight Championship fight in Reno, Nevada in July 1910 between the African-American Jack Johnson and the former champion James Jeffries, a white boxer, who had come out of retirement for the bout. Johnson won the fight and his victory triggered race riots across the United States. According to an Associated Press despatch dated July 4 and carried in *The Los Angeles Times*:

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17 Glasgow City Archive, Minutes of Glasgow Magistrates Committee, October 27th, 1910 C1 3.43 p.2656

18 Burrows, 'The 1909 Cinematograph Act: Some Myths Debunked', p.5

Race rioting broke out like prickly heat all over the country late today between whites, angry and sore because Jeffries had lost the fight at Reno, and negroes jubilant that Johnson had won.<sup>19</sup>

The race issue may have been an implicit concern of those who were campaigning against fight films in the United Kingdom. The Watch Committee in Walsall and the LCC both took action effectively to ban the film from being shown in premises licensed by them.<sup>20</sup> A few days after the Johnson-Jeffries fight, the matter was raised at a meeting of Glasgow Corporation at which the Town Clerk was asked if there was any way to prevent 'the public exhibition by means of the cinematograph or otherwise of a reproduction of the late American prize fight'.<sup>21</sup> A.W. Myles told the councillors that even with the recent passing of the Cinematograph Act there was little he could do:

...the Further Powers Act 1892 dealt with public shows and under it no such show could be set up in the city without the permission of the magistrates. If an application was made under the recent Cinematograph Act they were bound to grant permission for cinematograph shows – provided all the statutory conditions were fulfilled by the applicant. If such a show was to be set up in a duly licensed place the magistrates would have no power to interfere...if the exhibition was given by one duly licensed to hold cinematograph exhibitions.<sup>22</sup>

The Town Clerk's response, confirming what the court case had settled i.e. that the council had no control over cinema content, provoked a bitter debate in which one councillor, Baillie Anderson, wondered whether this meant that, having been given a licence, an exhibitor could screen anything even if it were obscene. Myles assured him this was not the case because in instances of obscenity the Public Authority, in this case Glasgow Corporation, did have powers to intervene. Baillie Anderson was not entirely satisfied with

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19 <http://latimesblogs.latimes.com/thedailymirror/2010/07/fight-of-the-century-touches-off-race-riots.html> last accessed March 25, 2016

20 Hunnings, *Film Censors and the Law*, p.50

21 *Glasgow Herald*, July 8, 1910 p.4

22 *ibid*

the answer and ultimately the Lord Provost, Sir Archibald McInnes Shaw, had to intervene to say that in matters of obscenity and decency each case would be dealt with on its merits. Although the issue was dropped Baillie Anderson insisted that it was 'scandalous' that films could not be stopped from being exhibited. The same issue was raised in Parliament a few days later with questions asked of the then Home Secretary Winston Churchill.<sup>23</sup> Two MPs asked whether Churchill could either himself prevent the exhibition of these films or ask local authorities to prevent them being shown, presumably fearing similar reactions in the United Kingdom to those seen in the United States.<sup>24</sup> Churchill admitted that he had no power to take either action. The racial subtext however seems to have been highlighted by a further question from the West Ham MP William Thorne who wondered whether the issue would have arisen had Jeffries, the white boxer, beaten Johnson, the African-American.<sup>25</sup> The question, which went unanswered, provoked laughter in the House which appears to indicate that race was indeed an issue.

When the film of the Johnson-Jeffries fight was eventually screened in Glasgow it did provoke legal action, but only in terms of copyright. The showman E.H. Bostock screened the film at his Zoo and Circus in New City Road for a week from November 14, 1910. His advertisements in *The Evening Times* stressed that the film had been obtained at 'enormous cost' and this was reflected in newly-increased admission prices that began at a shilling and rose to two shillings.<sup>26</sup> The newspaper write-up spoke of the films in glowing terms:

At yesterday's matinee in the Zoo Hippodrome, cinematograph films of the prize fight between Jim Jeffries and Jack Johnson in America this year were shown. The pictures are certainly remarkable. They afford a capital idea of the contest between these two renowned gladiators of the ring, and the spectators can follow the ringcraft of the men almost as well as if they were seated around the ring in Reno. The pictures are clear, and the disconcerting flicker which is

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<sup>23</sup> *Glasgow Herald*, July 12, 1910 p.11

<sup>24</sup> Hansard *HC Deb 11 July 1910 vol. 19 cc. 19-20*

<sup>25</sup> *ibid*

<sup>26</sup> *Evening Times*, Tuesday, November 15, 1910, p.8

so irritating a feature in so many films is entirely absent...It may be remarked there is nothing in the picture that justify in the slightest degree the outcry that their exhibition should be prohibited on the score of brutality.<sup>27</sup>

There is a sense in this review of the eventfulness of the screening. The unnamed reporter drew on the notion of cinema as a substitute for experience as well as addressing the improving technical quality of the exhibition. Perhaps most important there is also a sense of this being more than about a mere screening of a film, it was also a news story which suggests that the controversy around the film marks the medium starting to transcend the notion that it is only a diversion or an entertainment. Despite the report citing Johnson's 'genial black countenance' and 'sunny smile', the fight contributed to the climate of anxiety surrounding race relations. The mentions of 'brutality' in the report also suggested the beginnings of a concern over screen violence, which would become an issue for such films.

Attempts were made to stop the film being screened but not out of any sense of moral outrage; the Vitagraph Company sought an interdict against Bostock claiming that he had no rights to show the film.<sup>28</sup> Vitagraph had licensed the film to a Mr R.A.P. Williams to be screened first of all in Londonderry and then, in an extension of the agreement, in various towns in Scotland. One condition of the agreement, according to the court report, seems to have been that it should not be screened in areas with populations greater than 20,000, although no reason was given for the limitation. Vitagraph wanted Bostock to stop screening the film but Bostock claimed that he had acted in good faith with Mr Williams and was unaware of any previous agreement with Vitagraph. Sheriff Fyfe, taking into account that the film had only two performances left to run and that Mr Williams could not be found so that a summons could be served, refused Vitagraph's interdict and the film played for the rest of its run.<sup>29</sup>

As can be seen in the earlier questions asked of the Glasgow Town Clerk, fight films seemed to have been a particular issue for those concerned with the question of imitative

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27 *ibid*

28 *Evening Times*, Friday, November 18, 1910, p.10

29 *ibid*

behaviour. In an article in the Evangelical Christian magazine *The Quiver*, the issue was considered by a writer who took a trip to Whitechapel, a notoriously poor part of London, to canvass the opinions of children on what they see on screen. His young subjects seemed most excited by the action sequences. The writer wondered if such scenes 'made too realistic, may constitute a peril'.<sup>30</sup> However, he reconciled himself to the fact that children would ultimately come to realise that what they were witnessing was fictional. The issue of what he called 'prize-fight films' was different because they were not fictional and might therefore have lent themselves more to imitation:

Among the working class there has been of late a revived interest in pugilism. This is largely due to the enterprise of certain third-rate music halls in arranging special boxing matinees. The frequenters of these places are, as a rule, the riff-raff of the population. Watch the stream of weedy 'fag'-smoking youths issuing from one of the halls in South London after one of these orgies of brutalism, and remember that those hundreds of youths are idle when they should be at work, and you will have a most salutary insight into one of the prolific causes of industrial inefficiency and incipient hooliganism.<sup>31</sup>

The article taps into a network of establishment fears; not only of violence and crime but also of 'industrial inefficiency' which can be read as an attack on profit itself which may be more important. It also lays the blame specifically at the feet of the film show. In Glasgow fight films were, according to newspaper listings, a popular item on the programme of the Britannia Panopticon.<sup>32</sup> However apart from the occasional concern such as the aforementioned request to the Town Clerk on whether they might be banned, there is no clear evidence of any trouble resulting directly from these films. It is interesting to speculate on whether there was a difference between the audience for a fight film and the general cinema audience; we have no way of knowing but since they seem to be screened predominantly at The Panopticon, with its traditions of raucous music hall, then we might

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<sup>30</sup> Denis Crane, 'The Picture Palace: How Are We to Regard It.' *The Quiver*, 47:5 (1912: Mar), p.456

<sup>31</sup> *ibid*

<sup>32</sup> *Evening Times*, Monday, February 13, 1911, Monday, February 20, 1911, Tuesday, February 28, 1911, p.9

assume this would not attract the sort of higher status audience to which cinema was beginning to aspire.

The debate surrounding fight films highlighted growing concerns over the influence that moving pictures might have on the morality of the nation, especially where children were concerned. Less an anxiety about what is happening and more a concern about what might happen, the clear implication was that the lower classes were not sufficiently intelligent to know their own mind. The major issues were the inducement to imitative behaviour inciting either crime or violence. The *Glasgow Herald* carried a number of stories highlighting the underlying concern; this was not as part of any organised campaign but their presence in the newspaper suggests that, as in the case of children's physical safety in fires or crushes, there was sufficient public interest in the subject to justify the inclusion. At a time when the Cinematograph Act, no matter how it was applied, at least guaranteed safety, this notion of a corrupting influence on the young would not have been what the cinema industry was aiming at. There are increasing signs of an image problem and cinema owners and exhibitors found themselves in another conflict.

Typical of the issue was a report, 'By Special Telegram' from the United States, about crimes allegedly influenced by cinema that appeared in *The Glasgow Herald* not long after the Corporation row about fight films.<sup>33</sup> According to the report, a woman in Pennsylvania who had been having a row with her lover killed herself allegedly after seeing the heroine of a film do the same on screen. In Pittsburgh six men held up a streetcar and shot a policeman claiming they got the idea from a film:

There is a growing movement throughout the country to put a stop to the exhibition of cinematograph pictures which depict crime...the authorities of several cities including Pittsburgh, Philadelphia and Atlanta, have barred crime pictures as well as those of the prize fights... A wave of crime which is extending

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<sup>33</sup> *Glasgow Herald*, July 25, 1910 p.10

itself across several states is believed to be almost directly due to the exhibition of these sordid pictures.<sup>34</sup>

This notion of imitative behaviour being dictated by cinema appeared to be the crux of a growing movement to legislate further against the industry. Although the Cinematograph Act had made venues safe, and arguably protected their entrepreneurial speculators, there was still a simmering moral panic about the content of the material being shown in these sites. If it was likely to lead to crime, and more alarmingly for the middle and upper classes, crime against property, many felt that exhibition should be closely regulated. These newspaper reports can be taken as evidence of a growing discourse on film and its supposed, feared, or anticipated effects on the audience.

Later in the year *The Glasgow Herald* reported another case, this time at Tottenham Childrens Court, in which Marie Carroll, a 14-year-old girl from Wood Green, was accused of breaking into a gas meter and stealing 6s 4d.<sup>35</sup> In her defence Carroll had initially claimed that the robbery was part of a larger crime in which she had been held up along with her 5-year-old sister and 18-month-old brother:

Two men come in and asked where mother was. I said upstairs. They tied my hands together and put a cross around my neck and bound Bessie (the sister) to the table leg and Georgie to the chair. Then they took some matches out of their pocket and tried to melt it (indicating the gas meter). Then they took a pair of pliers and wrenched it and they counted it on the table and put it in a bag and went away through the window the same way they had come...Neither of the young children was tied and witness asked how they got free. Marie replied – 'I got scissors and managed to cut Bessie and I undone Georgie with my teeth'. Marie's hands were secured by a cord which was twisted but not tied around her wrists. Witness sent for the police.<sup>36</sup>

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34 *ibid*

35 *Glasgow Herald*, November 2, 1910 p.12

36 *ibid*

When the police arrived and Carroll was questioned by detectives she admitted that she had in fact broken into the meter herself to get money for sweets and pastries. She added that she had got the idea from seeing a similar incident at 'a picture palace in Balham'. Her father, who is described as being 'a respectably dressed man', said his daughter was a good girl who was a great help to her mother. The magistrate ultimately bound Marie over to her father for 40s to be of good behaviour for six months, but not before issuing a stern warning about the potential hazards of cinema to young minds:

Alderman Huggett deprecated children going to places such as picture palaces where they might get suggestions of this kind. The Bench was in doubt as to whether they should impose a penalty and charge it against the father for having neglected to exercise proper control over the child inasmuch as he had allowed her to have her innocent mind tainted by these pictures.<sup>37</sup>

Regardless of how representative they were of general conditions, the fact that cases such as these were not only occurring but being prominently reported in newspapers was perhaps an indication that the cinema industry had a serious public relations issue. The Cinematograph Act had been welcomed by the sector as an imprimatur of safety and security, but this image may have been threatened by suggestions that the content being screened in these spaces was apparently not as wholesome and safe as the spaces themselves. Cinema exhibitors did not want to be on the wrong side of this argument and in January, 1912 they formed a trade body, The Cinematograph Exhibitors Association. The situation was neatly summed up in an editorial in the trade paper *Bioscope* two weeks later:

It is not the picture theatre that is now the recipient of attack from the many self-appointed guardians of the public morals, but, rather, tired of the contempt which generally greets their efforts, they are clamouring, with no small voice, for the appointment of a Censor of Films to whom, apparently all subjects would have to be submitted for approval – or otherwise.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> *ibid*

<sup>38</sup> *Bioscope*, February 8, 1912 p.343 quoted in Hunnings, *Film Censors and the Law*. p.51

Plainly the industry, speaking through its trade paper, felt that if any restrictions were to be imposed on films this would be better done by the industry itself rather than be left to what Bioscope called 'the mercy of an arbitrary authority'.<sup>39</sup> That view was supported by leading figures including Cecil Hepworth, arguably the most famous and influential British film maker of the period.<sup>40</sup> In addition P.H. Cromelin of the Edison Manufacturing Co. Ltd believed that the endorsement and co-operation of the Home Office should be sought.<sup>41</sup> Cromelin's involvement fused morality, commerce and politics in a single figure and, appropriately enough, he was part of a delegation of manufacturers, exhibitors and renters who met the Home Secretary Reginald McKenna on February 22, 1912. It was Cromelin who suggested that a group of men, he suggested three to five, of appropriate standing, should view films before they were released. They would have the power to give films a seal of approval; Cromelin proposed a similar arrangement to the National Board of Censorship in New York. The trade suggested it would pay the wages of the men who were selected to view the films but there was a parallel desire for the Home Office to serve as the court of last resort and act as a body to arbitrate in contentious cases.<sup>42</sup> While welcoming the initiative McKenna was sensitive to the potential political implications of a government-appointed Censor, even on an appellate basis, since this would undoubtedly be seen as de facto state censorship. In addition, addressing the trade's main issue of achieving uniformity of standards across all of the local authorities in the United Kingdom would require an Act of Parliament to which McKenna, pleading pressure of Parliamentary business, was unable to commit. Perhaps recognising that there may be legitimate local variations in standards and tastes McKenna suggested an approach to local authorities, especially the LCC but the Council did not feel there was any great demand suggesting that 'not one single complaint had been sent to the Theatres Committee of any film or representation put before the people of London'.<sup>43</sup>

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39 *ibid*

40 T.D. Mathews, *Censored: The Story of Film Censorship in Britain*, (London: 1994) p.21

41 *Bioscope*, February 8, 1912 p.343 quoted in Hunnings, *Film Censors and the Law*, p.51

42 Low, *The History of the British Film 1906- 1914*, p.87

43 *Ibid*, p.53

The LCC was correct in one sense. There did not appear to be any desire by local authorities to introduce legislation regarding film content; their concerns, as in Glasgow, appeared to be safety and the hours during which cinemas could open. Nonetheless, according to Hunnings, religious and reform groups were beginning to make their opinions felt.<sup>44</sup> There is clear evidence of this in Glasgow, for example, with the actions of the Parish Council. There seemed to be genuine concern within the industry that the campaign for respectability and attendant profitability could be undone. Without formal support from the Home Office or the LCC the industry had to act independently and at what was described as a 'poorly attended' meeting of the Cinematograph Exhibitors Association on July 3, 1912 a motion was passed to the effect that a system of censorship was advisable and plans were drawn up on that basis.<sup>45</sup> The President of the newly-formed British Board of Film Censors (BBFC) was announced on November 7, 1912 as Mr G.A. Redford, a former Examiner of Plays in the Lord Chamberlain's Office. Redford would be in charge of four examiners who would act as:

...a purely independent and impartial body, whose duty it will be to induce confidence in the minds of licensing authorities and of those who have in their charge the moral welfare of the Community generally.<sup>46</sup>

In Glasgow, the issue of film censorship was an area of growing concern for the city magistrates. Since the first representation from Glasgow Parish Council on October 10, councillors had instituted what appeared to be a succession of delaying tactics which, as has previously been indicated, may have been connected to a number of councillors being involved in the exhibition industry. With the formation of the BBFC, and the climate that led to its establishment, the Corporation was being left with less and less room to manoeuvre. The Parish Council report continued to make its way through a succession of committees nonetheless, and pressure came from another source in the shape of noted actress and self-styled health campaigner Olga Nethersole. She was travelling throughout the United Kingdom on what would turn out to be her farewell stage tour in a production

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44 Hunnings, *Film Censors and the Law*, pp. 49 - 51

45 Ibid, p.53

46 John Trevelyan, *What the Censor Saw*, (London: 1973), p.25

called *The Awakening of Helena Richie*. Nethersole was an active campaigner for film censorship and used her fame to lobby local authorities wherever she went. When the play came to Glasgow in October 1912 she wrote to the Lord Provost 'as to the desirability of having a censorship of cinematograph pictures' which may not have been surprising since, as a stage actress, she was working in a field that was effectively censored by the Lord Chamberlain. The letter was duly passed to the Magistrates Committee which, unsurprisingly, agreed 'to continue consideration of the subject matter pending the chief constable reporting thereon'.<sup>47</sup> Miss Nethersole's visit to Glasgow had not been successful; her reception by the critics was only marginally warmer than her reception from the Baillies however the pressure on the Committee was building.<sup>48</sup> In December 1912, the Committee finally decided to pass the question of censorship over to 'the special subcommittee appointed in connection with the attendance of children at cinematographic entertainment'.<sup>49</sup>

The Magistrates Committee of Glasgow Corporation finally met to consider the issue of film censorship on April 10, 1913 a little more than three months after the BBFC had been set up and six weeks after the date by which the Board had announced that every film released in Britain would have a censor's certificate of approval.<sup>50</sup> The magistrates again had their attention drawn to the Nethersole letter and were also informed of the outcome of the final meeting of the special subcommittee which was considering the Glasgow Parish Council report. After some consideration, they finally reached a decision on how films would be classified in Glasgow cinemas.

1. So far as regards (a) that in view of the provisions of the Glasgow Police Acts relative to public exhibitions and having regard to the terms of the report by the Chief Constable referred to, and to the fact as reported by the Town Clerk that the

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47 Minutes of Glasgow Magistrates Committee, October 24th, 1912 C1 3.47 p.2656

48 *Glasgow Herald*, October 22, 1912 p.11

49 Minutes of Glasgow Magistrates Committee, December 20th, 1912 C1 3.48 p.384

50 Minutes of Glasgow Magistrates Committee, April 10, 1913 C1 3.48 p.1226

British Board of Film Censors had been established, no further action be taken with regard to the said subject matter of censorship; and

2. With regard to (b) that all future licences or renewals thereof under the Cinematograph Act, shall, if and when granted, be subject to the following terms, conditions and restrictions in addition to the existing conditions and any others that may hereafter be imposed by the Magistrates Committee...<sup>51</sup>

The conditions in Clause 2 were those already stated that prevented unaccompanied children under 14 being in cinemas after 9.30, that unaccompanied children be provided with separate seating, that coloured safety lighting be introduced, and that fire extinguishers be regularly inspected. In reaching this conclusion they managed to tie together the twin issues of morality and safety and while this was not as egregious an example as the Bermondsey case, it is undoubtedly another instance of the Cinematograph Act being allied to a purpose for which it was not intended.

The magistrates may have left the issue of censorship and the adoption of the BBFC on the table, but the argument that some sectors of the audience ought to be excluded, an argument that was conducted largely on the grounds of class, gender, and morality, had found some traction. Whether or not, as has been seen, the regulations were scarcely observed, a piece of health and safety legislation was still subverted to be used for moral prohibition. As we have seen earlier the new prohibitions in Glasgow, although they imposed new conditions on cinemas, were not as draconian as those in other cities. We might assume that the presence of cinema owners within the Corporation mitigated the effect of the moralisers and came up with a set of regulations that might be described as 'business friendly'. They were not sufficiently onerous to create issues for existing owners, but there were enough conditions to provide a regulatory barrier to more opportunistic entrants.

In Glasgow there was less of an issue with Sunday opening; since the proscription was included in the initial draft of licensing regulations it is difficult to gauge whether the local

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<sup>51</sup> *ibid*

industry favoured the idea but given the terms of license the point is somewhat moot. That apart, the industry seemed pleased with the situation in which it found itself after the passage of the Cinematograph Act<sup>52</sup>. After the tragedies of Newmarket and Barnsley and the near-tragedy at Stratford there had been a demand for national regulation for a sector which had been largely self-regulatory to this point. Now that these regulations were in place, with local variations, the exhibition industry could be optimistic that the public would see their venues as safe spaces. The perception within the industry was that cinemas were now protected from interfering local authorities or overzealous religious or moral campaigners.<sup>53</sup>

In their drive for legitimacy cinema owners believed that the hallmark of legislation would elevate their cinemas and drive out competitors from the lower end of the trade. Burrows suggests this was not the case. He asserts that there were 70 penny gaffs operating in London in 1909, the year before the Act came into force, but there were 82 in operation in 1910, once the Act was on the statute book.<sup>54</sup> One effect of legislation was to permit expansion in the middle and top end of the market rather than restrict trade at the bottom end. Again, according to Burrows, in December 1909 there were 52 cinemas in London which might be categorised as being middle or upper tier. Burrows definition is those 'with larger seating capacities than a converted shop, charging admission prices of threepence or more'; by the end of 1910 there were 128. In Glasgow, as we have established, there are no penny gaffs but in terms of exhibition spaces the earliest official figures from the Department of Public Works appear to be for 1913 by which time there were 85 sites, including municipal premises, licensed for cinema exhibition ranging from the 225-seat Wilton Halls in Napiershall Street in Maryhill to Govan Town Hall with a capacity of 2500.<sup>55</sup> If the official list contained in Appendix One is cross-referenced with the Scottish Cinema

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52 Williams, 'The "Cinematograph Act" of 1909: An Introduction to the Impetus behind the Legislation and Some Early Effects', p.350.

53 *ibid*

54 Burrows, 'The 1909 Cinematograph Act: Some Myths Debunked', pp.6,7

55 Glasgow City Archives D-OPW 61.5

Database, this suggests that 44 of these sites opened after 1909 and the introduction of the Cinematograph Act.<sup>56</sup>

We may conclude in this chapter that although there were serious attempts to limit the cinema industry's terms of operating, both by legislation and regulation, the industry in Glasgow came out of the process in a more robust and confident state. Although there was still a great deal of competition from other entertainment, most notably roller skating, the years from 1909 – 1914 saw a boom in British cinema building and, as can be seen in Appendix 2, the increase in screens for Glasgow appears to bear out the nationwide picture as indicated by Hiley's research.<sup>57</sup> He suggested that in 1909, 78 cinema exhibition companies were registered in Britain with investment capital of £708,000 and in the following year, 1910, this figure was 231 registered companies with investment capital of £2,183,700. Much of this increased investment was due to the greater certainty of a return since, providing the regulations were met, there was no chance of the premises being closed or prosecuted. The Cinematograph Act provided legal certitude about the status of a cinema exhibition site which would encourage financial speculation. In addition, it made sense, both legally and economically, to build a bespoke site to legislative specifications rather than risk the uncertainty of rented premises. The combination of safe sites, morally secure entertainment, and the degree of comfort that a bespoke cinema could provide paved the way for cinema in Glasgow to be recognised as a legitimate, family entertainment and a piece of legislation that could have been proscriptive played a large part in embedding cinema in the entertainment landscape. As will be discussed in the next chapter, this process would be further cemented by social developments which established Glasgow city centre as a safe and attractive leisure space, as well as developments in cinema architecture which would add to the desirability and eventfulness of a trip to the cinema.

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<sup>56</sup> The Scottish Cinema Database at <http://www.scottishcinemas.org.uk/database2.php> last accessed April 3, 2018

<sup>57</sup> Nicholas Hiley, 'Nothing More than a Craze: Cinema Building in Britain 1909- 1914' in Higson (ed.) *Young and Innocent? The Cinema in Britain 1896-1930* (Exeter: University of Exeter press, 2002), pp. 111 -127.



## 7 Architecture, memories, and the rise of the cinema natives.

As has been shown in the previous three chapters the introduction of national legislation and attempts at local control posed several challenges to the cinema industry in Glasgow. However, such interventions created a stable and more viable industry which could attract investment and, providing the legal and regulatory safeguards were met, provide a reasonable certainty of return. In Chapter Four we cited Allen's claim that from 1908 – 1912, cinema exhibition in Manhattan changed radically. Similar transitions were occurring in Glasgow in the same period and it is these changes that will be examined in more detail in this chapter. According to Allen there was a 'movement toward spacious, middle-class oriented theatres and away from the converted storefront'.<sup>1</sup> We have established there were no storefront cinemas or penny gaffs in Glasgow but in other respects there were similarities with Manhattan. Glasgow was moving away from re-purposed venues towards custom-built sites. Of the 44 new cinemas previously cited by Glasgow's Department of Public Works in 1913 in Appendix One, 28 were built as dedicated cinema sites between 1910 and 1913 while the remaining 16 were converted from existing venues.<sup>2</sup>

With films now being shown in spaces more used to live entertainment, cinema was able to compete on level terms with legitimate theatre. At the same time, just as the industry had hoped, the changes in the regulatory framework meant that, even though cinema's appeal was pan-class, they could concentrate on a more upmarket clientele. Part of the allure, as well as a dedicated space, was the advent of colour which meant that film, rather than appear as a monochromatic facsimile of life as in Gorky's previously mentioned *Kingdom of Shadows*, can now be as vibrant and attractive as a live performance. So, by

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<sup>1</sup> Allen, 'Motion Picture Exhibition in Manhattan 1906 – 1912' p.10

<sup>2</sup> The City Picture House in Renfield Street was a former restaurant, the BB Cinerama in Victoria Road, along with several others, was a converted ice skating rink, and the Canadian Picture Palace in Springburn was an old church. See The Scottish Cinema Database at <http://www.scottishcinemas.org.uk/database2.php>

the end of this chapter we will argue that the medium has emerged in a form very similar to what we might expect today when we consider cinema.

Once again a crucial element in the maturing of the exhibition industry was the development and re-definition of Glasgow city centre. The introduction of electric lighting, the very epitome of modern living, made the streets bright, safer, and added to the city's sense of spectacle. The concrete manifestation of this came in the opening of Glasgow's first custom-built cinema which invoked the spirit of the age in its very naming as The Charing Cross Electric Theatre. As audiences flocked to cinemas, the old habit of converting warehouses or variety theatres was no longer as appealing. In the period after the passage of the Cinematograph Act cinema architecture, and especially the interior space, became a key driver in the definition of what cinema in Glasgow could be. The audience began to have expectations of a cinema space and this chapter will consider as a case study Albert Victor Gardner, the man who, more than most, was responsible for the look of Glasgow's cinemas as he brought a glimpse of luxury to the city's tenemented housing schemes. This chapter argues that the audience's relationship with the spaces designed by Gardner and others added to a sense of eventfulness. There was a growing awareness of the cinema as not just a destination for a night out to see a film but a creator of memories and the nature of those memories will also be considered in this chapter.

The passage of the Cinematograph Act created a demonstrable boom in cinema exhibition in Glasgow. If the listings pages of *The Evening Times* are taken as an indicator then in February 1910, for example, there were four cinemas in the city centre of which two, Hengler's Circus and the Britannia Panopticon, also featured variety or music hall acts.<sup>3</sup> The following year, after the Cinematograph Act had been implemented, there were eight, again including Hengler's Circus and the Britannia Panopticon.<sup>4</sup> The legislation ushered in an exciting period in Glasgow's cinema development and undoubtedly increased the civic

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<sup>3</sup> *Evening Times*, February 28, 1910 p.8

<sup>4</sup> *Evening Times*, February 6, 1911 p.8

standing of cinema in the city. Increasingly engaged as citizens or customers, and in some cases both, there was, as has been suggested, a growing sense of cinema as a civic asset. The period currently under consideration was one in which Glasgow not only got its first custom-built, fixed-site venue, but also saw the construction of a cinema space which would rival any in the United Kingdom for luxury, extravagance, and opulence.

The development of cinema appears to have gone hand in hand with the emergence of the city centre as a safe and morally approved destination. There were a number of factors at play here not least the opening of four city centre main line railway terminals at Queen Street, Buchanan Street, Glasgow Central, and St Enoch's, which boosted commercial development in the area. There would also, we might assume, be increased policing to secure this new commercial area which in turn would make the city centre feel safer. However, I would argue that one of the most important factors in the development of Glasgow city centre as a leisure destination was the introduction of electric street lighting at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The first street lighting in Glasgow came in 1767, with a few oil lamps being sited in Trongate, the historical heart of the city.<sup>5</sup> Progress was slow, and by 1814 there were still only 1274 street lights in the whole of the city. The advent of coal gas and its use as a lighting source led to the establishment of the Gas Light Company in the city in 1817 and on September 15<sup>th</sup>, 1818 the first street light proper was switched on. Electric lighting was introduced in 1879 when the new St Enoch's Station was illuminated by six arc lamps. By 1892 a central power station had been built in Waterloo Street, and electric street lighting came to the city centre in 1893. By the end of February of that year there were 112 arc lamps situated in Sauchiehall Street, Renfield Street, Union Street, Jamaica Street, Argyle Street and Trongate. Buchanan Street and George Square were similarly illuminated. *The Glasgow Herald* reported that the move had proved so popular that the Corporation had

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5 <http://scienceonstreets.phys.strath.ac.uk/new/Lighting.html> last accessed July 10, 2017

the problem of 'satisfactorily meeting the demand that has sprung up'.<sup>6</sup> By 1895 there were no fewer than 20,000 public lamps in operation.<sup>7</sup> This public position was in sharp contrast to the domestic electric supply. In 1896 there were only 855 customers for domestic electricity and even by 1901 this had only grown to 3000. Along with the illumination came an expansion of Glasgow Central railway station between 1901 and 1905. In its own right the city centre had become not only accessible after dark but safer too and an attraction with its own sense of spectacle.

Nasaw suggests that, before electricity, city centres had been places of pleasures but only forbidden ones.<sup>8</sup> Anyone going out at night was in pursuit of 'the illicit or the immoral'. Electric lighting illuminated and legitimised the city centre space for all classes, not just those who could afford to be previously transported safely through the gloom in their private carriages. In the American example electricity and vaudeville go hand in hand as it was used to promote venues as clean, modern, unobjectionable, and safe spaces. Nasaw also suggests that the United States was far ahead of Europe in electrifying its streets; New York had 17,000 electric lights in 1903, Philadelphia almost 10,000, and Chicago around 9,000. This is compared to Munich (1291), Berlin (735), and Hamburg (399).<sup>9</sup> However, Glasgow in 1895 had more lamps (20,000) than any of the three cited American cities, and more than double those of Philadelphia and Chicago.

These same conditions saw the centre of Glasgow emerge as a leisure destination, it had transport links and, with the blaze of electric lighting, it became a place to see and be seen. Accordingly, it emerged as a legitimate area for investment in the cinema industry, especially since the Cinematograph Act solidified the chances of a return on any outlay.

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6 *Glasgow Herald*, October 16, 1893 p.4

7 <http://scienceonstreets.phys.strath.ac.uk/new/Electricity.html> last accessed July 10, 2017

8 Nasaw, D. 'It Begins with the Lights' in *On the Edge of Your Seat: Popular Theatre and Film in Early Twentieth Century American Art* by Patricia McDonnell (ed.) (London: 2002) p.45

9 *Ibid* p.49

This would allow cinema to move back into the traditional neighbourhoods of legitimate theatre, from which it had first emerged at the Skating Palace and become something of a higher-status entertainment while continuing to thrive in the suburbs.

There is no doubt that going to see a film was a popular entertainment choice for Glaswegians. In 1913 the city had just under 87,000 cinema seats, if we take together those in cinemas as well as premises licensed to screen films such as municipal halls.<sup>10</sup> This is a very obvious indication of the scale of Glasgow's cinema-going habit. Also, by this time *The Glasgow Herald* had joined *The Evening Times* in providing cinema coverage. Consequently there are signs of an emergence of a star culture where the names of several actors appear frequently in reviews to suggest that the audience was familiar enough with their work for this to be a draw in itself. There was also a sense of what a cinema programme should be with some films being given more weight than others; phrases such as 'chief film' began to occur in reportage suggesting that there was a hierarchy in the cinema programme as there would be on a variety bill, for example. The programme also became more and more reliant on story films which was a consequence of the developments in film form and these films, anecdotally, seemed to be pitched at the female audience. The Picture House, in addition, stressed that it had films featuring the latest French fashions to ensure that 'lady patrons are especially catered for'.<sup>11</sup>

Films such as *Weary Willie Goes Wheeling* which screened in Glasgow in 1909 (see p418) suggest the emergence of a nascent familiarity between the audience and the new medium in which actors or characters appear in recurring roles with plots or behaviours that were familiar to the audience. *Weary Willie* was a cartoon tramp who appeared in the magazine *Illustrated Chips* and made his first screen appearance in an eponymous 1898 film from

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<sup>10</sup> See Appendix 1 (p.293) for full details of venues licensed to screen films.

<sup>11</sup> *Evening Times*, Tuesday, February 21, 1911, p.9

James Bamforth.<sup>12</sup> This simple comedy running for just over a minute features Willie, a tramp, using his lack of personal hygiene to his advantage as outlined in the official synopsis.

Two men and two women are seated quite comfortably on a park bench until Weary Willie, the tramp, arrives. His objectionable behaviour drives them off, one by one, until he is left in sole occupation. Quite happy, he settles down to sleep.<sup>13</sup>

In a similar vein the Italian comedy series *Cretinetti* was released in English language territories as the *Foolshead* series and proved very popular with Glasgow audiences. The series began in 1909 and the slapstick character was the Keatonesque creation of the comedian Andre Deed. Three of these films - *Foolshead's Feast*, *Foolshead at the Cinematograph*, and *Foolshead on Roller Skates* – played in Glasgow in a twelve-month period and were well reviewed.<sup>14</sup> None of these titles is now available but on viewing some of the others the series follows broadly generic slapstick construction in which the unlikely hero, Foolshead, survives a series of improbable encounters to emerge triumphant. Rather like the tramp, Weary Willie, Foolshead is an underdog figure and as such encourages identification by the audience. We have seen already that these characters made a lasting impression on those who saw them with the recollections of George Brown who, some forty years later, recalled the pleasures of seeing Bronco Billy at the cinema.<sup>15</sup> Similarly Bert McGuffie, then in his seventies, had vivid memories of the screen antics of Foolshead, who he had seen at Bennell's Saturday matinees at the Wellington Palace:

...he used to be every other week in a picture, Foolshead. Now that was before Harold Lloyd and these fellows and Fatty Arbuckle, we used to get an odd one of his. This old Foolshead (laughs) he had one picture I can always remember it

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12 *Weary Willie* <http://www.screenonline.org.uk/film/id/574949/> accessed on April 15, 2015

13 <http://www.screenonline.org.uk/film/id/574949/synopsis.html> last accessed June 21, 2016

14 See Appendix Two, pp.315, 317, and 325

15 *Glasgow Herald*, September 1, 1937, p.11

and I never forgot it, it was awful good *Foolshead Climbs the Alps*. It was really marvellous what he went through on that occasion.<sup>16</sup>

While the film undoubtedly remained the main reason for going to the pictures, at the same time a relationship was beginning to form between the cinema space and the audience it contained, which shaped the expectations of audience behaviour created by that space. Given that large amounts of money were being invested in cinema construction it seems reasonable, as has been suggested by Burrows, to assume that the new cinema owners would be seeking a better class of audience; they would want to transition from the raucous bear pit of the carnival bioscope with its comments and heckling to something approaching a more-genteel audience which would sit, as in the legitimate theatre, in sedate silence even though there was no dialogue to be drowned out by their noise.<sup>17</sup>

In his study of audience behaviour Butsch offers a clear demarcation between the good audience and the bad audience.<sup>18</sup> One obvious way of moderating the crowd is through admission price to deter the rowdier elements, but the design of the building, the space, its location, and the journey to the cinema could also play a part. For Butsch, the crowd is the archetypal bad audience but at the same time there is also the suggestion that a crowd could be relied on to abide by certain codes.<sup>19</sup> Butsch suggests the ambition of this management of the crowd was to prevent it from becoming a mob, and he cites a number of mid-19<sup>th</sup> century developments designed to prevent this. There was, for example, a switch from benches or forms to single seats bolted to the floor.<sup>20</sup> This prevented the seating being used in any disorder. By introducing individual seats bolted to the floor there was a shift from the crowd to the individual; each patron had an individual space which

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16 Moving Image Archive paper collection 8/54

17 Burrows, 'Penny Pleasures', pp. 74-77

18 Richard Butsch, 'Changing Images of Movie Audiences in Explorations' in *Going to the Movies*, pp. 293 - 306

19 Ibid p.294

20 Ibid, p.294

now had explicit spatial boundaries and implied social and behavioural limits. Darkness also played its part in securing the transition. Early screenings, such as those in bioscopes, often took place with gas lights or candles remaining on which allowed the audience to chat and interact. The dimming of the lights, much easier with electricity, and the advent of darkness indicates that the audience should stop talking and prepare itself to watch. Butsch suggests that 'seating and lighting "disciplined" the audience both structurally and symbolically'.<sup>21</sup> This was certainly the case in the new wave of fixed-site cinemas in Glasgow from around 1910; the style of cinema would dictate the behaviour of the audience.

