

The Holiday, Britishness and British Film

Matthew Kerry

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the
requirements of Nottingham Trent University
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

September 2009

This work is the intellectual property of the author. You may copy up to 5% of this work for private study, or personal, non-commercial research. Any re-use of the information contained within this document should be fully referenced, quoting the author, title, university, degree level and pagination. Queries or requests for any other use, or if a more substantial copy is required, should be directed in the owner of the Intellectual Property Rights.

I declare that this thesis is the result of all my own work. All sources are clearly referenced in the text and bibliography. I also declare that none of this work has been submitted for publication, or as part of any other degree.

Matthew Kerry September 2009.

Abstract

The representation of the supposed free space of the holiday by a medium of mass entertainment offers a highly condensed image that demands analysis. In my thesis I question the ways in which the holiday film constructs a sense of Britishness based around the idea of community that is shaped and pressured by forces at different historical moments. Modern capitalist society offers us a structure where the holiday is presented to us as the ultimate contrast from work. It is commodified, and we choose to enter into this ideology, take our break, and return to work, refreshed. The holiday also offers a particular type of freedom, which distinguishes it from other forms of leisure. It can be considered as more of an 'event' than a weekend break from work, for instance.

The emergence of the holiday as a form of mass entertainment for the working class appears to coincide with the birth of cinema in the same respect. By studying the holiday film I try to reveal what it tells us about British culture, the nation and British life, and how cinema audiences may have engaged with and responded to these texts.

As well as providing textual analysis of the films, I also address the holiday as a liminal, carnivalesque space (Inglis, 2000, Shields, 2002), and also consider how the landscape is mediated through the tourist gaze (Urry, 2002, Bell and Lyall, 2002). I explore the ways in which the cinematic representation of the holiday shifts in relation to changing social contexts – in new formations of leisure, class and landscape. I also consider how audiences might actively respond to these films, and how these texts might construct an ideal working-class community pre- and post- World War II. Overall, I argue that representations of the traditional British holiday in these films are mostly white, working-class and raucous, but that these representations are not fixed, and are subject to change according to historical and social pressures.

Acknowledgements

First and foremost I would like to thank the AHRC who funded my period of research. Without this assistance, my studies over the past 5 years would not have been possible.

Many thanks to my Director of Study, Vivien Chadder for her help with my application, and continued support. Thanks also to Dr. Steve Jones for references on national identity and landscape, and Gary Needham for invaluable advice on how to structure a large piece of work, and for the loan of books. Immeasurable thanks also go to my internal examiner, Dr. Ben Taylor, and to my external examiners, Professor Sue Harper and Dr. Tracey Potts, for their helpful guidance towards the completion of this thesis.

Thanks to Professor Roger Bromley, Georgia Stone, Dr. Ruth Griffin, Dr. Martin O'Shaughnessy and Dr. Joanne Hollows for moral support and advice. Thanks to Rachel Eden for last-minute technical support, and to Kate Booth of the Graduate School.

Many thanks to my family: Mo Kerry for her interest and moral support, Lucy Kerry for grammatical advice and Jonathan Kerry for the loan of DVDs and books. Thanks also to dear friends James Nott and Dr. Maria Collingham.

Many thanks also to the British Film Institute, particularly staff in Special Collections and Viewing Copies, and thank you to the Media Archive for Central England for allowing me to use their viewing facilities. Thank you to Chichester Library and to the Butlin's Archive. Thank you to the library staff of Nottingham Trent University and their inter-library loans service.

Contents

| | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| Introduction to Thesis | 1 |
|-------------------------------|---|

Section 1 – Theories and Methodology

| | |
|--|----|
| Chapter 1 – The Holiday and Theorising the Holiday | 13 |
| Chapter 2 – The British Holiday Film and Its Audience | 64 |

Section 2 - Histories

| | |
|--|-----|
| Chapter 3 – The Postcard Comes To Life: Early British Film and the Seaside | 89 |
| Chapter 4 – Holidays With Pay: The Working Holidays of the 1930s | 117 |
| Chapter 5 – Re-constructing the Family Holiday: The Holiday Camp in Postwar British Film | 161 |
| Chapter 6 – From Austerity to Affluence: Holidays Abroad in Postwar British Film | 201 |
| Chapter 7 – Grim Nostalgia and the Traditional British Holiday in the 1970s | 239 |
| Chapter 8 – Interrogating National Identity and the Holiday in Recent British Film | 279 |
| Conclusion of Thesis – Summarising Representations of National Identity in the British Holiday Film | 303 |
| Indicative Filmography | 307 |
| Bibliography | 333 |

Introduction to Thesis

The 'Idea' of Britishness and the Holiday

In August and September of 2008, several variety acts who had arguably reached their peak of popularity on stage and on television in the 1970s and '80s, joined forces for the Best of British Variety Tour 2008.¹ These acts included Cannon and Ball, The Krankies, Jimmy Cricket and The Brotherhood of Man (to name a few) who between them represented England, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales, and performed in front of a huge backcloth of the Union Jack flag. The tour started in Skegness,² moving on to Lowestoft, Southend, and Blackpool Opera House – the latter venue being where stars such as George Formby had entertained seaside audiences in the 1930s. After a date in Bournemouth, the tour then began to work its way inland, reaching the East Midland's city of Nottingham on the 18th September, where I saw the show.

The evening's entertainment was heralded by the National Anthem, which most of the white-skinned (and largely white-haired) audience stood up for, and concluded with 'Land of Hope and Glory'. These patriotic tunes were aligned with a show in which a 60-year old married woman (Janette Krankie/Janette Tough) played a naughty schoolboy who pretended to flash his 'willy' at a man who also happened to be her husband (Ian Krankie/Ian Tough). The second half of the show was ushered in by the tune 'Oh We Do Like To Be Beside The Seaside'. Although the tour had admittedly started by visiting some seaside resorts, the use of the tune in land-locked Nottingham was seemingly left unquestioned by the show's organisers, and apparently accepted by the audience as yet another traditional tune, along with those used elsewhere in the show. Sticks of red, white and blue rock were for sale on the merchandise stall, as were mini Union Jack

¹ A Best of British Variety Tour 2009 has been announced, so this may well become an annual event.

² 'Recently voted Britain's most traditional town – home of dodgems, donkeys, and discount variety acts' (Moyle and Heffernan, 2008).

flags, which, although meant for the audience to wave during the show, perhaps wouldn't have looked out of place on top of a seaside sandcastle.

What these souvenirs and the use of the 'seaside' tune do have in common with the Union flag backdrop, and the photograph of the bulldog which appears on every other page of the souvenir programme however, is an ideological construction of Britishness, involving tradition, patriotism and nostalgia. The variety acts themselves could also be said to reinforce tradition and nostalgia, having roots in the type of seaside entertainment on offer in music halls and on piers over a century ago. The apparent appropriateness of the 'seaside' tune with this type of show – even when presented in Nottingham – possibly demonstrates a process of consent or acceptance by the audience of a certain idea of Britishness, which may or may not be the same idea of Britishness that the multicultural or youthful people of Nottingham had on that evening beyond the confines of the Royal Concert Hall.

There were two dates of the Best of British Variety Tour at Blackpool, both of which spanned the height-of-season bank holiday week of late August. It was this town that was also chosen for the filming of the show for the 'live' DVD which was subsequently released. Blackpool is arguably *the* holiday resort which perhaps best exemplifies this type of entertainment, and the fact that many British people would recognise this marriage between Blackpool and variety without even questioning it, perhaps demonstrates a process of 'unconscious' acceptance of some of the signifiers of tradition, patriotism and nostalgia suggested above.

The idea of the holiday and some of the cultural signifiers and motifs of the holiday, such as sticks of rock, and the song 'Oh I Do Like To Be Beside The Seaside' appear to be largely ingrained and taken for granted, as is the idea that the holiday is an important and firmly established British institution, even though holidays only became widely available for most working-class British people after

the Second World War. However, this thesis isn't simply about the holiday, but rather about the relationship that British cinema has had with the holiday over the past century, and how the representation of the holiday in these films might ideologically construct an idea of Britishness for the cinema audience.

The Imagined Holiday and Film

Jeffrey Hill considers that holidays are 'imagined events' (Hill, 2002: 86). Although referring to the work of Walton (2000), he puts it succinctly that holidays 'exist in the mind' and are 'capable of generating immense pleasures of anticipation and remembrance' (Hill, 2002: 86). Mass Observation highlights the 'holiday dream' in its study of Bolton mill workers in the 1930s and, as Cross points out, 'For many the holiday dream means a release from routine, a radical change from accustomed space, time, and activity' (Cross, 1990: 42). If a Sunday visit to church helps workers 'through the rest of the week', the holiday has a 'long-term function', giving millworkers 'something to *look forward to*'³ as manifested in the weekly saving of money in holiday clubs (Cross, 1990: 40). A Butlin's souvenir brochure from 1939 demonstrates that the company similarly understood the 'before, during and after' aspect of the holiday experience:

The thought behind the issue of this souvenir is to provide a happy ending to a perfect holiday. First there was the thrill of holiday planning, then the holiday itself. Now comes the pleasure of looking back through these pages, which it is hoped, will help you to live again the happy carefree days you spent with us (Read, 1986: 23).

Pimlott (originally writing in 1947) observes the temporal nature of the holiday, encompassing its anticipation and reflection, saying 'For many they are one of the principal objects of life – saved and planned for during the rest of the year, and enjoyed in retrospect when they are over' (Pimlott, 1976: 238). This is emphasised further when he considers that 'the adult often associates the seaside with memories of youth, of happiness, adventure, and romance, which add a sentimental value to things as they are' (Pimlott, 1976: 254). Hassan points

³ My emphasis.

out that 'nostalgia has long played a part in the English seaside holiday' (Hassan, 2003: 9), and it is this element of nostalgia which perhaps frames Michael Palin's memories of anticipating the family holiday from Sheffield to Sheringham – the packing of suitcases, and the collection (by a Pickford's van) of his family's luggage to take it to the station separately before their taxi arrived:

The excitement began three or four days before we left, for our buckets, spades, water-wings, and athlete's foot powder had to be packed early, in heavy leather suitcases stamped with the magic letters PLA – Passenger's Luggage in Advance (Palin, 1987: 7).

In some respects the idea of the holiday as an 'imagined event' is what links the holiday to cinema. For the duration of a film, an audience temporarily 'lives' within the narrative, but a film can also be something they look forward to seeing, and something that can stay with an audience, as a memory, for a very long time. Kuhn argues that a common feature of 1930s cinemagoers' accounts of their visits to the pictures is a pattern of 'anticipation, transportation and elevation' with audience members looking forward to-, then being 'carried away' by the films, and subsequently hanging onto this feeling until their next visit (Kuhn, 2002: 229, 230 and 233):

This is a story of a journey from 'real life' to the pictures and back again, from outside the cinema to inside and then back to an outside world which, for a while at least, will be imbued with the magic encountered and left behind in the cinema: an outside which then becomes the starting place for another journey, another cycle of return and (temporary) uplift and transformation (Kuhn, 2002: 233).

In her research, Kuhn interviews one cinemagoer who says a visit to the pictures left him feeling 'refreshed' and 'ready for work the next day', whilst another says that the cinema was 'as good as a dose of medicine' (Kuhn, 2002: 229 and 230). Shafer gives a similar account of the cinema by using a letter from a man to *Film Weekly* in December 1930 to highlight how important film actors and singers were to working men and women, saying:

After the show they go home rested and refreshed, better for the brief hours' respite from their ordinary life; and the rest of the week will be brightened by snatches of a song, a lilting melody, or a chuckle at a remembered wisecrack by one of the comedians (Shafer, 1997: 18).

Higson, similarly highlights that a film such as Cecil Hepworth's *Tansy* (1921) provided a 'restorative' function for its audience, and cites a *Bioscope* review which says that the 'wonderful sense of peaceful calm' of the film 'has the soothing effect of a delightful country holiday' (Porter and Burton (eds.), 2001: 55).

There is evidence to suggest that early film advertisers saw the potential in aligning cinema entertainment with the idea of the holiday. A comic-strip advertising feature entitled 'A Reel Holiday' printed in *The Bioscope* of 18th May 1922 shows the benefits of enjoying an 'imaginary' holiday at the cinema, instead of a real one at the seaside (Williams, 1993: 147). The first picture in the comic strip shows a row of grim-faced travellers clutching luggage, with the caption 'Why travel in discomfort to Slackton-on-the-Mud?' and is contrasted with an image of a cinema audience viewing an exotic scene bathed in sunshine, with the caption 'When all the world may be viewed at ease at the picture theatre'. Likewise, a shivering man at the water's edge captioned 'Why brave the rigours of the English climate?' is contrasted with a sunny image of on-screen bathing belles: 'While the sun always shines at the picture theatre'. Finally, a holidaymaker reaches into his pocket whilst a stern seaside landlady hands over a lengthy bill: 'Why "do in" a years savings in a fortnight?', which is shown against a happy queue of father, mother, daughter and son at a cinema box office, with the caption: 'When health, wealth and happiness are gained by regular attendance at the picture theatre!!' (Williams, 1993: 147). This tongue-in-cheek account of visits to the cinema suggests that the viewing of exotic scenes and bathing belles offer some sort of restorative function for an audience, and a cheaper alternative to the annual holiday.

As I will suggest later, a film can arguably ‘transport’ an audience on an imaginary journey through the process of its narrative, and this is perhaps doubly expressed if the film is enjoyed during a period which also offers an ideological separation from work. Some holiday resorts have acknowledged the potential relationship between the holiday and film as a form of seaside entertainment. As Bragg and Harris argue:

The cinema as a form of entertainment was well suited to the seaside. Most holidaymakers were in a mood to maximize the entertainment value of their one or two weeks by the sea. In fact, most seaside landladies’ policy of insisting that guests be off the premises after breakfast and not return until after nine in the evening ensured, particularly on rainy days, a constant level of business for cinema owners (Bragg and Harris, 2000: 86).

A 1914 guidebook for an excursion to Scarborough highlights the resort’s new Grand Picture House on Foreshore Road, as an ‘exceedingly useful’ place to visit ‘especially if it happens to be a wet day’ (Walters, 1977: 25). Not only did this new attraction offer somewhere to see films and shelter from inclement weather, but the attraction of the cinema was also married to the spectacular attraction of the sea view. This is because, the Grand Picture House was:

...the only modern Open-air Picture Theatre in England, and where, during the Entertainment, all patrons [could] have one of the best views of the Bay and surrounding scenery (*sic*) in the district, at the same time deriving the benefits of the bracing sea air (Walters, 1977: 25).

The marriage between cinema and holiday attractions is perhaps best demonstrated, however, by the Dreamland Amusement Park in Margate. The entrance to the park is in fact, an Art Deco cinema, attracting a film audience and also serving ‘as an advertisement for the amusement park behind’ (Bragg and Harris, 2000: 91). The architects Leathart and Granger built the cinema in 1935, making use of marble and bronze in their designs for what Bragg and Harris call a ‘gateway for a whole fantasy world’ (Bragg and Harris, 2000: 86 – 91).

Although I will return to this idea of the ‘imagined’ holiday (Hill, 2002: 86) and its

marriage with cinema when looking at audiences, my primary concern in this thesis is not with the exhibition of films at holiday resorts, but rather with British film's representation of the holiday in a body of work which I refer to as 'the holiday film'.

The Holiday and British Film

Academics have previously alluded to the holiday as a subject in British film, but these films have never been analysed as a body of work in their own right. Holiday historian John K. Walton, for example, recognises the potentially comic link between the seaside and film saying that it offers 'ample scope for the comedy of (cultural and sexual) embarrassment and the deflation of pretension and pomposity' but undermines his argument somewhat by demonstrating that film is not his *forte* (Walton, 2000: 8). Walton acknowledges that the increasing vogue for package holidays is recognised in *Carry On Abroad* (1972), but makes a poorly researched statement, by saying that none of the *Carry-Ons* have a British seaside resort setting, therefore overlooking *Carry On At Your Convenience* (1971) and *Carry On Girls* (1973). He lists several films that have been constructed around the theme of the holiday, or set in holiday resorts, but the comic link with the seaside is not further theorised (Walton, 2000: 8 – 11).

Steve Allen (2008) similarly looks at the relationship between the seaside and film in his essay 'British Cinema at the Seaside – the Limits of Liminality' using *The Punch and Judy Man* (1962), *Last Resort* (2000) and *I Want You* (1998). Although he refers to typical characteristics of the seaside such as its amusements and fish and chip shops, Allen doesn't examine the holiday and representations of Britishness, in detail. His concerns are primarily with the landscape, and he admits that he has not 'commented on the perceived 'decline' of the British seaside resort, and how it might be mapped onto these alternative engagements with liminality' (Allen, 2008: 69). This could be considered an oversight, as the function of Stonehaven/Margate as a holiday destination in *Last*

Resort, and the fact that the place is largely deserted, is arguably of great significance to the mood of the film, as identified in its title.

Perhaps Medhurst provides the most useful point of reference. In *A National Joke* he not only makes the link between popular films and the comic setting of the holiday resort, but also refers to the way that film might provide a restorative function for its audience, saying that:

The appeal of seaside sprees in film comedy, perhaps, is that for the duration of an evening at the cinema, even or especially in the middle of winter, you could rekindle memories of past holidays and hatch new ones (Medhurst, 2007: 137-138).

This links nicely back to Hill's theory of the 'imagined' holiday, and how holidays generate feelings of anticipation and remembrance (Hill, 2002: 86).

Context and Rationale

As suggested in my abstract, the representation of the free space of the holiday by the medium of film offers a highly condensed image that demands analysis. Although I will sometimes refer to documentaries and promotional films in some of my contextual material, I will primarily be looking at feature films, because, as Chapman suggests:

The feature film now attracts the most attention because it is seen as the most representative example of the cultural and ideological values of any national cinema, it is the feature film which draws people into the cinemas and which appeals to the widest audiences (Chapman, 1998: 58).

My analysis will aim to reveal how the British holiday film ideologically constructs a sense of Britishness through the narrative process. This sense of Britishness may change over time with industrial, economic and cultural shifts, but there may, perhaps, be some sense of consistency, for example, in representations of

the popular working-class holiday, which has been revealed in film over the past 100 years.

My rationale for constructing the thesis in chronological order, and for looking at British film from its emergence to the present day is for a number of reasons. Firstly, the chronological approach gives the reader a sense of progression which is satisfying to read – especially as the thesis covers such a broad time frame – but this sense of progression also helps to reveal how the films might ideologically construct a sense of Britishness through a process of ‘repetition and reiteration’ (Higson, 1995: 5). This should help me to find common links between early and recent holiday films, which reinforce a sense of history, tradition and ‘imagined community’, through their representation of the cultural practices of the holiday (Anderson, 1991).

In my history I will be looking at a number of specific examples and mapping them to themes which I hope will reveal something about national identity. In each chapter I will contextualise my chosen films by looking at the periods in which they were made, and offering a sense of their production history and audience reception, before offering a close reading of the films themselves.

Thesis Structure

The thesis as a whole is structured into two main sections. Section 1 establishes the theories and methodology I will be using for my research, and Section 2 covers my analysis of holiday films from the late 19th century to the present day. In Chapter 1 I will look at the holiday and how it has been theorised. As Evans and Richards point out, ‘the seaside holiday is a classic case of downward diffusion of tastes’, and in this chapter I will look firstly at the history of the holiday, from its inception as a pursuit for the aristocracy to its adoption by the Victorian middle classes, and its subsequent championing by working-class day-trippers (Evans and Richards, 1980: 125). I will then reveal how the introduction of widespread Holidays With Pay gave rise to more week-long holidays for

working class families in the pre- and postwar era, firstly at British coastal resorts and holiday camps, and latterly abroad, with the introduction of cheaper flights and package holidays for the proletariat from the 1960s onwards.

I will examine the influence that technology has had on the holiday – both in its amusements and also in the means of transport which takes the holidaymaker away from home – and I will look at the rights of access which took the working class man and woman out of the cities and into the countryside, offering them the experience of a more rational holiday, away from raucous seaside resorts.

Looking at the history of the holiday will arguably help to identify what constitutes a 'holiday film'. For example, a narrative journey away from home might be said to differentiate this type of film from one like *Brighton Rock* (1947) which, although set in a seaside resort, is not narratively constructed around a holiday.

In the second part of Chapter 1 I will look at the ways in which the holiday has been theorised, citing Marxist theories of ideology (Adorno, 2002, Debord, 2002), the carnivalesque (Bakhtin, 1968), theories on the 'tourist gaze' (Urry, 2002, Bell and Lyall, 2002) and the periphery (Inglis, 2000, Shields, 2002). I will also look at theories of national identity (Anderson, 1991 and Billig, 1995) and consider how this might be linked to ideas about the British holiday film. After looking at these theories and methods I will identify which ones will be useful for my textual analysis of the films in later chapters.

In Chapter 2 I will begin to think more specifically about the holiday film, and what the social function of these films might be. I will offer a speculative analysis of the ways the holiday film might engage with society, and consider whether it reflects or critically engages with it. Looking at the role of the audience will help to understand the extent to which the cinemagoer has some agency in the way these films are received, and how film can be linked back to the idea of the holiday.

After establishing these theories and methods I will then go on to analyse the film texts in more detail. In Chapter 3 I start with the emergence of British film, which was largely centred on the south coast of England. I will pay particular attention to the early film pioneer Cecil Hepworth, who, despite being based in Walton on Thames, produced a prolific amount of work in Bognor Regis, and is sometimes grouped with the 'Brighton School' filmmakers of the south coast for the sake of historical reference. This chapter therefore, will focus on representations of the seaside holiday in postcards and films of the late Victorian and Edwardian period. Films under analysis include *Landing at Low Tide* (1899) and *A Seaside Girl* (1907).

For Chapter 4 I will look north to Blackpool (and briefly to Douglas, Isle of Man) and the films of the early sound period. I will consider the seaside holiday for the mass working-class people of industrial Lancashire and how the Wakes holidays and factory day-trips to the coast worked to forge positive relations between the bourgeois mill owner and his workforce – something which Bennett refers to as 'employer hegemony' (Bennett *et al* (eds.), 1986). I will also consider the sense of 'northern populism' that music hall stars such as Gracie Fields and George Formby appeared to embody in the 1930s (Bennett *et al* (eds.), 1986). The chapter will be themed around the idea of the working holiday on film, and I will analyse the Fields film *Sing As We Go* (1934) and Formby's *No Limit* (1935), to support my arguments.

In Chapter 5 I will look at holiday camps in the postwar era. I will consider, in particular, how Billy Butlin appeared to capture the postwar mood with his large, regimented commercial camps, and how this idea was represented in the film *Holiday Camp* (1947). I will examine how the film's narrative works to ideologically reconstruct the family unit, and its traditional gender roles which had been deconstructed in the Second World War.

In Chapter 6 I will look at the foreign holiday in the latter postwar period. By looking at the film *Summer Holiday* (1963) I will consider how the teenager found cultural prominence through its relationship with a capitalist system of consumerism – buying into a largely Americanised leisure, music and fashion industry. *Summer Holiday*'s central star, Cliff Richard, was regarded as Britain's answer to Elvis Presley, and the film can be identified as an example of the 'folk musical' genre – an arguably American cultural form (Altman, 1989). The film also appears to ideologically reinforce a sense of British identity after the collapse of the empire and the Suez crisis of 1957, by use of the red London bus which courses its way across Europe on a touring holiday to Greece.

In Chapter 7 these anxieties concerning British identity are examined further by looking at the representation of the traditional British holiday in the 1970s and how holiday films appear to offer an idea of nostalgia in a time of economic and cultural crisis. The films I will be analysing to support my argument include *Carry On At Your Convenience* (1971), *Carry On Behind* (1975) and *The Best Pair of Legs in the Business* (1973). The chapter pays particular attention to caravan parks and 'smutty' postcard humour, as well as the grim nostalgia suggested above.

Finally, in Chapter 8, I interrogate the idea of national identity by considering if there is a sense of Britishness that accommodates multiculturalism through the use of the holiday in *Bhaji on the Beach* (1993). By analysing these key texts from the early days of cinema to the present, and by using the theories and methods outlined earlier in this introduction I hope to reveal how the holiday on film constructs a sense of Britishness based around the idea of community that is shaped and pressured by forces at different historical moments. The process of selection and rejection of films for analysis was largely informed by the availability of key texts, including viewing copies held by the BFI. Examples of other films which haven't been analysed in the following chapters, can be found in the Indicative Filmography towards the end of the thesis.

Section 1 – Theories and Methodology

Chapter 1 – The Holiday and Theorising the Holiday

Introduction

Before I look at the role that the British holiday has played in cinema over the past century, I will look at the history of the British holiday itself. Contextualising the holiday, both historically and culturally, will help to inform an understanding of the films under analysis in chapters 3 to 8. Walvin suggests that to tell the story of the English rush to the sea, to English readers is 'to tell them what they already know', as 'the recent history of the seaside is embedded in the individual and collective memories of the nation at large' (Walvin, 1978: 11). But as I will demonstrate in this chapter, the working class holiday with pay is only a relatively recent phenomenon, and one which only became widespread in Britain after the Second World War. By examining the history of the holiday, I will attempt to demonstrate how a rare experience for the privileged leisure classes encouraged increasingly popular responses through a process of industrialisation. Although my thesis looks at the holiday in British film from 1896 onwards, I will briefly refer back to the earliest days of the holiday in order to examine how it was constructed, and subsequently became a wider phenomenon for middle and working class people in the twentieth century. In the first section of this chapter I will present a chronological history of the holiday, particularly exploring how class distinction and technological progress has shaped patterns of consumption over the past two centuries.

I will then look at some of the theories and methods which have been used to analyse the holiday. I will demonstrate how society's experience of the British holiday and how attitudes to the national landscape are constructed, adding to feelings of national identity.

The History of the Holiday

The Earliest Days of the Holiday

The traditional British holiday is generally considered to be the seaside holiday, and although the seaside is an 'international phenomenon', Pimlott claims that it is 'particularly characteristic of a people who live on an island and never many miles from the sea' (Pimlott, 1976: 253), going on to say:

There is still a peculiar fascination about the sea. The custom of visiting the seaside is deep-rooted. Medical authority and popular belief agree on its health-giving properties. No natural playground offers more varied opportunities to more people of all ages, and for a century and a half the seaside resorts have been without serious competitors as specialists in the entertainment of holiday makers (*sic*) (Pimlott, 1976: 253).

Before the widespread use of affordable public transport in the mid-Victorian period, the English seaside resort had offered an exclusive holiday for aristocratic people who thronged to coastal towns such as Scarborough and Brighton in the early 1800s to 'take the waters'. Scarborough lays claim to being the very first British seaside resort. In 1626 a Mrs. Farrow was walking along the beach in the south bay when she noticed a 'russet coloured' spring of water 'issuing from the cliffside' (Hern, 1967: 2).⁴ Most other spa towns in England, such as Bath and Buxton were inland, but Scarborough had the added advantage of the bracing coastal climate when seaside resorts became more fashionable. Seawater as a restorative cure for all ills had resulted in seaside towns superceding the English spas, particularly after the Prince Regent made it fashionable at Brighton to follow the advice of Dr Richard Russell whose *Dissertation Concerning the Use of Sea-Water in Diseases of the Glands* had been published in English in 1754 (Walvin, 1978: 16, and Hassan, 2003: 6).

⁴ A foundation stone marks the spot where this spring was found – not far from the Spa complex which still stands today.

For Walton, the seaside superceded the inland spas for several reasons. Firstly, it 'offered a wider range of health-giving properties' which was 'important to that vast majority of invalids or hypochondriacs who had not been prescribed a specific source of treatment' (Walton, 1983: 16). He also points out that 'seabathing could be enjoyed in its own right as a pleasurable past time' and that the coastline appealed to those with an interest in natural science as well as those with a 'taste for the picturesque which was becoming fashionable in the later eighteenth century' (Walton, 1983: 16). Hassan echoes this when he argues that:

Another element in the emergence of the seaside holiday in Georgian England was the growing interest in travel and scenic tourism among the same privileged classes that patronized the spas. With its origins in the Grand Tour,⁵ domestic tourism was stimulated further by the revolutionary and Napoleonic wars, which placed restrictions on foreign travel between 1790 and 1815. By the second half of the eighteenth century, travel guides were among the most popular imprints of the publishing houses, both reflecting and helping to stimulate recreational travel, particularly to the more outlying parts of the country (Hassan, 2003: 20).

Walton says that the spaciousness of the seashore meant that it could accommodate people of different ages to 'mingle informally, and children could be made welcome to an extent which could not have been countenanced in the more formal and regulated regime of the spa' (Walton, 1983: 17). The presence of children at the seaside would become increasingly significant in the late nineteenth century and throughout the twentieth century as many of the commercial enterprises such as donkey rides, Punch and Judy, and beach toys such as buckets and spades were marketed at children.

For Inglis, the popularity of the seaside as a holiday resort came about because the 'new mercantile classes' needed a place to be seen doing 'nothing elegantly' (Inglis, 2000: 36). When the railways started to bring the middle classes to

⁵ The aristocratic pre-cursor of the holiday, in which wealthy people completed their education by visiting European cities such as Rome, Florence and Venice to appreciate great works of art and architecture.

resorts such as Brighton in the 1850s, the aristocracy moved on to more exclusive and contemplative locations such as Scotland, Ireland, the Lakes and the Continent.

Walvin points out that the pursuits of the aristocracy are aspired to by the middle classes, and in turn the working class, saying that 'those who visited the early nineteenth century resorts were, in general, the privileged – those anxious to imitate royalty and the upper reaches of society' (Walvin, 1978: 70). Hern similarly argues that 'the way in which upper-class attitudes and mores seep osmotically into the middle class and are thence taken over, adapted and absorbed by the petty bourgeoisie and the working class is perfectly exemplified by the social history of the English seaside' (Hern 1967: 9). Issues of class lie very close to the surface of the history of the holiday, and this is something I will return to later in the chapter, when I theorise the holiday.

'Daytrippers' and Improvements in Public Transport

Before cheaper, widespread travel, poorer people from manufacturing towns who wished to try the benefits of a sea cure, but who couldn't afford to travel by coach, had to hitch lifts on carts or else walk, to places like Blackpool.

Gladstone's Railway Act of 1844 meant that railways had to make provision for working class customers, but third class carriages were extremely uncomfortable, leaving travellers exposed to the elements in over-crowded compartments. Class distinctions permeated every aspect of English society, 'at work, at home, at rest and even at play and travelling' (Walvin, 1978: 37), as the poor quality of third class travel demonstrated.

In contrast, the plush waiting rooms and carriages supplied for first class travel meant that for the upper and middle classes the holiday journey in itself was part of the appeal. More capital than was really necessary was invested in the railways during the mid nineteenth century, with the result that they were 'lavishly

too expensive in construction and detail' (Inglis, 2000: 46), making a train ride a thing of glamour and excitement.

The growth in working-class holidays on the northwest coast was due to several factors, including fast, cheap transport, consented absences from work, the response of the resorts to working-class tastes, and regular, surplus income. For the latter, Walton points out that the weaving towns 'offered almost the highest female industrial wages in the country' (Walton, 1983: 32) which meant that families with more than one breadwinner could afford to put a little aside each week to pay towards a holiday.

According to Walton, the working class day-trippers 'required only the most primitive of amenities. They bathed naked, without segregation of the sexes, and drank large quantities of spirits to fortify their stomachs against their enormous consumption of seawater' (Walton, 1983: 11). By the 1840s and 1850s, 'the railway-led expansion of coastal tourism involved an accommodation with more plebeian tastes' (Hassan, 2003: 38). These low-class attractions, however, were closely regulated, and in 1897, 'Blackpool began to license beach traders' and attractions such as 'donkeys, bathing vans and boats', whilst excluding the more dubious 'Phrenologists, Quack Doctors, Palmists, Mock Auctions and Cheap Jacks' (Walvin, 1978: 78).

Although holidaymakers were often segregated into different areas determined by their class or sex, the Victorian beach unusually offered a chance for the whole family to spend time together in an age when people 'tended to enjoy themselves in groups divided by sexual and age differences' (Walvin, 1978: 77). More importantly, perhaps, was the fact that the lower classes had to take the whole family with them out of 'economic necessity' (Pimlott, 1976: 121), as working-class parents could not afford for child minders to look after their children at home, whilst they were away. The beach was therefore inclusive of women and children in a society where this wasn't seen as the norm.

The working class holiday, however, was by no means an overnight phenomenon, and did not become widespread until the mid twentieth century. At the end of the nineteenth century, 'the practice of going away from home for an annual holiday was widely established throughout the middle classes, and was extending to the better-paid manual workers, though far from universal amongst them' (Pimlott, 1976: 172). Although the growth of the railways had made it relatively easier to travel to the seaside, the holiday still remained a pastime for the upper and middle classes. It wasn't until the arrival of the Bank Holiday Act of 1871 that the lower classes became more used to the idea of taking a recreational break from work, and widespread holidays with pay wouldn't see the light of day until the late 1930s. The Second World War would even interrupt this development, making the annual family holiday a postwar phenomenon for many working class people.

The Holiday and Technology

The growth of the seaside resort as a popular holiday attraction was not just reliant on technological improvements in travel. Also noteworthy is the seaside's propensity for embracing technological progress for the purpose of entertainment, as Walvin says:

Technological changes went hand in hand with shifts in social attitudes to further the national desire for leisure and to increase the provision of cheap and readily obtainable pleasures. Seaside towns were obviously not alone in witnessing a remarkable upsurge in popularity in the last twenty years of the [nineteenth] century, but resorts, more than any other particular form of entertainment, exemplified the widening commercialisation of leisure and the growing in popular demand for it (Walvin, 1978: 76-77).

He illustrates this by referring to rollercoasters, electric lighting, bicycles for hire, electric trams, magic lanterns, films and 'What the Butler Saw' machines. Inglis also points out that the 'commercialisation of leisure' and the 'technology of the spectacle' went hand in hand at the seaside, as 'freebooting capitalists...spotted

this unprecedented social space in which both time and money were going spare' (Inglis, 2000: 45). Blackpool can be seen as a resort that was (and still is) almost wholly reliant on technology to provide its attractions, when contrasted with an area of 'unspoiled' coastline, such as Lulworth Cove, for example.

Technological innovations were also utilised to construct some of the more ritualised forms of recreation and recuperation. Pimlott cites the bathing machine and pier, for instance, as 'the two institutions which, perhaps, most typified life at the nineteenth century seaside resort' (Pimlott, 1976: 127). Whilst – in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century – male bathers still often swam naked, the bathing machine turned the simple act of entering the sea into an overly cumbersome ritual for most female bathers, in an effort for them to retain their modesty. 'Dippers' who had once helped the lame and sick to the waters now assisted these bathers:

They were brawny working women, teamed up with (and frequently married to) the men who drove the horses who pulled the wheeled bathing machines from the beach into two or three feet of water. They stood, fully clad in black, up to their draggled thighs in the water by the steps leading from the door of the machine. They would guide the bather down the steps and then forcibly duck him or more usually her (Hern, 1967: 41 – 42).

According to Hern, 'a seaside resort cannot stake a claim on interest or affection unless it has a pier' (Hern, 1967: 63), and competitive holiday destinations in Victorian times regarded the bigger and more elaborate structures as a sign of status. A pier was not only a place to find entertainment and refreshment, but perhaps, more importantly, was a place to be seen, and also to gaze both at the sea, and back at the land from the viewpoint of the sea. Before the building of a pier, people would have only been able to obtain this viewpoint from a boat, and the novelty of walking on the pier is demonstrated by the fact that there was usually an entrance toll of one penny. Inglis says that the piers anticipated the decks of the great liners, and that ladies and gentlemen took their 'morning

touche along the pier in order to feel the sea winds blow in their faces' (Inglis, 2000: 42).⁶

Early forms of cinema could also be found as an attraction at the seaside, particularly in sideshows, where the seaside gaze of the male upon female flesh – as seen in old prints such as those by Rowlandson (Hern, 1967: 22) – was translated into a technological thrill at the picture house in 'seven or eight minute films in jerky black-and-white of ...very vaguely erotic flashes of nakedness' and also at the 'just-as-jerky peepshows ('what the butler saw') [which cost] a penny a time' (Inglis, 2000: 51). Seaside resorts also played a big part in the gradual acceptance of Sunday opening for cinemas, in spite of attempts by supporters of the Imperial Sunday Alliance 'to persuade local authorities to use the 1909 Cinematograph Films Act to outlaw Sunday film shows' as Jones argues:

To take but one example: seaside resorts as centres of amusement found it commercially viable to sponsor leisure every day of the week, and it was in this sense that Blackpool became a pioneer of Sunday cinemas (Jones, 1987: 114 – 115).

The importance of the cinema as a source of entertainment at the seaside is later evident in the Mass Observation study of Blackpool in 1937, where observers noted that there were 19 cinemas, of which 15 had a collective seating capacity of 20,548, (Cross, 1990: 128).

The Early Twentieth Century

After the First World War, the attitudes of the working class had changed. Men who had been away fighting wanted a better life for their families and were determined to go away on holiday as the middle classes had before them.

⁶ It was later on, during the inter-war years that piers saw 'further embellishment and diversification' into sites of more raucous entertainment, with bars, shops, theatres, miniature railways, shooting ranges and slot-machines built into the equation, when the 'cult of the picturesque' alone, was not enough to satisfy what Walton refers to as 'the great unwashed' (Fischer, 1987: 26).

Hoggart – although largely critical of working-class cultural practices – suggests that:

Most working-class pleasures tend to be mass-pleasures, overcrowded and sprawling. Everyone wants to have fun at the same time (Hoggart, 1992: 145).

This perhaps suggests why so many working-class people had the same idea to travel to the seaside during the August bank holiday of 1919. This was one of the first major holiday dates in Britain, and Angeloglou's description of the chaos caused by thousands of people flocking to the coast without prior arrangement arguably demonstrates how a holiday has to be anticipated, planned and constructed:

Most of the visitors had no notion of how one took a holiday. The actual mechanics of it were new to them. They didn't book rooms, they didn't go to towns that they knew (Angeloglou, 1975: 40).

Londoners who flocked to the east coast had to wander the streets and sleep rough, as there were no rooms available for them. Blackpool, however, fared worse with an influx of 300,000 people. 'The lucky ones were those who saw what was happening and took the first train out of the town again' (Angeloglou, 1975: 41). The hectic nature of such unplanned holidays is later captured in the 1938 film, *Bank Holiday*, in which hundreds of people are seen to use the beach as temporary sleeping accommodation after all the hotels become full. However, a positive outcome arose from this chaos, with seaside towns and other places of interest (such as Cheddar Gorge or Stratford Upon Avon) identifying the need for accommodation and refreshment for the holidaymaker, and addressing the problem, accordingly (Angeloglou, 1975: 43).

Other Types of Holiday

Not all British people chose to take their holiday by the sea. The first three decades of the twentieth century saw the emergence of other types of holiday,

including cycling, walking and motoring holidays in the countryside, holidays abroad, and the cruise.

Inglis argues that the humble bicycle was just as important an advance in travel technology as the railway. It was relatively cheap, portable and genderless and 'admirable for courtship' (Inglis, 2000: 96). Like the motorcar that followed it, the bike was suitable for shorter journeys, such as weekend jaunts into the countryside.

The bike was seen as a symbol of leisure and freedom in the early twentieth century, because, at first, only the wealthy could afford them, and very few people rode them to work. For those who didn't own a bike, seaside towns had hire shops for people who wanted to take part in the craze. Bicycle rides into the countryside were also less problematic than early motor trips in unreliable cars, which, as yet, were only used for holiday travel by the very rich and 'were thought rather comical, for most of them were seen at the side of the road, with bonnets up, waiting for an important and usually unavailable spare part' (Angeloglou, 1975: 31).

From the 1920s hiking became a very popular pastime for the white-collar workers from big cities who wanted to escape and experience the 'great outdoors'. For Lowerson, one of the reasons for the upsurge in interest in the countryside – the idea of rural England being the 'real' England – was the vogue for country-themed novels, such as *Precious Bane* (1924), and *Cold Comfort Farm* (1932) and also magazines such as *Countryman* (first published in 1927), and later *The Yorkshire Dalesman* (Gloversmith (ed.), 1980 : 260 – 261).

The proliferation of guidebooks in the 1930s, further strengthened this interest in the countryside, with examples being Betjeman's *Shell Guides* (first published in 1934) and Dent's *Open Air Library* (1932). These guidebooks typically offered an

idealised 'tourist's picture' of the countryside, with their illustrations photographed in spring and summer (Gloversmith (ed.), 1980: 263).

Railway companies saw the advantage of promoting journeys for ramblers to the Yorkshire Dales, Pennines and the Lakes. For those who wanted to experience the 'tourist gaze' (Urry: 2002) without getting their feet dirty, London, Midland and Scottish railways 'ran excursion trains for those who wanted to see beauty spots from the line. Special carriages were built with picture windows from which excursionists could see the beauties of the north' (Angeloglou, 1975: 57).

It is not surprising that the growth in the use of the motor car by the upper and middle classes in the 1920s and '30s would lead to movements promoting walking, cycling and the great outdoors, as 'the boundary between city and country [became] so much more blurred' (Inglis, 2000: 11). A 50 per cent fall in the price of motorcars saw ownership increase by 500 per cent between 1924 and 1936, which in turn increased the amount of countryside motoring excursions for the middle classes (Gloversmith (ed.), 1980: 265).

The car was particularly useful for getting to destinations such as The Lakes for a walking holiday. The mountains were beyond easy reach of the railways – largely due to the efforts of nineteenth century preservationists including Wordsworth and John Ruskin, who believed the railway would spoil the natural beauty of the Lake District (Wyatt, 1987: 12) – but the arrival of the motorist brought another set of potential problems. The walking holiday was primarily a middle-class holiday, precisely because it was the middle classes who could first afford to buy a car, but, as Lowerson suggests, 'the new suburbanized countryside' with its 'choked arterial roads' was the 'nightmare landscape' of many 1930s preservationists (Gloversmith (ed.), 1980: 265).

If motorists were tolerated with a certain amount of disdain by country folk, the raucous working-class charabanc 'trippers' were less welcome (in both the

countryside and seaside resorts) because they usually stuck together in large groups and created more litter after picnicking in beauty spots (Angeloglou, 1975: 47). Hoggart suggests that 'the day-trip by 'chara' [was] ...particularly taken up by working-class people, and made into one of their peculiar – that is, characteristic – kinds of pleasure occasion' and continues by making comparisons between this type of holiday and the luxury that cinemas offered to working-class audiences in the mid twentieth century:

These buses, sometimes from a big town fleet, but often one of a couple owned by a local man, [were] the super-cinemas of the highways...plushily over-upholstered, ostentatiously styled inside and out; they [had] lots of chrome bits, little flags on top, fine names and loud radios (Hoggart, 1992: 146).

Lowerson claims that hiking also became a working-class pastime in the later 1920s. This was due to cheap rail and bus fares and a rise in wages for skilled and white-collar workers, meaning that in the 1930s as many as 10,000 walkers might be found in the Peak District during summer weekends (Gloversmith (ed.), 1980: 268).

Much of the land that was in immediate reach of industrial areas such as Sheffield and Manchester, however, was out-of-bounds for the working class rambler. The mass trespass by 600 ramblers of Kinder Scout in the Peak District on 24th April 1932 was in direct response to the prevention of rambling by the Duke of Devonshire, who used the land for grouse farming. Organised by Benny Rothman, the secretary of the Lancashire British Workers' Sports Federation, the subsequent confrontation between the ramblers and keepers resulted in 5 arrests and imprisonments for violence. No other demonstrations on the Peaks resulted in such skirmishes, but the business of 'access rights' was by now very much in the public arena, and eventually 'landowners came to agreements with local walkers to allow limited and controlled access, preserving both paternalism and the rentable values of their moors' (Gloversmith (ed.), 1980: 277).

Hassan argues that walking might be considered more of a 'home-based', or 'weekend' pastime, and therefore not so clearly attributed to the holiday (Hassan, 2003: 90). Nevertheless there may be enthusiasts who prefer a walking holiday to a week at the seaside. This type of holiday provides the narrative journey in the film *Arthur's Dyke* (2001), for example, but such representations are rare, which suggests that Hassan's acknowledgement holds true in most holiday films.

Holiday Camps

The holiday camp is another phenomenon which can be traced back to an early twentieth century preoccupation with health and fitness and the great outdoors, although their image has changed somewhat over the years. For Ward and Hardy 'holiday camps are popularly linked with the idea of fun, with getting away from the everyday routine, with a sense of togetherness, with being looked after, and with a promise of romance, glitter and fantasy' (Ward and Hardy, 1986: vii).

The earlier holiday camps (often referred to as 'pioneer camps') offered a much more back-to-basics camping experience than the later, commercial camps. The first holiday camp, the men-only Cunningham Camp on the Isle of Man, for example, had tents for accommodation, and offered self-improving daily routines of health and fitness. Likewise, the Caister Holiday Camp near Great Yarmouth, required the campers to 'muck-in' with all the chores, albeit with stereotypical gender roles. Women were responsible for the cooking, whilst the men 'had the task of picking the day's supply of vegetables from the gardens which adjoined the camping area' (Ward and Hardy, 1986: 15 - 16).

Although it was the middle-classes who were first attracted to this type of holiday experience and its associations with the cult of nature and health, the Co-Operative and Trade Union movements appreciated the type of camps which encouraged communal activity and enhanced the quality of life for working class people. The Holiday Fellowship and the Co-Operative Holidays Association provided 'cheap and wholesome accommodation on the edge of the wilder Welsh

and English areas, to attract young men and families away from the cheap and lurid commercialisation of Blackpool and Morecombe during Wakes Week', their guest houses providing a 'more Spartan and purposeful version of the all-in escapism Butlin's began to offer in 1937' (Gloversmith (ed.), 1980: 271). The Youth Hostels Association, which formed in 1929, also had its sights set on improving the working class.

In January 1939, the *Journal of the Town Planning Institute* claimed that holiday camps (both coastal and inland) were perhaps a solution to the potential millions of holidaymakers that the Holidays With Pay Act of 1937 would create, preventing the scenes of overcrowding that had occurred on the August bank holiday after the First World War in 1919 (Ward and Hardy, 1986: 112). Billy Butlin, however, had already seen the commercial potential of such camps, especially at relatively as-yet undeveloped resorts such as Skegness.

Butlin designed his camps to enable holidaymakers to take part in activities, under shelter, in cases of inclement weather. Before his camp was built at Skegness, holidaymakers had to obey the rules of landladies and vacate their rooms after breakfast, and if the weather was poor, many of them took shelter at Butlin's amusement park. Inspired by holiday centres he'd seen in Canada as a boy, Butlin decided to build a holiday centre that 'combined the adventure of camping with the comfort of all-weather enjoyment' (North, 1962: 47).

Ward and Hardy see a connection between the holiday camps of the 1930s and the glamour that the cinema offered to audiences of the time:

In the 1930s they offered visitors from a grey industrial setting a glimpse of Hollywood, first-hand experience of the seductive glitter previously restricted to the view from a cinema seat. Then in the 1940s, the camps were filled with holidaymakers, relieved that the war was over and attuned to the idea of doing things *en masse*. This period, in turn, was followed by the 1950s, when holiday camps could offer a package to meet the promise of an affluent age (Ward and Hardy, 1986: 151 – 152).

Like the beach, Inglis sees the holiday camp as a place for people to lose their inhibitions, as well as the 'freedom brought about by handing oneself and one's family over to the organisers in order not to suffer the intolerable freedom of organising everything oneself' (Inglis, 2000: 109). The holiday camp gave parents an opportunity to hand children over to a childminder whilst they took a rest, and mass catering was desirable to mothers who wanted a break from cooking the family meal.

Other camps opened in the wake of Butlin's success, the main rivals being Pontin's and Warner's, but none of these became part of the national psyche in quite the same way as Butlin's, which was probably due to Billy Butlin's ability to court publicity. The subsequent term of phrase 'Butlinism', referred, not exclusively, to holidaying at one of his camps, but also to the idea of 'holidaying en masse, paying a weekly fee and getting everything provided' (Ward and Hardy, 1986: 57). Butlin was firstly a showman, but one with a keen business sense. He knew the importance of good publicity and marketing, bringing stars such as Len Hutton to play cricket at the Skegness camp with a piece of 'Skeggy' rock as a cricket bat, whilst Gracie Fields bowled (Ward and Hardy, 1986: 58). It could surely be no coincidence that *Sam Small Leaves Town* was filmed at Butlin's, Skegness, in the year it opened, nor that *Holiday Camp* – the idea for which was inspired by Butlin's friend Godfrey Winn – was also filmed at Filey, the first new camp to open in the postwar period (Ward and Hardy, 1986: 102). Butlin's empire was eventually sold to the Rank Organization in 1972 for £43,000,000 (Butlin, 1982: 32).

The Cruise and Air Travel

From the early 1920s to the late '30s, the cruise offered a holiday experience for the super-rich. To begin with, liners such as the Queen Mary and Queen Elizabeth were used for transatlantic passages, but the steamship companies saw the profitability of promoting the idea of the journey as a holiday in itself by

turning the liners into 'floating hotels' and cruising around exotic locations such as the Mediterranean. As Angeloglou argues:

It was an extension of the thought that the very, very rich wish to be with their own kind on holiday, for it made them feel secure. What better way to ensure their ideal conditions for a holiday than to isolate them on a floating island? (Angeloglou, 1975: 84).

Just as the promenade and the pier were places to gaze and be gazed upon by others in the eighteenth and nineteenth century, so the Captain's table became the place for the aristocratic holidaymaker to 'see who was important among the other passengers...[and]...be seen by the envious guests who had to sit elsewhere' (Angeloglou, 1975: 85). The Second World War put an end to the cruise ships, where they found a use for carrying troops. In the postwar period, however, the cruise holiday itself was revived, not for the elite, but for the new bourgeoisie who aspired to be like the millionaires and film stars of the interwar years.

Despite its supposed associations with glamour and sophistication, Pimlott claims the cruise is similar to the holiday camp for its 'high degree of organisation and the acceptance by the individual of community living, a superimposed routine, and an external discipline' (Pimlott, 1975: 266). Giving a perfect illustration of the cruise holiday as a highly structured pastime, he continues:

Everything possible is done to take the individual out of himself. Only he is to blame if he is bored. He can forget the troublesome details of everyday life as a unit in a smoothly run machine (Pimlott, 1976: 266).

As with the railway journey, Inglis points out that with the cruise, 'getting there is half the fun', and that the 'suspended nature of the journey...urges upon people the attractions of doing things they would never do elsewhere' (Inglis, 2000: 96).

After the Second World War, the next major technological breakthrough for the holiday industry was the introduction of mass air travel. This was partly made possible by the number of surplus aircraft left over from the war, that entrepreneurs such as Freddy Laker were quick to find a use for. Most holidaymakers who chose to go abroad travelled for the climate, as Walvin points out:

Sunshine became a powerful factor of holiday making in England between the wars; in the 1960s and 1970s [it became] the most important attraction of most European resorts (Walvin, 1978: 144).

One of the reasons for the attractions of sunny climes was partly to do with health, the other fashion. Just as sea water and sea air were believed to have health-giving properties in Georgian and Victorian times, the sun was prescribed to give people a healthy dose of Vitamin D, and consequently it became fashionable for a person to display their health with a tan. Images of international film stars (such as the youthful Brigitte Bardot) displaying their tans at San Tropez and Cannes arguably had an influence on fans in the postwar era, although Walton points out that it was at the beginning of the twentieth century that Dr Saleeby (chair of the National Birthrate Commission and the Sunlight League) claimed that sunlight was 'Nature's universal disinfectant, as well as a stimulant and tonic' (Walton, 2000: 100).

Holidays Today

The increase in holidays abroad hasn't necessarily destroyed the domestic market in recent years. Although the British resorts aren't as popular as they were in the immediate period after the Second World War, many holidaymakers – who can afford to – take at least two holidays a year, quite often having one abroad and one 'at home'. As Inglis points out, technological progress doesn't necessarily mean that previous systems of travel will be phased out. He says that 'the railway's trail is far from ended, no more than the bicycle's' as there will always be those who choose a cycling holiday in the countryside, over a package holiday abroad (Inglis, 2000: 105).

Walton claims that the demise of the seaside in recent times has been somewhat exaggerated. Seaside amusement parks at Blackpool, Southport and Morecambe were the top three most popular attractions with free admission according to English Tourist Board statistics in 1997, and Blackpool Tower was the most popular paying attraction in the north-west, drawing 1.2 million visitors (Walton, 2000: 117).

Other seaside towns have had to diversify and find niche markets to sustain their economies. Southwold, for example, has gone for a nostalgic sensibility with its tiny cinema screening classic films, and its 'Under The Pier Show' which houses traditional, yet up-to-date, coin-operated automatons.⁷ Whitby promotes itself with its literary associations with Bram Stoker and has recently held 'Dracula' festivals to attract Goths. TV chef Rick Stein has turned the once quaint fishing village of Padstow into a mecca for 'foodies', with every other café, restaurant or delicatessen having his name stamped on it so that the place is now grudgingly referred to as 'Padstein'. Brighton and Blackpool have found a gay clientele for their clubs and bars,⁸ and Blackpool has also recently attempted to reinvent itself as the 'Vegas of England' (Hassan, 2003: 258 and Urry, 1990: 35). Holiday camps hold conventions and music festivals out of season. The alternative music festival 'All Tomorrows Parties' which began as a once-a-year festival at Pontin's, Camber Sands, has been so successful, that it takes place twice a year and has relocated to the larger Butlin's at Minehead. For some, these festivals are the epitome of 'cool' – somewhere to 'be seen' – just as the spas were all those centuries ago. At over £100 a ticket, they attract a mostly middle-class consumer. For many, it will be the first time they've ever visited a holiday camp, albeit with a

⁷ 'It has a new pier, the first to be built in England for 50 years, and a new cinema, the Electric Picture Palace, [a suitably retrospective name] a clever social pastiche where the audience stands every evening to sing God Save the Queen' (Jack, 2008: 32). The Under The Pier Show: www.theunderthepiershow.com.