Cinema, especially in Glasgow's case, was an indicator of the city's topicality and sense of innovation. Nowhere was this better illustrated than in the use of the word 'electric'. Electricity was fast becoming a byword for modernity, innovation, comfort and cleanliness and this was seized on by new cinemas who wanted to embrace these values by incorporating the term into their name. The commercial certainty underwritten by the new licensing environment encouraged investors and speculators to build new cinemas rather than converting existing premises such as warehouses; there are also some signs that cinema was emerging in its own right out of other cultural forms, including the retail warehouse. Glasgow's first custom-built cinema was the Charing Cross Electric Theatre at 508 Sauchiehall Street, located towards the western end of the city centre. It opened its doors on May 12, 1910 and as its name suggested it was selling innovation. This was emphasised by newspaper advertisements extolling the virtues of a new process Kinemacolor, which it claimed was 'the latest thing'.<sup>22</sup> Although the venue had 450 seats it was described in the same article as a 'dainty bijou hall' by the *Evening Times*, perhaps an indication of what was expected from cinemas in terms of their usual capacity. Regardless of the interior, it was the Kinemacolor process which caught the eye of the journalist covering the opening.

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<sup>21</sup> *ibid*

<sup>22</sup> *Evening Times*, May 13, 1910 p.8

Being able to see films in colour added to the growing emphasis on the cinema as a source of spectacle and inflated its sense of attraction. Kinemacolor had been invented by George Albert Smith and Charles Urban in 1908 and is generally regarded as the first successful colour film process.<sup>23</sup> Smith's invention involved shooting the film at 32 frames per second through alternate red and green filters; the processed film was then projected through a red and green filter at 40 frames per second to produce a coloured image. According to *The Evening Times* the results were excellent 'not only in their chromatic aspect but also for their marvellous steadiness and freedom from flicker'.<sup>24</sup>



Figure 15: A 35mm Kinemacolor projector (left) and a display stand extolling the process.<sup>25</sup>

The opening programme at the Charing Cross Electric had obviously been chosen to highlight the virtues of Kinemacolor and featured many films which appear to be distinguished not so much by their content as the fact that they were not monochrome; in

<sup>23</sup>National Media Museum <http://blog.nationalmuseum.org.uk/2013/06/25/film-pioneer-george-albert-smith-invented-kinemacolor/> last accessed March 31, 2016

<sup>24</sup> *Evening Times*, May 13, 1910 p.8

<sup>25</sup> National Media Museum <http://blog.nationalmuseum.org.uk/2013/06/25/film-pioneer-george-albert-smith-invented-kinemacolor/> last accessed March 31, 2016

this sense Kinemacolor could be seen as a throwback to the concept of the Cinema of Attractions where the colour technology was the attraction. What was being seen was largely irrelevant, what mattered was that it was being seen in colour. The newspaper reported that it was the Kinemacolor section of the programme which appeared to stimulate most reaction:

...such things as a Scottish lassie, shaking a tartan shawl, the band of the Cameron Highlanders crossing a bridge, 3000 children forming the United States flag, a white Persian kitten interviewing a gorgeous macaw parrot, and gay studies of carnations and spring flowers created the greatest enthusiasm among the spectators. Each of them was beautifully true to natural tints, not with the crudeness of hand-painted films but with complete fidelity to the tender tone of the artist Nature. Possibly the best film was that of a harvest field with the picturesquely clad reapers busy among the golden grain. The sheen on the coats of the brown horses was exquisite.<sup>26</sup>

There is a suggestion that the journalist had some previous experience of colour cinema from his reference to hand-painted films, but his account of the Kinemacolor screening is almost transcendent, especially when he goes on to admire the stereoscopic effect of the process which, in his terms, has objects 'standing distinctly out from the background'.

At 450 seats the Charing Cross Electric Theatre was on the small side for a city centre site, but newspaper coverage stressed the comfort and safety aspects, pointing out that the projector was inside a fireproof room, which of course was a condition of the legislation. The newspaper's use of the word 'hall' in this context is interesting; it is a terminological halfway house which suggests some kind of public gathering place, but it is not yet sufficiently sure of its lexicon to describe it in the same way that it might a new theatre. This is a nomenclature that has been overlooked in film history. We may read into this some cultural expectation of this new cinema space and, even if the newspaper is not quite

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<sup>26</sup> *Evening Times*, May 13, 1910 p.8

certain what it might be, it had no hesitation in describing it as ‘a creditable addition to Glasgow houses of entertainment’<sup>27</sup>

The venue quickly proved remarkably popular with the management taking out advertisements apologising for having to turn away ‘thousands of people’.<sup>28</sup> The premises were owned by the West of Scotland Electric Theatres Company which let it be known through the media that it had acquired a number of sites in various parts of the city which would be opened as cinemas in due course. The first of these, the Argyle Electric Theatre, which like the Sauchiehall Street site was designed by architect George Boswell, opened on December 23, 1910. A few days previously however a cinema had opened in Sauchiehall Street which would ultimately set new standards for opulence; this was The Picture House, a former furniture warehouse turned variety venue which had been converted to a cinema by Ralph Jupp and his Provincial Cinematograph Theatres Company.<sup>29</sup> Given its location only a few hundred yards away from some of the city’s most fashionable department stores the backers of the new venue had no doubt of the experience it was offering:

When one is wearied of the noise and glare of the streets The Picture House provides a delightful retreat. While the body is at rest the eye is charmed with a succession of varied and artistic pictures which unloosen the springs of imagination and give refreshment to the mind. The place is an oasis in the wilderness of streets.<sup>30</sup>

What is being offered here is an almost sensual experience as the weary shopper surrenders herself to the charms of the venue. There was an implicit contrast between the subdued atmosphere brought on by the moving image and the bustle of the outside world. Even though it began as an upmarket establishment directed towards the elite patron, The

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<sup>27</sup> *ibid*

<sup>28</sup> <http://cc.glasgowfilm.org/cinema-city/on-the-map/67-charing-cross-electric> last accessed March 31, 2016

<sup>29</sup> [http://www.scottishcinemas.org.uk/glasgow/pic\\_house.html](http://www.scottishcinemas.org.uk/glasgow/pic_house.html) last accessed March 31, 2016

<sup>30</sup> *Evening Times*, February 7, 1911, p.9

Picture House – and the use of the definite article in the name surely leaves no one in any doubt about how this venue saw itself – quickly set its sights even higher. As we discussed the use of the word ‘hall’ to describe the Charing Cross Electric, the use of the word ‘House’ in this instance may be intended to evoke connotations with opera thus creating the notion of the venue as an enclave of distinction. This is an evolutionary step in the consideration of cinema spaces as the exhibition sector moves towards a prescribed vocabulary. The Picture House closed for alterations in mid-1912 and re-opened just before Christmas.

After having been closed for alterations for some months, the Glasgow Picture House was reopened on the 19th inst. by Sir J Ure Primrose, Bart. The space occupied by the old theatre has been converted into a palm court, surrounded by a balcony to which access is obtained by a marble staircase. Here too, the Wedgwood café is situated. The theatre itself is an entirely new erection, larger in dimensions than formerly, and extends back to Renfrew Street.<sup>31</sup>



**Figure 16: The Palm Court foyer and interior of The Picture House in Sauchiehall Street c.1928 <sup>32</sup>**

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<sup>31</sup> *Building News*, December 27, 1912 p.925 quoted in [http://www.scottisharchitects.org.uk/building\\_full.php?id=232554](http://www.scottisharchitects.org.uk/building_full.php?id=232554) last accessed June 15, 2016

<sup>32</sup> [http://www.scottishcinemas.org.uk/glasgow/pic\\_house.html](http://www.scottishcinemas.org.uk/glasgow/pic_house.html) last accessed, June 10, 2016

The newly-refurbished Picture House was now very definitely the last word in luxury.<sup>33</sup> It set new standards for fixed-site cinema exhibition in Glasgow with a foyer and interior that rivalled many of the bigger cinemas in London:

The Palm Court might have been taken bodily from the palace of some Roman noble of the rich Augustan days. With its lofty marble pillars, spacious staircases and rounded balcony, its regal carved fireplace of white marble, its mosaic floor and garlanded dome, it makes of itself a lovely picture...while the greenery of its palms, the subdued colours of its tapestry panels and the lights gleaming in its silver chandeliers afford further charming features as a setting for the warm kaleidoscope of life and movement in the place.<sup>34</sup>

The Picture House was in the heart of what was by this stage the respectable city centre, situated on Glasgow's main and emblematic thoroughfare. Its immediate neighbours included the Berlitz School of Languages, a dressmaking school, a Glasgow Corporation department, and a photographic studio.<sup>35</sup> This was not a fly-by-night back street enterprise but rather one which took its place as a reputable and stalwart feature of the business landscape. In the description quoted above however there is also the sense here of the cinema being a destination in and of itself regardless of the programme within, and as a more luxurious space than had been seen before. The Picture House was, as Allen suggests, a spectacle all of its own.<sup>36</sup> In later years the venue would be further extended to include a giant Wurlitzer organ reinforcing Allen's claim that in those circumstances the main feature film was rendered almost incidental. There is also a suggestion of cinema-going becoming a transformative experience whereby the act of attendance provided some glamour reflected from that which was on the screen. Jupp's investment seems designed to place The Picture House at the heart of the city's main shopping street and, with admission prices

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<sup>33</sup> Although *Building News* refers to The Glasgow Picture House, the official title of the venue, according to The Dictionary of Scottish Architects, and The Scottish Cinemas and Theatres database was The Picture House.

<sup>34</sup> Bruce Peter, *100 Years of Glasgow's Amazing Cinemas*, (Edinburgh: 1996), pp. 28, 29

<sup>35</sup> Glasgow Post Office Directory, 1911-12 p.998

<sup>36</sup> Robert C. Allen, 'From Exhibition to Reception; reflections on the audience in film history', *Screen* 31: 4 Winter 1990 pp. 347 - 356

at a shilling, on the same footing as some of the grander legitimate theatrical establishments.<sup>37</sup>

While the programme would have been the main driver of the audience, it seems reasonable to conclude that architecture, and particularly the design of the interior space, became an important factor in the audience's experience, especially in the period after the passage of the Cinematograph Act. Allen suggests that in some cases in the United States the space was more important than the programme:

They were attracted to the theatre by the theatre itself, with its sometimes bizarre architectural and design allusions to exotic cultures, its capacious public spaces, its air conditioning in the summer, and its auditorium which may have been decorated to resemble the exterior of a Moorish palace at night – complete with heavenly dome and twinkling stars.<sup>38</sup>

Although air-conditioning is unlikely to have been an issue in determining the comfort of Glasgow cinemas the illusion of luxury was undoubtedly a factor in making the space as much a part of the spectacle as anything seen on screen and minimising the risk of the film itself which, although the most important part of the formula and the reason the audience was there, was also the most variable element since its quality could not be guaranteed from week to week. Allen also points out that the added attractions of live music, newsreels, or the occasional live performance make the main feature almost incidental to the decision to attend.<sup>39</sup> This suggests we are reaching a stage where, in Glasgow too, the exhibition site is a contributory reason for the visit. The increased street lighting would provide a sense of visibility, a desire to see and be seen with audience members being on

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<sup>37</sup> *Evening Times*, February 6, 1911, p.8

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid*, p.353

<sup>39</sup> Allen, 'From Exhibition to Reception; reflections on the audience in film history',

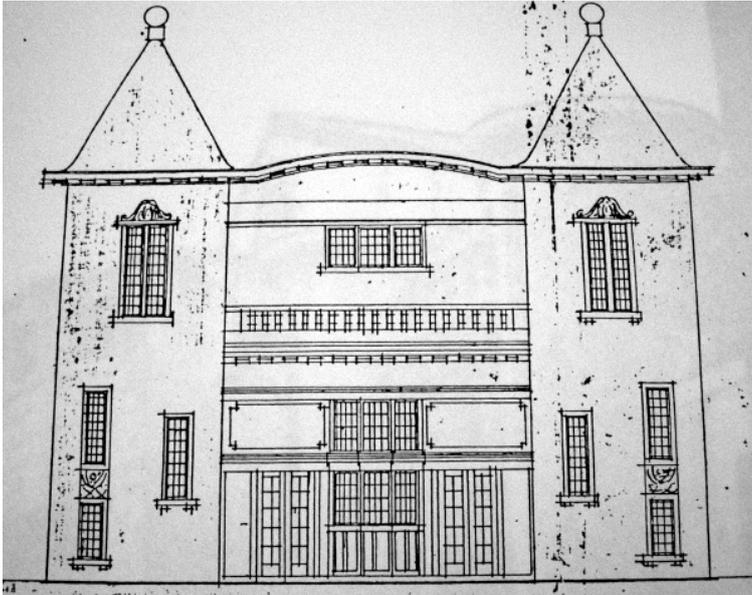
show and dressing for an event in their best clothes, the same way they might dress for church.

The notion of luxury, faux or otherwise, and visually distinctive architecture seems especially important in the designs of those cinemas located beyond the city centre, which were similarly enjoying an expansionist boom following the passing of the Cinematograph Act. Albert Victor Gardner, an architect responsible for many sites in the city's working-class suburbs and housing schemes, seems to have been determined to design cinemas that were at odds with the poverty of their surroundings. Gardner was born in Gloucestershire in 1884 but had moved with his family to Glasgow by 1901 when he began his studies at Glasgow School of Art.<sup>40</sup> The family appears to have had a peripatetic existence; one sister was born in Ireland, another in Sheffield and his father held several jobs including clerical work, commissionaire, timekeeper and, somewhat improbably, aeroplane tester. According to the Dictionary of Scottish Architects, after graduating from Glasgow School of Art in 1905 Gardner began his own independent practice in 1908 at the age of 24. His first commissions were for Post Office buildings in Glasgow and a roller skating rink in Argyle Street. He was also involved in the design of the Westerton Garden suburb on the western boundary of the city in 1913. His real passion however seems to have been for cinema design and much of his work was on the James Graham circuit. Gardner specialised in creating original design and imaginative exteriors while staying on a modest budget. This was achieved by having interiors that were generally more utilitarian and less ornate than their often elaborate facades. His first purpose-built cinema in 1911 was the Majestic in Govanhill on the South Side of Glasgow., later described as a 'hybrid of French chateau Renaissance and Glasgow Style modernism'.<sup>41</sup>

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40 Dictionary of Scottish Architects [http://www.scottisharchitects.org.uk/architect\\_full.php?id=200950](http://www.scottisharchitects.org.uk/architect_full.php?id=200950)  
last accessed July 10, 2017

41 *ibid*



**Figure 17: A sketch of the front of the Majestic in Smith Street, Govanhill as designed by A.V. Gardner.<sup>42</sup>**



**Figure 18: A contemporary view of the same cinema (now derelict).<sup>43</sup>**

His next commission, for the Partick Picture House the following year, featured a 'multi-arched castellated theme' quickly followed by designing the Picture House in Campbeltown in a French baroque style.<sup>44</sup>

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42 <http://www.scottishcinemas.org.uk/glasgow/majestic.html> last accessed June 10, 2016

43 <http://www.derelictglasgow.co.uk/derelict.govanhillpicture.html> last accessed June 15, 2016

44 Dictionary of Scottish Architects [http://www.scottisharchitects.org.uk/architect\\_full.php?id=200950](http://www.scottisharchitects.org.uk/architect_full.php?id=200950) last accessed July 10, 2017

In an architectural career that lasted from 1906 until 1939, A.V. Gardner designed around 50 cinemas and although many of them were striking architecturally he was never given a major city centre commission. His cinemas can be found in suburbs such as Springburn, Hillhead, Finnieston, and Govanhill, as well as small towns such as Rothesay, Dunoon and Campbeltown. Although his work has been described as 'stylistically haphazard' it shows influences of the great architect Frank Lloyd Wright of whom Gardner was a fan.<sup>45</sup> Traces of the American architect's work can be seen particularly clearly in Gardner's design for the Star Picture House in Maryhill in 1912, one of his earliest commissions:

Two squat towers to either side of the entrance had shallow pitched broad-eaved roofs over horizontal and vertical strips of small paned windows; recessed between them was a curved first floor balcony rising into a higher tower, again with broad eaves. The glazed corner windows with no visible support for the roofs above were distinctly modernistic for their date.<sup>46</sup>

Frank Lloyd Wright was the most famous and influential American architect of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Gardner's fondness for Wright was undoubtedly an indicator both of his ambition and the extent to which he was determined to include the latest trends and influences in a desire perhaps to create buildings that might be as influential as those of his idol. These Wright-inspired features and distinctive style could also be seen in other Gardner cinemas built between 1919 and 1924 including the Queen's Park Picture House, the Springburn Picture House and the Possilpark Picture Theatre, all of them in Glasgow, and the Alex Picture House in Paisley.

One of Gardner's most impressive cinemas was the Pavilion Picture House in Motherwell which he designed in 1913. Again, it features the influence of Frank Lloyd Wright:

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<sup>45</sup> Peter, 100 Years of Glasgow's Amazing Cinemas, p.95

<sup>46</sup> Dictionary of Scottish Architects [http://www.scottisharchitects.org.uk/architect\\_full.php?id=200950](http://www.scottisharchitects.org.uk/architect_full.php?id=200950)

Its façade was an impressive tribute to the entrance hall of Wright's 1900 Susan Lawrence Dana House in Springfield Illinois, rising into an asymmetrically placed advertising tower of finned brickwork and glass.<sup>47</sup>



**Figure 19: The Pavilion Theatre in Motherwell.<sup>48</sup>**

The *Dictionary of Scottish Architects* website records that almost all of Gardner's commissions were low-budget buildings in poor neighbourhoods which it offers as context for criticism by George Singleton that Gardner was a faker 'who used every substitute for the decent thing'. Dismissing Singleton's unsourced comments, the website goes on to suggest that Gardner was perhaps the most innovative of the early Scottish cinema architects whose presence is most evident in his work, and it was the industry's loss that he was never fortunate enough to get a well-funded commission.<sup>49</sup>

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47 *ibid*

48 <http://www.scottishcinemas.org.uk/scotland/motherwell.html> last accessed June 15, 2016

49 *Dictionary of Scottish Architects* [http://www.scottisharchitects.org.uk/architect\\_full.php?id=200950](http://www.scottisharchitects.org.uk/architect_full.php?id=200950) last accessed June 14, 2016y

Apart from a taste of comfort and relative luxury, in the Edwardian era a visit to the cinema provided an experience that had both a social and a spatial dimension. It went beyond merely participating in an event at a fixed venue. Mechanical reproduction and a burgeoning film distribution sector meant that thousands of others could be participating in the same event, frequently at the same time, which made the nascent cinema-going experience very different from that of the theatre by introducing an individual dimension to the collective experience. Allen has encouraged a reconsideration of the cinematic space along the lines posited by geographer Doreen Massey.<sup>50</sup> She has described space as ‘the sphere of coming across difference ‘and from this phrase we might infer that the cinema space allows the audience to come across different people, different locations, different things and different experiences.’<sup>51</sup> This multiplicity of possibilities may form an important part of the transcendent appeal of cinema. One of the key elements in this reconsideration is a conception of space as relational and ‘the product of interrelationships and interactions extending from the intimate to the global’. Allen also encourages us to consider Massey’s correlation between time and space. Space is not, he argues, ‘a pre-existing place waiting for things to happen, it is itself uniquely, unpredictably, eventful.’<sup>52</sup>

In his article on space in film historiography Allen advocates the use of Massey’s term ‘time-space’ to encourage a view that space is not simply a static void waiting to be filled. According to Allen this means that cinema space cannot be reductively considered merely as a place for the exhibition of films; it is a venue for experience and this experience can be dramatized by the design:

The experience of cinema does not exist outside the experience of space, and as such it is the product of historically specific, embedded material practices –

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<sup>50</sup> Allen, Robert C, ‘The Place of Space in Film Historiography’, *TMG* 9 [2], 2006 pp. 15 - 27

<sup>51</sup> Karen Lury and Doreen Massey, ‘Making Connections’, *Screen*, 40.3 (1999) pp.229 - 238

<sup>52</sup> Allen, “The Place of Space in Film Historiography”, p.16

of performance, of display, of exchange, of architecture, of social interaction, of remembering, as well as of signification and cinematic representation.<sup>53</sup>

The notion of cinema as a time-space also invites consideration of the memories which people recall of cinema visits, the traces of these time-space events. These memories are often of their early, formative, visits to the cinema as children. Bert McGuffie, for example, when he recalled the Saturday matinees at J.J. Bennell's Wellington Palace cinema in the Gorbals remembered seeing *The Perils of Pauline*, and the cinema experience was engrained in specific detail:

When the kids were going in on a Saturday well some of them were there before two o'clock but it gradually filled up and while this was going on there were a couple of men going round and they pulled down big dark blue blinds, that was to blot out the daylight, which left the hall in semi-darkness and while they were still filling up there were two men down below with a big cardboard box each full of sticks of rock and they went round handing them out. They were only about a pinkie thickness in a paper about 10 inches long and everybody got one of these. So we sat and had rock while the picture was on.<sup>54</sup>

Another respondent, a Mrs Smillie, who went to the same cinema in the same period, was similarly unable to recall with any certainty what she saw but the gregarious nature of the event remains with her some 70 years later:

We used to shout 'Oh watch your back – you know if anybody was crawling up to him you know, like the cowboys and Indians. And they used to shout and make noises and ach it was good fun...well we did enjoy it.<sup>55</sup>

It is interesting to note that while the recollection of the film is often vague or completely mis-remembered, the recollection of the space and the social circumstances of the event

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Moving Image Archive paper collection 8/54

<sup>55</sup> Moving Image Archive paper collection 8/52

are, by contrast, often very detailed. This is cinema evoking a sense of remembering and forgetting, it is the liberty and licence of the experience that was recalled. It is also, I would suggest, an early experience for a generation that would become what we might now characterise as 'cinema natives' i.e. those who were born into a world of moving images. The cinema may not have been as astonishing to them as to their parents, but the sense of freedom this space provided would certainly have made an impression. Kuhn has worked extensively in the field of cinema memory, including research in Glasgow, and her landmark work suggests that social cohesion, of the sort evidenced in those childhood memories, is a prime example of the appeal of the cinematic space.<sup>56</sup> She says that cinema going was regarded as part of the routine of everyday life and was a strong driver of social identity:

For the majority, going to the pictures is remembered as being less about films and stars than about daily and weekly routines, neighbourhood comings and goings and organizing spare time.<sup>57</sup>

Flora Stevenson's grandparents lived across the street from the Wellington Palace so, for her, a visit to the cinema was a bonus that came with fulfilling the familial obligation of visiting relatives. If it was a Saturday afternoon, then she and her brother would be taken across the road to the pictures by an uncle or older cousin:

It was a great treat to go out with my big brother to start off with and it was a tremendous treat to get to the pictures, you know, a tremendous thing. Although I don't remember an awful lot about the actual pictures I liked the atmosphere and going there and you know singing and joining in.<sup>58</sup>

Flora Stevenson also noted in the interview, with some regret, that when her grandparents died her trips to the cinema stopped because there was no longer anyone to visit. This I

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<sup>56</sup> Kuhn, *An Everyday Magic: Cinema and Cultural Memory* (London, 2002)

<sup>57</sup> Kuhn quoted in Allen, 'The Place of Space in Film Historiography', p. 22

<sup>58</sup> Moving Image Archive paper collection 8/53

would argue is a clear indication of how the cinema visit was interwoven with the social fabric of her young life.

Kuhn has developed a taxonomy of memory to classify these recollections, which rest at the heart of her research. 'Type A' memories are those which feature quite distinct recollections of scenes or sequences from films; 'Type B' memories situate those scenes in the context of the subject's life in the sense that, for example, it may have been the first film they saw; while 'Type C' memories are those where it is the activity rather than the content which is remembered. This is common, for example, in the recollections of older people of those children's screenings at the BB screenings in the Wellington Palace. They tend to remember the excitement of the experience without necessarily being able to recall what they saw, which would categorise them as 'Type C' memories.<sup>59</sup> They all share that previously discussed trait concerning cinema memories being about 'remembering and forgetting'. The event is memorable, but the specifics fade with time. Although Kuhn's study concerned itself with adult cinema-goers in the 1930s it is reasonable to assume that their formative cinema experiences would be similar to those who went to the Wellington Palace as very young children in the Edwardian era. Even if there is an implied unreliability in these reminiscences they are still important because they help to indicate how cinema was experienced. Looking back from the early part of the 21<sup>st</sup> century this Edwardian audience is barely available as a source of evidence but these sources that do still exist are very helpful in building a representative picture of cinema-going in the period.

The cinema space could also function as a vehicle for defining and developing social identity, often without the presence of the normal controlling forces of decorum and propriety, and this in turn provides a very specific sense of ownership of that space. In these terms the content presented was almost incidental, merely acting as an enabler for the rest of the process. The film is perhaps the trigger that generated these other conditions and therefore it would encourage the maintenance of a cinema-going habit. The work of

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<sup>59</sup> There is no suggestion of hierarchy in Kuhn's work. Type A memories are not better or superior to Type C memories; it is a taxonomic device.

Hansen, Allen, and Kuhn suggests that there are often different elements at play and that the cinema experience was a synthetic one, made up of a variety of components. For Hansen, there is an ethnic component to her study of the nickelodeon audience which allows her to characterise cinema as an 'alternative public sphere' for elements of America's new immigrant population.<sup>60</sup> Again there is a time element to be considered in Hansen's work since she suggests that the nickelodeon space provided a respite from the tyranny of the factory clock as well as allowing moments of reflection watching films that may have concerned themselves with their previous life e.g. documentaries or travelogues about the country from which they had emigrated. Allen considered a racial element in his study of cinema spaces in the Southern states of America in the 1920s; as he pointed out 'race was the axis along which all space was organised in the South'.<sup>61</sup> Black cinema-goers, he asserts, often had to watch films in cinemas which were specially designated for them, those cinemas which allowed black patrons and white patrons segregated the audience with black customers often having to buy tickets at a separate box office; those tickets were frequently for the poorest seats in the house. The cinema space therefore, according to Allen, acted as a reminder to the black audience of its place on the periphery of American society.

There is nothing quite so dramatic with the Glasgow audience; no sense of compulsory segregation. There is I would suggest a demarcation in Glasgow audience terms between the local cinema in their housing scheme or suburb, and the grander affair in the centre of the city. Rather than present them with outsider status the local cinema provided them, as Kuhn suggests, with an entertainment they could appropriate as their own and the luxurious design of men like Gardner contributed to that. For Kuhn the cinema was a space appropriated by the working class. What we might term as 'high culture' e.g. theatre, ballet and opera, was seen as elitist and they were largely excluded from it but she describes the working class as having a sense of entitlement about the cinema, a feeling that this was a space that was uniquely theirs.<sup>62</sup> The local cinema was cheaper and more accessible than

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60 Hansen, *Babel and Babylon*, pp. 101 - 125

61 Allen, Robert C, 'The Place of Space in Film Historiography', pp. 18 - 20

62 Thomas McGoran quoted in Kuhn (2002) p.221

the luxurious city centre venues, but these sites produced a sense of ownership as part of a community and this is what developed and maintained the cinema-going habit. However, sites such as The Picture House in Sauchiehall Street or the Charing Cross Electric Theatre were not forbidden to the working classes, rather their higher ticket prices and the inherent status as city centre venues categorised them as what might be described as aspirational venues with visits reserved for special occasions.

In that sense we might argue that the grandiose cinema designs of men such as Albert Victor Gardner served a useful social function echoing Frank Lloyd Wright's architectural ambitions of connecting communities through his work.<sup>63</sup> Many of his cinemas were sited in less well-off suburban areas such as Springburn, Possilpark, Govan, and Partick, and it might be that, in emulating the style and manner of the grander city centre venues, these sites provided a degree of associated status. Several hours in the relative luxury of even one of Gardner's smaller venues would provide an escape into a grander world than its tenement surroundings might imply.

If it is accepted that the act of cinema-going functioned in both spatial and experiential terms, the combination of these two factors, it might be argued, played a large part in shaping social identity. Kuhn's study of cinema-going in Britain in the Depression era, suggests that the spatiality and sociality of the cinema experience remained much more indelibly marked on the psyche after the memories of the films themselves had faded. This appears to be borne out by the examples quoted previously from the Moving Image Archive. This cinematic conditioning, it might be suggested, stayed with cinema-goers and developed to the point where they felt an individual and collective ownership of the cinema space itself. For Kuhn the social identity developed in cinema was class-driven in that it was organised around the daily routine of working-class life and often provided the highlight of the working week. Children, for example, in their recollections of early cinema-going routinely suggest that, no matter how difficult the family circumstances, parents regularly

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63 <http://www.franklloydwright.org/frank-lloyd-wright/impact.html> last accessed on April 6, 2016

managed to scrape together the relatively small amount of money needed to allow them to go to the cinema.<sup>64</sup>

In this sense specific cinema designs such as Gardner's chime with Hansen's critical suggestion that exhibition practices value the experience over the film.<sup>65</sup> For Hansen, these non-filmic activities such as orchestras, palm court foyers, grandiloquent uniforms and other trappings were not auxiliary functional considerations but valid, added attractions. In this sense elaborate design such as Gardner's could easily be included among these added attractions. These were retained and became part of what was an experience, and a growing culture of cinema-going in the city. This can be seen in early newspaper advertisements for cinema screenings in Glasgow which stressed the cleanliness of the venue or the quality of the projection giving them equal billing to the film, and often replacing it altogether. However, this changes in the period under examination in this thesis to the point where it is the film that receives top billing rather than how well it can be seen. Space, for Hansen, was important because the size and quality of the show depended on the space in which the show was seen; the bigger the space, the greater the opportunity for spectacle.<sup>66</sup>

As we end this chapter we can see that an entertaining film combined with a luxurious space, created a technologically stable product, and an entertainment experience, that placed cinema at the very heart of Glasgow's social life, especially but not exclusively for the working classes. The film is, in all senses of the word, the main event as far as entertainment is concerned. The cinema, whether in the extravagant city centre sites or the more modest but still impressive suburban venues, was appropriated especially by the working class as a place that was uniquely theirs; a haven on one hand and an aspirational

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64 Moving Image Archive paper collection 8/52

65 Hansen, *Babel and Babylon*, p. 99

66 Ibid, p.100

dream space on the other. Cinema, as Kuhn put it, became the main attraction, not just as an entertainment but as part of their lives:

...because it was exciting, and it was exciting because it was new and modern, because it was the fashionable place to go, and because going there was always anticipated with relish.<sup>67</sup>

There is a sense by now of the audience in Glasgow beginning to appropriate cinema as something of its own and in return becoming, in Butsch's terms, a good audience. The first-person recollections of elderly adults recalling their childhood experiences indicated how strong the affinity between this generation and moving pictures was. As the audience grew more aware of the form and the film became primary, then cinema design and space developed to meet the needs of the audience the industry was trying to attract. It was a still new, and vibrant, form which was attracting a new and vibrant audience and children were an important part of that audience. This is a generation that would grow up with cinema and the developing relationship with the medium as they mature together is surely what leads to a life-long affinity. The relationship between the audience and the cinema, and the expectations of the audience from the medium, will be further explored in the next chapter.

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67 Kuhn, *An Everyday Magic: Cinema and Cultural Memory*, p.222

## 8 The importance of narrative in the early cinema experience.

According to Allen, within the first twenty years of cinema a process of engagement and reception developed as the audience became more knowing and the exhibition process becomes more sophisticated.<sup>1</sup> For Allen the reception of a film was more than just the beginning of a critical discourse, it also takes into consideration factors such as the make-up of the audience, the location of the cinema, and the type of film. Having considered the function of early cinema's exhibition space in Chapter Seven, this section will now consider the relationship between the audience and the images presented in that space.

Some of Allen's considerations will be examined in this chapter as we consider how cinema developed a form of address to its audience, and this section will argue that this was seen nowhere more clearly than in the rise of the local topical film. The notion of locality has varied meanings but in this context we will be using the definition arrived at by Bottomore in that a piece of film can be considered to be local where there is 'considerable overlap between those appearing in the film and those who watch it or who are intended to watch it'.<sup>2</sup> This chapter will offer a case study of the work of the Lancashire film makers Sagar Mitchell and James Kenyon, who were frequent visitors to Glasgow and the West of Scotland, and their relationship with local entrepreneurs such as George Green in creating this very specific form of cinema; part document, part propaganda. The result of this collaboration, we will argue, is a type of film that spoke to its audience, often in direct, intimate terms, resulting in a bond between audiences, film, and filmmaker that would develop the audience's affinity with the medium. Also in this chapter we will consider some of the contemporaneous rivals to cinema, most notably Hale's Tours. This interactive phenomenon proved internationally successful yet, for reasons we will outline, did not

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1 Allen 'From exhibition to reception', pp. 347-356

2 Stephen Bottomore, 'From the Factory Gate to the "Home Talent" Drama: An International Overview of Local Films in the Silent Era' in *The Lost World of Mitchell and Kenyon: Edwardian Britain on Film* by Toulmin, Popple, and Russell (ed.) (London, 2004) pp. 33-48

thrive in Glasgow and the Hale's Tours exemplar will also be used to reach important conclusions about the vital importance of narrative to audience engagement.

The relationship between film and its audience is an evolving and complex one. The nature of cinema spectatorship from the 19<sup>th</sup> century to the 21<sup>st</sup> century was a product of technological change and social conditions. In his seminal analysis of the period referred to variously as pre-cinema or early cinema Tom Gunning coined the phrase the 'Cinema of Attractions' to define this period.<sup>3</sup> For Gunning the period is defined by the first Lumière screening in 1895 and it runs until the acknowledged pre-eminence of narrative cinema in 1906. The eventual dominance of narrative cinema can be seen in Appendix Two where the list of 442 films screening in Glasgow during the period of our sample survey from 1908 to 1914, includes only 58 that can be definitely categorised as non-narrative.<sup>4</sup>

Gunning's phrase celebrates the fact that cinema exists first and foremost to be seen. As he puts it:

...the Cinema of Attractions directly solicits spectator attention, inciting visual curiosity, and supplying pleasure through an exciting spectacle – a unique event, whether fictional or documentary, that is of interest in itself.<sup>5</sup>

There have been many subsequent arguments about the content of early cinema, about the importance of narrative or non-narrative style, but there is no denying that the sheer spectacle of moving pictures in the late Victorian era, something going beyond the limited movement of the magic lantern or other optical devices such as the mutoscope, made cinema a phenomenon to be seen for its own sake. In that sense it aligns itself with Gunning's definition. Cinema, especially non-narrative cinema, also provides the audience with the means of seeing something that would otherwise have been unattainable in their frame of experience; this notion of bringing the world to the spectator in an era of rapid

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<sup>3</sup> Tom Gunning, 'The Cinema of Attractions: Early Film, Its Spectator, and the Avant Garde', in *Early Cinema: Space, Frame, Narrative*, ed. by Elsaesser, T. and Adam Barker (London: 1990), pp. 56 - 62

<sup>4</sup> As well as the material contained in Appendix Two (pp. 297 - 348) a summary of the findings can be found on p.259.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid p.58

technological and social change should not be underestimated in assessing the rise in the popularity of cinema.

This Cinema of Attractions thesis also takes into account the way in which early cinema was viewed. Initial accounts of early cinema screenings tend to concern themselves first with the technology rather than the content, and the nature of the reproduction is more commonly commented on than what is being reproduced. As has been mentioned earlier, the first public screening of cinema in Scotland, in Edinburgh in April 1896, was not met with universal praise:

In the Cinematographe 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 have been thrown if the instrument had not been properly focused.<sup>6</sup>

In contrast, as we have already seen, the following month the first cinema screening took place in Glasgow. With no evident technical issues, the audience was able to appreciate the show for its own sake and demonstrate that appreciation as if they had been watching live performers rather than a virtual representation on a screen. This goes beyond simply enjoying the spectacle and offers evidence of the audience actively engaging with the material being presented in its own terms and reacting accordingly, by applauding enthusiastically:

...the sea shore, with the waves breaking on the beach, brought the exhibition to a close, amid the loud applause of the audience.<sup>7</sup>

Although there had been difficulties at the initial Edinburgh screening, a few weeks later, once some teething problems had been ironed out, the reception in the city was very different:

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<sup>6</sup> *Scotsman*, April 14, 1896 p.4

<sup>7</sup> *Quiz*, May 28, 1896, p166

The management of the Empire has made a distinct hit. Last night everything worked with perfect smoothness. The Cinematographe, seen in its full perfection, seemed to come to the audience as something of a revelation...The management of the light was perfect; the movement of the figures were wonderfully natural; and the general effect was singularly pleasing.<sup>8</sup>

With technological issues remedied and the quality of the image from the apparatus commented upon, *The Scotsman* was then able to address the effect the films had on the audience. As outlined in Chapter Two, from the description of the screening provided by the newspaper the films on offer appeared to be largely drawn from the initial Lumière programme.<sup>9</sup> However, now that the images could be clearly seen, the audience applauded throughout and became more and more enthusiastic about the films:

Altogether the Cinematographe...proved one of the greatest attractions which has been at the Empire for some time, and the audience were so enthusiastic in their applause that the curtain was raised and a beautiful sea-scape under moonlight the waves dashing on the rocks was shown.<sup>10</sup>

This raising of the curtain for a second time is, to all intents and purposes, an encore – a literal curtain call - in response to the reception by the audience was a theatrical tradition co-opted here by cinema. That reception bears witness to Gunning's argument about the moving image being an attraction on its own. The audience here were surely not showing their appreciation of how well the films moved but rather that they moved at all. This is the essence of the Cinema of Attractions, it took the audience beyond the limited animation of, for example, the magic lantern and provided a vivid, dynamic, experience with which the spectator could become actively involved and in doing so privileged the visual experience over what we might term the acoustic.

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<sup>8</sup> *Scotsman*, June 2, 1896, p.5

<sup>9</sup> See Chapter Two, pp. 58-60

<sup>10</sup> *ibid*

There is an absolute connection between the image and the gaze of the audience in any cinema viewing experience; the image engages directly with the spectator in a tacit acknowledgement of the existence of the audience. This is especially true of non-narrative cinema and can be contrasted with early fictional form where the events unfolding on the screen were constructed in such a way as effectively to deny the presence of a spectator. The notion of an actor in a narrative text acknowledging the audience through a look to the camera was an inviolable rule to be broken only for shocking effect such as by the final image of Porter's *The Great Train Robbery* (1903) in which a gun is aimed and fired out of the screen and, by implication, at the audience. The Cinema of Attractions however thrived on the acknowledgement of its own status; performers in these early films such as Loie Fuller whose daring *Serpentine Dance* was filmed by the Lumières in 1896, behaved on screen exactly as they would as if the cinema audience was in front of them.<sup>11</sup> Comedians would wink at the non-existent audience just as other performers would bow at the end of their act in the expectation of applause which they anticipated but would never hear.

The most concrete form of exchange between the moving image and the spectator came in those crucial moments of recognition when the spectators saw themselves on screen. The popularity of what were known as 'topicals', forerunners of newsreels, was one of the foundations of the success of the new medium. As Oakley recalls during the early Edwardian era topical films were made in increasing numbers.<sup>12</sup> The local non-fiction film – or 'local topical' – is a genre that has been very familiar to archivists but relatively ignored by film historians until recently. The contemporary perception of such films has been shaped in particular by the discovery in 1994 of a collection of films by Sagar Mitchell and James Kenyon from Blackburn, and the excellent work done by Toulmin, Bottomore, Loiperdinger et al in bringing this material to the attention of the wider public. In the case of the Mitchell and Kenyon canon these are films shot at factory gates, local fairs, sporting events, or simply in the centre of a town or city. Usually commissioned by local showmen or theatre owners the filming process often served as propagandistic advertising for the screening itself; the notion being that the audience could come along and see themselves

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11 *Serpentine Dance* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iCJ7gJLRyE> last accessed June 21, 2016

12 Oakley, p.3

on the screen as they were seen by others. The commercial value of such a screening was made clear in *How to Run a Picture Theatre*, an instruction manual for would-be exhibitors:

Everyone loves to see himself or herself, or friends, or children, on the screen, and the local topical is the best means of gratifying this desire.<sup>13</sup>

For most of the audience the key moment in any screening of these films was the instant when the audience members recognized themselves and others on the screen. Gunning, who describes such films as ‘the cinema of locality’ highlights the ‘cry of recognition’ which marks the direct connection taking place between the viewer and the image.<sup>14</sup> The ideal exemplar of such films are the series of so-called ‘factory gate’ films taken by Mitchell and Kenyon in towns and cities throughout the United Kingdom in the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. One of the hallmarks of these films is the candour with which the pro-filmic gathering confronts the camera during the filming process. Granted a great many of the subjects would be tired after a long day in a factory but, with the exception of the children who crowd around the camera in so many of the films, there is little acknowledgement by adults that the device is there. There is no capering or face-pulling, simply a gaze which might be characterised as wearied acceptance or at best borderline curiosity. In some of these films, the film makers can be plainly seen cajoling and manoeuvring the crowd into frame to make the film appear more cohesive and integrated.<sup>15</sup> The reaction when the films were screened, usually at weekends or on public holidays, was very different:

An enterprising cinematographer, who was giving a series of lantern entertainments in a town up North exposed a film at the gates of a large factory as the men were coming out for their dinner hour. This was in due course

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13 Anon. *How to Run a Picture Theatre: A Handbook for Proprietors, Managers and Exhibitors*, pp. 121-125

14 Gunning, ‘Pictures of Crowd Splendour: The Mitchell and Kenyon Factory Gate Film’, in Toulmin, V. Pople, S, and Russell, P (eds.), *The Lost World of Mitchell and Kenyon*, p.52.

15 One of the clearest examples is *Sedgwick’s Bioscope Show Front* (M&K 772) <http://player.bfi.org.uk/film/watch-sedgwicks-bioscope-showfront-at-pendlebury-wakes-1901-1901/> in which James Kenyon – wearing a white hat – can be seen ‘orchestrating’ the crowd. Also, in *Employees of Messrs Lumb and Co, leaving the works* (M&K 28), <http://player.bfi.org.uk/film/watch-employees-of-messrs-lumb-and-co-leaving-the-works-huddersfield-1900-1900/> showman Ralph Pringle – wearing a flat cap – can be seen encouraging the crowd who would form part of the audience. Both films were last accessed on July 14, 2017

projected on the screen, when great amusement was caused to the audience by an enthusiastic member, who on recognizing himself in the picture, shouted out to a companion, 'Lor', Bill', that's me with the square basket!' We are informed that this small incident was the means of bringing a huge audience on the following evening of men engaged at the said works, and after this particular film had been projected, they insisted on an encore, which was of course honoured.<sup>16</sup>

In these films, which were used by early pioneers as a simple and established way of driving trade towards their film show, the pleasure for the audience went beyond the simple delight of seeing movement captured on screen and extended to the audience seeing their own appearance within the image. One of those who saw their commercial potential was George Green. He worked with the Lancashire filmmakers from 1899 until at least 1907 commissioning work for his fairground bioscope in Lancashire as well as films to be made and screened in Cork and Glasgow.<sup>17</sup>

To use Bottomore's description highlighted earlier in this chapter, film number 186 in the Mitchell and Kenyon collection *Jamaica Street, Glasgow* (1901) provides a fine exemplar of the local topical.<sup>18</sup> This brief film highlights the traffic travelling north and south in Jamaica Street at the southern end of the city centre and also the public appearance of a busy street with people passing up and down it. There are many recognisable stores and landmarks in the footage and the film then cuts to a parade taking place nearby; parades in the Edwardian era were a form of street theatre or public entertainment and therefore worthy of capturing on film. Although there is no specific record of the film being screened in the city, the periodicity of Green's relationship with Mitchell and Kenyon suggests that he commissioned it, probably for one of his fairground showings at the Carnival in the East End. It is fair to assume that when the film screened for a Glasgow audience they would

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16 *Optical Magic Lantern Journal and Photographic Enlarger* 12, 140 (January 1901) quoted in Toulmin and Loipderdinger, 'Is It You: Recognition, Representation and Response in Relation to the Local Film', *Film History*, Volume 17 pp. 7-18.

17 Toulmin, *Electric Edwardians: The Story of the Mitchell and Kenyon Collection*, (BFI, 2006) pp.8,9

18 M&K 186: *Jamaica Street, Glasgow* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kpWbp4kx7uQ> last accessed June 21, 2016

have exhibited the same delight in recognising people and places as had been experienced by other audiences. Moments of recognition, such as these, strengthened the affinity the audience would have with the cinema and presumably with Green himself.

Apart from being precious sociological and archival documents these films also provide a clear insight into a relationship between an emergent technology and its nascent consumers developed on specifically local terms. Local topical were popular additions on early cinema programmes in Glasgow.<sup>19</sup> Mitchell and Kenyon visited the area several times filming in Glasgow in 1901, and Greenock in the same year, as well as on other occasions.<sup>20</sup> The popularity of such films with Scottish audiences meant that local filmmakers and exhibitors such as William Walker, James Hart, Jimmy Nairn, and many others contributed to a tradition of local cinema which extends to the 1950s. Toulmin suggested that this concept of self-recognition was one of the driving forces of early cinema. As she pointed out the tension of observing oneself while simultaneously potentially being observed by others at the same show must have created a dynamic and febrile atmosphere at these early screenings which would have been a highly effective marketing tool for subsequent showings.<sup>21</sup> Although the spectator was able to forge a direct connection with the image on the screen, sometimes enhanced by personal involvement or local familiarity, the relationship was occasionally mediated by a third party, often a master of ceremonies or narrator.<sup>22</sup>

Musser also suggests that the audience for early cinema was generally well informed about major events and were expected to bring a level of familiarity to the screen narrative. He asserts that these non-narrative films were often looked on as 'visual newspapers':

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19 See Appendix Three, p. 302 and p.338 for evidence of local topical material in cinema programmes.

20 For a fuller account of Mitchell & Kenyon's work in Scotland and relationship with George Green see Janet McBain 'Mitchell and Kenyon's Legacy in Scotland' in Toulmin, Popple and Russell (ed) *The Lost World of Mitchell & Kenyon* (BFI, 2004)

21 Toulmin and Loipderdinger, 'Is It You: Recognition, Representation and Response in Relation to the Local Film', p16.

22 See Appendix Two, p.311. The film *Queen Mary o' Scots* is billed with an accompanying recitation.

Audiences generally acquired prior knowledge of events shown on the screen through a variety of cultural forms, providing an explicit framework for appreciation. At the time of the Great Naval Parade in the North River, newspapers were filled with drawings of the participating ships. Detailed descriptions were given of their firepower, their commanding officers, and accomplishments during the war. Unlike today's audience for television news, vaudeville spectators generally read the papers and could appreciate the films within this context.<sup>23</sup>

Growing familiarity with the material represented a development in the relationship between the audience and the image which Musser says characterises much of early cinema in the United States. It could be argued that it provides an added layer to Gunning's concept of the Cinema of Attractions since the notion of effectively seeing a newspaper story come to life would be a considerable attraction in its own right. The popularity of local topicals in the United Kingdom similarly implies that audiences appreciated material with which they were familiar. It is also one of the ways that cinema is localised, and we can assume, for example, that the Mitchell and Kenyon material commissioned by George Green and screened in the city helped to give cinema audiences in Glasgow a sense of ownership. Whatever the means used, the role of the showman remained key to the programme and he exerted complete editorial control in that he 'selected short films, determined their order, and often tied them together with a narration'.<sup>24</sup>

There is evidence too for early cinema audiences being culturally aware. In 1900 when the British comedian Harry Relph – known as Little Tich – toured the United States one of the high spots of his act, captured on film, was a parody of Loie Fuller's *Serpentine Dance*.<sup>25</sup> The film played to great success in Britain and the United States and although part of the success would be the result of Relph's popularity, audiences must have been aware of Fuller's controversial routine either through reading about it or having seen it either live or

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23 Musser, 'American Vitagraph 1987 – 1901', p21

24 Musser, 'American Vitagraph 1987 – 1901', p.4

25 *Little Tich; Loie Fuller* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RfZ9dQ9Umqs> last accessed December 29, 2017

in the Lumière version. All of this suggests a developing relationship between the audience and the programme. The popularity of the story film, from around 1906, further suggests an increasing engagement between the spectators and the new form; one that was based on an understanding of narrative rather than simply fairground spectacle.

So far this chapter has demonstrated a developing relationship between the moving image and the audience from its earliest years. The topical film brought far-off events into whatever town the film was being screened, but more important the local topical brings recognition and with it a sense of connection between the audience and the film. This very direct form of address encouraged the audience to take ownership of moving pictures; a sense of proprietorial possession of which Kuhn found evidence in her research outlined in Chapter Seven. This sense of ownership and connection is suggested by the sheer scale of cinema exhibition in Glasgow. Only a little more than a decade after that first screening Oakley suggests there are 57 cinema sites in the city.<sup>26</sup> Not long after he made his claim there is evidence from newspaper records, as shown in Appendix One, to suggest that, while once a rarity, cinemas were becoming commonplace in the city.<sup>27</sup> Glasgow Corporation records suggest that by 1913 there were 85 sites in the city licensed to screen moving pictures. Of these 20 appear to have been public or municipal halls; 13 are cine-variety sites, and the remaining 54 are dedicated cinema venues. Exhibition on this scale, with just short of 87 thousand potential cinema seats in the city, albeit with some 40% of them accounted for by the larger municipal and variety venues, suggests a connection between the image and the audience which was becoming embedded and this was important given that cinema was not developing in a vacuum; it was one of many rival entertainments which are available to the paying public at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Many of these also relied on the moving image and in the next section I will argue a case for cinema emerging above all of these rivals as a dominant and enduring form.

The experience of the early cinema-goer was a combination of the effects of the production apparatus i.e. the projector, and the reception venue i.e. the theatrical space - along with the interaction of the fellow members of the audience. In that sense it was an experience

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<sup>26</sup> Oakley, p.7

<sup>27</sup> See Appendix One, pp. 293 - 296

which combined the social with the technological to produce an emotional effect on the viewer. Some early pioneers took this ambition further with the addition of a sensory dimension to the event through simulated movement; the intention was to provide a transcendent episode which took the viewer out of the physical venue and into an entirely new imaginary location by providing the appropriate sensory stimulus to go with the moving image. There had been a number of attempts at such attractions. In 1895 the novelist H.G. Wells and the cinema pioneer R.W. Paul applied for a patent on a film inspired by Wells' novel *The Time Machine* that would simulate travel through time and space.<sup>28</sup> At the Paris Exposition of 1900, Raoul Grimoin-Sansom presented *Cineorama*, an experience which aimed to replicate the sensation of travelling by hot air balloon; the audience stood on top of a large raised platform below which footage, which had been taken from an actual balloon, was projected onto a 360-degree screen.

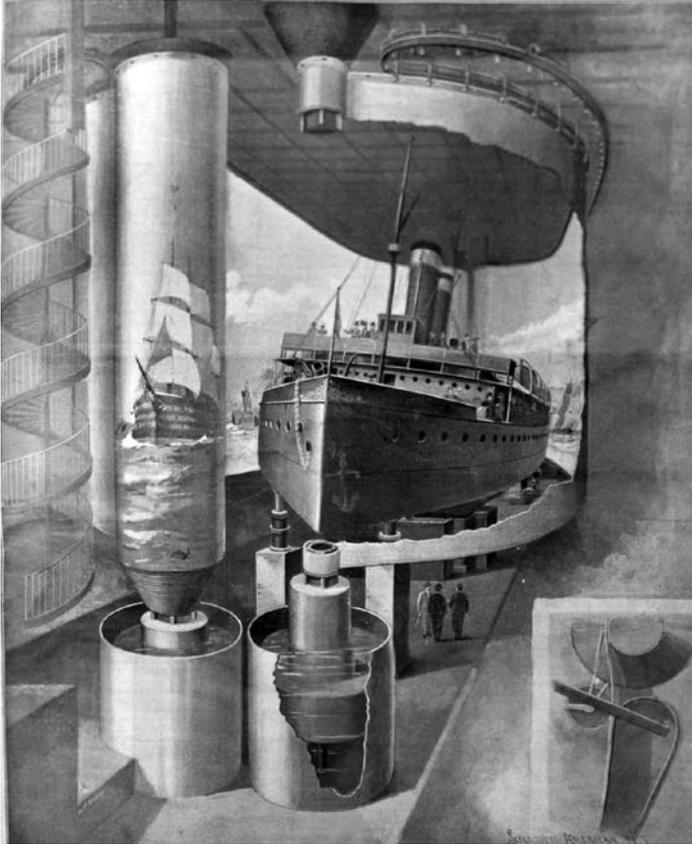


Figure 20: A poster for the Paris Exposition highlighting the Cineorama attraction.<sup>29</sup>

28 Raymond Fielding, 'Hale's Tours: Ultrarealism in the pre-1910 motion picture', in Fell, J. (ed) *Film Before Griffith*, (University of California Press, 1983) p.116

29 Image located at <http://tectonicablog.com/?p=41965> last accessed on May 4, 2016

At the same event the Lumière brothers presented *Mareorama*, a similar attraction which replicated the view from the bridge of a ship sailing across the sea.



**Figure 21: An illustration from Scientific American magazine showing a front view of the *Mareorama*. The rotating backdrop can be seen at the left-hand side of the frame.<sup>30</sup>**

The idea behind *Mareorama* was to recreate a sea voyage from Marseilles to Constantinople, with stops at Naples and Venice *en route*. The passengers, who included a correspondent for *Chambers's Journal*, boarded what appeared to be a luxury liner complete with crew who went through the motions of preparing for the trip on 'an extremely well-represented steamer, fitted with masts, rigging, and a smoking funnel':

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<sup>30</sup> 'The Mareorama at the Paris Exposition', *Scientific American*, Vol 83. Issue 13, p189 located at <http://www.scientificamerican.com/magazine/sa/1900/09-29/> last accessed May 4, 2016

After the supposed bustle of departure, the panoramic pictures will unroll themselves before the suppositious tourists, giving all the impressions of passing scenery. These pictures are forty-six feet high and over three thousand feet long. Everyone knows the phenomenon that the movement of an object which completely fills the field of vision gives the motionless spectator the impression of personal movement and it is thus that the Mareorama gives a perfect illusion of a real sea voyage.<sup>31</sup>

On a smaller scale than *Mareorama* the British director Cecil Hepworth had also popularised the 'Phantom Ride' film genre in which the footage was shot from the front of a speeding train giving the audience the sense of riding in the driver's cabin.<sup>32</sup> At a more local level, audiences in Glasgow and Edinburgh were being offered the delights of the Poole Family's Myriorama, a panorama which had animated elements incorporated into its design.<sup>33</sup>

Raymond Fielding suggests that some or all these attractions may have been the inspiration for George C. Hale, an American fireman turned mechanical engineer, to come up with his own version of such a ride. This version was called *Hale's Tours and Scenes of the World* and made its debut at the 1904 St Louis Exposition in the United States. The attraction aimed to go one better than the phantom ride by replicating not only the view from the train but also the sensory and auditory experience that went along with it. The audience entered a theatre which was designed to replicate a railway carriage complete with the appropriate livery and fittings as well as railway seats rather than theatre seats. In addition, the tickets were sold by staff in railway uniforms and the screening times were announced as departures, as in a railway timetable:

The stationary car provided a number of seats for its passengers, suitably inclined upward towards the rear to provide good sight lines. Through the open front, the audience viewed a motion picture which had been photographed

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31 J.E. Whitby 'Some Marvels of 1900', *Chambers's Journal* 2.85 p.523

32 Fielding 'Hale's Tours' pp.118-119

33 For a more detailed explanation see Griffiths, pp. 21-22

from the cowcatcher of a moving train, and which was thrown onto a slightly inclined screen from a motion picture projector situated in a gallery above and slightly behind the car. The size of the screen, the distance of the screen from the car, and the distance of the projector from the screen were intended to provide an image which covered the entire field of vision of the car's occupants.<sup>34</sup>



**Figure 22: A screening at the Hale's Tours attraction in London in 1910 showing the view from inside the 'carriage'.<sup>35</sup>**

This was certainly an entirely immersive visual experience but the difference between this and a 'phantom ride' was instantly apparent when the 'tour' began. Underneath the carriage/theatre, a continuous conveyor belt moved over a series of rollers and shafts during the performance. Lugs projecting from the belt rattled across a piece of metal under the carriage to provide the 'clickety-clack' sound of railway wheels on a track; the illusion of travel was further enhanced by blasts of air blown into the compartment and, as a *piece de resistance*, the operator could make the car sway from side to side by pulling a lever.

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<sup>34</sup> Fielding, 'Hale's Tours', p.121

<sup>35</sup> <https://londonfilmland.wordpress.com/tag/simulator-rides/> last accessed July 16,2016

Although these efforts may appear crude compared to 21<sup>st</sup> century hi-tech Disneyland simulator rides – of which Hale’s Tours is the undoubted precursor – they proved to be extremely popular and an international success. In 1908 there were an estimated 500 Hale’s Tours sites in the United States, and, along with the nickelodeon, they represented the earliest custom-built sites for the viewing of the moving image.<sup>36</sup> Although they were eventually superseded by more conventional exhibition spaces, with some US sites being ultimately converted into nickelodeons, as their popularity declined in America it increased overseas with Hale’s Tours attractions opening in Mexico, South Africa, South America, Hong Kong, Canada, Norway, and the United Kingdom.<sup>37</sup> The first Hale’s Tours venue opened in London in 1906 and there were four more by 1908.<sup>38</sup>

In Glasgow an enterprising businessman, Graeme Hunter, converted a shop in Sauchiehall Street, next door to what would become the Picture House, into a railway carriage to bring this attraction to the city. As the Glasgow exhibition historian Charles Oakley recalls:

The entertainment was known as Hale’s Tours and those who visited the cinema were given an impression of travelling through various picturesque parts of the world.<sup>39</sup>

Graeme Hunter’s foray into the world of travel simulation predates the first custom-built cinema in the city centre, since the Charing Cross Electric Theatre in 1910 is generally regarded as the first fixed-site cinema in the area. According to Oakley’s newspaper article, Hunter also appeared to have had extravagant plans for the site with ambitions to open a restaurant, a dance hall, and a roof garden on the premises. Oakley’s account appears to be the only surviving description of Hunter’s intentions. Examination of the Post Office Glasgow Directory for the years 1908 – 1911 shows no sign of Hunter’s enterprise at the location described by Oakley. As we can see from Appendix Three the exhibition landscape

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36 Phillipe Gauthier, ‘The movie theatre as an institutional space and framework of signification: Hale’s Tours and film historiography’, *Film History*, Vol. 21 (2009) pp. 326 - 335

37 Ibid p.328

38 <https://londonfilmland.wordpress.com/tag/simulator-rides/> last accessed June 21,2016

39 *Glasgow Herald*, October 6, 1954 p.6

in Saiuchiehall Street was becoming extremely competitive in this period, which suggests that Hunter's venture may not have been sufficiently long-lived to be included in the directory, opening and closing between editions. However, for those who had experienced it, Hale's Tours seems to have been memorable. In a letter to *The Glasgow Herald* in 1937 a man called Alfred Dunn, for example, recalls a visit as a six-year-old to the attraction, which he remembers as a curious entertainment:

...consisting of a sort of railway carriage, complete with a section of rail, one end being occupied by a screen on which were shown scenes such as one might view from a moving train. Accommodation was limited of course and I have a vivid recollection of waiting impatiently on a wooden form and being afraid that the 'train' would go off without me.<sup>40</sup>

Excusing his younger self's memory Mr Dunn was quite accurate in his description of the experience and the location of the attraction, however he does misremember the title which he recalls as 'Hare's Tours' (sic) which is perhaps understandable given that some 30 years had elapsed by the time he put pen to paper.

Hale's Tours did however spawn imitators across the city of Glasgow. In April 1908, Alex. E. Swann, applied for a licence to operate what is described as a 'cinematographic Pullman car' in premises at 11 Jamaica Street in the southern end of the city centre. The case was considered twice by Glasgow magistrates before the licence was finally refused, mainly on safety grounds, because of what are described as 'various objectors'.<sup>41</sup> The exact nature of the business relationship between Graeme Hunter and Hale's Tours is unknown but it seems reasonable to assume that it was some sort of exclusive franchise arrangement. This would explain a legal action which was raised by Hale's Tours against two Glasgow businessmen in June of 1908. Arthur Coop, who was described as a public entertainer, and Arthur Bide, a showman, were by then running an entertainment called Coop's Tours in premises at 127 Trongate. The action was brought by Hale's Tours of the World (Limited) who sought to restrain Coop and Bide from carrying on at that address or anywhere else

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<sup>40</sup> *Glasgow Herald*, September 3, 1937 p.9

<sup>41</sup> Glasgow Corporation minutes C.I.3.38 p1165, p.1256

‘an apparatus for producing an illusion of going on a journey’ as well as £1000 in damages.<sup>42</sup> Although the action, under the 1907 Patent Act, was raised on behalf of Hale’s Tours it was presumably instigated by Hunter to protect his own arrangement with Hale. The case was heard before Sheriff Fyffe who granted the interdict and awarded damages. Additionally, there does not appear to have been any record of Coop or Bide seeking a licence for their venture from the Corporation, but they appear to have evaded any prosecution on these grounds and presumably simply ceased trading.

In the end, despite having no similar competition, Hale’s Tours proved to be a short-lived venture and by 1910 The Picture House, Glasgow’s most opulent cinema, had opened on virtually the same site in Sauchiehall Street. Oakley put forward a number of reasons for the downfall of Hunter’s venture. He suggested the venue failed to thrive partly because of the lack of suitable product, as had happened in the United States but also:

... because the shows possessed a novelty rather than an entertainment value, and the public were not disposed to come back more than once or twice. Whether Hale’s Tours can be described as having pioneered cinema entertainment in the centre of the city is debatable, since they did not last very long.<sup>43</sup>

The Hale’s Tours experience clearly fulfilled some desire on the part of the audience for a sense of spectacle, but Oakley’s comments highlight the crucial absence of narrative in the experience and anticipate a wider debate as to whether Hale’s Tours actually constitute cinema, and Gauthier has highlighted the lack of attention paid to Hale’s Tours in synoptic film histories. There was a sense that whilst in Gunning’s terms such ‘tours’ would certainly be an attraction in and of themselves, but the audience now appeared to be outgrowing this type of limited spectacle. It seems that, at best, Hale’s Tours should be considered as an interesting step along the road to fixed-site cinema, in that they could be found in the same place and at the same time every day providing some sort of entertainment destination. But Oakley also suggested that the audience saw a clear distinction between

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<sup>42</sup> *Glasgow Herald*, June 8, 1908 p.9

<sup>43</sup> *ibid*

visits to Hale's Tours, which was perceived as a novelty, and a trip to the cinema which was considered as part of a regular, sustained, entertainment landscape which had variable content. Alfred Dunn's recollection similarly described it as an entertainment rather than as cinema, in his letter written some thirty years after the event it is more the physical experience he seemed to recall rather than any sense of what he saw. Even in a legal definition offered in the aforementioned court action the company itself referred to 'an apparatus for producing an illusion of going on a journey'.<sup>44</sup> We can infer from this definition that, as far as Hale's Tours was concerned, the cinematic aspect was a means to an end rather than, as in the case of fixed-site cinema, an end in itself. We may also suspect that the impetus of the cinema industry at this stage was to standardise exhibition and that a non-theatrical outlier such as this would go against the prevailing commercial drive.

Nonetheless the experience of a visit to Hale's Tours offered a new dimension in terms of the relationship between the audience and the moving image. In the first instance it rendered the experience more obviously immersive and, unlike a conventional cinema, forced the audience to acknowledge not only the space but the presence of their fellow audience members who were complicit in the deception of a train ride. In addition, unlike the reflected gaze of the local topical and the frisson of identification, it turned the moving image into a truly sensory, participative vehicle in a way that, for example, conventional theatre struggled to do.

To appreciate the most important distinction between Hale's Tours and successful exhibitions of moving images however we come back to the notion of narrative. One argument against Hale's Tours being considered as cinema is that it did not offer any sense of story, substituting instead a vicarious experience; it could be considered as an elaborate fairground thrill ride, an isolated attraction which could be viewed only once or twice as opposed to a cinema with a change of programme often several times a week. There is little in the Hale's Tours experience to reward repeat attendance whereas the attraction of cinema is designed to encourage habitual viewing.

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<sup>44</sup> *Glasgow Herald*, June 8, 1908 p.9

This offers evidence to suggest that the relationship between the audience and the image was sufficiently mature even from the earliest days to allow storytelling to take place and audiences increasingly came to expect that. Gaudreault raises interesting issues about the nature of narrative in early film and suggests that there are two types of such narrative in early cinema; the shot, which is a micro-narrative and produces the first layer of narrativity, and then the aggregation of these micro-narratives into what he terms the second layer of narrativity through which the audience derived meaning and understanding.<sup>45</sup> If we regard Hale's Tours in those terms, the phenomenon really only fulfilled the first of these criteria; the image of the train ride provided the first layer of narrativity but there are no micro-narratives to compile into the second layer. Whatever there was beyond the projected image was provided by the audience itself in its shared experience of a railway journey. Hale's Tours may have succeeded as one of many such rides in a fairground but stripped of the infectious carnival atmosphere and located on a city centre street it lost something of its appeal. It provided material which is undoubtedly available for narrativisation on the part of the audience but, unlike a fiction film for example, it did not demand it.

The timing of the emergence of Hale's Tours in Glasgow I believe offers an interesting sidebar on the development of the cinema audience and allows us to form some conclusions in terms of what the audience understands by the cinematic experience. Hale's Tours made its debut in Glasgow just after fixed-site exhibition had established itself in the city but just before the advent of the custom-built movie theatre. Even at this early stage in the history of fixed-site cinema, there was a perception on the part of the audience about what the nascent cinema-going experience should entail. There were expectations of comfort and exhibition space which were perhaps not met by a simulation of a rickety railway carriage. There was also, I suggest, an emerging question of attendant status which Hale's Tours did not fulfil, especially where city centre cinema-going was concerned.<sup>46</sup> A trip to the cinema was beginning to acquire the same status as a trip to the legitimate theatre, rather than the fairground, and not just by dint of cinema invading what has been a traditional theatrical locus in terms of the city's geography. In addition, if we look at the

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45 Gaudreault, 'Film, Narrative, Narration: The Cinema of the Lumière Brothers' in Elsaesser pp. 68 – 75

46 For comparison with the cinema-going experience, see the description of the delights of The Picture House in Appendix Two, p. 312. This is a level of luxury which Hale's Tours could not match.

cinema listings in local papers by the beginning of 1908 we are starting to see the emergence of a main feature being listed rather than a simple programme of cinematographic entertainments. As we will consider in the next chapter, within two years the single fiction film would come to dominate the cinematic offering with the non-fiction film relegated to supporting status on the programme. This suggests the advent of a parade of ever-changing spectacle which far exceeds the endless repetition of the simulated train journey. In passing we might conclude that the demise of Hale's Tours is the final nail in the coffin of cinema as a sideshow entertainment and offers the prospect of its emergence within 18 months at the heart of Glasgow's entertainment landscape, especially in the city centre.

## 9 The development of film form and the maturing of the audience.

The years after the passing of the Cinematograph Act in 1909 can be regarded as a period of maturation of the film industry in Britain. This chapter will draw on material from earlier in the thesis – specifically Chapter Three and Chapter 8 – to look at how this new maturity manifested itself in terms of the textual organisation of film. It will consider relationships between exhibition, film form, criticism, distribution and production and their effect on the development of the cinema audience. A multiplicity of factors is at play here not least the evolution of film form in response to the demands of an increasingly cinema-sophisticated audience.

The relationship between cinema sites and cinema audiences in Glasgow can be considered as a virtuous circle; we have shown in Chapter Three the audience first determined where fixed-site cinemas would be situated and how, after a period of consolidation, the cinema owners developed their venues into spaces that would attract the type of audience to which they aspired in a drive for respectability. This relationship cannot be considered without also taking into account changes in film form. As we move away from the Cinema of Attractions towards a more complex and sophisticated narrative style, usually referred to as the classical style, there appears to be a corresponding uplift in the demographic of the cinema audience. Issues of status and respectability will come into consideration as will the audience's expectations of an evening at the cinema. Despite encompassing a relatively short period, from around 1908 to 1914, this chapter will argue that the audience was responding to a newly mature film form. It will also draw on material compiled from newspaper archives and contained in the appendices to this thesis to illustrate the argument.

It is self-evident that we cannot impute feelings or opinions into an audience that no longer exists, and it would be inappropriate to adopt a teleological view influenced by the views of 21<sup>st</sup> century audiences in dealing with a late-19<sup>th</sup> or early-20<sup>th</sup> century entertainment. There is however a body of local newspaper accounts, including letters pages with recollections and memories, to allow us to begin to infer the attitudes of the audience at this time, whilst the entertainment listings and reviews section of the *Evening Times* in

particular, provides an invaluable resource in this regard. I would argue that the role of recollection as evidence is very important despite the inherent risk of inaccuracy. The nature of the memory, and the time lapse until it was documented, says much, I believe, about the eventfulness of early film for a generation of Glaswegians who were, without knowing it, what I have already described as 'cinema natives'. The abiding influence of cinema in their lives is a key part of the history of Glasgow's relationship with the moving image.

Any historiography of the establishment of cinema in Glasgow must draw on a number of factors including the films, the programmes constructed around them, the spaces in which they were seen, and the nature of the critical and promotional discourse that emerges as a consequence. It must also recognise film form as a key index of investment and response. What we are chiefly considering here is early cinema, generally taken to mean 'that period in which cinema first appeared and developed from the mid-1890s to the mid-1910s'.<sup>1</sup> However we will also consider the evolution of the medium towards a more classical form which prevails from around 1916. This chapter will therefore feature several case studies of, mostly, non-canonical films which, through studies of newspaper archives, we can establish as screening in Glasgow during the period from 1897 to 1914 i.e. the advent of cinema prior to the start of the First World War. By considering these individually and collectively we get a sense of an emerging Glasgow cinema audience which shares some characteristics with those described by Allen and Hansen in Manhattan, or by Burrows in London, yet at the same time has characteristics that are unique to the city itself. As well as these case studies more information on films screening during this period, and how they were presented to the audience can be found in Appendices Two and Three.