⁸ See references to 'Gay Blackpool' in Walton, 1998: 146, and also Hassan, 2003: 258.

certain amount of knowing irony, and the trailer for the *All Tomorrows Parties* film (2009) trades on this imagery by contrasting scratchy day-glo archive footage of the camps, against present-day concert footage of bands performing. Walton sums up the more recent kitsch sensibility of the British seaside resort by saying:

Despite all the pressures and problems of the later twentieth century, however, it could be argued that the British seaside has been remarkably resilient. Not only has it kept a strong share of an expanding holiday market, it has also maintained its power as a cultural referent, and is beginning to market itself in post-modern, ironic ways, inviting visitors to share the jokes about seaside kitsch and enjoy a distinctive experience which is also sold as part of the heritage boom (Walton, 2000: 198)

Further to this idea, the Caravan Gallery⁹ has recently produced a series of deliberately 'tasteless' postcards (reminiscent of the *Boring Postcards* (1999) collection curated by Martin Parr) which highlight the depressing aspect of Britain's run-down seaside towns, and other aspects of grim British culture. 'Bank Holiday Britain', for example, shows five images of rain-lashed and wind-swept people huddling under umbrellas – some facing out to slate-grey seas. 'Seaside Fun' depicts four semi-derelict or deserted amusement arcades, whilst 'Save Britain's Piers!' includes an image of Brighton's West Pier (before it finally succumbed to fire), and another (unidentified) pier replete with 'danger' signs. The exclamation mark in the title of the latter card would seem to suggest an ironic stance, and a questioning of whether there is a point in saving these relics of the past, but the image of the British seaside as ironic and kitsch is by no means universal, and tends to be framed from a privileged, middle-class perspective, as does the current argument for 'holidays at home'.

Arguments for Holidays 'at Home'

Continuing debates on climate change, the ethics of travelling abroad and the rising cost of airfares due to an increase in fuel prices could arguably have an effect on where the British choose to spend their holidays in the future, and

⁹ The Caravan Gallery: Jon Williams and Chris Teasdale, www.thecaravangallery.co.uk. (There are no dates given for the postcards).

consequently re-evaluate the traditional seaside- or camping holiday as a possible alternative. Mark Ellingham, the founder of the *Rough Guides* travel books is concerned about the environmental impact of air travel, arguing that 'travelling is so environmentally destructive that there is no such thing as a genuinely ethical holiday' (Hill, 2007: 23). Although Ellingham admits that encouraging people to stop flying altogether would be 'totally unrealistic' his main concern is to put an end to 'binge flying', continuing:

We now live in a society where, if people have nothing to do on a Saturday night, they go to Budapest for 48 hours. We fly anywhere at the slightest opportunity, 10 times and upwards a year. This needs to be addressed with the greatest urgency (Hill, 2007: 23).

These debates are not new,¹⁰ but they have been particularly brought to the fore in 2008, as several budget price airlines including XL and Zoom¹¹ have gone bankrupt due to the decreasing profit margins caused by higher fuel prices. Delegates at a conference on local tourism in Nottingham in Autumn 2008 quickly anticipated a gap in the market left by the absence of cheap air travel and consequently attempted to fashion 'staycations' as a new buzzword for holidaying in Britain.¹² The Prime Minister, Gordon Brown's choice of holidaying

¹⁰ In 1999, for example, the BBC programme *Heart of Matter* questioned whether travel is 'the new colonialism, exploiting people and places for pleasure and profit' (Morgan, 1999). One of the problems highlighted in the programme is the nature of the 'package holiday' where the all-inclusive price goes mainly to the tour operators and the holiday hotels and complexes where the holidaymakers stay during their visits abroad.

Comparatively little money is spent on trade within the local communities, with the result that no money goes back into the local economy. Backpackers were also blamed for 'blazing the trail' of countries which the package companies then followed. The issue of environmental damage was also flagged up (by Environmental Campaigner, George Monbiot) long before it became more widely acknowledged by the press and public.

¹¹ *The Guardian* announced Zoom's collapse on August 30th 2008: 'Zoom which operated from five UK airports, blamed its financial difficulties on the economic downturn and the rise in oil prices. Its UK managing director, Jonathan Hinkles, said the firm's fuel bill had increased by £15m, a rise of about £80-£90 on the cost of a return ticket to Canada' (Sturcke, 2008: 10). On August 30th 2008, the collapse of XL was described 'as one of the biggest failures seen in the travel industry' (Brignall, 2008: 1). Soon afterwards the British tour operator 'K&S Holidays' also went bust (Sky News, 14th September 2008).

¹² *East Midlands Today*, BBC 1, 10th September 2008.

in Southwold in summer 2008 appears to communicate a message to the nation that holiday spending money should be circulated within the UK rather than abroad, in order to boost the flagging economy. He could also be making a token gesture towards concerns about climate change by not using air travel during his leisure time. Nevertheless, his choice of Southwold appeals to a white, middle-class sensibility that hankers for a quaint ‘imaginary’ Britain of the past, as Ian Jack elaborates:

If I were forced to give Southwold a subtitle it would be “1955 – but with olives”. Like a handful of other small resorts – two would be St Mawes in Cornwall and Whitstable in Kent – it was waiting for the rebirth of certain temperament among the middle class. I think this came about in the 1990s (Jack, 2008: 32).

The history of the holiday, as outlined above provides a contextual framework for the films I am going to analyse in Chapters 3 – 8. I will now give a more detailed examination of how the holiday has been read by cultural theorists, in order to determine which theoretical frameworks I intend to use.

Theorising the Holiday

In this section I will look at some of the theories on the holiday, which help to construct it as a cultural ‘text’ or cultural ‘practice’. I will be looking at the holiday in terms of class, the spectacle, the tourist gaze, the periphery, and national identity, amongst others. Examining these theories will enable me to identify which ones I will find particularly useful for exploring ideas of the holiday as represented in British film.

The Holiday and Class

Throughout my examination of the history of the holiday I have hinted at how class distinction plays a part in a holidaymaker’s choice of resort, and in pastimes and modes of transport. These distinctions are deep-seated and can be traced

back not only in the different types of pleasures desired by holidaymakers – for example in the working-class choice of the pub at Ramsgate and Dover, against the white-collar choice of tearoom (Hern 1967: 77) – but also in efforts to maintain a certain amount of exclusivity by the wealthy consumers of places such as the Lake District. Rollinson for example, argues that there was an element of ‘social snobbery’ in Wordsworth’s efforts to keep ‘the humbler classes’ and the attractions they would bring, away from the Lakes (Rollinson, 1967: 140). Class does not only play a part in the past history of the holiday, but also in the present, and in representations of the holiday in film.

In order to fully appreciate how class plays a part in how the holiday is constructed, it is useful to look at how class has been theorised. The choice of holiday resort that a person makes, for example, can be seen as a marker of a person’s taste. As Bourdieu argues:

Taste classifies, and it classifies the classifier. Social subjects, classified by their classifications, distinguish themselves by the distinctions they make, between the beautiful and ugly, the distinguished and the vulgar, in which their position in the objective classifications is expressed or betrayed (Bourdieu, 2006: 6).

It could therefore be suggested that a person who deliberately chooses a sedate, quiet camping holiday on the Dorset or Cornish coast will deliberately be distinguishing themselves from what they consider to be the ‘ugly’ or the ‘vulgar’ holiday that brasher and more raucous resorts might offer. Part of this distinction is marked by being away from crowds, and therefore demonstrating that the holidaymaker has exclusive tastes which separate them from the majority.

There is evidence of cultural elitism in the following words of Stephen Bayley who personally considers the idea of travelling less in order to avoid ‘impulse flyers’ who are spoiling his trips to Europe, and who, he implies, do not belong there:

The sophisticated traveller will perhaps fly less, confirming the maxim that travel does not broaden the mind, but narrows it. In a backstreet restaurant in Nice, I became curious about an incongruous English couple. I asked them the how and the why. They explained that they had been driving to B&Q, but decided to go to East Midlands Airport instead. Two hours later, my dream of being Graham Greene had evaporated (Bayley, 2006: 29).

Cultural elitism might also be demonstrated, for example, in an 'authentic' backpacking holiday, which the holidaymaker plays a large part in constructing for themselves in opposition to the package-type holiday in which everything is provided. Krippendorf, however, suggests that the idea of 'authentic' or 'alternative' holidays is a misguided one, and that these holidaymakers are just as much consumers of the holiday industry as the people they are trying to distinguish themselves from:

Even the most fanatical 'off-the-road freaks' use, as a matter of course, many of the facilities produced by mass tourism which they despise so much: cheap flights, airports, the tourist information service, to mention but a few (Krippendorf, 1987: 38).

In contrast to this, there are holidaymakers who consider the brash and colourful seaside holiday to be the true, authentic holiday. Singer and upholder of working-class values, Mark E. Smith, for example, outlines the contrasts between Brighton and Blackpool, and suggests that the former has been spoiled by becoming an expensive commuter town for London:

Blackpool, on the other hand, that's a great place to spend a holiday. There's no cultural elitism there, thank fuck. They've got some smashing chip shops as well. It gets a lot of stick for some odd reason. I think it's because it knows what it is - it's not striving to ape elsewhere. I like places that know themselves (Smith, 2008: 154 – 155).

Like Blackpool, Skegness appears to be a resort which acknowledges the lower-class tastes of its consumers. The visitors guide for 2009 has the resort's nickname 'Skeggy' unpretentiously emblazoned across the front (*Skeggy and East Coast Visitor's Guide*, 2009).

For those people who prefer adventure holidays, or 'cults of the natural, the pure and the authentic', Bourdieu suggests that they are also revealing taste and class distinctions by demonstrating 'cultural capital' which is invested in knowledge of the activity itself, (as well as proving that they have the money to spend on the luxury goods needed for such holidays):

Foot-trekking, pony-trekking, cycle-trekking, motorbike trekking, boat-trekking, canoeing, archery, windsurfing, cross-country skiing, sailing, hang-gliding, microlights etc. – whose common feature is that they all demand a high investment of cultural capital in the activity itself, in preparing, maintaining and using the equipment, and especially, perhaps, in verbalizing the experiences...(Bourdieu, 2006: 220).

Holidays, just as other practices in life, can be defined by Bourdieu's theory of 'habitus', which might be defined simply as a 'comfort zone' which people of a certain class are bound by, and which they may or may not choose to leave and cross over, into the comfort zone of people from another social class. Bourdieu explains 'habitus' as such:

The practices of the same agent, and, more generally, the practices of all other agents of the same class, owe the stylistic affinity which makes each of them a metaphor of any of the others to the fact that they are product of transfers of the same schemes of action from one field to another (Bourdieu, 2006: 173).

The television programme *Holiday Swap* (2003) plays upon this idea by making families who might usually enjoy the relative solitude of a narrow-boating holiday, for example, swap places with a family who likes to spend their free time at Butlin's. By witnessing the holidaymakers' discomfort when forced outside their usual 'habitus', the television viewer's pleasure is consequently derived. This viewing pleasure in itself is a demonstration of class distinction, as it requires knowledge of what are considered good- and bad-taste holidays. Holiday camps have particularly been subject to ridicule and scorn by cultural critics, as I will reveal later, and it is useful to think about how Bourdieu's theories of 'distinction'

and 'cultural capital' can explain how middle-class holidaymakers might construct these feelings, and also how 'habitus' might play a part in why the working classes might choose such a holiday.

Adorno's 'Free Time'

Hill suggests that society plays a large part in promoting the idea of the holiday to the consumer. When someone is down, friends and colleagues often tell them that they 'need a holiday'; as Hill points out 'it is the ultimate 'change' that 'does you good' (Hill, 2002: 76). Adorno, however, argues that this contrast with work is anything but, and that 'free time' is in fact 'shackled to its opposite' (Adorno, 2006: 187). He says that when people are 'at least subjectively convinced that they are acting of their own free will, this will itself is shaped by the very same forces which they are seeking to escape in their hours without work' (Adorno, 2006: 188). Adorno uses camping to illustrate how a popular youth movement of the bourgeoisie has been industrialised and commercialised, and has therefore lost its authenticity and offer of freedom, although he acknowledges that there wouldn't be a commercial demand for camping equipment, had the youth movements not existed first:

The industry alone could not have forced people to purchase its tents and dormobiles, plus huge quantities of extra equipment, if there had not already been some longing in people themselves; but their own need for freedom gets functionalized, extended and reproduced by business; what they want is forced upon them once again. Hence the ease with which the free time is integrated; people are unaware of how utterly unfree they are, even where they feel most at liberty, because the rule of such unfreedom has been abstracted from them (Adorno, 2006: 190 – 191).

Hill touches on this when he describes an advertisement for a holiday in Spain which the individual may take to be an 'authentic' view of the country, while they disregard the fact that the holiday is still a product of consumption which has been 'sold' to them. He says that the text in the advertisement conveys a sense of 'difference which might offer an exciting experience in itself, or simply an

opportunity to tell friends back home about the 'real Spain' rather than the 'pseudo-events' on offer on the coast' (Hill, 2002: 88).

What Adorno argues, and what Hill suggests, through his examination of the contrast between the 'authentic' and 'inauthentic' holiday, is that modern capitalist society offers a structure where the holiday is presented to the consumer as the ultimate contrast from work. It is commodified, and the consumer chooses to enter into this ideology, take a break, and then return to work, refreshed. However, Adorno (and other theorists I will highlight later) are viewing popular pleasures from a largely privileged and elitist viewpoint.

Adorno particularly undermines the idea of 'hobbies' claiming that they are activities for unimaginative people to fill in the gaps between work. In opposition to this he admits that he leads a life of 'privilege' where his 'free time' is in fact an extension of his job: 'the production of philosophical and sociological works and university teaching' (Adorno, 2006: 189). He offers a fairly convincing argument against the commodification of hobbies (despite not giving particular examples), but if looked at from an alternative viewpoint, it could be said that this high-minded 'element of fortune' is another person's idea of a fairly mundane existence. It could be argued that hobbies aren't necessarily an avoidance of thinking about work; model making of vintage transport or militaria for example, might offer the hobbyist memories of childhood, whilst at the same time being an extension of some interest in social history; knitting might be therapeutic and also have the pleasurable function of providing a garment.

Adorno shows weaknesses in his argument, not only by not specifying which hobbies he is critiquing, but elsewhere when he considers that suntans turn the sunbather into a 'fetish', and undermines his statement by saying that they 'can be quite fetching' (Adorno, 2006: 191). He ultimately admits that 'the real interests of individuals are still strong enough to resist, within certain limits, total

inclusion' (Adorno, 2006: 196 – 197), thereby revealing that his argument that 'free time' imitates work cannot be generalised so easily in these terms.

In contrast to Adorno, de Certeau challenges the way in which 'users – commonly assumed to be passive and guided by established rules – operate' (de Certeau, 1988: xi). In comparing the act of walking to the act of speech, for example, he says that the choices the walker makes when passing through a space enables us to consider 'a preliminary definition of walking as a space of enunciation' continuing:

If it is true that a spatial order organizes an ensemble of possibilities (for example, by creating shortcuts and detours) and prohibitions...[the walker] thus makes a selection...[and] thus creates a discreteness, whether by making choices among the signifiers of the spatial "language" or by displacing them through the use he makes of them (de Certeau, 1988: 97 – 98).

In other words, a person has some agency in their actions. Signposts, road markings and other signs may direct the walker a certain way, but ultimately, the walker has some freedom to choose whether or not they follow these signs.

It could therefore be argued that, despite the commodification of the holiday, as mentioned by Adorno, the person who goes on holiday plays an important part in constructing it for themselves by the choices they make and the combination of those choices. They take an 'active' part in the holiday, and this is why they are 'holidaymakers'. Taking part in activities that are far removed from the everyday stresses of work and home creates a sense of achievement. If a consumer does nothing on their days off from work, the holiday is seen as a failure. The holiday also offers a particular kind of freedom, which distinguishes it from other forms of leisure. It can be considered more of an 'event', than a weekend break from work, or a game of darts, for instance.

Bell and Lyall (2002) highlight how each holiday experience is 'constructed' by the individual, without explicitly pointing out that holidays are 'imagined events' as Hill (2002) does:

Each individual journey is a set of experiences unique to that consumer. This uniqueness is constructed by the endless iteration of the minutiae of transport, meals, clothing, weather, activities, and timing as played out in the delivery of each tourist experience (Bell and Lyall, 2002: 3).

Like Hill, they go on to demonstrate how the holiday is anticipated, and then takes on a significant role in the memory of each individual, or groups of people who have shared the experience:

The trip is often planned months or even years in advance. The trip may well be that year's major consumer item. It becomes a way of retrospectively labelling that year in personal memory: "1996? That was the year we went to Tunisia" (Bell and Lyall, 2002: 3).

The Holiday as Spectacle

Debord highlights leisure time and vacations as something to look forward to and be desired. For him, the time after work is the 'time of the spectacle...the time appropriate to the consumption of images' (Debord, 2002: 112). However, just as Adorno considers that 'free time' is industrialised, Debord considers that the 'spectacle' of free time is a commodity. If applied to the holiday in his terms, it could be argued that the eye is ravished by a series of spectacular images such as the sublime coastal landscape; the rolling waves of the sea; the mountains of the Lake District; feats of engineering such as piers, fairground rides and Blackpool Tower, illuminations and brightly coloured signage; and also by more basic, but iconic, items such as buckets and spades and ices. Debord argues that spectacular images are so perceptible that they in turn consume us, and we forget, momentarily that they are commodities. 'Commodity fetishism' allows the 'perceptible world' to be 'replaced by a set of images that are superior to that

world yet at the same time impose themselves as *eminently* perceptible' (Debord, 2002: 26).

Debord also makes a case that as capitalist production compresses distance between different places, society has become more homogenised and trivialised. The individuality of different places and societies has been watered down into a series of commodified spectacles resulting in a sense of sameness:

Tourism is [a] chance to go and see what has been made trite. The economic management of travel to different places suffices in itself to ensure those places' interchangeability. The same modernization that has deprived travel of its temporal aspect has likewise deprived it of the reality of space (Debord, 2002: 120).

Advanced methods of travel have compressed time and space, just as the spectacle of film compresses time and space. 'Armchair travel' constructs familiarity with places through photography, film and television. When holidaymakers visit a place for the first time, they may feel that they already know the place, and it could be argued that the mass media has also contributed to feelings of homogenisation between holiday destinations.

Theories on the spectacle offer another analogy between the holiday and film, but the spectacle also tends to over-simplify the holidaymaker's and film audience's response to what they are being presented with. Blackpool illuminations are often mediated through film narrative as a spectacle – as in *Bhaji On The Beach* (1993) when the lights turn on in one of the climactic scenes – but in real-life the spectacle provided by the lights shouldn't be overestimated. Mass Observers, for example, found that although holidaymakers enjoyed watching donkey rides and people strolling on the beach in the glow of the lights, in so doing they leaned on the promenade railings and 'turned their backs to the illuminations' (Cross, 1990: 220). Therefore consumption of the spectacular is revealed to be diffuse and folded into other practices such as strolling and donkey rides. The view from Blackpool Tower is similarly framed as a spectacle

in films such as *Hands Across The Ocean* (1946) and *Hindle Wakes* (1952) but, as with the lights, the notion of the spectacle may not be so all-consuming in real life. A holidaymaker might ride to the top of the Tower as a test of their own bravery, as well as to observe the panorama: Mass Observers found that just as many people discussed jumping off the Tower as a subject of conversation, as did those who talked about the view (Cross, 1990: pp. 88 and 219).

Like Adorno, Debord offers his theory of the spectacle from a contentious viewpoint with a middle-class bias which tends to simplify and massify popular responses as docile and accepting. Therefore ideas regarding 'the spectacle' should arguably be considered with caution.

Consuming Places

Urry, (1995), describes four ways in which places are consumed, some of which relate to Debord's theories on commodification of places and their consumption. He says, firstly, that places are increasingly being restructured as centres for consumption, where goods are 'compared, evaluated, purchased and used' (Urry, 1995: 1); secondly, that places are in themselves consumed, particularly visually; thirdly, that places can be literally consumed to the point of depletion and exhaustion; and finally, that it is possible for localities to consume an individual's identity 'so that such places become almost literally *all-consuming* places' (Urry, 1995: 1).

All of the above can particularly be applied to holiday destinations, although the increase in widespread tourism and leisure since the demise of industrialised society means that the boundaries between centres for consumption has become increasingly blurred. The British seaside, for example, has long been a centre for consumption of goods, where workers spend their hard-earned savings to the point of excess, on souvenirs, food and drink, tickets for cinema and theatre, and donkey and fairground rides. To return home without having spent-out would represent defeat in the efforts to have a good time.

Urry's point about places being consumed to the point of exhaustion and depletion can perhaps be seen in the historical trajectory of the use of seaside towns as centres for consumption. As fashions change and society finds alternative places to spend its leisure time, tired coastal towns such as Morecambe in the 1980s and '90s,¹³ or individual attractions such as Brighton's dilapidated West Pier can appear to have been used up and then discarded, as relics of a bygone era.

The seaside resort as a place where an individual's identity can be consumed is something I have already touched upon, in relation to the holiday being an 'imagined event'. The seaside's capabilities to construct itself as a place where people can 'lose themselves' is linked to its liminal qualities and has also been picked up by Inglis (2000) and Shields (2002), to which I shall return later. The movement from a person's local place to a tourist destination such as the seaside gives the holidaymaker a certain amount of anonymity and freedom to lose his or herself in the crowd, and therefore indulge themselves in activities in which they might not usually get involved. The beach is a perfect example of a place where the individual is consumed by the crowd and can lose their inhibitions about undressing in public, which they otherwise might balk at in everyday life. Likewise the fairground can consume the individual: the lights, noise, colour and movement allowing the most inhibited person to laugh, scream and shout in a public space without embarrassment.

The Tourist Gaze

The seaside as a place of visual consumption is perhaps the area which Urry has studied at most length. His theory of the 'tourist gaze' is not only the subject of his book of the same name from 1990 (revised 2002), but he also refers to it, for example, in *Consuming Places* (1995), and also in his chapter 'Tourism and the Photographic Eye' in *Tourist Cultures: Transformations of Travel and Theory*

¹³ See Hassan, 2003: 254 – 258.

(1997). The 'tourist gaze' is not the view that the local resident has of a place, but a collection of images that are presented for consumption. Postcards, guidebooks, tourist brochures, TV and film all construct an image of the holiday destination that the holidaymaker will look for on their arrival, and also replicate in their photographs and home movies. If they don't record it photographically, they will at least attempt to collect the gaze by witnessing it, first-hand, and then purchase a postcard to remind themselves, or demonstrate to others that they have seen it. The holiday has to be mediated in some way, for us to be able to consume it.

In postcards, which show a view of the sea, for example, the sea has to be framed by a boundary – be it a pier, a sea wall, a cliff, or the beach. Water is arguably undifferentiated, so a view of the sea itself would be insufficient without a framing device. The anchorage provided by written text such as 'wish you were here' or 'beautiful Devon', adds further meaning to the image, constructing the location's identity and at the same time inviting a reaction from the viewer such as longing or nostalgia.

One of the earliest forms of travel guide, Thomas West's 1778 guidebook for the Lake District, explained in specific detail where to stand in order to gain maximum pleasure from the landscape. He called these places viewing 'stations', and referred to the 'desirable use of the Claude glass' to enable the tourist to frame the landscape (Urry, 1995: 200). Taken to the extreme, in the present day, Bell and Lyall describe how giant frames on the landscape in Auckland, New Zealand, guide tourists where to pose for photographs, but that 'many park users' consider these structures (which are actually advertisements for Westpac Bank), to be 'crass' (2002: 39 - 40).

Even if not taking photographs, the tourist requires some kind of guidance in where to look. In 'The Prelude', Wordsworth describes crossing the Alps, whilst at the same time missing the experience 'lost as in a cloud'. A peasant only tells

Wordsworth and his fellow travellers that they have crossed the Alps after the event. Without having the landscape described or mediated for him, he loses out on the experience to much 'dejection' and 'deep genuine sadness' (Wordsworth, 1955: 370 – 371).

Urry claims that the tourist gaze isn't just found in images of the sublime landscape, but also in the spectacle of seaside attractions. He says that 'because of the importance of the visual, of the gaze, tourism has always been concerned with spectacle' (Urry, 2002: 78). This spectacle is inherent in the presentation of such attractions as 'the grandest ballroom, the longest pier, the highest tower, [and] the most modern amusement park', for example, as resorts compete with each other for tourists (Urry, 2002: 78).

He also argues that different gazes are authorised by different discourses, such as education (apparent in the Grand Tour, and perhaps, the life-affirming student 'gap year' experience); health (encompassing physical and mental recovery and well-being); and play (what he refers to as 'liminal' tourism). He also mentions the contrast between the romantic gaze of solitude, and the shared experience of the collective gaze (Urry, 1997: 176). Urry's reference to the tourist gaze in the spectacle of seaside amusements is useful; there are more examples of this type of gaze in the films analysed in this thesis, than the tourist gazes of landscape and iconic pieces of architecture, for example.

Bell and Lyall (2000) not only consider the 'tourist gaze' like Urry and how natural landscapes are commodified, but also the holidaymaker's physical relationship to the landscape through extreme sports and travel. A contrast is made between those who wish to seek 'stillness' and the 'trip of a lifetime', and those who crave 'speed' and who are 'frequent flyers'.¹⁴ The speed and acceleration of consumption is linked to the increasing consumerism of capitalist society.

¹⁴ See Bell and Lyall, 2000: Chapter 2 and page 150, for instance.

Particularly interesting is their account of how we gaze upon wonders of natural beauty, but how this action in itself is never enough, and has to be commodified for the viewer. For example, to view sites such as the Niagara Falls holidaymakers have to immerse themselves in numerous tourist activities, as 'most visitors are not going to spend an entire day simply watching water tumble over a cliff' (Bell and Lyall, 2002: 21). Their description of a trip on the *Maid of the Mist* sums this up, where even being provided with special waterproof coats defines the event 'as something of an adventure' (Bell and Lyall, 2002: 21). The tourist will also be expected to buy souvenirs to remind them of the experience, and also 'consume' the landscape by photographing it.¹⁵

Bell and Lyall further expose the 'innocent' tourist gaze as anything but, saying that the holidaymaker's eyes have been trained to look at landscapes in particular ways through previous associations with postcards or travel guides, which they quote Barthes as calling 'agents of blindness' (Bell and Lyall, 2002: 4). Tourists can't discover anything new for themselves, because they are essentially told what to look at, and from which particular viewpoint – this concept could perhaps be extended to images seen in films and on television, too.

They also point out that most tourist brochures often show landscapes without people, and 'where people are present in these representations they are likely to be tourists rather than locals, inviting the potential traveller to put themselves in the picture' (Bell and Lyall, 2002: 4).

Similarly, they discuss the picture postcard which displays an attraction 'at the apogee of its appeal' (Bell and Lyall, 2002: 35), which makes the holidaymaker believe they have witnessed this view whilst on holiday, when in actual fact their gaze may have been obscured by poor weather conditions. They cite Staff (1966) by saying that 'we compare the postcard with the author's index card, with

¹⁵ The consumption of the landscape through photography is also highlighted by Urry (1997).

its title, author, and summary serving as a sort of visa stamp as evidence to the owner's having been there' (Bell and Lyall, 2002: 38).

Bell and Lyall argue that just as people collect postcards, there are those who collect gazes:

What they want is to be able to look, and submit to memory, the experience of having looked. The more difficult to get to, the rarer the sight, the more valuable the experience as currency (Bell and Lyall, 2002: 156).

The desire for a new gaze and the anticipation of the holiday are emphasised by Bell and Lyall when they say that 'to a large extent the tourist subject is defined by what has not yet been purchased, done, or seen yet... There is always more. The need to consume more is essential to both tourism and capitalism' (Bell and Lyall, 2002: 156).

The tourist gaze, as outlined above in pictorial terms, is useful insofar as it has some affinity with the way the cinema frames landscapes, particularly in films which portray the exotic, foreign holiday, such as *Summer Holiday* (1963). However, there is something of a contradiction in some of Bell and Lyall's arguments. Holidays of 'acceleration', for example, not only consume the holidaymaker but also require a significant amount of action on their part. Pleasure is derived by the activities of an adventure holiday which the person makes an active part in creating. Urry's theory about landscapes 'consuming' the holidaymaker is similarly suspect in that it appears to imply that holidaymakers have no autonomy in their leisure time pursuits.

Likewise, the postcard appears to have multiple purposes, some of which perhaps demonstrate an 'active' part of holidaymaking, in contradiction to this idea of the all-consuming. Not only does the postcard capture a moment (as part of the holidaymaker's consumption of the landscape), but it also demonstrates to the recipient that they haven't been forgotten, whilst at the same time enabling

the holidaymaker to show-off about where they are. It is an 'active', yet pleasurable form of communication.

The Periphery

As well as the tourist gaze, the idea of the coast as a peripheral space is one that theorists frequently return to, and it is a useful way of theorising bawdy and comic elements of films in further chapters. In order to illustrate this idea of the 'periphery', Inglis (2000), Bennett (1986), and Shields (2002) refer to Bakhtin's (1968) theory of carnival.¹⁶ The seaside is a de-centralised space where, as I have pointed out before, the holidaymaker is allowed to do things which they wouldn't normally do in everyday life. Inglis refers to the beach as the 'uncertain liminal', saying that in the sea we 'might become someone else, freed from propriety', and that this sensation is carried over onto the beach where we laugh with breathless excitement, 'pouring with cold water' (Inglis, 2000: 40). The inclusive nature of the seaside, causes a 'vivid overlapping of classes, customs [and] livelihoods' (Inglis, 2000: 45), largely because everybody looks the same in swimwear, reclining on the sands.

Inglis also claims that the pier and promenade were originally 'playgrounds of the urban boulevardiers who had come to the seaside in order to conduct themselves in more liberal, not to say licentious ways than they could at home' (Inglis, 2000: 40). Certainly, the very nature of the pier as neither land nor sea, and as a place to see and be seen provides the opportunity for it to become a liminal zone in the same way as the beach.

Shields uses Brighton, tracing its history from medicalised Regency resort, to its reputation for 'dirty weekends' and altercations between Mods and Rockers, to demonstrate his theory of the seaside as a 'liminal zone'. Shields defines liminality as a period or place of transition, a 'liberation from the regimes of

¹⁶ Bakhtin, Mikhail, 1968 edition, (translated by Iswolsky, Helene), *Rabelais and His World*, London: MIT Press.

normative practices' (Shields, 2002: 84), and describes the beach as a margin between land and sea where transgressive behaviour is allowed to take place. Shields also uses theories of 'liminality' to define Brighton's reputation for criminality with particular reference to Greene's depiction of the town in *Brighton Rock* (1936), and also the news reports of the Bank Holiday riots of 1964.

He argues that Bakhtin's theory of the carnivalesque is central to understanding the construction of Brighton's associations with liminal pleasure within British culture, and also Brighton's changing image from Regency resort, to Victorian gaiety, for instance. A growing sense of 'spectacle' in the mid nineteenth century, alongside a growing number of visitors to Brighton contributed to the town's transition from a place of ritualised health-pursuits into a location for fun and social mixing. This spectacle is not so much a spectacle of the landscape and the sea, but rather a spectacle of people and activity. Shields does briefly mention an early fascination with the 'sublime' pleasures of feeling the strong coastal winds hitting the body, but doesn't dwell on this. Instead, he concentrates on the 'circus atmosphere' of the 'seafront parades' and a 'growing focus on the 'sights' of the naked bathers...portrayed as either comic invalids or 'bathing beauties' (Shields, 2002: 81).

Shields cites Bakhtin by saying that carnival is a 'spectacle lived by people who are all participants, actors, not spectators', and that it offers a 'completely different, non official...aspect of the world, of man, and of human relations' (Shields, 2002: 89). The breakdown in hierarchies is possible at the seaside, Shield says, due to the beach's status as a 'free zone' which can change 'with every tide' (Shields, 2002: 89). The suspension of rules and regulations was historically evident in the social mixing of the beach, where day-trippers who couldn't afford to use bathing machines simply rolled up their trouser legs and paddled, or where mothers allowed their children to undress beneath their skirts.

A carnivalesque attitude prevails in seaside postcard humour. Shields points out that authority is turned on its head and mocked in postcards that portray policemen as drunks, and clergymen as sexually repressed, yet prone to Freudian slips of the tongue. Likewise, what Bakhtin (1968) refers to as 'grotesque representations of the body' are also evident in saucy postcards featuring generously proportioned women, insipid, hen-pecked husbands, and references to 'ozone' as a *double entendre* for extra-marital sex. As Bakhtin suggests:

Wherever men laugh and curse, particularly in a familiar environment, their speech is filled with bodily images. The body copulates, defecates, overeats, and men's speech is flooded with genitals, bellies, defecations, urine, disease, noses, [and] mouths (Bakhtin, 1968: 319).

Shields (2002) suggests a bawdy image of Brighton formed a background for divorce cases where the 'dirty weekend' was often used as evidence of a husband's infidelity. Although proof of infidelity was not required for divorce after 1936, this myth of Brighton as a destination for dirty weekends remains to this day, albeit in a more post-modern, knowing way. As late as the 1950s, however, the 'dirty weekend' could still cause offence. In the film *Genevieve* (1953), the very suggestion that two unmarried characters (played by Kenneth More and Kay Kendall) were destined for Brighton as part of the vintage car rally caused consternation amongst the British Board of Film Classification, the implication being that they were going to have pre-marital sex at the journey's end (Harper and Porter, 2005: 230).

Hetherington and 'Heterotopia'

In contradiction to Shields, Hetherington (1997) sees this theory of 'marginal' spaces such as Brighton – where the periphery is seen as a direct contrast to the centre – as too simplistic, and one which he calls a 'binary approach' (Hetherington, 1997: 26). Instead, Hetherington chooses to use the term 'heterotopia' to describe alternative spaces such as the seaside. He doesn't

consider a 'margin' to be the polar opposite to a centre (or a place of social order), saying instead that Heterotopia are places of 'otherness' that can exist alongside places of social order:

Heterotopia...are margins in the sense of the unbounded and blurred space-between rather than the easily identified space at the edge. Margins are spaces of traffic. They are spaces that contain both the central and the 'marginal' in ways that unsettle social and spatial relations (Hetherington, 1997: 27)

As with Inglis and Shields, however, Hetherington uses the idea of 'liminality' to discuss his concepts of heterotopia, and similarly uses carnival to discuss the disruption of social ordering that takes place in these alternative spaces. In terms of the holiday film, I would argue that the 'periphery' as highlighted by Inglis and Shields is a more useful theoretic framework for my reading of the holiday film. My intention is to explore how the holiday narrative is constructed as a contrast to the every day, so I would argue that Hetherington is less useful in this context.

Bennett and the 'Regional Popular'

Bennett (1986), however, presents several readings of Blackpool, one of which is not unlike Hetherington's theories on heterotopia. He places the resort at the centre of progress and commerce in the nineteenth century, and this will prove useful when I look at film representations of Blackpool later on. His essay on 'Hegemony, Ideology, Pleasure: Blackpool' (in Bennett et al (eds.), 1986) is significant for looking at the enduring image of Blackpool as Britain's most popular working class holiday resort. Bennett points out, for example, how the marginal, unregulated status of the beach enabled side-shows and lower-class entertainments to set up shop, eventually driving away the upper classes and their predilection for 'rational' pursuits, and also uses Bakthin's work on the carnivalesque to highlight the Blackpool holidaymakers' fascination with freak shows, joke shops and phallic novelties. He also outlines how a corporeal sense of the body is realised in the mechanical fairground rides which throw people from side-to-side and upside-down.

Of greater interest, perhaps are his thoughts on the ideology of Blackpool's 'regional popular' and how the town's promotional literature has always placed itself at the centre of Britain (and formerly the British Empire), ahead of London in offering the 'latest...up to the minute forms of popular entertainment' (Bennett et al (eds.), 1986: 142). The regional spirit he paints of Lancashire as being 'no-nonsense, down-to-earth' and 'constructed in opposition to the all-talk, no action pretensions of the South' (Bennett et al (eds.), 1986: 135) is reminiscent of the ethos constructed in the music and film of northern entertainers such as Gracie Fields, and particularly the spirit of the film *Sing As We Go* (1934), which uses the locations of industrial Lancashire and Blackpool to such great effect. Money generated by the factories played a huge role in the lives of mill-workers, by funding public and private amenities such as museums, parks, libraries, sports clubs, brass bands and day-trips to the seaside (Bennett et al (eds.), 1986: 143). These organised trips to the seaside constructed associations between work and pleasure, and forged feelings of loyalty in the workforce.

A discourse of modernity during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century also arguably put the resort at the centre of popular entertainment during the time of the British Empire. Bennett says this is evident not only in the mechanical rides of the Pleasure Beach and the promotional hoopla that surrounded them, but also in the adaptation of imperialist motifs in architecture, which echoed styles from the East, and in popular entertainments such as mock naval battles. Bennett's case for Blackpool putting itself at the centre of the Empire, and re-diverting some of the cultural hegemony of the south, appears, however, to go against the claims of Inglis and Shields, who argue that the seaside is a de-centralised space which allows for marginal pleasures. Bennett's analysis constructs Blackpool as an oppositional place (to the South, and London in particular), yet he doesn't describe the place as resisting all that the capital stands for. Rather, the implication is that anything the South can do, Blackpool can do it better, bigger and with more style. This would suggest that Bennett

considers the seaside more as an area which can exist alongside the centre as an alternative space.

The Holiday and National Identity

Images of the British seaside are bound up in national identity. When someone refers to a 'traditional British holiday' it is taken for granted that others will understand immediately what they are talking about, without giving it much thought or analysis. Feelings about the 'traditional' British holiday can be infused with nostalgia, pleasure, a sense of national pride, or a certain amount of irony, depending on personal standpoint. To some, the seaside holiday is now considered passé, belonging to a bygone era, before the British could afford (or were even aware of) holiday destinations in Europe or on the other side of the world. The British seaside holiday is often seen as un-exotic, basic and constructed by a series of seemingly uncomplicated thrills and rituals, but these rituals are only second nature to British people because they have been practiced again and again over the centuries, as outlined in the history of the holiday I have given above.

Similarly, the 'Costa' holiday with its 'British' themed bars such as *Lineker's* (named after the footballer and TV presenter, Gary Lineker), is now seen as a throwback to the 1960s, '70s and '80s, and something of a compromise for people who want a holiday abroad but cannot do without the familiar signs and signifiers of a traditional British holiday. This image of the British holiday is mainly white and working class, and arguably constructed in opposition to more tranquil and exotic ideas of the foreign holiday, for instance.

Benedict Anderson (1991) says that nationalism is formed by a number of processes including organised language, a sense of sovereignty and a sense of territorial boundaries, but a process of 'imagining' this sense of community also forms it. He uses the 'mass ceremony' of reading daily newspapers to describe how a person can be involved in a private act, yet be aware that 'the ceremony

he performs is being replicated simultaneously by thousands (or millions) of others of whose existence he is confident, yet of whose identity he has not the slightest notion' (Anderson, 1991: 35).

In *Waving the Flag*, Higson, summarises Anderson's argument that in the modern world, alongside language and education, cultural experiences and modern forms of communication such as cinema, make a bigger contribution to a sense of nationhood than 'militaristic activity or blood lines', saying that 'it is by these means that the people inhabiting a nation-state come to know themselves as a community and as different to others outside this community' (Higson, 1995: 6).

If, as Anderson says, the construction of nationhood is partly due to an understanding of 'territorial boundaries', it could be argued that the British holiday intensifies this awareness. A visit to the coast increases a person's awareness of Britain as an island. Similarly, a visit to another country increases a sense of 'difference' or 'otherness' from the nation the holidaymaker is visiting. This difference may consciously be expressed as a sense of 'Britishness' on behalf of the British holidaymaker. As Gilroy points out, 'community is as much about difference as it is about similarity and identity' (Gilroy, 2005: 322). Therefore it could be suggested that this idea of 'difference' has resulted in the exaggerated construction of Britishness in the Spanish Costas, to create a 'home from home'. Jackson and Penrose argue that:

Many English people regard the notion of "race" or ethnicity as something that applies only to other people, to "minority" groups. Their own identities are taken for granted and thought to be unproblematic because they are so rarely examined (Jackson and Penrose (eds.) 1993: 9 – 10).

Representations of the British seaside holiday are ethnically constructed as 'white', and as Jackson and Penrose say, 'taken for granted'. This is partly due to its nostalgic and heritage associations, but nevertheless, the representation of

non-white British citizens is still very rare in holiday advertising and brochures.¹⁷ Even white British citizens for whom English is not their first language may find it hard to assimilate into some seaside resorts, as was discovered by the woman who was asked to leave an Isle of Wight gift shop for speaking Welsh to her own sister.¹⁸

There are several ways in which national identity might be constructed through the holiday, including national identity and landscape, national identity and the heritage industry, and also in what Billig (1995) calls 'banal nationalism'. I will now look at some of these ideas in more detail and suggest which ones are useful for reading representations of the British holiday in film.

National Identity and Landscape

Just as nations 'imagine communities', they can also 'imagine places'. Shurmer-Smith and Hannam (1994) make an interesting point about this. They say that places have 'no objective reality, only intersubjective ones' (Shurmer-Smith and Hannam, 1994: 13). In other words, one person's experience or memories of a place may be totally different to another's. They continue:

Think about all the times you have been somewhere you visited as a child and say that it is smaller, when you revisit somewhere you were in love and find that it is surprisingly mundane, when you go somewhere that you once thought was the height of sophistication and find that it is embarrassingly tacky (Shurmer-Smith and Hannam, 1994: 14)

The construction of community, however, relies to a certain extent upon a similar reading of given signs which go some way to providing the reader with a certain feeling of 'kinship' to those around him or her. The holidaymaker arguably constructs the holiday, but this construction also includes an element of

¹⁷ This notion of 'invisibility' which is highlighted by Neal and Agyeman (2006: 2) is something I will return to in Chapter 8.

¹⁸ Ramnarayan, Abhinav, (2009), 'Woman thrown out of shop for speaking Welsh', www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2009/jun/26/welsh-speakers-isle-of-wight

negotiation with society, which plays some part in enabling the 'imagining' of the place which is being visited. Everyone's holiday experience may be unique, but the holidaymaker is encouraged to consume and take part in various signs, images and cultural practices which construct an 'imagined' or shared experience of the holiday resort. This shared 'idea' of a place might work on the level of the 'banal', which I will return to later, but theoretical analyses of national identity and place are frequently pitched at the level of the sublime, or linked to moments of historical significance, as I will demonstrate.

Bell and Lyall, for example, touch upon the role that the sublime landscape plays on constructing national identity:

The local visitor to one of the natural icons of his or her own country is a participant in the drama of nation. The site visited will be extremely familiar (from representations of it) before the visit; but in this realization, a further connection is made with fellow nationals who share "ownership" of the site (Bell and Lyall, 2002: 172).

The British coastline is often imagined in terms of areas of 'unspoilt' beauty, as this is the image that is usually promoted in travel guides and brochures. Walton traces this 'unspoilt' image of the English coast to Britain's pride as a sea-faring nation, as represented in its art:

Bound up in this England was an equation between the sea, patriotism and national identity, or so the paintings of J.M.W. Turner and William Lisle Bowles at the turn of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries have been interpreted (Walton citing Quilley, 2000: 122).¹⁹

British national identity appears to rely to a great extent on nostalgia myths, looking back to times when there was a supposed stronger sense of loyalty to the Empire and monarchy. These white, conservative feelings can also be bound up in attitudes to the landscape, and as mentioned above, a traditional seaside landscape is usually considered to be an unspoilt, 'rural' coastline, or else a

¹⁹ Quilley, Geoff, *Imagining Nations*, 1998.

remainder of the Victorian seaside resort, with its wrought-iron pier and promenade.

Lowenthal (1991) stresses that Britain's national landscape is English, rather than British, because the landscape that British people have been led to identify with is one of the cultivated English countryside. He points to several elements which contribute to Britain's sense of national identity via the English landscape, three of which are of particular interest when thinking about the traditional British seaside holiday.

Firstly, Lowenthal says that because Britain is an island, rather than part of mainland Europe, its 'insularity' differentiates the nation from all other European nations, saying that 'the sea serves treble duty: it limits size, marks boundaries, and insulates against continental contaminants' (Lowenthal, 1991: 214). This sense of place and boundary may contribute to the compulsion of British people to flock towards the coast at least once a year, during periods of free time.

Secondly, he emphasises the contrast between the untouched and untamed national landscapes of other countries such as Switzerland, and the 'created landscape' of England, saying that 'English culture tames and adorns nature' (Lowenthal, 1991: 215). This can be found in the patchwork fields of cultivated farmland, but also in attempts to tame the coastline for visual pleasure through the building of promenades, piers and other seaside attractions to create pleasurable vantage points.

Thirdly, Lowenthal draws our attention to the importance that nostalgia plays in the English love of landscapes. This, he says, is evident in myth-making constructed by 'childhood memories of sunlit fields...picturesque villages' and 'peaceful beaches with the English enjoying themselves in their own time-honoured fashion' (Lowenthal, 1991: 217). A fondness for an imagined English landscape has resulted in the transformation of farmland into sites for tourism: for

example areas of Wiltshire which have been preserved by English Heritage on archeological grounds, or the transformation of Grouse-farming land into the National Park of the Peak District. Likewise, nostalgia plays a large part in what the British have come to expect from a British seaside resort, not only in their expectations of the architecture and environment (piers, promenades, Victorian wrought-iron work), but also in the colourful attractions, food stalls, and entertainments, which stretch far back over one and a half centuries. Tim Lott considers how the seaside holiday plays such a part in 'English' culture. As he looks through family photographs from the 1920s, he muses:

The seaside snaps are somehow the most evocative, because the sand and the sea feel buried deep in the English unconscious, the romance of starfish, and rock-pools, red crabs the size of tea plates and cubes of ice-cream (Lott, 1996: 45).

Although landscape plays a part in some of the films that I will be analysing later – such as *Hands Across the Ocean* – a framing of the 'sublime' landscape is rare in holiday films, which appear to prioritise more raucous representations of British resorts, rather than 'landscapes devoid of human presence' (Hockenhull, 2008: 82).²⁰ A nostalgic view of the seaside, however, is suggested in many of these films, through recreations of some of the holiday practices outlined above.

National Identity and the Heritage Industry

The nostalgic construction of the British seaside resort appears to play an increasing role in Britain's heritage industry. This can be found, for example, not only in English Heritage attractions such as Brighton's Royal Pavilion, but also in the aforementioned resort of Southwold which Addley describes as having a 'pungent...distillation of nostalgic English twee' and which one local resident complains 'outsiders' want to turn into a 'heritage Disneyland' (Addley, 2007: 7).

²⁰ Hockenhull provides an analysis of sublime British landscapes in the films of Powell and Pressburger, comparing 'frozen moments' in their films with neo-romantic paintings of the 20th century (Hockenhull, 2008: 2).

In *On Living in an Old Country*, Wright describes the England of 1979 as 'an anthropological museum', where relics of the past (such as landscapes and historical buildings) are preserved and re-packaged in 'closely held iconography of what it is to be English' (Wright, 1991: 1 – 2). He argues that although mythical history linked to ideas of national identity becomes much more obvious during times of national crisis (such as war), it is also evident in 'the late nineteenth century preservation movement' and 'its attempt to articulate ideas of beauty, culture and historical significance against the excesses of capitalist development and accumulation' (Wright, 1991: 183), the feelings of which can still be felt today through the work of the National Trust and English Heritage, for example.

Samuel (1994) examines several ways in which the heritage industry has been criticised, saying that 'heritage-baiting has become a favourite sport of the metropolitan intelligentsia' and is 'accused of wanting to turn the country into a gigantic museum' (Samuel, 1994: 260). One of the reasons he says that the heritage industry has been denigrated is because it is associated with the 'world of entertainment', and says:

Heritage is accused of trivializing the past, playing with history, focusing on unworthy objects. Its predilection for dressing up is thought of as childish, while its association with the holiday trades is almost by definition demeaning (Samuel, 1994: 265).

Samuel aligns the denigration of heritage and its consumers with Lindsay Anderson's critiquing of the Margate funfair in *O Dreamland*, the 'Americanized' and 'standardized' seaside shows highlighted by J. B. Priestley, and the 'passive' seaside audiences in John Osborne's *The Entertainer* (Samuel, 1994: 268). He then goes on to discuss how modern theme parks have, 'in contemporary left-wing demonology...become the latest in a long line of opiates of the masses' including Butlin's holiday camps, bingo halls, and Hollywood films (Samuel, 1994: 268). For Samuel:

The perceived opposition between 'education' and 'entertainment', and the unspoken and unargued-for assumption that pleasure is almost by definition mindless, ought not to go unchallenged. There is no reason to think that people are more passive when looking at old photographs or film footage, handling a museum exhibit, following a local history trail, or even buying a historical souvenir, than when reading a book (Samuel, 1994: 271).

His argument is useful when considering how popular pleasures have been undermined by the likes of Adorno, Debord, and Hoggart, for example, and how these critiques appear to deny any act of agency in the consumer. Such critiques of popular pleasures can remove any sense of 'active' enjoyment on behalf of the holidaymaker and film audience, and therefore need to be questioned when analysing the holiday and British film.

Banal Nationalism and the British Holiday

So far I have highlighted some of the ways in which the nation can be constructed through ideas of heritage and images of rural England. One of the problems with looking at national identity in this way, however, is that it is frequently aligned with rather grandiose iconography such as the sublime landscape or moments of historical or cultural significance, such as Wright's description of the recovery of the Mary Rose in the 1980s (Wright, 1991: 163). Most film representations of the British holiday do not tend to frame the landscape in this way, focusing instead on its more 'liminal' and 'carnavalesque' attractions.

In order to appreciate how the British holiday might be 'imagined' on a more prosaic level, Billig's theory of 'banal nationalism' is a useful point of reference. According to Billig the ideological habits of banal nationalism 'are not removed from everyday life' but 'flagged' daily, 'in the lives of its citizenry' (Billig, 1995: 6). Billig points out that away from the idea of 'national days' and large-scale gestures of national identity, there are days when flags are displayed, but go unnoticed:

Indeed, it seems strange to suppose that occasional events, bracketed off from ordinary life, are sufficient to sustain a continually remembered national identity. It would seem more likely that the identity is part of a more banal way of life in the nation-state (Billig, 1995: 45 – 46).

As well as the idea of unnoticed and un-waved flags which might hang on a public building (Billig, 1995: 38), Billig uses weather reports in daily newspapers to demonstrate how such an item might routinely, yet unconsciously construct an idea of 'nation' in the reader. For example, the reports usually contain a map of Britain which is not labelled as such, because 'the shape of the national geography is presumed to be recognizable' (Billig, 1995: 116 – 117). Billig similarly analyses the sports pages of daily newspapers to reveal how articles referring to 'our' sports stars, and 'Battler Brits' pitch national teams and players against those of 'other' nations, and points out that it is not only the 'vulgar' tabloids that use this type of language, but also the liberal *Guardian*, which allows 'its sport pages [to] reproduce the typical British focus, inviting readers to celebrate 'our' victories and to salute 'our' heroes' (Billig, 1995: 121).

If this theory of 'banal nationalism' is applied to the British holiday, it may be useful in understanding how national identity can be constructed through seemingly trivial cultural practices such as paddling in the cold sea, joining in patriotic seaside 'sing-alongs' and buying sticks of rock. The northern rock and sweet manufacturer John Bull, for instance, has the eponymous British character as the company's trademark – replete with a Union Jack on his waistcoat.²¹ Similarly, the 2008 billboards which advertised Blackpool Pleasure Beach as 'a great British day out' with the iconic Big Dipper ride shown against a rippling Union Jack flag might also serve the same 'banal' function. Billig points out that 'banal does not imply benign' (Billig, 1995: 6), and it is this type of 'flagging' which might almost unwittingly construct an idea of nation for the 'traditionally British' holidaymaker. The programme for Scarborough's Naval Warfare, which

²¹ www.john-bull.com

takes place during the holiday season, tries to distance itself from any associations with real battles, and reminds the reader that it is 'a holiday attraction and meant to be fun' (Scarborough Borough Council, (no date): 2). However, the significance of the re-enactment is also acknowledged in the statement, 'the thirty minute battle stirs the memories of brave and heroic deeds which are part of our naval history, and our heritage' which emphasises that the holiday attraction is anything but benign (Scarborough Borough Council, (no date): 5). Similarly, the practices of the British holidaymaker abroad, such as wine-tasting or watching bull-fights, which appear to place them within the traditions of the country they are visiting, can be said to construct ideas of 'difference' which ideologically place the holidaymaker 'outside' the nations they are visiting.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have examined the history of the holiday, and also looked at different ways in which the holiday can be theorised. It has been important to look at the history of the holiday, in order to understand how the films I will be analysing can be contextualised in historical terms, and also to understand how the holiday might be culturally constructed over time, through a process of emulation, and the passing on of traditions and cultural practices.