The driving force in the establishment of cinema in Glasgow was the presence of a receptive audience in a particular location. It has already been established in Chapter Three of this work that fixed-site cinema emerged first in the east end of the city for two reasons; this is an area which was considered an entertainment locus because of the early Carnival

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<sup>1</sup> Early cinema definition from *Oxford Dictionary of Film Studies* by Annette Kuhn and Guy Westwell (Oxford University Press, 2012)

screenings by George Green in the Vinegar Hill area, and it was also an area which offered the prospect of a large available audience.

In the first decade of cinema exhibition the data presented in Appendix Two suggests there were no permanent purpose-built exhibition sites in the city centre, for example.<sup>2</sup> Nonetheless it has been demonstrated that the city centre played a key role in the development of cinema in Glasgow with the screenings at the Skating Palace and Wilson's Colosseum. In addition, the first film to seize the attention of the Glasgow audience screened in the city centre, but not in a cinema. As we have already discussed, The Glasgow and West of Scotland Amateur Photographic Association had taken the bold step of presenting the film of *Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee Procession* to the city in the summer of 1897 as part of its annual exhibition which was held in the Fine Art Institute in Sauchiehall Street.<sup>3</sup> The event was an enormous success, playing to full houses for its initial two-week run which was extended to six weeks. The city centre location and the one shilling admission fee suggests these screenings attracted a much wider demographic in audience terms than the working-class audiences associated in previous scholarship with early cinema. This was an event of historic proportions, no British monarch had reigned so long, and almost every film camera in London had been trained on the proceedings.<sup>4</sup> Major film-makers of the day such as R.W. Paul sent their cameras to cover the event and in the end Paul offered for sale 12 films, each 40 feet in length, of different aspects of the procession; it was also stressed that these could be screened individually or joined together and shown in sequence.<sup>5</sup> Paul's catalogue described the films as little more than a prosaic list of events e.g. 'Dragoons – Dragoons Passing St Paul's, Royal – Royal Carriages arriving at St Paul's, etc. From the surviving BFI footage, for which the film maker is unidentified, we get a sense of what the 1897 audience could see.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> See Appendix Two, pp. 297 - 348

<sup>3</sup> *Glasgow Herald*, September 1, 1937, p.11

<sup>4</sup> Low, *The History of the British Film 1896 – 1906*, p.63

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid* pp. 63, 64

<sup>6</sup> *Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee (1897)* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pTG9NJZFKk> last accessed June 21, 2016

Paul's film is squarely in the tradition of the Cinema of Attractions; it is not so much what one can see that is important but that anything can be seen at all. This was an event that, before cinema, would be limited to a crowd numbering in the thousands but now was able to be viewed by millions, indeed by almost everyone who wanted to see it. This is, as Low suggests, the real appeal of the topical, the sense of eventfulness, of vicarious participation that it brought with it providing an 'indispensable public service'.<sup>7</sup> Considered in terms of form, the film of the event is very basic consisting of a number of shots of cavalry, carriages, landaus, and the Royal coaches passing in front of static cameras at strategic vantage points. This is very much a view of the ordinary spectator, there is no camera movement, no shift of focus or depth of field; the events are recorded unadorned as they pass in front of the camera lens. In that sense the film replicated the experience of the person in the street. It also reminds us of Musser's view of early cinema as a visual newspaper in that a degree of foreknowledge would be required to appreciate fully what was being seen.<sup>8</sup> There is no indication of which dignitary is in which carriage, or which regiment of cavalry, or from which country is parading in front of the camera. There is indeed not even an indication of which carriage contains the Queen and her family. The audience brought its own sense of understanding of the events; again, they had as much information as those who were at the event itself.

Although we do not know for certain which film of the Diamond Jubilee procession was screened in Glasgow, it seems likely that it would have been Paul's which appears to have been the most popular. If all twelve of Paul's films were shown that would amount to about 500 feet of film, or roughly five minutes of screen time. Those who were at the Glasgow screenings recall the whole programme, which included several magic lantern shows, running for about half an hour. Paul had connections with the city having shot a film of the Glasgow Fire Brigade in the same year and would return to Glasgow on more than one occasion to shoot topicals.<sup>9</sup> Whether it was the Paul film or whether it was by some other film maker the effect on the audience can be illustrated by the fact that forty years after

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<sup>7</sup> Low, *The History of the British Film 1896 – 1906*, p.61

<sup>8</sup> Musser, Charles 'American Vitagraph: 1897 – 1901', pp. 4 - 48

<sup>9</sup> Moving Image Archive Ref SSA/4/5/73

seeing the presentation James Baillie, a former President of the Glasgow and West of Scotland Amateur Photographic Association, remembered it vividly:

In spite of some flickering we gazed on it not only with delight but with amazement. It seemed too marvellous to be true.<sup>10</sup>

Baillie's recollections illustrate one of the most interesting aspects of early cinema, namely the enduring impact that it made on those who were viewing it for the first time. Given that it was like nothing they had seen before that was not surprising and occasionally the sense of spectacle transcended recollection of detail, leading in some cases to somewhat unreliable accounts. For example, in a letter to the *Glasgow Herald* in 1937, a Mr George Brown recalls going to the cinema in Glasgow as a child to see a Bronco Billie (sic) film at the 'Cinema House' in Renfield Street. He also recalled seeing one other particular film in memorable circumstances:

The first film many people ever saw in Glasgow was in the Theatre Royal. The pantomime was, I think, *Robinson Crusoe* with that most perfect of 'boys' Marie Loftus. At the interval people were rising to go out when the picture 'A Trip to the Moon' in colours was flashed on a screen let down in front of the curtain and you may be sure everyone sat down again. It caused more sensation than the pantomime (a very good one) had done.<sup>11</sup>

Mr Brown's memory of the event is obviously vivid, a testament to the eventfulness of the experience, but the chronology is inaccurate especially if he is referring to Méliès's *Le Voyage dans la Lune*, which dates from 1902. However, Marie Loftus starred in pantomime as *Robinson Crusoe* in the Theatre Royal in 1889 and 1890, more than a decade before Méliès' film had been made.<sup>12</sup> It seems clear that Mr Brown remembers the film but has conflated his memories of where he saw it; similarly, the 'Cinema House' where he saw the *Bronco Billy* film was actually the Cinema Picture House which opened only in 1911

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<sup>10</sup> *Glasgow Herald*, September 1, 1937, p.11

<sup>11</sup> *ibid*

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.theglasgowstory.com/story.php?id=TGSDH14> last accessed June 21, 2016

suggesting quite a gap between the two memories and it seems unlikely that both occurred in his childhood.<sup>13</sup> What was really being remembered here was the ritualistic aspects of going to the cinema which imprinted themselves on a young mind at the expense of the specifics of time and place. It is nonetheless a clear indication of the impact that the spectacle of cinema had on this young spectator.

A more reliable account, but only slightly so, of two canonical films being shown in Glasgow comes from the showman E.H. Bostock, who ran the Zoo and Variety Circus in New City Road. This would become the Zoo Electric Theatre in 1911 and show films as a permanent part of its programming. However, at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century it was still predominantly a circus and variety venue. Always a prodigious self-promoter with a gift for publicity, it is unsurprising that when *The Glasgow Herald* invited contributions to mark the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of cinema in the city, Bostock offered a significant recollection:

I ran from July 1897 onwards films as a sideshow and in the same winter I produced them in the circus as part of the programme. Again at Christmas 1898 I presented a beautiful picture "*Cinderella*", all hand-coloured in Paris, and again in August 1901, exhibited the first fight film in the city '*Fitzsimmons v. Jeffries*', which was a very big success.<sup>14</sup>

Bostock appears to be talking here about *Cendrillon* another Méliès film which was made in 1899 so his recollection is perhaps a year out.<sup>15</sup> The film, an adaptation of *Cinderella* does however include a number of hand-coloured passages which suggests he is talking about this film. The film was the first of Méliès's so-called 'féeries', a French theatre genre known for its fantastical storylines, melodramatic plots, and theatrical trickery.<sup>16</sup>

*Cendrillon* runs for just under 6 minutes and is a stripped-down retelling of the well-known fairy tale on a set which resembles a small theatrical stage. It begins with the drudge

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<sup>13</sup> <http://www.scottishcinemas.org.uk/database2.php> last accessed December 29, 2017

<sup>14</sup> *Glasgow Herald*, September 2, 1937, p.7

<sup>15</sup> *Cendrillon* (1901), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RZgXy7JI9DM> last accessed June 21, 2016

<sup>16</sup> Katharine Singer Kovacs, 'George Méliès and the Féeries' in John Fell (ed.) *Film Before Griffith* (Berkeley, 1983) pp. 244, 245

Cinderella being abandoned by, presumably, her stepsisters dressed for a ball. As she ponders her fate, a fairy appears in the fireplace and after listening to Cinderella's story turns three mice into liveried coachmen and a large prop pumpkin into a coach. Cinderella's ragged attire is transformed into a beautiful ball gown, before she climbs aboard the coach and exits left of frame presumably to the ball. After indicating a grandfather clock to remind her that the transformation is time sensitive, the fairy godmother disappears through a stage trap door. The scene dissolves to a ballroom where Cinderella makes her entrance; at first shunned by her stepmother and sisters she then catches the attention of the Prince. They dance but Cinderella is aware that it is close to midnight. As she tries to leave a bizarrely dressed man with a long white beard, a personification of Father Time, appears in the middle of the frame carrying a giant clock face. He vanishes in a cloud of smoke to be replaced by the fairy who sternly admonishes Cinderella before turning her back into her rags; she is mocked by the crowd and rushes out in disgrace but pursued by the Prince. Back in her cottage a distraught Cinderella begins to weep. Suddenly the grandfather clock moves across the floor, Father Time appears again in a cloud of smoke, a chorus line of dancers appear brandishing clock faces, they then turn into dancing clocks, and a giant clock face fills the screen with Father Time capering at its centre. Cinderella is roused by her sisters and told to go and answer the door. The Prince is there carrying a slipper left by the mystery woman as she rushed out; both sisters try it on without success until the Prince tries the slipper on Cinderella and it is a perfect fit. The fairy reappears again, transforms Cinderella back into her ball finery, and she leaves on the arm of the prince. The film dissolves to a parade where the prince leads his bride, Cinderella, and their royal retinue into the palace past a crowd of cheering spectators. The film ends with the female spectators forming a chorus line in the middle of which the fairy appears and dances; after the dance is complete the scenery is pulled aside, and the backdrop raised to reveal Cinderella, the prince, and the principal members of the cast in a tableau vivant.<sup>17</sup>

In terms of form *Cendrillon* represented a significant advance even at this early stage in cinema history. It is presented in a manner which would be very familiar to an audience that had no real conception of cinematic language but was more used to the theatre; the

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<sup>17</sup> *Cendrillon* (1901), <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RZgXy7Jl9DM> last accessed June 21, 2016

story is presented as if it were on stage and employs rudimentary stage technology and set dressing augmented by the use of Méliès's trick photography in place of stage magic. The camera remains static and distanced from the performers as the audience would be distanced from the stage. Méliès had always claimed that he discovered his trick photography by accident; that the film had jammed while he was out shooting and when it was freed again objects 'magically' reappeared in different places. This is a reduced explanation for a complex effect and Gunning suggests it is kept deliberately simplistic to make it appear magical.<sup>18</sup> In fact Gunning asserts that the effects could not have been achieved as Méliès had suggested, since the various effects of differences in cranking speeds, the physical position of the film in the camera, and the objects in the frame would have made it impossible to create this kind of abrupt but essentially seamless effect without a degree of splicing and/or dissolving. Although there are those who credit Méliès as a pioneer of film editing in this respect, Bottomore is a little more sceptical. For him the twenty-shot *Cendrillon* with its joining together of shots is a way of acclimatising the audience to the notion of the longer, story film but his 'multi-scene films are merely multi-scene theatre that has been filmed'.<sup>19</sup> If we take both theories together then we might consider *Cendrillon* as a transitional film; on the one hand the idea of seeing a well-known and well-loved story brought vividly to life fits Gunning's analysis, on the other however the sophisticated, multi-scene narrative is taking broad steps towards what we would consider to be a classical cinema.

Barry Salt also marks Méliès's use of transitions between scenes in *Cendrillon* as a significant advance in film form. Méliès, when there is no appropriate intertitle between scenes, dissolves rather than cuts. At the same time British filmmakers from the so-called Brighton School, such as James Williamson, used the more abrupt cutting technique to transition from one scene to the next.<sup>20</sup> Bottomore is equivocal and slightly dismissive of Méliès's multi-scene films but the multi-scene concept forces us to consider issues such as where the narration is located and who is taking responsibility for it. It would seem that the answer is that the multi-scene approach provided a narrative structure which is in the

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18 Gunning, 'Primitive' Cinema: A Frame Up? Or The Trick's on Us' in Elsaesser pp.97, 98

19 Steven Bottomore, 'Shots in the Dark; The Real Origins of Film Editing' in Elsaesser pp. 104, 105

20 Barry Salt 'Film Form 1900- 1906' in Elsaesser p.32

control of the director, in this case Méliès, which suggests a plan or order, thus locating it towards classical cinema.

In historical terms it may represent a cinematic landmark but, in Glasgow at least, the presence of *Cendrillon* went almost unremarked. Although Bostock retrospectively took the credit for showing it, at the time it was, as he says, a sideshow to the many other attractions on offer. Examination of newspaper advertisements for his venue in both December 1898 – his date – and December of 1899, the year in which the film was made, provide no mention of *Cendrillon*. In advertisements for his venue on December 12, 1898 Bostock promoted a zoo and a variety circus, as well as delights such as ‘Mlle Alexandra, the Venus of the Curriculum, M. Bertie the gymnast par excellence, (and) Vasco, the Mad Magician’.<sup>21</sup> If films were being screened, as Bostock insists, then it was probably as part of a cine-variety format. Writing in the *Glasgow Herald* almost 40 years later Bostock was adamant that *Cendrillon* was a great success, as was his screening of *The Corbett-Fitzsimmons Fight* although he may again be mistaken about the details. Again, an examination of newspaper listings shows no record of the fight being screened at Bostock’s establishment; it was however screened at another city centre venue, Crouch’s Wonderland and Cinematograph in Argyle Street, some four years earlier in May 1897.<sup>22</sup>

This fight film had been a major event for Crouch’s and the advertisement trumpeted the arrival of the film with some urgency, pointing out that it had just been added to the programme; it also claims to show ‘every movement during the contest’.<sup>23</sup>

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21 *Glasgow Herald*, December 12, 1898, p.6

22 *Glasgow Amusements and Pastimes*, May 10, 1897 p.6

23 *ibid*

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**CROUCH'S**  
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**CINEMATOGRAPH THEATRE.**

137 ARGYLE STREET GLASGOW.

PERFECT and REALISTIC  
LIVING PICTURES

**JUST ADDED**

The CORBETT FIGHT, showing every  
movement during the contest.

**WORTH HALF-A-CROWN TO SEE.**

If you have seen other Cinematographs, and they  
make your eyes ache, come and see ours and we assure  
you that you will not only be highly delighted but will  
recommend it to your friends.

**CROUCH THE LEADER**

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Figure 23: The advert heralding the arrival of 'the Corbett fight' at Crouch's.<sup>24</sup>

Given that the film originally ran for more than an hour and a half, it seems unlikely that it would have been screened in its entirety. However, it was a prestige production, and Crouch's took the opportunity to boast that the screening was worth half- a-crown to see – much more than the usual 6d admission:

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24 Glasgow Amusements and Pastimes, May 10, 1897 p.6

If you have seen other cinematographs and they make your eyes ache, come and see ours and we assure you that you will not only be highly delighted but will recommend it to your friends.<sup>25</sup>

The fight between James Corbett and Bob Fitzsimmons for the heavyweight boxing championship of the world had taken place in Carson City, Nevada on St Patrick's Day, 1897. Filmed in its entirety by Enoch Rector and released in US cinemas in May of the same year, it played in Glasgow roughly contemporaneously with its American release. The fight consisted of fourteen, three-minute rounds and the finished film ran for just under 100 minutes. It was shot on a specially constructed camera and on the unprecedented aspect ratio of 1.65:1 on 63mm nitrate film.<sup>26</sup> Although the film no longer exists in its entirety, it is still regarded as one of the most significant contributions to early cinema. What remains of the film is a curious viewing experience from a 21<sup>st</sup> century perspective.<sup>27</sup> It offers a static, unshifting view of the fight, whilst the unique aspect ratio allows the whole ring to be covered at once. The shallow depth of field means that the fighters move across the frame; rather than tracking them, the camera remains immobile. In that sense it somewhat replicated the experience of the viewer in the way that the R.W Paul film of the Diamond Jubilee did, as well as replicating the sense of topicality and participation in an event from which they would normally have been excluded through geography.

*The Corbett-Fitzsimmons Fight* caused a sensation in the United States, especially among women who at that time were not expected to attend such events. Hansen however suggests that as much as 60% of the audience at the screening in Chicago were women, and that the film offered them the chance to see 'the forbidden sight of male bodies in semi-nudity, engaged in intimate and intense physical action'.<sup>28</sup> Part of the attraction of this film, perhaps more than other topicals, was the vicarious experience it provided of a

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<sup>25</sup> *ibid*

<sup>26</sup> [http://boxrec.com/media/index.php/James\\_J.\\_Corbett\\_vs.\\_Bob\\_Fitzsimmons](http://boxrec.com/media/index.php/James_J._Corbett_vs._Bob_Fitzsimmons) last accessed on July 19, 2016

<sup>27</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LVwNVzqQeeg> and [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zU\\_sT\\_FvyWU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zU_sT_FvyWU) last accessed June 16, 2016

<sup>28</sup> Hansen, *Babel and Babylon*, p.1

major sporting event which took place in a venue that, even by American standards, was slightly off the beaten track.

It seems likely that Bostock's erroneous claim arose because he became confused between the Corbett fight and the Johnson- Jeffries bout which, as demonstrated in Chapter Six, he did screen to some notoriety. Although there would later be concern about the moral hazard that fight films might pose to an impressionable audience there is equally no evidence to suggest that the women of Glasgow followed the example of their counterparts in Chicago by flocking to Crouch's Wonderland to see the Corbett film. The vicarious thrill of the fight film was however something which would be exploited by other cinemas, in particular the Britannia Panopticon where the genre seemed to be especially popular with the clientele. In February 1911, for example, the Panopticon screened the film of the fight between Sam Langford and Bill Lang which the management felt sure would prove popular:

Mr Pickard has secured for Glasgow the sole right for the pictures depicting the glove contest between Sam Langford the black [sic] and Bill Lang the heavyweight champion of Australia and they promise to eclipse in point of drawing power any of the numerous novelties the enterprising proprietor has placed before the public. ...As to the pictures themselves they need no praise. They are first-class and one can follow the rounds as clearly almost as if he were at the ringside.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> *Evening Times*, February 28, 1911 p.9



**Figure 24: Sam Langford (centre) stands over Bill Lang during their London boxing match.<sup>30</sup>**

The actual fight took place at Olympia in London on February 21 so, according to the listings in the *Evening Times*, the Glasgow audience was seeing this bout just a week after it had taken place, as opposed to the two-month gap between the Corbett Fitzsimmons fight and its screening at Crouch's. The Langford-Lang fight was clearly as much a media event as it was a boxing match. Langford, a Canadian, was a very popular fighter. He was, according to the boxing statistics website *BoxRec* 'one of the best boxers of all time and arguably the greatest boxer to never win, or even fight for, a world title'.<sup>31</sup> At a period when black boxers seldom contested world championship bouts Langford still built up a formidable reputation. He fought across four divisions, from lightweight to heavyweight, and frequently found himself mismatched, as he was against the Australian, Lang, who was 30 pounds heavier. Despite Lang's weight advantage, Langford won on a disqualification in the 6<sup>th</sup> round.<sup>32</sup> Although the company behind the Langford-Lang fight is unknown, some of the footage still survives.<sup>33</sup> The boxer's popularity meant that a number of his fights had been filmed, this raises the issue of early cinema and the cultivation of celebrity. We can argue that the presence of a famous sportsman was an attraction in and of itself and the footage

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30 [http://boxrec.com/media/index.php/Sam\\_Langford\\_vs.\\_Bill\\_Lang](http://boxrec.com/media/index.php/Sam_Langford_vs._Bill_Lang) last accessed June 16, 2016

31 [http://boxrec.com/media/index.php/Sam\\_Langford](http://boxrec.com/media/index.php/Sam_Langford) last accessed June 16, 2016

32 [http://boxrec.com/media/index.php/Sam\\_Langford\\_vs.\\_Bill\\_Lang](http://boxrec.com/media/index.php/Sam_Langford_vs._Bill_Lang) last accessed June 16, 2016

33 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4SvbTck039Y&list=PL871F637E590F8EFB> last accessed June 16, 2016

at the start of the film showing 'behind the scenes' shots of Langford training reinforces that view.

It is interesting to note the difference in form between this film and the Corbett-Fitzsimmons fight. In the Langford film the camera is much closer to the ring and is looking down from a slightly elevated vantage point; significantly the camera also moves, panning gently left and right to follow the action thus replicating the spectator's experience as the fighters move across the ring to the point where the view is at times better than that available from ringside. The attraction with the Langford fight is surely topicality rather than any of the sexual titillation of which Hansen had spoken in the Corbett-Fitzsimmons bout. Sports fans and filmgoers alike had the opportunity to see a much talked-about sporting event, close-up, only a matter of days after it had taken place some 400 miles away. The exclusive booking meant that the Panopticon could promote the film with as much vigour as it might promote an actual boxing match. The immediacy of the event added another layer to the attractiveness of the cinema experience and introduced the notion of a film programme acting almost as a visual reporter on current events.

Both of these fight films screened at venues close to the Trongate in the east of the city. As argued in Chapter Eight it was not until after the introduction of the Cinematograph Act of 1909 that cinema exhibition really took hold as a permanent city centre attraction. Through research into local newspapers a representative database has been constructed of the cinema texts that were placed in front of the potential audience in Glasgow from 1908 - 1914. 1908 was chosen as the starting point because this was when the Glasgow Parish Council was alleged to have conducted its original survey of cinema audiences. 1914 was taken as the end point because this was the year after the Corporation changed its regulations in response to initial lobbying from the Parish Council and new regulations had been applied to all cinema licences.

If we consider the month of February from 1908 to 1914 then we have a sampling of 422 films. These are detailed in Appendix 2 as individual programmes and in Appendix 3 as a database of all of the information that could be found about these films. Oakley had

previously said that, even as early as 1896, there was no shortage of films available to be screened in the city.<sup>34</sup> This would appear to be borne out by the findings of this research.

The 422 films on offer in the period under investigation break down as follows.

<b>Genre</b>	<b>Number of films</b>
Comedy	100
Drama	98
Western	42
Romance	23
Crime	15
Documentary	15
Travel	15
Fantasy	13
Historical	12
Newsreel/Topical	11
Nature/wildlife	9
Sport	6
Adventure	5
War	5
Shakespeare	3
Fight films	3
Sensational*	2
Science	1
Dance	1

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<sup>34</sup> Oakley, p.3

Animation	1
Unknown	42
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>422</b>

\* This description was applied to two films screened at the Panopticon in the advertising matter. On further examination one would appear to be a Western and the genre of the other cannot be established. However, the description of the films as 'sensational' is entirely in keeping with the Panopticon's brash, public image.

It is worth remarking on the breadth of material available to the potential audience and also the scale and range of exhibition venues in which they could be seen. Comedy was the predominant genre but drama and romance featured prominently and Glaswegians seemed to have been inordinately fond of Westerns. Given the protest from the Parish Council documented in Chapter Four, it might be anticipated that there would be significant numbers of films that could be considered objectionable in terms of content, but it can be seen that there are relatively few in this category; only 15 can be categorised as 'crime films', the same number as there are documentaries or travel pictures. More details of these films and how they were presented to the public can be found in Appendix Two. The breadth of venues is also instructive. Leaving aside the 20 municipal halls which were used for other events as well as screenings; the venues ranged from the 226-seater Casino in Pollokshaws to the 2508-seater Wellington Palace in the Gorbals.<sup>35</sup>

One of the earliest films for which details are available is *The Shipowner's Daughter*, a 1908 film from Pathé Freres which played at Pringle's Picture Palace near Glasgow Cross in the week of February 3, 1908. This is a single reel film which is described by the newspaper as 'a tragic drama with a happy ending in a splendid picture'.<sup>36</sup> In contrast one film of the later period *Judith of Bethulia*, which played at The Picture House in Sauchiehall Street in the week of February 9, 1914 is singled out for its running time and described as 'magnificently staged and occupies over an hour in going through'.<sup>37</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> A full list of licensed cinema venues is contained in Appendix One pp 293 - 296.

<sup>36</sup> *Evening Times*, February 4, 1908, p.9

<sup>37</sup> *Evening Times*, February 10, 1914, p.9

The research suggests that even at an early stage cinema was an international medium. In February of 1908 for example, the appendix suggests that, for those titles for whom a country of production could be sourced, audiences in Glasgow were able to watch not just films from the United Kingdom, but also the United States, France, Italy, and Denmark.<sup>38</sup> The films were silent so there was no language barrier and any information could be communicated by an easily translated inter-title card. This is also an indication of the transportability and commodification of film even at this relatively early stage.

Picture house owners presented varied programmes which had something to suit all tastes and which changed frequently and the material in Appendix Two attempts to draw this together for the first time to give a sense of the promotional discourse between exhibitors and audience. Hengler's in Sauchiehall Street proclaimed that 'the display of animated pictures...presents another change of subject for the current week. These are of a wide range as regards interest and amusement'.<sup>39</sup> At one end of the spectrum there were low comedies such as *What Happened to Mary*, a short (430 feet) British film which played at Dennistoun Palladium in the week of February 19, 1912.<sup>40</sup> It is summarised as 'A girl weds a sweep and discovers he is a Negro'.<sup>41</sup> But in the same week the Charing Cross Electric Theatre is offering a more improving programme:

All those interested in science should make a point of seeing the film depicting the marvels of liquid air while *The Making of Roses* should appeal to those of a horticultural turn of mind. Among the other instructive pictures is *Bergamo in Lombardy* whose famous buildings are shown to advantage. *Somebody's Mother*, *A Contagious Disease*, and *Editor and Millionaire* go to complete a varied programme.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> A full list of films screening in the city in February 1908 and their country of origin can be found on p.349

<sup>39</sup> *Evening Times*, February 25, 1908, p.9

<sup>40</sup> *Evening Times*, February 20, 1912, p.9

<sup>41</sup> Internet Movie Database located at [http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0169378/?ref\\_=fn\\_tt\\_tt\\_2](http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0169378/?ref_=fn_tt_tt_2)

<sup>42</sup> *Evening Times*, February 20, 1912, p.9

'Liquid air' is air which has been compressed to the point of liquidity and has properties similar to liquid nitrogen. It was considered a scientific marvel in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and there were claims that it could be used to fuel cars. It was, to some extent, a cutting edge scientific development but it is interesting to see this and a film on cultivating roses presented as the prime attractions in a programme that also included a sentimental drama and two comedies. This sort of programming further supports Musser's view of cinema as a medium which required a degree of foreknowledge and understanding from its audience if it was to be completely appreciated. While it is not difficult to anticipate an objection to the potentially vulgar content of *What Happened to Mary*, it would be equally difficult to see someone find grounds for complaint about the programme at the Electric Theatre which appeared to balance entertainment with improvement. Those who opposed the Glasgow Parish Council, such as Baillie James Alston of Glasgow Corporation, were vocal in their support of the educative quality of cinema especially where children were concerned and would have had little difficulty in finding material to support their claims.<sup>43</sup> Programmes such as this from the Charing Cross Electric Theatre in 1913 were typical of the development of cinema exhibition:

Of more than ordinary interest is a series, taken at Antwerp, of exotic fish, examples of the finny tribe living in Chinese, Indian, African, and other overseas waters. Among the fish shown are the 'climbing', 'telescope' and numerous others including one formed like a frog and apparently having much the same habits. There is charm and pathos in *Old Songs and Old Memories*, entertainment in *She is a Pippin* – the curing of a jealous wife – *Linked Together* and *The Counts*, and real interest in some fine scenes of *Aquatic Sports in Norway*. The latter representing among other recreations yachting as it is pursued by Norwegians.<sup>44</sup>

If we accept that the Parish Council survey took place in 1908, then permanent site dedicated cinema exhibition in Glasgow was in its very early stages. Leaving aside those variety theatres that screened films, at the end of 1908 there appear to have been only ten

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<sup>43</sup> *Forward*, March 15, 1913, p.2

<sup>44</sup> *Evening Times*, February 11, 1913, p.9

picture houses in Glasgow.<sup>45</sup> We are beyond Gunning's periodicity for the Cinema of Attractions and as we saw in Chapter Three picture house owners were by now offering modernity with state of the art technology supported by new, clean venues. There may have been some who were still drawn by the novelty of the moving image but these would be a diminishing sector of the audience. Increasingly sophisticated narrative was becoming the norm and this played a part in the rise of the story film. Brewster talks about the 'naïve realism' of American films pre-1910:

...made for the nickelodeon market...but still confined to a lower-middle and working-class clientele, they reflect that milieu in the most direct possible way, confining themselves largely to it and filming directly in its real surroundings.<sup>46</sup>

The exhibition industry was looking to expand its clientele beyond this working-class core and originality was the new selling point. The Panopticon promised 'the very latest dramatic and comic films' on its American Bioscope.<sup>47</sup> Hengler's, when it began its seasonal screenings, promoted 'the newest and best animated pictures'.<sup>48</sup> In early advertisements the titles of the films were sometimes mentioned but just as frequently left unremarked upon as the audience was instead being sold newness, freshness, and originality. The content of the billings indicates that the audience was also being drawn to the idea of the programme of entertainment on offer rather than the attraction itself. Animated pictures 'add to the enjoyment of the evening' at The Panopticon.<sup>49</sup> Similarly, in other sites there was an emphasis on content rather than simple novelty. At Pringle's in Watson Street, in February 1909, special mention is made of the main feature *The Female Saloon Smasher (Carrie Nation)*. The newspaper said:

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<sup>45</sup> See p.109 for more details of Glasgow cinemas at this stage.

<sup>46</sup> Ben Brewster, 'A Scene at the Movies', *Screen*: 2, Vol XXIII, 1982 p.14

<sup>47</sup> *ibid*

<sup>48</sup> *Evening Times*, February 10, 1908, p.8

<sup>49</sup> *ibid*

A picture portraying some of the doings of Carry [sic] Nation, the 'saloon smasher' creates much laughter.<sup>50</sup>

In keeping with Musser's theory the potential audience is invited to recall the visit to Glasgow of the famous temperance campaigner Carrie Nation a few weeks previously. Carrie Nation was an American radical anti-alcohol activist who favoured direct action against drink and those who sold it.<sup>51</sup> She practised prohibition by smashing up bars and saloons with a hatchet. In 1908 she brought her campaign to the United Kingdom, but she encountered a hostile reception in Glasgow as her train was met by an angry crowd numbering around 3000. Ironically, she was forced to seek refuge in licensed premises while the crowd was dispersed, before leaving the city without carrying out any of her trademark raids on public houses. Such was her fame that the incident was reported in newspapers around the world.<sup>52</sup> The enterprising cinema owners had resurrected a 1901 comedy and the Glasgow audience was presumably given the chance to jeer her once again. According to *The Evening Times* the temperance campaigner was not treated with a great deal of sympathy:

This picture is based upon the much talked of exploits of Mrs Carrie Nation in Kansas. The interior of a bar-room with its usual customers is shown. Mrs Nation and her crusaders come in with their hatchets and proceed to demolish everything in sight. Mrs Nation, however, knocks out the spigot from a beer barrel and is deluged by its contents.<sup>53</sup>

The appendix also shows that the cinema screened a local topical of the Glasgow Marathon as part of the supporting programme which may have been something of a hedge against

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50 *Evening Times*, February 2, 1909, p.9

51 Carrie Nation biography located at <http://shsmo.org/historicmissourians/name/n/nation/> last accessed August 4, 2017

52 'Carrie Nation Given a Hostile Reception in Glasgow', *Montreal Gazette*, December 15, 1908, p.1 located at <http://news.google.com/newspapers?nid=1946&dat=19081215&id=nLs0AAAAIBAJ&sjid=7YQFAAAAIBAJ&pg=6311,4109143>

53 AMB Picture Catalogue located at <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0231324/plotsummary>

the risk of bringing back a relatively old attraction.<sup>54</sup> Although the film was billed in the newspaper advertisements as *The Female Saloon Smasher (Carrie Nation)* titles in these early days seem to have been malleable with frequent errors occurring not only in titles, but also descriptions, and billings. One film for example is listed almost interchangeably as *The Mailed Hand* or *The Nailed Hand* depending on which cinema it played in; the correct title seems to be *The Nailed Hand* and the film itself is a French-made western in the *Rifle Bill, King of the Prairie* series.<sup>55</sup> The Carrie Nation film in question appears to be *Kansas Saloon Smashers*, a 1901 Edison film which was one of the first to be directed by Edwin S. Porter.<sup>56</sup> There is no record so far of this film being screened in Glasgow in 1901 although there is no reason to assume that it did not appear in the city. Its resurrection however indicates a certain agility of programming on the part of local cinema owners to capture the interests of the audience.

Despite the film's very short running time we can see from Appendix Two it is advertised as the main feature with another, equally short, film billed as a supporting title in a programme evidently designed to cash in on its subject's current notoriety. It also suggests that reactions to particular films in one country and context could not be transferred to another. In America the film is seen as a slapstick comedy, Glasgow audiences however were encouraged, principally by means of the name change, to signal their independence in the matter of temperance by treating the central figure with mockery and derision, an early indication perhaps of the differing moral parameters of entertainment across national boundaries.

The film runs for about a minute without any titles or credits. It opens on a bar in which a man, dressed as an office worker, is standing extreme left of frame. A woman dressed as a servant comes in to collect a bucket of beer, the barman chats to her, gives her the bucket and she leaves. A policeman enters right of frame, orders a whisky and is given the bottle to serve himself. Meanwhile the man at end of bar is joined by a colleague and they chat. The policeman downs a shot and leaves as a top-hatted gentleman enters and stands mid-

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<sup>54</sup> See Appendix Two, p.302

<sup>55</sup> *Evening Times*, February 8, 1909, p.8

<sup>56</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KV8pCY32KZA> last accessed June 16, 2016

frame to collect a bucket of beer. Two women appear brandishing short-handled axes. They grab the bucket of beer and throw it over the customers, who are then chased by one of the women. The other woman goes behind the bar and starts to smash the mirror with her axe – this is achieved via a jump cut special effect. The barman picks up a soda syphon and sprays it at her forcing her out of the bar. As she leaves she is joined by her colleagues coming in but they are all forced out by the barman and the policeman who has come back into shot. In one final piece of slapstick the policeman and the barman slip and fall on the wet floor.<sup>57</sup>

*Kansas Saloon Smashers* was made two years before Porter's landmark *Life of an American Fireman*. It is more of a basic tableau than a multi-scene work, but even though it is a single-shot comedy filmed in a very two-dimensional style it tells the story well and efficiently. There is a sense of composition in the way the characters are stationed at the bar to frame the action; less attention is paid to the frame since the policeman who enters from the right seems to have emerged from thin air. There is however a clear and logical narrative progression, however rudimentary, and the appeal of the film is obviously in its narrative merits – in this case, slapstick comedy – rather than the simple notion of a moving image. None of the women is identified as Carrie Nation, but the story would make it plain that the film was intended to lampoon a prominent public figure. *Kansas Saloon Smashers* was something of an outlier in that it was a film made in 1901 which was screened in Glasgow in 1908. It was brought back on the basis of the notoriety and topicality of its subject but for Glasgow audiences it would have provided evidence of how quickly film form had developed since it was made. The talent and ingenuity of Porter as a film maker means that, even though it is set in the period of the Cinema of Attractions it has early indications in its visual organisation of classical cinema.

The popularity of cinema as an entertainment was reflected in an apparent growing confidence by picture house owners in their product. This confidence can most easily be seen in terms of their investment in new premises and the number of new cinemas opening

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<sup>57</sup> *Kansas Saloon Smashers* (1901) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KV8pCY32KZA> last accessed June 16, 2016

in the period under examination.<sup>58</sup> Ralph Pringle was a film industry veteran as an exhibitor, a renter, and a commissioner of material. Pringle had worked as a manager for the Thomas-Edison Animated Picture Company in Newcastle before leaving to set up the North American Animated Photo Company in 1901. From 1901 to 1907 Pringle commissioned more than 170 films from Mitchell and Kenyon before setting up Pringle's Picture Palace in Glasgow.<sup>59</sup> Pringle would appreciate the value of a film that could only be seen in his cinema, and in 1909 he put on an exclusive presentation of the French melodrama *The Red Hand*. This was one of the biggest films to have been screened in the city to date:

Mr Pringle eclipses all prior productions in the picture-drama having secured the greatest sensation in this line, namely *The Red Hand*. It is a drama in eleven tableaux and includes Life in Paris in all its Night Aspects, The Fast Life of Paris, The Fashionable Restaurants, and The Haunts of the Parisian Hooligans. The thrilling Apache Dance is much admired.<sup>60</sup>

In terms of content this may have appeared to have been the sort of film to which the Glasgow Parish Council might have objected in its depiction of the sexually-provocative Apache Dance and its characterisation of the Parisian demi-monde; however, Pringle had successfully branded the film as an event, a landmark screening that should not be missed. Any objection to the alleged salaciousness of *The Red Hand* could be countered by screening what appears to be the first filmed adaptation of *The Count of Monte Cristo* on the same programme, presenting an altogether more noble view of French life courtesy of Dumas. In doing so we have an instance of the moving image as an improving commodity being used as a delivery mechanism of ideas to the audience.

A similarly enlightening experience was provided when J.J. Bennell took over the prestigious St Andrew's Hall in the centre of Glasgow for a three-week run of special screenings of 'The Celebrated BB Pictures'. This is a different sort of event from the

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<sup>58</sup> Appendix Two shows there were only two cinemas advertising in *The Evening Times* in February 1908 but by February 1914 this had risen to eight.

<sup>59</sup> Pringle biography: National Fairground Archive located at <http://www.sheffield.ac.uk/nfa/researchandarticles/mkshowmen> last accessed June 21, 2016

<sup>60</sup> *Evening Times*, February 23, 1909, p.9

municipal concerts which were often staged at the same venue. Prospective patrons were left in no doubt about what awaited them as they were promised

The most magnificent display of animated pictures ever seen in Glasgow projected on the largest screen in the world containing 1000 square feet of canvas.<sup>61</sup>

In terms of the scale of the exhibition this can be seen as one of the landmark events in the development of cinema in Glasgow.<sup>62</sup> The programme selected by Bennell appears to have been chosen to match its august surroundings.

The entertainment submitted was a capital one and there was a large audience. A splendid series of beautifully coloured films were those illustrating the story of Psyche, in Greek mythology, Other outstanding films were *The Opening of Parliament by the King* in London last week, *The Flower Girl*, *Scenes from Cowboy Life*, *The Runaway Dog*, *Mr Feary Does Not Like Policemen*, *Weary Willie Goes Wheeling*, and *A Hungry Man*. During the evening organ selections were played by Dr A. Davidson Arnott and quartettes (sic) by the Glasgow Male Voice Quartette (sic) and illustrated songs on the Cinephone.<sup>63</sup>

This programme can be considered as a reasonable snapshot of what cinema had to offer at this stage. It featured documentary, comedy, and drama along with music and community singing. It was a mix of material that was variously informing, educating and entertaining and in that sense, it was a reasonable response to many of the objections raised by Glasgow Parish Council. In addition, St Andrew's Hall, which was arguably Glasgow's highest status performance space and a venue more used to orchestral or operatic performances, could scarcely have been construed in any way as a potentially

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<sup>61</sup> *Evening Times*, February 22, 1909, p.8

<sup>62</sup> For more details see Appendix Two, pp 305, 306

<sup>63</sup> *Evening Times*, February 23, 1909, p.9

licentious space especially since it had previously hosted municipal concerts in which moving pictures had featured.<sup>64</sup>

Allen characterises the period between 1910 and 1915 in the United States as ‘the rise of the picture palace’ and in this respect the development of Glasgow cinema spaces follows suit.<sup>65</sup> As seen in Appendix Two between February 1910 and February 1911 the number of cinema sites in Glasgow doubled from four to eight. The new sites were The Charing X Electric Theatre in Sauchiehall Street, which as the first custom-built cinema in Glasgow was a landmark development away from the days of hybrid variety venues and repurposed warehouses. The Picture House, also in Sauchiehall Street, in addition the Argyle Electric Theatre, a sister site to the Charing Cross theatre, opened in Argyle Street, and then there was the Scottish Zoo and Electric Picture Theatre, which Bostock opened at his existing site in New City Road. It has been argued elsewhere in this work that the Cinematograph Act of 1909 was of benefit to the industry because it provided commercial certainty for picture house owners. They knew that providing they complied with the Act, and whatever local regulations were additionally imposed, then they could continue in business and this encouraged investment. Audiences could not have failed to notice the new generation of fixed-site venues that came in its wake since they now found themselves courted not only by differentiation in product but also by standards of exhibition space. There was a sense that cinema as an entertainment had become permanent and this was reflected in the way these new venues presented themselves to the public.

In the heart of Glasgow’s most fashionable shopping street The Picture House saw itself as a benchmark of luxury and comfort and set its stall out to attract a quality clientele. Apart from screening upmarket fare such the newspaper advertising also promoted the cinema’s ‘Wedgwood tea lounge’.<sup>66</sup> It was apparent from the start that The Picture House was determined to play its part in the elevation of the Glasgow cinema-going public. The write up in *The Evening Times* left potential customers in no doubt about what awaited them:

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<sup>64</sup> See Chapter 3, pp. 95 - 98

<sup>65</sup> Allen and Gomery, *Film History: Theory and Practice* p. 205

<sup>66</sup> *Evening Times*, February 6, 1911, p.8

The place is an oasis in the wilderness of streets. If anything, its popularity is increasing, the evening displays being extremely well attended. Scores of shoppers too pop in for an hour in the afternoon, sip a cup of fragrant Bohea in the Wedgwood Lounge which is surely the most artistically got up tea room in the city and then have a peep at some of the wonders of the cinematograph. The programme is varied and interesting. So real looking are the Roman scenes that we almost feel as if we were in Rome itself. Current events are presented with striking vividness while the numerous humorous pictures create much merriment. In *Two Boys in Blue* series we witness many incidents of life in the Wild West of America. Then the band must not be forgotten for it enchants the ear when the observer's eyes are not gazing on the screen.<sup>67</sup>

The contrast offered here compared with previous exhibition spaces is startling. Where Hansen saw the American nickelodeon as a potential haven or refuge for hard-working and careworn immigrant women in the United States, The Picture House a little more than a decade later offers a 'delightful retreat' for fashionable women and an 'oasis in the wilderness of the streets' for those over-burdened not so much by work as by shopping. It seems likely given its florid tone that this copy was provided to the newspaper by the cinema itself, even so it is a clear indication of how The Picture House saw itself. A venue that was determined to attract a certain class of patron, this was an exclusive cinema space to match Glasgow's emerging premier shopping street which was reflected in the admission price of 6d or 1/- putting it on a par with legitimate theatres in terms of cost. Whether the customers were in fact the ladies shopping in Sauchiehall Street's modish department stores or, as seems more likely, the weary shopgirls who served them and popped into the cinema on a lunch break, The Picture House speaks of a new type of cinema experience in Glasgow. The idea of the band that 'enchants the ear when the observer's eyes are not gazing on the screen' suggests an immersive, almost sensual cinema experience bringing with it a notion of transcendence as cinema begins to equate itself with luxury and splendour. The following week the write-up for The Picture House commented on another film being screened as part of that week's programme which it described as:

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<sup>67</sup> *Evening Times*, February 7, 1911, p.9

...the voyage of a North Sea trawler from Boulogne followed by the casting of the nets, the reaping of the harvest of the sea, and the return to market is so vividly portrayed that one enjoys the benefits of the instructive voyage without the accompaniment of the sickness which such a fresh sea would be sure to cause a landsman.<sup>68</sup>

The film in question was probably *On a North Sea Trawler*, a 1911 newsreel from Pathé Freres.<sup>69</sup> This concept of vicarious experience was also seen in the review of *An Elephant Ride through the Jungle* which played at The Picture House in the week of February 5, 1912:

Tigers are seen prowling about, elephants scamper wildly, while many other animals which one would prefer to meet on the picture screen rather than (in) their dangerous haunts are seen.<sup>70</sup>

It can be argued that the 1911 release of *Henry VIII* by W.G. Barker's company, Barker Motion Photography, represented a further landmark in cinematic exhibition in Glasgow, and not just because it suggests that, with the new luxury picture houses finding themselves as homes to cinematic Shakespeare, cinema was making inroads into the territory normally occupied by the legitimate theatre. The film version of *Henry VIII* played at The Picture House in February 1911, and the billing stressed the presence of the well-known actor Sir Herbert Beerbohm Tree who, at 60 years old, was too old at this stage for the title role but instead played the elder statesman and cleric, Cardinal Wolsey. The *Evening Times* write up made a virtue of the film's authenticity and similarity to the stage version:

The proprietors of The Picture House are to be commended for their enterprise in securing the exclusive rights, though for one week only, of the pictures showing scenes from Sir Herbert Beerbohm Tree's production of Shakespeare's *King Henry VIII*.... Five scenes are shown and even those who are unacquainted

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<sup>68</sup> *Evening Times*, Tuesday, February 14, 1911, p.9

<sup>69</sup> See Appendix Two, pp. 315, 316

<sup>70</sup> *Evening Times*, Tuesday, February 6, 1912, p.9

with the play would have no difficulty in following its development so well chosen are the scenes and so graphic is the acting. The production, though necessarily curtailed, is acted by the entire cast from His Majesty's Theatre London.<sup>71</sup>

This concept of exclusivity which is highlighted in the review contributed to the attraction of the film. The exclusive film became one that not only had to be seen but could only be seen in a very short space of time; it generated its own must-see quality simply by its limited availability. In this sense, we might argue that this goes against the attraction of cinema which is that, unlike theatre, a film was transferable and transportable and could be seen, broadly speaking, at any time or place that was convenient for the spectator. The exclusive film had a window in which it must be seen and it acquired a higher status in the process; a status which was then conferred on the audience as a 'reward' for having made the effort to see it.

If we consider the exhibition landscape in Glasgow at the end of February 1911, The Picture House was the city's most opulent cinema, but it was only a few hundred yards away from the Charing Cross Electric Theatre which was its closest rival in terms of content and space.<sup>72</sup> The recently-opened, and similarly modern, Argyle Electric Theatre was another commercial competitor a few minutes' walk away, and although it could not match these venues in terms of exhibition space The Panopticon was screening the aforementioned Langford vs Lang fight film, itself an exclusive presentation. In that environment an exclusive screening of a high-status film would enable a cinema to set itself apart from the competition.

Beerbohm Tree's stage production of *Henry VIII* was an impressive piece of work with a cast of 172 and an epic presentation. The stage version had been touring for several years and was still being presented when the film version was released. The screen version appears to have been screened contemporaneously in Glasgow and other major cities. In one sense this was plainly a film that the audience was assured needed to be seen simply

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<sup>71</sup> *Evening Times*, February 28, 1911, p.9

<sup>72</sup> See Appendix 2 pp. 297 - 348 for details of city centre exhibition

for its own merits. In another however it also shared some qualities with the topical such as Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee or even the world title fight between Corbett and Fitzsimmons. Beerbohm Tree's production was a cultural phenomenon, a highly talked about production, and now, thanks to cinema, audiences in Glasgow could share in that cultural experience, for a price. The standard admission in most cinemas was 6d but the ticket prices for *Henry VIII* at The Picture House went up to a shilling, with the cheapest seats at sixpence. Tragically the terms of exclusivity with Barker were so severe that they required all copies of the film to be burned at the end of the first run.<sup>73</sup> It would seem that not so much as a frame of film has survived which makes it impossible to consider any potential refinements of the narrative or visual style.

The deal that was struck to engage the Beerbohm Tree production and the stressing of the 'theatre-like' quality of the film suggests that the owners of The Picture House were similarly interested in attracting a new audience; one more in keeping with their self-styled up-market aims, rather than bringing in the core cinema-goer. This trend can also be seen in newer cinemas such as the St Enoch's Picture Theatre, which opened in January 1913. One of its first attractions was the most famous stage actress of the day, Sarah Bernhardt in *An Actor's Romance*. The review in the paper the following day also indicated that audiences may now be genuinely more interested in the quality of what was being placed in front of them rather than its novelty.

However much as the position of this house is responsible for the patronage bestowed upon it, the character of the pictures submitted play a prominent part in the search for popular favour. This week the management have secured the exclusive rights of *An Actor's Romance* (Madame Sarah Bernhardt playing the leading role) which elicited much appreciation at yesterday's performances which were well attended despite the inclement weather.<sup>74</sup>

The Picture House was not alone in targeting a new audience. E.H. Bostock opened his Scottish Zoo and Electric Picture Theatre in New City Road on January 31, 1911 and by this

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<sup>73</sup> <http://www.screenonline.org.uk/tv/id/1023170/> accessed at 11.23 April 2, 2015

<sup>74</sup> *Evening Times*, February 4, 1913, p.9

stage film had moved from sideshow to main event in Bostock's billing. As well as boasting 'Grand cinematograph entertainment' the Scottish Zoo and Electric Picture Theatre also stressed that it cost only 'sixpence to see everything' including a zoo and freak show.<sup>75</sup> From his pricing strategy and his marketing pitch Bostock appeared to be targeting family audiences by offering value for money.

In one respect the Glasgow Parish Council was correct about children at the cinema.<sup>76</sup> it may have been wrong about any moral hazard but it was correct in its belief that cinema was proving enormously attractive to children who very quickly developed a cinema-going habit to the point where they would turn up regularly every week regardless of the programme. This new audience of cinema natives was proving very lucrative.

Judging from the numbers present at the continuous performances yesterday at the Charing Cross Electric Theatre it was evident that this place of entertainment is becoming decidedly popular. It was seen yesterday from the number of children present in the afternoon that it has formed quite a happy hunting ground judging from the way in which they showed their approval.<sup>77</sup>

From this quote we can infer that cinema as a commodity was developing rapidly and it was finding a young audience of cinema natives, which we might argue it was targeting through Saturday matinees, forcing us to consider the possibility of a burgeoning movie generation. Cinema was now beginning to develop a language and context of its own and this generation was growing up fluent in that language. The works of Brewer and Salt have identified the changes in film form which took place in the first ten to fifteen years of cinema. There is now evidence of a stylised narrative in the control of a single individual, the director, to produce a recognisable story conforming to a series of aesthetic norms.<sup>78</sup> By 1914, from which we take our next exemplars, film makers had a range of artistic and

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<sup>75</sup> *Evening Times*, Monday, February 6, 1911, p.8

<sup>76</sup> The Parish Council campaign is covered in depth in Chapter Four pp. 129 - 159

<sup>77</sup> *Evening Times*, Tuesday, February 7, 1911, p.9

<sup>78</sup> Bordwell in *The Classical Hollywood Cinema: Film Style and Mode of Production to 1960*, (London: Routledge, 1988,) pp 4 - 9

stylistic devices at their disposal. Those techniques which had been successful were imitated by others, those which did not work were abandoned.<sup>79</sup> These included, but were not limited to, lighting effects, cross-cutting, inserts, point of view shots, flashbacks and tracking shots. Each of these techniques was employed for a specific reason to achieve a specific effect and the lack of resistance on the part of the audience indicates they understood and engaged with this narrative evolution.<sup>80</sup> This understanding of the developing language of cinema was reflected in a snapshot of Glasgow illustrated by the programme for the week of February 9, 1914 as outlined in *The Evening Times* on that date.<sup>81</sup>

<b>Cinema</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Main feature</b>	<b>Supporting programme</b>
La Scala	Sauchiehall St	<i>Scrooge (1913)</i>	<i>Beauties of France (?)</i> <i>The Bride's Secret (?)</i>
The Picture Salon	Sauchiehall St	<i>The Vulgar Boy (1913)</i>	None listed
Theatre De Luxe	417 Sauchiehall St	<i>David Copperfield (1913)</i>	None listed
St Enoch's Picture Theatre	Argyle St	<i>Her False Friend (1914)</i>	None listed
City Picture House	60 Union St	<i>Kindness Repaid (?)</i>	None listed
The Picture House	140 Sauchiehall St	<i>Judith of Bethuliah (1914)</i>	None listed
Partick Star Palace	Dumbarton Road	Variety	<i>The Death Weight (1913)</i>
Shettleston Palaceum	Hill St	Variety	<i>The Intruder (1913)</i>

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79 Salt in Elsaesser p. 32

80 For a comprehensive account of the evolution of film form from 1900 – 1912 see Barry Salt's 'The Early Development of Film Form' in *Film Before Griffith* pp. 284-298

81 For more details see Appendix Two, pp. 342, 343

*Scrooge* is a British film from Zenith Productions which is a very good example of the star culture which had now begun to take hold.<sup>82</sup> Although nominally based on *A Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens, this is much more of a showcase for the actor Seymour Hicks who had originated the role in 1901; as the opening credits inform us he had played the role ‘for over 2000 performances’. Regardless of content the main attraction here was Hicks as we can see from the *Evening Times* write-up:

The chief part is taken by that well known actor Seymour Hicks and most of the incidents are shown with great clearness.<sup>83</sup>

*The Glasgow Herald* found *Scrooge* and its supporting programme a winning combination.

A dramatic representation entitled *Scrooge* is one of the prominent features, and Edison’s talking picture *The Bride’s Secret*, is a striking production both from its merit as a film and the comedy it provides.<sup>84</sup>

There is evidence here of audiences being enticed to a venue on the basis of an emerging critical and promotional discourse; *The Bride’s Secret* was being praised not just as a piece of comic entertainment but also as an extremely good film suggesting that the potential audience was now in the habit of making stylistic value judgements and encouraged to do so by the critical reporting. *Scrooge* was billed as an exclusive presentation with the exclusivity based on the opportunity to see Hicks in his most famous performance. The film itself is little more than a star vehicle, the opening shot of which presented Hicks to the audience as himself in contemporary garb and then dissolved into Hicks in character. It also took a number of liberties with Dickens’ story – not least by including Dickens himself - as the BFI synopsis makes clear:

Charles Dickens paces his library in Gads Hill. Inspiration strikes, and he settles down to write *A Christmas Carol*. Fred Wyland, nephew of Ebenezer Scrooge,

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82 Full film accessed on April 14, 2016 at <http://www.screenonline.org.uk/film/id/1420054/index.html>

83 *Evening Times*, February 10, 1914, p.9

84 *Glasgow Herald*, February 10, 1914, p.12

gives money to poor children on Christmas Eve. Scrooge, leaving his office, is chased by poor children. At the office, Scrooge's clerk Bob Cratchit bids goodbye to his crippled son and goes to work. A poor woman comes to the office to beg from Scrooge but he turns her away. Cratchit gives her money.

At Middlemark's, the poor line up for food. When the food runs out, Middlemark goes to Scrooge for assistance but is turned away. Scrooge gives Cratchit a second-hand quill as a Christmas present. After Cratchit has gone, he settles down with his money to sleep. Marley's ghost appears and shows him in sequence his childhood sweetheart, Cratchit's Christmas, a vision of the death of Cratchit's crippled son Tim, and his own lonely tombstone. Scrooge wakes. Realising the error of his ways, Scrooge throws money from his window to the poor children and sends a boy for a large turkey for Cratchit, then goes to visit them for lunch in good humour.<sup>85</sup>

In this film Scrooge is not visited by three ghosts on Christmas Eve, instead the spirit of his former partner Jacob Marley fulfils the functions of all the phantoms. The ghastly visitations of Dickens' novel are presented here as double-exposed *tableaux vivants* which take place in front of a horrified Scrooge. The special effects are rudimentary given that this is more than ten years after Méliès' féeries such as *Cendrillon* or *Voyages dans la Lune*, and the staging of the action is little more than filmed theatre with a number of exterior scenes to flesh out the story. These exterior scenes appear to take place in bright sunlight which, along with some obviously fake snow, makes the Christmas Eve setting very hard to accept. In terms of the narrative Hicks is seldom off-screen for most of the film's 37-minute running time so large parts of the story are dispensed with in text-heavy expository intertitles as Hicks emotes in melodramatic fashion. This reinforces the suggestion that the film is about a chance to see Hicks rather than Dickens, although the authored status of the piece may have provided some of the appeal. In terms of form there are some inserts and point of view shots, but the appeal here is that of Hicks' performance and, with the exception of

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85 <http://www.screenonline.org.uk/film/id/1420054/synopsis.html> accessed on April 14, 2015

being opened out by one or two exterior scenes, this is little more than a visual capture of the stage performance.

Directly across Sauchiehall Street from the La Scala, The Picture House was simultaneously screening *Judith of Bethulia*, a Biblical epic by D.W. Griffith that had been made the previous year but not released until 1914.<sup>86</sup> This was Griffith's first feature and initially ran for about an hour, of which only 47 minutes survives. It was the running time which caught the attention of *The Glasgow Herald*:

...the leading feature being a pictorial representation of the story of Judith, as told in the apocryphal book which bears her name. The film, which is a very long one, is divided into four parts and the presentation of the various scenes occupies about an hour.<sup>87</sup>

*The Evening Times* was similarly impressed by the length of the film but was also taken by the drama and the spectacle of the film.

Judith of Bethulia...is a story based on the book of Judith in the Apocrypha and shows the plight of the inhabitants of Bethulia which is besieged by the Assyrians. To save the city Judith goes to the camp of Holofernes the Assyrian general whom she first fascinates and then beheads. Taking the head she returns to the beleaguered city and so encourages the Jews to attack and defeat the Assyrians. The piece is magnificently staged and occupies over an hour in going through. There is a first rate programme in addition.<sup>88</sup>

If we consider *Scrooge* and *Judith of Bethulia* together, both newspapers make mention of the lengthy running time in their reviews of these films, but there was no indication that this is any deterrent to the audiences' enjoyment, suggesting perhaps an audience-led demand for longer, story films. In terms of form there is a world of difference in scope,

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<sup>86</sup> [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C--Qy\\_ty-kg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C--Qy_ty-kg) last accessed June 21, 2016

<sup>87</sup> *Glasgow Herald*, February 10, 1914, p.12

<sup>88</sup> *Evening Times*, February 10, 1914, p.9

execution and artistry when comparing *Scrooge* to *Judith of Bethulia*. While the former is a flat, filmed, theatrical production, the sophistication of the latter film shows many of the characteristics that would become the hallmarks of Griffith's more-renowned work in *The Birth of a Nation* which would be released the following year. There is genuine scale with a large cast, impressively spectacular sets, and a mix of shots – establishing shots, close-ups, and inserts – and parallel and continuity editing to progress the narrative. The story moves slowly but effectively, and Griffith gives the film a sense of pace and rhythm. The framing is approaching the norms of the classical Hollywood model previously outlined in that the action takes place on a wide screen making full use of the frame, and there is sophisticated use of space with action taking place both in the foreground and background. In contrast to *Scrooge*, the performances here, particularly by Blanche Sweet in the title role, tend towards naturalism rather than the pantomimic nature of the British film. This was a film which presented the audience with a sense of scope, spectacle, and something approaching epic grandeur. This was a film that was meant to be seen in a venue such as The Picture House, a prestige film in a prestige venue which demanded to be seen at that locus.

In the same week, as can be seen in Appendix Two, just along the road from La Scala and The Picture House, the Theatre DeLuxe was offering another Dickens adaptation in the shape of Hepworth's version of *David Copperfield* which is described by the BFI as arguably Britain's first feature film, and at 7500 feet (c.67 minutes) was the longest British film released to date.<sup>89</sup> *The Glasgow Herald* praised the film for its faithfulness to the source material, which is hardly surprising, since it was directed by and starred Thomas Bentley who, rather like Seymour Hicks with Ebenezer Scrooge, had made a stage career of Dickensian roles before he moved to cinema. As with *Scrooge*, the opening titles establish Bentley's credentials as 'the Dickensian character actor', and his status as an interpreter of Dickens which, according to the BFI, attracted Cecil Hepworth to back this production.<sup>90</sup> Although it is not as cinematic as *Judith of Bethulia*, this is still a more complex and nuanced production than *Scrooge* in that it gives a glimpse of how the feature film was to develop as a form in its own right as opposed to filmed theatre. The interior scenes are much less

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89 <http://www.screenonline.org.uk/film/id/1419932/index.html> last accessed June 21, 2016

90 *ibid*

stagey, and the exteriors were shot on the actual locations in which the novel was set. This was a major attraction for *The Glasgow Herald*:

...the many scenes, which are familiar to the minds of all who have read the book, are splendidly realised.<sup>91</sup>

But the most significant review, I would suggest, is that which appears on the same day in *The Evening Times*:

The special attraction...is a series of pictures founded on episodes in David Copperfield, the masterpiece of Charles Dickens. The story is most faithfully reproduced in picture and tends to brighten one's estimate of the cinema art.<sup>92</sup>

This final sentence provides an important benchmark at the conclusion of our consideration of the development of early cinema and its audience in Glasgow. It marks a significant change in the vocabulary of the reportage; in the first instance it refers to 'cinema' as a discreet entity and at the same time conjoins it with the word 'art' in a formal sense. It is a recognition that the moving image has evolved from a fairground attraction to an entertainment of status; an entertainment which can be considered in the same terms as the other performing arts. This might be considered a local equivalent of what Allen and Gomery describe as the 'movie-going experience'; an event which included not only a newsreel, a programme of shorts, and a main feature with a clear and recognisable narrative, but also the architecture and furniture of the building.<sup>93</sup> At the same time the use of the phrase suggests the presence of a sophisticated audience that would not only recognise this 'cinema art' in context but saw in itself a body of men and women who were able to participate in this new art form and appreciate it in its newly-defined terms. We have now a suggestion of an audience that was able to embrace cinema as an end in itself and was becoming thoroughly acclimatised to the cinema experience. Newspaper write-

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<sup>91</sup> *Glasgow Herald*, February 10, 1914, p.12

<sup>92</sup> *Evening Times*, February 10, 1914 p.9

<sup>93</sup> Allen and Gomery, *Film History: Theory and Practice*, pp. 156

ups began to show signs of being more than a simple descriptive account of current or forthcoming attractions and moved towards genuine evaluation of the product in a vocabulary familiar to the audience which marks the beginnings of a type of critical discourse in respect of the form and content of the film on offer. It is this discourse which in the increasingly mature exhibition and production industries would allow this early cinema to evolve and dominate the entertainment landscape in Glasgow for the next century and beyond.



# Conclusions

This thesis set out to construct a social history of the development of the cinema audience in Glasgow from its earliest days to the beginning of the First World War. As we reach the end we can see that this thesis has extended accepted scholarship in the period under examination, to show that cinema established itself as a primary entertainment in Glasgow with an audience that spanned all ages and demographics. This has been illustrated through extensive research of contemporary newspapers to demonstrate that cinema's origins in Glasgow are much more diverse than the previously-understood dominance of fairground showmen such as George Green. Rather it has been shown to have begun as a high-status entertainment with a price point aimed accordingly at what we would consider to be the middle classes or the more comfortably off sectors of the working class. We have argued that it was its economic success amongst this demographic which attracted people such as George Green into the sector.

Its growing popularity, along with the price elasticity outlined earlier, eventually enabled cinema to come within the financial means of the working class who then embraced it enthusiastically. Popular variety theatres and inexpensive municipal concerts provided affordable access to the working class which allowed the moving image to be embraced pan-demographically. This was then followed by the beginnings of dedicated cinema exhibition which began in the densely-populated working-class areas of the east end of the city which had a historical association with popular entertainment dating back several hundred years. The luxury sites we find at the end of the study in the city centre, as outlined in detail in Appendix Two, illustrate a parallel exhibition strategy with exclusive screenings of high-status films such as *David Copperfield* or *Judith of Bethulia* have taken us to the brink of that period of codified stylistic and aesthetic norms which we now refer to as 'classical cinema'.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Definitions of 'early cinema' and 'classical cinema' come from *Oxford Dictionary of Film Studies* by Annette Kuhn and Guy Westwell (Oxford University Press, 2012)

In its socio-historical approach, this work considered the established scholarship of Allen, Kuhn, Hansen, Griffiths, Low, and others and used their work as a prism to view the development of the early cinema audience in Glasgow. Fresh research, mostly in local newspaper archives, allowed the construction of a historiography that not only outlined the development of early cinema in Glasgow, but also provided a local perspective on some of the larger issues raised by existing historiographies. It offers a different viewpoint, especially in terms of the demographic of the earliest audiences for the moving image and the nature of the venues in which it was initially exhibited. Geography has also been an important factor and the appendices include a series of maps showing how the traditional entertainment sector in the east end played a crucial part in the development of fixed-site exhibition. Cartography too suggests this new medium took root in that part of the city where an audience could be found, in the densely-populated, working-class areas in and around the east end of the city which was home to much of the heavy engineering for which Glasgow had become famous, confirming an early link between the cinema city and the industrial city.

Clearly tastes in these viewing spaces were diverse. The thesis in its appendices – especially Appendix 3 - offers a new database of films that we can confirm as having been screened in Glasgow in this period. The intention was to document as many non-canonical films as possible to extend our understanding of the breadth and depth of material available to the audience. In many instances, we have also been able to show how these films were received. As a consequence, and allowing for the fact that the writer is not absolutely the audience, we are able to get an idea of how newspapers engaged with early cinema in a discourse that began with a discussion of the quality of the image and took us to a point, at the end of this study, where we can trace the beginnings of what can be considered a genuine discourse about aesthetic form with its own standards and tropes. There are clear indications of an audience becoming aware of what a film-going experience is, or should be, in narrative and creative terms, and relating to it accordingly in a defined and mutually understood terminology. There were other visual entertainments available at this time and this thesis has attempted to shed new light on this by considering, we believe for the first time, the presence of Hale's Tours in Glasgow. This sense of an understanding and appreciation by Glasgow audiences of what constituted cinema may account for the failure of Hale's Tours and its rivals as outlined in Chapter 7.

The scale of cinema exhibition in Glasgow at this stage bears repeating. Appendix One shows that by 1913, just before the end of the period under examination, there were 85 sites in Glasgow licensed to screen films. This can be broken down into 20 municipal venues, 13 cine-variety sites, and 52 dedicated cinema exhibition sites. Altogether there were 86,995 cinema seats in the city; although they accounted for only 23.5% of the venues the municipal sites made up 30% of the available seats, while the 13 cine-variety sites accounted for 15.3% of the venues and 26.7% of the available seats. Even so, taking 1913 as a benchmark since we have the official Corporation figures there were 37,627 cinema seats in the city from 52 venues, the bulk of which had opened since 1909. This is a clear indication of how the industry in Glasgow had developed in a relatively short period.

A roughly contemporaneous snapshot of the Glasgow cinema landscape comes from David Gouk, who worked in the city's exhibition and distribution industry for more than 50 years from 1923. Gouk recalls his first visit to the cinema in Glasgow:

My first introduction to cinema in Glasgow would be around 1912 or 1913 when my father brought me into town which was a tremendous adventure then by one of the famous Glasgow tramcars. Alighting in Jamaica Street he showed me one of the finest cinemas in Glasgow, the Grand Central Picture House which was the mecca in those days, in that as well as being a picture house it also had a restaurant and an orchestra. It was a highlight on a Saturday night for fathers and mothers, and sweethearts to come into town and boast that they had been at this famous Grand Central.<sup>2</sup>

Even speaking sixty years after the event a distinct sense of the experience's eventfulness remained. Gouk himself referred to 'the adventure' which began with a ride on a tramcar; like the cinema, an emblem of modernity and progress. Whilst his account of the date is slightly off since the Scottish Cinemas Database suggests the Grand Central did not open

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<sup>2</sup> Moving Image Archive 5/7/97 Tape transcript from interview with David Gouk at the People's Palace, Glasgow, (original tape recording held by People's Palace) (Nov 1975)

until 1915, that does not detract from the stress on spectacle and also the notion of this particular cinema as an aspirational place designed to impress others and confer status:

We turned and walked along Argyle Street. On the right hand side, just past St Enoch's Square, was the St Enoch Picture House...Just across the road was another picture house called The Vaudeville, managed by a gentleman called MacDougall, commonly known as 'Oor Uncle Wullie'. He practically knew every patron.<sup>3</sup>

Again, there is a slight slippage in chronology.<sup>4</sup> But here we have exemplars of cinemas which were not as high-status as the Grand Central but were obviously popular and held in some affection by their clientele. The fact that in the case of the latter they conferred a nickname on the manager and he knew his patrons by name suggests familiarity brought about by repetition, and clear evidence of a cinema-going habit. The recollection also suggested not just a relationship between cinema and its audience but also between the members of the audience itself, a sense of community engendered in the recognition between the patrons and the staff. This is no longer the haven of which Hansen spoke, this might reasonably be considered as a place of entertainment and social cohesion:

From there we walked along and we came to another cinema, just past Dunlop Street, famously known as 'The Fifty Fives', the number being 55 Argyle Street but generally known as The Argyle Picture House ... Further along we came to one of the great places in Glasgow – A.E. Pickard's famous Panopticon. Across the road, past the Tron Steeple, tucked in at the back of Watson Street was the old Queen's Theatre which eventually became the Queen's Cinema.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> *ibid*

<sup>4</sup> The Scottish Cinemas Database <http://www.scottishcinemas.org.uk/database.html> suggests that the St Enoch opened in 1913 but The Vaudeville did not open until the summer of 1914.

<sup>5</sup> Moving Image Archive 5/7/97 Tape transcript from interview with David Gouk

In the space of a few hundred yards Gouk takes us from the luxury and opulence of what might eventually be considered a picture palace, in the shape of the Grand Central with its restaurant and orchestral accompaniment, to the Panopticon which would be at the lower end of the exhibition scale. In such a very short distance, Gouk has been able to demonstrate a wide spectrum of cinema offerings which suggest an experience which had become available to all regardless of class, income, or status.

In considering how the development of the cinema audience in Glasgow contrasts with other major cities, comparisons with London are instructive. In an article in *The Times* on April 9, 1913 a journalist attempted to analyse the popularity of cinema in the capital at that period. The unnamed correspondent took an imaginary stroll, much as Gouk did in Glasgow, walking down the major thoroughfares such as the Strand, or Oxford Street, or Tottenham Court Road and wondered why:

...when the door is unlit, and down a back street, and the seats are hard and the attendants meagre, we sit there until the first picture begins to come over again, and directly the programme is changed, which is not as often as it should be, we pay our sixpence and go once more. Why do we invariably find the hall full of men and women, old, elderly, and young, paying their sixpence, listening intently, going away and coming again!<sup>6</sup>

The scenario in *The Times* is comparable to that described by David Gouk. Whether it is the opulence of the Grand Central or the relatively basic environment of the Panopticon, crowds flocked to be entertained. One interesting side note however is the *Times* journalist's description of audiences 'listening intently', suggesting a level of determined engagement with nuances of plot and story rather than the expectation of spectacle or thrill of recognition that may have brought them here fifteen years previously. This suggests that the audience has become, in the terms defined by Butsch, the epitome of a good audience and the very antithesis of the mob.<sup>7</sup> Butsch suggests they are a community more than a public but however you define it they are a recognisable group within that

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<sup>6</sup> *The Times*, April 9, 1913, p.11

<sup>7</sup> Butsch, 'Changing Images of Movie Audiences in Explorations', p.304

defined space. That may be argued to have engendered a sense of belonging in a cinema audience which may be part of the increasing appeal of cinema as described by Gouk.

That sense of belonging is part of the relationship between the moving image and its audience which this work aims to address. To begin with it could barely have been called an audience at all, simply a number of people who had come along to see the latest attraction in a growing procession of scientific novelties presented for public delectation. Moving pictures were thus a refinement on previous optical entertainments; albeit one with some promise as *The Scotsman* pointed out at the first screening in Edinburgh. However, within a relatively short space of time a sophisticated entertainment emerged, so codified that it could justifiably be called an art form. The key to this development was the engagement of the medium with its public.