Looking at the various ways in which the holiday can be theorised has helped to identify ways in which the holiday in British film can be analysed. For instance, I will often be considering the holiday film in terms of Urry's 'tourist gaze' and Shields and Inglis' theories on 'margins' and the 'periphery'. The latter two theories are closely associated with Bakhtin, who is also useful when analysing 'carnavalesque' seaside attractions. Adorno's 'Free Time' may be useful in Chapter 4, when I look more closely at the holiday as a contrast to work, but, as I indicated above, Adorno, Debord and Hoggart, need to be treated with some element of caution due to their tone of cultural elitism. Debord's theory on 'the spectacle', for example, is exaggerated at best, but the holiday can arguably be

framed as a spectacle through the eyes of the holidaymaker in a film's narrative, and consequently for the film audience. Cultural studies preoccupations with class, gender and national identity will be at the forefront of most of my analysis, but I won't be explicitly referring to Bourdieu's 'habitus' and Billig's 'banal nationalism' in great detail. Instead, these theories will be implicit in my analysis of class relations between characters in the films, and my understanding of how national identity might be constructed through the narrative process.

Now that I have explored and revealed which theoretical frameworks I have chosen to analyse the films, in the next chapter I will be considering what the social function of the holiday film might be.

Chapter 2 – The British Holiday Film and Its Audience

Introduction

In the previous chapter I looked at both the history of the holiday and how the holiday has been theorised. In this chapter I will now begin to think more specifically about the holiday film, and what the social function of these films might be. Landy argues that recent studies of genre pictures have 'sought to analyse the ways in which mass cultural productions are part of a meaningful system of social exchange in which the audience, rather than being the passive consumer of these texts, is an integral element in their production and reception' (Landy, 1991: 4). Therefore, when looking at film in terms of national cinema, it isn't just the film texts which have to be considered, but also the industry which produces them, and the society which consumes them.

Higson emphasises that a 'representational' approach to national cinema must not fall into the trap of being 'reflectionist', and that it is also important to consider how cinema 'might actively work to produce' national identity 'through its own textual processes and, forms of engagement with the spectator' (Higson, 1995: 5 – 6). Street shares this point of view by saying that although British film is usually categorised by 'economic boundaries', it can also be categorised by 'cultural conceptions', and 'the extent to which they participate in establishing nationhood as a distinct, familiar sense of belonging which is shared by people from different social and religious backgrounds' (Street, 2004: 1).

In this chapter I aim to offer some speculative analysis on the different ways cinema – and the holiday film in particular – can be said to engage with society. I will question whether such films reflect society, or whether they critically engage with it. Mass Observers in the late 1930s, for example, concluded that the cinema had 'a profound effect on the everyday life of all social classes [effecting] their education, fashions, morality, leisure and their social attitudes', alongside

other social influences such as 'religion, politics and sport' (Richardson and Sheridan, (eds.) 1987: 21). Kuhn similarly suggests that 'spectatorship intersect[s] with the feelings and behaviours of social audiences...[informing] people's daily activities and interactions with family members and peers' (Kuhn, 2002: 238). Therefore, it is useful to think about how the holiday film might communicate feelings of community and national identity, by looking beyond the film texts themselves and considering audience reception.

In order to make my speculative analysis, I will be examining some of the ways in which responses to texts have been theorised, including work on 'active' and 'passive' audiences, before looking at box-office statistics and sociological research on cinema audiences in the twentieth century. In so doing, I will offer some of my own thoughts on the popularity of holiday films, and also how audiences might have responded to them.

Different Approaches to Studying Audience Reception

Although there is not a huge amount of material on the social function of British film, Mass Observation and the sociological work carried out by J. P. Mayer in the 1940s provide some useful contemporary sources. Shafer (1997) uses a variety of sources such as contemporary reviews and letters from filmgoers to magazines like *Film Weekly* and *Picturegoer Weekly* to gauge taste preferences and responses to films during the 1930s, whilst Kuhn uses an ethnohistoric approach, and gathers information from what she refers to as 'elders' stories', through oral history recordings and questionnaires, to reveal British cinemagoing experiences of the 1930s (Kuhn, 2002: 239). Looking at research on audience taste preferences of the 1930s and '40s carried out by Poole (1989) and Harper (2004 and 2006) also gives some indication of what kinds of films were most popular in these decades, and therefore what audiences were looking for on their visits to the cinema.

Most of the available data on cinema audiences tends to relate to the 1930s and '40s, which is why I will mostly be concentrating on these two decades in this chapter, but looking at these decades is also useful for the following two reasons. Firstly, it covers a period in which cinema attendance in Britain was at its height, giving a clue as to what audiences looked for when film-going was the most popular form of leisure.²² Secondly, the period in question covers the interwar years of the 1930s which I will be looking at more closely in Chapter 4, and the postwar boom in leisure which is covered in Chapter 5. It is useful therefore, to look at the audience preferences revealed here in comparison with the contextual material and film analysis which appears in subsequent chapters.

Kuhn argues that 'although historical, ethnographic and film-based investigations are normally conducted in separate disciplinary and methodological universes', a process of 'methodological triangulation' combining historical, ethnographic and film-based disciplines, can bring 'together issues around film texts and spectatorial engagements with questions relating to the social audience and the contexts of reception' (Kuhn, 2002: 7). Because the holiday film offers a 'condensed' image of leisure combining the holiday and film, some understanding of how the films may have been received (alongside readings of the texts) is useful for considering what the function of the films might have been, and therefore Kuhn's 'methodological triangulation' is a useful model to follow (Kuhn, 2002: 7).

This method however, would be an undeniably huge task to carry out if I applied it to all the decades analysed in my thesis. The thesis will therefore mostly include film-based analyses, because one of its main purposes is to examine films which have largely been neglected, or to look at a body of films in the context of their subject matter as 'holiday films' which they have not before. A

²² Richards, for example, says that 'cinema-going was indisputably the most popular form of entertainment in Britain in the 1930s' (Richards, 1989: 11), and the immediate postwar period saw the highest record of attendances in British cinemas with over 1,600 million tickets sold in 1946 (Morgan, 2001: 32 – 33).

more in-depth research project on holiday films and their reception, similar to Kuhn's exploration of the 1930s, would be worth returning to as a study in its own right – perhaps focusing on a specific period, such as the immediate postwar when cinema appeared to respond to the boom in holidays for the working-classes. The role of cinema at seaside resorts might also be another area worthy of study. One of the interview questions in Kuhn's fieldwork, for instance, was 'Did you go to the cinema on holiday?' but responses to this question do not appear to have been analysed for the purposes of her book (Kuhn, 2002: 244). Eyles also suggests that seaside towns, as well as major cities, were used for first-runs of main features 'prior to...general release', which seems to highlight the importance of resorts as places of film exhibition, and which also invites further investigation (Eyles, 1996: 180). Having outlined some of the different approaches to studying audience reception, I will now consider the ways in which cinema audiences have been theorised.

The 'Passive' and 'Active' Cinema Audience

In his essay 'Transparencies On Film' Adorno decries mainstream, commercial cinema for the way it ideologically incites 'collective behaviour' in audiences and makes them 'fall into step as if in a parade' (Adorno, 2006: 183). For him, the cinema audience is decidedly passive. He uses the Hollywood film *Anything Goes* (1931)²³ as an example to argue that the viewer's eye is 'carried along' and 'joins the current of all those who are responding to the same appeal' (Adorno, 2006: 183).

Adorno would prefer film as a medium if it didn't use 'standardised' techniques 'which work against...realism', such as 'superimpositions' and 'flashbacks' that 'inform the viewer as to what is being signified or what needs to be added in order to comprehend whatever escapes basic cinematic realism' (Adorno, 2006: 184). However, to say that all commercial films incite the same response from every cinemagoer shows a tendency to oversimplify the role of the audience, and

²³ He incorrectly says that Gracie Fields appears in the film.

the narrative function of such films. It could be argued that cinematic techniques such as 'flashbacks' and 'superimpositions', the use of suspense, and scenes without dialogue help to leave space for a film audience to create some of their own meaning from the experience, rather than make them passive. When looking at how people may respond to novels, for example, Iser says that:

If the reader were given the whole story, and there were nothing left for him to do, then his imagination would never enter the field, the result would be the boredom which inevitably arises when everything is laid out cut and dried before us (Iser, 1974: 275).

Similarly, the cinema audience can be seen to be an 'active' audience, with 'the reader [receiving]' a film 'by composing it' (Iser, 1978: 21). Different members of an audience may not gain the same type of experience from one single film that other people in the auditorium experience. Mayer points this out when he says that:

In the cinema the film is presented to every member of the audience. But the sensation-perception mechanism is unique for every individual. What is perceived is unique in each case, but what is 'seen' is also unique (Mayer, 1946: 59).

He illustrates his point by saying that in essays written by three different schoolgirls about their favourite film *Gone With The Wind* (1939), the 'differences between the three accounts of the film are striking', with one girl remarking on the acting and casting of the main characters, the second on the details of the story, and the third on the thoughts and 'personal relationships' of the characters (Mayer, 1946: 61). Each girl has read the film in a way unique to the other two, and therefore has experienced the film differently, and has a different memory of it. A film like *No Limit*, therefore, might also offer a range of alternative viewing pleasures such as the sights of the seaside resort of Douglas, the thrill of the Tourist Trophy Races, the central heterosexual romance between George Formby's and Florence Desmond's characters, or simply the tongue-in-cheek and smutty innuendo of Formby's songs. As Iser suggests:

One text is potentially capable of several different realizations, and no reading can ever exhaust the full potential, for each individual reader will fill in the gaps in his [or her] own way, thereby excluding the various other possibilities; as he reads, he will make his own decision as to how the gap is to be filled (Iser, 1974: 280).

Adorno makes an analogy between magic lantern shows and the holiday, saying that a holidaymaker who 'spends a few weeks in the mountains abstaining from all work, may unexpectedly experience colourful images of landscapes consolingly coming over him or her in dreams or daydreams' and says that if films were to recreate this 'discontinuous' non-narrative style, 'as the objectifying recreation of this type of experience, [then] film may become art' (Adorno, 2006: 180). However, feature film production is an industry and consequently part of a system of standardisation, but as suggested above, it can also be said to entertain its audience through a certain amount of autonomy and agency. Conversely, rather than being original works of art, feature films are a popular cultural form. An audience would soon tire of having to 'rediscover' cinema as an art form if every new film they went to see provided a completely new set of challenges.

Another way to consider the manner in which an audience might respond to texts is through the work of Althusser who says that 'ideology interpellates individuals as subjects' by 'hailing' the reader (Althusser, 2006: 343). He elaborates:

Ideology 'acts' or 'functions' in such a way that it 'recruits' subjects among the individuals (it recruits them all), or 'transforms' the individuals into subjects (it transforms them all) by the very precise operation which I have called *interpellation* or hailing, and which can be imagined along the lines of the most commonplace everyday police (or other) hailing: 'Hey you there!' (Althusser, 2006: 344 – 345).

Whilst referring to Althusser's theory, Storey (2006) uses advertising to explain how a text 'flatters us into thinking we are the special 'you' of its discourse' (Storey (ed.) 2006: 276 – 277), but this process of 'interpellation' might also work in patriotic films such as *Millions Like Us* (1944) – which addresses the audience

in the title sequence by referring to the 'Millions like you' who appear in the film – and also in popular comedy films which can be said to invite feelings of communality. One of the ways in which comedies invite responses from an audience is through a 'direct mode of address', such as comic songs and asides, whereby characters look into the film camera's lens, and consequently out into the cinema audience (Sutton, 2000: 23 – 25). As Sutton argues, 'British comedy films operate a distinctive mode of address, one which has more in common with the 'open' and interactive forms it derived from live entertainment than the 'closed' and historic ones of the narrative film' (Sutton, 2000: 23). He continues:

The voice of [Anderson's (1991)] 'imagined community' lies at the heart of much British comedy – whether it takes the form of the bond between music-hall performer and audience, the working-class solidarity of early Gracie Fields films, the later, wartime evocations of 'Britishness' in films as different as *Tawny Pipit* and *Gert and Daisy's Weekend* or the more familiar Ealing evocation of the local community as the key unit of social relationships (Sutton, 2000: 24).

A similar feeling is alluded to by Kuhn, who says that part of the sensation of being 'transported' by film is due 'to a remembered sensation of being singled out and addressed individually by characters on the screen' (Kuhn, 2002: 226). Even in films where direct address is not used, but where certain sections of society are depicted or represented, there may be an element of what Althusser calls 'misrecognition' from the audience (Storey (ed.) 2006: 277). As I will explain in Chapter 4, for example, part of the appeal of film stars such as Gracie Fields and George Formby was that to working-class audiences of the 1930s and '40s they appeared to be 'down-to-earth' types from humble backgrounds, which Lancashire audiences considered as 'their own' (Cross, 1990: 132). In turn, their films included characters, 'types' and situations, which audiences would have been familiar with, such as family sing-a-longs around the piano (in *Sing As We Go*), or furtive and awkward attempts at courting (in *No Limit*). Richards, for instance, reveals how 'working-class audiences did...like stars who were both

visibly and audibly from their own background, stars who shared some at least of their attitudes and outlook' (Richards, 1989: 297).

Some of these representations in turn may also be regarded as stereotypes, but nevertheless they would have offered some sense of familiarity for the audience to make comparisons with their own experiences, albeit with an element of escapism. As Shafer says:

Some working-class filmgoers were troubled by the comic portrayals of ordinary people. But those who objected were apparently in the minority; the seeming willingness of at least segments of the film industry to respond to the criticism was offset by the fact that other patrons did not seek and in fact avoided realistic social drama. Escapist cinema remained profitable (Shafer, 1997: 55).

In terms of the holiday, audiences may have been familiar with comic depictions of the Blackpool landlady, for example. Moorhouse admits that she 'has been burlesqued in stage and radio play, caricatured by music hall and concert comedian' but the working-class audience of *Sing As We Go* had probably come across similar characters, or at least heard about them from friends, after their annual visits to the seaside town (Moorhouse, 1955: 66).

Audience Preferences and Box Office Takings

One way of speculating about the appeal of holiday films and how audiences may have responded to them is by looking at the box office takings of the relevant films, and also audience preferences of other types of film and making comparisons. The popularity of some of these films may also be measured by the fact that they have been re-released, enabling the longevity of their appeal to cinema audiences. *Sam Small Leaves Town* was reissued in 1942, *No Limit* in 1946, *Holiday Camp* in 1948, *Bank Holiday* in 1951, and *Sing As We Go* in 1953. Some of these reissues were possibly to make up for shortages of second features during the war, and America's embargo of films into Britain due to the

introduction of the *ad valorem* tax of 1947 – 1948.²⁴ However, the episodic nature of some of the holiday films, and the framing of their narratives through music hall gags, songs and skits, plus the enduring appeal of some of the films' stars arguably made the films ideal for rekindling memories of holidays past, and inviting thoughts of holidays present. *No Limit* also fostered something of a cult following among Isle of Man Tourist Trophy enthusiasts, with the film being revived annually during the races (Dean, 1973: 213).

Poole suggests, however, that 'film companies and cinema chains rarely issue statistics of attendance' and therefore it is difficult to construct an accurate picture of how successful or unsuccessful certain films were on a week-by-week basis (Poole, 1987: 15). Swern and Childs similarly point out that:

Until 1969 reliable box office figures were not made freely available to the cinema press of the day...Distributors and exhibitors kept their receipts a closely guarded secret, but the trade publication *Kinematograph Weekly* and its dedicated staff kept a very close eye on the business and were able to determine which films were the hits, and which were the misses (Swern and Childs, 1995: 4).

The *Kinematograph Weekly* surveys (by R. H. 'Josh' Billings and Bill Atria) give a broad overview of each year's successes, and several of the more popular holiday films do make an appearance in these tables after the Second World War. For example, *Holiday Camp* was named as one of the box office attractions of 1947 after other British films *The Courtneys of Curzon Street*, *Great Expectations*, *Odd Man Out* and *Frieda* (Billings, 1947: 13). The 'Most Promising New Team' was *Holiday Camp*'s Jack Warner and Kathleen Harrison, which gives an indication of the impact of the film, and why it spawned a series of

²⁴ In 1947 a 75 per cent duty was imposed on American films in order to secure the exhibition of British films in the domestic market. These efforts backfired somewhat, when the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA) instigated a boycott of the British market. The duty was subsequently removed in 1948. See Street, 2004: 14 – 15, and Harper, 2006: 362.

'Huggett' films (Billings, 1947: 14).²⁵ In 1953, *Genevieve* was listed as the third most successful British film, with 'Other Money Makers' including *Innocents In Paris* (Billings, 1953: 10). Although war films were still very popular in the postwar period, *Doctor At Sea* was the second most successful film of 1955 running closely after *The Dam Busters* (Billings, 1955: 4).

In the 1960s, a distinction was made between films on 'general release' and those which were 'special presentations' like *Cleopatra* (1963). In 1962, the best feature series was named as *Carry On...*, with *Carry On Cruising* listed as one of the year's top money makers on general release (Billings 1962: 6 – 7). Not surprisingly, *Carry On* films featured heavily in these end-of-year polls, such was the enduring nature of their appeal to British audiences, and in 1969, *Carry On Camping* came second in the Top 10 general releases, with *Carry On Up The Khyber* in fifth place (Atria, 1969: 8 – 10). In 1963 *Summer Holiday* was the second most successful general release after *From Russia With Love* and Cliff Richard was named as one of the most popular stars (Atria, 1963: 4).

Poole, however, points out that although *Kinematograph Weekly* offers some clues about which films were the most successful annual releases on a national level, these tables mostly reflect the taste preferences of West End audiences, and therefore should be compared alongside statistics which also record regional taste preferences (Poole, 1987: 15). Although published records of attendance from individual cinemas are rare, some have emerged such as those of the Majestic, Macclesfield (between 1939 – 1946), analysed by Poole (1987); the Empire, Leicester Square, analysed by Eyles (1989); and the Regent, Portsmouth (of the 1930s and '40s), analysed by Harper (2004 and 2006). These results represent a cross-section of society from England's north, south and capital, and in turn can be broken down into a 'distinction between matinee and evening performances, thus helping...to make distinctions between male and

²⁵ *Holiday Camp* is also listed as one of the main films in the top nine box-office films of 1947 on the Gaumont circuit in Eyles, 1996: 189.

female taste' (Harper, 2004: 565 and 568). Distinctions can also be made between war and peacetime, when the mood of the nation might be different, or a noticeable influx of American troops might make a difference to ticket sales (Poole, 1987 and Harper, 2006).

Eyles' research isn't of much use here because American MGM films mostly filled the Empire's programme, although some British films, including *Innocents In Paris* and *Girls At Sea*, gained healthy receipts – the former selling 52,849 seats over a two-week period in July 1953, and the latter selling 17,811 seats in November 1957 (Eyles, 1989: 43 and 46). Poole's research reveals that the highest number of tickets sold between 1939 and 1946 at the Majestic, Macclesfield was for the patriotic American film *This Is The Army* with 14,662 out of a possible 15,330 seats (in 1944), followed by *Mrs Miniver* with 14,241. The highest-selling British film in this period was *The Wicked Lady* with 15,520 seats sold in 1945 (Poole, 1987: 16). In 1943 the average attendance peaked at the Majestic, but American films were more popular there in this year, with *Holiday Inn* (13,144 seats), *Random Harvest* (12,809) and *Gone With The Wind* (12,416) out-grossing the top three British pictures *Somewhere On Leave* – starring northern comic Frank Randle – (13,119), *In Which We Serve* (11,303) and *The Man In Grey* (10,987) (Poole, 1987: 24). American musicals were popular at the Majestic but a large proportion of the cinema's clientele was made up by US troops stationed in Macclesfield from June 1942 to July 1944, which might explain the popularity of films like *This Is The Army* (Poole, 1987: 17 and 27).

Regarding tastes in British films, George Formby and Gracie Fields were the most popular stars at the Majestic in 1939 with *Its In The Air* (11,626 seats), *Trouble Brewing* (11,480) and *Shipyard Sally* (11,095) providing the biggest box-office figures (Poole, 1987: 19). Formby remained the top British attraction at the Majestic for the next two years, to be replaced by Frank Randle, in 1942 and 1943 (Poole, 1987: 20 – 24). This preference would appear to be region-specific, because, as Poole points out, 'the taste in Macclesfield would seem to be for

comedy which has definite northern links' (Poole, 1987: 19). It is therefore not too difficult to speculate that Formby's *No Limit* and Fields' *Sing As We Go* would have found a receptive audience in Macclesfield, as perhaps would Randle's *Holidays With Pay* in 1948.

In contrast to this, Harper suggests that 'Fields had never been a particular...favourite' at the Regent, Portsmouth in the 1930s (Harper, 2006: 367) and finds instead that Aldwych farces starring Ralph Lynn and Tom Walls, and the comedies of Will Hay appealed to the region's middle-class tastes (Harper, 2004: 572 – 573). According to Harper, the Regent ledgers of the 1930s 'tell us a lot about the tastes of an audience that was probably aspirational, could afford the most expensive cinema in town, and who *liked to be seen there*', continuing:

This audience allayed its anxieties by going to see films which would confirm its own attitudes on culture and sexual probity. Its tastes indicate a liking for the exotic, but a hatred for the vulgar: a liking for minor naughtiness, but a hatred for promiscuity: a liking for the contemporary, but a chariness about modernity: a liking for a stylish, balanced display, and a hatred of cheap films (Harper, 2004: 577).

Holiday-themed films encompassing scenes of the 'exotic' and 'minor naughtiness' may have offered some sort of appeal to the tastes outlined above, although there is little evidence of them in the Regent's ledgers. Most of these films must therefore have appeared at one of Portsmouth's other numerous cinemas, of which there were 22 in 1930, and 29 by the end of the decade (Harper, 2004: 566). However, the Riviera-set *First a Girl* shown in the week beginning 25 January 1936 sold a very respectable 20,945 tickets at the Regent.

²⁶ The film's exotic setting would undoubtedly have lifted the audience out of the post-Christmas January blues, but its star, Jessie Matthews, would also have

²⁶ Harper categorises any 1930s film at the Regent selling over 25,000 tickets in a week as a 'runaway hit' and anything over 19,000 as a 'major success' (Harper, 2004: 570). For wartime, Harper lowers the bar to 20,000 for a 'runaway hit' and 16,000 for a 'major success' due to the 'overall serious drop in attendance figures' (Harper, 2006: 366).

been a big attraction to the sophisticated tastes of the Regent's audience (Harper, 2004: 583). The film *Bank Holiday* fared less well with 12,178 tickets sold in the week beginning 11th June 1938. Harper points out that attendances fall during summer months, but that this is usually from 16th June to 11th August (Harper, 2004: 568). Nevertheless, the film may have fared poorly as a result of re-presenting a holiday atmosphere which the Regent's middle-class and respectable working-class audience could have been experiencing in reality, in nearby seaside resorts such as Brighton and Bognor Regis.

Analysis of box office figures gives us some indication of what type of films were popular at given times, and in certain regions, but as Poole argues:

They do not tell us about personal reactions. They do not tell us why people went to see a particular film or whether they enjoyed it (Poole, 1987: 29).

In order to understand the social function of holiday films in more detail, it may help to examine the results of Mass Observation surveys and the film audience 'autobiographies' collated by J. P. Mayer in the 1940s.

Mass Observation and Film

Mass Observation held a survey with the audiences of three cinemas in Bolton in March 1938. The cinemas were chosen 'to represent the three different levels of cinema operation' with the Odeon being the most luxurious, The Crompton having a middle-range 'mixed family audience' and The Palladium, which was a 'downmarket' cinema, with a working-class audience from the city-centre area (Richardson and Sheridan, (eds.) 1987: 32). The ages of the respondents ranged from 7 to 78, with 62 per cent of them being 30 or under (Richardson and Sheridan, (eds.) 1987: 33).

Questions were asked about the regularity of their visits, the types of films they preferred – whether American or British – and also the genres or subject matters of films they liked and disliked. The most popular type of film overall for both men

and women was musical romance, with drama and tragedy second, and history and crime joint third. Slapstick comedy and cartoons were the least popular (Richardson and Sheridan, (eds.) 1987: 34).

The majority of respondents preferred American films to British because of their fast pace and 'natural' actors, although many stated that they didn't like the American actors' accents and use of slang (Richardson and Sheridan, (eds.) 1987: 101 and 108). When responding about what they would like to see more of, most people commented that they would like to see more humour, more beautiful things, more action and more people like themselves, one example being the 26-year-old woman who attended the Odeon and asked for:

More real life stuff treated with imagination and insight. Situations that are real, and yet lift one 'out of oneself' more. I like to see films containing my favourite actor or actress – always *real* people (Richardson and Sheridan, (eds.) 1987: 120).

Similarly, an 18-year old woman who visited the Palladium commented that she didn't like to see overly made-up actresses and too-lavish settings, instead wanting 'more films of people like us who live and breathe, not beautiful statues or tailored dummies' (Richardson and Sheridan, (eds.) 1987: 55 – 56). Representations of working-class characters were sometimes treated as suspect. A 32-year old male customer of the Odeon commented that 'when scenes are depicted of working class life, they are generally portrayed as a lot of buffoons, without manners or understanding' (Richardson and Sheridan, (eds.) 1987: 96). Gracie Fields and George Formby were singled out as popular British stars, with one man looking forward to seeing Gracie in a Hollywood film, and another requesting to see *No Limit* again (Richardson and Sheridan, (eds.) 1987: 46 and 83). Travel films and beautiful scenery were appreciated,²⁷ although one 28-year-old woman complained that 'sometimes the commentator talks too much and hinders appreciation of the scene' (Richardson and Sheridan, (eds.) 1987: 122).

²⁷ See for example, Richardson and Sheridan, (eds.) 1987: 103 – 4, 105, and 114.

What can be gleaned from this information is that audiences didn't want total escapism. They wanted to be able to forget the cares and stresses of their everyday lives, but at the same time enjoy a film which resembled something of their own experience. The films of Fields and Formby arguably offer portrayals of working-class life not far beyond the experiences of the cinema-going public. Formby may be a 'buffoon' but he always comes out on top in his films, representing something of an underdog-turned-hero. The holiday film might also offer film audiences an experience they could identify with, whilst at the same time re-presenting the holiday narrative as something for the audience to 'take them out of themselves', as requested by the aforementioned Odeon attendee (Richardson and Sheridan, (eds.) 1987: 120). Although the holiday film involves some element of travel, the respondents of the Mass Observation survey who enjoyed travelogues tend to be referring to ones with 'exotic' locations, and this isn't really something that is offered by British holiday films until the 1950s and '60s, although the aforementioned *First A Girl* is a rare exception with scenes of the French Riviera.

The downsides to a survey like this, however, is that the respondents largely comment on films they have seen recently, hence the large number that refer to *Victoria The Great* (1937), *Stella Dallas* (1937) and *A Star Is Born* (1937). This means that many filmgoers will only be referring to films within recent memory, rather than offering a more considered or objective opinion of the impact of many different types of films they have seen over the years. People might also write answers which they think cinema managers *want* to read, rather than being completely honest. Several of the answers are worded as if writing to the cinema managers, rather than Mass-Observation, and the fact that cash prizes and complementary tickets were to be given out to the most comprehensive answers may have influenced those taking part, especially as the answers were not given anonymously.

Filmgoer 'Autobiographies' of the 1940s

This issue of honesty is also a problem that has to be considered when looking at the sociological work of J. P. Mayer in the 1940s. Mayer placed an advert in *Picturegoer* in February 1945 which asked people whether films ever influenced them with regard to personal decisions or behaviour (such as love, divorce, manners and fashion) and also whether films ever appeared in their dreams (Mayer, 1946: 181). He followed this piece of research by placing another advert in *Picturegoer*, in order to discover how films affected people's 'whole development rather than on only one or two aspects of their lives' (Mayer, 1948: 13).

The answers were written in the form of short essays, but were led by questions which asked whether films had ever given the cinemagoer the desire to travel, or any ambitions to pursue certain careers, for instance. Mayer himself questions whether the respondents might exaggerate their answers, and also whether they can 'be taken as a representative sample of our population' (Mayer, 1948: 15). Both points have to be considered, firstly due to the leading nature of the questions and because prizes were offered to the best responses; and secondly because most of the essays appear to be written by middle-class readers of *Picturegoer*, which don't necessarily represent the general population of British cinemagoers. Although the essays may reveal something about middle-class audience responses to films in the 1940s, it may help to compare Mayer's results alongside the research carried out by Harper (2006) on the 'more low-brow' tastes of audiences at the Regent, Portsmouth during the 1940s (Harper, 2006: 367).

When looking at films which sold in excess of 16,000 seats in a week in the 1940s, Harper finds that some of the major American successes at the Regent during the war years were the 20th Century Fox big-budget musicals starring Betty Grable, such as *Springtime in the Rockies* and *Sweet Rosie O'Grady*,

which were particularly popular with female audiences (Harper, 2006: 367). British successes were comedies where the 'gormless man wins through' such as Arthur Askey and George Formby vehicles (Harper, 2006: 368). In contrast to this, Mayer found that:

The Betty Grable films, the Blondie films, the so-called comedies of the Three Stooges type, the cheap detective or murder films are unmistakably disliked. Nor are the 'stupendous' American musicals liked by all (Mayer, 1948: 239).

George Formby films had a mixed reception, with one 18-year-old woman saying that his films aren't 'made enough of' (Mayer, 1948: 187), but which a British male aged 23 loathed alongside the films of Frank Randle:

To generalize again, the George Formby type of comedy makes me tremble when I think it might somehow reach America. For bawdy innuendo it takes whatever cake is awarded for that sort of thing. Congreve might have been able to put it over two-hundred and eighty years ago, but Formby can't do it today. A Purity Drive is called for (Mayer, 1948: 208).

Resistance to Betty Grable musicals and British working-class comedy indicates an elitist attitude from those who took part in the survey, which does not necessarily reflect the views of the wider cinema-going public. Some of the respondents to Mayer's competition, however, give clues as to how the holiday film might have found appeal amongst middle-class audience members, and some of the following comments may be useful to consider in this context. Several people wrote in, for instance, saying that films gave them a desire to travel:

- It is mainly through the influence of travel films that I want to travel when I am older. Foreign lands always look so beautiful when seen through the lenses of a [Technicolor] camera (British male aged 15 ½ quoted in Mayer, 1948: 40).
- Films about European countries always have a special interest for me, especially those about Switzerland and France, the former for

skating, ski-ing and climbing, and France for a gay life, and I hope when final peace comes and everything gets back to normal, I shall have the opportunity of seeing these countries myself (British female short-hand typist, aged 17 ½ quoted in Mayer, 1948: 64).

- Films have made me long to travel especially those about the sea. My biggest regret is that I wasn't a man, otherwise I'd have gone to sea. I think most films have wonderful scenery and I imagine climbing hills and mountains and sailing on lakes until someone besides me says: 'All that is made of cardboard and paper'. I wish folks would keep their thoughts to themselves, because it so often spoils the atmosphere caused by the films... I would like to travel and when I see cliffs and sea combined with the country I wish I could visit every coast in the world. Maybe travelling would inspire me to write more... (British female clerk aged 21 quoted in Mayer, 1948: 81 – 82).

If the above comments reveal middle-class desires to visit foreign lands, other comments referred to the appeal of the British landscape. One 18-year-old woman for instance, found that films further intensified this appeal:

Since I returned from Cornwall and seen (*sic*) its impressive coastline and countryside, I naturally wanted to see films about that and other parts of the country as in *Frenchman's Creek* and *Canterbury Tale*, the latter having given me a peace of mind which I had not known for some time, and a longing to go to Canterbury (Mayer, 1948: 73).

Another woman (aged 25) similarly remarked on *Love Story's* 'marvellous Cornish scenery' and commented that she preferred the portrayal of 'our scenery' in British films above American ones, as more truthful (Mayer, 1948: 227). The above comments regarding travel (at home or abroad) suggest perhaps that such films might invite a desire for holidaymaking for those members of the cinema audience who could afford it. However, in a further *Picturegoer* competition (in which Mayer asked what cinemagoers likes and dislikes of films were), one woman comments that these films offer an 'imagined' feeling of release in spite of travel being beyond her financial means:

Although I should like to travel all over the world, I shall never be able to, and through seeing films about other lands, this makes up a little for not

being able to go, (but only a very little I'm afraid)' (British female G.P.O employee aged 18 quoted in Mayer, 1948: 183).

The same woman commented that she liked films with 'plenty of outdoor scenes, and children', continuing:

Always, I look for a sense of freedom in a film, something refreshing, something that really might happen in real life. Children too, seem to be the embodiment of freedom and happiness... I enjoyed *National Velvet* and the refreshing beautiful scenes shot by the sea (Mayer, 1948: 182 – 183).

The above comments hint at my argument in the introduction to the thesis that films offer an 'imagined' sense of a holiday, and have a restorative and refreshing function. Mayer similarly interprets her comments as a reaction to her class status and a job in which, 'shut in the office, she appears to satisfy her longing for fresh air by the fantasy fulfilment which films provide' (Mayer, 1948: 242).

Mayer's findings also reveal that middle-class cinemagoers wanted to see more people 'like themselves', just as Mass Observers had found in their investigation (as highlighted in Richardson and Sheridan, (eds.) 1987: 120). Many respondents said, for example, that they liked British films such as *This Happy Breed* (1944), *The Way Ahead* (1944) and *Millions Like Us*, for their authentic portrayal of British people. One British female aged 19 said, for example:

There is nothing I dislike more than an imitation of Hollywood in British films: imitation in dialogue, accent, and action... Now take *Millions Like Us*. Here was not perfection, I admit. But here was sincerity, pathos and charm. Here were real, every-day people. Here was a very appealing and moving, natural love theme (Mayer, 1948: 192).

Similarly, another respondent (named as no. 23A) said that they could really relate to the 'witty dialogue' and characterisations in *This Happy Breed* which made the filmgoer feel as though they had 'met that family':

The aunt who had 'turns', the harassed mother, the 'boy next door', once more you shared with them their happiness and sorrow, just as you did in *In Which We Serve* (Mayer, 1948: 195).

These findings would seem to suggest that audiences enjoyed films which they could relate to on an every day level, although Harper also points out that from the Regent ledger of the 1940s 'audiences preferred films [such as Melodramas] that dealt with their anxieties on a symbolic level, rather than those that alluded directly to their lives' (Harper, 2006: 380). Holiday films therefore might offer characters which audience members could identify with, to a certain extent, but conversely, the liminal setting of the seaside might also give them an opportunity to live out fantasies of the holiday romance – as seen in the various productions of *Hindle Wakes* – or to deal with symbolic anxieties such as those provided by the introduction of more sensational characters like the 'mannequin murderer' in *Holiday Camp*.

A Speculative Analysis of the 'Holiday Film'

Throughout this chapter I have examined how films might work ideologically to 'hail' members of an audience, and make them feel that they are being addressed (Althusser, 2006). However, by referring to Iser (1974 and 1978), it could be argued that audience responses to films aren't necessarily passive. Films can also illicit audience response on a more prosaic or social level, by influencing fashion and behaviour,²⁸ and by also providing 'a taken-for-granted component of girl talk', with 'gossip about the cinema...interwoven with other, non-film related, topics' (Kuhn, 2002: 116). On a similar note, Mass Observers suggest that:

It is reasonable to suppose that the average man who goes to the pictures every week is influenced more than somewhat by the films that he sees on the screen. It is just as reasonable to suppose that of all films that he sees those that influence him most are the 'family films' (Richardson and Sheridan, (eds.) 1987: 297).

If all of the above findings in this chapter are applied to holiday-themed films, it may be possible to begin to make assumptions about the appeal of such films. It

²⁸ See for example, Mayer, 1946: 218 and 223.

could be argued, for example, that they have the potential to take a filmgoer 'out' of his or herself (Richardson and Sheridan, (eds.) 1987: 120) or transport the filmgoer 'away from the dull things' (Kuhn, 2002: 226). The filmic holiday journey offers a sense of escape, and a temporary release from the stresses of every day life. Holiday films largely include families and narratives which contemporary audiences could relate to, enabling the audience to 'not merely find on the screen individual characters that resemble people that they know, but [a] whole set-up...drawn to make the screen family act *as a whole* like the family next door' (Richardson and Sheridan, (eds.) 1987: 296).

Mass Observers and Mayer found that many films which made a lasting impression often had a life 'beyond' that of the cinema, for example, in introducing popular songs,²⁹ or starring personalities that had forged a career in music hall like Gert and Daisy and the aforementioned Fields and Formby (Richardson and Sheridan, (eds.) 1987: 293). Holiday films can also be said to have wider associations with holiday-type entertainment, starring performers who were popular in end-of-pier shows and other seaside venues, and by representing humour familiar from seaside postcards. George Formby was hugely popular at Blackpool Opera House in the 1930s and his films may have introduced popular songs that were consequently heard in seaside shows (Cross, 1990: 128). Much later, in the 1960s and '70s, cast members of the *Carry On* films also provided a sense of familiarity and reassurance to film audiences who enjoyed end-of-pier humour, and played out stereotypes familiar from 'saucy postcards', as Medhurst argues:

²⁹ Mayer's findings include a comment by a 22-year-old English female Insurance Clerk who wrote: 'Music, of course, owes much of its popularity to films. By merely listening to various people whistling in the street it is easy to guess which film is on at the local cinema' (Mayer, 1946: 201). Similarly, Mass Observation discovered from a 33 year-old woman that 'To find yourself singing the catchy tunes the next morning, then you know you get the utmost pleasure out of the films. They just relive in your memory' (Richardson and Sheridan, (eds.) 1987: 125 – 126).

It was not just the same performers being the same kind of types, but also the same kind of types signifying the same set of attitudes and beliefs (Medhurst, 2007: 134).

Although biographical asides are usually avoided in academic investigations, it may be significant that holiday films frequently include performers such as Fields, Formby, Jack Douglas, Reg Varney and Diana Coupland who were either raised at seaside resorts or holiday camps within a showbusiness environment, or else had early experiences of performing in such places.³⁰ Many of these films therefore include a certain type of performer with music hall experience, sometimes playing characters created on stage – such as Douglas’s Alf Ippitimus³¹ and Stanley Holloway’s Sam Small – but occasionally appearing as themselves, like ‘cheerful’ Charlie Chester in *Holiday Camp*.

Holiday films might provide a trigger for memories of family holidays – just as peacetime memories of the seaside are recalled in *Millions Like Us* – or conversely, they might influence a filmgoer’s decision as to where they choose to go on holiday, or what type of holiday they would like to go on. The films might subconsciously ‘educate’ an audience about the intricacies of holidaymaking, helping them to avoid the bank holiday fiasco highlighted by Angeloglou (1975: 40).³² A 19-year-old English female, Book-keeper and Wages Clerk who wrote to Mayer explained, for instance, that films could ‘show how to behave in hotels and similar places, which is a help to people who seldom travel, when they do visit such places’ (Mayer, 1946: 223). These films might also reinforce the traditions of cultural practices that are part of the holidaymaking experience, such as the beauty contests seen in *Sing As We Go*, *Bank Holiday*, and *Holiday Camp*.

³⁰ Douglas was raised by a theatrical family in Blackpool (Barker, www.guardian.co.uk/film/2008/dec/19/1), one of Varney’s first theatrical engagements away from home was at Southend (Varney, 1990: 129 – 142), and actress and band singer Coupland was raised in a holiday camp (Gaughin, 2006: 43).

³¹ Douglas created the character whilst working at Butlin’s, Clacton (Barker, www.guardian.co.uk/film/2008/dec/19/1).

³² See Chapter 1, page 21.

In some respects, the films may offer a response to the national mood at certain moments in history – *Holiday Camp* for example, could be said to capture the immediate postwar desire for a return to familial normality and stability – but the films could also be said to critically engage with society. There are scenes in *Bank Holiday*, for instance, which depict the hectic nature of the rush to the seaside, and which affectionately mock the lower-class tastes of some of the characters. *Sing As We Go* expresses a resistance towards the burgeoning Americanisation of seaside entertainments, whilst offering traditionally British (and northern) representations of working-class solidarity as the ideal alternative.

In recent times, resorts and tourist spots have often utilised film and television associations for promotional purposes. Scarborough's *Visitor Guide* of 2009 points out that 'the sights and sands' of the resort 'have been familiar to movie buffs and telly addicts for decades' through films such as *Little Voice* (1998) and television programmes like *The Royal* (2003 – present) (*Visitor Guide*, 2009: 28). It is therefore not too fanciful that places like Blackpool and companies such as Butlin's could have exploited the publicity that films of the 1930s and '40s, and subsequent decades provided for their resorts. Holiday films could also be said to satisfy the demands highlighted by Mass Observers and Mayer, for more films which show the British landscape and the British way of life. Richards, for example, points out how in 1935 P. L. Mannoock, critic of the *Daily Herald* commented that British landmarks and the British countryside ought to be acknowledged by British producers, and that as a result of this 'widespread feeling', film critics 'fell on 'authentically English films' with almost pathetic gratitude' (Richards, 1989: 247). He argues that *Bank Holiday* therefore 'elicited almost universal praise' from publications such as the *Evening News*, the *Sunday Times*, the *Daily Worker*, the *Observer* and the *New Statesman*, all of which commented on the film's 'authenticity' (Richards, 1989: 247 – 248). The question remains, however, of what constitutes an 'authentic' portrayal of England.

Conclusion

By looking at box-office statistics, sociological surveys, ethnohistories of cinemagoers, and contemporary reviews, an impression of how audiences may have responded to holiday films, and the social function of these films, may be speculated upon to a certain extent. As I have revealed above, the films might be said to satisfy audience demands to see characters they could relate to in familiar representations of the British way of life, and the British landscape. However, I have also found that the representations discussed in the studies by Mass Observation and Mayer are largely white, English and middle-class, and therefore offer an arguably selective representation of the nation.

Higson points out that the diversity of British society is often overlooked in preference for an 'imagined community' of what embodies Britishness, and that, in film, 'descriptions of British cinema as a national cinema ...tend to be far more selective in promoting one particular reading of British cinema over others' (Higson, 1995: 1). British national identity in the films I intend to analyse is often marked as white and English, and representations which fall outside of this are often marked by their 'otherness' – for example in blackface minstrelsy seen in *No Limit*, and the representation of Yugoslav border controls in *Summer Holiday*, both of which I will return to later. On the other hand, however, Higson argues that different members of an audience do not always read films in the same way, and that there are also films which deliberately 'challenge the nationalising myths found in the most resolutely patriotic films' (Higson, 1995: 7).

Street similarly argues that national cinema may be more diverse than has been traditionally assumed. It need not necessarily be taken to imply 'a jingoistic, nationalist imperative', but can challenge 'that view by giving a voice to those who have had very different experiences of living in Britain', continuing by saying that 'British film styles and themes have not been totally uniform and in their different ways have contributed to the cultural construction of Britishness' (Street, 2004: 2).

By looking at certain films chronologically over a long period of time, patterns of 'repetition and reiteration' may begin to emerge which either reinforce or challenge representations of national identity (Higson, 1995: 5). The term 'national cinema' would suggest that the films have to follow some sort of formula, or have something in common which enables them to define or represent the nation, whether this be through jingoistic and flag-waving representations, or more 'banal' forms (Billig, 1995). The films would also have to win the audience's consent in order for this ideological construction of identity to succeed. It may be useful, therefore, to consider these arguments when looking at films which have, over time, traditionally been neglected by theorists and historians, and which may not represent what is considered to be the 'typical' British character.

In the next chapter I will begin my chronological examination of the holiday in British film. Throughout the thesis I will be using methodology outlined in Chapter 1, such as the tourist gaze, peripheries, and the carnivalesque, to identify how cultural practices and ritualised pleasures of the holiday, ideologically construct a sense of Britishness for the cinema audience. I will also consider why certain films were produced at certain times, and for whom. I will begin by looking at films with a holiday setting as they occurred at the dawn of British cinema, which happened to coincide with the introduction of mass holidaymaking for the middle and working classes.

Section 2 – Histories

Chapter 3 – The Postcard Comes To Life: Early British Film and the Seaside

Introduction

In the previous chapter I considered how the holiday film might appeal to British audiences, and speculated on how audiences may respond to these films. In the second part of my thesis I will look in more detail at the films themselves, contextualising them, and considering whom their intended audience may have been at the times of release. I will also be using some of the theories and methods outlined in Chapter 1 to analyse specific film texts.

This chapter will be an examination of British films of the silent period, and its theme will be the visualisation of the British seaside and British humour in postcards and films. Picturesque postcard views, and the saucy humour of comic postcards both appear to have influenced the early British holiday film but as I shall demonstrate later, the early seaside film, in turn, appears to have influenced imagery used in postcards. Together, both visual forms help to mediate an implied reading of the British holiday, as I aim to demonstrate. In my analysis of early seaside film I intend to pay particular attention to any evidence of postcard humour, and also consider the use of the tourist gaze. The two key texts I will be analysing in detail are *Landing at Low Tide* (1899), and *A Seaside Girl* (1907).

British Silents

Until very recently, film historians have largely neglected Britain's silent period. This is mainly because so few films produced in the period up to the First World War actually still exist, leaving very little material to analyse. For example, of the fifteen Hepworth titles shot in Bognor Regis between 1907 and 1908, which may have been relevant to my thesis, only *A Seaside Girl* (1907), and *Dumb Sagacity*

(1907) remain. However, the BFI and BBC recently appear to have been making a concerted effort to bring whatever is in existence from this period to the public's attention, by restoring it and making it available on DVD and television. Recent rediscoveries and releases include *The Lost World of Mitchell and Kenyon* (2005); *The Lost World of Friese-Greene* (2006); R W Paul, *The Collected Films 1895 – 1908* (2007) and the documentary *Silent Britain* (2006), for example.³³

To begin with, films consisted of one shot that ran for less than a minute, and were categorised as either 'actuality' (non-fictional) or 'made-up' (fictional) films (Low and Manvell, 1948: 14). 'Locals' – films of local interest for regional audiences (such as Mitchell and Kenyon's 'Factory Gates' films), were a popular format, as were 'Phantom Rides' – films in which a camera had been attached to the front of a train in order to capture the excitement of speed and motion.

Britain did not have a 'national' film industry in the early, silent era, but instead consisted of a number of small, family-run 'cottage' industries, which were spread around, but mostly situated in the south of England. Because the films were not mass-produced on an industrial scale, when one became particularly popular – such as Hepworth's *Rescued By Rover* (1905) – the film would have to be re-shot, due to the original negative becoming worn by the printing of numerous copies.³⁴ Because these enterprises were relatively small, family members took on various roles, not only acting in the films, but also helping out with set building, developing the films, and marketing them. These filmmakers usually

³³In 1948, Low and Manvell claimed that Mitchell and Kenyon had 'left little trace' (Low and Manvell, 1948: 22 – 23), but in 1994 a huge body of their work was found in the cellar of an empty shop in Blackburn (*The Guardian*, January 7th 2005: 4). Similarly, the 1914 Hepworth film *How Things Do Develop* (in which two photographers, one of whom has been photographing farm animals, the other, his girlfriend in a full-length bathing costume, get their films get mixed up during printing) was discovered in a box of toys which were bought by an antique dealer in Devon in 2000. Jo Botting of the BFI commented that 'we knew Hepworth had made this film but no one had ever seen it so I was probably the first person in 70 years to see it' (*The Independent*, June 26th 2000: 7).

³⁴ See Gifford, 2001: 40.

created their own projection equipment, and often exhibited the movies themselves, as there was no regulated or centralised system of distribution.

Early film pioneers such as Birt Acres, James Bamforth, Esme Collings, Hepworth, Frank Mottershaw, G. A. Smith, and Williamson were all connected professionally with one or the other at some point (Low and Manvell, 1948: 13 – 14). Collings had previously worked with Friese-Greene at his photographic studio in Bond Street, London, and Birt Acres was another professional photographer and an associate of R. W. Paul. G. A. Smith was a keen astronomer and Fellow of the Royal Astronomical Society. He devised his own camera in 1897, and experimented with early colour cinematography (Chanan, 1980:174). The first British colour film, *A Visit to the Seaside* was made by his Natural Color Kinematograph Co. in 1908, and included the (by then) already familiar seaside postcard set-pieces of a girl falling into the sea from a boat, and men peeping at bathing girls (Gifford, 2001: 69).³⁵

Most of the early pioneers ‘came to cinematography through photography or the optical lantern’, with several of them initially producing films as a sideline to other businesses (Low and Manvell, 1948: 13). James Williamson of Williamson’s Kinematographic Company ran a chemist’s shop and photographic studio in Church Road, Hove, and began to dabble in cinematography in 1896, for instance. Only two years later, he closed the chemist’s side of his business to concentrate on films full time. As Low and Manvell point out:

The transformation of the motion picture from a toy or curiosity discussed at scientific and photographic societies into a major industry, a young art and an educational force started when it became a regular form of entertainment (Low and Manvell, 1948: 13).

³⁵ The Kinemacolor sign can still be seen on G. A. Smith’s old premises from the train line between Brighton and Hove, as pointed out by Sweet in *Silent Britain* (2006), and witnessed by myself in 2007.

Although the beginning of British film is given as 1895, cinema arguably developed over time from a series of other visual entertainments. As Chanana points out 'the invention of cinematography...came to fruition through an accelerating series of discoveries which fed into each other' (Chanana, 1980: 48). The quality and style of early film was influenced by still photography of the period, especially as some of the early film pioneers such as Williamson and Collings had started out as still photographers. As Kevin Brownlow points out:

The standard of photography in the silent days was remarkably high. The cameramen had the tradition of Victorian still photographers to draw upon and even the least pretentious film could boast superb cinematography (Usai, 1994: 2).

Because several of these film pioneers were based in Brighton and Hove, they are collectively referred to as 'The Brighton School', which was first coined at the 1978 Federation Internationale des Archives Filmiques (FIAF) meeting in Brighton (Elsaesser, 1990: 5). This concentration of filmmakers along the South Coast took advantage of 'the favourable weather, good light, attractive scenery and convenient communications with London' (Eyles, Gray and Readman, 1996: 3). Warren mentions that Brighton was a prime location for filmmaking, again, highlighting the favourable climate, but also makes a connection between filming and the seaside photographic trade, saying that:

The reason why these pioneers were attracted to the south coast of England was presumably the good climate and light, essential for their work. Brighton and the more refined Hove were holiday resorts after all, which would have meant a good trade in portraiture, chemistry and entertainment, from which film was a natural progression (Warren, 1995: 19).

As well as photography, painted dioramas, magic lanterns, and a number of contraptions that created the illusion of the moving picture such as Zoetropes and Phenakistiscope, all contributed to the eventual development of the cinematograph as a form of entertainment. As David Robinson says, the cinema

'was the realisation of a conception that had been clearly envisioned for centuries before' (Williams (ed.), 1996: 33).

Although, as I suggested earlier, many British films of the silent period have been lost, and there is scant information on the films that still exist, from the few remaining films, and descriptions of lost films in contemporary film catalogues and trade journals, it is possible to build a greater picture of what the missing films may have looked like. Similarly, by looking at humorous postcards of the late Victorian and Edwardian era – some of which involve situations not unlike early film comedies described by Gifford, 2001, for example – it may be possible to understand what the narratives and characters in silent holiday films were like.

Postcards

The Germans were the first to make an association between the tourist and the pictorial postcard in the early 1890s, with cards that depicted picturesque views alongside the legend 'Gruss Aus' ('Greetings From') (Staff, 1979: 56). It wasn't until 1902, however, that the British Post Office allowed the message and address to be written on the same side of the card, 'thereby leaving the whole of the other side to be taken up by the picture' (Staff, 1979: 66). This rectangular framing of the postcard view consequently imitated the cinematic frame, and at the same time appears to have fed off images found in popular cinema for inspiration. For example, an (undated), but clearly Edwardian (painted) picture postcard by H. Fleury, Misch and Co., appears to take the cinema as inspiration, in that it depicts the arrival of a steam train at a station, with the passengers and railway porters all alighting, and climbing into horse and cabs to the left of the picture (illustrated in Coysh, 1984: 254).³⁶ Although the image is seen from a higher angle than eye level, and also set further back from the train, the image is reminiscent of the actuality film *Train Entering Hove Station* (1900), and there is

³⁶ L. B. & S. C. Victoria Brighton Train (Arrival) by H. Fleury. Misch and Co. 'Noted Trains' Series.

a suggestion of movement in the swishing of the skirt of the woman in the foreground, and the steam billowing from the engine.³⁷

Because the 'whole-side' postcard view came after the first rush of 'train arrival' films such as the Lumieres' *L'Arrivée du train en gare de La Ciotat* (1896) it is possible to assume that such postcard views were influenced by cinema. As I suggested earlier, the *journey to* the seaside resort was as much a part of the experience of the holiday as the holiday itself, and the sense of heightened excitement that the point of arrival generates, as well as the observation of technology and movement is something that is condensed in the genre of 'train arrival' actualities of this period, and also in fictional films with train arrivals such as *Father's Picnic on the Sands* (1905). Likewise, the experience of this point of arrival is something that the holidaymaker may have wanted to share with the recipient of a postcard.

Similarly, the comic seaside postcard is another genre which may borrow images from cinema, as well as influence it. For example, an undated card drawn by Harold C. Earnshaw, (J. Henderson and Sons Ltd, est. 1903) entitled 'How to Keep Fit...' shows a comic story in two pictures (as seen in Coysh, 1984: 181). In the first, a man in a one-piece, stripy bathing suit paddles into the sea, whilst in the foreground a tramp stands over his clothes. In the second picture the man has returned to the beach to find the tramp's clothing piled in place of his own, along with the caption 'In the hot weather, great care should be exercised in the selection of beautiful clothes, and plenty of changes should be made' (Coysh, 1984: 181).

This scenario of people having their clothes stolen whilst bathing was very common in early cinema, and there are numerous examples listed in Gifford's

³⁷ Other, apparently lost films, which foreground the holiday journey by train are Hepworth's *Interior of a Railway Carriage – Bank Holiday* (1901) and James Williamson's *A Trip to Southend or Blackpool* (1903), which highlights the 'discomforts of [a] crowded railway compartment' (Gifford, 2001: 26).

British Film Catalogue (2001), although it is not always easy to ascertain from the descriptions whether the films are set at the seaside or by a river.

The effect of the comedy, however, is always to capture the horror of someone in a state of undress, returning to their clothes to either find them missing, or exchanged for someone else's, preventing the bather from getting dressed. For example, in R. W. Paul's *The Bothered Bathers* (1907) some swimmers try to reach their clothes without a woman seeing them (Gifford, 2001: 56). The Hepworth company's *An Unfortunate Bath* (1908) filmed at Bognor by Lewin Fitzhamon, has a narrative in which girls fool some old men by 'exchanging their clothing' (Gifford, 2001: 69). The scenario of *Bathing Prohibited* (1908) has a succession of people's clothes being stolen: 'Tramps steal bathers' clothes; bathers steal girls' clothes; girls steal policemen's clothes' (Gifford, 2001: 68). The comedic effect is intensified further if a figure of authority is caught out, as in the latter film, and also Hepworth's *The Stolen Clothes* (1909) in which a tramp changes clothes with a swimming policeman (Gifford, 2001: 81).

However, early cinema and the postcard can arguably be linked more directly by the company Bamforth (of Holmfirth, Yorkshire), who produced both silent film comedies and postcards.

Bamforth

James Bamforth was an early film pioneer who had originally been involved in lantern slide production. He specialised in producing slides with life models – people photographed against painted backdrops, and tinted in full colour. The slides often followed a scenario with a moral flavour, such as that of a family starving to death because the household's father is an alcoholic (Webb, 2006). When they began producing films in the late 1890s, they initially dabbled in actualities, such as the 1 minute, 9 second film, *Men Leaving the Factory* (no date), and *Rough Sea* (no date) (Webb, 2006). Holmfirth is 55 miles from the coast, so no doubt this latter film would have overwhelmed most of the local

townsfolk because ‘for the majority of the audience, this may have been their first glimpse of the mighty ocean’ (Webb, 2006).³⁸

Bamforth and his son subsequently saw the commercial potential of fictional films and used their skills in storytelling, painting backdrops, and photography to create comic shorts which were filmed in the streets and parks around Holmfirth.³⁹ But in 1902, the year that the picture postcard came of age – having the fully rectangular image on one side of the card – James Bamforth decided to cease making films and concentrate on making postcards instead. When streamlining the business, he considered that the postcard would be the more profitable of the two enterprises. As Luke McKernan says in *Holmfirth Hollywood*:

It’s something of a mystery why Bamforth’s stopped making films when it did – we don’t have business records, but we’re fairly sure that the film making side of them was a relatively small part of their business, and that they probably weren’t making that much money. But in the early 1900s the postcard business [took] off in a huge way, and that’s what Bamforth was in to, and [the company set] the films aside (Webb, 2006).

The business could also utilise the images which had already been created for their lantern slides and produce sets of postcards using the original photographs to produce illustrated ‘song postcards’ which were hugely popular (Webb, 2006).

In 1912, a year after James Bamforth’s death, his son went back into filmmaking. Cinema had now become the dominant form of entertainment in Britain, and the

³⁸ Incidentally, photographs of rough seas seem to have had a special attraction for the Edwardian postcard-buying public. Views of waves breaking over piers and promenades, cliffs and rocky shores abound. Tuck produced 30 sets of “Rough Seas”, some with literary quotations by poets such as Tennyson, for example (Coysh, 1984: 224).

³⁹ Alderson outlines how James Bamforth’s other son, Harry ‘took these films to show in a public hall hired for the purpose, a phonograph with its huge tin horn providing the orchestra... During ‘production’, worked stopped in the town and bystanders enjoyed the fun, while the main street suffered a barrage of custard pies or was drenched by fire hoses and buckets of white wash amid the antics of ‘cops’ or suffragettes’ (Alderson, 1970: 14).

company specialised in producing a series of comedies starring Reggie Switz as Winky. One of the last Bamforth films was the comedy *Sharps and Flats* (1915), which satirised the idea of draft dodging during the First World War. In this film, Winky and a friend go on a camping holiday 'to chase floozies' and lie to their wives that they are at Volunteer Training Corps camp (Webb, 2006). They send telegrams home that are laden with *double entendres*, which the film then juxtaposes with shots of the men *in flagrante*. For example, a close-up of the written text "our company is now under canvas", is followed by a shot of the men ushering some young women into their tent, and "our food is fine – especially the tarts – we liked them as soon as they touched our lips", is shown before a shot of Winky and friend kissing the women under some bushes. The men eventually get their come-uppance when the wives arrive at the camp, and find that everything is not what it seems.

It is perhaps unfortunate that the Bamforth company was not located on the coast but in landlocked Holmfirth, otherwise they might arguably have exploited this sense of humour with a series of seaside comedies. The *double entendres* of the above-mentioned film, however, were used to an increasing advantage, when the company again gave up film making in 1915 to concentrate exclusively on postcards. The company virtually cornered the market in the production of saucy cards in the 1960s and 1970s. These cards, featuring cartoons of buxom blondes with huge eyelashes, and comic scenarios about naturism were akin to the *Carry On* film in postcard form, as were the postcards of Donald McGill.

Donald McGill

In his well-known essay on the comic postcard, Orwell chooses to highlight McGill's work because he claims he is 'not only the most prolific and by far the best of contemporary postcard artists, but also the most representative, the most perfect in tradition' (Orwell, 2000: 194). Orwell is not only taken by the vulgarity of the humour, but also the 'hideous' colour of the designs which he claims have 'an utter lowness of mental atmosphere which comes out not only in the nature of the

jokes but, even more, in the grotesque, staring, blatant quality of the drawings' (Orwell, 2000: 194).

Orwell highlights a number of recurrent themes which McGill's cards are reliant upon, namely: sex, home life, drunkenness, W. C. jokes, inter-working class snobbery, stock figures, and politics. Obscenity plays a large part in the humour of these cards, in the *double entendres* of the written text and in the visualisation of voluptuous women with 'grossly over-emphasised' breasts and buttocks, which, he claims, are 'caricatures of the Englishman's secret ideal' (Orwell, 2000: 198).

The stock figures that Orwell discusses are very much evident in early film comedies, particularly the 'masher' and the Suffragette, but also occasionally the Scotsman. The voluptuous or matronly woman and the hen-pecked husband are also frequently used stereotypes, as is the drunkard. These stock figures work as a visual shorthand to an easily identifiable joke, which is useful both in silent film and the postcard, which has to reveal its 'gag' in a single image. A relatively more obscene type of postcard humour, however, would not be used in films until much later on (for example, during the era of the *Carry Ons*, which also made use of garish colour), when censorship became more relaxed, and the point of the innuendo could be made more obvious.

McGill, whose career as a postcard artist spanned from the early 1900s to his death in 1962, was able to get away with sex jokes which were far more racy than would have been allowed in both film and any other print medium of the time, although newsagents were occasionally prosecuted for selling the postcards. McGill himself went on trial for obscenity in 1954, where:

He claimed ignorance of the obvious hidden meanings behind his drawings, thereby putting the onus of impropriety on his questioners. Even with the notorious Stick of Rock, Cock (a self evidently outrageous piece of ithyphallic gigantism) he claimed it was merely one of a series of figures carrying large sticks of rock in various ways (Phillips, 2000: 23).

As Staff argues, ‘the seaside comic postcard with its picture of mixed bathing, along with a distinctive exaggeration of the human form, sometimes lent itself to a certain amount of vulgarity’, and McGill’s designs, ‘although never downright obscene, sometimes had a suggestive sense of vulgarity about them which has ever since been associated with the English seaside and typifies an aspect of English life and humour’ (Staff, 1979: 73).

Although some of the previously mentioned film pioneers such as Collings and G. A. Smith specialised in producing seaside ‘actualities’, others were beginning to add postcard-type humour to the films from as early as 1896.⁴⁰ For example, a simple observation made in an actuality film such as Paul’s *On Brighton Beach* (1895), which shows people landing from a small boat, is put into a different context when ‘comic incidents’ are added to it in Paul’s *Landing at Low Tide*, directed by Birt Acres in Brighton the following year (Gifford, 2001: 2).⁴¹ Sopocy says that these kinds of film shorts ‘could be described as comic postcards that moved just long enough to get their laughs’ (Sopocy, 1978: 1). The use of postcard-type humour, certain types of character, and the selection of locations and props all tend towards an implied reading of the holiday as a liminal or carnivalesque space, as I will reveal in my analyses of the following case studies.

Landing at Low Tide

Comic films of people alighting from boats must have proved to be a popular theme as Haydon and Urry remade *Landing at Low Tide* in 1899. The comic

⁴⁰ Collings for example, produced a number of 40 ‘actualities’ in Brighton in 1896, including *Ocean Waves in a Storm*, *Bathers on the Beach at Brighton*, *Children on the Beach*, *Crowds at Brighton*, *Donkey Rider*, *Children Playing in the Sea*, and *Promenade at Brighton* (Gifford, 2001).

⁴¹ Although R. W. Paul was not strictly speaking of the Brighton School, his Theatrograph included several seaside actualities filmed in Brighton including *Brighton Beach* aka *Brighton on a Bank Holiday* (1896), and *Brighton Pier* (1896). Titles he filmed in other resorts include *Rough Sea at Dover* (1895), *Rough Sea at Ramsgate* (parts 1 and 2, 1896), and *Yarmouth Sands* (1896). He also captured other films of people at leisure, for example, *Henley Regatta* (1896), *Hampstead Heath on a Bank Holiday* (1896), and *Hyde Park Bicycle Scene* (1896).

postcard overtones are accentuated further in this film by Gifford's description: 'boatman carries fat woman ashore and they fall into the sea' (Gifford, 2001: 9). This happens to be the earliest example of a fictional British film with a seaside setting, of which the BFI has a viewing copy, so Gifford's description of the woman as 'fat' can be disproved, but she does function as a stern, unattractive upper-middle class stock character, who is there to be mocked. The film also functions as little more than a moving postcard view, because it consists of a single shot, which runs for approximately one minute, without cuts.

The postcard view is from the beach; the cinema audience is gazing out to sea. There are two sailboats moving from right to left on the far horizon, one has two sails, the other, three – another boat appears later. There is a rowboat in the foreground with long oars laid out and a rope holding the boat, presumably so it won't drift out of view of the camera. Two people are seated in the rowboat; at the rear, a man with a moustache, wearing a suit and bowler hat, and a woman with an umbrella or parasol seated at the front. She appears to be wearing a straw hat, and her hair is tied back in a bun. She closes the umbrella just as the shot starts – this is almost hard to spot, as it's so quick.

A man wearing gaiters, white jacket, and flat cap walks into the sea to help them disembark – he has his back to the camera, but his costume signifies him as a working man. The woman stands and turns, and we see more of her costume. She wears a long, high-waisted skirt and blouse, which although smart, are not expensive-looking clothes. The couple therefore appear to be like the second phase of white-collar, middle-class holidaymakers, rather than the upper classes that frequented the resorts before them, and this is the type of holidaymaker we would expect to see at the end of the nineteenth century. The boatman holds his arms out to help the woman out of the boat, but she falls into the sea. She then climbs back into the boat. The first man (who presumably is her suitor, or husband) sits, looking amused. He also glances back at the camera, smiling.

The woman then lifts her long skirt and wrings it out, revealing her long bloomers underneath. This can be read as making her both an object of display and of humiliation, because revealing her underclothes displaces her dignity.

Determined to alight, she steps off the boat again into the boatman's arms, and this time they both fall over, falling so far that they exit the right side of the frame. The man in the bowler throws his head back to laugh then looks at the camera, and also beyond the frame towards the woman and boatman. The audience doesn't see his view, only his reaction. He functions as the audience's guide – telling them when to laugh – particularly by acknowledging the camera's (and therefore the audience's) presence.

The woman and boatman walk back into the frame. The man helps the woman as if to get back into the boat, but they both fall over into the sea again. Finally, the boatman throws his arms around the woman, lifting her around the buttocks and carries her towards the shore. She flaps her arms as if in protest at the over-familiarity of this manhandling. The simple act of falling over is a device that constantly reappears in slapstick comedy, and appears doubly ridiculous if the protagonists fall into water.

Even though the film is brief and doesn't involve a journey from the home to the holiday destination, it could be argued that *Landing at Low Tide* is an early example of a holiday film. Firstly, the characters are at leisure. They are in a boat, but the viewer gets the impression that they haven't been anywhere in particular; they haven't been fishing; they are boating for its own sake. They are reasonably well-dressed, but not to the extent that they are too formal to be relaxed, and they are obviously not wearing working clothes, unlike the boatman. The fact that they are attended to by the boatman also gives the impression that they are on holiday. The postcard view, and framing of the seaside as a place of leisure implies that this is not a situation of the 'every day'. There is a novelty value to the situation – maybe this is the first time the lady has been boating at sea, which is why she has difficulty in alighting from the boat.

Although the characters in the film are not extreme caricatures, as would later appear in comic postcards, they may have been recognisable to audiences of the time as typical bourgeois holidaymakers, dressed for the occasion, coming to a rather undignified end to their day at sea. The popularity of this film, or films like it can be demonstrated by the fact that the Walturdaw company, who usually bought ten or twelve prints of the most interesting films to rent out 'actually bought eighty prints of a film, which was entitled *Landing an Old Lady from a Small Boat*' (Chanan, 1980: 229).⁴²

Other Seaside Films

By the early 1900s, it appears that the British seaside holiday had become common enough so that if audiences had never experienced a holiday themselves, they would at least recognise some of its cultural practices and cultural artefacts. Bathing machines and bathing tents, for example, regularly appear in early seaside comedies, presumably because there is a chance to tease the audience into believing they might get a glimpse of an attractive young woman undressing inside them, as the following description of *Seaside Views* (1906) by Cricks and Sharp demonstrates:

[The film is] of remarkably good photographic quality and extremely interesting. It will not do for Sunday School entertainments, but the average audience will enjoy it. The picture opens with a seaside scene of people going to bathe. There are a number of bathing machines, and two tramps enjoy themselves by peeping at the inmates of a number of them. The scene changes to the interior of the machines, and we are shown in succession a remarkably fat lady, another of uncertain age, who is seen to divest herself of teeth, wig, and cork leg, and then a gentleman is shown. The tramps, in disgust, move away, and to their delight the new machine is seen to contain a young lady preparing herself for a dip. In their delight, however, the tramps make a noise which reaches the girl, and, throwing some clothing over her shoulders, she seizes a sunshade and belabours

⁴² No such title appears in Gifford's *British Film Catalogue* (2001), but early films often had more than one title. It could be a different film, which steals its idea from *Landing at Low Tide*, or the original title has been misquoted. The BFI viewing copy of *Landing at Low Tide* is also listed as *Lady on the Boat*.

them so that they both fall into the sea (*The Optical Lantern and Cinematograph Journal*, 1906: 37).

The stock characters of the tramp, the grotesque fat lady and the attractive young woman in the above film are similar to those in the postcards discussed by Orwell, who noted that 'there are no pictures, or hardly any, of good-looking people beyond their first youth' – everyone after that is seen either as a grotesque, or prematurely aged by an unhappy marriage; what Orwell describes as a 'middle-aged, cat-and-dog couple' (Orwell, 2000: 198). The latter seem to make an appearance in *A Seaside Episode* (1909) by Cricks and Martin, a film which is:

...full of comic situations, well thought out and produced. Mrs. Joy goes off to the seaside, to the delight of her husband, and shortly afterwards Mr. Joy, meeting a pal, decides to go to Bexhill for a holiday. There he has a high old time, flirting with the girls. Unfortunately, Mrs. Joy is staying in the same town, and one of the children spots father embracing a young damsel, and naturally tells mother. Meanwhile, father and his flame have gone off, leaving the umbrella beneath which they were seated, sticking up in the boat. Mother comes along and belabours the gamp, but discovers to her chagrin that father is not there. She soon finds him, however, enjoying some mixed bathing. Going out in a boat she pummels him with her umbrella, and in doing so, falls into the sea. The final picture shows a general mix-up on the edge of the beach (*Bioscope*, 1909: 34).

The parasol is used to punish the philanderer and the peeping Tom in both *Seaside Views* and *A Seaside Episode*, and each film climaxes, like *Landing at Low Tide*, with characters falling into the sea. The comedy couple in *Father's Picnic on the Sands* (Cricks and Sharpe, 1905) are not a 'cat-and-dog' couple, but mother is a rather mannish fat woman (possibly played by a man in drag, as was common at the time), and father is a comedy drunk. Orwell points out that in McGill's postcards, 'drunkenness is something peculiar to middle-aged men' (2000: 196), and it would seem to be the case in this film, as father's luggage for his daytrip to the beach, is simply a barrel of beer marked 'XXX'. Rather than the bourgeois couple seen in *Landing at Low Tide*, the family in *Father's Picnic...* appear to be of a lower class. Their mannerisms are plebeian and clumsy and

they travel in the second-class carriage of the train. Although they are dressed in their finest clothes, they don't look as well-to-do as the onlookers at the station where the family arrive, one of whom is a child in a sailor suit and wide-brimmed hat *a la* Lord Fauntleroy.

Father's Picnic... is possibly the only remaining comedy of this era which shows a train journey to the seaside, and serves to show the audience that the characters are a group of 'trippers'. It also provides a set-up for father to spill out of the carriage door on arrival and collapse onto the platform. There is very little else to this comedy, beyond falling over. Members of the family topple over like dominoes as they skip down to the beach, and the shelter they construct on the sands to cover their picnic inevitably collapses onto them. The final shot is of father lying prostrate, emptying the beer barrel into his mouth. The viewer gets the impression that this may be the family's first excursion to the seaside, and that they don't know how to conduct themselves, other than by over-indulgence and excess.

The seaside as a place for men to seduce women, as acknowledged by Orwell, can also be found in these films, and appears time and time again. It doesn't appear to matter whether the man is already married or not: he will still take advantage of the beach where couples can mix, and where women can be observed in their bathing costumes, as the following reviews demonstrate. *Her Morning Dip* (1906) by Gaumont and Co.:

shows a charming lady making her way from her house to the beach, attended by a crowd of cavaliers. She enters her bathing tent, and goes to the water still followed by the admiring gaze of her admirers, and the scene concludes with her in the sea (*The Optical Lantern and Cinematograph Journal*, v. 2, 1906: 227)

and *Caught by the Tide* (1906):

is a sensational subject with a streak of humour. Two sweethearts are seen on the sand. So engrossed are they with one another that they fail to notice that the tide is rising until they are quite cut off. A humorous scene is that

showing six men taking the lady up to the top of the cliffs by a stout rope
(*The Optical Lantern and Cinematograph Journal*, Volume. 2, 1906: 227)

Cecil Hepworth at Bognor Regis

Perhaps the most prolific filmmaker to produce a series of seaside comedies in the early part of the twentieth century was Cecil Hepworth. Although, as I previously suggested, Hepworth is sometimes grouped with the Brighton school – taking up filmmaking at the same time as pioneers such as G. A. Smith *et al* – he was actually based in Walton-on-Thames.

At first Hepworth was antagonistic towards cinema, being ‘the son of a well known lantern lecturer, T. C. Hepworth, and himself a keen and devoted disciple of the lantern’, considering film entertainment as a passing fancy, possibly due to the initially poor quality of early projection equipment (Williams (ed.), 1996: 137). He used his March 1897 magic lantern column in *Amateur Photographer* to wrongly predict the demise of the cinematograph,⁴³ but by May had ‘recanted in full, finally convinced that film did indeed have a long term future’, especially as ‘R. W. Paul had just formed a company with forecast profits of £15,000 per annum’ (Williams (ed.), 1996: 138).

Hepworth opened a film studio to produce his ‘Hepwix’ films at Walton-On-Thames, in 1899, at the age of 25, and became one of the most significant British filmmakers of the silent period, producing up to 200 films a year by 1906. His numerous innovations included the construction of tracks in his studio to create tracking shots, and the use of Muranese glass in the construction of his studio ‘which diffused the sunshine and killed shadows without greatly diminishing the amount of light’ (Warren, 1995: 174). Hepworth also developed the narrative

⁴³ Hepworth: ‘That the present boom in these animated palsy-scopes cannot last for ever is a fact which the great majority of people seem to be losing sight of altogether, and yet it is only common sense to suppose that it will not be so very long before the great British public gets tired of the uncomfortably jerky photographs. Living photographs are about as far from being things of beauty as anything possibly could be, and they ought not to be expected to be joys forever’ (Williams (ed.), 1996: 137).

style of silent film, using innovative and efficient camera set-ups and editing to tell a story without the need for intertitles, in films such as *Rescued by Rover* (1905), the structure of which Barr describes as ‘pleasurable...in the way that metre and rhyme can be in a poem’ (in Murphy (ed.), 1997: 8). In the early years of the company, Hepwix was largely a family business, with Hepworth himself appearing in *Rover*, alongside his wife, baby daughter and pet dog, Blair in the title role. Even as the business expanded, employees’ job descriptions were not set in concrete, and actors often worked as technicians and vice versa. The actress Chrissie White highlights the spirit of camaraderie and of everyone ‘mucking in’ at the studios in this reminiscence:

The first film I was in that was shown was about Gypsies;⁴⁴ I played a gypsy girl and the film was made in Ashley Park with Lewin Fitzhamon... We got about 6s. a day if we were filming, half that amount if it was wet... When it was wet we used to help in the processing rooms, joining up all the lengths of film. There was never any “star” system at Heppy’s studios; everyone helped in doing what was needed at the time (Lansdell, 1973: 5).⁴⁵

One result of the business’s expansion, however, was that Hepworth began to concentrate more on running the studio whilst other directors and cameramen made the films. Lewin Fitzhamon was responsible for what became an annual pilgrimage to the south coast to direct films for Hepwix. Initially the company made a series of chase films and comedies in Bognor Regis, (1907 – 1909),⁴⁶ and subsequently in Lulworth Cove, Dorset (from 1910) where the romantic scenery was used as a backdrop for adventure films and literary adaptations such as *Hamlet* (1913), for which a castle set was built on the cliffs adjacent to the beach.

⁴⁴ This film is possibly *A Fickle Girl* (1910); ‘gypsy girl jilts lover for squire but he loves another’, but no cast details are given in Gifford, 2001: 84.

⁴⁵ From the Nettlefold Studios Special Collections, BFI, collated by Geoffrey Faithfull. (Faithfull was Hepworth’s cameraman after he left school in 1909).

⁴⁶ These dates are questionable. Although the Gifford catalogue only lists Hepworth’s Bognor films in 1907 and 1908, local residents recall the company visiting in 1909 (See for example, *Bognor Regis Post*, 20th January 1951: 3).

The Bognor Visitors Lists in the *Bognor Observer* refers to a Mr and Mrs Hepworth, family and nurse staying in the Steyne, Salisbury House in the summer of 1907, and Lynne Cottage in 1908 and 1909, but there are no definite records of the Hepwix company filmmaking in the town (Eyles, Gray and Readman, 1996: 10).⁴⁷ The *Bognor Post* published several articles in the 1950s including recollections by local people who helped with the films and appeared as extras in some of them. A Mr. David Fellick acted as an agent for the Hepworth company in 1909, and, as well as appearing as an extra, one of his jobs was ‘to go around to get the concessions from various owners for permission to use suitable premises as backgrounds for the taking of the films’ (*Bognor Regis Post*, 20th January 1951: 3). He also recalls that the skittle alley in the Ship Inn at Aldwick was used as stores, and that Hepworth’s dog and pony were housed at the Royal Norfolk Stables.

Because no studio records regarding the Bognor films remain, we can only speculate as to why Hepworth chose to film there. It was possibly due to the success of the south coast films made by The Brighton School, that he was inspired to shoot his series of movies in Bognor. He may also have chosen this particular location to avoid creating too close a competition with the Brighton filmmakers, keeping his own ideas at a safe distance from them. As I previously suggested, only two of approximately fifteen of the Bognor comedies with a seaside theme have survived, and there is very little information on these films. In his autobiography, Hepworth refers briefly to his company’s migration to Lulworth Cove in 1910 and 1911,⁴⁸ but makes no reference to Bognor. Chrissie White did not appear in the Bognor films, but vividly recalls the Lulworth films:

⁴⁷ Lewin Fitzhamon returned to Bognor to direct *Her Pony’s Love*, (Gaumont, 1913) a film not unlike *Dumb Sagacity* (1907), with the heroine’s pony fetching her fiancé to save her from the sea (Gifford, 2001: 145). Bognor resident Miss A. D. Taylor appeared as an extra and was ‘taken to Felpham, in company of two Great Danes, riding around the Upper Bognor Road in a trap to play the part of a maid’ (*Bognor Post*, 12th December, 1959: 5).

⁴⁸ ‘In the autumn of that year practically our whole company migrated to Lulworth Cove, armed with a number of suitable scripts and a firm determination to make as many good

Every summer “Heppy” used to take the company to Lulworth Cove in Dorset. We made several films there. I remember that we shot one in Newps Bay nearby, where the beach was very steep. I had to sit on a little rock until the tide came up to my shoulders, then Fitzhamon swam out to rescue me.⁴⁹ I was terrified of the water and never learned to swim. However, we always did our own stunts; I even jumped into six feet of water at Sunbury for one film. A crowd of us had to jump in – I came up on someone’s head and grabbed for the side (Lansdell, 1973: 6).

From this brief description and the reminiscences of other people who were involved in the seaside films, Hepworth and company regarded both the commercial seaside resort of Bognor, and the unspoilt, sublime resort of Lulworth, as suitable locations from which to construct mild sex comedies and chase films.

It appears that the sea itself often plays an important role in either trapping a girl or woman, in order for them to be rescued – as with the above film, and *Dumb Sagacity* – or alternately providing a dramatic means of escape, however temporary – as in the case of *A Seaside Girl*. The narrative of *Dumb Sagacity* is a direct descendent of *Rescued by Rover*, in that it again stars Blair the dog, who runs home to fetch for help in rescuing someone in danger. In this film, a young girl (Gertie Potter) who has been playing on the beach with the family dog is cut off by the tide. The dog then swims to shore and summons the help of a horse from the family’s stable. The film makes good use of location in that when the dog leaves the beach, and when it returns with the horse, both animals jump over

small films as it possibly could, and to enjoy itself into the bargain’ (Hepworth, 1951: 106 – 107).

⁴⁹ This description is most probably of the film *A Spoilt Child of Fortune* (1910). Gifford’s scenario reads: ‘tramp swims to save spoilt girl, cut off by tide’ (2001: 93). The first seaside film for which White’s name is credited in the Gifford catalogue is *Tilly at the Seaside* (1911), with Alma Taylor as Tilly, and White as Sally, but no location is given (Gifford, 2001: 101).

the groynes like steeple-chasers. When the girl is saved, she rides side-saddle on the horse which wades to safety whilst the dog swims behind.⁵⁰

However, it isn't exactly clear from the narrative whether the girl is on holiday or not. She could be merely playing in her hometown during the school holidays or weekend, or visiting relatives who live by the sea. The shore is ideologically constructed as a place of innocence and leisure, but the girl has the beach to herself, and there are no signs of other holidaymakers. *Dumb Sagacity* is a film which uses the seaside as a device for constructing a drama around being caught by the tide, but there isn't sufficient evidence to suggest that the film has been envisioned as a representation of the holiday. *A Seaside Girl*, however, is quite different. In this film, the seaside is represented as a busy resort, and as a place for courtship and sexual flirtation (welcome or otherwise) to take place.

A Seaside Girl

Like *Rescued By Rover*, and *Dumb Sagacity*, *A Seaside Girl* is a chase film. If Gunning refers to the 'cinema of attractions' as the period up to 1906, then the chase film genre arguably followed it, as he points out:

The chase film shows how, towards the end of this period (basically from 1903 to 1906), a synthesis of attractions and narrative was already underway. The chase had been the original truly narrative genre of the cinema, providing a model for causality and linearity as well as a basic editing continuity (Elsaesser, 1990: 60).

The female character and the seaside setting could both be regarded as 'attractions' in *A Seaside Girl*, with the addition of 'causality' and 'linearity' in the chase by three male suitors. 'Narrative linearisation' can be seen in chase films where 'the scene is held until the very last character exits the frame, thus creating a tension between the narrative trajectory demanding the next shot, and

⁵⁰ Hepworth was following a winning formula by producing a series of rescue films starring Blair. James Anderson describes *Dumb Sagacity* as a 'film of the year' (Manuscript notes circa 1923, James Anderson, BFI Special Collections).

the tableau-like scene, having its own narrative-dramatic momentum' (Elsaesser, 1990: 21). *A Seaside Girl* appears to be a prime example of this formula.

The film brings life to the type of comic postcards which imply that the seaside holiday is a place to flirt with the opposite sex, often due to too much sea air. For example, an elegantly drawn cartoon by Fred Spurgin,⁵¹ (posted on February 28th, 1910), depicts an Edwardian man with a cane and straw boater pursuing a bustling lady with a parasol along the prom and is captioned 'when at the seaside, don't forget the wife and kids!' (Phillips, 2000:75).

The West Sussex Record Office has (quite rightly) archived *A Seaside Girl* as an early example of Bognor captured on film, but even still, a consideration has to be made about how the film crew *constructed* the film's image of the town at the time. Each tableau-like scene of the film mediates the Edwardian seaside experience, involving the beach, the pier, the bicycle hire shop, hansom cabs, rowing boats and bathing machines, with the added narrative drive of the woman being pursued. By including these seaside motifs in every shot and using them as a narrative device, the film offers a representation of the holiday, and an implied reading of Bognor Regis as a holiday resort, which is lacking in *Dumb Sagacity*, for instance.

In the first scene, a woman (May Clark) is seen sitting on pebbly beach, leaning against a breakwater, with her head bowed, reading a book. She appears to be like one of the early, middle-class holidaymakers, visiting the coast for health and rest, rather than raucous entertainment, and is respectfully dressed, in a white, lacy dress. There are beach huts, a couple of deck chairs and other groynes receding into the distance. A mother and two children in the background are the only other people in view, and take no notice that a film is being made. This tranquil, postcard-like view of the beach is disrupted, however, by the

⁵¹ Real name, Izydor Spungin.

appearance of three men, who transform the film into a comedy of clumsy seduction.

Two men appear from the groyne behind the woman. One wears a white hat, tweeds and a big, white, scarf or bow round his neck; the other (older) man has a trilby type hat and beard.⁵² They raise their hats and bow to the woman. The first man grabs her shoulder as they talk to her, and the woman looks uncomfortable and gestures to the man to let her go. A Scotsman wearing a kilt (Frank Wilson) then enters from the left of the frame. He too doffs his cap, and walks down some wooden steps offering to shake hands with the woman, while the other men watch. She refuses and shakes her head to say 'no', gets up and runs towards the camera exiting the bottom of the frame, whilst the men give chase. All of the above action has occurred in a single shot, without camera movement. The men continue to pursue the woman through a series of similar tableau-like scenes, each revealing different aspects of the seaside resort, which provides an illuminating representation of leisure in this period.

In scene two, which is filmed on a wooden pier, situated very close to the prom, it appears that the filmmakers haven't been able to keep the town's holidaymakers out of shot. There are lots of on-lookers to the right of the frame, most of whom are children, all wearing hats as was the fashion of the day. The three men attempt to seduce the woman again, who clasps her hands with exasperation (the acting style is very typical of silent comedy, with broad gestures). She then pushes the first two men away. As the Scotsman and the man in tweeds confront each other the woman escapes by climbing up a ladder in the background to the pier's pavilion roof and down onto the prom. This is quite a daring stunt, and is followed by the comedic sight of the Scotsman chasing after her, showing quite a lot of leg as he jumps down from the roof of the pavilion.

⁵² One of these men, (it isn't clear which) is played by Thurston Harris, who appeared in several of the Bognor films in comedy roles such as Simpkin in *Simpkin's Saturday Off* (1907), and the tramp in *A Tramp's Dream of Wealth* (1907).

The chase continues with the characters in hansom cabs, and then on bikes which are borrowed from a garage-cum-bicycle hire shop, the sign of which appears to read 'Motor MFG Co. Norman J. Wilmott'. Other signs on the shop highlight the garage's leisure facilities, including: 'Official repairer to the automobile club', 'Private car from here', 'Rover Cycles', and 'Cycles on hire'. From these signs an idea is given of the cycle craze of the time, and that bicycle and – for those who could afford it – car hire were popular activities of holidaymakers at the turn of the last century. The sign on the building next door reads 'Apartments' – a popular form of holiday accommodation before Bed and Breakfast houses largely took their place.

Eventually, the woman arrives back at a more crowded section of the beach, with two fishing boats in the foreground, and several bathing machines behind. There are two boatmen in uniforms of white sailor shirts and peaked caps, and (what is presumably) a bathing machine horse to the left of the frame. One man takes the woman's bike away. She then walks up a plank into a bathing machine and the men wheel it into the sea. When the suitors arrive, they follow the woman, each in a rowboat, launched out to sea by the boatmen.

The action cuts to a candy-striped bathing machine in the sea, with rowboats to the left and right, carrying the suitors. The woman stands in front of the bathing machine door, and jumps into the water. She is wearing a full-length swimsuit with a sailor collar, and a white cap. The first two suitors climb onto the bathing machine and sit on its ledge, arguing. They look pleased as the woman swims back into frame from the right.⁵³

We then see the bathing machine from a different angle with a pier in the background. There is some poor continuity between shots, here. Amongst other things, the bathing machine now has an apex shaped roof instead of a rounded

⁵³ In this shot a dog that looks as if he might be Hepworth's Blair, swims briefly into the foreground.

roof, and isn't boldly striped. Although the reasons for this can't be determined, it would suggest that the second shot was filmed on a different occasion to the one where the woman jumps into the sea. This reinforces the idea that what we are seeing is a 'representation' of the seaside holiday, rather than a 'reflection' of the real Bognor of the time, and that as long as we get the *impression* of continuity in the action, it matters little that there isn't continuity between the actual bathing machines and costumes.

The Scotsman re-enters the frame on a boat and jumps into the shallow sea. He goes down on one knee, takes off his cap and blows a kiss, as if making a proposal. The woman nods 'yes' and hugs him. The other men step into sea, the Scotsman pushes them over into the water and carries the woman back to the bathing machine. He keeps the other men at bay and guards the door as she goes inside. The film climaxes with a trick shot, as the time it takes for the woman to change out of her swimwear is compressed by a jump cut; the door of the machine re-opens and the woman is fully clothed in her white dress. She gestures the other men away, and the Scotsman carries her back to the shore.

There is very little logic to the film. It is difficult to understand why the woman suddenly relents, and accepts the advances of the Scotsman; nor why she chooses him above the other two suitors. Sense only arises from the setting of the seaside as a liminal place where people might behave differently to how they would at home. From previous experience of comic strips, postcards and popular song, the audience understands from the film's title that the 'seaside girl' may be more accommodating to the sexual advances of the male characters, than she would be in an everyday situation. After all, it is only after her dip in the sea, that she loses her frigidity. By foregrounding the woman in the title, the film also hints at an element of display, which is honoured by the appearance of the woman in her bathing costume.

The audience may also have been able to identify the people in the film as 'stock characters' from other sources. The Scotsman is easily identifiable from his costume, and mentioned as one of McGill's typical postcard characters by Orwell (2000: 197), but it is harder to determine who the other characters represent. Without the existence of other films in the series, it is difficult to tell whether the same characters appeared in other scenarios, perhaps enabling the audience to predict that the Scotsman will succeed in wooing the girl.

Besides producing several films at Lulworth, Hepwix were to return to the formula of the seaside comedy with *A Seaside Introduction* (1911),⁵⁴ in which a 'dude' (Hay Plumb) searches for a girl's (Alma Taylor) lost shoes and stockings on the beach. Despite utilising medium close-ups which reveal the characters' expressions, the film has neither the pace nor excitement of *A Seaside Girl*, and seems somewhat dated for the time it was made. As Gunning says, 'the period from 1907 to about 1913 represents the true *narrativization* of the cinema, culminating in the appearance of feature films which radically revised the format' (Elsaesser, 1990: 60), and although the scenes in *A Seaside Introduction* are presented less like a series of tableaux, the plot is so slight, that the narrative appears almost static. Higson argues that Hepworth was to develop a film style that emphasised the pictorial, rather than the narrative drive, in films such as *Tansy* (1921), in a deliberate move away from Hollywood's burgeoning classical film style, but in *A Seaside Introduction*, we get little pictorial pleasure from the location (Porter and Burton (eds.), 2001). The beach is filmed from the shoreline, and the gaze out to sea is never used as a backdrop to the action. The water only provides a reason for the woman to remove her shoes and is not used for any further comic effect.

As I suggested earlier, 'saucy' postcard humour would make a significant return to British film in the late 1960s and early 1970s, but toward the latter years of the silent era, when the British film industry was in trouble due to the Hollywood

⁵⁴ Gifford gives the location as Brighton (2001: 106).

monopolisation of the industry, there were fewer British films, and consequently, fewer holiday-themed films in production.⁵⁵ Hepworth himself was a victim of the crisis. Despite, or perhaps because of, an elaborate expansion plan after the First World War, Hepworth's new Hepworth Picture Plays Limited (formed in 1919) struggled to survive during the slump which followed the immediate postwar boom. After releasing one of his most ambitious projects, his second version of *Comin' Thro' The Rye* (made for £10,000) in 1923, his company was declared bankrupt. The receivers, knowing very little about the value of Hepworth's studio equipment sold all of his assets off at a fraction of their costs, and also took all of his negatives, which were later melted down for use in manufacturing aeroplane wings. Consequently, possibly one of the most historically valuable collections of British films was lost forever.

Conclusion

Over a century after *A Seaside Girl* was made, it is difficult to ascertain whether this is an accurate portrayal of Bognor Regis in 1907, and what holidaymakers would have encountered had they paid a visit to the town. However, the holiday is ideologically expressed through the film's narrative and the seaside trappings such as bathing machines and hire bikes, giving an impression of the Edwardian seaside holiday which would arguably have been familiar to audiences of the time, even if they had never been to the seaside themselves.

Recollections by the people of Bognor seem to suggest that seaside films were regarded as a suitable entertainment for a seaside audience (of both locals and holidaymakers), during the early years of British cinema. Jesse Holden, for example, reveals that local children were given a half-holiday to see an actuality film at The Queen's Hall in 1900 of a 'ship sailing very slowly across the screen', and describes it as a 'marvel' (*Bognor Regis Post*, 28th November, 1959: 5). Another 'Bognorian', Leonard Rogers, recalls film shows at the pier, and that 'a blanket was kept soaking in a tub near the projector' in case of fire (*Bognor Regis*

⁵⁵ See Landy, 1991: 23; Petrie, 1991: 52; and Street, 2004: 6.

Post, 19th December, 1959: 16). Unless the reminiscences of Bognor local David Fellick are incorrect, Hepworth's seaside films must have been in circulation for some years. Fellick claimed that *Fire at Sea* (supposedly filmed in 1909)⁵⁶ and other films shot in the town were shown on Bognor's Pier Pavilion in 1910 (*Bognor Regis Post*, 20th January, 1951: 3). These reminiscences of seaside audiences watching seaside films appear to confirm, and perhaps condense, an idea of the holiday being presented as a seaside entertainment in film.

In the next chapter I will be looking at early sound films with a holiday setting, which were made during the interwar years. In particular I will examine how the comedies of George Formby and Gracie Fields ideologically construct a sense of working-class community through representations of the working holiday.

⁵⁶ No such title appears in the Gifford catalogue; Fellick could be mistaken as he also refers to *Dumb Sagacity* by the incorrect title, *Animal Sagacity* elsewhere in the same article.

Chapter 4 – Holidays With Pay: The Working Holidays Of The 1930s

Introduction

In the previous chapter I examined British holiday films which emerged at the dawn of British cinema itself, reaching a peak with the series of films made by Hepworth. These films appeared in a period of increasing mass travel (by rail) and mass communication (through film, and printed media such as the postcard). To begin with, the holiday was a luxury, largely taken by the leisured classes, who could afford to rent a house by the sea, sometimes for the whole summer season, as 'hotels had not been thought very respectable until 1900' (Angeloglou, 1975: 25). As the twentieth century moved on, however, the working classes increasingly hankered for some free time away from their home towns. For these people, the holiday (as opposed to the daytrip) became a distinct possibility, particularly in the Lancashire mill towns which benefited from the economic success of the cotton industry. For other working class folk, (in the east end of London, for example), a *working holiday* was the only alternative. Some of these families took seasonal hop-picking jobs in Kent, following the adage that a 'change was as good as a rest'.⁵⁷

In this chapter I am going to look at the working class holiday in British films of the 1930s, with a particular emphasis on the working holiday. I will be using the Gracie Fields film, *Sing As We Go* (1934) as my main case study, and also referring to George Formby's *No Limit* (1935). Some of the most enduring

⁵⁷ A postcard (seen in Phillips, 2000: 53) depicting Kent hop-pickers from 1905 has this message written on the reverse:

It is a happier sight to see the 'Hoppers' on their road to the Hop plantations. They are overflowing with joy as they drive along...alas! They often return to their homes without one of their number. He may have died, been locked up in prison, or is too ill to remove. Lots of sickness amongst the pickers always. It makes me sad to see humanity on so low a scale & also makes me realise what I have to be thankful for. Am coming home soon Willie.

images of *Sing As We Go* are the scenes where the mill workers – led by Fields – sing and march from the factory (after losing their jobs), and then sing and march back again, at the film’s conclusion. These scenes appear to mimic documentary film and press photography of the protests and hunger marches of the time – iconic imagery which would arguably have been familiar to the film’s working class audience.

In retrospect, it may at first seem insensitive to have represented the holiday on film, during a period of mass unemployment, when many working-class people would have been glad to have found work, let alone take a holiday, but as I hope to reveal in this chapter, the decade cannot simply be discussed in terms of the ‘Slump’. If anything, the 1930s were a decade of contradictions, and this can perhaps be seen in the films which have a holiday setting, and which struggle to find a compromise somewhere between the representations of work and leisure. As discussed in Chapter 1, if critiques of mass culture (such as those by Adorno, 2006), suggest that the holiday is an industrialised process which imitates work through patterns of organisation and repetition, it could be argued that this is foregrounded no more evidently than in holiday films of the 1930s. In these films, the holiday is closely associated with – rather than contrasted with – work by the central characters that find employment during what could be described as a ‘working holiday’.

In this chapter, I will firstly look at the political and economic climate of the time. I will explore the differing views that the British working class were either experiencing terrible poverty, or were reasonably well off, depending on where these people lived, and in what trades they were employed. I will then look at the introduction of more widespread holidays-with-pay, particularly referring to Blackpool. I will be considering a ‘northern populism’ expressed not only in the spirit of Blackpool, but also in the music hall entertainers who appeared in some of the holiday-themed films of the 1930s. Finally, I will be examining *Sing As We*

Go and *No Limit* – films which arguably construct a sense of community through their representation of holidays that particularly appear to imitate work.

The Slump – Some Conflicting Arguments

Sing As We Go and *No Limit* emerged during a period of struggle, not only a struggle to obtain widespread holidays with pay, but also a struggle to find work. The 1930s are often referred to as the ‘devil’s decade’,⁵⁸ a time of widespread poverty, but some historians such as Mowat (1976), Thorp (1992), and Baxendale and Pawling (1996) argue that this is a generalisation and oversimplifies a period in which Britain was rather fragmented, both economically and culturally. The latter historians, for example, suggest through J. B. Priestley’s *English Journey* (first published in 1934),⁵⁹ that people’s experience of poverty or otherwise, largely depended on whether they lived in a depressed area such as Tyneside, where the shipbuilding industry was all but finished, or the relatively prosperous Midlands, where hosiery and other light industries were creating a more affluent working class population. As Baxendale and Pawling argue, ‘despite its economic and social problems, and the prevalent images of dole queues and hunger marches, Britain in the 1930s was a relatively stable society, which was never threatened with major political upheaval’ (1996: 72). Others, such as the Merseyside Socialist Research Group, however, argue strongly against those who have played down the significance of the slump, saying:

To many right wing historians and commentators of today the image of hunger marches, the criticisms of Government and Government policies, is misleading and supposedly too one-sided a view. From the viewpoint of the working class who bore the brunt of those policies, however, there was only one response – despair and anger at the sheer waste of [the 1920s and 1930s] (Merseyside Socialist Research Group, 1992: 11).

⁵⁸ Referred to by Baxendale and Pawling (1996: 140), Mowat (1976: 480), and Thorp (1992: 120).

⁵⁹ Their use of *English Journey* could be considered as problematic, however. In spite of their reference to the text as documentary evidence of the time, Priestley’s book is arguably a *fictionalised* travelogue, which creates drama and suspense through its deliberate narrative structure of social and geographic contrasts.

Demonstrations and hunger marches are an enduring image of the 1930s, and 'for some contemporaries...were part of an epic and widespread struggle against the policies of successive governments' (Stevenson & Cook, 1994: 186). There were mass demonstrations in 1932 against the introduction of the Means Test, and autumn 1936 saw the march from Jarrow to London by 200 shipbuilders in order to raise awareness of the 80 per cent unemployment rate in the town, and to protest against the lack of help from the government (Symons, 1972: plates 128, 129 and 130).

J. B. Priestley who shortly went on to write the screenplay for *Sing As We Go*, had visited Jarrow during his *English Journey*, and reported that the town was far worse than the derelict shipbuilding town of Slakeby which he invented for his novel *Wonder Hero* (1933):

There is no escape anywhere in Jarrow from its prevailing misery, for it is entirely a working-class town. One little street may be rather more wretched than another, but to the outsider they all look alike. One out of every two shops appeared to be permanently closed. Wherever we went there were men hanging about, not scores of them but hundreds and thousands of them. The whole town looked as if it had entered a perpetual penniless bleak Sabbath. The men wore the drawn masks of prisoners of war (Priestley, 1994: 314).

An assumption is often made that there was a clear north/south divide in the problem of unemployment, particularly when illustrated by the march to the capital, from Jarrow in the northeast. But as Priestley found after the worst of the Slump was over, it depended more on what type of work people were employed in – rather than where they were, geographically – as to how badly they were hit by the depression.

The Midlands, for instance, were experiencing a period of economic growth due to the success of light industries such as the Imperial Typewriter Company in Leicester, and the manufacture of Cadbury's chocolate in Bourneville, near

Birmingham (Priestley, 1994: 122 and 93). Despite the cotton industry not being what it had been,⁶⁰ the enduring popularity of Blackpool as a pleasure resort by cotton mill employees would seem to suggest that the depression had not affected all areas of the industrial north too drastically, either. It is also important to consider that the holiday itself was part of the steady growth of 'new consumer industries' that were well established in resorts like Blackpool by the late 19th century (Walton, 1978: viii).

Cinema was also noteworthy for being an 'affordable luxury' which remained largely unaffected by the Depression. In fact, cinema admissions rose steadily throughout the decade 'from 903 million in 1934, the first year for which reliable statistics exist...to 1,027 million in 1940' (Richards, 1989: 11). During this period 80 per cent of ticket sales were for cheaper seats, which suggests that the majority of cinemagoers were working-class' (Richards, 1989: 12 – 15).

According to Mowat, 'the depression made remarkably little difference' to the levels of consumption which had been healthy in the 1920s, 'and any setback had been more than made good by 1934' (Mowat, 1976: 451). Stevenson and Cook also take this point of view, claiming that the dawn of affluence, which finally emerged in 1950s Britain, began to find its ground in the 1930s, with 'the service sector [witnessing] a rise which was to continue after the Second World War' (Stevenson and Cook, 1994: 24).

Families who lived in the Midlands and South East where the new consumer industries were developing, and whose salaries were above £3 per week, were the ones who experienced a better standard of living. Those earning more than £4 could probably afford to buy their own semi-detached house.

⁶⁰ In 1924 15.9 per cent were unemployed in the cotton industry, by 1930 this had risen to 44.7 per cent (Mowat, 1976: 273).

They might even enjoy an annual seaside holiday week. Most certainly these were the sections of the working class who were beginning to benefit from the trend towards paid holidays, which was eventually formalized, after the Amulree Report, and the Holidays with Pay Act of 1938 (Laybourn, 1990: 143).

A response to the gradual economic recovery can be seen in holiday films of the late 1930s. For example, there is a much more obvious demonstration of refined wealth in the films *Sam Small Leaves Town* (1937) and *Bank Holiday* (1938). The latter film has holidaymakers who enjoy the ostentatious Hollywood-style glamour of the Grand Hotel with *en suite* rooms and a cocktail bar, and although one middle-class man says that he has had to save up to pay for an expensive suite, he doesn't give the impression of going 'on the bust' like the working-class family headed by Arthur and May (Kathleen Harrison and Wally Patch), or like some of the working-class characters in *Sing As We Go*, *Hindle Wakes* and *No Limit* (Moorhouse, 1955: 58).

Holidays With Pay

As standards of living improved, and working hours in Britain were reduced, the working classes looked to the holiday in order to emulate the leisured and middle-classes that had enjoyed the seaside resorts for extended periods of time before them. However, before a family could afford to go on holiday, the breadwinners of the family had to be sure that they could pay for all their basic overheads at home such as rent, as well as the costs of travel, board and lodgings, food, and entertainments whilst they were away. In order to do this, the worker had to save throughout the year, to pay for the extra expenditure of the week away from home, as well as the loss of earnings during their week off work. The working class holidaymaker liked to ensure that all bills for board and lodgings were paid on arrival; this meant that everything they had left was spending money, and they were determined to spend it all, to have a good time. Cross refers to this need for carefree spending, which was discovered by Mass Observers of the Worktown (Bolton) study in the late 1930s:

Worktown observers found that wage earners defined themselves not as jobholders but consumers; their ability to express themselves in funded free time was critical to their self-esteem. Not surprisingly observers found a passion for holiday saving clubs and carefree holiday spending (Cross, 1990: 9).

There were various attempts to introduce a Bill for compulsory Holidays with Pay over the years, including 1925, and 1929, the latter being put on hold due to the economic depression. It wasn't until after the economy began to recover in the mid 1930s that any discussions regarding paid holidays could be taken seriously. The government opposed a Bill introduced by Guy Rowson in 1936, but in November 1937 another attempt was made, this time by the Departmental Committee on Holidays with Pay under the chairmanship of Lord Amulree. Employers who were against the introduction of paid holidays saw the Bill as an increase in wages albeit in another form, but the Trades Union Congress made a case for the Bill highlighting the benefits that it would bring to the workplace:

They based their case mainly on the increased nervous strain in industry, the advantages to the health and efficiency of the worker, the desirability if only on psychological grounds of removing the unfortunate distinction between the blackcoated and the manual worker, the needs of housewives and mothers, and the slow progress which had been made in default of statutory provision. Regular annual holidays with pay, they said, were 'an integral part of those admittedly necessary regular periods of freedom from daily toil, commonly described as periods of leisure' (Pimlott, 1976: 217 – 218).

It could be argued that the Holidays With Pay Act – which was finally passed in 1938 – also had a direct effect on working conditions of the British film industry, which could then be felt through an increased standardisation in the production of the films themselves. Jones suggests that 'certain categories of the cinema labour force had signed relevant district agreements [for paid holidays] in the 1920s', continuing:

The Ministry of Labour Gazette for March 1925 lists holiday pay agreements for operators in Coventry, Glasgow, Sheffield and the West Riding of Yorkshire. By 1937 many of the large circuits had conceded one week's paid holiday, whilst studio and laboratory technicians in permanent employment received two weeks' holiday pay...It is significant that the unions were demanding paid holidays for all grades, including freelance and part-time staff (Jones, 1987: 76).

Jones argues that standardisation in employment conditions of the time had a cultural, as well as industrial impact on the product. Before film technicians' working hours and conditions were regulated, some staff 'were working about a hundred hours on average each week, without overtime pay', but the efforts of the unions meant that film production could subsequently only take place within specified working hours, with reasonable rest periods, (Jones, 1987: 62). He continues:

Without knowing it, the trade unions were associated with the construction of a more homogeneous film product produced and packaged in similar ways and in similar conditions. In one sense, of course, union organization was a channel by which 'aesthetic' labour could preserve or reclaim its independence and control over cultural commodity, yet the unions, in stressing the need for uniformity in industrial relations practices and in negotiating with capital, were accepting to some extent the wage form, the need for technical change and a range of other factors which underpinned the Capitalist mode of film production and presentation (Jones, 1987: 78 – 79).