It has been shown that what began as a series of discrete cultural events, not yet able to be described as cinema, in venues as diverse as public halls, retail emporia, and leisure centres became a pattern of habit-forming behaviour. Unlike Manhattan, in studies by Allen for example, moving pictures in Glasgow did not emerge from a nickelodeon culture nor, as in Burrows' work in London, were there any unregulated penny gaffs setting up in empty stores.<sup>8</sup> As discussed in Chapter Four, the city's regulatory structure meant that in Glasgow cinema really emerged via the variety theatre.<sup>9</sup> Contrary to previously accepted work by King, Bruce, Oakley et al the development of cinema in Glasgow does not depend on the travelling showman seen in many other cities and documented extensively by Toulmin.<sup>10</sup> The east end of the city plays an important role as an historical locus for entertainment, but research in this thesis has shown that cinema had a considerable foothold in the city before George Green and others had their first screenings. It is from this locus however that it has been shown that permanent dedicated cinema exhibition finally emerged spreading through the city from east to west. This set Glasgow apart from

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<sup>8</sup> Allen, 'Motion Picture Exhibition in Manhattan 1906 - 1912: Beyond the Nickelodeon', *Cinema Journal* 18 (1979) pp. 4-7 and Burrows, 'Penny Pleasures: Film Exhibition in London during the Nickelodeon Era, 1906 - 1914', *Film History*, Vol. 16, pp. 60-63

<sup>9</sup> Griffiths, *Cinema and Cinema-going in Scotland*, pp. 57 – 58. See also Bohlmann, *Regulating and Mediating the Social Role of Cinema in Scotland, 1896 - 1933* pp. 63-66

<sup>10</sup> Toulmin, 'Local films for local people': Travelling showmen and the commissioning of local films in Great Britain, 1900 -1902' *Film History*, Volume 13, (2001), pp 118-137

other cities in that cinema began among what we might broadly consider to be the middle classes, put down roots in working class areas, and then recolonised the city centre where it had begun. This is a clear summation of an appeal which can reasonably be described as pan-class or pan-demographic. A pattern of habit-forming behaviour therefore was created to the point where regular devotees were numbered in their hundreds of thousands. Their weekly attendance became enthusiastically woven into the social fabric of Glasgow leisure behaviour and made it, and it is worth repeating Caughie's assertion, 'the epicentre of cinema going, cinema building, and film exhibition claiming for itself the term Cinema City'.<sup>11</sup>

Social class and gender were crucial to the development of the exhibition industry in Glasgow. Although it did share with other cities a primarily working-class demographic which would prevail for many years, cinema as we have shown was not initially the preserve of the lower classes. As Kuhn has suggested the working class may have appropriated cinema as their own, but they did not own it exclusively.<sup>12</sup> Its appeal across class boundaries enabled it to embed itself in Glasgow society and provides a shield against criticism that it operated exclusively as a low-class entertainment.

At a time when respectable women could not go into licensed premises and would seldom be seen in variety halls or theatres, cinema provided an alternative destination for their leisure time, especially when falling prices, as demonstrated by Bakker, brought it within their economic compass.<sup>13</sup> In this sense our research has supported Bakker by suggesting that cinema owners targeted their advertising to stress the cleanliness and comfort of their venues specifically to attract women. When the main rival was the pub, it was argued that if you could get women into the cinema then men were more likely to follow. In short, the cinema became a place where families might go.<sup>14</sup> The introduction of the Cinematograph Act of 1909 in the face of the ever-present threat of fire laid down national safety standards for the industry and ensured that the whole family could be taken along without fear of

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<sup>11</sup> Caughie, 'Small Town Cinema in Scotland: The Particularity of Place' in *Cinema Beyond the City* p. 24.

<sup>12</sup> Thomas McGoran quoted in Kuhn (2002) p.221

<sup>13</sup> See Chapter 3, pp 131 – 133 for a fuller explanation of Bakker's work

<sup>14</sup> Crane, *The Picture Palace, Quiver*, 47:5, March 1912, p.456

injury or harm. The notion of officially approved respectability created a halo effect for cinema in terms of repeat business.

Along with women, this thesis has argued that the most important regular attendees at early cinema shows were children. Although the BB Pictures at the Wellington Palace may have been the most celebrated, the provision of special Saturday morning or afternoon screenings for children, from around 1910, quickly became a staple of the exhibition scene.<sup>15</sup> As demonstrated by the vivid recollections documented earlier, Saturday at the cinema provided a welcome release for children to indulge themselves without parental restriction and, by extension, some equivalent respite for parents. The accounts of how, even in straitened circumstances, the price of a ticket for the Saturday pictures could usually be found is an indication of the parental approbation that extended to the new medium.

I have used the term 'cinema natives' to describe these young people who grew up with cinema and could scarcely imagine life without it. The vividness of their memories, even sixty years after the event, is an indication of the impact cinema had on their subsequent lives.<sup>16</sup> The recorded memories of what they saw and when they saw it may not always be reliable but the fact that they remember it at all, and at such a distance, speaks eloquently of the hold cinema had on their lives. These were the children who would grow up with cinema and it is their life-long habits that contribute to the popularity of cinema in Glasgow. Their familiarity with the moving image as Glasgow's first cinema generation meant that they could comfortably cope with the changes in film form in the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This was an audience that matured along with the medium and as such developed a lifelong habit of cinema attendance.

The importance of cinema in children's lives can be seen by the strenuous attempts to limit or ban their exposure to it. Glasgow Parish Council felt that movie theatres posed a moral hazard to the working poor in general, and children in particular, and in 1908 launched an investigation into the city's cinemas. They delivered a set of proposals to Glasgow

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<sup>15</sup> Moving Image Archive 5/7/97 Tape transcript from interview with David Gouk.

<sup>16</sup> See Chapter 7 for the childhood cinema memories of Bert McGuffie, Flora Stevenson et al.

Corporation which, as can be seen by the minutes of meetings from both bodies outlined in Chapter Four, set in train five years of regulatory wrangling. The local authority delayed its response, not least because some prominent councillors also owned or ran cinemas. The conflict of interest eventually produced a regulatory framework which, as has been shown, was more lenient in Glasgow than in other cities. Even at this stage it was apparent however that, at the highest level, Glasgow was a cinema-friendly city. The close tie-up between the councillors and the cinema industry which this episode highlighted may also account for a sense of enhanced civic pride about Glasgow's relationship with cinema.

The dispute also saw the press, in the form of the West of Scotland radical newspaper *Forward*, take an interest in the row as a vocal advocate of the audience. The press, principally *The Evening Times* and to a lesser extent the other evening newspapers, *The Evening Citizen* and *The Evening News*, played a significant role in promoting cinema to the Glasgow audience. The city's morning newspaper *The Glasgow Herald* was more circumspect in its cinema coverage but still, albeit with hindsight, considered the arrival of moving pictures at Wilson's Colosseum as an event which, in terms of civic status, put Glasgow on a par with great cities of the world such as London, Paris, and New York.<sup>17</sup> From 1908, when the first fixed-site cinema opened in the city, *The Evening Times* carried regular programme information and write-ups which helped establish its readership as the natural constituency for cinema. There is here a sense of the cinema audience serving double duty as customers and citizens, sometimes both at once.

The establishment of dedicated cinemas in Glasgow from 1908 gave the new industry a sense of permanence. With the commercial certainty provided by the Cinematograph Act, Glasgow experienced a cinema boom leading to the city's first purpose-built site, the Charing Cross Electric Theatre which opened in 1910. A short time later The Picture House, the most opulent cinema in the city opened for business. That both venues were in Sauchiehall Street, then Glasgow's most emblematic shopping area, was a clear marker of the permanence, ambition, and status which the cinema exhibition industry claimed for itself in the period prior to the First World War.

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<sup>17</sup> *Glasgow Herald*, August 30, 1937 p.10

In closing, this thesis has shown the centrality of the audience to the development of cinema in Glasgow. Historical precedent may initially have defined the loci from which cinema would emerge, but then a generation of cinema natives embraced the new form as they grew together. The aim of this work has been, through original research, to take some of the grander historical narratives and apply them to Glasgow, and also to qualify some of the canonical knowledge developed by that existing scholarship. In consequence we have a detailed account of how early cinema developed in the city and this knowledge, through its commonalities and differences, which may act as a corrective to 'Londoncentrism' i.e. that cinema developed everywhere in the United Kingdom as it did in London. It has sought to demonstrate the relationship between film and its audience as well as relationships within the audience itself. Finally, in bringing together a range of sources it has encompassed a number of themes which show not only what cinema in Glasgow was in the period under examination, but also what it was about to become in the years ahead.

# Appendix 1: Licensed Glasgow cinema sites 1913<sup>1</sup>

Venue	Address	Capacity
Empire Theatre	Sauchiehall Street	1882
Grand Theatre	Cowcaddens	1914
Henglers Cirque	Sauchiehall Street	1952
Royalty Theatre	Sauchiehall Street	1371
Lyceum Theatre	Govan Road	1847
Whitevale Theatre	Gallowgate	948
Coliseum Theatre	Eglinton Street	2225
Palace Theatre	Main Street, Gorbals	2508
Alhambra Theatre	Wellington Street	2509
Royal Princess's Theatre	Main Street, Gorbals	1811
Olympia Theatre	Bridgeton Circus	1905
Panopticon	Trongate	929
Casino	Castle Street	1032
Gaiety Music Hall	Anderston Cross	1452
Star Palace	203 Dumbarton Road	1185
Maryhill Star Palace	Gairbraid Street	999
Pringle's Picture Palace	Watson Street	1085
Annfield Hall	Gallowgate	689
Bijou Halls	Cowcaddens	632
Argyle Electric Theatre	55 Argyle Street	754
Alexandra Parade Pictures	490 Alexandra Parade	510
Bridgeton Public Hall	136 Main Street	1090
Canadian Picture Palace	Coburg Place, Springburn	401
Bridgeton Cross Electric Theatre	Bridgeton Cross	555
Co-operative Hall	Angus Street, Springburn	536
Electric Theatre	252/254 New City Road	629
Charing Cross Electric Theatre	508 Sauchiehall Street	379
Empire Electric Theatre	457 Gt Eastern Road	480
Electric Theatre	59 James St, Bridgeton	1196
London Road Electric Theatre	Kirkpatrick Street	843
Langham Halls	26 Broad Street	414

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<sup>1</sup> Glasgow City Archive, Licensed Glasgow cinema sites 1913 D-OPW 61.5

<b>Venue</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>Capacity</b>
Masonic Halls	Quarryknowe Street	465
North Woodside Hall	92 North Woodside Rd	510
Paragon Electric Theatre	6 Tobago Street	834
Royal Picture Palace	102 Main St, Bridgeton	543
Round Toll Picturedrome	45 Possil Road	612
St James Hall	112 Stirling Road	564
Springburn Electric Theatre	341 Springburn Road	517
Glasgow Picture House	140 Sauchiehall Street	1192
Vitagraph	520 Sauchiehall Street	465
Cinema House	72 Renfield Street	549
Theatre-de-Luxe	421 Sauchiehall Street	658
Palladium	Hillfoot Street	1135
Wilton Halls	105 Napiershall Street	225
Windsor Halls	Great Western Road	921
La Scala	115/117 Sauchiehall St	987
Gorbals Picturedrome	27 Govan Street	1061
Majestic Electric Theatre	Smith Street, Govanhill	707
Paragon Electric Theatre	304 Mathieson Street	695
St Mungo Halls	South York Street	1278
Eglington Electreum	923 Eglington Street	526
Wellington Palace Halls	Commercial Road	1644
B.B. Cinerama	Victoria Road	1320
City Hall	Candleriggs	2419
Maryhill Halls	Gairbraid Avenue	800
Springburn Public Halls	Keppochhill Road	1500
St. Andrews Halls	Berkeley Street	4500
Dixon Halls	Dixon Avenue	1200
Kinning Park Halls	West Scotland Street	1400
Kingston Public Hall	389 Paisley Road	1000
Langside Public Hall	Langside Avenue	750
Partick Burgh Halls	Partick	1050
Govan Town Hall	Summerton Road	2500
Burgh Halls, Pollokshaws	Barrhead Road	990
Couper Institute, Cathcart	Clarkston Road	500
Parkhead Public Hall	Duke Street	384
Partick Picture House	Orchard Street	899
Palladium Theatre	Dumbarton Rd, Whiteinch	550
Standard Picture Palace	Dumbarton Rd, Partick	509
Casino	King Street, Pollokshaws	226
Premier Electric Theatre	Main Street, Shettleston	400
Scott's Electric Theatre	Gray Street, Shettleston	600
Govan Hall	Robert Street	728
Govan Cross Picture Palace	Helen Street	1397
Ibrox Picture Palace	Lendel Place	556
Green's Picturedrome	Summerton Road	1326
Scenic Picture House	Paisley Road Toll	593

<b>Venue</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>Capacity</b>
Shawlands Cross Picture House	Pollokshaws Road	572
Camphill Picture House	Baker Street	1364
St Enoch Picture House	Argyle Street	639
The Sun Picture House	Hopehill Road	416
Whiteinch Public Halls	Whiteinch	1030
The City Picture House	Union Street	431
Govan Central Picture House	Govan Road	932
Avenue Theatre	Dumbarton Rd, Whiteinch	764
<b>Total seats</b>		<b>86995</b>



# Appendix 2: Glasgow cinema programmes 1908-1914

## Rationale & methodology

The methodology involved sampling the same month every year for the period under investigation. February was chosen because it is the first month in which there would be 'normal' programming. A brief look at cinema programmes in January suggests that the films being screened skewed towards family entertainment and also featured holdovers from special festive programmes scheduled during the Christmas and New Year period.

For reasons previously outlined, *The Evening Times* was chosen as a representative sample of a popular newspaper which was sold and read throughout the city during this period.

Details of the films and programmes come from the Entertainments column which appeared in *The Evening Times* on each Tuesday i.e. the day after the listing. This column does not always cover every cinema but frequently contains more detail than the advertisement. Taken together however the Monday advertisements and the Tuesday 'reviews' provide a reasonably representative account of cinema going activity in Glasgow in this period.

There are a number of inconsistencies in titling which have been caused by mistranslation, poor typesetting, human error or some combination of these factors e.g. the film *The Nailed Hand* also appears as *The Mailed Hand* in some instances. In this case *The Nailed Hand* appears to be correct. In all instances the version used is that which appears in the advertisement. Further details of the films cited here can be found in Appendix 3.

## Glasgow cinema programming – February, 1908

Week beginning Monday, February 3, 1908

Cinema	Location	Main feature	Supporting programme	Price
Panopticon	Trongate	Variety bill	American Bioscope	2d
Pringle's Picture Palace	Glasgow X	<i>True Unto Death</i>	<i>A Gamble for a woman/A fisherman's rival/The Shipowner's daughter</i>	2d, 3d, 4d, 6d

## Film descriptions

Panopticon – 'the entertainment concluded with animated pictures among which was a series entitled *The Thaw Tragedy*'.

Pringle's Picture Palace – *The Shipowner's Daughter* which is a tragic drama with a happy ending in a splendid picture.

## Glasgow cinema programming – February, 1908

Week beginning Monday, February 10, 1908

Cinema	Location	Main feature	Supporting programme	Price
Hengler's	Sauchiehall St	None	None	3d, 6d, 1/-
Panopticon	Trongate	None	Bioscope	
Pringle's Picture Palace	Glasgow X	<i>The Last Cartridge</i>	<i>The Colleen Bawn/The Pretty Typist/The Statue's Night Out/ The Hostage</i>	

## Film descriptions

Hengler's – 'Other contributions are animated pictures *The Mill Girl, The Indian's Revenge and Tunny Fishing*'.

Pringle's Picture Palace – '*The Last Cartridge* which gives an illustration of the Indian Mutiny in 1857 is a very fine picture'.

## Glasgow cinema programming – February, 1908

Week beginning Monday, February 17, 1908

Cinema	Location	Main feature	Supporting programme	Price
Hengler's	Sauchiehall St	None	None	
Panopticon	Trongate	Variety	'comic films'	
Pringle's	Glasgow X	<i>The Midnight Rider or Paul Revere</i>	<i>The Robber's Sweetheart/The Tell Tale Cap</i>	

## Film descriptions

Hengler's – 'Animated pictures form the principal part of the entertainment at Hengler's Circus this week. An entire change of films has been made and they are all up to a high standard of excellence. They were greatly appreciated by a well-filled house last night'.

Panopticon – 'The entertainment concluded with the Chronophone and the American Bioscope'.

Pringle's – '*The Midnight Rider* shows an incident in the American War of Independence'.

## Glasgow cinema programming – February, 1908

Week beginning Monday, February 24, 1908

Cinema	Location	Main feature	Supporting programme	Price
Hengler's	Sauchiehall St	None	None	
Panopticon	Trongate	Variety	<i>The Last Chance/The Mesmerist/Poor Man's Xmas/The Scholar's Revenge</i>	
Pringle's	Glasgow X	<i>Francesca Di Rimini or The Hunchback's Vengeance</i>	<i>A Slave's Hate/The Sin of the Hour/The Haunted House/Unlucky Flirtations/A New Form of Travel</i>	

## Film descriptions

Hengler's – 'The display of animated pictures at Hengler's presents another change of subject for the current week. These are of a wide range both as regards interest and amusement'.

Panopticon – '...and animated pictures on the American Bioscope'.

Pringle's – '*Francesca Di Rimini*' is a splendid production.

## Glasgow cinema programming – February, 1909

Week beginning Monday, February 1, 1909

Cinema	Location	Main feature	Supporting programme	Price
Pringle's	Glasgow X (Watson St)	<i>The Female Saloon Smasher (Carrie Nation)</i>	<i>Caught in the Trap</i>	
Pringle's Bijou Hall	Cowcaddens	<i>The Ticker Told</i>	None listed	
Hengler's	Sauchiehall St	Final week of winter circus season		

## Film descriptions

Pringle's Watson St – 'A special picture of Glasgow's Marathon race and George Robey's charity football match. A picture portraying some of the doings of Carry Nation [sic], the 'saloon smasher' creates much laughter'.

Pringle's Cowcaddens – 'A hearty reception was given to the North American Company's series of animated pictures by the large audience. The films are of great variety and include *A House of Excitement*, *Jock Jow*, and *Her Birthday*. Among the dramatic scenes are *The Stepmother* and *Caught in the Trap*.'

Panopticon – 'Chief place among the animated pictures is allotted to *Anarchy in London*, which depicts the funeral of the two victims of the recent outrage perpetrated in the outskirts of London. Other 'sensationals' were *The Incendiary* and *The Spectre of the Glacier*. The comic films include *Jaco the Artist*, *The Tricky Convict*, *Tommy Visits his Aunt* and *More Milk for Baby*'.

## Glasgow cinema programming – February, 1909

Week beginning Monday, February 8, 1909

Cinema	Location	Main feature	Supporting programme	Price
Hengler's	Sauchiehall St	None	None	
Pringle's	Glasgow X	<i>The Nailed Hand</i>	None listed	
Pringle's Bijou Hall	Cowcaddens	<i>The Sailor's Adopted Child</i>	None listed	

## Film descriptions

Pringle's Watson Street – '*The Nailed Hand*, a very dramatic series and one of the many which met with the appreciation of the patrons. *Major Richardson's Bloodhounds* was a picture of the detective type showing the sagacity of animals. A splendid series of films was that of *The Guardian Angel* which met with success'.

Pringle's Cowcaddens – 'A splendid series of pictures entitled *The Nailed Hand* is one of the '*Rifle Bill* sensationals' which are appearing here weekly and can only be seen at the Bijou and Watson Street houses. Other interesting pictures are *The Sailor's Adopted Child*, *The Hidden Hand* and *The Gauls*. The comical films, all of them calculated to raise much hilarity, are *The Mother's Protection* and *The Police Dogs*.

Panopticon – 'There is also a display of animated pictures. The pictures include *The Marvellous Shoes*, *The Willing Worker*, *Gendarmes*, *Horses*, and *Troubled Spirits*'.

## Glasgow cinema programming – February, 1909

Week beginning Monday, February 15, 1909

Cinema	Location	Main feature	Supporting programme	Price
Hengler's	Sauchiehall St	None	None	
Panopticon	Trongate	Variety	None listed	
Pringle's	Glasgow X	<i>The Outcast's Sacrifice</i>	The Escape and Recapture of Raffles	
Pringle's Bijou Hall	Cowcaddens	<i>The White Gloved Man</i>	None listed	
St Andrews Hall	Charing X			

## Film descriptions

Hengler's – 'Among the pictures exhibited this week are *Making Moving Pictures* and *Hercules the Athlete*, both a very interesting series of pictures. Those of the humorous order include *Tommy's Visit* and *An Absorbing Tale*. Both of them create great laughter'.

Panopticon – 'The animated pictures which add to the enjoyment of the evening include *Barbara Fritchie*, a splendid historical and dramatic picture; *Unfounded Suspicions*, *The Electric Policeman*, *The Demon Lamp*, *Polly's Excursion* and *The Magic Hoop*'.

Pringle's Cowcaddens – 'At Mr Pringle's popular establishment in Cowcaddens a splendid programme of animated pictures is provided this week. This novelty seems to have 'caught on' in this district judging from the patronage bestowed on this class of entertainment. Dramatic pictures shown include *The White Gloved Man*, *In Search of Oblivion* and *Tom Thumb*. Several interesting comic films are also introduced. They include *Bathing* and *The Nurses' Race*'.

## Glasgow cinema programming – February, 1909

Week beginning Monday, February 22, 1909

Cinema	Location	Main feature	Supporting programme	Price
Hengler's	Sauchiehall St	None	None	
Pringle's	Glasgow X	<i>The Red Hand</i> (exclusive)	None listed	
Pringle's Bijou Hall	Cowcaddens	<i>The Count of Monte Cristo</i>	None listed	
Panopticon	Trongate	None	Bioscope Pictures	
St Andrews Hall	Charing X	The Celebrated BB Pictures		

## Film descriptions

Hengler's – 'Another capital display of animated pictures. Those of a humorous nature are *The Doings of a Fool*, *Polly's Excursion* and *Runaway Dog*. Meanwhile those of a dramatic character are *Retribution*, and *The Late Tragedy of Tilda the Lion Tamer*'.

Pringle's Cowcaddens – 'Mr Pringle eclipses all prior productions in the picture-drama having secured the greatest sensation in this line, namely *The Red Hand*. It is a drama in eleven tableaux and includes *Life in Paris in all its Night Aspects*, *The Fast Life of Paris*, *The Fashionable Restaurants*, and *The Haunts of the Parisian Hooligans*. The thrilling Apache Dance is much admired. Other pictures are *The Sailor's Daughter* and *The Count of Monte Cristo*. A series of comical views is also shown by the American Bioscope'.

Panopticon – 'The programme also includes a beautiful series of comic and dramatic films which are graphically depicted by the Panopticon bioscope'.

St Andrew's Hall – 'Owing to the increased popularity and success which the cinematograph has achieved in every part of the country, the enterprising management of the B.B. Picture Company have begun a three weeks' engagement at St Andrew's Hall. The entertainment submitted was a capital one and there was a large audience. A splendid series of beautifully coloured films were those illustrating the story of *Psyche*, in Greek mythology. Other outstanding films were *The Opening of Parliament by the King in London* last week, *The Flower Girl*, *Scenes from Cowboy Life*, *The Runaway Dog*, *Mr Feary Does Not Like Policemen*, *Weary Willie Goes Wheeling*, and *A Hungry Man*'.

## Glasgow cinema programming – February, 1910

Week beginning Monday, February 7, 1910

Cinema	Location	Main feature	Supporting programme	Price
Hengler's	Sauchiehall St	Circus		
Panopticon	Trongate	Variety	<i>The Adolf Beck Drama</i>	
Pringle's	Glasgow X	<i>A Terrible Encounter</i>	None listed	
Pringle's Bijou Hall	Cowcaddens	<i>The Corsican's Revenge</i>	None listed	

## Film descriptions

Panopticon – 'In addition to the films shown on the Bioscope including *The Heir to the Clover Court Castle*, an excellent drama based on the story of Adolf Beck, there are Will Nutt in song and dance, May Rhoda vocalist, Horace Sade, dancer; Sid Myra and his remarkable dog Nell.

Pringle's Cowcaddens – The chief item is *A Cowboy's Romance*, a splendid series of pictures depicting life in the Far West. The other attractions are *A Corsican's Revenge*, *The Lamplighter*, *Little Big Horn*, *To Save Her Soul*, *The Runaway Stove* and *Found in a Taxi Cab*.

## Glasgow cinema programming – February, 1910

Week beginning Monday, February 14, 1910

Cinema	Location	Main feature	Supporting programme	Price
Hengler's	Sauchiehall St	Circus		
Panopticon	Trongate	Variety	Bioscope – <i>The Girl Bushranger</i>	
Pringle's	Glasgow X	<i>The Keeper of the Light</i>	None listed	
Pringle's Bijou Hall	Cowcaddens	<i>The Judgement</i>	None listed	

## Film descriptions

Panopticon – 'Animated pictures are also features of the programme this week the principal one being *The Girl Bush Ranger*, which depicts in a series of films of life in the Wild West'.

Pringle's Cowcaddens – 'The principal item was *Judgement*, a splendid series of pictures beautifully depicted. Others that augment the bill are *The Orange Merchant*, *The Engineer's Daughter*, *Are You John Brown* and *The Children's Doctor*'.

## Glasgow cinema programming – February, 1910

Week beginning Monday, February 21, 1910

Cinema	Location	Main feature	Supporting programme	Price
Hengler's	Sauchiehall St	Circus		
Pringle's	Glasgow X	<i>A Rocky Road</i>	None listed	
Pringle's Bijou Hall	Cowcaddens	<i>A House of Cards, The Thanksgivings</i>	None listed	
Panopticon	Trongate	<i>The Opening of Parliament</i>	None listed	

## Film descriptions

Pringle's Cowcaddens – 'The principal film on the bill is *The Three Thanksgivings* which is clearly depicted. The other attractions are *Maud Muller*, *A Dream of Paradise*, *The Theatrical Charity Sports*, and *The House of Cards*'.

Panopticon – 'There is also a first class series of animated pictures all of which were very much enjoyed'.

## Glasgow cinema programming – February, 1910

Week beginning Monday, February 28, 1910

Cinema	Location	Main feature	Supporting programme	Price
Hengler's	Sauchiehall St			
Pringle's	Glasgow X	<i>The Heroine of Mafeking/ The Last Muster</i>	None listed	
Pringle's Bijou Hall	Cowcaddens	<i>Two Orphans/The Bank Breaker</i>	None listed	
Panopticon	Trongate	<i>Dove's Eyes Gratitude</i>	None listed	

## Film descriptions

Pringle's Cowcaddens – 'The chief item is *The Two Orphans*, a splendid series of pictures clearly portrayed. The others are *The Last Muster*, *The Fallen Idol*, *An Attempt to Smash a Bank*, *Drowsy Dick's Dream*, *The Dancing Girl of Butte*, and *The Fireman's Wedding*'.

Panopticon – 'The animated pictures are also interesting, the principal one depicting the State Opening of Parliament'.

## Glasgow cinema programming – February, 1911

Week beginning Monday, February 6, 1911

Cinema	Location	Main feature	Supporting programme	Price
Hengler's	Sauchiehall St	Circus		
Scottish Zoo and Electric Picture Theatre	New City Road	Animal performances	'Grand cinematograph entertainment'	'6d to see everything
The Picture House	140 Sauchiehall St	<i>Queen Mary o' Scots</i> (recitation)	None	6d and 1/-
Charing X Electric Theatre	500 – 516 Sauchiehall St	<i>Pathe's Gazette</i>	None listed	6d
Argyle Electric Theatre	55 Argyle St	None listed	None listed	3d, 4d, 6d
Pringle's	Glasgow X	<i>The Wedding Present on C Ranch</i>	<i>The Sleepwalker</i>	
Pringle's Bijou Hall	Cowcaddens	<i>The Cowpuncher's Glove</i>	None listed	
Panopticon	Trongate	<i>The Cowpuncher's Glove</i>	None listed	

## Film descriptions

Scottish Zoo – ‘After a very successful circus season Mr Bostock has re-opened his establishment in New City Road as a first-class picture theatre. The hall thoroughly deserves the large share of patronage which it receives as the pictures are all of the latest and the best. They are very clear and steady. Some of the pictures on this week’s programme are *Marie’s Jokes with Fly Paper*, *Two Mad Boxers*, *Woman’s Wit*, *The Widow’s Wooers*, and *Two Boys in Blue*. Over and above the excellent picture entertainment there is a fine collection of animals in the Zoo proper’.

The Picture House – ‘When one is wearied of the noise and glare of the streets The Picture House provides a delightful retreat. While the body is at rest the eye is charmed with a succession of varied and artistic pictures which unloosen the springs of imagination and give refreshment to the mind. The place is an oasis in the wilderness of streets. If anything, its popularity is increasing, the evening displays being extremely well attended. Scores of shoppers too pop in for an hour in the afternoon, sip a cup of fragrant Bohea in the Wedgwood Lounge which is surely the most artistically got up tea room in the city and then have a peep at some of the wonders of the cinematograph. The programme is varied and interesting. So real looking are the Roman scenes that we almost feel as if we were in Rome itself. Current events are presented with striking vividness while the numerous humorous pictures create much merriment. In *Two Boys in Blue* series we witness many incidents of life in the Wild West of America. Then the band must not be forgotten for it enchants the ear when the observer’s eyes are not gazing on the screen’.

Charing X Electric Theatre – ‘Judging from the numbers present at the continuous performances yesterday at the Charing Cross Electric Theatre it was evident that this place of entertainment is becoming decidedly popular. It was seen yesterday from the number of children present in the afternoon that it has formed quite a happy hunting ground judging from the way in which they showed their approval. The films this week are of a very high order and the patrons were highly delighted with the clearness and steadiness of the pictures shown. A very interesting film is shown of the launch of *The Thunderer* at Canning Town. Among other pictures are the following International Football Match France Defeated by England at Twickenham, Military Cross Country Race at Brussels and Hockey in Russia’.

Pringle's Cowcaddens – 'An excellent opportunity is afforded of seeing a splendid selection of animated pictures. They include *The Cowpuncher's Glove*, *A Story of the Wild West*, *The Mountain Wife*, *My Daughter*, *Pressed Roses*, and *A Miraculous Recovery*. Both houses were well filled'.

Panopticon – 'The pictures on the bioscope are good, the chief film being *The Cowpuncher's Glove*. There were large audiences at each of the performances yesterday.'

## Glasgow cinema programming – February, 1911

Week beginning Monday, February 13, 1911

Cinema	Location	Main feature	Supporting programme	Price
Pringle's Bijou Hall	Cowcaddens	<i>A Cheyenne Brave</i>	None listed	
Hengler's	Sauchiehall St	Circus		
Scottish Zoo and Electric Picture Theatre	New City Road	<i>The Two Daughters and Davy Jones Domestic Trouble</i>		
The Picture House	140 Sauchiehall St	None	None	
Charing X Electric Theatre	500 – 516 Sauchiehall St	<i>The Captain's Bride/A Double Elopement</i>		
Argyle Electric Theatre	55 Argyle St	<i>The Nine of Diamonds</i>		
Pringle's	Glasgow X	<i>An Indian Bride</i>	None listed	
Panopticon	Trongate	<i>Bioscope</i>	None listed	

## Film descriptions

Zoo Electric Theatre – 'One of the series of films depicted is *The Royal Mint* which is both interesting and instructive. Some of the others are *The Poison Label*, *Davy Jones's Domestic Trouble*, *The Plumber* and a host of other up to date pictures'.

The Picture House – "Animated news' is one of the most attractive features at the cosy, popular Picture House in Sauchiehall Street. Stepping in there one can see most realistic representations of the State Opening of Parliament, a football match, an Anglo-French

harriers contest and many other events which happened within the past few days. We are even shown the latest fashions in ladies' dresses. There is a most exciting run of pictures showing how the Moscow brigade turn out and tackle a fire in that city, and the voyage of a North Sea trawler from Boulogne followed by the casting of the nets, the reaping of the harvest of the sea, and the return to market is so vividly portrayed that one enjoys the benefits of the instructive voyage without the accompaniment of the sickness which such a fresh sea would be sure to cause a landsman. A dramatic representation is given of the career of Napoleon's brother in law Murat who rose from a tavern boy to be a brilliant general and the King of Naples. Another interesting drama is entitled *A Cowboy's Vindication* while hearty laughter is provided by the comic pictures *Looking for a Profession* and *Foolshead's Feast*. All the pictures pass with remarkable steadiness'.

Charing Cross Electric Theatre – 'An exceptionally good programme is provided by the management and includes such well-known pictures as *The Captain's Bride*, *A Double Elopement*, *The Gipsy* and *The Horse That Did Run*'.

Pringle's Cowcaddens – 'The principal films shown were *A Cheyenne Brave*, *Jim Bridger's Indian Wife*, *Two Daughters*, *Wiffle's Two Sons*, *Longleg's Infernal Invention*, *The Winning of Miss Langdon*, *Betty and the Broom*, and *A Double Elopement*'.

Panopticon – 'The pictures on the bioscope are in accordance with the otherwise excellent nature of the programme'.

## Glasgow cinema programming – February, 1911

Week beginning Monday, February 20, 1911

Cinema	Location	Main feature	Supporting programme	Price
Scottish Zoo and Electric Picture Theatre	New City Road	Bioscope entertainment	None listed	
Hengler's	Sauchiehall St	Circus		
Panopticon	Trongate	<i>Digger Stanley v. Johnny Condon</i>	None listed	
Pringle's	Glasgow X	<i>Pirates of 1920</i>	None listed	
Pringle's Bijou Hall	Cowcaddens	<i>The Squaw and the Man</i>	None listed	
Charing X Electric Theatre	500-516 Sauchiehall Street	<i>Pathe's Gazette</i>	None listed	
The Picture House	140 Sauchiehall St	None listed	None listed	
Argyle Electric Theatre	55 Argyle St	<i>The Thieves of the Air</i>	None listed	

## Film descriptions

Zoo Electric – ‘The entertainment, which is made up of animated pictures, was very much enjoyed, special interest being manifested in a splendid film entitled *His Sister in Law* which was admirably well depicted. The series also included *Billy's Book of Boxing*, *A Wedding Trip*, and *Cousin Tontolini Comes Back*’.

Electric Theatre – ‘The principal series depicts in a most entertaining fashion incidents from *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. Horticulturists will be interested in the presentation of

coloured pictures illustrating the culture of dahlias. The black and white views of current events are also very good'.

The Picture House – 'An attractive programme is being submitted this week, including items which are likely to appeal to all tastes. Two of the most beautiful of the pictures are views of the Swiss countryside seen from the decks of a steamer on the Lake of Thun, and a series of coloured pictures showing the different stages in dahlia growing. *Elder Alden's Ward* is a stirring Indian drama of the Puritan days of America...Other attractive films are *The Fairy Jewel* and *Love's Victory* in the former of which some beautiful scenery is shown. There are several humorous pictures including one which depicts the ubiquitous Foolshead at a cinematograph show. Current events are graphically reproduced on screen and lady patrons are specially catered for by pictures showing the latest French modes'.

Pringle's Cowcaddens – 'The principal films shown were *The Squaw and the Man*, *The Tale of a Hat*, *White Roses*, *When the Leaves Fall*, *The Tenderfoot Messenger* and a splendid film illustrating the fight against consumption entitled *The Red Cross Seal*'.

Panopticon – 'Animated pictures are again the chief attraction and the recent fight for the bantam weight championship between Digger Stanley and Johnny Condon is depicted with a clearness that is most inspiring...In addition to the fight pictures there is a splendid series of films some of them being *The Milliners' Strike*, *The Tenderfoot Messenger*, and *Tilly's Unsympathetic Uncle*'.