Evidence of the above might be found, for example, in a more obvious use of techniques like studio back-projection shots (such as the beach scenes in *Bank Holiday*), which save the time and cost of taking a large cast on location. Standardisation can also be found in successful films which spawn sequels (such as the later *Holiday Camp* and its subsequent series of 'Huggett' films), or a studio's films which bare similarities to each other in tone and structure, such as Associated Talking Pictures' *Sing As We Go* and *No Limit*. A series of films starring the same actor can also be said to follow a formula: a man who wrote to

Mayer in the 1940s, for instance, was dismayed at the 'same old gags and situations' which were inherent in Formby's films:

George Formby films follow a strict routine:- George is a goomph, George meets girl; George plays 'uke'; George beats villain; George gets girl. Intelligent use of this star, with good support would make all the difference in the world (Mayer, 1948: 222).

Before I analyse the films of Fields and Formby in more detail, I would like to consider the ideological processes at work in these films, and their representation of work and leisure. Both films appear to be addressing tensions of the era, between a struggle for paid holidays, and a struggle to find work. It could be argued, therefore, that an attempt is made to resolve these tensions by the depiction of the working holiday in these films.

The Working Holiday and Film

As I suggested at the beginning of this chapter, it could, at first consideration, appear a strange and rather tactless decision on the part of filmmakers to create musical comedies with a holiday theme during a period when most working class families were struggling to survive from day to day, without any hope of a break away from home. However, an ideological process is at work here, in that the holidays represented in these films are not so much an escape from the workplace, as a reconstruction of the work place in the form of the working holiday. In chapter one I highlighted Adorno's argument that free time follows a pattern of industrial standardisation which is 'shackled to' the condition of work (2006: 187). What I aim to argue, however, is that films such as *Sing As We Go* and *No Limit* make this association between work and the holiday more explicit, in the way that the holiday resorts of Blackpool and Douglas are viewed from the position of Fields' and Formby's characters who visit the resorts to find employment.

In *Sing As We Go*, Fields' character takes several jobs during the summer season at Blackpool after her cotton mill at home has closed down. Strictly speaking, George Formby's character in *No Limit* doesn't visit the Isle of Man with the purpose of finding a holiday job, but he does visit the resort in the pursuit of money: winning a cash prize in the Tourist Trophy races. Whilst there, he also briefly improvises some self-employment as a blackface minstrel on the beach, to pay for his board and lodgings. Similarly, but on a slightly grander scale in *First a Girl* (1935), Jessie Matthews' character visits the French Riviera because her new job as a nightclub entertainer takes her there. And in *Sam Small Leaves Town*, Stanley Holloway's character disguises himself as an odd job man at Butlin's, Skegness, and undertakes the various duties that this job entails. He is taking a break from his usual employment as an actor, but nevertheless he is still working. The idea of work is also never very far from the mind of nurse Catharine (Margaret Lockwood) in *Bank Holiday*. As an employee of a caring profession, she cannot 'switch off' from her job, and chooses to abandon her 'dirty weekend' at (the fictional) Bexborough in order to go home and save a suicidal widower whose wife has died in childbirth at Catharine's hospital.

Richards claims that 'you never see people actually at work' in films of the 1930s, but I would argue that this is not the case (Richards, 1989: 297). The characters in these films are seen to be hard workers, even if at first, some of them do not appear to be very good at their new-found employment. Fields' and Formby's characters, in particular, can't afford to take a leisurely, work-free holiday, but they do make the best out of a bad situation, by immersing themselves in the holiday spirit and working at the same time. *Sing As We Go* and *No Limit* offer a temporary distraction from the struggles of the period, constructing a sense of community in a time of adversity, whilst the later film, *Sam Small...* appears to represent a less austere time (in which the worst of the Slump is over), and a period of relative innocence, before the onset of War.

If a loss of work creates a loss of community, then *Sing As We Go* and *No Limit* go some way to ideologically re-constructing this sense of community among working class audiences, through the process of the films' narratives. The construction of the star personae of Fields and Formby as 'ordinary folk' and their optimistic and comic songs also contribute to a sense of togetherness and hope amongst their audiences. The problems of the Depression are therefore regarded as a temporary problem, which can be overcome by determination and hard work, as well as personal strength of character. As Shafer says:

The lasting message to audiences was that problems could be solved and overcome through such efforts, and that steps could be taken by a person to enable him to transcend his current difficulties. The pervasiveness of these themes makes it probable that a regular moviegoer would have heard this message at the cinema fairly frequently (Shafer, 1997: 219).

These films also re-present a form of northern populism filtered through their Lancastrian music hall stars, and their northern locations, particularly in the holiday resorts where there appears to be no evidence of the Slump. The sense of community which both films communicate, in turn becomes representative of national pride, with Formby and Fields befriending or romancing characters from the south, who help them to overcome their personal and, perhaps (in the case of the Fields film), regional problems. A sense of national pride is also reinforced by the appearance of the Union Jack at key moments in both films.

The idea of the working holiday was nothing new in the 1930s. People from the east end of London, for example, had been taking annual hop-picking holidays in Kent for many generations. A British-Pathé newsreel from September 1931 depicts (what it refers to on its inter-title as) a 'profit and pleasure' holiday.⁶¹ The farm shown in the film employs about 2000 pickers. Whole families make the pilgrimage including mothers and young children, who in turn chaperone the babies. These families treat the work like 'their annual holiday', with one young woman commenting on the health benefits, rather than the drudgery of the job,

⁶¹ VHS: British Pathe News – 1931 A Year to Remember, 1992, Ingram Video.

saying, “Oh what a difference to London – I’ve come down here to try and get that schoolgirl complexion”.

Similarly, seasonal work had long-been made available during the busy summer periods in resorts such as Blackpool. Landladies built a relationship of ‘friendly comradeship’ with chambermaids and kitchen maids, who, despite the relatively low wages, returned ‘to the same place year after year’ for the ‘fringe benefits’ that seaside work could bring (Walton, 1978: 184). The popularity of seasonal work at Blackpool meant that jobs became increasingly over-subscribed, especially so later on, when the Slump hit the cotton industry, as Walton points out:

In 1924...the supply of potential hotel and boarding-house servants during the summer was so far outrunning the demand that penniless girls without jobs, who had come for the summer from ‘works and factories’ inland, were becoming a serious problem for the local police...A few years later the supply was being further swollen by out-of-work mill girls (Walton, 1978: 183 – 184).

However, Blackpool and Douglas appear to be lands of plenty in *Sing As We Go* and *No Limit*. There appears to be no shortage of jobs available to Fields’ character in her film, and the holidaymakers in Formby’s film are part of what Bell and Lyall refer to as a ‘consumer society...a society of abundance’ (Bell and Lyall, 2000: 158). We see George Shuttleworth (Formby) go on a spending spree, buying a new suit, and lavishing his new-found partner, Florrie (Florence Desmond), with gifts in order to give her a ‘good time’.

Blackpool is continually referred to in discussions about the introduction of Holidays With Pay, precisely because the annual Wakes holidays there had become such a part of working class life in the industrial north, long before the idea of paid holidays was introduced more widely across Britain. Bennett argues that this entrenchment of Blackpool in northern popular culture played a big part in the hegemony of factory owners in winning the consensus of Lancastrian mill

workers by pitting them against the south (in Bennett *et al* (eds.), 1986: 144). Walton also picks up on this, commenting that Lancashire mill workers were 'tamed and controlled [by the mill owners] without actually being suppressed' (Walton, 1978: 33). Bennett argues that the 'employer paternalism' and dependency on the factory imbued all aspects of life in the north, 'both corporately, through its funding of museums, parks, libraries and the like, and privately, by means of the wide range of cultural activities – sports, brass bands, day-trips to the seaside – supported by individual employers on a voluntary basis' (Bennett *et al* (eds.), 1986: 143). This can be seen in *Sing As We Go*, where Greybeck Mill has its own football team and the workers are rehearsing for a concert. 'Employer paternalism' can also be seen in the several versions of *Hindle Wakes*, where the bourgeois mill owner, Mr Jeffcoate is a working-class man made-good and is therefore still seen as a colleague by other members of his workforce.

According to Bennett, the 'employer paternalism' and dependency on the factory constructed a regional form of hegemony whereby the industrial north was placed outside and pitted against the 'central state apparatuses' of London and the south, and limited 'the purchase, within Lancashire, of national styles of political, moral and intellectual leadership' (Bennett *et al*, (eds.), 1986: 143). This hegemony was realised, not only through a sense of competition with the south, but also through a set of lived ideological relations of the day-to-day existence of northern working class people, (for example in the provision of corporate facilities and cultural activities), and also through particular events such as the annual outing to Blackpool, which Bennett (after Joyce) refers to as 'employer hegemony', continuing:

It is worth recalling that the typical context in which the northern working classes visited Blackpool was not as individuals or families but as members of work-based communities – moving there in whole streets and towns during wakes weeks, or visiting for a day on the occasion of annual outings which were frequently factory-based and paid for by employers (Bennett *et al*, (eds.), 1986: 144).

Bennett suggests that Blackpool combined the 'discourse of modernity' with 'northern populism' in its promotional material, foregrounding its impressive architecture (including three piers), and attractions such as the Tower and the electric illuminations, in order to create a sense of northern pride, and some healthy competition with the London-centred hegemony of the south (Bennett *et al*, (eds.), 1986: 145).⁶² Bennett also claims, however, that the Corporation has, in more recent years disconnected itself from 'specifically regional associations...to a broader, more updated vision of progress in its anticipatory Americanisation of pleasure' (Bennett *et al*, (eds.), 1986: 146). This is also something which J. B. Priestley saw glimpses of in 1934, when he commented that the place lacked 'something of its old genuine gaiety', having become 'too mechanised and Americanised' and which is consequently expressed in some of the scenes in *Sing As We Go*, and which I will return to later (Priestley, 1994: 267).

Blackpool and Music Hall Stars of the 1930s

The sense of northern populism and regional pride mentioned above was also imbued, to a certain extent, by popular artists such as Gracie Fields and George Formby in the early part of the twentieth century, who were found to be the 'two surest draws' at Blackpool's cinemas by Mass Observers in the late 1930s (Cross, 1990: 135). These two film stars, whose careers had begun in music hall, exploited their humble, working-class roots by keeping, if not exaggerating, their Lancashire accents and singing songs about working class life, long after they had become hugely successful, to the extent that working class audiences (particularly in Lancashire) always regarded them as 'their own' (Cross, 1990: 132).⁶³ Audiences felt that they could identify with stars like Formby and Fields, because music hall was a form of entertainment which often referred to, and commented on everyday life, as Medhurst explains:

⁶² Even as late as 1955, Moorhouse exclaimed that 'not even London itself can boast a more familiar skyline than Blackpool' (Moorhouse, 1955: 55).

⁶³ Formby and Fields are often mentioned together, once being imagined by the *Manchester Guardian* as the 'typical Lancashire married couple' (Richards, 1984: 193).

Music hall songs were usually observational narratives drawing on recognisable experience, surveying such topics as work, holidays, romance, and family life, a range very similar to the subject matter offered by the twentieth-century stand-up comedians whose work is rooted in music hall modes. Like all popular comedy, the music hall comic song was an invitation to belong, to acknowledge and celebrate like-mindedness, to say 'yes, life's like that, let's laugh at it' (Medhurst, 2007: 65).

George Formby was a second-generation music hall star. His father, George Formby senior had been a huge music hall star at the turn of the century, and is credited with 'inventing' the joke regarding Wigan Pier, which he referred to as his 'favourite bathing spot' (Bret, 1999: 3). After George senior's death, George Formby junior recreated his father's stage persona 'John Willie',⁶⁴ but eventually developed a style of his own. His humour and comic songs alluded to sex, in much the same way as the comic seaside postcard, referring to nudist camps, and making phallic suggestions in songs such as 'My Little Stick of Blackpool Rock' (Richards, 1984: 194).⁶⁵ In *A Chorus of Raspberries* – the title of which is taken from Orwell's work on Donald McGill – Sutton points out that 'the four 'leading jokes' which Orwell isolated in his essay on the 'world' of these postcards, 'nakedness, illegitimate babies, old maids, and newly-married couples', are a good indication of the parameters of Formby's songs which revel in *double entendre* and adolescent 'naughtiness' (Sutton, 2000: 123).

The 'adolescent naughtiness' and relative naivety of Formby's act endeared him to a wider public than the other popular Blackpool music hall star of the time, Frank Randle, who 'sometimes found himself in court on obscenity charges, something that would never have happened to Formby, even if one or two of his songs were banned at one time from BBC radio by virtue of their moderate

⁶⁴ John Willie is the character George plays in *Boots! Boots!* (1934) and *Off The Dole* (1935). In later films he mostly plays characters called George. Fields and Formby usually play characters that share the first name of the respective actor, so closely are their roles identified with the actors' personalities. Higson points this out when he says that in *Sing As We Go* the 'narrative role [of Fields] and the performative presence of the star attraction are virtually indistinguishable' (Higson, 1995: 143, footnote).

⁶⁵ The songs that refer to naturism, for example are: 'A Lad fra' Lancashire', and 'In My Little Snapshot Album' (Richards, 1984: 194 – 195).

innuendo' (Medhurst, 2007: 72). Richards suggests that the 'juvenile' attitude towards sex which Formby's characters usually had in his films, made him a 'far readier figure for general identification than the unashamed sexual athletes who were his potential rivals and who alienated more respectable sections of the mass audience' (Richards, 1984: 192). Despite his 'shy' and 'awkward' persona Formby usually ends up with a romantic partner at the end of his films, reaffirming his masculinity for the cinema audience. These women are usually from the south of England – with a 'cut-glass Home Counties accent' (Medhurst, 2007: 73) – and of higher social class, contributing to Formby's national, rather than regional appeal.

George Formby's popularity as a film star in the late 1930s can be seen in the price of tickets for his 'live' appearances at Blackpool at the time. Admission to Formby's 'King Cheer' show at the Opera House, for example, cost 3/6, whereas a ticket to see a lesser star such as Reg Bolton cost only 1/9 (Cross, 1990: 128). The films of Formby and Gracie Fields also proved to be much more popular in Blackpool than comedies from their American counterparts. One cinema manager commented that audiences didn't 'see the point' of comedies by the Marx Brothers, for example (Cross, 1990: 135). Formby was well aware of his regional, and later, national appeal, commenting, 'I have no desire to work in America. British studios are good enough for me' (Cross, 1990: 132).⁶⁶

Gracie Fields had a particular appreciation for seaside audiences, who seemed to lose their sense of reserve, whilst on holiday. For her, a professional appearance at the seaside combined 'business with pleasure' (Fields, 1934: 11). In a 1934 *Picturegoer Weekly* article she talks about the bracing climate of Scarborough – 'Blackpool of the East Coast' – and considers how it has an effect on both theatre and cinema audiences:

A bitter wind...whipping the grey of the North Sea into white-capped waves, and chivvying the people off the promenade and into the nice warm

⁶⁶ From an interview in *Empire News* (March – June, 1938).

theatre... Maybe the sea air sharpens their wits or something, anyway, they always seem more eager, more critical, more alive, whether it's a film or a flesh and blood act to which they're giving their attention (Fields, 1934: 11).

Gracie Fields had been working on the music hall stage since childhood, but, like many children in her hometown of Rochdale, she had also worked part-time in the mill. The press book for *Sing As We Go* highlights the film's biographical elements, implying that this close association between the star and her character is part of the film's appeal: 'From mill girl, through a series of highly comical "jobs" and back again to the mill singing as she goes...it holds sure fire material for Gracie with much of the action of the story suggesting this inimitable comedienne's early life' (*Sing As We Go* Pressbook, 1934).

Fields' route to stardom had taken her from the Lancashire music halls to the west end of London, and to a recording career, enabling her to reach an even wider audience. 'Assertive, funny, self-mocking, totally lacking what used to be called 'side', her fans referred to her simply as 'our Gracie' (French, 2008: 16). It is this 'ownership' of Gracie by the British public which is so pertinent in any description of her life and career. As Alan Plater⁶⁷ points out:

I think there was a great need in the audience to have working class heroes...to have people on the stage who were from the same background. It's this idea of ownership that is very much a part of it (Jackson: 2006).

Similarly, Fields' friend, Hazel Provost, remarks:

She was no better than them, that's what people liked. I think they felt she was like their sister or their mother, she was just one of them (Jackson: 2006).

And John Loder, Fields' co-star in *Sing As We Go*, comments:

In her own eyes she is a very ordinary sort of person...She is quite content with being, as she thinks, nobody in particular (Loder, 1934: 13).

⁶⁷ Screenwriter of *Pride of Our Alley*, Yorkshire Television, 1983.

This 'ordinariness' is highlighted by Frith, who points out that 'her most important asset as a live performer was an ability to change the theatre into the front room. She sang both her comic and serious songs as if chatting while hanging up the washing over the wall' (Frith, 1988: 70). Similarly, Landy comments that 'the abiding aspect of her 'ordinariness' is stressed in her rapport with workers, her altruistic behaviour in the interests of others [due to her charity work], her identification with street life and her physical appearance' (Babington, (ed.) 2001: 65 – 66).

Richards comments that Fields found popular appeal because she became successful through a combination of talent and hard work: helping the working class audience to believe that they could take her lead, and that this personal rise from poverty to riches also 'explains her success with middle-class audiences, enabling her eventually to make the transition from a sectional to a national symbol' (Richards, 1984: 171). It could be argued that this 'ownership' of Fields by her audience, and the morale that was raised and reinforced by her performances contributed to the building of a sense of community amongst her working-class following. In particular, Fields' 'down-to-earth Rochdale background and sparky personality helped to create hope in the lives of British [cinema] audiences during the years of the depression' (Warren, 1995: 49).

As Medhurst points out, 'there was...a brief period of co-existence between music hall and cinema, which is usually seen in terms of the overlapping and interlinked decline of the former and rise of the latter' (Medhurst, 1992: 168). After the move from silent to sound film production at the end of the 1920s and beginning of the 1930s, producers looked towards music hall personalities to capitalise in film musicals. Formby and Fields were two of the most successful stars of this era, to make the transition into films.

Fields and Formby at Associated Talking Pictures

The 1930s were 'one of the most prolific periods of British filmmaking, a boom era stimulated by the Cinematograph Films Act of 1927' (Richards (ed.), 1998: vii). However, the traditional assumption by historians such as Low is that although 'film production doubled during the thirties...the increase consisted almost entirely of cheap and inferior films... [which] went far to ruin the reputation of British production as a whole' (Low, 1985: xiv). Richards, however, argues that in spite of this opinion, many of the films of this period were 'demonstrably popular with domestic audiences' particularly the films of stars such as Fields and Formby which fell somewhere between the – sometimes – poor standard of the 'quota quickies' and the prestige pictures by the likes of Alexander Korda (Richards (ed.), 1998: 1 – 2). Basil Dean refers to the making of the Fields and Formby films as 'factory farming' but nevertheless, these pictures were not cheap to produce, at approximately £60,000 per film, due to their location filming, and the huge fees given to their stars (Dean, 1973: 237).⁶⁸

Dean was the head of Associated Talking Pictures (ATP) in the 1930s – the name Ealing Studios adopted during this decade, until 1938 (when Michael Balcon took over as head of the studio) – and was responsible for the development of the careers of Formby and Fields, 'who became Britain's highest paid film stars of the period' (Warren, 1995: 45).

According to Rollings and Wareing, Dean negotiated a partnership with Hollywood's RKO studios in 1929, in order that some American-funded productions could be made and distributed (by Associated Radio Pictures) in

⁶⁸ Fields was contracted in August 1933 for £22,000 – £25,000 per picture (Higson, 1995: 115). ATP Studio boss Basil Dean also recalls that she was 'eventually receiving £40,000 for each of four pictures' and that when Hollywood offered her £50,000, he 'knew the time had come for [her and ATP] to part company (Dean, 1973: 208 – 209). *Sing As We Go* was budgeted at £64, 917/1s/9d (Higson, 1995: 116), although Dean claims the film was made for £1, 500 less than its projected cost (1973: 206).

Britain, and that, in turn, some of ATP's films could be distributed in America with the assistance of RKO (Rollings and Wareing, 1973: 2 – 3).⁶⁹ By 1932, however, it had become apparent:

...that the RKO-ATP collaboration had foundered. ATP had produced nine feature films and these had been delivered to RKO for American release, but dollar earnings in the USA had been nil. RKO claimed that the films were too English in character for American audiences who could not understand the English accents. It was evident, moreover, that RKO regarded the ATP arrangement solely as a means of supplying films to satisfy RKO quotas in Britain, whereas, ATP withdrew the latest Gracie Fields film *Looking on the Bright Side* from RKO, and the link with RKO Radio was gradually eased out (Rollings and Wareing, 1973: 5).

It was possibly this failure to form successful business partnerships with America which persuaded Dean to concentrate on future productions which appealed to a domestic, British audience.

Basil Dean initially signed Fields to a film contract in 1931. Her first film, *Sally In Our Alley* (1931), directed by Maurice Elvey, became a huge hit, especially in the provinces, making in the region of £100,000 at the box office, a huge amount for a British picture at the time (Dean, 1973: 157). Richards suggests that Gracie Fields' move into films was 'a logical development' and 'was to be the means by which she reached the four corners of Britain and realized that symbolic status for which her talents and background so well fitted her' (Richards, 1984: 171). However, Dean became unhappy about the critics' dismissal of Fields' films as cheap, production-line entertainment. Fields had referred to herself as a '£2 a minute film star' which the newspapers had picked up on, and 'the fact that much of the criticism was justified only made matters worse' (Dean, 1973: 204). Dean set about improving matters by signing J. B. Priestley to write the screenplay for Fields' fifth film, as he thought 'his humour and strong characterisation would be well suited to the needs of the Lancashire star' (Dean, 1973: 204).

⁶⁹ This information is taken from a draft for an article (with amendments by Basil Dean) written in 1973. From BFI special collections for Basil Dean, item 000001.

In some ways, Priestley's career as a writer had taken off at the same time as Fields'. 'The runaway success in 1929 of his third novel, *The Good Companions*, and a string of theatrical hits beginning with *Dangerous Corner* (1932), swelled by a continual flow of essays, reviews, biographies, film-scripts and radio talks, made him into a prominent public figure, an all-purpose sage with a broadly-based audience' and he was an 'habitual commentator on the contemporary scene' in both fiction and non-fiction, such as *English Journey* (1934), and *Out of the People* (1941) (Baxendale and Pawling, 1996: 47).

In *English Journey*, Priestley comments on Gracie Fields' voice, saying that it is the personification of Lancashire, and that the Lancashire accent is 'the official accent' of music hall humour:

Listen to her for a quarter of an hour and you will learn more about Lancashire women and Lancashire than you would from a dozen books on these subjects. All the qualities are there: shrewdness, homely simplicity, irony, fierce independence, an impish delight in mocking whatever is thought to be affected and pretentious. That is Lancashire (Priestley, 1994: 253).

On his journey, Priestley visits Blackpool, which was to become the setting for his *Sing As We Go* screenplay. He highlights the fact that Blackpool's attractions are completely man-made, saying that 'nature presented it with very bracing air and a quantity of flat firm sand; and nothing else', continuing:

Its citizens must have realised at once that charm and exclusiveness were not for them and their town. They must have decided immediately to make a move in the opposite direction. They would turn it into a pleasure resort for the crowd, and especially the Lancashire crowd from the cotton mills. Blackpool should give them what they wanted, and make no bones about it. Blackpool did. Compared with this huge mad place...places like Brighton and Margate and Yarmouth are merely playing at being popular seaside resorts. Blackpool has them all licked (Priestley, 1994: 265 – 266).⁷⁰

⁷⁰ Walton claims that 7 million visitors passed through Blackpool each year by the mid-1930s, compared to 5.5 million at Southend, 3 million at Hastings, 2 million at

Priestley's vivid descriptions of place and character were what Dean needed to bring some elements of realism to Fields' films. He considered Priestley's use of 'the current depression in the Lancashire cotton industry' as 'solid enough to support its broad humours without loss of credibility', therefore improving upon 'the fabrications of Gracie's previous films' (Dean, 1973: 204). The location work in Blackpool also gave Dean (who directed, as well as produced the film), a further opportunity to breathe life into the film, with what he refers to as 'les actualités' (Dean, 1973: 204). In fact, Brown says that Dean was 'obsessed, sometimes to dottiness, with open-air shooting', something which *Sing As We Go* would seem to illustrate as a case in point (Barr (ed.), 1986: 153).⁷¹

Blackpool had long been savvy to the powers of advertising, forming its first Advertising Committee in 1880, and producing 10,000 copies of an illustrated resort guide which was distributed amongst railway waiting rooms and other places (Walton and Walvin, 1983: 173). Gracie Fields' appearance in the town half a century later was certainly something the Corporation's publicity machine was willing to embrace, to attract custom. This is something which Dean asserts, saying that *Sing As We Go* 'was...a tremendous advertisement for Blackpool', continuing:

This the Corporation acknowledged by providing a posse of police to control the enormous crowds that gathered, particularly when we took possession of the fun fair each morning for a week on end. Word sped round the town that Gracie Fields ('real and live – not a waxwork') was to be seen making a film there. By the third day the crowds were almost unmanageable, and more police had to be sent for. Some of the watchers were roped in to people the fairground. Once they had grasped the importance of not looking at the camera they provided a realistic background of holidaymaking at no expense to ourselves (Dean, 1973: 204).

Bournemouth and 1 million at Morecambe, to name a few examples (Walton, 1998: 120).

⁷¹ Regarding location filming, the film's budget for hotel and catering was projected at £1000.0.0. (BFI Special Collections, Basil Dean Collection item 3).

Bret recounts a similar story regarding the scenes at the Tower Circus which were filmed on a Sunday, when the venue was usually closed to the public:

A sign was hung on the door advertising for extras: COME AND BE FILMED WITH GRACIE! The queues began forming at six o'clock in the morning and hundreds of people were still there twenty-two hours later. Five thousand fans were admitted to the Tower Ballroom at a cost of one shilling each, and there was not one complaint that, unlike in America where extras got paid one actually had to pay to be in a film with Our Gracie (Bret, 1995: 53 – 54).⁷²

Richards comments that the image of Blackpool on film gave 'Gracie for the first time the genuine and recognisable setting her talent deserved', and that 'viewed today, it stands as a remarkably vivid and engrossing monument to that traditional British institution – the seaside holiday' (Richards, 1984: 182).

The success of *Sing As We Go* undoubtedly went some way to influencing Dean's first film project with the other major music hall (and subsequent) film star of the era, George Formby. Dean was interested in finding 'another personality with comparable box office attraction' to Fields when Ben Henry informed him that George Formby's film *Boots! Boots!* (1934) 'was doing remarkable business everywhere in the north of England' (Dean, 1973: 211). *Boots! Boots!* is a relatively unsophisticated and rather dated film for the year of its production. Made by Blakeley's Productions Ltd, and filmed above a garage in Albany Street, Manchester (Richards, 1984: 196), the film stars Formby as the resident shoe-cleaner of a hotel who ends up performing in its cabaret.⁷³

⁷² The budget documents for *Sing As We Go* suggest that the cost for the film's crowd scenes was £500.0.0., with a handwritten annotation next to this entry reading, 'including Blackpool crowds'. Dean's suggestion that the crowds were filmed for free, along with Bret's comment that extras had to pay to appear in the film, begs the question of how and where this £500 was spent (BFI Special Collections, Basil Dean Collection item 3).

⁷³ John E. Blakely made a success of producing low-budget films featuring popular music hall stars. In 1947 he converted a Wesleyan Church in Dickenson Road, Rusholme, Greater Manchester, into a two-stage studio to produce a series of low-budget comedies starring the likes of Frank Randle, Tessie O'Shea and Jimmy Clitheroe. The studio had its own contract artists, much like studios in Hollywood, although on a much smaller scale (Warren, 1995: 117).

Boots! Boots! is of some interest here, in that the hotel setting enables the film to be constructed as a series of short, self-contained skits in various rooms including the reception area, the manager's office, the barber's, the kitchen, and different bedchambers, featuring a number of different characters. However, the idea is carried through rather crudely, with the film coming across as little more than a collection of variety acts. This is especially so, as most of the camerawork consists of static wide shots or medium shots, which capture Formby's 'business', with very few close-ups or cutaways to maintain audience interest. The fragmented nature of the narrative, and studio-bound sets can make the film difficult to 'read' in terms of the possible intention of representing of a holiday hotel. This is arguably not the case with Formby's later film, *No Limit*, which makes full use of location filming at Douglas, Isle of Man, to represent the holiday.

Dean viewed a copy of *Boots! Boots!* alone in his projection room, and found it to be 'a very crude affair [with a] commonplace story [and] poor photography', but he was impressed with Formby's personality which seemed to 'bounce off the screen', and offered him a contract (Dean, 1973: 211). Giving Fields a quality scriptwriter had created a successful formula so Dean decided that he 'needed another established North Country writer to supply a story for George' and 'settled on Walter Greenwood, author of *Love on the Dole* (1933), who provided the screen story *No Limit*' (Richards, 1984: 198). The Isle of Man, and its annual TT Races, was chosen for the film's setting. Douglas, on the Isle of Man, was another popular resort for Lancastrian holidaymakers, but traditionally regarded as rather more exclusive than Blackpool. Bolton people who could afford to go to Douglas looked down on Blackpool (it cost 6 shillings to get to Blackpool, and 17 shillings to get to the Isle of Man, for example), as a yard foreman commented to a *Mass Observer*:

Oh, there's a great distinction between Isle of Man Douglas and Blackpool...It doesn't feel like a holiday unless you go over water, you know. That sea-voyage has a lot to do with Douglas...[and] not nearly so many would go to the Isle of Man if it wasn't so far (Cross, 1990: 48).

As the Blackpool Corporation did before them, the Isle of Man authorities 'agreed to provide special facilities' for Formby's film to be shot on location in Douglas in the summer of 1935 (Dean, 1973: 211). The film's director, Monty Banks, placed an advertisement 'on local cinema screens for crowd extras, most of whose only remuneration was the hope of seeing fleeting glimpses of themselves in a George Formby movie' (Bret, 1999: 44).⁷⁴

No Limit took Formby 'away from the revue format [of *Boots! Boots!*] ...and put him in a setting of action and adventure', with the Isle of Man 'brought to life by extensive location-shooting' (Richards, 1984: 199). As with *Sing As We Go*, the location photography is an important attraction of the film, but Dean drew the line at Formby's request that he take part in some of the more risky motorbike stunts during filming of the TT races. *No Limit* became an instant hit on its release, with an appeal that endured for many years afterwards, as Dean explained in 1973:

The enthusiastic notices which followed the provincial trade shows – phrases such as 'grand entertainment for the masses', 'most exciting slapstick spectacle seen in British pictures', etc. – presaged good box office results. In fact, I would say that this was the most successful comedy ever produced at Ealing, either during my reign or afterwards. It was released in March 1936, re-issued in 1938, 1946 and 1957. Moreover it still sustains annual revival on the Isle of Man screens during the TT races. Such outstanding success must be something of a record for a first film – and slapstick at that (Dean, 1973: 213).

I will now analyse *Sing As We Go* in more detail, with reference to Formby's film, in order to reveal how the representation of the working class holiday, and the

⁷⁴ The film had two weeks' location filming and three weeks in the studio. Lead roles were budgeted at £3750., small parts and crowds were budgeted at £2300., and hotel and catering was budgeted at £480., with the total budget for the film being £29,390. - markedly less than *Sing As We Go*'s £64,917. (BFI Special Collections, Basil Dean Collection item 3).

working holiday, help to construct feelings of optimism and community in a time of supposed general hardship.

Sing As We Go

Sing As We Go is possibly one of the most frequently discussed British films of the 1930s. Higson (1995) studies it at great length in a chapter on product differentiation in British film. He contrasts the film's regional and national appeal with the Jessie Matthews film, *Evergreen* (1934), which was aimed largely at an international market. He also considers how the carnivalesque attractions of Blackpool are presented, and how they showcase Fields' flair for comedy and song. Baxendale and Pawling (1996) also look at the film, when discussing the journeys of J. B. Priestley. Jeffrey Richards, however, has seemingly taken on the role of Gracie Fields aficionado, discussing the film and its star in *The Age of the Dream Palace* (1984), and *British Films and National Identity From Dickens to Dad's Army* (1997), as well as appearing in the documentary *Legends: Gracie Fields, 'Amazing Gracie'* (2006). Several of the essays listed above focus mainly on Fields' star appeal, and the way she became an emblem of her era – what Richards refers to as a 'Lancashire Britannia' (1997: 263) – and although this has great significance in discussions of 1930s cinema, there is still room to consider the role the film has in constructing an image of the traditional seaside holiday, and how this in turn might construct feelings of national pride.

The plot of *Sing As We Go* is as follows: Grace Platt, (Gracie Fields) works at Greybeck cotton mill, and has a romantic admiration for the assistant manager, Hugh Phillips (John Loder). The mill closes so Grace finds alternative work in Blackpool, and meets a man there called Sir William Upton (Lawrence Grossmith), who makes artificial silk. She arranges a meeting between Hugh and Sir William, and consequently, the mill reopens to work with this new process. Between the closing and re-opening of the mill, Grace is employed in numerous holiday jobs, which are incorporated into the narrative as a series of set-pieces and gags, in much the same way that George Formby's sketches are presented

to the audience in *Boots! Boots!* The difference between the latter film and *Sing As We Go*, however, is that this film makes much more use of location, and is edited to a snappy pace to create excitement.

In this film, as in Fields' previous roles, Grace is a feisty and independent character, whom others look towards to solve their problems, even though she has problems of her own. Despite having a crush on Hugh, she plays matchmaker between him and a girl from London called Phyllis, (Dorothy Hyson) who she meets at Blackpool. Grace is left without a romantic partner, because, as a representative of everyone's friend, sister or mother, she belongs to the crowd, as seen in the closing scene where she returns to the mill with the rest of the workers, all engaged in singing the film's title song.

Priestley brings strong characterisation and humour to the film, as Basil Dean assumed he would, and there is a great richness to the observations made by the writer on the nature of working class life – at home, at work, and on holiday – even if (as we should expect from a comedy film) this has been exaggerated, or caricatured at times. For example, Grace's Uncle Murgatroyd and his friend Hezekaziah Crabtree are prime northern stereotypes, as their names might suggest. In their first scene, they return from a drunken night out, armed with bottles of ale, custards, and some tripe wrapped in newspaper, much to the disgrace of Grace's aunt, who promptly arrives home from Blackpool and breaks up the party.

As previously suggested, Dean had also employed Priestley in order to add some realism and northern authenticity to the film, and the opening sequences of the machinery coming to a halt at Greybeck Mill directly acknowledge the Depression, even if some middle-class critics of the time found the solutions offered by the film to be too trite and oversimplified. For instance, Paul Rotha argued that Blackpool and Bolton were 'there in truth' but that 'comic effect' shouldn't be applied to 'issues which are conditioning the very existence of

countless persons' (Rotha, 1934: 115). Instead, Rotha thought that these topics should only be addressed through the genre of documentary, but, as Baxendale and Pawling point out, the documentary movement of Grierson *et al*, along with Mass Observation could sometimes appear patronising in the way it represented the noble, working-class man⁷⁵ (Baxendale and Pawling, 1996: 39).

If critics such as Rotha didn't approve of the depiction of industrial Britain and its problems in *Sing As We Go*, its intended audience (the working and lower-middle class patrons of music hall and the cinema) evidently did, as shown by the increasing popularity of the film's star, and the enduring popularity of the film's title song, which Richards and Shafer both point out became an anthem for the Depression (Richards, 1984: 169, and Shafer, 1997: 193). In fact, the film 'probably had the widest audience of any single representation of British life in the Slump, and according to its director Basil Dean, in common with all Gracie Fields' early films, it was most popular outside London, in the very areas most likely to be affected by unemployment' (Baxendale and Pawling, 1996: 71).

In several ways, *Sing As We Go* makes visual and narrative references to *Hindle Wakes*, the latest version of which had been produced by Gaumont-British only three years before. In *Sing As We Go*, however, when the bobbins of cotton cease spinning, it is not just for a week's holiday, but due to the economic crisis. One woman says that she has been working there for forty years, and another comments that a loss of work will be worse for "them with young children to feed".

An emphasis is made that the closing of the factory doesn't just mean a loss of work, but also a loss of community: the mill's football team will be lost, and the musical show which the workers were planning to put on will also have to be abandoned. When Grace asks the assistant manager, Hugh, if the show should

⁷⁵ With an emphasis on 'man': Baxendale and Pawling point out that there is a 'virtual absence of women' from the films of the documentary movement (1996: 32).

still go ahead, she jokes that they could still practice singing when they queue for their dole. Throughout the film's narrative, it appears that music, and in particular, communal singing, can reaffirm feelings of hope and optimism, both for the film's characters and for the cinema audience. According to Baxendale and Pawling the musical comedy's representation of the Slump is not insensitive. Instead, it reminds us that:

The audience of *Sing As We Go*, experienced cinemagoers, know that it is a fantasy, that it has to do with how they wish their world was rather than how it actually is...what is noteworthy is not so much that the Slump is portrayed in a musical comedy, but that a musical comedy should be set in the Slump...and is set where many of its audience live and work (Greybeck and its mill), and where they take their holidays (Blackpool) (Baxendale and Pawling, 1996: 73 – 74).

After the mill's closure, Grace Platt spends no time moping about her plight. When her aunt advises her that there is work available at Mrs. Clotty's boarding house in Blackpool, Grace sensibly decides to save money by making the journey there from Greybeck by bicycle, rather than train. Grace is dressed like a cycling enthusiast of the day (not unlike a hiking outfit) with shorts, socks, boots, and topped with a beret. She also wears a sailor shirt and carries a huge backpack loaded with pots and pans (presumably to cook dinner on the way!) The impression of Grace's journey to the west coast is constructed by her moving from right to left of the screen in all the shots of her cycling. Higson argues that the journey to the resort is presented as a spectacle, commenting that the montage effects in this scene act as an 'attraction' that 'vastly exceeds' its 'narrative function' (1995: 152 – 153), but it could also be argued that the mesmeric sequence ideologically represents Priestley's sinister notion that all roads beyond Preston are designed to 'suck you into Blackpool' (Priestley, 1994: 263).

As a contrast to the travel montage mentioned above, the holiday journey in *No Limit* is represented by a short scene in a crowded railway compartment and a

lengthier episode on a steam ship to the Isle of Man. Formby's character is joined on the train by other holidaymakers, including boisterous children, and adults who are pouring drinks. One can imagine that this type of scene would have been familiar to filmmakers and audiences who had seen silent comedies built around the gag of the overcrowded excursion train. It is also similar to the train scene in *Hindle Wakes* (1927) where a baby and dog are shown in the luggage rack. For the train passengers in *No Limit*, the holiday evidently begins before they reach their destination: the journey itself is part of the holiday. This is something we miss from *Sing As We Go*, where we see the exterior of the trains and buses making their way to the coast, but don't experience the atmosphere of the excited holidaymakers inside the transport.

On arrival in Blackpool, Grace asks a policeman for directions to Lime Street, which the policeman claims he's never heard of. As a comic policeman he is seen as a figure of authority to be mocked and undermined by Grace, as part of the holiday's permitted saturnalia, just as such figures were traditionally mocked in the comic seaside postcard. The character is also played as a minor 'star-turn' by Stanley Holloway, the significance of which is pointed out by an inter-textual remark made by Grace, when she says to him, "Alright Sam, pick up tha' musket". It is almost as if Gracie (not Grace) is referring to Holloway's character, Sam Small, which had become popular at the time through sales of Holloway's recorded monologues, such as 'Sam, Sam, Pick Up Tha' Musket'. Holloway comments:

[Sam Small] was an immediate hit on records. I remember meeting Larry Adler in the street way back in 1934 and Larry stopped and clasped my hand. He said: 'I must shake hands with the man whose records are selling at six shillings each!' That was expensive in those days. True, mine were twelve-inch records and everybody else's seemed to be ten-inch discs selling at three-and-sixpence, but you can realise the difference in royalties (Holloway and Richards, 1967: 85).

The *Sing As We Go* script⁷⁶ dated 15th May 1934 has no cast list, but the insertion of this piece of dialogue (on page 23) indicates that Stanley Holloway was already cast as the policeman. Fields later asks a lion in the Tower circus where 'Albert' is. This is a reference to another monologue made famous by Holloway, 'The Lion and Albert'. It is strange, however, that Fields gets to refer to both monologues, and not Holloway himself.

The Boarding House

Soon after Grace's arrival at the resort we are introduced to Mrs. Clotty's (Margaret Yarde) boarding house 'The Savoy' – the front steps of which are crowded with holidaymakers attempting to catch a bit of sunshine.⁷⁷ Although Grace's stay at the Savoy is relatively short, the film's vivid representation of the holiday boarding house, and of the Blackpool landlady leaves a lasting impression, as Walton explains:

Perhaps the most widely influential rendering of the comic landlady...[occurs] in the Gracie Fields film *Sing As We Go*...[Gracie's character begins] a brief spell 'in service' at a boarding-house run by one Mrs Clotty, a 'fearsome harridan' who [has] broken the spirit of an ineffectual husband and now [presides] over a household of variously awful visitors...*Sing As We Go* exploited an already-current myth of the comic landlady, but it probably did more than any other single influence to confirm and perpetuate it (Walton, 1978: 10).

The physical appearance of the house would be familiar to anyone who had seen a typical terrace of bay window-fronted boarding houses. As Walton points out, 'the houses were not too dissimilar in appearance from the better working-class districts of the inland towns, and this in turn made the ideal of homeliness, so important a part of the successful landlady's stock in trade, much easier to cultivate' (Walton, 1978: 69). The house in which George Formby stays in *No*

⁷⁶ BFI Special Collections (Script catalogue no. S 252).

⁷⁷ 'Location suggested is the left side of Adelaide Street, looking towards the promenade, with the Tower seen in the background, so as definitely to avoid identifying this street' (Priestley, 1934: 25).

Limit is slightly grander than Mrs. Clotty's, as we may expect from the more genteel town of Douglas. The film's landlady, Mrs. Horrocks (Beatrix Fielden-Kaye) is certainly more pretentious than Mrs. Clotty, her establishment being an 'hotel', rather than a boarding house. When Mrs. Horrocks's parrot nips George's behind, she reassures him that the bird "only bites the elite". This landlady also makes a great show of her best, sea-facing bedroom, which she offers to George, believing him to be an important TT Rider.

Mrs. Clotty's house is run like a highly efficient machine with strict rules and regulations. Signs in the hallway state that towels mustn't be used for bathing, and dinner is signalled by the ringing of a bell. 'Changeover day' which comes at the end of each week when the old holidaymakers leave, and the new ones arrive is particularly busy. A pile of suitcases on the doorstep denotes that a crowd of people have all arrived at the same time (probably by bus). When Grace is forewarned about 'changeover day', she groans that it sounds like the 'cup final'.

Although there is a sign outside the front door which reads 'apartments', this is probably a throw-back to an earlier period, as the house in the film is clearly run under the bed-and-board system, which became more popular in the 1920s and 1930s. Before the First World War, most landladies ran their businesses under the apartments system, renting out rooms, or even bed-space for visitors who brought their own food, which the landlady then cooked for them. Between the wars, 'the apartments system gradually gave way to the boarding-house system, under which all meals were provided by the landlady at a fixed rate and to a fixed menu' (Walton, 1978: 3 – 4).

We see a notice in the Savoy's dining room which gives the strict meal times: 'Breakfast 8 – 9, Dinner 12.30 – 1, Tea 4.30 – 5'. Because this is a working-class setting, it is interesting to note that lunch is referred to as 'dinner' (the main, three-course meal of the day, usually including soup, pie and pudding), which is

followed later by 'tea' (which usually consists of 'cold meat and salad' (Cross, 1990: 68)). Having paid 'full board', holidaymakers would return to digs for each meal, leaving very little free time to go far from the house in between. This also meant a very busy day for boarding house staff, although it was much simpler for them to work to a set menu, than to cook the food of each individual family, as they had under the old apartments system. In *Sing As We Go*, dining (like other activities in the film) is a communal experience, and is a particularly demanding one for Grace. When one particular diner presents her with a list of requests, she retorts, "I'm sick of you 'can I's!"

Mrs. Clotty has a husband, but she is the dominant member of the household. As Walton remarks, 'even when the husband was on the premises...lodging-house keeping was very much a woman's business' (Walton, 1978: 85). Mrs. Clotty is strict, but she is not quite the harridan Walton refers to. She fits the bill of the comic postcard landlady, as does her husband in the role of a hen-peck, but she is also amused by a boorish guest called Mr. Parkinson, and greets him jovially as a 'big bad wolf'. Mrs. Clotty is probably taken with Mr. Parkinson's money. Her husband says the guest is 'very well off' and it appears that the landlady will put up with any amount of horseplay by Parkinson (including the slapping of Grace's behind), in order to keep his custom. Grace, however, responds to Parkinson's trick of tripping her up in the dining room, by emptying a bowl of rhubarb over his head, and is dismissed from her job. Her forthright individualism has disrupted the efficiency of the house, so she has to leave.

Her dismissal, however, enables Grace to then go through various means of employment which are represented almost as a series of stand-alone sketches for the cinema audience, and which also showcase the spectacle of the resort. She doesn't hold many of these jobs for very long, and – as demonstrated by her rebellious attitude to work at the boarding house – is dismissive of most of them, but her search for work comes across as relatively easy in the context of the economic Depression. These jobs are holiday jobs, and therefore regarded as

temporary, until Grace is reinstated at the mill under more suitable employment as welfare officer.

Priestley's Blackpool – a Critique?

Higson claims that *Sing As We Go* can be read as a 'critique...of Priestley's new, Americanized Blackpool' (1995: 171), but careful analysis reveals that there is a clear separation between the seaside pleasures that Priestley wishes to denigrate, and those which he wishes to celebrate. The Americanised pleasures that Priestley disapproves of can be interpreted as representative of 'mass culture' and new forms of leisure, and therefore, his argument is decidedly elitist, regardless of whether contemporary holidaymakers enjoyed the attractions. For example, Priestley doesn't favour the aggressively-marketed 'Crunchy Wunchy' toffee which Grace sells by the seafront. The crass slogans on the stall, such as 'Get that Crunchy Wunchy habit', and 'Crunchy Wunchy - it's a bullseye every time', appear in Priestley's script and are clearly a parody of American branded products (Priestley, 1934: 79). When Grace is seen in her Crunchy Wunchy uniform she remarks "Don't I look a devil?" which is probably a signal of Priestley's thoughts on such marketing.

Similarly, at the Pleasure Beach, we see two showmen competing for an audience for their respective shows. One is a traditional sideshow featuring 'freaks' such as 'the human spider', alongside illusions such as 'the vanishing lady', whereas the other show has a wild-west theme. We don't see the latter, but get the impression that this is the poorer of the two shows, as the main characters choose to see mysticism, over cowboys. Priestley is also clearly critiquing the business of American-style song-plugging, as referred to in *English Journey* where he mourns the loss of traditional seaside 'pierrots and nigger minstrels' (*sic*) claiming that:

The [new] entertainers are calculating, their shows more standardised, and the audiences more passive. It has developed a pitiful sophistication – machine-made and not really English – that is much worse than the old hearty vulgarity (Priestley, 1994: 267).

The ‘catchy little tune’ which Grace is required to sing over fifty times, is cheery and light-hearted but its banality is signified by the fact that it is the only song of Grace’s that the cinema audience is not allowed to hear in full. Grace, however, encourages the audience within the film to join along either singing or whistling, so in some respects, she succeeds in making them an active, rather than ‘passive’ audience. She works her charm to remind them of the communal sing-a-long, but loses her voice in the process.

The Masses and Community

There seems a somewhat exaggerated tendency to ‘massify’ the British holiday experience, and this is how it has often been represented in promotional hyperbole. This can be found for example, in the statistics which Butlin made known about the mass catering that his camps provided – which I will return to in the next chapter (Butlin, 1982: 154) – and in Blackpool’s promotional statistics of the postwar period, where ‘300 and more trains’ arrived ‘in one day during the height of the holiday season’, and where turnstiles at the Tower registered ‘anything up to 60,000 folk passing inside in a day’ (Moorhouse, 1955: 60 – 61). Although it is not too fanciful to imagine that holidaymakers from small towns and villages, or small communities within larger cities, would be slightly overwhelmed by the crowds at resorts such as Blackpool, it has to be remembered that people would have experienced their holiday as part of an immediate circle of friends and family, rather than as part of a huge mass. Nevertheless they would probably have taken to the crowd enthusiastically, as part of the working-class holiday experience.

This brings us to think about the way the *Sing As We Go* represents the holiday masses. There is no doubt that Gracie Fields’ presence in Blackpool had

something to do with attracting the large crowds which we see in many of the scenes. In some instances it is difficult to determine whether the crowds are there to enjoy a holiday, to watch a film being made, or indeed, both. In his autobiography, Basil Dean recalls the management of the crowd by himself, assistant director Carol Reed,⁷⁸ and Gracie:

This is the largest, the most enthusiastic and the least expensive crowd that I have ever rehearsed. Of course it's embarrassing when a particular cluster of people, who have been carefully instructed by Carol Reed, get bored and begin to drift away in search of fish and chips or ice-cream cones. But few want to leave once Gracie begins her fooling... [Their roars of laughter are] something of an embarrassment to our sound staff. Gracie has to give her comic whistle and demand silence before the next shot can be taken. Then, just as the cameras begin to turn, some mischievous youngster utters a loud 'Ssh', and the crowd giggles. So we have to stop and start again (Dean, 1973: 205).

The holiday experience in this film is a collective one. There is little time for contemplation and relaxation. As such, working-class holidaymakers of this period were reassured by being part of a crowd, and 'compelled to visit the seaside town where they knew their friends would be' (Cross, 1990: 48). In the film we see crowds everywhere, watching a bike race, dining in the boarding house, watching the beauty pageant at the Lido, and dancing at the Tower ballroom, for example.

As mentioned previously, 'for its Wakes visitors Blackpool had none of the anonymity of a cosmopolitan or metropolitan resort' because people traditionally visited Blackpool together from one town, or even one workplace – in trips which had been organised by their local mill, for example (Walton, 1978: 39 – 40). This is one of several reasons why it could be argued that 'free time' imitates the pattern of work, along with the enforced meal times set by landladies. Cross highlights, for example, how landladies '[controlled] all the movements of people

⁷⁸ Handling the crowds in this film possibly helped prepare Reed for similar scenes at the railway station and sea front when he came to direct *Bank Holiday*, four years later.

on the sands' by set meal times (Cross, 1990: 68), and there is evidence to suggest that this was not just a projection on behalf of Mass Observers. Holidaymaker Barry McQueen, who went to Blackpool in the 1950s and 1960s, similarly recalls the way that regulated mealtimes shaped the daily routine:

At about quarter to twelve there was a mass exodus from the beach because they used to have three meals a day...Some would go and hand their deck chairs in but others would take them back to the digs and say 'we're not paying again!' (Humphries, 2006).

If a holidaymaker visits Blackpool surrounded by his or her work colleagues and also follows regulated meal times, they are arguably following a familiar routine that doesn't alienate them from the process of their daily lives. A break from routine is offered by the temporary saturnalia of excessive eating and drinking, and the carnivalesque attractions of the pleasure beach, but these in turn, can be seen as businesses which are competing to take the holidaymakers' hard-earned cash. Medhurst also points out that carnival is 'yet another form of social control' or rather 'a safety valve which [diffuses] tensions by allowing the peasantry some brief relief so that they [return] more contentedly afterwards to their allotted place at the bottom of the pile' (Medhurst, 2007: 69).

Perhaps a more innocent mode of comfort is offered by the communal singing, which I highlighted earlier, and which is of central importance to *Sing As We Go*, and to *No Limit*. The working class people in Fields' film are adept at creating their own entertainment, whether it's singing around the piano at home, or singing along with Grace at Ritz and Finglestein's song-plugging sideshow. They also sing along with Grace at the mill. At the beginning of *Sing As We Go*, the workers sing the title song ('in style' as Grace advises them to do) as they *leave* work, possibly for good. At the film's conclusion they sing as they go *back* to the workplace. In the first instance, the song is one of hope and optimism in the face of adversity, but finally it is one of joy, as the community is re-instated.

Communal singing reassures the mill-workers that all is not lost, and also constructs a sense of community for the cinema audience, to which they can

relate. According to Richards, the songs in these films ‘were very much the way [Fields] communicated with her audience’, and people in the cinema would ‘sit forward during Gracie’s songs...and live the songs with her, and then sit back in the seat afterwards’ (Jackson, 2006).

Similarly, communal singing pays a large contribution to the holiday spirit in *No Limit*. On the train journey from home, for example, George plays the ukulele and sings a song about the TT Races in anticipation of the holiday ahead.⁷⁹ The other passengers smile, briefly join in with the song, and sway to the music. The singing and the pouring of drinks construct a joyful, communal atmosphere. On the second leg of the journey, over the sea to the Isle of Man, there is more singing in the ship’s bar, this time led by Florrie who sings optimistically that:

Happiness is leading the way
Life is just a long holiday⁸⁰

During this song, the camera cuts back to reveal that the whole of the bar is listening, and swaying along to the music. Various other people including the ship’s staff, and holidaymakers pick up the melody. The barman sings whilst pouring cocktails that are generously laced with several spirits including gin, whisky, rum and brandy – “hold your breath and swallow the lot!” There is no sense of austerity due to the Depression in this bar. If anything, a sense of ‘abundance’ is being communicated in this scene, particularly by one weary man who has a huge family of children.⁸¹ When we see them all lined up his wife tells us “It’s hard to believe, but it’s true!”

⁷⁹ The song is ‘Riding in the TT Races’ and includes the lines:
Once my bike was hard to ride, but I didn’t mind
Until I found they’d hitched a Charabanc on behind
(Song by Harry Gifford and Fred E Cliffe).

⁸⁰ Song title: ‘Riding Around on a Rainbow’.

⁸¹ Richard Dyer pinpoints ‘abundance’ as one of the characteristics typically expressed in Hollywood musicals in his essay on ‘Entertainment and Utopia’ (Dyer, 2002: 22), which could also be appropriated here.

The rendition of the title song in *Sing As We Go*, and its association with national pride is particularly emphatic at the film's closure, due to the appearance of the Union Jack flags which are waved by the mill workers on their return to the factory, and over which the end titles are superimposed. Higson considers that although the 'accents, customs, and location mark this as a regionally specific community...it also functions as a microcosm of the national community', of which the Union Jack plays a part in signalling (Higson, 1995: 157). The Union Jack is also foregrounded in *No Limit*, when it is unfurled at the start of the TT race. It also appears in the closing credits to remind the audience that they have been watching a British film. The race in this film is arguably presented as a mass spectacle, with the crowds united by their rooting for George to win. Although George is an archetypal northern stereotype (his character being called George Shuttleworth, from a town called 'Slagdyke'), his acceptance by the southern, middle-class character of Florrie, and his winning of the race makes him universally accepted, the point being, as Richards says, that 'if George could win through adversity, anybody could' (Richards, 1984: 199). This is something which arguably appealed to film audiences in the Depression, and the Second World War.

Between the Traditional and the Modern

In some respects, the holidays which are represented in *Sing As We Go* and *No Limit* have a rather confused identity, and appear to be struggling somewhere between the progressive, and the regressive. The Fields film attempts to celebrate the traditional Blackpool Wakes holiday, whilst also critiquing some of the more recent Americanised attractions of the resort. The contradictions between the traditional and the progressive, however, are perhaps even more acute in Formby's film, which involves what could be considered an 'event' holiday, long before such holidays became widespread.

Although the holidaymakers in *No Limit* are seen sunbathing and visiting the fair, for instance, these activities are incidental to the TT Races, which are the

foremost reason why holidaymakers have gathered on the island. Traditionally, only the upper classes could afford to take holidays which were constructed around sporting seasons, such as skiing in Europe, for example, so this holiday could be seen to pre-figure event holidays for the middle- and working classes, as well as perhaps anticipating the 'extreme sport' holidays of today. Bell and Lyall contrast the traditional type of tourist who was content to simply 'gaze', against the more recent type of tourist who consumes the landscape through speed:

In the same way that travel at first slowly increased in speed, and then more rapidly increased...the body of the tourist is subjecting itself to the same increases in speed and acceleration. Where people once stood to look, then walked, they now run: cross-country, fell-running, mountain-running, ultra-distance running, endurance sports (Bell and Lyall, 2000: 105).

The climax of *No Limit* is built around the TT race with an emphasis on excitement and speed, and we see several daring stunts including a bike bursting into flames and one smashing over a cliff. This is a sequence that frames the motorcycle racers and the watching crowds, against the postcard views, and quaint, white-painted stone cottages of the island, contrasting modernity with the traditional and the picturesque.

There is, however, what could arguably be called a 'regressive' scene at the centre of this film which particularly seems to look back to an entertainment form from the previous century, and is framed as such by George's performance against a row of antiquated bathing machines, the use of which had gradually started to be phased out in the period before the First World War. At this point in the film, George needs to find work to pay for his board and lodgings. Florrie has the idea that he should busk in black face, and helps him to disguise himself with soot from the grate of the fireplace in his hotel bedroom. The scene then cuts to Douglas beach which has a long line of bathing machines. This is probably one of the last films which features them in a contemporary setting – from then onwards, they usually appear in period films to denote the holiday practices of a

previous era. George uses the steps of one of the bathing machines as a make-shift stage, which perhaps denotes a feeling of nostalgia against which the attraction of the 'sand singer' – in this instance the black face minstrel – performs.

According to Pickering, 'blacked-up buskers and troupes had started taking to the sands from at least the 1860s' and 'remained a familiar beachfront presence during the first half of the twentieth century' (2008, 70 – 71). Although this form of minstrelsy 'offered a stereotypical depiction of African-American people' through 'racial mockery' Pickering claims that 'seaside minstrels are usually referred to as innocuous' with 'family-friendly material and performances [which] were far from hostile or vicious in any reference they may have had to black people themselves' (2008: 3 and 74). Nevertheless, These types of performances 'still dealt in damaging images' by promoting stereotypical depictions of black people (Pickering, 2008: 74).

Formby's black face performance is something of a curiosity, and seems somewhat incongruous here, because his character changes nothing else about his performance technique, even singing a (British) northern-themed song 'In a Little Wigan Garden'. In some respects, Formby's character appears to be trying to distance himself from his actions. By claiming to 'feel daft' in the make-up, and delivering a typically Formby-esque performance (with ukulele and references to Wigan), in some ways, he is removing himself from the usual performance-style of the American minstrel. The make-up is used mainly as a disguise for busking, so that the identity of the seemingly successful TT rider remains concealed. Unsurprisingly, however, the disguise provides the opportunity for some overtly racist remarks to be inserted into the script. Mrs. Horrocks (not realising that George is wearing make-up) doesn't want to believe that the singer is one of her boarders, and exclaims, "A black man? The idea – don't be silly!" When George's identity is revealed she still shows her disgust at his begging, by saying that she doesn't have 'sand singers' in her house. The sequence could be seen to

encapsulate class snobbery directed at unregulated beach entertainers, regressive forms of entertainment such as minstrelsy, and the beach paraphernalia of a bygone era. These motifs tend to look back to the previous century, unlike the rest of the film which tends to embrace modernity, and anticipates a time of more widespread holidays with pay for the working classes.

Conclusion

In summary, *Sing As We Go* and *No Limit* both function ideologically, as a momentary respite from the dark days of the Depression – reminding audiences that the Slump may only be temporary. The re-construction of the workplace, not only at the conclusion of *Sing As We Go*, but in the elements of the working holiday which we see in both films, also tends to offer an ideological solution to the anxieties of the time. Unemployment appears to be a temporary problem here, and one that is regionally specific. The representation of Blackpool and the Isle of Man as bustling resort towns seems to suggest that the Slump was not as far-reaching as we might first believe. Nevertheless, there were still around 2 million unemployed men in 1935, and recovery was not sufficient to have prevented the plight of the unemployed people of Jarrow, whose protest march to London took place the following year (Yass, 1975: 29).

The Fields film, in particular, makes a direct reference to the economic problems of the time, and goes some way to showing the audience that hard work and determination can reunite the community. Mass Observation found that music played an important role in films and that, 'Gracie Fields and George Formby singing [could] register advice, for instance, or instruct on anything a good deal more strongly...than Lord Halifax or Mr Hore Belisha' (Richards and Sheridan (eds.), 1987: 168). Both films make use of communal singing, and re-present the northern populism of music hall to reinforce the community spirit of the working-class holiday. A sense of stoicism and cheer is communicated to the cinema audience, from the films' two stars, with their regional and national appeal. This point is reiterated by Richards who says:

If Lancashire recognized in George and Gracie qualities specific to the region, the nation also identified characteristics to admire. For Gracie and George shared certain qualities that were at a premium during the Depression and subsequently the war – optimism, cheerfulness and indomitability (Richards, 1997: 259).

The communal atmosphere of the traditional British holiday resort plays a big part in reaffirming a sense of national pride. There is a feeling that all can't be bad, if the Pleasure Beach can supply a little diversion by suspending 'the normal restraints which hem in and limit the body' and if 'excessive eating and drinking' is still the order of the day (Bennett *et al* (eds.), 1986: 151 – 152).

Stevenson and Cook point out that by November 1938, the number of working people entitled to paid holidays had risen to 9 million, and by June 1939 over 11 million.

This meant for many working people the first opportunity for an extensive holiday away from home. The British holiday resorts reached a peak of popularity with a host of new hotels, boarding-houses, entertainments and amenities. Twenty million people visited the seaside annually by the late 1930s, 15 million on extended holidays (Stevenson and Cook, 1994: 34).

As I suggested earlier, films like *Sam Small Leaves Town* and *Bank Holiday* represent the holiday of the 1930s in less austere times, coming as they do, towards the end of the decade. *Sam Small...* anticipates the coming of more widespread holidays with pay. The film was released in the year before the Act was passed, and location footage was shot at a Butlin holiday camp – a company which used the Holidays With Pay Act to garner publicity, as I will point out in the following chapter (Butlin, 1982: 119). *Bank Holiday* however, also anticipates the onset of war. News headlines and hoardings in the film predict a 'record bank holiday' in spite of the 'war clouds over Europe' – the film appears to represent the last carefree days before wartime restrictions. In the film's coda, nurse Catharine emphasises the temporal nature of the holiday whilst seemingly

commenting on the end of peacetime when she says, “everyone’s coming back; the holiday’s over”.

In spite of what Stevenson and Cook (1994) argue, the introduction of more widespread holidays with pay didn’t have an immediate effect on the numbers of working class people taking a holiday. The holiday habit had to develop over several years, and didn’t really see a huge increase until after the Second World War ended, especially as most coastal areas were out of bounds during this time, in case of invasion (Pimlott, 1976: 222). In the next chapter, I will be examining holidays in the immediate postwar period. In particular, I will be analysing the representation of the holiday camp in British film, and how this may have contributed to an ideological re-construction of the working-class family.

Chapter 5 – Re-constructing the Family Holiday: The Holiday Camp in Postwar British Film

Introduction

In the previous chapter, I examined the holiday film in a period without widespread holidays with pay for the working classes. When the Holidays with Pay Act was passed in 1938, the opportunity of an annual break was in turn scuppered by the restrictions of the Second World War. Widespread holidays for the working classes only became a reality after the war had ended, and even then, this was a relative luxury in the immediate postwar period. For most people, some sort of restoration of 'normality' was their main concern in a period of 'make-do-and-mend' and rationing. It was in this era that the regulated jollity of the holiday camp flourished. The mass pleasures on offer at these camps were perhaps temporarily able to convince the British holidaymaker that life wasn't such an anti-climax after the victory celebrations had ended.

Holiday films were few and far between during the Second World War, as British cinema was given over to propaganda purposes.⁸² Some of the patriotic films made in the early 1940s however, incorporated holiday themes into their narratives, but in such a way that they didn't deny the existence of war, or detract from the patriotic purpose of the films. For example, in *Gert and Daisy's Weekend* (1941) the eponymous heroines (Elsie and Doris Waters) become involved in the war effort by unwittingly volunteering to take a group of city children on holiday to a large house in the country, and in *Millions Like Us*, the Crowson family spend one last holiday at Eastgate⁸³ before the New Palace Pier's lights are extinguished to signify the coming of the war. The holiday scenes at the beginning of the latter film show crowded beaches and singing pierettes, and are presented as memories of holidays taken before the hostilities. These

⁸² See for example, Aldgate and Richards, 1986, and Chapman, 1998.

⁸³ A fictionalised Eastbourne.

memories are contrasted with the resort which honeymooners Celia and Fred (Patricia Roc and Gordon Jackson) return to during wartime, where buildings on the prom show signs of bomb damage, and where the gaze out to sea is punctuated by gun blasts on the horizon. The holiday memories are therefore framed as an example of the freedom which British people are fighting to protect. As I have said, however, images of the British on holiday were rare during the Second World War, and it wasn't until *Holiday Camp*'s release in 1947 that the phenomenon of peacetime holidays was foregrounded once again.

In this chapter, I will give an insight into the immediate postwar period, and the appeal of mass forms of organised leisure in this era. I will examine the cultural significance that holiday camps might have held at the time, before analysing the way that the family holiday is represented in *Holiday Camp*. Firstly, however, I will briefly look at how the British spent their holidays at home during the Second World War.

Wartime Holidays at Home

Wartime restrictions on travel, the use of seaside accommodation for service personnel and the closing of many of Britain's east coast beaches meant that holidays were 'out of bounds' for a large majority of the British populace during the Second World War. Margate, for example, 'which seemed to blink across at Nazi Europe, became very run down' (Walvin, 1978: 128), and holiday guides were prevented from reproducing up-to-date maps in case they got into the hands of the enemy. The Ward, Lock and Co. *Guide to Torquay, Paignton, Dartmouth and South Devon*, for example, had to include a note in its wartime edition which read:

Owing to war-time difficulties, it is not at present possible to include the customary complete set of maps and plans in this guide (Ward, Lock and Co. insert, no publishing date given, circa 1940 – 45).

The government scheme of 'Holidays at Home' materialised in 1941 as part of an effort to restrict travel as part of the government's 'Is Your Journey Really Necessary?' campaign. The Labour MP, J. P. W. Mallalieu was enthusiastic about Holidays at Home. In his 1943 book *Passed to You, Please*, he highlights Huddersfield's success at the provision of entertainments such as 'concert parties, military bands, model railway and yacht contests and open-air dancing' (cited in Sladen, 2002: 71). Billy Butlin was responsible for supplying some of the fairground amusements for Holidays at Home, as he recalls:

While I was at the Ministry of Supply, several places including Gloucester, Leicester and Sheffield asked me to help them to organize their holiday weeks and I was happy to do so. I had many thousands of pounds' worth of fairground rides lying idle and I had them brought out of mothballs and loaned to various towns and cities. They were mostly operated by retired and middle-aged volunteers – and even by school children (Butlin, 1982: 138 – 139).

Picnics and sporting activities were also popular Holidays at Home activities, but some towns took pains to imitate the seaside experience further by providing donkey rides and sand pits, whilst the beauty contest (which had become an increasingly popular feature of the British seaside holiday in the pre-war years – as seen in *Sing As We Go* and *Bank Holiday*) also found a place in many Holidays at Home programmes.

However, there were concerns during wartime about how the extra number of holidaymakers created by the introduction of Holidays With Pay could be accommodated at the War's end. In 1942, for example, 'the fledgling Ministry of Town and Country Planning started to consider questions such as the siting of new holiday camps which were – accurately – expected to provide a good part of the accommodation needed' (Sladen, 2002: 88 – 89). One option discussed by the National Council of Social Service (NCSS) was that the government 'set up a central authority, a national holidays corporation, which would hold and manage government hostel property, adapted for holiday use, and give financial aid to local authorities and voluntary organizations towards the capital cost of new

holiday facilities' (Sladen, 2002: 89). Ernest Bevin saw holiday camps as 'playing an important role, and shared with Sir Stafford Cripps the idea that they should be used to attract foreign visitors to spend their holidays in Britain' (Ward and Hardy, 1986: 143).

As Sladen indicates, however, '[t]he predicted extension of the public sector contribution to holidays into peacetime, failed to materialize' (Sladen, 2002: 89). Instead, the opportunity was seized upon by private investors such as Billy Butlin, a man adept at seeing a niche in the market for his commercial holiday camps.

Before I look at postwar holidays and holiday camps in more detail, I will briefly examine the postwar climate of austerity, and how Britain aimed to rebuild itself in the late 1940s. This will, in part, give an idea of the atmosphere of the times in which holiday camps found mass appeal with British society.

Victory in Europe – Picking up the Pieces

One of the first major changes to take place in Britain after Victory in Europe was the 'Labour Landslide' in July 1945 which saw Churchill (and the Conservatives) leave office, to be replaced by Clement Atlee.

At 7 p.m., [Churchill] went to Buckingham Palace in his chauffeur-driven Rolls-Royce, to hand in his resignation as Prime Minister. Fifteen minutes later, Atlee and his wife drove there, through cheering crowds, in their modest Standard 10. At last, Labour was in office. A new age seemed to have begun (Mayne, 1983: 21).

Osgerby suggests that this election victory:

...has often been taken as heralding a new era of consensus in British political life...both Labour and Conservative governments of the fifties and early sixties operated within a framework of shared assumptions – the provision of the welfare state, the maintenance of high levels of employment and an acknowledgement of the state's general responsibility for the management of a mixed economy. In such an atmosphere it certainly seemed as though a new era was dawning (Osgerby, 1998: 30).

Morgan discusses this further, as follows:

In the eighteen months that followed, Britain appeared to undergo a massive transformation unique in her history. Over 20 per cent of the economy was taken into public ownership or was well on course for it. The framework for a welfare state was boldly set out, with the National Health Service Act passed in May 1946, along with a National Insurance Act that enacted Beveridge proposals, and new drives for publicly subsidized housing and advance in elementary and secondary education (Morgan, 2001: 29).

The 1942 'Beveridge Report', published officially as *Social Insurance and Allied Services*, 'had established the principles of an integrated system of welfare provision that became the blueprint for the Labour government's new welfare state' (Tincknell, 2005: 7). Beveridge's aim to make health care universally available through the National Health Service, and to introduce a system of Family Allowances and National Insurance to prevent destitution 'caught the popular imagination as an image of a fairer society for which the Second World War was fought' (Muncie, 2003: 43).

There were national concerns about a fall in population rates, as well as a rise in the number of couples opting for divorce. Men often found it difficult to settle back into civilian life, as Kynaston points out:

The strains on marriages were severe. A couple might not have seen each other for several years; he expected to return to his familiar position as the undisputed head; she had become more independent (often working in a factory as well as running the home) – the possibilities for tension and strife, even when both were emotionally committed to each other, were endless. Inevitably, the number of divorces (in England and Wales) rose sharply: from 12,324 in 1944...to 60,190 by 1947 (Kynaston, 2007: 97).

This in turn resulted in a 'commitment to national and international renewal focused intensively on the desire to restore the family life that war had disrupted;

wartime anomie and chaos were supposed to be replaced with cohesion and familial stability' (Tincknell, 2005: 6).⁸⁴

The introduction of services such as Family Allowance made an ideological contribution to the re-construction of the family at the end of the War – something to which certain forms of mass leisure, such as the cinema and family holidays, also contributed as the decade progressed. However, for the majority of people, the return to a reasonably comfortable life would be at least another five years away, as Britain continued to be a place of 'drabness and shortages' (Morgan, 2001: 32). Many items which were rationed in the early 1940s, such as bacon, ham, butter and sugar (rationed from January 1940), were not taken off rationing until the spring and summer of 1954. Sweets and chocolate were rationed from July 1942 to February 1953; the latter date a notable landmark for children of the era (Hennessy, 2007: 9).

Morgan points out that though 'new clothes, cars, currency for foreign travel [and] luxuries of all kinds were in desperately short supply', there were still 'traditional pleasures [to improve] public morale', such as football and cricket, dance halls, and the cinema, which remained a relatively cheap and accessible form of entertainment for most people:

The year 1946 saw the record attendance for British cinema-going with over 1,600 million attending; teenage girls, deprived of perfume or 'nylons', would go to their local Gaumont, Odeon, Ritz, or Regal three or four times a week (Morgan, 2001: 32 – 33).

Similarly, Hennessy and Geraghty both refer to Addison,⁸⁵ when they discuss the possible reasons for the postwar boom in leisure. They say that because of the

⁸⁴ Chambers similarly states that 'the state desire to expand the population of western anglophone nations after the Second World War was translated into the need to rebuild 'the family', with 'the modern 'functional' family...[reaching] its peak around the 1950s, during which the white, middle-class, patriarchal, 'nuclear' version of the family emerged as the dominant model' (Chambers, 2001: 49).

continued rationing of everyday commodities such as food and clothes in a time of full employment and women at work, consumers looked for other ways to spend surplus cash: for example, in visiting the cinema, or by spending it on a holiday (Hennessy, 2006: 316, and Geraghty, 2000: 4). It was these types of leisure activities to which British people looked, in order to feel that at least some wartime restrictions had passed. People felt that they needed a holiday after the years of restrictions and austerity, and many hadn't had the opportunity since the introduction of Holidays With Pay. Kynaston (2007: 6 – 13) also argues that – contrary to popular mythology – British V. E. celebrations were rather low-key, which is possibly another reason why people hankered for a holiday to confirm their newfound freedom.

Hands Across the Ocean

For most people in Britain, however, a holiday was still a dream in 1946, but not so for the young couple seen in *Hands Across the Ocean* (1946),⁸⁶ who undertake a lengthy journey of discovery, far beyond the means of most British citizens of the time. *Hands Across The Ocean* is admittedly a bit of an oddity, as it is one of the first British films of the postwar era which includes *several* holiday settings, and which foregrounds the British landscape to reinforce a sense of British tradition and national pride. The film follows a romance between an American GI (played by Sergeant Bill Swire), and his British girlfriend, Helen Foster (Pearl Cameron), against a spectacular backdrop of several key British (and Irish) landmarks. The film foregrounds these landmarks to remind the cinema audience of places they may not have been able to visit during the war years, or indeed ever, before the introduction of paid holidays.

The film's main purpose, however, appears to be to allay any fears or suspicions that British people had for American GIs who had chosen to marry a British woman. As Swinglehurst points out, 'fraternisation between US troops and British

⁸⁵ Addison, Paul, *Now the War is Over*, 1985, London: Jonathan Cape, p. 116.

⁸⁶ An independent, Gordon Film Production.

females led to romantic attachments, many of them permanent'⁸⁷ so one of the ways the film works to gain the sympathy and understanding of the British audience is through its narration by the American soldier,⁸⁸ who comments on the beauty of the British countryside, and also the beauty of British women (Swinglehurst, 2007: 144). The narrator often compares the sights to similar ones in America (to quash any feelings of difference between the two nations), and talks about his ancestral roots in Southern Ireland. To celebrate their engagement, the couple go to see that most typically British working-class leisure pursuit: a dog race.

Although Gifford lists *Hands Across the Ocean* as a fictional film it is arguably a drama-documentary. The film has been shot as a silent, with a dubbed voice-over and suitably patriotic music such as 'The British Grenadiers' to denote Britishness, and 'Swanee River' to denote Americana. The film works as a travelogue, and the film's message regarding the union between the two lovers and their plans to start a family are stressed, as such, for the film to be considered as *peacetime* propaganda.

The travelogue begins on the Thames, where the GI makes a comparison between the English river and its people:

"Your river Thames was just about the most English thing I'd struck yet. Unhurried, quiet and smooth. Dignified, yet still friendly, if you get what I mean."

He says of Helen, "She and the scenery were made for each other."

As she hands out picnic food on the boat the GI wonders what Helen would be like in the kitchen, "our kitchen", but he keeps quiet. (Her suitability for domestic duties is tested later when she learns how to make "good American coffee" and waffles!)

⁸⁷ This text is seen beside a photograph of a GI bride leaving Waterloo Station with her six-month old daughter to join her husband in America.

⁸⁸ The 'American' voice-over is actually an impersonation, provided by the Irish actor Tommy Duggan.

Next they visit Blackpool, “A kind of Coney Island with an English accent.” During a ‘horse and buggy’ ride, the GI comments that the town “looked just the way I felt, in a strictly holiday mood”. There is a spectacular panoramic shot of the coast from the top of the Tower. Then on to the Lake District, where the picturesque beauty of the landscape is foregrounded for the cinema audience:

“We have some rocky scenery too, way back home, but it’s often too big to fit into the picture. You’ve gotta keep on travelling to appreciate it. Here, they’re like a lot of little pictures, and each one is complete in itself.”

After visiting Oxford, Stratford upon Avon and Southern Ireland (where the GI kisses the Blarney Stone), the couple go to London to attend a school for US-bound brides. They learn how to bath a baby, and the camera shows them squeeze each other’s hands as they watch an infant being bathed. After one last boat ride on the Serpentine the soldier returns to his ship, saying:

“Goodbye folks. You’ve been swell. And I’m going to tell them all back home. Funny it should take a war to make people more friendly, but that’s how it is. So long, men and thanks for everything, and especially, Helen!”

The latter (and rather dubious) comment would seem to suggest that he sees Helen as a gift from the men of Britain.

As I have suggested, the film labours its comparisons between the English countryside and its people quite relentlessly over its 37-minute running time. It is interesting, however, because it gives us an insight into the postwar phenomenon of the ‘GI Bride’ and the efforts which appear to have been made in maintaining relations between America and Britain at the time. The relationship as seen in the film is hardly progressive for its time. We never get to hear the woman’s voice, and her GI husband’s top priority appears to be to get his bride into the kitchen on their arrival in the US. The film does, however, hint towards some of the postwar anxieties relating to the need for the re-construction of the family – although on this occasion, the couple will be making their home in

America. The re-construction of the *British* family, however, is something which the first significant British film with a holiday setting, *Holiday Camp* (1947), also appears to address, which I will come back to later.

Middle Class Holidays of the Immediate Postwar Years

Despite the restrictions of the postwar period, there is evidence to suggest that for some middle-class people, the return to the comforts of the pre-war era was relatively easy. In *Our Hidden Lives*, Simon Garfield has collated a series of revealing extracts from the postwar diaries of a handful of Mass Observers.⁸⁹ Because they are Mass Observers, it could be argued that the diarists are middle class and therefore reasonably well off – apart, perhaps, from Maggie Joy Blunt, who takes in lodgers to aid her finances. This means that their lifestyles, including holidays, may not be completely representative of the era. One of the diarists, Mr. Taylor (an accountant from Sheffield in his mid 40s) has a fortnight in Europe, taking in France, Switzerland and Italy (Garfield, 2005: 428 – 431), whilst several of them comment on their dislike of holiday camps. Herbert Brush (a retired and widowed 72 year old from London) spends a few days at Caister Holiday Camp in Norfolk in 1947 (Garfield, 2005: 402). He finds the bed uncomfortable and says that it is difficult to determine what type of meat is served at one of the meals. In some respects, this holiday is something of an experiment for Mr. Brush who usually takes motoring holidays to Cornwall and Torquay. He also pays a brief visit to Ramsgate and Margate, where he finds the Dreamland amusements to be closed (Garfield, 2005: 211 – 212).

Herbert Brush's holiday in Truro is particularly interesting, as he takes it in July 1945, not long after the hostilities had ended in Europe. He goes with one of his housemates (a woman called 'W' who does the driving), and stays in a cottage

⁸⁹ Garfield relates how in 1939, Mass Observers were asked to keep diaries in order to record their day-to-day experiences in wartime Britain. About 500 'secretaries, accountants, shop workers, scientists, schoolteachers, civil servants, housewives and electricity board inspectors', from all over Britain responded to the request, with some of them continuing to make diary entries after the war had ended (Garfield, 2005: 2).

on the Cliffside above the harbour. Indoor toilets were still a luxury in 1945, as Brush records:

Friday, 20th July 1945:

There is no WC in this cottage and one has to go down to the Public Lavatory on the quay side, about 50 yards away and 20 feet down. No paper supplied (Garfield, 2005: 61).

There is still evidence of the fortification of Britain's beaches, which might have resulted in some terrible accidents for the less cautious:

Sunday, 22nd July 1945:

This afternoon we went for a picnic on Penewan Beach. Talking to a man and a woman at the harbour later, the woman mentioned the fact that no villagers go on the sands where we had been: there were too many mines left by the Americans, even after they were supposed to have cleared them all. Probably if we had been told before we went there we should have not rested on those sands with such comfort (Garfield, 2005: 61 – 62).

Similarly, on Tuesday 24th July, he has a picnic at Porthluney Cove, where he sees 'six Italian prisoners of war...engaged in the task of taking down the anti-invasion fence' (Garfield, 2005: 62). He also refers to wartime restrictions in this diary entry, when observing a man who walks 'about half a mile along the top of the cliff' in order to retrieve a lost rubber beach ball. With materials such as rubber in short supply during the war years, items such as beach balls had become 'nearly impossible to buy anywhere', as Brush comments (Garfield, 2005: 63). Low postwar supplies of beer also affect the pubs during Brush's holiday in Truro, August 1946. He says that none of them have 'any beer for the holiday, so some people will not enjoy themselves as well as they hope to do' (Garfield, 2005: 260).

The Holiday Camp in Pre- and Postwar Britain

In postwar Britain, Blackpool was still a very popular resort for many working-class families, but it was in this period that the 'holiday-camp phenomenon' really

captured the imagination of the British people (Kynaston, 2007: 217). As Jimmy Perry⁹⁰ recalls when reminiscing about his time as a Red Coat at Pwllheli in 1949:

The war had only been over four years and rationing was still in progress and life was very hard for most of the population. People wanted to forget the long dreary years behind them and have the holiday of their lives at a modest cost... (Read, 1986: 5).

Although there was strong competition from Pontin's and Warner's in the postwar era, it was Butlin's name which became synonymous with the commercial holiday camp. Butlin was a great entrepreneur, and made his success by identifying gaps in the leisure market, and coming up with innovative solutions on how to fill them. Initially starting his career as a fairground showman, he realised in the 1920s that the charabanc was partly responsible for the declining numbers of people who visited Bank Holiday fun fairs, and that 'people were escaping from their often dismal surroundings to spend a day at the seaside', to which he thought it 'would be good business to follow them' (Butlin, 1982: 80). It was after meeting two fellow showmen during the 1926/27 season at Olympia,⁹¹ who had businesses in Skegness, that Butlin decided to visit the resort for himself.

Butlin made his first fortune by importing the first Dodgem Cars into Britain (at Skegness in 1928), and subsequently opening a chain of seaside amusement parks in Mablethorpe, Hayling Island, Bognor, Felixstowe, Portsmouth, Bexhill and the Isle of Man (Butlin, 1982: 89). It is likely that many people who had visited these resorts during the 1930s would have recognised the Butlin name by the time his first holiday camp opened in Skegness in 1936. When the camp opened in Easter of that year, it initially had a limit of 500 campers a week 'to allow for trial and error', but by June, the number of campers per week had risen to 1000 (Butlin, 1982: 107).

⁹⁰ Perry (along with David Croft) went on to create the BBC TV series *Hi De Hi* (1980 – 1988) set in the fictional postwar holiday camp, Maplin's.

⁹¹ Bertram Mills had a circus at London's Olympia every Christmas, which also included many stalls and sideshows outside the big top (see Butlin, 1980: 70).

Butlin offered holidays with three meals a day and inclusive entertainment from 35 shillings to £3 a week, according to the time of the season. The holiday camp with its outdoor and indoor amusements was an ideal alternative to seaside accommodation such as bed and breakfast houses where landladies wanted their guests to stay out during the day no matter the weather, and, as Angeloglou points out, 'in a week at the seaside one day was sure to be wet' (Angeloglou, 1975: 55). Initially, as indicated by his £500 page advert in the *Daily Express*, Butlin appears to have been aiming for customers who might be regarded as a mix between the respectable working classes and the lower middle-class (Butlin, 1982: 107). This is certainly the impression that the film *Sam Small Leaves Town* (1937) gives. Customers in the film drink champagne, the women in the bar wear long evening gowns, and the dining hall (although supposedly catering for '2000 people' as one character points out to Stanley Holloway) has an atmosphere more like a restaurant, than a canteen, as witnessed later in *Holiday Camp*.

Butlin did well to open his first camp around the same time as the introduction of Holidays With Pay. Despite referring to this fortunate timing as 'luck', he admits that once he realised the camps would be popular after the war, and that 'some eight million workers would be able, and seemingly determined, to have a holiday by the seaside', he tailor-made his camps to suit these demands, and actively lobbied Parliament to pass the Act in 1938 (Butlin, 1982: 118). When paid holidays were introduced he advertised with the slogan: 'Holidays with pay: Holidays with play: A week's holiday for a week's wage', because the average weekly wage was about £3 10s (£3.50) a week (Butlin, 1982: 119).

Holiday camps were advertised as something modern and progressive, and pitted against hotels and bed and breakfast houses in their advertising spin. Gray points out that 'in establishing its place at the seaside, the holiday camp lobby eagerly denigrated traditional seaside accommodation, arguing that the 'seaside

landladies [were] doomed', as were the old-style resorts, many of which resisted the coming of the camps' (Gray, 2006: 293).

The Postwar Efficiency of the Holiday Camp

As research for *The Englishman's Holiday*, Pimlott visited Butlin's at Clacton for one day in August 1946. He made extensive notes on what campers received for their money in the immediate postwar period. The season lasted from early April to November, and prices ranged from £5 5s a week before 1st June and after 19th October, to £6 16s 6d from 6th July to 14th September, with children up to ten charged at half price. Prices included all entertainment, and meals except for afternoon tea and "elevenses", drinks and snacks, the shoe shine service...riding and excursions' (Pimlott, 1975: 277). The camp was open for two days a week for non-residents at 2s 6d per head, who could make use of the 'free' entertainments.

Of some important note, perhaps, is the way that the camp was run as a 24-hour operation with 'much of the cleaning including window-cleaning' being done at night, along with 'preparation for breakfast' (Pimlott, 1975: 277). This is something which might be more common in today's 24-hour society, but which perhaps was rather innovative in 1946.

Many commentators emphasise the regimentation of holiday camps, claiming that this was partly a consequence of the discipline of war. Martin Parr,⁹² for instance, comments that the camps combined 'the novel luxuries of hot water on tap and un-rationed meat, and a national taste for being in barracks' (Parr, 2002:

⁹² Whilst he was a student at Manchester Polytechnic, Parr took the job of a 'walkie' photographer at Butlin's, Filey, during the summers of 1971 and 1972. He recalls being 'allowed to photograph in the Beachcomber Bar, which was full of tropical plants with waitresses dressed in hula skirts and, best of all, a thunderstorm every half hour' (Parr, 2002: 5).

5).⁹³ Entertainers Roy Hudd and Tom O'Connor also recall how the organised leisure of the camps appealed to people in the postwar period, with Hudd commenting:

Just after the war people didn't half need to have fun, but they still needed...the discipline of war (Kelly, 2005).

O'Connor reiterates this:

We wanted to be instructed as to what to do, how to enjoy ourselves...with no worries, no stress – we just did it (Kelly, 2005).

Pimlott says, however, that he 'saw little evidence of regimentation or organized 'jollyng' that has become part of holiday camp folk lore, including during the fancy dress competitions where he says 'the impression was one of informality rather than of high-powered organisation' (Pimlott, 1975: 280 – 281). Perhaps the only evidence of regimentation was when the campers were called to hand in their ration books to the caterers at certain times, according to where their names came in the alphabet. Pimlott also points out that 'lunch was an impressive demonstration of efficiency', continuing:

The service was speedy, and the food was good. Soup – meat pie and vegetables – steamed pudding – it was a mass-produced meal but substantial and well enough prepared. No bread – owing to rationing. Tea to drink afterwards, and I was told that tea was served at every meal. (More remarkable still, beer had never run out at the bars during the whole season). (Pimlott, 1975: 280 – 281).

To give an idea of the scale of catering, Butlin recalls that in a camp accommodating 5,000 visitors the '*daily* consumption of potatoes was four tons' (Butlin, 1982: 154). Read points out how Filey adapted to mass catering when rationing was in force, with some imaginative innovations:

⁹³ The association with barracks wasn't just a coincidence. Camps such as those at Filey, Pwllheli and Ayr had been used by the army during wartime, and subsequently bought back by Butlin at three-fifths of their original cost. See Butlin, 1982: 132 – 133, and Hennessy, 2006: 314.

Fresh eggs were supplied from local farmers near each camp, but powdered egg was used for making cakes and sandwiches. Whale meat was put in steak and kidney pie or garnished with onions, and the campers were told it was 'Canadian wind-dried steak'. There were a lot of potatoes, spam and fish, which came from nearby Grimsby and Hull and was either fried, boiled [or] baked (Read, 1986: 73).⁹⁴

The Butlin's camps required an enormous amount of organisation in administration, and at 'front of house':

At the bigger camps like Skegness, it was not uncommon for up to 12,000 applications to be received in one day at the height of the season. All of them were acknowledged within twenty-four hours. On Saturday [Butlin's] often handled 12,000 people – 6,000 leaving and 6,000 newcomers (Butlin, 1982: 154).

Critiquing The Holiday Camp

Gray describes the design of these camps as 'monolithic', saying that the large communal areas and chalets in 'serried rows' were 'more reminiscent of the light industrial factory estate or military barracks and parade ground than the traditional seaside' (Gray, 2006: 291 – 292). But this would seem the most necessary and logical architectural plan for accommodating large numbers of people and functioning efficiently. Holiday camps have long-been criticised for being the kind of institution which embodies commercialisation, standardisation and industrialisation in one shiny package. As Ward and Hardy say, 'in their modern form [commercial camps] exhibited all that was offensive in a changing world. Unlike the pioneer camps (simple places with familiar values) the new camps were brash, vulgar and generally in the poorest of taste...[attracting] the kind of criticism that has its origins in the school of thought which can measure everything against a classical notion of heritage' (Ward and Hardy, 1986: 154). Orwell was one such critic, as Gray outlines:

Writing shortly after the Second World War and arguing that 'much of what goes by the name of pleasure is simply an effort to destroy consciousness',

⁹⁴ Rabbit was another popular meat which camps served at the time.

Orwell was withering of the holiday-camp-like modern pleasure spots (Gray, 2006: 293).

This critique also recalls Huxley's premonition of a consumerist society and burgeoning Americanisation of Britain in *Brave New World*. His 1932 novel predicts a time when people will be distracted from reading and thinking with 'no leisure from pleasure', where synthetic music is piped out in the Girls' Dressing-Room of the Central London Hatchery Conditioning Centre, and loud-speakers announce closing time for the Obstacle Golf course at Stoke Poges (Huxley, 1994: 32, 49 and 64).

It could be argued that the numerous activities that Pimlott saw on offer at Butlin's in 1946 are the antithesis of the 'rational' recreations that were associated with the holiday of the 18th and 19th century aristocrats and well-to-do. The commercial camps were exactly that: Ward and Hardy point to Nicholas Mosley's visit to Butlin's at Bognor in 1961 where he found cigarette advertisements on the walls, competitions sponsored by newspapers, and half an hour of commercials each day on Radio Butlin's (Ward and Hardy, 1986: 158). Sandbrook similarly mentions that 'Philishave sponsored a Shaver of the Week competition, while Rizla offered a prize for the best Cigarette Roller' (Sandbrook, 2005: 124 – 125).

Most of the criticisms aimed at holiday camps, however, come from an elitist viewpoint, and therefore tend to deny the popular appeal that the camps had with huge numbers of people who were trying to recover from a frightening and stressful war. The very reason the aforementioned diarist, Herbert Brush probably found Caister Camp to his distaste was because it was outside his usual 'habitus' of the motoring holiday in Cornwall (Bourdieu, 2006: 172). The types of holidaymakers that despised the new commercial camps were generally those who preferred holidays of self-improvement (preferably away from crowds), often involving walking and climbing. These, however, are the types of holiday that not every working class man and woman has cultural access to (Ward and

Hardy, 1986: 155 – 156). In favour of holiday camps, Ward and Hardy argue that they ‘offered visitors from a grey industrial setting a glimpse of Hollywood, first-hand experience of the seductive glitter previously restricted to the view from a cinema seat’ (Ward and Hardy, 1986: 151 – 152).⁹⁵ Sue Cowperthwaite, who remembers her first visit to a holiday camp in the 1960s, alludes to this:

I couldn’t believe it when we got there. It was like another world...like some sort of film set. There were coffee bars which was very exotic...
(Humphries, 2006).

The camps, like films, also tended to collapse time with their organised activities, so that all of the *longeurs* and uneventful parts of the day were erased. Space was similarly compressed and re-packaged so that the camper, who might not ordinarily get the opportunity to leave Britain, could experience the exoticism of countries from all corners of the world:

From the outset, commercial camps, in responding to the holiday habit, sought to transport their visitors from a world of everyday drudgery to a make-believe setting. Images were compressed and interwoven to create a world that was everywhere yet nowhere. Hawaiian bars and Viennese coffee lounges, Hollywood Terraces and South Sea pools, de luxe Grand Hotel ballrooms and sundecks named after Atlantic Liners – all could be part of a day’s experience (Ward and Hardy, 1986: 147).

Such re-packaging of different nations, however, usually resulted in stereotypical representations of different cultures, signified, for example, by the use of grass skirts, fake palm trees, and ethnic masks for decoration. It is this type of fake exoticism along with the aforementioned commercial sponsorships, which often led to criticism of the camps.

In spite of these criticisms from the intelligentsia, commercial holiday camps managed to offer a ready-made, packaged holidays when the British public were

⁹⁵ Campers who didn’t want to take part in activities could observe the action from the comfort of a cinema-style seat. In *The Leather Boys* (1963), for example we see Reggie (Colin Campbell) sitting on stalled seating at the edge of the ballroom, watching his wife (Rita Tushingam) dance during their honeymoon.

hungry for such entertainment, just as the package holiday abroad would in later years. Godfrey Winn identified this phenomenon when he was called upon to write the scenario for Gainsborough Picture's *Holiday Camp* in 1946.

Holiday Camp

According to Gifford's *British Film Catalogue* (2001) there is very little evidence of British films with a holiday setting after *Bank Holiday* (1938) and a couple of films set on Transatlantic liners (*Double or Quits*, and *Hey! Hey! USA!* – both 1938) until *Here We Come Gathering* (1945), a children's short, set on a fruit-picking holiday. During the Second World War, the British film industry, in conjunction with the Ministry Of Information had focused their attentions on more patriotic fare in order to assist the war effort, and the aforementioned *Gert and Daisy's Weekend* and *Millions Like Us* were part of this trend. For the most part, however, it appears that holidays on screen were as equally out-of-bounds as they were in real life. The first feature film with a holiday theme to capture the imagination of the British public in the postwar era was *Holiday Camp*. According to Geraghty the film follows a popular trend in cinema at the beginning of the postwar era, when many British films used 'entertainment itself as the basis for a large number of stories', continuing:

Sometimes this manifests itself in particular settings such as holiday camps, fairgrounds, holiday resorts, pubs, race tracks, the dogs, boxing's 'square ring' and music halls, and in the activities that the characters are involved in: beauty competitions, gambling, sporting activities, dancing, the pools (Geraghty, 2000: 14).

Holiday Camp is a key film of the period and made a huge impression on popular cinema audiences of the time, enabling the film's producers to make a series of films featuring *Holiday Camp*'s central family, the Huggetts.⁹⁶ If the Huggetts represent the typical working-class family of the nation, *Holiday Camp*'s structure incorporates other characters which typify certain aspects of postwar life in

⁹⁶ The characters subsequently went on to appear in a radio series from 1953 – 1962.

Britain, the purpose being to ‘suggest that all ‘outsiders’ – the upper-middle-class spinster, the unmarried mother, the rootless sailor – can be part of one social family’ (Harper, 2000: 157). The film also includes a couple of ‘spivs’ – small time crooks who dealt in black market goods during the Second World War and just after – and references to rationing.⁹⁷

***Holiday Camp* – Background and Production History**

In the postscript to the 1947 book of the film, Winn says he had recently ‘retired’ from Fleet Street to write books when (in his own words) he was ‘summoned to the presence of the great chief himself, Mr. Rank, and offered a long-term contract’ to write for films’ (Porlock, 1947: 81).⁹⁸ He claims to have had the idea to use a holiday camp as a setting for a screenplay, at the back of his mind for some time. Winn was ‘a great believer in this new kind of communal holiday’, and had spent a weekend, ten years previously, at Butlin’s Skegness camp as research for a newspaper article, where he took part in dancing, judging the beauty contests, and also the ‘Hi-de-Hi and the Ho-de-Ho’ (Porlock, 1947: 81 – 83). Winn is credited with creating the story of the lonely spinster, Esther Harman. He also says he based the character of Jimmy Gardener, the sailor, on a real-life friend of his who had (as in the film) saved all of his chocolate ration for his girlfriend, only to eat it all himself after being jilted (Porlock, 1947: 86).

Winn was a friend of Butlin and persuaded him to ‘give permission for location filming to take place at his camp in Filey on the North Yorkshire Coast’ (Spicer, 2006: 109). Butlin probably understood the valuable publicity that the film would generate. He had close connections with the British film industry, keeping an office in Wardour Street (which has long been the centre of the industry), and

⁹⁷ A Redcoat pushes sailor Jimmy towards Joan Huggett on the dance floor, saying that a dance with him is ‘coupon-free’. Joe Huggett similarly refers to getting their money’s worth during austere times, when his wife is taking part in a keep-fit session. He tells her that they are paying ‘good money’ for the privilege, and that she should ‘stick [at] it’.

⁹⁸ If this was the case, however, *Holiday Camp* is the only screenplay of his which appears to have been filmed.

was one of the backers of the 1939 film, *The Stars Look Down* (Butlin, 1982: 128). He had also allowed his Skegness camp to be used as a location for *Sam Small Leaves Town* in 1937, and would subsequently let film cameras into the Bognor and Clacton camps for *The Leather Boys* and *Every Day's A Holiday* in the 1960s. During the making of *Holiday Camp*, Winn visited the Filey camp to help with publicity material for the film, and was photographed with Butlin, riding a four-wheeled bicycle and judging a beauty contest (Porlock, 1947: 85 and 87). As Winn modestly admits, however, the final script for *Holiday Camp* was the result of many cooks, including Mabel and Dennis Constanduros – who were responsible for creating the Huggett Family⁹⁹ – and the new head of Gainsborough, Sydney Box, and his wife, Muriel. The Box diary of 1946, however, suggests that Winn was largely responsible for the idea. For example, a long, handwritten entry for July 7th 1946 includes the following text:

Lunched with Godfrey Wynn [*sic*] on Saturday who wants to do a holiday camp story, using 'Butlin's' as background. We were favourable and are going ahead with the idea. He lectures [?] at the Filey camp on the 12th and we hope to send Ken Annakin with him to collect data and work out the story.¹⁰⁰

Winn's first master script of *Holiday Camp*,¹⁰¹ dated 22nd October 1946 is markedly different to the finished film. For example, the character list on page 1 says that Mr and Mrs Huggett's 9-year old daughter, Marina was to be in the film (she isn't), and that Elsie Dawson was to be a 28-year old domestic servant – as played by Esma Cannon, she is a much older character. Redcoats also appear to have been given more prominence in the script – one of them hints to Elsie that

⁹⁹ These characters were largely based on the Constanduros's radio saga, *The Buggins Family* (1928 – 1948), (Spicer, 2006: 92).

¹⁰⁰ Muriel and Sydney Box diary 1943 – 1947, BFI Special Collections, Muriel and Sydney Box Collection Item 15.

¹⁰¹ The front cover includes this note: 'This is not the final script of the film. It is a master-script, compiled from the four shooting-scripts so far written by different scenarists, and is intended to incorporate the best features of each. The final script will be prepared and issued immediately after discussion of this version. For the purpose of set-building, scheduling, dope-sheets, dress plots, etc., this script may be taken as representing substantially the structure and construction of the final film' (Winn, 1946).

they had had some mild flirtation the previous year. The most significant difference, however, is that there is no mention of Joan Huggett's baby, which suggests that this character was introduced to replace Marina (Winn, 1946: 5). The omission of the baby would have largely denied *Holiday Camp* its ideological function of reconstructing the family at the film's conclusion.

Sydney Box had replaced Maurice Ostrer as the managing director of Gainsborough (under ownership of the Rank empire) in May 1946. Box was 'appointed on the understanding that he would increase production at Gainsborough to twelve films annually as part of Rank's extended programme', which became a greater concern after the American embargo on film exports to Britain in 1947 (Spicer, 2006: 83). It was largely due to Box's managerial control that the era of the Gainsborough costume drama gave way for more pictures with a contemporary setting. According to Spicer, Box's 'most distinctive achievement' at Gainsborough was to introduce 'topical' films to the studio's roster, as well as a number of 'portmanteau' films such as the Somerset Maugham adaptations *Quartet* (1948) and *Trio* (1950), and *Holiday Camp*, with its interweaving stories and ensemble cast (Spicer, 2006: 109 and 152). However, it must also be pointed out that *Holiday Camp* bears a striking similarity with the pre-war Gainsborough film, *Bank Holiday*, which also follows the stories of several people on a trip to the seaside. The comparisons are strengthened further by the appearance of Kathleen Harrison in both films, playing a daffy, cockney mother.

Box had previously been a documentarist, and when he became head of Gainsborough he wanted to develop a 'documentary method of social reporting with a fictional story' to create films for the public featuring characters 'who live as they do' (Spicer, 2006: 109). *Holiday Camp* addresses this aim in numerous ways, by encompassing many concerns of the immediate postwar period including the unmarried mother, criminality and new forms of leisure. As Spicer points out, the film was the first 'to focus on family life being restored to normality

after the war, rather than the returning combatant' (Spicer, 2006: 109).¹⁰²

Director, Ken Annakin, like Sydney Box, had a background in documentary which probably added to the film's sense of realism. Annakin is dismissive of the Gainsborough melodramas which preceded his time at the studio, saying that audiences no longer wanted to escape, but, rather, 'to be told how brave they had been during the war, and what concrete rewards they could expect in the 'New World Fit For Heroes'' (Annakin, 2001: 27).

Gainsborough films under Box's control were made under three types of production values: Relatively cheap, medium, and prestigious. The cheap productions (shot in six to ten weeks and costing between £100,000 and £120,000) had little known actors and inexpensive costumes and sets. The medium budget productions (of which *Holiday Camp* can be categorised) cost between £150,000 and £200,000 and were shot in twenty weeks. The 'prestige films' or 'specials' cost between £200,000 and £500,000, and might be shot in Technicolor, sometimes with second units filming abroad (Spicer, 2006: 84).

Although much has been made of the film's location sequences in Filey, and how this adds to *Holiday Camp*'s feeling of realism, closer inspection reveals the film to be very much a product of the Gainsborough studios in Shepherd's Bush, with many of the 'outdoor' scenes actually being shot under artificial light. Unlike *Sam Small Leaves Town* where Stanley Holloway and his co-stars are clearly seen to be taking part in the thrills of the holiday camp location at Skegness (frolicking in the swimming pool, and taking part in a bike ride around the surrounding countryside), *Holiday Camp*'s locations are mostly restricted to back projections and establishing shots of crowds. The least convincing set is arguably the main

¹⁰² Harper also highlights the 'newsreel style' of the film's opening sequences as well as its concerns with the reconstruction of the postwar family: 'The film dealt ostensibly with changes in working-class leisure; but its real business was to find a husband for the Huggett's daughter and a step-father for her child' (Higson (ed.) 1996: 105).

one featuring a double row of chalets with a painted sky in the not-too-distant background.

Although none of the principal actors seem to have visited Filey for the filming, it is possible that extras were employed to construct the atmosphere of holiday camp life, but it is doubtful that they were at the camp for as long as is claimed in the following anecdote:

At a cocktail party in September 1947, a Mass-Observation investigator heard a young middle-class actor from the film being asked if he had gone on location... 'My God no, thank heaven,' he replied. 'But a lot of them did – they were there seven weeks – ghastly – it's miles from everywhere and they were stuck.' And as he so eloquently added – 'Can you believe it – it's all so hearty and childish they even have "Lads and Lassies" on the Cloakroom doors – Christ!' (Kynaston, 2007: 218).

The above quote yet again demonstrates the way in which the middle classes might wish to distance themselves from the idea of staying in a holiday camp – even if they happen to be involved in the making of a film which is set in such a place. Annakin similarly points out that three of the crew members objected to staying in chalets during the filming, instead asking to stay in a Scarborough hotel, with the result that two days had to be taken off the shooting schedule to incur the extra costs (Annakin, 2001: 25).

In contrast to what the actor highlighted by Kynaston suggests, budget restrictions meant that seven weeks location work (out of a possible twenty week filming schedule) would not have been justified for a handful of establishing shots, and films involving extensive location work would be expected to demonstrate this in the resultant film.¹⁰³ Instead, Annakin claims that forty technicians were despatched to Filey for three weeks to film shots of the camp. Unlike the three technicians highlighted above, Annakin preferred to stay on the camp site, where he absorbed the holiday atmosphere and made note of

¹⁰³ Spicer refers to films made almost entirely on location such as *A Boy, a Girl and a Bike* (1949), as 'open air' films (Spicer, 2006: 82) – which *Holiday Camp* clearly isn't.

conversations he heard, later inserting them into the film's dialogue (Annakin, 2001: 25). Although the amount of location footage in the film is relatively brief, it is seamlessly interwoven with the medium shots and close-ups of Kathleen Harrison *et al* – milling around in the reception area looking for their luggage, or taking part in the Hokey-Cokey – which communicate the feeling of the holiday camp setting with some authenticity.

The Holiday Camp Arrivals

The film begins with the arrival of a train at a country station, mimicking the 'train-arrival' films of the silent era.¹⁰⁴ There are posters on the wall for the 'luxury' holiday camp with slogans which echo Butlin's publicity campaign 'Holidays with Play'. Another poster (seen in a still from the film in Gillett, 2003: 62) reads 'The Family Choice', perhaps emphasising the idea that such holiday camps are suitable places for families to escape from the strictures of daily routine, and from each other (with parents relieved from childminding, for instance). We don't see the characters leave home, but we get an idea of their domestic lives from the film's dialogue. The film's narrative is carried out through situation and dialogue, rather than action, much like a soap opera.¹⁰⁵

The main characters then get onto a coach which will take them to the camp. For most of the holidaymakers, the visit to the camp is a new experience, which adds to the film's sense of anticipation and excitement. Although some of the holidaymakers who haven't visited a holiday camp before are rather anxious, the opening sequences aren't as hectic as those in *Bank Holiday* where the huge queues for the trains are enough to deflate anyone's enjoyment of the vacation ahead.