## Glasgow cinema programming – February, 1911

Week beginning Monday, February 27, 1911

Cinema	Location	Main feature	Supporting programme	Price
Charing X Electric Theatre	500-516 Sauchiehall St.	<i>The Great Italian Hydroplane and Eldora, The Fruit Girl</i>	None listed	
Hengler's	Sauchiehall St	closed		
Pringle's	Glasgow X	<i>Love and Luck</i>	None listed	
Pringle's Bijou Hall	Cowcaddens	<i>Leap for Life</i>	None listed	
Panopticon	Trongate	<i>Sam Langford v. Bill Lang</i>	None listed	
The Picture House	140 Sauchiehall St	<i>Shakespeare's Henry VIII</i>	None listed	6d, 1/-
Argyle Electric Theatre	55 Argyle St	<i>Love, Luck and Gasolene</i>	None listed	

## Film descriptions

Zoo Electric – 'The films are all of the latest and are very clear and steady when thrown on the screen. Some of the pictures on this week's programme are *The Wolf of Fresh Water* showing the fishing of wolf fish at St Anne's Montreal which is very interesting. The next is a dramatic picture *A Plain Song* from which a good moral can be taken. Some of the comic pictures were *When Father Buys a Screen* and *The Rival Tecs*'.

Charing Cross Electric Theatre – ‘Dramatic, humorous and instructive pictures are included in this week’s programme. The principal films shown are *Eldora the Fruit Girl*, *Elder Alden’s Indian Ward*, *A Four-Footed Pest*, and *The Doll’s Revenge*. A film of a most instructive nature depicting *The Great Italian Hydroplane* was shown in a most realistic manner. A display of current events ends a most enjoyable programme’.

The Picture House – ‘The proprietors of The Picture House are to be commended for their enterprise in securing the exclusive rights, though for one week only, of the pictures showing scenes from Sir Herbert Beerbohm Tree’s production of *Shakespeare’s King Henry VIII*....Five scenes are shown and even those who are unacquainted with the play would have no difficulty in following its development so well chosen are the scenes and so graphic is the acting. The production, though necessarily curtailed, is acted by the entire cast from His Majesty’s Theatre London...The other pictures shown include a number of interesting and pretty films, and the humorous element is not overlooked’.

Pringle’s Cowcaddens – ‘The pictures included were humorous, pathetic and interesting. The principal films shown were *A Leap for Life, Love, Luck and Gasolene*, *Suspicion*, *The Return to Hearth and Home*, *Tontolini’s Motor Ride* and many others.’

Panopticon – Mr Pickard has secured for Glasgow the sole right for the pictures depicting the glove contest between Sam Langford the black [sic] and Bill Lang the heavyweight champion of Australia and they promise to eclipse in point of drawing power any of the numerous novelties the enterprising proprietor has placed before the public. ...As to the pictures themselves they need no praise. They are first-class and one can follow the rounds as clearly almost as if he were at the ringside’.

## Glasgow cinema programming – February, 1912

Week beginning Monday, February 5, 1912

Cinema	Location	Main feature	Supporting programme	Price
Hengler's	Sauchiehall St	circus		
Joy Town Picture Theatre	New City Road	None listed	None listed	6d
Panopticon	Trongate	Variety bill	None listed	
Pringle's	Glasgow X	<i>The Madman</i>	None listed	
Theatre De Luxe	417 Sauchiehall St	<i>Arrah na Pogue,</i>	None listed	6d
The Picture House	140 Sauchiehall St	<i>An Elephant Ride Through the Jungle</i>	None listed	
Charing X Electric Theatre	500-516 Sauchiehall St	None listed	None listed	
Pringle's Dennistoun Picture Palladium	Hillfoot Street	None listed	None listed	

## Film descriptions

Joy Town – 'Some of the series of pictures depicted include *The Main Man, An Evil Power,* and *Constable Smith in Trouble*'.

Panopticon – 'There are some fine bioscope films the chief one being an exciting drama entitled *In Time for the Press*'.

The Picture House – 'One film which has a particularly interesting flavour is that in which life in the jungle is graphically depicted. Tigers are seen prowling about, elephants scamper

wildly, while many other animals which one would prefer to meet on the picture screen rather than their dangerous haunts are seen. The other films are equally good'.

Charing Cross – 'A most interesting series of pictures is the kinemacolour film *The Zuyder Zee*. The other pictures are *The Queen of Criminals*, *His Brother's Double*, *Overcharged*, and *The Curate's Love Story*'.

Dennistoun Palladium – 'That this establishment is popular with the inhabitants of Dennistoun is amply proved by its large number of patrons. The establishment is worked on the 'two houses a night' system with a change of pictures each Monday and Thursday. The pictures are all of the latest and best variety and never fail to please. Some of the films on the current programme are *The Voice of the Child*, *The Foolishness of Jealousy* and *Kitty Among the Cowboys*'.

## Glasgow cinema programming – February, 1912

Week beginning Monday, February 12, 1912

Cinema	Location	Main feature	Supporting programme	Price
Hengler's	Sauchiehall St	circus		
Joy Town Picture Theatre	New City Road	<i>The Man Hunt, Dalmatian Alps, Last Will, Stray Bullets, Yarn of a Baby's Shirt, Didums and the Police</i>		
Pickard's Casino	Castle St	None listed	None listed	
Pringle's	Glasgow X	<i>The Last Notch</i>	None listed	
Charing X Electric Theatre	500-516 Sauchiehall St	None listed	None listed	
Theatre De Luxe	417 Sauchiehall St	<i>A Woman's Heart</i>	None listed	
The Picture House	140 Sauchiehall St	None listed	None listed	
Pringle's Dennistoun Picture Palladium	Hillfoot Street	None listed	None listed	

## Film descriptions

The Casino – ‘There are some fine bioscope films. The chief one is an exciting drama entitled *Message from Beyond*’.

Panopticon – ‘Nothing but the best is supplied in the way of pictures at this theatre and this week the fare is no exception to the rule’.

Charing Cross Electric Theatre – ‘The dramatic element is well depicted in *The Smoke of a 45* and *The Call of the Wilderness*. The scenic pictures *Seeing Cincinatti* and *Hunting Wild Buffalos in Cambodia* make one long to see foreign countries. The comic section embraces *Art v. Music* and *Keeping Mabel Home*. On Thursday a picture of interest to all lovers of animals will be shown. It is entitled *Who’s Who in Doggieland*’.

## Glasgow cinema programming – February, 1912

Week beginning Monday, February 19, 1912

Cinema	Location	Main feature	Supporting programme	Price
Pringle's	Glasgow X	<i>A Cornish Coast Tragedy</i>		
Joy Town Picture Theatre	New City Road	<i>Heroes of the Mutiny, The Postal Substitute, Oh Mother in Law, Waiting at the Church, Up to Date Robbers</i>		
Pickard's Casino	Castle St	Variety	None listed	
Pringle's Dennistoun Picture Palladium	Hillfoot St	None listed	None listed	
Theatre De Luxe	417 Sauchiehall St			
Charing X Electric Theatre	500-516 Sauchiehall St	None listed	None listed	
The Picture House	140 Sauchiehall St	None listed	None listed	

## Film description

Panopticon – ‘The bioscope pictures are on the usual lines. A sensational drama *The Duel of the Candles* is the chief film and along with many others of varied kinds makes this part of the programme exceedingly good’.

Casino – ‘The chief picture is entitled *The Madman*. There are other good pictures notably *The Ranchman’s Daughter* depicting an episode in the Wild West’.

Charing Cross Electric Theatre – ‘All those interested in science should make a point of seeing the film depicting the marvels of liquid air while *The Making of Roses* should appeal to those of a horticultural turn of mind. Among the other instructive pictures is *Bergamo in Lombardy* whose famous buildings are shown to advantage. *Somebody’s Mother*, *A Contagious Disease*, and *Editor and Millionaire* go to complete a varied programme’.

The Picture House – ‘A most sensational item is *The Romance of the Rio Grande* showing the Texas Rangers on the trail of Mexican smugglers and a fierce fight with the Indians...*Up to Date Robbers* is a most dramatic item showing the methods employed by a clever gang of thieves. A most humorous film is *Waiting at the Church* depicting the many difficulties which beset a bridegroom on the fateful day and cause him to be very late arriving at the church. *Foolshead on Roller Skates* is also good and creates much merriment. A beautiful series of views of the River Lonig are shown, the scenery of the river and surrounding country being most magnificent. This week’s current events are very interesting’.

Dennistoun Palladium – ‘*Didums and the Police* is the title of a film which keeps the audience in continual laughter as also does *What Happened to Mary*. *The Ultimate Sacrifice* and *The Fresher* are pictures of strong dramatic interest’.

## Glasgow cinema programming – February, 1912

Week beginning Monday, February 26, 1912

Cinema	Location	Main feature	Supporting programme	Price
Hengler's	Sauchiehall St	None listed	None listed	
Joy Town Picture Theatre	New City Road	Joy Town Pictures and Grand Variety Company	None listed	
Pickard's Casino	Castle St	Star varieties and moving pictures	None listed	
Pringle's	Glasgow X	<i>Ruined</i>	None listed	
Charing X Electric Theatre	500-516 Sauchiehall St	<i>Notre Dame de Paris</i>	None listed	6d
Theatre De Luxe	417 Sauchiehall St			
Pringle's Dennistoun Picture Palladium	Hillfoot St	Variety		
The Picture House	140 Sauchiehall St	None listed	None listed	

## Film descriptions

Panopticon – 'The bioscope pictures contain many fine subjects, the most prominent being a thrilling drama entitled "*King Detective*'.

Casino – 'The chief picture is entitled *The Man Hunt*. There are other good pictures notably *The Night of Peril*....an excellent programme which is choked full of first-class bioscopic films'.

The Picture House – ‘A most interesting film is *The Bloomhoff Diamond Diggers* which depicts many incidents of the South African diamond digging industry. Other pictures are *The O’Neill*, *His Last Cent*, *The Pitcher Plant*, and *Tweedledum as Strike Leader*’.

Charing Cross Electric Theatre – ‘All lovers of drama should see the pictorial films shown this week at this theatre depicting *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*. The story is vividly portrayed in colours. The comedy pictures comprise *Twas Ever Thus*, *Her Sacrifice* and *The Right John Smith* while two grand animal pictures *Baby Animals* and *The Inhabitants of Jungletown* are worth seeing. Views of Varmland complete a first-rate programme’.

Dennistoun Palladium – ‘Some of this week’s pictures are – *A Tragedy on the Cornish Coast*. This is a picture well worth seeing. *A Soldier’s Return* is also very good. Those of the humorous nature are *Selecting His Heiress* and *Wiffle’s Magic Wand*’.

## Glasgow cinema programming – February, 1913

Week beginning Monday, February 3, 1913

Cinema	Location	Main feature	Supporting programme	Price
Hengler's	Sauchiehall St	Circus	None listed	
Panopticon	Trongate	Variety bill	None listed	
Pickard's Casino	Castle St	Variety and all-star pictures	<i>Kings of the Forest, The Reformation of Sierra Smith</i>	
St Enoch's Picture Theatre	Argyle St	<i>An Actress's Romance</i>	None listed	
Pringle's	Glasgow X	<i>The Best Revenge</i>	None listed	
The Picture House	140 Sauchiehall St	None listed	None listed	
Pringle's Dennistoun Picture Palladium	Hillfoot Street	<i>Kings of the Forest</i>	None listed	
Theatre De Luxe	417 Sauchiehall St	<i>The Child's Triumph/The Stolen Treaty</i>		
Partick Picture House	Orchard St	<i>The Stolen Treaty</i>		
Maryhill Star Palace	1046 Maryhill Road	None listed	None listed	2d, 4d, 6d, 9d

Scenic Picture House	Paisley Road Toll	<i>Woman in White</i>	'and many others'	
Avenue Theatre, Whiteinch	950 Dumbarton Rd	Variety	'a host of splendid pictures'	

#### Film descriptions

Panopticon – 'The pictures, too, could not be bettered the series including several dramatic and comic subjects'.

Casino – 'The pictures are exceptionally interesting, the chief film being a remarkable one entitled *The Kings of the Forest*, the others being well up to the standard associated with this house'.

Maryhill Star Palace – 'As regards the pictures nothing more needs to be said than that this week's series is of the stamp which never fails to please'.

Scenic – 'The chief film is entitled *The Woman in White* and in addition to this very fine subject there are a host of films which cannot fail to command respect'.

St Enoch's – 'However much as the position of this house is responsible for the patronage bestowed upon it, the character of the pictures submitted play a prominent part in the search for popular favour. This week the management have secured the exclusive rights of *An Actor's Romance* (Madame Sarah Bernhardt playing the leading role) which elicited much appreciation at yesterday's performances which were well attended despite the inclement weather. Otherwise the bill of fare is crammed with many interesting films'.

Dennistoun Palladium – 'This week's programme should satisfy all tastes, embracing as it does pictures of the dramatic, humorous, and instructional order. *The Kings of the Forest* is a picture which deserves special mention, it being very interesting while another film of strong dramatic power is *A Fugitive from Justice*. *Billy as an Acrobat* provides plenty of amusement. It is a good all round programme'.

Partick Picture House – ‘The chief film is a very dramatic and interesting one entitled *The Stolen Treaty* which portrays the stirring adventures of a naval officer carrying a treaty from one Power to another. The programme also includes *The Informer: An Episode of the Civil War* and *Sold, A Bear Fact* a very diverting film’.

The Picture House – ‘The educative, dramatic and humorous films were of the latest, while the current events shown on the screen were equally interesting. Blended as it was so cleverly, the programme was of a type that appealed to all tastes and accordingly was received, as it fully merited, with the utmost enthusiasm’.

Theatre De Luxe – ‘Drama forms the major part of this week’s programme, the chief pieces being *A Child’s Triumph* and *The Stolen Treaty* each displayed in three parts. *Simple Simon*, *Costumier* was of the fantastical order while *Pathe’s Gazette* showed incidents during the Londonderry election and the funeral of the London policeman who was killed on point duty recently’.

## Glasgow cinema programming – February, 1913

Week beginning Monday, February 10, 1913

Cinema	Location	Main feature	Supporting programme	Price
Hengler's	Sauchiehall St	Circus	None listed	
Panopticon	Trongate	Variety bill	None listed	
Pickard's Casino	Castle St	<i>The Black Mask</i>	None listed	
St Enoch's Picture Theatre	Argyle St	<i>The Rose of the Thebes</i>	None listed	
Pringle's	Glasgow X	<i>The Evil Genius</i>	None listed	
Theatre De Luxe	417 Sauchiehall St	<i>Oedipus Rex/As You Like It</i>	None listed	
Charing X Electric Theatre	500 – 516 Sauchiehall St	<i>Faithful Unto Death</i>	None listed	
Pringle's Dennistoun Picture Palladium	Hillfoot Street	<i>A Calvinist Martyr</i>	None listed	
Maryhill Star Palace	1046 Maryhill Road	None listed	None listed	
Scenic Picture House	Paisley Road Toll	<i>Secret of the Mine</i>	None listed	
Avenue Theatre, Whiteinch	950 Dumbarton Rd	Variety	'a host of splendid pictures'	
Partick Picture House	Orchard St	<i>As You Like It</i>	None listed	

## Film descriptions

The Casino – ‘The pictorial part of the programme is of the usual high order, and was followed with absorbing interest throughout’.

Panopticon – ‘The pictures are of a very high order’.

Maryhill Star Palace – ‘The pictures, as has been the case since the opening of the hall, are of the best obtainable including several fine dramatic and comic subjects’.

Theatre De Luxe – ‘Always endeavouring to interest, educate and amuse the public, the management have overcome this difficult task once more by bringing to Glasgow two films which could not have attracted greater attention. They are *Oedipus Rex* and an adaptation of Shakespeare’s drama *As You Like It*. The former is shown as acted by Mr Martin Harvey who produced the play in Glasgow before large audiences. They are indeed fine pictures and should be seen by those who like the best. Otherwise the programme could not be bettered’.

St Enoch’s – ‘Those who delight in scenery should not miss *The Mouth of the Adour*. The river enters the Bay of Biscay just below Bayonne, and the film presented at this comfortable house shows the sea in full fury, the wave sweeping over the jetties – a sight which is awe-inspiring in its grandeur. The dramatic pieces shown include *Faithful Unto Death*, a story of massacre in India; *Mifanwy*, a Welsh tragedy, and *A Struggle of Hearts*. There are also a number of comical scenes while The Topical Budget shows snatches of play in the Hull City v. Newcastle United cup tie and the King inspecting the new battle cruiser *New Zealand*’.

The Picture House – ‘Of more than ordinary interest is a series, taken at Antwerp, of exotic fish, examples of the finny tribe living in Chinese, Indian, African, and other overseas waters. Among the fish shown are the “climbing”, “telescope” and numerous others including one formed like a frog and apparently having much the same habits. There is charm and pathos in *Old Songs and Old Memories*, entertainment in *She is a Pippin* – the curing of a jealous wife – *Linked Together* and *The Counts*, and real interest in some fine

scenes of Aquatic Sports in Norway. The latter representing among other recreations yachting as it is pursued by Norwegians’.

The Partick Picture House – ‘The chief attraction this week is William Shakespeare’s well-known comedy *As You Like It*. The theme of the story is beautifully portrayed and was of absorbing interest. Another delightful film is *The Land Beyond*’.

The Scenic – ‘The chief picture this week is entitled *The Secret of the Mine* which is shown in two parts. The incidents contained therein are of a highly dramatic type and were followed with the closest interest’.

Dennistoun Palladium – ‘Prominent on this week’s programme are *The Merry Widow*, a film in two parts, *Unmerited Shame*, a film of strong dramatic interest, and *An Absent-Minded Burglar*’.

## Glasgow cinema programming – February, 1913

Week beginning Monday, February 17, 1913

Cinema	Location	Main feature	Supporting programme	Price
Hengler's	Sauchiehall St	Closed		
Panopticon	Trongate	Variety bill	None listed	
Pickard's Casino	Castle St	<i>The Black Mask</i>	None listed	
The Picture House	140 Sauchiehall St	None listed	None listed	
St Enoch's Picture Theatre	Argyle St	<i>The King Attends Capt. Scott's Memorial Service in London</i>	<i>The Turkey Trot</i>	
La Scala	Sauchiehall St	<i>Pictures of Scott's Last Journey</i>		
Pringle's	Glasgow X	<i>The Smouldering Spark</i>	None listed	
Theatre De Luxe	417 Sauchiehall St	<i>The Power of Love</i>	<i>Scott's memorial</i>	
Pringle's Dennistoun Picture Palladium	Hillfoot Street	<i>The Love of Lady Irma</i>	None listed	
Maryhill Star Palace	1046 Maryhill Road	None listed	None listed	
Partick Picture House	Orchard St	<i>A Boy Scout Hero</i>	None listed	

## Film descriptions

Panopticon – ‘The pictures submitted are of the usual high standard associated with this house’.

Casino – ‘The pictures shown are all of a very high order’.

St Enoch’s – ‘A nicely varied programme is again being submitted at this theatre, the views of Salt Lake City and its surroundings being especially fine. In drama *Bronco Bill’s Love Affair*, *Wrongly Accused*, and *An Official Appointment* are of a thrilling nature while the comic pictures comprise *Hawkeye Has to Hurry*, *The 100 Franc Gold Piece* and *The Curate’s Wife*, while the latest Yankee conception *The Turkey Trot* is also shown. The Topical Budget includes a Californian flower carnival, a game of lacrosse between Oxford and Cambridge Universities at Lords, French fashions, and the Scott memorial service at St Paul’s’.

La Scala – ‘Principal interest will centre on the *Died in Action* film on which is given many glimpses of the life of Captain Scott and his gallant explorers. The pictures are clear and interesting and they vividly illustrate what arduous work Polar exploration means. The series is concluded with a film showing the assembling of the mourners at the memorial at St Pauls last Friday. Another admirable film is *Monte Christo* (sic) – a cinematograph of Dumas’s great romance of vengeance. Surely one of the great utilities of “filmography” will lie in its power to visualise scenes of fiction. The remainder of the films are good and entertaining. Not the least excellent feature of La Scala is the steadiness of the pictures shown’.

Theatre De Luxe – ‘The chief attraction this week is a beautiful romantic drama woven round the lives of a fisherman’s family entitled *The Power of Love*. *The Supreme Sacrifice* is another capital dramatic film...*In the Garden Fair* and *The Memorial Service to Captain Scott at St Paul’s Cathedral* are other pictures calling for special mention. The humorous side is also well attended to with some funny farcical comedies which include *The Old Hundred Franc Gold Piece*. A very interesting and instructive film is that describing the life of the Heron’.

Dennistoun Palladium – ‘This week’s programme includes a splendid film in two parts entitled *The Evil Genius, Gold and Glitter, Four Days a Widow, and A Double Event*’.

Avenue Theatre, Whiteinch – ‘There is a first class programme consisting of variety turns and animated pictures. In the latter extracts from the late Captain Scott’s expedition are included in *Pathe’s Gazette*, a film which also portrays all the important happenings of the past week. *The Cowboy’s Mother* is a film of strong dramatic interest’.

The Picture House – ‘This week the programme includes several pictures of an interesting compelling nature. *The Fire Fighter’s Love* being a dramatic subject of considerable strength, while *The Foundling*, an old English story, is most attractive. *When it Comes Off, Incognita* and *Sally Ann’s Strategy* each raise much laughter. Two items of an instructive nature are *The Problems of Aviation* and *Ascending Mont Blanc*. *Gaumont’s Graphic* depicts current events, a special feature being the memorial service to the Polar heroes in St Paul’s Cathedral which the King attended’.

## Glasgow cinema programming – February, 1913

Week beginning Monday, February 24, 1913

Cinema	Location	Main feature	Supporting programme	Price
Hengler's	Sauchiehall St	Closed		
Partick Picture House	Orchard St	<i>The Secret of the Safe</i>		
Panopticon	Trongate	<i>The Black Mask</i>		
Pickard's Casino	Castle St	Variety	None listed	
The Picture House	140 Sauchiehall St	<i>The Panama Canal</i>	None listed	
St Enoch's Picture Theatre	Argyle St	<i>The Supreme Test</i>	None listed	
Theatre De Luxe	417 Sauchiehall St	<i>Sister Beatrix</i>		
Pringle's Dennistoun Picture Palladium	Hillfoot Street	<i>The Poet and the Peasant</i>		
Pringle's	Glasgow X	<i>The Smouldering Spark</i>	None listed	
Maryhill Star Palace	1046 Maryhill Road	None listed	None listed	

## Film descriptions

Panopticon – ‘The bill is further augmented by a series of bioscopic pictures which would be very hard to beat’.

Casino – ‘As is usual the pictorial display is of a high standard’.

Maryhill Star Palace – ‘There is a thoroughly enjoyable series of pictures’.

La Scala – ‘The principal series is *On the Steps of the Throne*, a highly romantic military drama which at once appeals to lovers of this kind of entertainment. Of more than ordinary interest is the beautiful views of Austria which are depicted by an excellent instructive film entitled *The Lake of Traun, Austria- Hungary*. *The Finger of Suspicion* is another excellent romantic film. The humorous element is also well sustained by such highly amusing comedies as *Simple Simon* and *Calino’s Panther* and *The Winking Parson*’.

St Enoch’s – ‘Those who delight in natural beauties should see *Scenes in the Trossachs* in addition to which are some pretty spots in Rouken Glen and the Cora Linn Falls at Lanark. There is the usual strong dramatic programme comprising *The Fugitives*, *Poet and Peasant*, and *The Supreme Test* while to those in need of a hearty laugh nothing could be finer than *A Guilty Conscience* and *A Doctor for an Hour*’.

The Picture House – ‘The outstanding feature of the programme at this magnificent rendezvous is the second part of the film about the construction of the Panama Canal...It is a picture everyone should make a point of seeing. *When Thieves Fall Out* is an intensely interesting drama, while fun in abundance is to be had in *The Winking Parson*, and *Nora the Cook*. *Mountain of St Gothard* supplies a feast of exquisite scenery’.

Dennistoun Palladium – ‘*Poet and Peasant* is the title of a powerful dramatic film while *When Love Leads* is no less interesting. *Love Laughs at Locksmiths* is a film which is a sure mirth creator, as also is *An Amateur Poisoner*’.

Partick Picture Palace – ‘*Bob’s Deception* is crammed full of interest, while as good a picture as has been seen for a long time is *The Secret of the Safe*. It is a drama of much strength and found much favour with the large audiences who visited the establishment yesterday.

*Early's Awakening* and a host of interesting current events on *Pathe's Gazette* are also attractive items'.

Hengler's – 'A dramatic picture of great power in two parts, *The Secret of the Safe*, is the chief film. Another picture well received by the audience was also of a dramatic nature entitled *Paul Sleuth, Crime Investigator*'.

Theatre de Luxe – 'A beautiful miracle photo play in four parts entitled *Sister Beatrix*, the story of a nun's downfall through being tempted with the pleasures of the world, her adventures in the world, and her gradual destruction. From one lover she passes to another until ruin and disaster attend her wherever she goes. Wretched and hopeless is led back to the Cathedral where she repents all her sins. Of a lighter vein is a farcical comedy entitled *Economic Brown*. A very interesting and instructive picture is one depicting the working of an *Iron Foundry in the Urals*'.

## Glasgow cinema programming – February, 1914

Week beginning Monday, February 2, 1914

Cinema	Location	Main feature	Supporting programme	Price
Picture Salon	Sauchiehall St	<i>The Harder Mystery</i>	<i>Papa's Letter, The Pride of Battery B</i>	
La Scala	Sauchiehall St	<i>The Magistrates Conscience</i>	<i>Will Evans Whitewashing the Ceiling, Caught in the Act</i>	
Theatre De Luxe	417 Sauchiehall St	<i>The Black Mask</i>	None listed	
Shettleston Palaceum	Hill Street	Variety	<i>The Mystery of the Silver Skull</i>	
City Picture House	60 Union St	<i>The Suffragette</i>	None listed	
St Enoch's Picture Theatre	Argyle St	<i>No Quarter</i>	None listed	
The Picture House	140 Sauchiehall St	<i>The Next Generation</i>	<i>Two Old Tars</i>	
Partick Star Palace	203 Dumbarton Road	<i>Ballyhoo's Story/Hard Cash</i>	Variety	

## Film descriptions

Casino – 'The pictorial part includes *An Evil Power, Baby Day, The Ragged Prince, Caza's Tit-Bit, A Southern Soldier's Sacrifice, and A Hard Case*'.

Panopticon – 'The pictorial part included several interesting films'.

The Picture House – ‘Prominence is given this week to a powerful vitagraph drama in two parts, entitled *The Next Generation*. It shows how a shipbuilder despite several warnings from his nephew allows a faulty liner to be put to sea. The fault reveals itself on the maiden voyage and disaster follows. The scenes depicting the passengers taking to the boats, and the final rush of water into the stoke-holes are most realistic and thrilling. *Making Ink* is an interesting film of this unique industry and *Agra N.W. India* proves to be a very fine scenic picture. *A Stenographer Wanted* featuring John Bunny is delightful and amusing comedy’.

The Picture Salon – ‘One of the finest dramatic pictures produced *The Next Generation* is shown this week...The episode is quite Zolaesque in its treatment of this powerful phase of modern life. The other pictures represent equally excellent examples of travel, comedy, drama and the usual up-to-date topical events’.

Theatre De Luxe – ‘The programme this week appeals strongly to lovers of drama, *Italian Vendetta* and *The Club of the Black Mask* being powerful pictures of this type. An interesting picture of water fowl at home is thoroughly enjoyable while a fine pathicolor film shows the beauties of *Gagry*, a port on the Black Sea’.

City Picture House – ‘*The Suffragette* is a dramatic story well portrayed wherein a man’s villainy is exposed indirectly by the methods used by the suffragettes. Other splendid dramatic films are *The Rosary*, a kinematograph portrayal of the world famous song, *The Hollow Tree* with its pulsating plot, and *Daisies*, a June idyll featuring Miss Florence Turner. The lighter side is well represented in *Dash That Lily*, and *When One Round O’Brien Comes Back*’.

La Scala – ‘The chief attraction is a “talking picture” depicting a bit of highly amusing comedy, *Caught in the Act*. Another mirth-provoking piece is one delineating the grotesque and absurd antics of “Will Evans” and his mate engaged in whitewashing the ceiling of a London flat, only to discover at the end of their labour that they have been operating in the wrong house’.

Shettleston Palaceum – ‘The chief bioscopic picture is *The Mystery of the Silver Skull* which is full of interesting situations. The other films are well selected’.

## Glasgow cinema programming – February, 1914

Week beginning Monday, February 9, 1914

Cinema	Location	Main feature	Supporting programme	Price
La Scala	Sauchiehall St	<i>Scrooge</i>	<i>Beauties of France, The Bride's Secret</i>	
The Picture Salon	Sauchiehall St	<i>The Vulgar Boy</i>	None listed	
Theatre De Luxe	417 Sauchiehall St	<i>David Copperfield</i>	None listed	
St Enoch's Picture Theatre	Argyle St	<i>Her False Friend</i>	None listed	
City Picture House	60 Union St	<i>Kindness Repaid</i>	None listed	
The Picture House	140 Sauchiehall St	<i>Judith of Bethulia</i>	None listed	
Partick Star Palace	203 Dumbarton Road	Variety	<i>The Death Weight</i>	
Shettleston Palaceum	Hill St	Variety	<i>The Intruder</i>	

## Film descriptions

Panopticon – 'A sensational drama entitled *The Devil's Daughter* is the premier picture'.

The Picture House – '*Judith of Bethulia* is a story based on the book of Judith in the Apocrypha and shows the plight of the inhabitants of Bethulia which is besieged by the Assyrians. To save the city Judith goes to the camp of Holofernes the Assyrian general

whom she first fascinates and then beheads. Taking the head she returns to the beleaguered city and so encourages the Jews to attack and defeat the Assyrians. The piece is magnificently staged and occupies over an hour in going through. There is a first rate programme in addition’.

La Scala – ‘The principal attraction is Charles Dickens’s *Scrooge*. The chief part is taken by that well known actor Seymour Hicks and most of the incidents are shown with great clearness. *The Bride’s Secret* is given by Edison’s Kinetophone and is much appreciated’.

Picture Salon – ‘The Clarendon speaking pictures are still proving great attractions. An excerpt from Dickens’s famous *Pickwick Papers* entitled *Mr Pickwick and Mrs Bardell* is the special speaking picture. *In the Shadow of the Mountains*, a romance in two parts, is the principal film. The picture depicts in a most explicit manner the life and hardships of Western life. *John, the Waggoner* is another very interesting drama of the West. The comedy element is well sustained by *Prof Hoskins Patent Hustler* and *Taming a Grandfather*’.

St Enoch – ‘The outstanding picture *Her False Friend* (in two parts) depicts in various forms love, hatred, jealousy and revenge. Next under the category of drama is *The Outlaw*, which gives a most realistic representation of life out West. Of a lighter vein is *Little Paul Pry*, a screaming comedy’.

Theatre De Luxe – ‘The special attraction is a series of pictures founded on episodes in *David Copperfield*, the masterpiece of Charles Dickens. The story is most faithfully reproduced in picture and tends to brighten one’s estimate of the cinema art. In addition to the big picture there is a screamingly amusing film entitled *Tommy’s Locomotive*’.

City Picture House – ‘The chief attraction is a romance of the Australian backwoods *A Kindness Repaid* which, by the way, is exclusive to this theatre. It is an exciting story and should be seen by all. *The Little Hero* is another excellent film while *Mary Jane Does the Grand*, *Two Old Tars* and *The Sheriff’s Brother* are equally interesting’.

Partick Star Palace – ‘The pictorial part of the programme was of the usual high standard including a powerful drama entitled *The Death Weight*, in two parts’.

## Glasgow cinema programming – February, 1914

Week beginning Monday, February 16, 1914

Cinema	Location	Main feature	Supporting programme	Price
La Scala	Sauchiehall St	<i>The Anarchist</i>	<i>The Girl from School, The Old Guard</i>	
The Picture Salon	Sauchiehall St	<i>Anne Boleyn</i>	<i>Mr Pickwick and Mrs Bardell</i>	
Shettleston Palaceum	Hill St	Variety	Satan's Castle	
Theatre De Luxe	417 Sauchiehall St	<i>Facing Eternity</i>	None listed	
City Picture House	60 Union St	<i>Saved by his Victim</i>	None listed	
St Enoch's Picture Theatre	Argyle St	<i>Black Nisson</i>	None listed	
The Picture House	140 Sauchiehall St	<i>Fruits of Vengeance</i>	None listed	
Partick Star Palace	203 Dumbarton Road	Variety	<i>Trapped by Forest Fire, The Boomerang</i>	

## Film descriptions

The Picture House – ‘Sir Charles Wyndham in his masterpiece *David Garrick*. This exquisite drama with its intermingling shades of refined comedy and tragedy lends itself to the art of the cinema and is most faithfully reproduced. In addition there is the requisite spice of humorous pictures and current events’.

La Scala – ‘*The Girl from School*, a comedy, and *The Old Guard*, a kinetophone drama form the chief attractions. The former is an excellent comedy depicting the adventures and

pranks of a 'tomboy' while the latter is a capital romance. *The Anarchist* is a fine sympathetic drama with a real motive'.

Picture Salon – 'A historical film entitled *Anne Boleyn* depicts some incidents in the life of this unfortunate woman'.

City Picture House – 'A fine dramatic picture entitled *Saved by his Victim* dealing with the old story of love crossed by pride and ambition calls for special mention, while *Innocent* is the title of another strong dramatic film. Of the humorous order *The Girl Next Door* is a sure mirth producer'.

St Enoch – '*Black Nisson*, a romantic drama is the chief attraction. This picture is projected with great clearness and steadiness which brings out in a most realistic manner all the incidents of the plot'.

Theatre De Luxe – 'The chief item is *Facing Eternity* which deals with incidents during the Franco-German war. The part of the heroine is taken by Miss Henny Porten, who succeeds in tapping the telegraph wires and so becomes aware of the movements of the enemy. How she is captured in the act, condemned to be shot, and is led out by a file of soldiers and saved at the last minute makes a good picture'.

Partick Star Palace – 'The pictures were of the usual high order including a powerful drama entitled *The Boomerang*, in two parts'.

Shettleston Palacium – 'The pictures are also first-rate, *Satan's Castle*, in two parts, topping a rare series'.

## Glasgow cinema programming – February, 1914

Week beginning Monday, February 23, 1914

Cinema	Location	Main feature	Supporting programme	Price
La Scala	Sauchiehall St	<i>Sport and Travel in Central Africa</i>	<i>The Rose of San Juan, Dixie</i>	
Theatre De Luxe	417 Sauchiehall St	<i>A Bargain with Satan or The Student of Prague</i>	None listed	
The Picture House	140 Sauchiehall St	<i>The British Army Film</i>	None listed	
City Picture House	60 Union St	<i>From Out the Flood</i>	None listed	
Partick Star Palace	203 Dumbarton Road	Variety	<i>The Anarchist. The Winner</i>	
Shettleston Palaceum	Hill St	Variety	<i>Escaped from the Asylum</i>	
The Picture Salon	Sauchiehall St	<i>Life in the British Army</i>	None listed	
St Enoch's Picture Theatre	Argyle St	<i>Fruits of Vengeance</i>	None listed	

## Film descriptions

Casino – ‘The pictorial part is well sustained by an excellent detective drama entitled *Tigris, King of Crime*’.

Panopticon – ‘The pictures are as usual all that could be desired’.

La Scala – ‘The “top of the bill” picture this week is the first of a series showing *Sport and Travel in Central Africa*. This picture depicts an expedition on its quest for big game in this

wonderful land. The second part of this series will be shown in the latter part of this week, and for its scenic and educative values should not be missed’.

The Picture Salon – ‘The Picture Salon has a capital series of *Life in the British Army* pictures on view. The incidents display most perfectly the various Army manoeuvres and give the public a vivid and inspiring idea how Tommy Atkins keeps himself in fit condition’.

Theatre De Luxe – ‘*A Bargain with Satan* heads a list of well-selected films and is a picture calculated to suit all tastes. *The Rose of San Juan* is another interesting item while *Tweedledum Dancing* supplies many a laugh’.

Partick Star Palace – ‘The pictorial part of the programme is of the usual high standard including a powerful drama entitled *The Winner*’.

City Picture House – ‘*Modes of Travel in Japan* showing lovely country and river scenes. Two grand dramas, *From out the Flood* and *From Love to Hatred*, appeal to the emotions, as also does *Hero and his Blind Master*’.