¹⁰⁴ Typed notes next to some of the scenes in Winn's first master script of October 1946 indicate that exteriors such as the train entering the station, and crowds entering the buses, had already been shot (Winn, 1946: 1).

¹⁰⁵ Landy (1991: 315 - 316) points out the film's resemblance to the soap opera genre, as does Betty E. Box who says that the series of Huggett films were 'the equivalent of *Coronation Street*' (Cook, 1997: 151 – 152).

Elsie Dawson, however, is a holiday camp veteran and says that she goes every year – a curious comment considering that most of the big, commercial camps were closed during the war. In any case, she has past experience of such places, and helps the other characters (and consequently, the cinema audience) understand the nature of holiday camp life. On the coach she sits next to the young sailor, Jimmy Gardener (Jimmy Hanley) who says he can't dance. Elsie tells him he "will before the week's out" – knowing full well that a holiday camp makes people lose their inhibitions, and reiterates this by telling her chalet-mate, Esther Harman (Flora Robson), that a camp "takes you out of yerself". Elsie enjoys calling back to the camp's radio announcer when he asks (via loud speaker) if everyone is enjoying their dinner. She calls back, "Yes!" with a large grin on her face. The fact that the campers are replying to a tannoy is rather nonsensical, but they want their enjoyment to be acknowledged amongst the crowd of fellow diners.

Elsie also holds with the school of thought that a person should measure their enjoyment of a holiday by spending all their money in order to have 'a real good time', and has had her hair permed especially for the occasion. Despite her attempts at being the life and soul of the holiday camp experience, there is tragedy at the centre of the character. She rather fancifully hopes to be engaged by the end of the week, and hopes that in such a huge crowd of people there must be an 'unattached' man for her. Her willingness to look for excitement, however, costs her her life, when she goes for a moonlit walk with the mannequin murderer. Gillett says that Elsie Dawson's death subverts 'the notion of the working-class character as a figure of fun' (Gillett, 2003: 66), because up until this point, the audience has been led to laugh at the spectacle of middle-aged Elsie's attempts to appear youthful. Winn's first master script of *Holiday Camp* says that Elsie was brought up in a Dr. Barnado's home, which offers a suggestion that her character is ideologically placed 'outside' the family (Winn, 1946). It is this 'outsider' status which, cinematically speaking, legitimizes Elsie's

disappearance at the end of the film. Landy argues, for example, that it is the killing of Esma Cannon's character that 'distinguishes this film from traditional domestic comedies and links it to the family melodrama' (Landy, 1991: 316). There are other 'outsiders' in the film, such as the spinster, the war widow and the unmarried mother, but their attempts at finding a family for themselves during the holiday helps them to integrate with the community at the film's conclusion.

Gillett sees the war widow and spinster as typical characters of the time, the latter, Esther Harman, having missed the opportunity for marriage due to losing her partner in the First World War (Gillett, 2003: 64 – 65). Harman says she hasn't had a real holiday for 20 years and that she and her mother always went to Torquay together in the summer.¹⁰⁶ We can gather from Esther's comments that her holidays were sedate, uneventful and rather dreary: the type of holiday which people take in order to recuperate "with patent medicines on their tables". Esther says she would push her mother in a bath chair along the front every day, then go indoors to knit. Their routine continued by sitting up for the 9 o'clock news, then going to bed. It is implied that this is the holiday of a bygone era, and, incidentally, the kind represented in the ABPC comedy, *Last Holiday* (1950),¹⁰⁷ which is set in a rather stuffy hotel that doesn't welcome young children, and where the chambermaid speaks in a loud whisper, in fear of disrupting the peace.

It may appear strange at first that a middle-class holidaymaker such as Esther would choose to stay at a holiday camp. It could be argued that she simply needs to find a contrast with the staid holidays she experienced at Torquay, but Geraghty finds another reason for her appearance in the film. She says that a method of identifying 'popular culture with national identity is by continuing the wartime convention of bringing different classes together, in this case in pursuit

¹⁰⁶ This has been changed from Bournemouth in Winn's first master script (Winn, 1946: 7).

¹⁰⁷ The setting of *Last Holiday* is evidently based on Bournemouth and Torquay, as both of these resorts are mentioned in the same breath as the film's fictional setting of Pinebourne.

of fun', enabling an upper middle-class character such as Esther to be accepted into a largely working-class space (Geraghty, 2000: 14).

War widow Joan Huggett (Hazel Court) has been brought to the camp by her parents, in hope that she will find a husband. Whilst the Redcoats look after Joan's baby, she successfully romances Jimmy the sailor through a montage which shows them by the pool, then riding on bumpy bikes, and skating. By the film's conclusion Jimmy is showing signs of taking on the responsibility of father to Joan's young child, and is seen holding the baby on the coach which leaves the camp. Valerie Thompson's (Jeannette Tregarthen) situation is rather more complicated than Joan's in that she is unmarried and pregnant. Although her partner, Michael (Emrys Jones), sticks by her, Valerie is frightened of what her aunt's reaction will be to the news. Her worst fears are realised when her aunt (Beatrice Varley) says she is turning Valerie out of the house, after bringing "disgrace upon a decent family". Gillett says that this response 'was more usual among older members of the middle class and respectable working class', but that Esther Harman demonstrates a more liberal attitude 'in keeping with the times', by offering to look after the young couple (Gillett, 2003: 64).

Harman is reunited, temporarily, with her long-lost fiancé when she discovers he is the announcer in the camp's control tower. The announcer (Esmond Knight) has been blinded in action during the First World War, and has no memory of his life before then, so doesn't recognise Esther. In their bittersweet exchange, Esther realises that she has lost him forever; him now being married with children who, she says, must be 'a great consolation' to him. He replies that "they are – life'd be very empty without children, wouldn't it?" Esther agrees, and a tear rolls down her cheek. Esther's subsequent offer of help to Valerie and her partner, therefore, is not purely in their interests. By creating a surrogate family for herself, Esther is hoping to prevent herself from feeling lonely in the big, empty house her mother has bequeathed to her. All these potential outsiders are ultimately incorporated into the community, as Harper (2000: 157) points out, by

finding a family, but it is the working class family of the Huggetts who provide the film with its central characters.

Ma and Pa Huggett

In contrast to Elsie Dawson, the Huggett family are not *au fait* with the routine of the holiday camp and take longer to settle in. Ethel Huggett (Kathleen Harrison) is a middle-aged mother who attempts to hold the family together, but who is depicted as rather neurotic in the process. Hers and Joe Huggett's (Jack Warner) chalet is piled high with clothes after she unpacks all their luggage. She is flustered and desperately asks to be left alone to sort it out. In a later scene when she hears her husband has been gambling she complains about the drudgery of her domestic life:

“If you think I'm going on slaving me fingers to the bone while you go chucking yer money away like the man who broke the bank at Monte Cristo [*sic*] you can think again – I'm going to sister Daisy's and you can get one of yer lady friends to come and queue and clean and cook for you 'cos I've had enough of it!”

Flustered though she is, Harrison's character is less be-fuddled than the one she plays in the film *Bank Holiday*. In the latter film, May (Harrison) is driven to distraction by three young children, who she is left to mind alone when her husband, Arthur (Wally Patch) deserts them to go to the pub. Unlike the coarser cockney stereotypes Arthur and May, the Huggetts are 'respectable' working class – which is important if the postwar cinema audience are expected to identify with these characters, rather than see them as figures of fun. In *Bank Holiday*, May wears outlandish bell-bottom 'beach pyjamas' and a comic sailor's hat which reads: 'S.S. Whoopee'. In contrast, Mrs. Huggett favours print dresses with high collars, even by the pool, and doesn't hold with the other campers undressing in public, commenting that she “can't look up and keep [her] modesty”. Similarly, Mr. Huggett follows the British tradition of keeping covered up, but, as Gillett points out, 'he [eventually] relaxes enough to put an open-neck shirt with the collar outside his sports jacket in the fashion of the time' (Gillett,

2003: 61). He and Harry Huggett (Peter Hammond) also appear in one scene dressed as 'Mackintosh bathers'. This was the tradition of bathers who changed for the beach (or in this case, the camp's swimming pool), and then covered themselves in a raincoat on their walks from, and back to, their sleeping accommodation, usually to avoid paying for the use of a bathing hut (Hern, 1967: 28 and Walton, 1983: 182).

Evidence that the Huggetts are representative of the nation can be found in the words of the film's writer, Godfrey Winn. He describes the Huggett family as:

British to the core...Longing for a change from food shortages, and "making do," and finding a heavenly respite in the camp, where they quickly settle down to the care-free timetable relayed over the loudspeaker by "The voice," in the same way [that Winn had] watched a multitude of campers in real life become themselves absorbed and transformed (Porlock, 1947: 83).

In some respects, however, Mrs. Huggett isn't able to completely relax whilst on holiday. In one scene her son finds her alone in her chalet, darning her husband's socks. She does, however, warm to the spirit of the communal sing-alongs, which are of the 'nonsense' variety. For example, she takes part in the 'Hokey-Cokey' and bumps up and down with the rest of the concert audience to 'Sons of the Sea – Bobbing Up and Down Like This'. The latter song, with its audience participation led by Charlie Chester (playing himself in the holiday camp concert), involves a carnivalesque sense of the ridiculous, as the division between performer and spectator is broken down.¹⁰⁸ The song is imbued with British patriotism, which is turned on its head by the absurdity of the song's accompanying actions – something which a holiday audience is arguably more willing to embrace:

¹⁰⁸ Tessie O'Shea was originally pencilled in to perform 'Sons of the Sea', not Charlie Chester. The idea of using a couple of Gainsborough stars to judge the beauty contest as themselves is also noted in the script – but no names are given (Winn, 1946: 31).

Sons of the sea, bobbing up and down like this
Sailing the ocean, bobbing up and down like this
They may build their ships, my lads, bobbing up and down like this
But they can't beat the boys of the *Bulldog Breed*¹⁰⁹
Bobbing up and down like this

Ethel is less keen on letting her guard down in a more formal dance in the camp's ballroom. Joe warns her on the final night of the holiday that it is her "last chance", but she claims that "old age and arthritis" are holding her back. Squadron Leader Binkie Hardwick (Dennis Price) literally sweeps her off her feet, however, when he forces her out of her comfort zone and leads her to the dance floor. As Geraghty points out, however, 'the family may, as in much of *Holiday Camp*, join in communal pleasures but at difficult points it is up to the family to defend itself against the world, for, as Landy points out in her discussion of *Holiday Camp*, it is 'familial relations' rather than communal solidarity that are the 'antidote to [the] frightening world' (Geraghty, 2000: 136, citing Landy, 1991: 317).

This is foregrounded, for example, when Joe Huggett plays the cardsharps at their own game and wins back the holiday money and IOUs that Harry has lost in a previous scene. Geraghty claims that due to the outcome of this game, a father 'who seems initially weak is restored to an authoritative position' (Geraghty, 2000: 137). Although Geraghty has a point, I would argue instead that Joe Huggett initially comes across as a 'disinterested' father, rather than a 'weak' one. Like most fathers of the time, he leaves his wife to deal with familial duties, and only steps in at a moment of crisis. For the rest of his holiday, he appears more concerned with ogling the bathing belles through his binoculars, much to Ethel's disgust.

A notable scene is the one where Joe and Ethel grab a moment's peace on the cliff top.¹¹⁰ They gaze out to sea and contemplate their lot and reminisce about

¹⁰⁹ My emphasis.

married life. It is a rare moment of calm in an otherwise busy film. They realise that they haven't been alone like this since their honeymoon, which consisted of an afternoon bus ride and walk towards the water works. The scene is comic, but also tender. Joe points out that it is quiet because they haven't got the children with them, to which Ethel replies, "Funny how you never realise how fond you are of children till you get away from them". She wonders if she is becoming too dowdy for Joe. He replies with the backhanded compliment: "What you? Don't be daft, the women who go for larking about in a pair of panties and a brassiere are all right at the seaside – give me something plain in the home".

Even though they are alone together, Joe still refers to Ethel as 'Mother'. It is as if she has lost her sense of self, and has been subsumed into her role as child-rearer and skivvy. She doesn't appear to consider, however, that this will be the lifestyle her daughter, Joan, will take on board when she finds a husband at the camp. Progressively for the times, there is hope that Jimmy will take some of the duties of child rearing himself, which is shown by his gesture of holding the baby at the end of the film.

Community and The Holiday Camp Space

It is in the radio control tower during the meeting between Esther and the announcer, where the latter makes a speech which arguably serves as the key point in the film, and a commentary on what he refers to as "one of the strangest sights of the twentieth century – the great mass of people, all fighting for the one thing you can't get by fighting for it: happiness". He goes on to say that he realises the crowd isn't a crowd at all, but "separate individuals, each one of them with a different set of problems and worries, hopes and fears", and that he wants to make them happy and "repay the happiness" the world has given to him.

¹¹⁰ This location is named as Flamborough Head in the first master script, but appears as a studio set in the finished film. There are location shots of the sea when Esther meets Valerie and Michael at the cliffs later on (Winn, 1946).

The speech is evidently not by Winn, as it replaces a reference to Confucius which Winn wrote, and which appears in the first master script.¹¹¹ Gillett claims that the ‘socialist tone’ of the speech make Ted Willis the ‘probable author’, although Spicer argues that it may have been the Boxes who were responsible for this piece of dialogue, in that it ‘continues the key concern of Box’s [documentary] films – ‘the difficulties of the transition from war to peacetime’ (Gillett, 2003: 66 and Spicer, 2006: 109). Whoever was responsible for the speech, it appears to encapsulate the essence of the holiday camp which provides entertainment and reinvigoration for the individual within a crowd. The speech also summarises the film’s narrative, which focuses on individual stories within the framework of the camp’s activities.

As previously suggested, the holiday camp appears to have found willing consumers in the postwar era who, due to life in the armed services and air munitions factories, had become used to mass-catering and sleeping in bunk beds, as well as following a strict, daily routine. In the film, the wartime use of holiday camps as army barracks or prisoner of war camps is alluded to on several occasions. Esther Harman visits Farleigh because she says her long-lost beau was stationed in the area during the First World War. Similarly, Squadron Leader Binkie Hardwick, although clearly spinning a yarn to impress the women, says that he visited the area with the RAF during the last war. The closest similarity is made, however, when Esther says that the camp’s ‘control tower’ sounds like the type of thing a POW camp would have. Similarly, an establishing shot of the campers taking part in outdoor exercises is somewhat reminiscent of the health and fitness regimes of Weimar Germany.¹¹² The supposed links between Aryan strength and camping have antecedents in ‘the camping and holiday camp cult of the 1930s’, which, as Walvin reminds us, was:

¹¹¹ Winn’s dialogue reads: “Know what [Confucius] said? – If you want to find yourself, you must lose yourself in something than you are [*sic*]. He was right. I know – I caught it in the last war – I mean the last but one” (Winn, 1946: 72).

¹¹² For example, in the film *Ways to Strength and Beauty* (1925) referred to in Hau, Michael, *The Cult of Health and Beauty in Germany, a Social History, 1890 – 1930*, (2003), Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

given a fillip by the apparent success of Nazi ideals – embodied in their camping and outdoor programmes – and was helped by the prevailing sense that outdoor life was one route to national well-being (Walvin, 1978: 116).

The British camps, however, perhaps differ from this physical ideal in their emphasis on the harmless and insubstantial jollity of such larks as the knobbly-knees contest. If anything, such contests demonstrate that the British on holiday can deprecatingly poke fun at their own physical *imperfections*. Mrs. Huggett's physical jerks are treated light-heartedly. She obviously has no prowess for such activity, and, like most people who take part in keep fit whilst on holiday, won't find the time to continue such exercises when she returns home.

The Beauty Contest

Following the pattern set by *Sing As We Go* and *Bank Holiday* a beauty contest provides a pivotal moment in *Holiday Camp*'s narrative. Up to, and including the contest – which appears forty minutes into the film – the narrative is rather inconsequential, concerned mostly with the spectacle of the holiday camp's attractions. The beauty contest arguably then presents the film with its ultimate spectacle, after which the film becomes more concerned with the tribulations of the young couples, and the increasing menace of the mannequin murderer.

During the beauty parade, the narrative comes to a standstill whilst the camera lingers on the young bathing belles. Firstly we see close-ups of their faces, followed by a procession of limbs. A montage of identical shots compresses the narrative further, where three women at a time climb onto a podium to be looked at by the competition judges. The camera cuts to the judges' point of view, so that the cinema audience becomes the spectator. This echoes the earlier scene where Joe Huggett is looking at young women in bathing costumes through his binoculars, and we see a shot which represents his point of view, framed by the outline of the binocular lenses. In this instance we become like the seaside

'peepers' depicted in old prints and postcards that ogle female bathers through telescopes.

Beauty contests such as this often take place around a bathing pool. The tiered seating at the poolside provides a ready-made auditorium for the event, and the water itself makes a space for the audience to get a clear view of the women parading. The poolside location also legitimises the request from the judges to see women in their bathing costumes – the contestants would probably feel much more exposed if they were wearing such outfits away from the pool. Beauty contests also, in their own peculiar way, promote a sense of regional and national pride. Entrants in *Bank Holiday*, for example, wear sashes which proudly proclaim the town, or region of London from which they come, whereas *The Beauty Jungle* (1964) includes the contest 'Miss Rose of England', in which the finalist gets a chance to represent the beauty of her country in the international competition, 'Miss Globe'.

In *Holiday Camp*, Valerie refuses to take part in the competition, due to her pregnancy. Although her condition hasn't been revealed to us yet, we are left to guess her reasons for not wanting to make a spectacle of herself in front of the other campers, and as a mother-to-be, she no longer wishes to project the image of sex object. Joan Huggett's participation in the beauty parade is made in a last-minute decision. When she wins the contest, Binkie Hardwick is momentarily attracted to her. He comes across as the type of man who sees a beautiful woman as a trophy, which is a rather foolish way of also attracting attention to himself, considering he is using the camp as a hiding place.

The Holiday Camp Bolt-hole

A sinister edge is brought to *Holiday Camp* with the introduction of Binkie, who turns out to be the mannequin murderer – the character is hardly a good advert for a visit to Butlin's. Gillett argues against Murphy's (1992: 215) claim that the 'war-obsessed killer functions effectively as an embodiment of post-war anxiety'

(Gillett, 2003: 65), and I would tend to agree. If anything, the character is a pantomime villain, although Muriel Box had based him on the real-life serial killer Neville Heath, who was being tried at the time (Annakin, 2001: 24). With this narrative twist, Winn reluctantly informed his friend, Billy Butlin, that ‘the plot had got quite out of hand’, but luckily (according to Winn), the showman had faith in the cinema audience’s separation of fantasy from reality, replying, ‘don’t worry, Godfrey...All my campers will know it couldn’t have happened at Filey, and those who haven’t been to one of my camps – well, to them it will be just another film’ (Porlock, 1947: 86).¹¹³

As a cad and a show-off, however, Hardwick is interesting, especially when he boasts to Angela (Yvonne Owen) that they should meet up in London where he knows a chef at a place in Mount Street who “can be relied upon to get [them] a steak or something special”. In a time when meat was being strictly rationed he believes that the luxury of a steak will work like bait to draw the attentions of a beautiful woman. Angela is not naïve, but she is strangely drawn to the type of man she refers to as a ‘wolf’. The way she coyly calls him a ‘cave man’ after he rough handles her is deeply unpleasant, and even at the film’s *denouement* she hopes that he will be waiting at the train station for her with an engagement ring. He has, however been arrested, after having his last week of freedom in the holiday camp. When he describes his chalet as being “like a prison cell”, the detectives imply that that is where they’re taking him, saying that he is “going to feel quite at home”.¹¹⁴

¹¹³ According to his memoirs, Annakin remembers things differently. He says that Butlin was furious about the plotline involving the killer, exclaiming, ‘I’ll fight you through every court in England, if you show this filthy movie!’ The director dissuaded Butlin from taking any further action by relating a tale he’d heard from a female redcoat he’d had a fling with during filming. She claimed that she’d found the bodies of seven dead drunks in the camp’s pool over the previous summer, and realising the adverse publicity this would have on the camp, Butlin decided to keep quiet (Annakin, 2001: 28).

¹¹⁴ The idea of criminals taking cover in a holiday camp was perhaps borrowed from this film for the 1948 short *The Gentlemen Go By* (produced by AIPGB), in which an ex-sailor joins a smuggling gang using a holiday camp as a front (Gifford, 2001: 548).

Although his character was added to spice up the plot, on this occasion, the screenwriters might have misjudged the willingness of the audience to accept a murderer into the holiday camp setting – ‘one or two critics cavilled at the introduction of a serial killer – the *Manchester Guardian* called it ‘the caterpillar in the salad’ (Spicer, 2006: 111). Whatever the critics may have felt about Binkie Hardwick, the film was generally received with resounding success,¹¹⁵ with some reviews acknowledging the film’s promotional prowess for the holiday camp industry. Josh Billings in *Kinematograph Weekly* said that the film should ‘gently boost both Gainsborough and the Butlin’s shares’, adding:

It is all intensely real and refreshingly English in detail and atmosphere and should prove a rousing exception to the rule that composite plays are seldom a commercial proposition. Made expressly for the ninepennies, its title and backgrounds alone assure it substantial box-office success. And, incidentally, Mr. Butlin will never receive wider publicity (Billings, *Kinematograph Weekly*, August 7th 1947: 17).

The film also found favour with the *Monthly Film Bulletin* who said:

This is a film built around the authentic atmosphere of a holiday camp with its regimented gaiety and heartaches. It has humour, sentiment and suspense, with no pretence of offering anything to linger in the memory. [Apart from Dennis Price and Hazel Courts’ characters] the rest are just types which one sees everyday – and that simple statement is probably a tribute to the unobtrusive skill of the director (*Monthly Film Bulletin*, vol. 14, no. 164, August 1947: 111).

In a rather strange twist of fate, in September 1947, Sydney and Muriel Box were returning from a holiday in America on the transatlantic liner, *Queen Elizabeth*, when a copy of *Holiday Camp* was screened for the passengers. Their diary entry of September 26th 1947 reads:

¹¹⁵ The film went into profit less than three months after its release (Annakin, 2001: 27).

They showed *Holiday Camp* on the last night of the voyage. Theatre was packed. Went quite well, though we thought it was a very bad copy and the sound was on uneven [?] projectors, so that one lost half the dialogue.¹¹⁶

The viewing of the holiday-themed film onboard the luxury liner arguably offers a condensed image of the holiday, albeit one that provides a largely working-class representation of leisure for the enjoyment of the relatively well-to-do passengers.

Conclusion

Although British holiday camps can arguably be traced back to the pioneer camps of the early 20th century and interwar years, with their emphasis on health, fitness and the great outdoors, it was in the postwar era that the commercial camps flourished, as Read reminds us:

The country was in joyous optimistic mood, people were glad to be alive and Bill Butlin sensed that they wanted to celebrate peace by going on holiday with their families... They queued [at the camps] for cigarettes, and were excited by the sight of fruit cake and ice cream, and a promise of chicken twice a week. They didn't have much money to spend, or special holiday clothes to wear or ideas of travelling abroad, a lot of them had been abroad and they were grateful to be home (Read, 1986: 54).

Holiday camps offered an inclusive holiday which acknowledged and catered for all generations of the family, be it in the 'Parent's Free Hour' when child minders gave mothers and father's a temporary break from the children, or in the 'glamorous grandmother' competition – introduced to Butlin's in 1955 after Billy Butlin met Marlene Dietrich, 'the most glamorous grandmother he had ever seen' (Read, 1986: 110).

¹¹⁶ The Boxes got home on Mon 8th September at 10pm, which suggests the film was shown on 7th September. Muriel and Sydney Box diary 1943 – 1947, BFI Special Collections, Muriel and Sydney Box Collection Item 15.

However, although *Holiday Camp* arguably re-constructs the ideology of the family unit, with father as the head of the household and mother weighed down by domestic responsibilities, the family holiday at such camps is also a chance for these roles to be challenged and subverted. The middle-aged patriarch's position at the top of the family hierarchy can be questioned momentarily when a father is pilloried for his 'knobbly-knees' or 'most bald' head. Similarly, the mother's domestic responsibilities can be taken away from her by the mass catering and free childminding on offer. This, however, is acknowledged as a temporary respite. When the Huggett family get on the coach to return home at the film's end, Ethel dreads a return to domestic duties, proclaiming that she doesn't know how she's "ever going to face a carpet sweeper again". In the meantime, Joe reflects that this has been the best holiday they've ever had – at least memories of their time at the holiday camp will keep them happy through the coming year.

Holiday Camp anticipates the postwar popularity of the camps and possibly played a part in helping the Butlin holiday find mass appeal in the following decade. As Ward and Hardy point out:

If the vision of a society of leisure receded in the 1940s (obscured by the war and by the subsequent period of austerity) it reappeared in bolder form in the 1950s as a cultural watershed between two worlds – the world of wartime Britain and its aftermath, and the world of 'affluence' with its 'growing prosperity, of a kind' (Ward and Hardy, 1986: 148).

Apart from the aforementioned *The Beauty Jungle*, holiday camps reappear again in this 'world of affluence' in British films of the 1960s where they are sometimes presented as an alternative space for young people. They also appear in holiday films of the 1970s where they are largely looked upon with nostalgia. In terms of the former, *The Leather Boys* (1963), for instance, is a social realist drama where the raucous atmosphere of Butlin's, Bognor Regis, is shown to be an unsuitable venue for Reggie and Dot's honeymoon, whereas *Every Day's A Holiday* appears to be a response to Butlin's short-lived attempts

to find a teenage market for his camps (Read, 1986: 170). The latter film also appears to cash-in on the success of colourful widescreen rock musicals made popular by Cliff Richard, but without the same degree of success. In the next chapter I will be analysing the change from austerity to affluence in more detail, looking at the rise in spending power of the teenager, and also the representation of the foreign holiday in British films such as Cliff Richard's *Summer Holiday*.

Chapter 6 – From Austerity to Affluence: Holidays Abroad in Postwar British Film

Introduction

In the last chapter I looked at the cultural impact that holiday camps had for families in Britain after the Second World War, and how the film *Holiday Camp* appeared to respond to this. In this chapter I aim to look at the increasing affluence of the 1950s and 1960s, and how this appears to have been negotiated, ideologically, in the types of holidays seen in British films of the period. To begin with I will consider the legacy of postwar British films with a holiday setting that *Holiday Camp* may have set a trend for, and how the representation of the traditional British seaside holiday appears to have quickly become viewed as something outmoded and unexciting. I will then examine how the end of rationing and an increase in disposable income affected the types of holidays the British were choosing to take from the mid 1950s onwards, and the cinema's response to this. Finally I will analyse the film musical *Summer Holiday*, considering how the film – and consequently the foreign holiday – may have been marketed to teenagers.

Summer Holiday demonstrates a distinct change in film production and style since *Holiday Camp*. Geraghty claims that compared to the beginning of the postwar period – when cinema could be considered as the 'entertainment for all' – by the end of the 1950s it had largely become a 'marginal pursuit', with producers endeavouring to find niche markets such as youth audiences, or by presenting big-budgeted *must-see, event* films (Geraghty, 2000: 20). As I will demonstrate, *Summer Holiday* might be considered as a film which attempts to fulfil both of these aims.

One of the ways in which British film attempted to broaden its audience in the latter postwar period was by striving for international appeal, or by working with American companies which could offer the films distribution in the US. In 1956, for example, the Rank Organisation announced a policy of only producing films

which would appeal to international markets and consequently established Rank Film Distributors of America (RFDA) in order to ‘penetrate the US market’ (Murphy, 2001: 90). Although (in film terms) ‘international’ often refers to part-funding by an American film company, in this chapter I will be using the term more to describe a feeling of internationalism conveyed for the most part by including overseas locations, international cast members, and ‘American’ technological advances such as Technicolor, CinemaScope and VistaVision. These technical innovations – which were largely a response to the encroaching dominance of television – arguably favour location filming, as the emphasised artificiality of studio-bound, widescreen Hollywood musicals such as *Brigadoon* (1954) and the ‘Barn-Raising Ballet’ in *Seven Brides for Seven Brothers* (1954) reveal. In opposition to this, the location filming in *Summer Holiday*, works to the film’s advantage, in offering a ‘tourist gaze’ of Europe (Urry, 2002).

Another such film, which appears to address this international appeal, is *The Beauty Jungle*.¹¹⁷ The film bridges a wide gap between the traditional British seaside holiday of the immediate postwar era, and the exotic, foreign holiday which I will be discussing further in this chapter. Starting in the seaside town of Weston-Super-Mare, and taking the film’s heroine, Shirley Freeman (Janette Scott), on a journey from the beauty contests of Butlin’s to an international modelling career, this colourful, wide-screen film presents the spectacle of the Riviera and Mediterranean which the jet-set flocked to in the late 1950s and early 1960s in order to gain that longed-for tan. It is typical of the type of film which the Rank Organisation had announced its intention to produce towards the end of the 1950s – attempting to reach an international market through its use of technological advances such as CinemaScope and Technicolor, its exotic locations, and international cast – although by the early 1960s the company were making profits mostly through the distribution of films with ‘indigenous British subjects’ (Murphy, 2001: 90).

¹¹⁷ Renamed *Contest Girl* for its American release.

The film follows the postwar trait of fleshing out its cast with numerous 'guest stars', including Norman Hartnell ("the man who dresses the greatest beauties in the world"), the Duchess of Bedford, Stirling Moss, Hollywood actress Linda Christian, and 'pop' musician Joe Brown (representing the teenage market) as contest judges. The British actor Edmund Purdom, who had made a name for himself in American and European films also appears as the Hollywood star Rex Garrick. *The Beauty Jungle* treats the cinema audience to 'tourist gaze' shots of Nice, Cannes and Monte Carlo, where Shirley and her manager, Don Mackenzie (Ian Hendry), ostentatiously arrive in a 'heli-taxi' for the 'Miss Globe' contest. The numerous contestants for this competition bring an international flavour to the film, coming from places as far afield as Peru, France, Germany, America and Japan.

As Laing outlines, on 15th September 1964, *The Sun* claimed that 5 million British people were taking holidays abroad, and that this was contributing to a widening of 'mental horizons' (Laing, 1986: 22) – something which films such as *The Beauty Jungle* and *Summer Holiday* appear to represent. Although Murphy briefly analyses *The Beauty Jungle* in *Sixties British Cinema* (1992), I wish to look more closely at *Summer Holiday*, an analysis of which arguably offers something of an alternative history to the usual 'swinging London' and social realist films of the 1960s, which are often analysed in studies of the decade. Before I look at *Summer Holiday* in more detail, however, I wish to go back to the early 1950s and consider Britain's apparent progress from austerity to affluence.

Austerity to Affluence in the Postwar Era

According to Laing, the Coronation of Elizabeth II in June 1953 provides a watershed for the change from postwar austerity to postwar affluence, which was possibly expressed most memorably by the huge increase in the purchase of televisions in order for families to view the event at home (Laing, 1986: 9). Hennessy points to the Coronation as a widespread celebration of 'national identity' (Hennessy, 2007: 4), whilst Laing says that 'the Coronation took place at

a moment of economic and political self-confidence', and that the 'contemporary public expositions of the Coronation presented the new reign as simultaneously a renewal of British tradition and stability and, also, the beginning of a new era' (Laing, 1986: 9). He continues:

Both the particular moment of the Coronation (the first stirrings of 'affluence') and its implicit message (unity through hierarchy) were supportive of the Conservative 1955 election theme – a prosperous, conflict-free Britain (Laing, 1986: 10).

In this period of change, Labour were swept aside by the Conservatives who 'took full credit for ending rationing of tea, sugar, sweets, butter, meat, bacon and cheese between 1952 – 4. By contrast Labour was presented as a party which could not govern without rationing...' (Laing, 1986: 10). The end of rationing provided another watershed, taking consumers' demands out of the hands of the government, and into the hands of capitalist suppliers. Hennessy comments on this:

From 1954 onwards, people were free to eat as much as they wanted of anything they could pay for. This restored freedom, coupled with a decisive increase in real disposable income, put the onus for any inadequacy of supply and choice, in food as in other consumables, on to the market mechanisms which are controlled by capitalists small and (increasingly) great. It is therefore no coincidence that from this point onwards, advertising campaigns, cookery, literature, immigration, foreign travel and the ebbs and flows of fashion could make their effects felt quickly and directly (Hennessy, 2007: 12).

There was an increase in better housing – including the building of new council estates – and private car ownership increased, from just under 2 million in 1948, to 4.5 million in 1958, and over 8 million in 1964 (Laing, 1986: 26 – 28).

By 1964, after thirteen years of Conservative economic management, annual consumer expenditure had in real terms doubled (Sandbrook, 2005: 486).

With this newfound affluence came hopes for a new kind of Britain which looked across to America and Europe for inspiration in its fashions, town-planning and public services. In *The Future of Socialism*,¹¹⁸ Anthony Crosland envisioned a decidedly Continental-style Britain with:

More open-air cafes, brighter and gayer streets at night, later closing-hours for public houses, more local repertory theatres, better and more hospitable hoteliers and restaurateurs, brighter and cleaner eating-houses, more riverside cafes, more pleasure gardens on the Battersea model,¹¹⁹ more murals and pictures in public places...statues in the centre of new housing-estates, better-designed street lamps and telephone kiosks (Crosland, 1961: 521 – 522).

According to Laing, Crosland saw 'patterns of consumption as decisive indicators' of embourgeoisement of the proletariat, with 'key items such as television sets, cars and annual holidays', as evidence of middle-class luxuries that had been adopted by the working classes (Laing, 1986:16). As Osgerby points out, 'the growth in living standards during the period was tangible and of a scale sufficient to underpin one of the most profound phases of transition in working-class life and culture', leading many people to believe that Britain was evolving into a classless society (Osgerby, 1998: 31). A certain amount of equality between the classes could also be found in the continuing increase in the provision of Holidays With Pay. By the end of the 1950s, almost all workers had this entitlement, as Sandbrook explains:

In 1959 a study found that ninety-nine out of a hundred industrial companies offered their workers' two weeks paid holiday. It was hardly surprising, then, that the holiday industry was booming as never before (Sandbrook, 2005: 124).

The next question, however, was how the middle-class bourgeoisie intended to differentiate themselves from working class holidaymakers of the postwar era.

¹¹⁸ First published in 1956.

¹¹⁹ A surviving bequest of the 1951 Festival of Britain.

The Traditional British Seaside Resort in Postwar Britain

Osgerby identifies three social types of the affluent, postwar period who were typical of the 'bourgeoisification' of working class lifestyles in the 1950s: 'the bourgeois worker', 'the housewife' (whose domestic life had supposedly been enhanced by affordable kitchen gadgets) and 'the teenager' – the latter, of which (Osgerby claims) 'most fully encapsulated perceptions of social transformation after 1945' (Osgerby, 1998: 32). Young people are very much evident in The British Transport Film, *Holiday* (1957), which was filmed in Blackpool during the summer season of 1956.¹²⁰

With the Lancashire cotton industry 'still thriving' (Humphries, 2006), Blackpool continued to be one of the most popular British working-class resorts throughout the 1950s, and this film shows a resort populated (amongst others) by young would-be teddy boys and girls perhaps anticipating Macmillan's announcement on 20th July 1957, when he said 'most of our people have never had it so good' (Laing, 1986: 11).

As Hennessy says, the second half of the 1950s was 'a relatively golden time, a more innocent age before the jets from the Manchester Ringway took the place of the holiday steam specials and the Blackpool sands lost pride of place to those of Torremolinos' continuing:

From the Suez summer and autumn of 1956, illusion after illusion was reluctantly and sometimes painfully shattered for the settled people on that *Holiday* beach and those who governed them. Even by 1960 Anstey's film might have already struck the discerning viewer as an evocation of a world we were losing (Hennessy, 2007: xvii).

¹²⁰ British Transport Films were part of the British Transport Commission which 'in a ramshackle and cash-strapped fashion, held together the railways, waterways and lorries the Atlee government had brought into public ownership in the late 1940s' (Hennessy, 2007: xiii). *Holiday*: produced by Edgar Anstey, and photographed by David Watkin, reissued as part of *An Invitation to Travel: The British Transport Films Collection, Volume Three*, BFI 1998.

In feature film production, the postwar holiday mood is ideologically expressed in further films after *Holiday Camp* – there being a significant number of films set in Brighton and Blackpool between 1947 and 1952, as well as re-issues of *Bank Holiday* and *Sing As We Go* in 1951 and 1953, respectively.¹²¹ The introduction of more widespread holidays was acknowledged in the Frank Randle comedy *Holidays With Pay* (1948) which features brief location shots on one of Blackpool's piers and the outdoor Lido, and includes a short trip to the Isle of Man for good measure. The gag of the 'fat lady falling from a boat' is also revitalised in this film, with Tessie O'Shea appearing as the butt of the joke. As the following decade progressed, however, the traditional thrills of the British seaside holiday perhaps became overly familiar, and its representation, increasingly tired. A particular example is the last remake of *Hindle Wakes* (1952). On this occasion, the film has been updated to a contemporary setting: there are no clogs on the cobbles, and the mill is more advanced and mechanised than in the previous film versions. The resort is extremely busy: the Winter Gardens are crowded with dancers and the beach is full of people in deckchairs, but there is little sign of the 'naked' sunbathers Mrs. Hawthorn (Joan Hickson) warns her daughter about.

In *Hindle Wakes*, Blackpool offers excitement and hedonism, but is not presented as a suitable backdrop for romance. Instead, mill worker Jenny Hawthorn (Lisa Daniely) and the mill owner's son, Alan (Brian Worth) spend six illicit nights in Llandudno, the headland of which Jenny first spies from the top of Blackpool Tower. In Llandudno, Jenny's gaze towards the moonlit sea arouses the heroine's emergent sexuality: she watches crashing waves from the balcony of her hotel suite, before Alan guides her into the bedroom. The symbolism is rather obvious, but typical of an era before censorship was more relaxed, as indicated by the twin beds in the couple's suite.

¹²¹ *Holiday Camp* was itself re-released in 1948 and again in October 1954 in a version cut by 1,200ft (Gillett, 2001: 542 and *Kinematograph Weekly*, October 28, 1954: 26).

At the end of the film, Jenny is as forthright and independent as in previous versions, and Betty Farrer (Diana Hope), Alan's fiancée also demonstrates some modern characteristics, as shown by her mid-twentieth century familiarisation with psychoanalysis. She blames Alan's philandering on an "over-stimulated libido or a frustrated psyche...something in [his] subconscious", and says she'll have to look it up in Freud. She also refers to the postwar housing programme when she tells her beau he might have to move into a "new council house – they're very up-to-date", if his father disinherits him. Betty is able to look at their situation objectively, saying, "We're only two individuals, our duty to the community comes first".

Despite some of these progressive statements, the original stage text of 1912 is starting to belie its age. Sex outside wedlock was undoubtedly still frowned upon in the late 1940s and early 1950s – *Holiday Camp*, for example, tackles a similar theme – but in *Hindle Wakes*, the way that class relations are dealt with, and the set-bound staginess of the final confrontation between the families, dates the film rather badly.

The Dubious Seaside Attractions of Free Cinema

The traditional seaside holiday, however, was soon to be observed and critiqued by Lindsay Anderson in his Free Cinema film *O Dreamland* (shot in Margate in 1953, but first screened publicly in 1956). Free Cinema was a movement which had been concocted by Anderson, along with Lorenza Mazzetti, Tony Richardson and Karel Reisz, the latter being programme manager of the National Film Theatre at the time, and therefore able to arrange a screening of a number of Free Cinema films there in early 1956. *O Dreamland* offers a critique of the passive holiday crowds, shuffling around Margate's amusement park and queuing for refreshments. The grainy black and white footage juxtaposed with banal popular tunes such as Frankie Lane's 'I Believe' are presumably supposed to invoke our sympathy for the working class people observed by Anderson's camera, but the observational nature of the film, like the work of middle-class

Mass Observers, often has the opposite effect. Anderson *et al* tend to observe the people in their films as if from afar, in a somewhat patronising way. As Harper and Porter say:

The film-makers' attitude to the working class is ambivalent. On the one hand they are the salt of the earth; on the other hand nothing could be worse than to be them, since they know nothing. Thus they are simultaneously patronized and feared...in *O Dreamland*, the crowd is passive, with debased tastes. They gawp at the side-show Torture Through the Ages and at the animals in the zoo, who are little better than themselves. This ambivalence shades off into dislike of the popular audience (Harper and Porter, 2003: 190).

The Free Cinema group were also 'united in their hatred for the controls exerted over creative artists by commercial producers' (Harper and Porter, 2003: 190), but their films indicate that total control by the director can also have a detrimental effect on the film, leading to a lack of quality-control. *Momma Don't Allow* (1956), for example, appears to be interminable, simply because it shows dance after dance during its twenty-two-minute running time, where maybe one would have been sufficient. Harper and Porter claim that Free Cinema's films and manifestos may be viewed with hindsight as 'fodder for bourgeois intellectuals', but its output did provide the directors with a 'training ground' for their future projects (Harper and Porter, 2003: 189 – 191).

There are, however, examples of independent productions from the time which managed to find greater appeal, whilst gently poking fun at some of the retrogressive aspects of the traditional seaside holiday. The Technicolor Rank comedy, *Genevieve* (1953), for example, (independently produced and directed by Henry Cornelius, with backing from Earl St. John and the National Film Finance Corporation), doesn't strictly portray a holiday, but it does have elements of the journey to seaside, on this occasion as part of the annual vintage car rally from London to Brighton.

On reaching Brighton, two of the protagonists, played by John Gregson and Dinah Sheridan, stay in the antiquated Grand Palace Marine Hotel, where the eccentric landlady (Joyce Grenfell) informs them that hot water is only provided between 2.30 and 6pm. Their room is scruffy, with poor electrics and bad plumbing, and is situated next to a clock tower which chimes noisily on the hour. It is precisely because the couple see themselves as sophisticates – Sheridan’s character is incredulous that she can’t have a hot bath on arrival – that the inadequacies of the hotel are made evident. The elderly guests, who have presumably been holidaying at the same place for years, assume that the young couple are Americans, so alien are their requests.

Genevieve was to become a huge financial success,¹²² capturing some of the postwar essence of new bourgeois middle class characters who, as Harper and Porter highlight, are ‘*au fait* with imported luxury items like peppers’ (Harper and Porter, 2003: 49).

Promotional Holiday Films

Towards the end of the 1950s, the bourgeois middle classes were becoming increasingly aware of the holiday attractions of Europe and the Mediterranean. This, in part, was due to the imaginative marketing ploys of travel companies such as Thomas Cook, and smaller firms such as Gaytours of Manchester. These firms understood the persuasive powers that cinema could have over a captive audience, and decided to produce their own promotional films in order to sell glamorous and expensive holidays abroad. Tony Annis Jr recounts how in the late 1950s, his father (a Thomas Cook salesman) used to spend the winter months visiting theatres and halls in the north of England, showing films of sunny, foreign destinations to people who had never been on holiday abroad before:

¹²² NFFC made £255,221 from its share of the profits in *Moulin Rouge* (1953), *Genevieve* (1953), and *The Weak and the Wicked* (1954) (Harper & Porter, 2003: 28).

He was a great believer in the power of film, and the show – together with the film – he thought, would get the people in that ‘feel good factor’ moment to sign up to go for a trip (Bowering, 2006).

One such film show in January 1957 at St. George’s Hall, Bradford was ‘standing room only’, as around 2000 people came to marvel at the exotic locations on Mr. Annis’s films. Some travel firms showed their films in pubs, plying the audience with free wine, and then encouraging them to have a dance afterwards, the party atmosphere persuading people to book a holiday ‘as a thank you for having a goodnight out’ (Bowering, 2006).¹²³ In some respects, these screenings appear to echo the road shows of the early film pioneers who could temporarily suspend an audience’s disbelief. As Tony Annis Jr recalls:

You could feel them going out, even on a cold winters night in the north of England, really having felt they had been to the Mediterranean (Bowering, 2006).

Foreign holidays, as yet, were not widespread, so glamorous films with characters that an audience could relate to, or at least aspire to be like, were very persuasive in getting people to spend large amounts of money on a holiday. For example, *Sunshine Serenade*, a Horizon Holiday film from 1958, shows a young woman embarking on a flight to the Mediterranean for a fortnight – a holiday which, at the time, would have cost the ‘average working woman ten weeks’ wages’ (Bowering, 2006). Importantly, perhaps, she is travelling alone, rather than as part of a family. She therefore comes across as modern, independent, and with a disposable income which isn’t tied to home-centred expenditure. These films worked to reassure the audience that a foreign holiday was not the daunting experience they thought it might be, and also, that they offered some much-needed luxury to people’s lives who had gone without for so many years during and after the war. Travel writer and broadcaster Simon Calder comments that such films were ‘revolutionary’:

¹²³ Recalled by former sales manager, Terry Jordan.

[They were] saying to people just a few years after rationing had ended in Britain – ‘hey, go off and indulge yourself – you deserve it!’ (Bowering, 2006).

Countries such as Spain, Italy and Morocco, which saw an influx of holidaymakers in the 1960s, actively encouraged the holiday industry to thrive. Film historian, Dr Heather Norris Nicholson says that ‘Franco looked at tourism and to industry as ways of bringing much-needed hard currency into Spain to help with its revival after the devastating legacy of the Spanish Civil War’ (Bowering, 2006). Local customs were re-packaged as a spectacle for overseas visitors. Tourists were encouraged to get into the arena and have a go at bullfighting with young bullocks, drink from a porron,¹²⁴ and buy souvenirs such as castanets, lace fans and miniature straw donkeys. However, it wouldn’t be until the end of the 1960s, and beginning of the 1970s, that the package holiday to Spain became a more widespread choice for the British holidaymaker. In the late 1950s and early 1960s the Mediterranean holiday was still a relative luxury, only afforded by the middle classes. A response to the increase in foreign holidays is evident in films of this period but one of the first feature films to build its narrative around a weekend holiday flight to Europe was *Innocents In Paris*, released in 1953.

British Film Ventures Across the Channel

Written and Produced by Anatole de Grunwald and directed by Gordon Parry for Romulus Films, *Innocents in Paris* was filmed largely on location in the French capital, as well as the Gate Studios in Borehamwood. The film is structured similarly to *Bank Holiday* and *Holiday Camp*, with a handful of episodic tales built around an ensemble cast who portray several British stereotypes. Susan (Claire Bloom) is an ‘English rose’. She has a fleeting holiday romance with a dashing

¹²⁴ The porron – a drinking vessel with a long spout which the drinker holds at arm’s length to receive a spurt of wine – was disapproved of by George Orwell who fustily commented, ‘I went on strike and demanded a drinking-cup as soon as I saw a porron in use. To my eye the things were altogether too like bed-bottles, especially when they were filled with white wine’ (Orwell, 1989: 6).

Parisian called Max (Claude Dauphin) who makes the analogy between her looks and the flower by telling her over a romantic meal that there is “nothing more beautiful in the world than the English rose”.

Gwladys is a dotty old eccentric – as we might expect her to be when portrayed by Margaret Rutherford.¹²⁵ She visits Paris to sketch and paint, and ends up beating the local artists at their own game by selling one of her pictures. George (Jimmy Edwards), a moustachioed English gent dressed from head-to-toe in tweeds, is perhaps an upper-crust forerunner of the ex-pat or Englishman abroad who finds home comforts in an ‘English’ pub. On his arrival, he goes straight to the Britannia Bar – “The one place in Paris where you can get a good glass of a decent, British brew”. He approves of the place because it keeps ‘English’ hours, and closes at 11pm.

The Parisian women find Scotsman Andy (James Copeland) very amusing in his kilt, particularly a modern woman who is wearing slacks. When he stops to look in a shop window full of women’s undergarments, the locals presume he is a cross-dresser. The tables are turned further when he goes into a fun house and his kilt is raised by blasts of air, enabling the female onlookers to laugh at his attempts to cover up. This is a scene familiar from other films, including *Sing As We Go* and *The Beauty Jungle*, with women being the usual butt of the joke.

Cultural differences are highlighted. Susan is surprised to be served snails from a French menu which she doesn’t understand. MP Sir Norman (Alistair Sim) almost stirs up cold-war hostilities when a Russian delegate at an international conference hears him say that the effect of vodka on his constitution is like an ‘atom bomb’. To get over the effects of the drink, he is taken to a Russian bar where cultural barriers are eliminated as he becomes inebriated on ‘Pink Lightning’.

¹²⁵ From the spelling of the character’s name, she appears to be Welsh, but Rutherford does not imitate the Welsh accent.

The film is timely. As Sandbrook points out, 'British airlines introduced their first cheap 'Tourist' charter flights in 1952, and curious middle-class holidaymakers were, slowly but surely, beginning to abandon their traditional seaside haunts for the charms of the Riviera or the Costa Brava' (Sandbrook, 2005: 134). This film, being released in the following year, appears to be a response to this 'new' type of holiday for the British tourist. The flight that is chartered in the film is certainly exclusive: 'London Airport' (as it is called in the film) is incredibly small compared to the sprawling mass of glass and concrete that Heathrow is today. The passengers are undoubtedly 'well-to-do' and the trip looks expensive: the plane has tables between the seats on which a meal accompanied by champagne is served.

Sir Norman is revealed to be the MP who introduced the maximum currency allowed abroad. Passengers are able to take £5 cash and, as Sir Norman explains, "travellers cheques – the maximum amount permitted under the Treasury order and council 2585 1952". The fusty and mean-spirited MP is a changed man after his delightful trip abroad. Back at London Airport he is confronted by a reporter who asks if he is "considering lowering the basic traveller's allowance still further", to which he retorts:

"If I'm considering anything at all sir, it is certainly not that!"

The final shot of the film perhaps demonstrates that the film is an elaborate advertisement for British European Airways (BEA). Susan looks at a poster for the airline as she leaves the airport which reads:

You'll never forget that week-end [*sic*] in Paris, BEA takes you there and brings you back.

The shot cuts to a close-up of the cartoon *gendarme* on the poster, who suddenly becomes animated and winks at the cinema audience. This gesture appears to be an invitation to the audience to try a BEA flight for themselves, and is a rather unexpected, fantasy ending to a film which otherwise appears to strive for realism with its location filming, and soap opera-like structure.

The Cruise Holiday on Film

An alternative type of 'exotic' holiday which the cinema seems to have taken to heart in this period, is the cruise. This type of holiday, which only the very rich could afford in the interwar years (Angeloglou, 1973: 84 – 85), was appropriated by an increasingly bourgeois middle-class who arguably wished to emulate the aristocracy – just as working class holidaymakers wished to emulate the middle classes at the seaside in the late Victorian period. The cruise holiday became increasingly accessible, as the postwar era progressed – when the economy had improved, and austerity had subsided. The cruise ship as cultural icon appears to have captured the imagination of the bourgeoisie in the 1950s, just as the holiday camp appealed to the proletariat. For example, The Royal Festival Hall (a bastion of middle-class entertainment), which was built for the Festival of Britain in 1951, in many respects resembles a beached liner, standing on the South Bank of the Thames. In fact, during the festival there was a 'seaside' exhibit outside the Festival Hall, with a lighthouse, lifeboats, bunting, and rows of deck chairs arranged in rows to face the river, completing the nautical air which the hall itself seems to construct in the imagination.¹²⁶

Sea-faring comedies became popular with British audiences in the second half of the 1950s with examples being *Doctor at Sea* (1955), *Not Wanted on Voyage* (1957), *Girls at Sea* (1958), *Further Up The Creek* (1958), *The Captain's Table* (1959), and *Carry on Cruising* (1962). These films are colourful and episodic, and their narratives appear to negotiate an 'international' ideology by including 'exotic' locations – even if, for the most part, these are studio sets coupled with stock footage of the ocean. In some instances, such as *Doctor at Sea* and *Girls at Sea*, the settings are actually cargo ships or frigates, and the comedy arises from these predominantly male spaces being 'invaded' by women, to which the men then have to adapt. The crews also often conceal the female passengers from

¹²⁶ Information on the 'seaside' exhibit can be found on the Festival of Britain website: www.museumoflondon.org.uk (accessed on June 5th 2008). An illustration of the 'seaside' exhibit appeared in the *Illustrated London News*, 26th May 1951: 851.

the ship's captain, offering the potential threat of impropriety and sexual mishaps to the films' scenarios. If some of these films don't necessarily portray a cruise, they are at least a response to such holidays.