St Enoch – ‘The special picture is *Fruits of Vengeance* which depicts most realistically a story of exquisite charm. It is of great interest and from start to finish holds the attention of the audience. The comedy element is provided by *Caught Courting* and *Give Bill a Rest*’.

Shettleston Palaceum – ‘An exciting film in two parts, entitled *Escaped from an Asylum*, heads an attractive series of pictures’.



## Appendix 3: Films on release in Glasgow, 1908-1914

This is a sample of film on release in Glasgow during the period which is the focus of the latter part of this thesis i.e. the beginning of fixed-site cinema in 1908 to the start of the First World War in 1914. For reasons explained in Appendix 2, the month of February was chosen for each year.

This list is a combination of those films listed in the cinema advertisements in *The Evening Times* as well as those mentioned in the editorial copy. In expanding the details I used the following sources; British Film Institute <http://explore.bfi.org.uk/>, the Internet Movie Database [www.imdb.com](http://www.imdb.com), the Complete Index to World Film <http://www.citwf.com/>, and the printed material in *The Evening Times*.

As outlined in Appendix Two there are a number of inconsistencies in titling which have been caused by mistranslation, poor typesetting, human error or some combination of these factors. Every effort has been made to include the accurate titles in this database. Further work may still be needed to clarify such occurrences.

**February, 1908**

<b>Title</b>	<b>Produced</b>	<b>Country</b>	<b>Genre</b>	<b>Length</b>
True Unto Death	1907	Denmark	Drama	494 feet
A Gamble for a Woman	1908	France	Drama	492 feet
The Fisherman's Rival	1908	US	Drama	
The Shipowner's Daughter	1908	France	Drama	950 feet
The Unwritten Law	1907	US	Drama	950 feet
The Mill Girl	1907	US	Drama	700 feet
The Indian's Revenge	1906	US	Historical drama	795 feet
Tunny Fishing	1908	UK	Documentary Historical	310 feet
The Last Cartridge	1908	US	drama Historical	600 feet
The Colleen Bawn	1908	US	drama	
The Pretty Typist	1908	France	Comedy	500 feet
The Statue's Night Out	?	?	?	
The Hostage	1907	France	Drama	600 feet
The Midnight Ride of Paul Revere	1907	US	Historical drama	915 feet
The Robber's Sweetheart	1907	Denmark	Crime	
The Tell Tale Cap	?	?	? Historical	
Francesca di Rimini	1908	Italy	drama	900 feet
The Last Chance	?	?	?	
The Mesmerist	1908	France	Drama	606 feet
Poor Man's Christmas	?	?	?	
A Slave's Hate	1908	France	Drama	500 feet
The Sin of the Hour	?	?	?	
The Haunted House	1906	France	Fantasy	180 feet
Unlucky Flirtations	1908	France	Comedy	460 feet
A New Form of Travel	?	?	?	

**February, 1909**

<b>Title</b>	<b>Produced</b>	<b>Country</b>	<b>Genre</b>	<b>Length</b>
Carrie Nation, Saloon Smasher	1901	US	Comedy	141 feet
Glasgow's Marathon Race	1909	UK	Newsreel	?
George Robey charity football match	1909	UK	Newsreel	?

Caught in the Trap	1906	France	Comedy	100 feet
The Ticker Told	1908	US	Drama	900 feet
A House of Excitement	?	?	?	
Jock Jow	?	?	?	
Her Birthday	?	?	?	
The Stepmother	1908	France	Drama	650 feet
Anarchy in London	1908	UK	Documentary	
The Incendiary	1905	France	Sensational	600 feet
The Spectre of the Glacier	?	?	Sensational	
Jaco the Artist	?	?	Comedy	
The Tricky Convict	1908	UK	Fantasy	440 feet
Tommy on a Visit to his Aunt	1908	UK	Comedy	380 feet
More Milk for Baby	?	?	Comedy	
The Nailed Hand	1908	France	Western	?
Major Richardson's Bloodhounds	1909	France	Crime	?
The Guardian Angel	1908	France	Drama	?
The Sailor's Adopted Child	?	?	?	?
The Hidden Hand	?	?	?	?
The Gauls	?	?	?	?
A Mother's Protection	?	France	Comedy	
The Police Dogs	1907	France	Comedy	750 feet
The Marvellous Shoes	1908	France	?	?
The Willing Worker	?	?	?	?
Gendarmes	1907	France	Documentary	?
Troubled Spirits	?	?	?	?
Outcast's Sacrifice	1909	France	Drama	
The Escape and Recapture of Raffles	1908	Denmark	Crime	630 feet
The White Gloved Man	?	?	?	?
Making Moving Pictures	1908	US	Documentary	885 feet
Hercules the Athlete	1908	Denmark	Drama	500 feet
An Absorbing Tale	1909	UK	Comedy	300 feet
Barbara Fritchie, the story of a patriotic woman	1909	US	War	950 feet
Unfounded Suspicions	?	?	?	?
The Electric Policeman	1909	UK	Comedy	350 feet
The Demon Lamp	?	France	Fantasy	?
Polly's Excursion	1908	UK	Comedy	?
The Magic Hoop	1908	France	Fantasy	300 feet
In Search of Oblivion	?	?	?	?

Tom Thumb	1909	France	Fantasy	950 feet
Bathing	1908	US	Comedy	450 feet
The Nurse's Race	1909	France	Comedy	?
The Red Hand	1908	France	Drama	1450 feet
A Sailor's Daughter	?	France	?	?
The Count of Monte Cristo	1908	US	Adventure	1000 feet
Psyche	1909	France	Fantasy	934 feet
The Opening of Parliament	1909	UK	Newsreel	200 feet
The Flower Girl	1908	US	Drama	335 feet
The Life of a Cowboy	1906	US	Western	1000 feet
The Runaway Dog	1909	France	Comedy	250 feet
Mr Feary Does Not Like Policemen	?	?	?	?
Wearry Willie Goes Wheeling	1909	UK	Comedy	330 feet
The Hungry Man	?	France	?	?

### February, 1910

Title	Produced	Country	Genre	Length
The Heir of Clavancourt Castle	1909	France	Historical drama	?
A Terrible Encounter	?	?	?	?
The Corsican's Revenge	1908	France	Drama	?
Cowboy's Romance	1909	US	Western	?
The Lamplighter	1910	UK	Drama	?
On the Little Big Horn, or Custer's Last Stand	1910	US	Western	995 feet
To Save Her Soul	1909	US	Drama	986 feet
The Runaway Stove	1910	France	Comedy	344 feet
Found in a Taxi	1910	US	Comedy	385 feet
The Girl Who Joined the Bushrangers	1909	UK	Western	925 feet
The Keeper of the Light	1909	US	Drama	965 feet
The Orange Merchant	1910	France	Drama	?
The Engineer's Daughter	1910	US	Drama	?
Are You John Brown?	1910	UK	Comedy	525 feet
Children's Doctor	1910	UK	?	?
The Rocky Road	1910	US	Drama	990 feet
The House of Cards	1909	US	Western	?
The Thanksgivings	1909	US	Drama	950 feet
Maud Muller	1909	US	Drama	982 feet
A Dream of Paradise	1909	UK	Comedy	320 feet

Opening of Parliament	1910	UK	Newsreel	?
The Heroine of Mafeking	1909	US	Historical drama	1000 feet
The Last Muster	1910	UK	?	?
Two Orphans	1909	France	Drama	1000 feet
An Attempt to Smash a Bank	1909	UK	Drama	625 feet
Dove Eye's Gratitude	1909	US	Western	1000 feet
The Fallen Idol	1910	US	Drama	900 feet
Drowsy Dick's Dream	1909	UK	Comedy	?
The Dancing Girl of Butte	1910	US	Western	984 feet
The Fireman's Wedding	1910	UK	Drama	?
Marie's Jokes with the Fly Paper	1910	UK	Comedy	?

### February, 1911

Title	Produced	Country	Genre	Length
Circle C Ranch's Wedding Present	1910	US	Western	1000 feet
The Sleepwalker	1909	UK	Comedy	425 feet
The Cowpuncher's Glove	1909	US	Western	?
Two Mad Boxers	1910	France	?	?
Woman's Wit	1910	France	?	?
The Widow's Wooers	1910	UK	Comedy	?
Two Boys in Blue	1910	US	Western	1000 feet
The Launch of the Thunderer	1911	UK	Newsreel	200 feet
France defeated by England (sic)	1911	?	Sport	?
Military Cross Country Race in Brussels (sic)	1911	?	Sport	?
Hockey in Russia (sic)	1911	?	Sport	?
A Mountain Wife	1910	US	Western	980 feet
My Daughter	1911	France	Drama	850 feet
Pressed Roses	1910	US	Romance	990 feet
A Miraculous Recovery	1911	UK	Drama	750 feet
A Cheyenne Brave	1910	France	Western	938 feet
The Two Daughters	1910	US	Drama	995 feet
Davy Jones' Domestic Troubles	1910	US	Comedy	1000 feet
The Captain's Bride	1910	US	Romance	1000 feet
A Double Elopement	1911	US	Romance	990 feet

The Nine of Diamonds	1910	US	Western	990 feet
An Indian's Bride	1909	US	Western	1000 feet
Gunner Muir vs Bombardier Wells	1911	UK	Fight	?
An Empire's Money Maker	1910	UK	Documentary	?
The Poison Label	1911	UK	Comedy	560 feet
The Misadventures of Bill the Plumber	1911	UK	Comedy	290 feet
King George V Opens His First Parliament in State	1911	UK	Newsreel	200 feet
Anglo French Harriers	1911	?	Sport	?
A Fire in Moscow	1911	France	Newsreel	?
On a North Sea Trawler	1911	France	Newsreel	?
Joachim Murat, from the tavern to the throne	1910	Italy	Historical drama	850 feet
A Cowboy's Vindication	1910	US	Western	950 feet
Looking for a Profession	1911	France	Comedy	?
Foolshead's Birthday	1911	Italy	Comedy	500 feet
The Gypsy Child	1909	UK	Drama	400 feet
That Horse Did Run	1911	France	Comedy	?
Jim Bridger's Indian Bride	1911	US	Western	1000 feet
Wiffle's Two Sons	1911	France	Comedy	?
Longlegs Kicking Shoes	1911	Italy	Comedy	350 feet
The Winning of Miss Langdon	1910	US	Romance	995 feet
Betty and the Broom	1910	France	Comedy	?
Digger Stanley vs Johnny Condon	1911	?	Fight	?
The Pirates of 1920	1911	UK	Fantasy	945 feet
The Squaw and the Man	1910	US	Western	1000 feet
The Thieves of the Air	?	?	?	?
His Sister in Law	1910	US	Drama	998 feet
Billy's Book on Boxing	1911	UK	Comedy	?
A Wedding Trip	1910	US	Travel	1000 feet
Cousin Tontolini Arrives		Italy	Comedy	375 feet
The Merry Wives of Windsor	1910	US	Shakespeare	1000 feet
Culture of the Dahlias	1911	France	Documentary	?
The Lake of Thun	1911	Italy	Travel	350 feet

Elder Alden's Indian Ward	1910	US	Western	?
The Fairy Jewel	1910	Italy	Fantasy	420 feet
Love's Victory	1911	US	Romance	?
Foolshead at a Cinematograph Show	1911	Italy	Comedy	650 feet
A Tale of a Hat	1910	US	?	950 feet
White Roses	1910	US	Romance	588 feet
When the Leaves Fall	1911	France	Drama	?
The Tenderfoot Messenger	1910	US	Western	997 feet
The Red Cross Seal	1910	US	Drama	1005 feet
The Milliner's Strike	1911	France	Drama	?
Tilly's Unsympathetic Uncle	1911	UK	Comedy	?
The Great Italian Hydroplane	1911	UK	?	?
Eldora the Fruit Girl	1910	US	Drama	1000 feet
Love, Luck and Gasoline	1910	US	Romance	?
A Leap for Life, Or Trappers and Indians in Canada	1910	US	Adventure	985 feet
Sam Langford vs Bill Lang	1911	?	Fight	?
Henry VIII	1911	UK	Shakespeare	2000 feet
The Wolf of Fresh Water	1911	UK	Nature	390 feet
Father Buys a Screen	1910	UK	Comedy	400 feet
Rival Tecs	1910	France	Comedy	?
A Four-Footed Pest	1910	US	Comedy	?
The Doll's Revenge	1910	UK	Comedy	?
Suspicion	1910	US	?	?
The Return to Hearth and Home	1911	France	?	?
Tontolini's Motor Ride	?	Italy	Comedy	?

### February 1912

Title	Produced	Country	Genre	Length
Arrah na Pogue	1911	US	Romantic drama	3000 feet
The Madman	1911	US	Drama	1000 feet
An Elephant Ride Through the Jungle	?	?	Nature	?
An Evil Power	1911	US	Drama	1000 feet
Constable Smith in Trouble Again	1912	UK	Comedy	335 feet

In Time for Press	1911	US	Drama	1000 feet
The Golden Belt	1911	Italy	Western	1800 feet
The Lonely Inn	1912	UK	Drama	880 feet
The Cowboy Pugilist	1911	US	Western	1000 feet
By the Zuyder Zee	1912	France	Comedy	?
The Queen of Criminals	1912	France	Crime	?
His Brother's Double	1911	US	Comedy	?
Overcharged	1912	UK	Fantasy	350 feet
A Curate's Love Story	1911	UK	Romance	?
The Voice of the Child	1911	US	Drama	1055 feet (18 mins)
The Foolishness of Jealousy	1911	US	Comedy	1000 feet
Kitty and the Cowboys	1911	US	Western	?
The Man Hunt	1911	US	Western	1000 feet
The Dalmatian Alps	?	?	?	?
The Lost Will	1912	UK	Crime	700 feet
Stray Bullets	1911	US	Comedy	500 feet
The Yarn of a Baby's Shirt	1911	US	Comedy	?
Didums Diddles the Policeman	1912	UK	Comedy	400 feet
Detective Summer and the rope	1912	France	Crime	?
The Last Notch	1911	US	Western	1000 feet
The Heart of a Woman	1912	UK	Crime	625 feet
A Message from Beyond	1911	US	Drama	1000 feet
The Smoke of the .45	1912	US	Western	?
The Call of the Wilderness	1911	France	Western	1000 feet
Seeing Cincinatti	1911	US	Travel	?
Buffalo Hunting in Indo China	1910	France	Travel	350 feet
Art V. Music	1912	US	Comedy	?
Keeping Mabel Home	1911	US	Comedy	?
Who's Who in Doggie-Land	1912	UK	Nature	?
A Tragedy of the Cornish Coast	1912	UK	Drama	1050 feet
Heroes of the Mutiny	1911	US	Adventure	1000 feet
A Postal Substitute	1910	US	Western	950 feet
Oh! You Mother in Law	1911	US	Comedy	?
Waiting at the Church	1911	US	Romance	1000 feet
Up to Date Robbers	1912	Italy	Crime	600 feet

The Duel of the Candles	1911	US	Western	1000 feet
The Ranchman's Daughter	1911	US	Western	?
A Lesson in Liquid Air	1912	France	Science	500 feet
Recipe for Making Roses	1912	France	Documentary	?
Bergamo, Lombardy	1911	UK	Travel	?
Somebody's Mother	1911	US	Drama	?
A Contagious Disease	1911	UK	Comedy	400 feet
The Editor and the Millionaire	1912	UK	Romance	875 feet
A Romance of the Rio Grande	1911	US	Western	1000 feet
Foolshead on Roller Skates	1911	Italy	Comedy	?
River Lonig	?	?	Travel	?
What Happened to Mary	1912	UK	Comedy	430 feet
The Ultimate Sacrifice	1911	US	Drama	?
The Fresher	1911	US	Drama	1000 feet
Notre Dame de Paris	1911	France	Drama	2500 feet
King, the Detective	1911	US	Crime	1000 feet
A Night of Peril	1912	UK	Crime	550 feet
Bloemhoff Diamond Diggings	1912	UK	Documentary	?
The O'Neill	1912	US	Drama	1000 feet
His Last Cent	1911	US	Drama	1000 feet
The Pitcher Plant	1912	France	Nature	?
Tweedledum as a strike leader	1912	Italy	Comedy	450 feet
Twass ever Thus	1911	US	Comedy	1000 feet
Her Sacrifice	1912	UK	Romance	500 feet
The Right John Smith	1911	US	Comedy	?
Baby Animals	1912	France	Nature	?
The Inhabitants of Jungle Town	1912	UK	Nature	524 feet
Views of Varmland	1912	UK	Travel	?
The Soldier's Return	1911	US	Drama	?
Selecting his Heiress	1911	US	Comedy	1000 feet
Whiffle's Magic Wand	1912	France	Comedy	500 feet

### February, 1913

Title	Produced	Country	Genre	Length
Kings of the Forest	1912	US	Drama	2000 feet
The Reformation of Sierra Smith	1912	US	Western	1000 feet (10mins)

An Actress's Romance	1912	France	Drama	2500 feet
The Best Revenge	1912	Italy	Drama	2000 feet
A Child's Triumph	1913	US	?	?
The Stolen Treaty	1912	Denmark	Drama	2000 feet
The Woman in White	1912	US	Fantasy	Two reels
A Fugitive from Justice	1912	US	Western	1007 feet
Billy as an Acrobat	?	?	Comedy	?
The Informer: An Episode of the Civil War	1912	US	War	1080 feet
Sold, a 'Bear' Fact	1913	UK	Comedy	430 feet
Simple Simon, Costumier	1913	France	Fantasy	?
The Black Mask	1912	Sweden	Adventure Historical	3000 feet
The Rose of Thebes	1912	Italy	drama	1600 feet
The Evil Genius	1913	UK	Crime	2000 feet
Oedipus Rex	1913	France	Drama	2000 feet
As You Like It	1912	US	Shakespeare	3000 feet
Faithful Unto Death	1913	US	Drama	1000 feet
A Calvinist Martyr	1913	France	Drama	?
The Secret of the Mine	1913	France	Drama	?
The Mouth of the Adour	1913	France	Travel	?
Mifanwy - A Tragedy	1913	UK	Romance	675 feet
A Struggle of Hearts	1912	US	Western	1000 feet
Hull City v. Newcastle	1913	UK	Sport	?
King inspects battle cruiser New Zealand	1913	UK	Newsreel	?
Exotic Fish	1913	France	Nature	?
Old Songs and Memories	1912	US	Drama	1000 feet
She is a Pippin	1912	US	Comedy	1000 feet
Linked Together	1912	US	Comedy	500 feet
The Counts	1912	US	Romance	1000 feet
Aquatic Sports in Norway	1913	UK	Sport	?
The Land Beyond the Sunset	1912	US	Drama	1000 feet (14mins)
The Merry Widow	1912	US	Comedy	?
Unmerited Shame	1912	US	Drama	1000 feet
An Absent-Minded Burglar	1912	US	Comedy	One reel
The King attends Captain Scott's memorial service in London	1913	UK	Newsreel	?

Scott's last journey	1913	UK	Newsreel	?
The Turkey Trot	1912	US	Dance	?
The Smouldering Spark	1913	US	Drama	?
The Power of Love	1912	US	Western	1000 feet
The Love of Lady Irma	1910	US	Romance	988 feet
A Boy Scout Hero	?	?	?	?
Salt Lake City, Utah and its surroundings	1912	US	Travel	500 feet
Broncho Billy's Love Affair	1912	US	Western	?
An Official Appointment	1912	US	Drama	1000 feet
Hawkeye has to hurry	1913	UK	Comedy	528 feet
The 100 Franc Gold Piece	1913	Italy	Comedy	?
The Curate's Bride	1913	UK	Comedy	?
Monte Christo	1911	US	Adventure	?
The Life of the Heron	1912	UK	Nature	570 feet 999 feet
Gold and Glitter	1912	US	Drama	(17mins)
In the Garden Fair	1912	US	Comedy	1000 feet
Four Days a Widow	1912	US	Romance	1000 feet
A Double Event	1913	France	?	?
A Cowboy's Mother	1912	US	Western	?
The Fire Fighter's Love	1912	US	Drama	?
The Foundling	1913	US	Drama	?
When it Comes Off	1912	UK	Comedy	485 feet
Incognito	1913	France	Comedy	500 feet
Sally Ann's Strategy	1912	US	Comedy	?
The Problems of Aviation	1913	France	Documentary	?
Ascending Mont Blanc	1913	France	Documentary	?
The Secret of the Safe	1913	Italy	Drama	2400 feet
The Panama Canal	1913	US	Documentary	?
The Supreme Test	1912	US	Romance	1000 feet
Sister Beatrix	1912	Germany	Drama	4200 feet
Poet and Peasant	1912	US	Romance	1000 feet
On the Steps of the Throne	1912	Italy	Romance	3000 feet
The Finger of Suspicion	1912	US	Crime	1000 feet
Calino's Panther	1911	France	Comedy	?
The Winking Parson	1912	US	Comedy	400 feet
Scenes in the Trossachs	1913	UK	Travel	?
The Fugitives	1912	US	Drama	?
Guilty Conscience	1912	US	Comedy	?
A Doctor for an Hour	1912	US	Comedy	1000 feet

Nora the Cook	1912	US	Comedy	?
On the Mountain of St Gothard	1913	France	Travel	?
When Love Leads	1912	US	Romance	1000 feet
Love Laughs at Locksmiths	1910	France	Comedy	695 feet
The Amateur Poisoner	1913	France	Comedy	?
Bob's Deception	1912	US	Drama	?
Early's Awakening	1912	US	Comedy	?
Paul Sleuth Crime Investigator	1912	UK	Crime	1140 feet
Economical Brown	1912	US	Comedy	?
An Iron Foundry in the Urals	1913	France	Documentary	?

### February, 1914

Title	Produced	Country	Genre	Length
The Harder Mystery	?	?	?	?
Papa's Letter	1914	UK	Drama	?
The Pride of Battery B	1913	US	Drama	1000 feet
The Magistrate's Conscience	1913	France	Drama	?
Whitewashing the Ceiling	1914	UK	Comedy	1500 feet
Caught in the Act	1913	US	Comedy	?
The Suffragette	1913	US	Comedy	?
No Quarter	?	?	?	?
The Next Generation	1913	US	Drama	2000 feet
The Ballyhoo's Story	1913	US	Western	?
Hard Cash	1913	US	Drama	2000 feet
Baby Day	1913	US	Comedy	?
Caza's Tit Bit	1913	France	?	?
A Southern Soldier's Sacrifice	1911	US	War	?
A Hard Case	1913	?	?	?
Ink Making	1914	UK	Documentary	452 feet
Around Agra and Lucknow	1913	UK	Travel	?
Stenographers				
Wanted	1912	US	Comedy	?
Vendetta	1913	Italy	Drama	?
The Club of the Black Mask	1913	Italy	Drama	3200 feet
Water Fowl at Home	1914	UK	Nature	?
Gagry, Caucasia	1914	France	Travel	600 feet
The Rosary	1913	US	Drama	?
The Hollow Tree	1913	France	Drama	?
Daisy Doodad's Dial	1914	US	Comedy	?

Dash That Lily	1914	UK	Comedy	?
One Round O'Brien Comes Back	1913	US	Comedy	?
The Mystery of the Silver Skull	1913	US	Drama	2000 feet
Scrooge	1913	UK	Fantasy	2500 feet
The Bride's Secret	?	?	?	?
The Little Vulgar Boy	1913	UK	Comedy	1000 feet 7500 feet
David Copperfield	1913	UK	Drama	(67mins)
Her False Friend	1914	Italy	Drama	?
A Kindness Repaid	?	?	Drama Historical	?
Judith of Bethulia	1914	US	drama	61 mins
The Death Weight	1913	US	Crime	2000 feet
The Intruder	1913	US	Drama	?
Pickwick versus Bardell	1913	UK	Drama	1000 feet
In the Shadow of the Mountains	1913	US	Western	2000 feet
John, the Wagoner	1913	US	Western	?
Professor Hoskin's Patent Hustler	1914	UK	Fantasy	434 feet
Taming a Grandfather	1914	US	Comedy	?
The Outlaw	1913	US	Western	1000 feet
Little Paul Pry	1914	Italy	Comedy	?
Tommy's Locomotive	1914	UK	Comedy	?
A Little Hero	1913	US	Comedy	?
Mary Jane Does the Grand	1914	US	?	?
Two Old Tars	1913	US	Comedy	?
The Sheriff's Brother	1911	US	Western	?
The Anarchist	1913	US	Drama	?
The Girl from School	?	?	Comedy	?
The Old Guard	1913	US	Drama Historical	?
Anne Boleyn	1913	France	drama	?
Satan's Castle	1913	Italy	Drama	?
Facing Eternity	?	Germany	War	?
Saved by his Victim	1914	Italy	Romance	?
Black Nissen	1914	Germany	Romance	?
Fruits of Vengeance	1913	US	Drama	
Trapped in a forest fire	1913	US	Drama	1000 feet
The Boomerang	1913	US	Drama Historical	?
David Garrick	1914	UK	drama	4000 feet
The Girl Next Door	1913	UK	Comedy	425 feet

Sport and Travel in Central Africa	1914	US	Travel	?
A Bargain with Satan or The Student of Prague	1913	Germany	Fantasy	5000 feet
The British Army Film	1914	UK	Documentary	?
From Out of the flood	1913	US	Drama	?
The Winner	1913	US	Drama	?
Escaped from the Asylum	1913	US	Drama	?
Life in the British Army	?	?	Documentary	?
Tigris, King of Crime	1913	Italy	Crime	4000 feet
Dixie	?	?	?	?
The Rose of San Juan	1913	US	War	?
Tweedledum's Dancing Fits	1910	Italy	Comedy	450 feet
Modes of Travel in Japan	1914	France	Travel	450 feet
From Hatred to Love	1914	France	Drama	?
Hero and his Blind Master	1914	US	Drama	?
Caught Courting	1913	US	Romantic comedy	?
Giving Bill a Rest	1913	US	Comedy	600 feet

## Appendix 4: Maps of Glasgow cinema sites 1908-1914

### Rationale & methodology

These maps provide some indication of the distribution of cinema sites in Glasgow in the period under examination. For reasons of visual clarity it was felt that this should be confined broadly to the city centre area, bounded to the south east by Glasgow Cross and the north west by Charing Cross. This still gives an indication of the proliferation of cinema venues in the city centre from the beginnings of the fixed-site era.

Using Digimap software to access historic Ordnance Survey maps of Glasgow, the approximate location of the venues was determined using newspaper advertisements and Glasgow Business Directories for the period, as well as the Scottish Cinemas Database ([www.scottishcinemas.org.uk](http://www.scottishcinemas.org.uk)). Maps have been produced for four key moments in the development of the exhibition industry during this period. These aim to provide a snapshot of the state of the business at these given times. The maps are

**Map 1: 1898** – This shows the four main sites screening films at this time i.e. the Skating Palace, Wilson Colosseum, the Britannia Panopticon, and Crouch’s Wonderland.

**Map 2: 1909** - This is the city at the beginning of the fixed-site era. Wilson’s venue has closed and the Skating Palace has changed hands. In addition, Ralph Pringle has opened two sites.

**Map 3: 1911** – This is after the passing of the Cinematograph Act 1909. There has been a significant increase in sites including the city’s first custom-built cinema, the Charing Cross Electric Theatre, and its most luxurious site, The Picture House.

**Map 4: 1914** – This marks the period in which the new regulations introduced in response to Glasgow Parish Council’s campaign have come into force. Cinemas have now well and truly established themselves and their status is indicated by the fact that they are situated mostly on the city’s busiest streets i.e. Sauchiehall Street and Argyle Street which, with their continuous programming, gave access to a steady supply of passing trade.

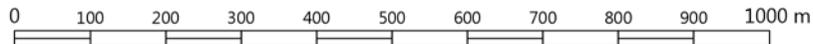


# Glasgow 1898



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Scale 1:10000

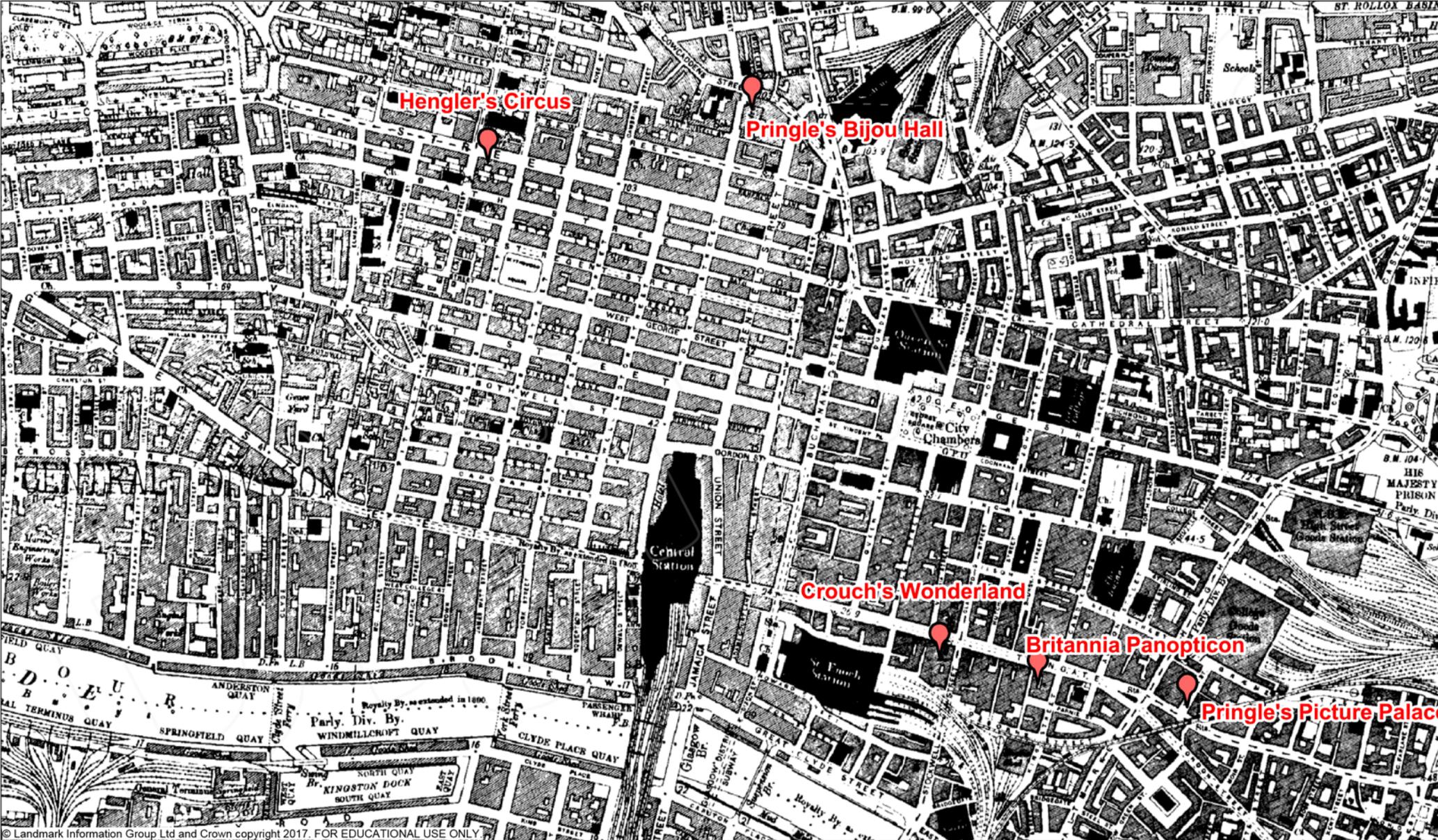


Aug 11, 2017 10:05

Andy Dougan  
University of Glasgow

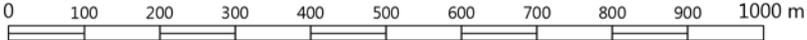


1909



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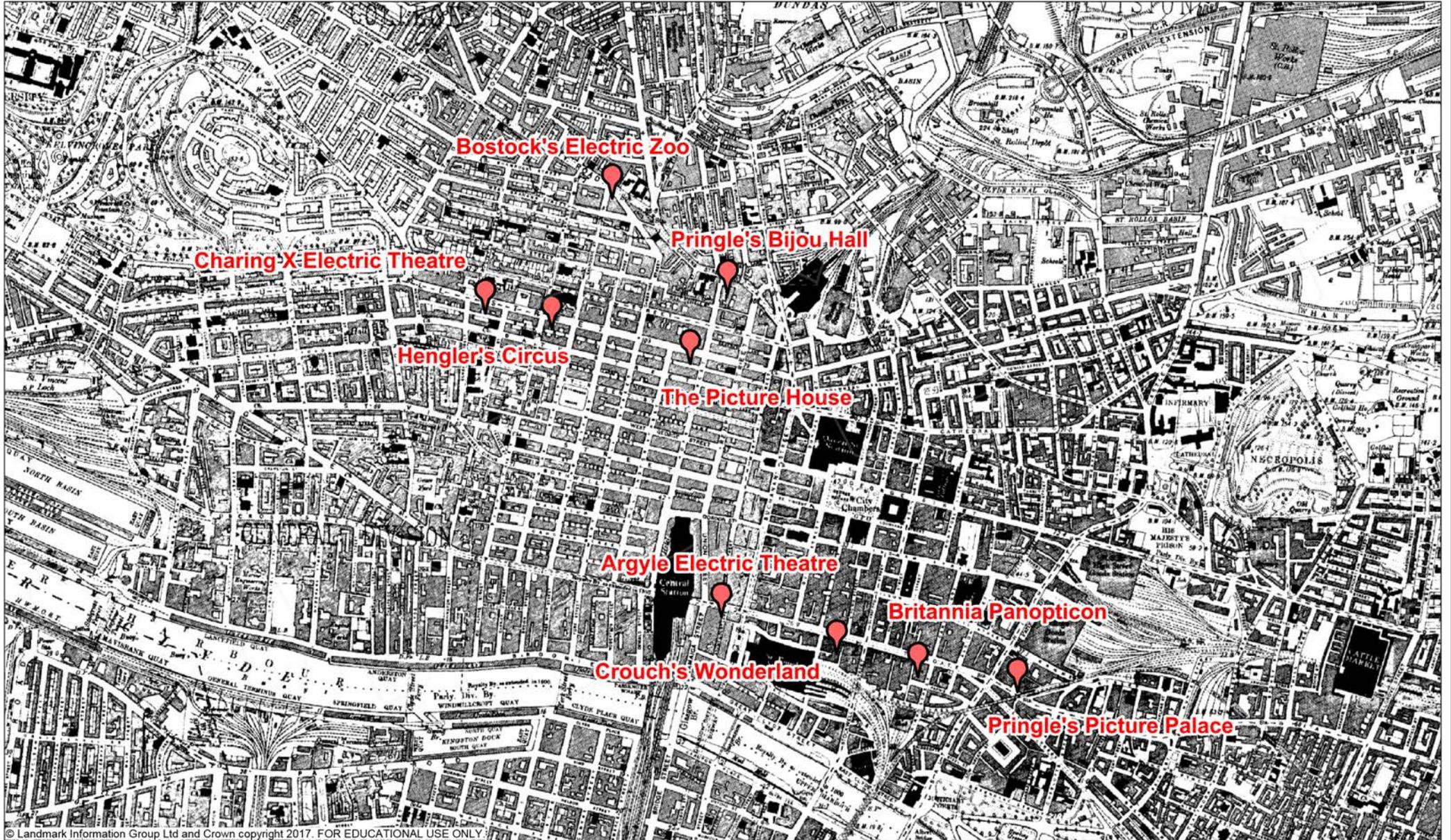
Aug 10, 2017 11:05

Andy Dougan  
University of Glasgow



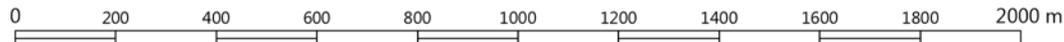


# Glasgow 1911



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Scale 1:15000



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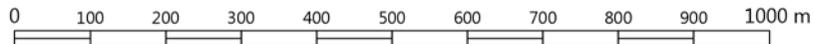


# Glasgow 1914



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Scale 1:10000



Aug 28, 2017 13:33

Andy Dougan  
University of Glasgow



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