Carry On Cruising is the first of the *Carry Ons* with a holiday setting, and the first in colour. A pre-title card acknowledges 'the kind assistance of P & O Orient Lines' in the making of the film. As with other films of this type, an illusion of a journey is constructed through the occasional use of scratchy 'stock' footage of distant shores, and of the cruise ship cutting through blue seas. In reality, however, the film is an ensemble piece, consisting of a series of slapstick gags and punning word play, filmed on a large studio set at Pinewood. We never see the passengers disembark at Spain, Italy and North Africa, but Miss Castle (Dilys Laye) and Miss Trimble (Liz Fraser), return to the ship brandishing souvenirs such as sombreros and porrons, which signify the tourist's view of such countries. National dress is also represented by stereotypical outfits which the crew and passengers wear at times, such as a matador and belly dancers' costumes. A multicultural flavour is further brought to proceedings, when the ship's chef (Lance Percival) decides to make an 'international cake' for the captain's party, accompanied by some terrible attempts at mimicking the accents of the respective countries. Spanish sherry, Devonshire cream, grated coconut from the South Seas, Bombay duck, Chop Suey, Californian prunes and spaghetti are all included to remind the captain of 'everywhere he's ever been'.

There is an emphasis on luxury: passengers spend money freely in the ship's bar, Miss Castle and Miss Trimble are seen pampering themselves with cosmetics at the dressing table in lacy lingerie, and zipping themselves into evening dresses. The ship's buffet is laden with colourful jellies, cakes and blancmange, resplendent in piped cream and glace cherries, in an over-decorative style reminiscent of *Fanny Craddock*.¹²⁷ The enclosed space of the SS *Happy Wanderer*, however, poses a problem for the frustrated ship's captain

¹²⁷ The ship's chef makes a timely reference to *Craddock* at one point, saying that he has been preparing a special diet for a passenger called 'Fanny Fusspot, the calorie queen'.

(Sid James), who tells his incompetent crew that he wished he ran a holiday camp, so at least could occasionally escape 'by walking out of the gate'.

Produced by Betty E. Box and directed by Ralph Thomas, *Doctor at Sea* was the second in the series of Rank's *Doctor* films, which were amongst Rank's most successful films of the 1950s, accounting for the company's 'increased profits from production and distribution between 1954 and 1957' (Harper and Porter, 2003: 49). Box was 'the only woman to work as a major feature producer in the 1950s', and was responsible for bringing the character of Simon Sparrow to the screen, and having Dirk Bogarde play the part (Harper, 2000: 159).

Doctor At Sea strives further than most for international appeal by co-starring Dirk Bogarde with Brigitte Bardot in her first English-speaking role. It is also the first British production to have been filmed in VistaVision (*Monthly Film Bulletin*, September 1955: 135). The introduction of widescreen formats such as CinemaScope and VistaVision in the 1950s caused some problems for British cinematographers. The widescreen ratio was more suited to adventures and epics – genres which American filmmakers usually excelled in, whereas the British were more experienced in documentarism, and working in black-and-white. With wide-screen, 'spectacular aspects of the settings [had to be] emphasised...The problem was that British cinematographers were temperamentally unsuited to, and inexperienced in, spectacle' (Harper and Porter, 2003: 209).

One solution to this problem, however, was by opening the film out by shooting on location, something which the seascapes in *Doctor at Sea* attempt to satisfy. Exterior scenes were filmed aboard the *Agamemnon* between Venice and Piraeus, Greece, and her sister ship, the *Achilleus* in dry dock at Piraeus. Betty Box recalls having to obtain the help of the British Ambassador of Greece, Sir Charles Peake, who found 'a glamorous crowd from amongst their own friends and acquaintances', to appear as extras in a night time party scene aboard the *Achilleus* (Box, 2000: 111). As with the *Carry On* film, the party scene provided

the film with the required emphasis on glamour – Lady Peake appearing in ‘a Balenciaga creation’, and:

The Greek waiters [serving the] distinguished guests with pukka champagne instead of the cold tea or coloured water usually handed round for film party scenes (Box, 2000: 112).

In contrast to this recollection, however, Box also remembers refusing to use all the members of a touring company of *Porgy and Bess* who were on board the *Agamemnon*, as extras, exclaiming that ‘to have only negroes aboard our cruise ship (apart from our main characters) would have appeared ludicrous’ (Box, 2000: 108). In an era when black actors still played mainly subservient roles, and were largely invisible in British film, a cargo ship taking glamorous passengers on board would presumably not have been a suitable setting for these actors. Instead, only ‘one or two’ were asked to help out (Box, 2000: 108).

Despite the international cast, exotic locations and technological attractions that *Doctor At Sea* utilises, the film gained mixed reviews on its release. In Britain, *Today’s Cinema* highlighted its ‘happy holiday atmosphere’ and Bardot’s ‘piquant French sauciness’ (D. R. 1955: 8), and *Kinematograph Weekly* favourably emphasised the film’s comedy and locations:

Bracing salt air artfully offsets the somnambulistic effects of chloroform as it merrily sails to exotic shores, and a piquant sex interest, as well as moments of hilarious, yet harmless, ribaldry, heightens the wholesome fun (Billings, 1955: 14)

In America, the *Motion Picture Herald* found the film to be ‘not nearly as funny as its predecessor’, but considered that it would do well in the U.S. due to its ‘broad’ humour and the success of the original film (1956: 801). James Powers in the *Hollywood Reporter*, however, found the comedy to be too British to translate successfully for an international audience:

Doctor At Sea is one of those British comedies that seems determined to widen the gap between American comprehension of the British sense of humour rather than bridging it. The lines and situations may be the kind that have Ole Bill and his Missus chuckling over their cups of tea at the Tottenham Neighbourhood Ritz but for the average American audience it will not lay anyone in the aisles other than those trampled in the rush to leave (Powers, 1956: 3).

By the mid 1960s, the cruise holiday already appeared to be passé. At the beginning of *Wonderful Life* (1964), we see a cruise ship, partly staffed by three youthful stewards – played by Cliff Richard, Richard Sullivan and Melvyn Hayes, along with The Shadows, who are performing in a classical quartet. In this scene, there is one elderly, drunken holidaymaker, who appears to represent the ossified, elderly elite of yesteryear – still connected to an era of inter-war opulence where people wear tuxedos for dinner. After Cliff Richard and his friends finish work for the night, they plug in their amplifiers (a rather pointed contrast between old and new forms of entertainment), and blow the ship's electrics in the process. They are evicted from the boat and end up in Grand Canaria – the exotic, Mediterranean location offering extreme flights of fancy, with the youths becoming involved in directing a feature film.

Wonderful Life appears towards the end of a series of films which emerged in Britain in the late 1950s and early 1960s which attempted to 'cash in' on the current youth craze, supposedly sweeping the nation. Although *Wonderful Life* was listed in *Kinematograph Weekly* as one of the successes of 1964 (Atria, 1964: 8), Donnelly claims that the film was 'a critical and financial failure compared to its predecessors', which perhaps suggests that the cash cow that was the youth-oriented British pop musical had almost seen its day (Donnelly, 1998: 152). It may also have been something to do with The Beatles suddenly becoming the *band du jour* – themselves appearing in *A Hard Day's Night* in the same year.¹²⁸ Music, fashion and film culture also became increasingly London-centred as the sixties progressed. Levy, for example, states that London became

¹²⁸ Murphy prefers to highlight the cultural significance of *A Hard Day's Night* over the films of Cliff Richard, for example (Murphy, 1992: 114).

'swinging' in about August 1963, just as Cliff Richard's first flush of stardom reached its peak and subsequently began to fade (Levy, 2002: 6). Youth cults and fandom move at an alarming rate, which is why, as Medhurst explains, pop and rock films often lose their audience by the time of a film's release:

The production time needed for feature film production means that between conception and release a film can find itself horribly stranded by changes in the cultural landscape (Romney and Wootton (eds.), 1995: 62).

In the year before *Wonderful Life's* release, for example, Cliff Richard had been riding high with *Summer Holiday*, the most successful British film of that year. Before I look at *Summer Holiday* in more detail, however, I will briefly contextualise the film, considering how the British film industry looked to the youth market in order to keep audience numbers healthy. This had an impact on the way that the film was promoted, which I will return to after my analysis of the film.

Contextualising *Summer Holiday*

As I previously suggested, there was an increasing embourgeoisement of the working classes in the 1950s, and part of the cultural impact of this was that working-class teenagers very quickly became conspicuous consumers of records, clothes, cosmetics, gadgets (such as radios and hi-fis), and evenings out at concerts and the milk bar. As the British Transport Film, *Holiday*, appears to demonstrate, trips to the seaside can also be added to this list. As Osgerby highlights:

Unlike the home-centred consumption of their parents, youth's expenditure on commercial goods and entertainments primarily took place in public realms, this exposure contributing to impressions of a new, discrete and affluent 'young generation' (Osgerby, 1998: 38).

Lewis sees the 'the growing importance of youth and consumer culture' as indicative of a 'parallel decline in prestige here in the West: viz. the end of Empire in Great Britain [and] its dramatic decline in global prestige and clout' (Lewis,

1992: 79). He uses British filmmaker Julien Temple's argument to say that the different youth cults from Teds to Punks are the nation's 'only recent achievement – other than its spectacular plummet, it is the only reason the world still notices Britain' (Lewis, 1992: 79). It is arguably evident, for example, that the leisure industry has geared a large proportion of its market towards the teenager from the 1950s onwards. This could be seen most significantly in the music industry, where the introduction of the 7-inch single, portable radios and Dansette record players commodified the music which was so much a part of a youth group's identity. The introduction of special chalets to attract teenage holidaymakers to Butlin's also appears to be part of this trend, as does the marketing of the film *Summer Holiday*, which I will return to later (Read, 1986: 170).

The emergence of the youth cult in the mid to late 1950s came at a difficult time for the British film industry, with an increase in television sales and wider choice in leisure pursuits, and producers looked to the young audience as another way of bringing people into cinemas. Numerous rock and pop musicals were produced in Britain in the later 1950s and early '60s, ranging from relatively cheap and swiftly-made productions such as *The Tommy Steele Story* (1957) and *The Golden Disc* (1958), to more elaborate films such as *Summer Holiday* and *Every Day's A Holiday*. As Medhurst points out:

Once Britain had begun to produce its own home-grown rock and rollers, once the market for such a thing was arguably established, the film industry was bound to muscle in, seeking its share of the teenage spending money which so excited and worried social commentators of the day (Romney and Wootton (eds.), 1995: 62).

Cliff Richard also acknowledges this, commenting:

I think it's because the producers recognized that we brought people into theatres, therefore why not cinemas? And it did work for a while, didn't it? (Maxford, 1996: 47).

Stars such as Cliff Richard were seen as 'edgy' and rather threatening when they first came to prominence as Britain's answers to Elvis Presley in the late 1950s, but their musical style might possibly be referred to as 'rock pop' which Bradley says incorporates elements of rock 'n' roll and 'Tin Pan Alley' song writing, and which is important in the context of their films appealing to a wider, family audience (Bradley, 1992: 71).¹²⁹ Melvyn Hayes for example, refers to *Summer Holiday* as 'a family picture which you could take your granny to and no one would be offended' (Maxford, 1996: 45). The films also may have aimed to dispel any fear or suspicions that older generations had of the 'juke box boys' by representing them as enterprising, and uninterested in rebelling against society (Hoggart, 1992: 248 – 249). Osgerby considers this when discussing the films of Cliff Richard:

Many of these films were exemplary of the way in which youth emerged as a motif for post-war ideologies of confidence and growth. For example, Cliff Richard's films of the early sixties, [*The Young Ones* and *Summer Holiday*] are both tales of ebullient youngsters liberating themselves from the dull conformity of their workaday lives. The young people here are not rebels but responsible and enterprising citizens, the films' unquestioning sense of freedom and optimism epitomizing the notions of prosperity and dawning social harmony that lay at the heart of dominant political ideologies during the early sixties (Osgerby, 1998: 39).

Richard himself, reinforces this argument when referring to the appeal that *Summer Holiday* has held with audiences over the years, saying:

¹²⁹ Like many popular entertainers, Cliff Richard worked at a Butlin's holiday camp for a brief spell as one-time Redcoat Stan Edwards recalls: 'Cliff Richard and the Drifters started off in the Pig and Whistle Bar, [at Clacton in 1958] where campers used to go for a knees up and a sing song. They thought Cliff's music was a racket and nobody went in when he was playing. Cliff only knew about eight numbers at the time, and they were all Elvis Presley songs. He used to look like Elvis, and wiggle in the same way. You can imagine the sort of campers who wanted a sing-song liking that sort of music! Of course they'd put Cliff in the wrong bar, once they moved him to the South Seas Coffee Bar he went down well, and he did sessions in the Rock 'n' Roll Ballroom, in the afternoon when there was only about thirty people in there. Cliff left after a few weeks' (Read, 1986: 163).

We were the people who weren't rebels. We just loved rock and roll. We purely had a fun time, and that sort of thing never dates (Maxford, 1996: 44).

Indeed, it was a measure of success for all rock 'n' roll stars that they would eventually be acknowledged by an older generation of music hall entertainers. When George Formby was asked by *Melody Maker* to explain why he had been as popular in his heyday as Tommy Steele and Cliff Richard were, he said, 'I don't know. I suppose I used to be what Cliff Richard is now – not very good, but what the public wanted' (Bret, 1999: 214).

As I suggested earlier in this chapter, British cinema in the 1950s had increasingly looked to American technological innovations such as CinemaScope and Technicolor in order to draw audiences away from television sets, as well as other forms of leisure. This was an era when narrative tended to sometimes appear secondary to spectacle, as the widescreen was emphasised by the use of lavish sets, crowd scenes and impressive locations. In his essay 'The Decline and Fall of the Movie',¹³⁰ film writer and traditionalist, Leslie Halliwell decries the introduction of CinemaScope, claiming that:

The new shape was impossible to compose for; as Fritz Lang said, it was fine for funerals, but what painter through the ages had ever selected it unless to cut up into a triptych? (Halliwell, 1989: 1164).

Halliwell also finds location filming disagreeable, saying that 'new realistic films were slower, because the travel costs had to be justified and travelogue largely took the place of drama' (Halliwell, 1989: 1163). *Summer Holiday* makes extensive use of location, but its filmmakers don't necessarily fall prey to prioritising these exotic backdrops over the narrative. *Summer Holiday* arguably uses the locations as an *alternative* to the studio backlot, by *faking* many of its Greek locations as a number of other countries including France, Switzerland and Yugoslavia as actor Melvyn Hayes recalls:

¹³⁰ The *Decline and Fall of the Movie* essay was originally written in 1978.

[The crew] had a few days in Paris with the second unit, but when we were going through Switzerland that was shot in Greece. All the mountains were painted on bits of glass! (Maxford, 1996: 45).¹³¹

By filming most of the exterior scenes in and around Athens, rather than the whole of Europe, the location budget was kept relatively low, whilst giving an impression of expense. A further impression of prestige is in the genre of the film itself, which imitates the Hollywood musical. By the 1960s, musicals were increasingly expensive to mount, due to the independent nature of most film productions at this time, and the subsequent difficulty in bringing together specialist staff such as musicians, arrangers, designers and choreographers needed for musical film production. Musicals therefore had to be presented as 'must-see', event films in order to justify their cost, which the exotic locations in *Summer Holiday* go some way to signifying.

The British have traditionally not been very adept at producing Hollywood-style 'folk musicals', where music fits seamlessly into the narrative and seems to appear naturally from the characters and plot.¹³² The most successful British musicals have, arguably, been those which showcase music hall stars such as Fields, Formby and Askey, whose films are more like comedies with musical interludes. Britain's one big attempt at emulating the Hollywood musical in the 1940s, *London Town* (directed by the American Wesley Ruggles in 1946), was a dismal flop, and the British didn't return to the genre on such an ambitious scale until the 1960s, with the Cliff Richard musicals, and expensive productions which were financed by American companies, such as *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang* (1968), and *Oliver!* (1968) – the latter two attempting to emulate the success of 20th Century Fox's *The Sound of Music* (1965). As Donnelly highlights:

¹³¹ This is similar to how Powell and Pressburger faked the Himalayan scenery at Pinewood for their exterior shots in *Black Narcissus* (1947). See: Powell, 1992: 562 – 563.

¹³² See: Altman, Rick, *The American Film Musical*, 1989 edition, London: BFI

The Young Ones, *Summer Holiday* and *Wonderful Life* are prestige productions, especially for rock 'n' roll star vehicles. They use colour and wide-screen format... They emulate the Hollywood tradition with energetic dances, choreographed songs, and duet interactions between the male and female leads. Each film even contains a hypertraditional, big medley-set piece-section¹³³ *The Young Ones* music hall medley, *Summer Holiday*'s mime in the courtroom, and *Wonderful Life*'s "We Love the Movies," with its succession of film references – yet significantly each film also reserves a showcase for at least one rock 'n' roll song (Donnelly, 1998: 151).

***Summer Holiday* – Production History**

Summer Holiday was produced by Kenneth Harper for Ivy Productions and Associated British Pictures at Elstree Studios, and distributed by Warner-Pathé. Harper had previously produced *The Young Ones*, which became the top money-maker of 1962, so (as Richard recalls) having had a success with that film, 'it was obvious that we should continue with the same team, but in a different location' (Maxford, 1996: 45). According to Turner, 'the idea of filming Cliff in an exotic location was inspired by the boom in foreign travel in the early '60s' (Turner, 2008: 102). The director of *The Young Ones*, Sidney Furie, however, was not available to repeat the success of that film, so the job went to first-time director, Peter Yates, who was in his early thirties when the film was made. Harper considered it important to find someone fresh and new, who could communicate a feeling of youthful enthusiasm, as Yates remembers:

They were looking again for a young director who would get on with Cliff and who would have that kind of attitude which they liked (Yates, 2002).

Yates had previously worked as a first assistant director on social-realist films such as *A Taste of Honey* and *The Entertainer*, where he had had the experience of filming on location, and had also directed a couple of plays at the Royal Court theatre. He felt it important that the film was 'really based on energy' so that audiences felt they had 'had a good time' on leaving the cinema (Yates,

¹³³ In the style of the 'Broadway Ballet' in *Singin' In The Rain* (1952), or 'Born in a Trunk' in *A Star Is Born* (1954), for instance.

2002). Yates also introduced innovative techniques to the filming by making the cast warm up for scenes by dancing around to music (Maxford, 1996: 47).

American Herbert Ross was brought in to choreograph and film the musical numbers and the dialogue scenes which 'book-ended' the dances. He was largely responsible for the way the film apes American-style film musicals with the numbers being an important and integral part of the story (Yates, 2002). Another American, Lauri Peters was also cast as Richard's love interest to bring some transatlantic appeal to the film. Peters had previously appeared on Broadway as one of the Von Trapp children in *The Sound of Music*, although, rather curiously, in *Summer Holiday* the British actress Grazina Frame dubbed Peters' singing voice – in an American accent!¹³⁴ Most of the cast remember the production as a happy experience. Richard says that:

Working on *Summer Holiday* was more like a holiday than work. I swanned around Greece for six weeks on a red London bus with a group of good mates and we were all paid for the privilege (Richard, 2008: 82).

Actor and dancer Teddy Green concurs:

There wasn't a join between work and play. We'd get up in the morning at the hotel in Athens, which is where we shot all the location stuff, jump on the bus with Cliff and The Shadows...and ride out to the location. And The Shadows would get out their guitars and we'd sing all the way there, so it was like being on the film set anyway. We'd get out and get on with our jobs, then at the end of the day we'd get back on the bus and sing all the way back to the hotel! It was seamless (Maxford, 1996: 45).

Melvyn Hayes, however, claims that working on the film wasn't all plain sailing:

When I came back from it I went on holiday because I was so exhausted! We used to film from the crack of dawn. We'd get up at six to be in make-up for six-thirty. We'd then work until the light went, go back to the hotel and fall asleep. And sitting in that bus on the top of a mountain, with the outside temperature well over a hundred, was like sitting in an oven (Maxford, 1996: 45).

¹³⁴ Frame subsequently appeared in *Every Day's A Holiday*. Peters' role had almost been given to the then unknown Barbra Streisand.

Holidays in Europe – A Youthful Experience

Just as the tour of Britain and southern Ireland was seen to be easily accessible to the young couple in *Hands Across The Ocean*, in *Summer Holiday*, virtually the whole of northern Europe is shown to be within easy reach of those with the time and transport to utilise this undiscovered playground – namely youths with a disposable income. The film follows the story of a group of young, male bus mechanics who take a bus around Europe, and meet and fall in love with a group of young women along the way.

The film opens in black and white with an iconic shot of a British seaside pier followed by shots of a traditional brass band who play an instrumental version of the film's title song in an 'oomp-pah-pah' style. The heavens open and the band run for shelter. The following title sequence consists of newsreel-type footage of rough seas, wet and wind-swept promenaders, an abandoned cricket match and people huddled under shelters. This sequence aims to represent the traditional British seaside holiday as outmoded – rather in the same way that another film from the era, *The Entertainer*, does, for example – but on this occasion, it is emphasised further with the unpredictable weather, leaving expectant holidaymakers full of dismay at the futility of their efforts to enjoy time away from work.

It is not yet twenty years after the postwar phenomenon of widespread Holidays With Pay, yet imagery of the working-class braving the British climate is presented here as the typical holiday experience. The scene has echoes of the rain-lashed resort of Piltown in the previous year's *The Punch and Judy Man* (1962), and also a scene in *Bank Holiday* where holidaymakers flee from the beach during a downpour.

The employees at Aldenham Bus Overhaul Works, Cyril (Melvyn Hayes), Steve (Teddy Green), and Edwin (Jeremy Bulloch), are hoping that Don (Cliff Richard) can think of a positive way to spend their imminent holiday. When Don arrives at

the works in a London Routemaster bus, the film suddenly bursts into Technicolor and music, with Don singing the good news that he and his friends can use the bus as transport for their time away from work. His plan is a business enterprise: they turn the bus into a 'mobile hotel' and if their holiday in the South of France is a success, they can repeat the trip next year with 'paying passengers'.

There then follows an elaborate musical number in the bus works as the boys anticipate the countdown to their holiday and customize one of the buses. The Routemaster is used for some commercial intertextuality. In this scene, for example, a banner advertising 'BEA Europe's foremost airline' is pasted across the side of the bus. Adverts for 'Intavilla holiday villas' and Dolcis Shoes, who provided footwear for the film, can also be seen. When the transformation of the bus is finished, the boys promise to send their co-workers a postcard, and then set off, cueing the famous title song. In contrast to the scenes in Britain, the shots of the bus driving through France while Richard sings 'we're all going on a summer holiday' are bright and sunny, with cheerful French children waving from the roadside.

Bruce Welch and Brian Bennett of The Shadows wrote the title song in twenty minutes. Richard claims that the song 'spans gaps,' commenting:

It's not mainstream pop-rock and it's not jazz or show music. It's right in the middle. And it has this lilting melody people latch onto really quickly...it always gives me a great thrill to hear it on the radio every summer, because you get a feeling that people are going to be singing it themselves going on their own holidays (Maxford, 1996: 45).

As Richard says, the tune is lilting – like a nursery rhyme in its simplicity, which is why it has almost become part of British folklore, and also why the song will forever be associated with the iconic Routemaster bus.¹³⁵ The song's lyrics have

¹³⁵ For example, in the documentary *Perpetual Motion: The Routemaster Bus*, a clip of this scene appears less than four minutes into the programme, to illustrate the point that

also become part of British popular culture. One refrain in particular appears to communicate the ideology of the film, which invites people to explore holiday destinations which they may have only previously seen in films, but which are now becoming more widely affordable:

We're going where the sun shines brightly
We're going where the sea is blue
We've seen it in the movies
So let's see if it's true

The boys soon meet three women, Sandy (Una Stubbs), Angie (Pamela Hart) and Mimsie (Jacqueline Daryl), who are on their way to a singing engagement in Athens. The women are patronised by these bus mechanics who inform them that their car is a 'write-off' and that they should join the boys on the bus, and get a lift to their destination. In the subsequent 'Come Ride With Us' number, the girls' skirts twirl up as they dance, and underwear can clearly be seen. For most cinema audiences of the time, a musical would be the only mainstream genre of film where they would get a glimpse of female underwear. The hints towards sexual fulfilment in 'Come Ride With Us' might also be ideologically linked to the holiday message – especially with the scene's objectification of the female body. When the girls defiantly drive off, their car's exhaust backfires, leaving the boys blackened with soot. A musical reference is made to minstrelsy, with a banjo refrain of 'Oh Susannah!' and the boys delivering the final line of their 'Come Ride With Us' song on their knees with outstretched arms, *a la* Jolson.

Music and Youth

As might be expected from a Cliff Richard musical, *Summer Holiday* has a strong emphasis on youth, and the film's young characters exist almost in their own bubble – we know very little about their backgrounds, or about their families, and the fact that they are away from home emphasises this even further. Unlike *Holiday Camp*, for example, the film negates the family, which is seen to be

London buses are 'a mobile monument, as familiar as Tower Bridge and Trafalgar Square – recognised across the world' (Wooding, 1992).

suffocating and restrictive. Ex child star, Barbara Winters (Lauri Peters) has run away from her domineering stage mother, and the young men and women she joins on the bus (initially stowing away, disguised as a young boy), offer her a sense of freedom. Similarly, her burgeoning romance with Don allows her the chance to grow up for the first time. As is usual in a musical film, the romance between the main characters is told largely through song, and because this is a rock 'n' roll musical, the music and dance in *Summer Holiday* is used to communicate a feeling of youth and vitality.

As highlighted earlier, the job of providing music for the film went to several different artists, which is evident in the variety of the styles of music throughout the film. Peter Myers and Ronnie Cass wrote the majority of the songs in the more traditional style of the Hollywood musical, and the rest of the songs were written by different combinations of Richard's backing group, The Shadows,¹³⁶ with Richard himself contributing to two songs: 'Good News' and 'Bachelor Boy'. Philip Springer and Buddy Kaye supplied the introspective love ballad 'The Next Time' to the score. The insertion of 'Bachelor Boy', although somewhat relevant as a comment on Don's character, appears rather more arbitrary than some of the other numbers in the film. It was added towards the end of production purely on commercial grounds because everyone (rightly) assumed it would be a huge hit. The fact that it is the only production number set outdoors during 'daylight', but actually reproduced on an obviously fake indoor studio set makes the scene contrast wildly with the rest of the film, which largely tries to emphasise the exoticism of its sunny locations.¹³⁷ The lyrics and sensibility of 'Bachelor Boy', in which Don says that he doesn't want a serious relationship and will remain single to his 'dying day', are interesting in that they have become closely associated with Richard's public persona, and therefore his appeal to fans.¹³⁸ Part of the appeal of a largely asexual 'teenybopper' like Richard to a female fan base is that

¹³⁶ Bruce Walsh, Brian Bennett, Hank Marvin and Mike Conlin.

¹³⁷ 'Really Waltzing' is set in a beer garden, but the artificiality of the set seems to matter less because the scene takes place at night, with the garden illuminated by artificial light.

¹³⁸ Richard appears to have kept to his word, and even today is either often referred to as 'the Peter Pan of pop', or 'the Bachelor Boy'.

he appears to always remain single and therefore 'available' to the fan who can project her desires on to the artist and feel that he is speaking to her personally, through the emotions of the music (McRobbie, 2000: 142).

In the song 'Swingin' Affair', Don and Barbara sing about their plans to have a relationship with no strings attached. They talk about love affairs in terms of people 'owning' each other – something which Don doesn't want. Barbara goes along with this, saying that she doesn't want to 'rent' him let alone, 'own' him, but as we find out later, this is a pretence on her behalf, as she claims that she has loved him since she was 'a little boy' – a comic reference to her disguise at the start of the film. Photographically, 'Swingin' Affair' couldn't be further from 'Bachelor Boy', set as it is on a Swiss mountain, but actually filmed in Greece like most of the location shots.

The Tourist and Imperialist Gaze in *Summer Holiday*

In 'Swingin' Affair', and also 'The Next Time', the exotic locations add an extra dimension to the scenes. In 'Swingin' Affair', for example, the characters appear to be constantly on the move, so that the audience is treated to an ever-changing series of vistas behind the two singers and a group of men that Barbara dances with to make Don jealous. This adds to the carefree nature of the song's lyrics, and the feelings of Don and Barbara who want to 'enjoy the magic' of an affair without ties. Director Yates says he aimed to 'open [the film] out as much as possible' and get 'value' from the fact that they were on location, which is particularly evident in this scene (Yates: 2002).

For 'The Next Time' Yates says that he was 'determined to stage a number around the Acropolis' (Yates: 2002), probably because after *disguising* the fact that most of the locations shots in the film are of Greece, the Acropolis finally establishes that the characters are in Athens at the end. The establishing shot of this scene is a breath-taking postcard view of the Acropolis, with Richard appearing so small in the frame, that at first it is hard to make out his figure, until he moves. The Acropolis as an iconic landmark has also, arguably taken on an

iconographic alliance with the film – in much the same way as the red bus has – because a shot from this scene appears on the cover of the film’s soundtrack LP.¹³⁹ These shots are tourist gazes of the European locations: immediately recognisable images of a place, usually from a spectacular viewpoint, which communicate where the characters are. Different nations in the film are similarly represented in stereotypical ‘shorthand’ with easily identifiable imagery. For example, Switzerland is simply represented by mountains, and the presence of a Saint Bernard dog, Austria is represented by a waltz in a beer garden (along with a couple of characters in national-type dress such as lederhosen), and the French are represented by the Great Orlando (Ron Moody), a Marcel Marceau style performer who speaks in the ‘international language of mime’.

It is arguably when *Summer Holiday* comes to represent Yugoslavia, however, when the film becomes most problematic. After crossing the Swiss-Yugoslavian border, with some difficulty and hostility from the Yugoslavian border control, the boys decide to go out and look for some bread. They come across a lone shepherdess (Wendy Barrie), dressed in raggedy peasant clothes, and with a pencilled-in mono-brow (to denote ugliness), care of the make-up department. Don and the others chase and surround the panic-stricken woman, and it looks for a moment as though she is about to be gang-raped – even by an asexual bunch of characters such as Don and his friends. After the boys curiously soften her up by teaching her how to Twist to the song ‘Dancing Shoes’, Edwin pulls out his phrase book. He misreads the Yugoslavian word for ‘bread’ as ‘bride’, the woman’s mood changes, and she takes Don back to her farm for an immediate marriage ceremony, thinking he’s looking for a wife. The boys try to escape, and a fight breaks out, with the woman’s relatives being none too pleased. Don exclaims, “The natives are restless!” and Steve dryly comments, “I told you we should’ve gone to Blackpool!” The Yugoslavian segment can be considered in terms of racial stereotyping. The ‘Britishness’ of the holidaymakers is contrasted

¹³⁹ Whilst considering iconic landmarks, it is curious that *Summer Holiday* doesn’t include a shot of the Eiffel Tower to signify the bus’s arrival in Paris, although a shot of the Arc De Triomphe is used instead.

with that of the Yugoslav 'other', who are referred to jokingly as 'natives'. The unfamiliar setting is similarly regarded in opposition to the typically British seaside destination of Blackpool.

According to Yates, Yugoslav people took offence to the way their nationals were depicted as 'wild peasants' (Yates, 2002). The men come across as savages – wielding whips and guns; the women as simpletons – desperate to comply with the first suggestion of marriage. Three months after the film's release a press release from Yugoslavia announced that Richard, Yates, and the producer, Kenneth Harper were banned from ever visiting the country in the future. Peter Yates defends himself by explaining, 'we weren't saying the whole country was like this' (Yates, 2002), but this is to misunderstand the effect that films can have on audiences – particularly international audiences who will see representations of their country as condensed to a few simple symbols. If the Arc de Triomphe and a mime artist represent France for example, and a red London bus and some cheery teenagers represent Britain, then Yugoslavia has been represented here by some tumbledown farm buildings and aggressive country folk dressed in homemade sheepskin jerkins.

Una Stubbs considers the incongruous way the Routemaster bus courses through Europe as comic:

I think the red bus had as much to do with the film's novelty value as anything else. It looks so comical seeing it in the other countries. It would have been quite a different film if they had been travelling around Europe in a lorry, for instance. You can't underestimate the appeal of a red bus (Maxford, 1996: 47).

In the light of the offence felt by Yugoslavia, however, the appearance of the bus in the European landscape might be considered as imperialist, especially as Don intends to introduce two hundred buses into Europe with British holidaymakers on similar trips in the near future. It could be argued that this holiday by London bus anticipates the type of vacation where the British holidaymaker can't visit

another country without the comfort of finding a little piece of Britain on their arrival, just as Jimmy Edward's character, George enjoys finding the 'Britannia Inn' in the French capital in *Innocents In Paris*. *Summer Holiday*'s representation of Yugoslavia – as the only eastern bloc country the youths visit – may also be constructed through the prism of the Cold War. The aggressive border controls, for instance, recall the stern Russian delegates of *Innocents In Paris*.

Imperialist, or otherwise, at the film's conclusion, Don's enterprising spirit pays off and he receives a message from the bus company saying he can go ahead with his idea of introducing 200 holiday buses to Europe. Barbara's materialistic mother then shows her consent to her daughter's relationship with Don, as she realises what a talented businessman he is. It is during the film's end credits that Don and his friends' holiday really begins, and we see them exiting the bus and running into the sea.

A Consumerist Dream

The release of *Summer Holiday* arguably introduced a then-unprecedented marketing campaign for the British film industry. Industry journals picked up on the film's advertising, with *Daily Cinema* heading an article, 'Summer Holiday Mammoth Exploitation Campaign Swings into Action', continuing:

One of the most ambitious and far-reaching exploitation campaigns ever planned for a British motion picture is now under way at Warner-Pathé, to launch what the company expect will be one of their biggest-ever money-spinners (*The Daily Cinema*, 1963: 6).

This publicity, however, not only advertised the film, but also worked as a cross-promotional exercise encompassing the British music, fashion and travel industries, offering a condensed consumerist push towards the youth market. This type of marketing is usually attributed to the Hollywood 'High Concept' films of the 1980s,¹⁴⁰ but the evidence here regarding Cliff Richard's film would

¹⁴⁰ See Wyatt, Justin, *High Concept and Marketing in Hollywood*, 1994, Texas: University of Texas Press.

suggest otherwise. For example, two singles from the film were released before *Summer Holiday* reached cinemas, working as aural trailers to the film, followed by an LP of the whole soundtrack.¹⁴¹ Unusually, the women's costumes for the film were not designed exclusively by a film costume designer and then copied for the high street. Instead, the women's costumes – as selected by Cynthia Tingey – were designed by the David Gibson Fashion Group of Nottingham.¹⁴² A range of identical high street versions was then released for young consumers to follow in the style of Una Stubbs and Lauri Peters. These all carried a 'swing' ticket showing a still of Richard and Peters in a scene from *Summer Holiday*, creating further publicity for the film. An elaborate press book gave cinema owners numerous ideas of how to market the film, including ways of highlighting the film's fashion concepts:

With the full co-operation of David Gibson's Ltd, their sales representatives and their display materials, this is a tie-up that offers you every opportunity to carry out a first class publicity campaign on an outstanding national tie-up (*Summer Holiday* press book, 1963).

David Gibson held fashion shows in 'twenty-seven key cities during the winter 1962' with invitation cards which carried 'a facsimile of the swing ticket' on the cover, and 'seven pictures of Lauri Peters and the dresses worn in the film' in its centre pages (*The Daily Cinema*, 1963: 7). Cinema managers were offered special quad posters promoting the designs, and also advised to hold fashion contests, with one of the Gibson dresses being given away as prizes. They were also offered showcards to promote a national competition linked to the film. Prizes included a Vespa 'Sportique Scooter', fifty pairs of Dolcis shoes, two weeks holiday in a 'Rentavilla' on the Costa Brava and Fidelity radios, record

¹⁴¹ The soundtrack was at the top of the British album chart for 14 weeks (Turner, 2008: 82).

¹⁴² The involvement of David Gibson Ltd with *Summer Holiday* holds fond memories for Cliff Richard fans from the Midlands. One excited woman who queued to see Sir Cliff signing copies of his autobiography at Asda, Spondon, Derbyshire on September 9th, 2008 proudly exclaimed that her Grandmother had helped to make clothes for the film (*East Midlands Today*, September 9th 2008).

players and tape recorders.¹⁴³ Although the national competition was open to all ages, the accompanying imagery from the film and fashionable prizes had a definite slant on youth and vitality. As Osgerby points out:

Young people seemed to embody all that the consumer dream stood for and throughout the fifties and early sixties advertisers habitually used images of youth to associate their products with dynamic modernity and 'swinging' enjoyment (Osgerby, 1998: 33).

Local dance halls were encouraged to hold talent contests for a 'local 'Cliff Richard' or for a group of instrumentalists playing in the Shadows style' and travel agencies were advised to use copy lines for the film of 'swing your way across Europe with Cliff Richard in *Summer Holiday*' and 'Cliff Richard and *The Young Ones* go abroad for their *Summer Holiday*' (*Summer Holiday* press book, 1963). The consumerist dream was fulfilled by the film's publicity tie-in with the opening of a department especially for teenagers at a store in Cardiff:

On the 29th of this month, the London bus which is one of the main "characters" in the story...will be taken by road to Cardiff, carrying six of the young stars who will attend the opening at Howells, Cardiff's leading big department store, of a brand new teenage fashion department. Also linked with the showing in Cardiff of *Summer Holiday* is Howell's contest to find a girl between 18 and 25 to be "Miss Cardiff" (*The Daily Cinema*, 1963: 7).

Kenneth Harper cannily arranged for the film to be released at a time when audiences might appreciate it most, as he recalls:

I said to Leslie Grade... 'you must get it ready for the winter and let's pray for snow!' We were lucky. It snowed. Everybody was frozen and they went into the cinema and it was like having a summer holiday (Turner, 2008: 102).¹⁴⁴

¹⁴³ An advert for Fidelity can clearly be seen on the back of the bus in the film, along with the adverts I have previously mentioned – a clear case of 'product placement'.

¹⁴⁴ *Summer Holiday* was released in Britain on February 17th 1963.

The publicity worked its magic, and the film became a huge success in Britain. *Film Review*, called the film, 'the zingiest, zestiest of all British musicals', continuing:

Expertly produced against sunny European settings; with a swingy musical score, first-rate dance routines, pleasing romance, amusing foolery and a delightful cast led by Cliff Richard. Positively – a box office certainty and entrancing entertainment for the whole family (M.H., 1963: 8)

Kinematograph Weekly also favoured the film's 'authentic' backgrounds and 'breathtaking' photography (1963: 8) but *Monthly Film Bulletin* found the film to be 'slapdash' and 'continually [slopping] into the second-rate through lack of inventiveness in narrative and dancing' (TK, 1962: 19).

However, in spite of the producers' attempts to make the film appeal to the American market,¹⁴⁵ with its international cast and exotic locations, *Summer Holiday* and its follow up *Wonderful Life* were not hits across the Atlantic, as Donnelly points out:

Cliff's films looked like they might make an impression on the international cinematic body, but they failed, and it was left to the Beatles to bring British films to the U.S. market as part of the large-scale British record invasion of the U.S. charts in the mid 1960s (Donnelly, 1998: 147).

Conclusion

As I have explored in this chapter, Britain in the late 1950s – early 1960s saw an incredible change in patterns of consumption for both middle-class and working-class people, expressed most conspicuously with an emphasis on the spending power of the teenager. With the end of rationing, and an increasingly affluent population, British people looked towards foreign holiday destinations, as one way of broadening their horizons, whilst simultaneously emulating the elite and

¹⁴⁵ The titles of *The Young Ones* and *Summer Holiday* were changed for the American market into *It's Wonderful to Be Young* and *Swingers in Paradise*, respectively.

super-rich travellers who had visited sunnier climes before them. The opportunities for youthful adventurers to find excitement overseas is perhaps ideologically expressed most strongly in the film *Summer Holiday*. This film, more than any other, caught the imagination of cinema audiences at the time with its exotic settings and the vibrant energy of its young cast, making holidaymaking abroad appear to be a breeze – despite the troublesome encounter with the Yugoslav characters. The foreign holiday, just like the soundtrack LP and the David Gibson clothes is constructed as an item of consumption which is not beyond the reach of the teenage cinemagoer. There is also the promise of the holiday romance, and that the successful businessmen (in this instance Don *et al*) will get the talented girls (Barbara and the singing trio) – this promise is arguably communicated to the film's youthful audience.

The film came at a promising time for the British film industry, with international interest, and co-productions increasing throughout the decade – and with London in particular becoming a centre for cultural innovations in popular music, film and fashion. It was this confidence in Britain's cultural standing which perhaps underpins the imperialist ideology beneath the surface of Cliff Richard's seemingly inoffensive pop musical. This confidence, however, proved to be short-lived with the release of Richard's next big-budget rock 'n' roll musical, *Wonderful Life*. This film failed to follow the huge critical and financial success that *Summer Holiday* had found, and Richard consequently pushed his film career into the background, concentrating on his appeal as a recording artist and live performer.

The end of the 1960s, too, saw further changes in the British film industry, as revealed in films which were made at the turn of the decade – including those which have a holiday setting. In the next chapter, I will be looking at holiday films of the 1970s, to see how these may have ideologically constructed feelings of nostalgia in an increasingly pessimistic and bleak period in British history.

Chapter 7 – Grim Nostalgia and the Traditional British Holiday in the 1970s

Introduction

In the last chapter I looked at how the postwar era of affluence was expressed in British films of the late 1950s and early 1960s, which represented the excitement and exoticism of the foreign holiday. The British film industry itself had arguably reached some sort of zenith in the 1960s, both commercially and artistically. The myth of 'swinging London' had fed into British society as a whole, and helped to attract Hollywood investors, as Richard Lester suggests in *Hollywood UK*:

After decades in which Britain had followed American leads, suddenly the process seemed to have been reversed...By 1967, 90 per cent of the funding for British movies came from America (Evans, 1993).

British film, alongside the fashion and music industries, worked to perpetuate the idea of affluence – which the promotional tie-ins of *Summer Holiday* demonstrate – but this period of artistic and financial success was not to last. At the end of the decade, many of the American studios either reduced their spending on UK productions or withdrew financial support completely, and so the British film industry had to find new ways to support itself.¹⁴⁶

Some high-profile members of the industry were invited to work in Hollywood. Ken Russell, for instance, claims that most British directors never made any money in the 1960s unless they went to America, as John Schlesinger did, to make films such as *Midnight Cowboy* (1969) (Solomons, 2008: 10). This move didn't always end in success, however. Actor-turned-director, Mike Sarne went to Hollywood to helm the screen version of Gore Vidal's satire *Myra Breckinridge* (1970), which turned out to be a huge disaster for the already cash-strapped 20th

¹⁴⁶ An exception to this general rule was Columbia. They saw the commercial potential in financing a series of pictures with an almost exclusively British market – the *Confessions...* films (something that I will return to later).

Century Fox, struggling after the losses made on big-budget musicals such as *Doctor Dolittle* (1967), *Star!* (1968), and *Hello Dolly!* (1969). At the end of the decade many of the US companies cut their losses, and instead concentrated production on 'more modest American films like *The Graduate* (1967), *Bonnie and Clyde* (1967) and *Easy Rider* (1969)' (Petrie, 1991: 57).

The British film industry not only suffered as a result of the loss in US funding, but also because of the industrial action which was so typical of the early 1970s. Terry Staples, for example, argues that the miners' strike of 1973 had a direct influence on the film industry in early 1974 when the 'restrictions on the non-domestic use of electrical power' during the 'three-day-week' meant that cinemas had to 'reduce the number of shows they put on' (Staples, 1997: 229). In their attempts to attract domestic audiences into cinemas, British producers, looked for inspiration at home, in the types of films which they hoped would be sure-fire money-spinners. Most of the films were – crucially – relatively cheap to produce, and could largely be divided into the categories of already-established series (such as the *Carry Ons*, and the numerous *Dracula* sequels by Hammer, for instance), soft-core sex films, and television spin-offs. The influence of the soft-core sex films could also be seen elsewhere. The Hammer films, for example, often included increasing levels of nudity as censorship became less strict in the late 1960s and early 1970s, and TV spin-offs incorporated a higher smut quotient, or at least made a nod to more risqué comedy, which wouldn't be acceptable on television.¹⁴⁷

In this chapter I aim to reveal how the British film industry, like Britain itself, had reached a crisis, and how it attempted to address this problem by largely focusing on low-budget productions aimed at a domestic market. There appears

¹⁴⁷ This might be particularly so if the film makes use of the liminal setting of the holiday, as in *Holiday On The Buses* (1973) and *Are You Being Served?* (1977), the latter film including a scene in which Mr Humphries (John Inman) further acknowledges being part of a 'gay network' by having 'a drink with some transsexual friends' in a hotel bar (Healy, 1995: 255).

to be something of an ideological struggle in the holiday films of this period, between an expression of nostalgia, and also an acceptance of permissiveness. The narratives of these films for example, appear to look back nostalgically to British traditions and institutions, whilst at the same time speak to an audience who might be attracted by the *risqué* sexual content.

Firstly I will say something about the 'crisis' of Britain at the time, and the British film industry itself. I will reveal something about the sense of grim nostalgia which seemed to appear in the early-to-mid 1970s, before offering examples of how this ideology appears to conflict with 'permissive' film texts of the time. In particular, I will be looking at nostalgic representations of the traditional British seaside holiday in films, which also exploit a sense of 'saucy' seaside postcard innuendo. The film texts I will use for my analysis, will include *Carry On* films, television spin-offs such as *Holiday On The Buses* (1973), and the Reg Varney vehicle, *The Best Pair Of Legs In The Business* (1973). The latter film not only includes a central character who is suffering from a crisis of identity, but the film itself (and its promotional material) also arguably communicate confusing messages about what kind of audience it is trying to reach. The film is also noteworthy because – like *Carry On Behind* (1975) – it includes the representation of a caravan holiday, something which reached mass popularity for holidaymakers in the latter postwar period.

The 'Crisis' of the 1970s

Britain in the early 1970s was a place of moral panics, strikes and power cuts. Inflation was up (largely due to the quadrupling of the price of oil after the outbreak of war in the Middle East), and Heath's Conservative government announced a three-day-week in order to save British energy supplies from coal in the face of the miner's strike (Hennessy and Seldon (eds.), 1987: 216 – 230).¹⁴⁸ Stuart Hall comments that 1972 was a year of 'sustained and open class conflict of a kind unparalleled since the end of the war' (Hall *et al*, 1978: 293). He claims

¹⁴⁸ War in the Middle East was announced on 6 October 1973, and the three-day-week was announced in November 1973.

that the postwar boom in affluence saw a break with traditional ideologies 'which produced a sense of the loss of familiar landmarks and thus provided the basis for growing 'social anxiety', continuing:

The association of 'affluence' with an attitude of 'unbridled materialism', hedonism and pleasure was seen as quickly leading to 'permissiveness' – a state of the loosening of moral discipline, restraint and control (Hall *et al*, 1978: 157).

Hunt similarly sees the 'low' culture of the 1970s as a 'cruel trickle-down of permissiveness into commodity culture [with] the 1970s as a particularly cruel parody of the 1960s' (Hunt, 1998: 2). In spite of this sense of permissiveness – or perhaps, because of it – British society in the 1970s also appeared to look back nostalgically to British traditions, and times when things seemed less bleak. This could be found, for example, in the various celebrations of the monarchy such as Princess Anne's wedding in 1973, and the Queen's Silver Jubilee in 1977, which perhaps saw the greatest return of the 'street party' – all Union Jack flags and jelly – since the Coronation in 1953.

Holidays in the 1970s

Although there was an increase in the number of British holidaymakers taking package trips abroad,¹⁴⁹ the traditional seaside holiday could still find a relatively healthy number of consumers in this decade. Ward Lock's *Red Guide to The Kent Coast* (published circa late 1960s/early 1970s) still keenly lists Dreamland as Margate's 'principal entertainment centre, with cinema, ballroom, olde-tyme music hall and skating rink, as well as cafés, restaurants and bars' (Ward Lock and Co., circa late 1960s/early 1970s: 44). Rail was still considered to be a good mode of transport for holidaymakers, especially so that, 'since the introduction of all-electric services all the resorts in the area [could] be reached from London in under two hours' (Ward Lock and Co., circa late 1960s/early 1970s: 5). In an

¹⁴⁹ This was partly as a result of entrepreneurs like Freddy Laker, 'the first man to break the power of the big airlines by introducing vastly cheaper fares and opening up much of the world to people who could not previously afford air travel' (Barker, 2006: 37).

echo of the railway daytrips of the late nineteenth century, British Rail continued to offer special excursion trips to the seaside. In 1972 BR Southern advertised a '2 in 1 excursion to Canterbury and Margate with nearly three hours stay at each place' at a cost of £1 for an adult return fare.¹⁵⁰

Butlin's saw an increase in family holidays at its camp in the early 1970s, but business tended to see a downturn as the decade progressed. In contrast to this, however, its closest rival, Pontin's was still doing well. Pontin's boom years were in the 1960s when Fred Pontin owned sixteen camps, and introduced his team of Bluecoats in a copy of Butlin's red-coated staff. His camps continued to be relatively successful in the 1970s, partly because they were much smaller in comparison to the huge Butlin camps, which struggled to fill the thousands of beds. Pontin also introduced self-catering and televisions into the chalets – appealing to the requirements and tastes of an era which was less compliant with communal eating and entertainment, than in the immediate postwar.¹⁵¹

Pontin made a success (where Butlin had failed) by branching out with foreign holidays. He offered 'Pontinental' package holidays to Majorca, Spain and Ibiza with flights, accommodation, food and entertainment all included in the price. An advert exclaiming 'Go Pontinental to the sun!' can be seen pasted to the side of the bus in *Holiday On The Buses* (filmed at Prestatyn), which doesn't disguise the fact that the location is a Pontin's camp, therefore providing an example of commercial intertextuality.¹⁵²

1970s films such as *That'll Be The Day* (1973) and *Tommy* (1975) recall the heyday of the British holiday camp in the mid 1950s – the former reconstructing the camps as havens for young men and women who use them as venues to explore their emergent sexuality, away from the prying eyes of parents, and the

¹⁵⁰ Leaflet published by British Rail Southern (AD4278/A20/24 172) circa early 1972.

¹⁵¹ Information taken from www.butlinsmemories.com/2/id182.htm, accessed on 30/11/2003.

¹⁵² An advertisement for Pontin's holiday camps also appears on the side of a bus in *Mutiny on the Buses* (1972).

latter showcasing 'Bernie's Holiday Camp' in an elaborate keep-fit routine where crowds manically perform star jumps and touch their toes. *That'll Be The Day* also illustrates some of the contradictions I have found when looking at films of the period. If the film is nostalgic, this nostalgia is hardly rosy. Instead, its mood is decidedly grim. The film's main character, Jim MacLaine (David Essex) escapes from the restrictions of home and school and runs away to the seaside, only to move into a dreary rented room, and the depressing job of deckchair attendant on a rain-lashed beach.

Some respite comes with bar work at a holiday camp¹⁵³ where he shares a chalet with Mike (Ringo Starr), who works on a fairground when the holiday camps are out of season. The two characters are part of an itinerant workforce, drifting from job to job, and using women (or rather, 'birds') as sexual commodities, rather like the male protagonists in 1970s sex comedies.¹⁵⁴ In one particularly unpleasant scene Jim rapes a schoolgirl under a tree and is chastised by Starr for not 'picking on someone [his] own size'. There are several scenes of grim, fumbling sex in chalets and by the fair ground, and Ringo Starr destroys any mystique he may have had in the previous decade as a Beatle, when he bares his pallid buttocks in close-up to reveal a (painted-on) tattoo, which his character has had inscribed during a drunken spree. The film aims to construct a sense of nostalgia for Britain's emergent postwar rock 'n' roll scene of the late Fifties and early Sixties, but, at the same time, struggles to contain this myth within a narrative that has a 1970s boorish approach to sex. This crisis of identity is, arguably, what also brought the *Carry On* series to its (temporary) close in 1978, as I will argue later.

¹⁵³ A Warners holiday camp at Puckpool, Ryde, Isle of Wight was used for the location shots: 'Able to accommodate 650 people...[it] merged with the adjoining St Clare Holiday Camp (also owned by Warners) in the late 1980s to form Harcourt Sands. Sold to Renowned Holidays in the mid-1990s and later closed in September 2006' www.butlinsmemories.com/warners/camplist.htm, accessed 17/10/2008.

¹⁵⁴ As mentioned by Hunt, 1998: 112.

Carry On Holidaying

Arguably one of the most successful series of British films (alongside James Bond), the *Carry On* films always relied on a certain quotient of innuendo to get their laughs, but the series became noticeably more reliant on smut at the end of the 1960s and beginning of the 1970s. Simultaneously, however, the series nostalgically acknowledged its association with the 'saucy seaside postcard' that its humour is so often aligned with, by using the British-on-holiday as a theme in five films between 1969 and 1975, namely: *Carry On Camping* (1969), *Carry On At Your Convenience* (1971), *Carry On Abroad* (1972), *Carry On Girls* (1973), and *Carry On Behind* (1975).¹⁵⁵ Medhurst makes a connection between the series as a whole and the carnival atmosphere of the traditional working-class holiday when he says:

Carry Ons are like holidays (the boarding house and fry-up kind, not the discover-the-unexplored-secrets-of-Patagonia monstrosities), or works' outings, or coach trips, or any other kind of piss-ups where indulgence and irresponsibility offer temporary escape from everyday tedium (Medhurst, 1992: 16).

Carry On At Your Convenience (1971) includes a particularly vivid representation of a traditional British seaside holiday. This involves a lengthy sequence showing a works outing to Brighton,¹⁵⁶ which harks back to the type of morale-boosting

¹⁵⁵ Talbot Rothwell wrote all of the holiday-themed *Carry Ons* listed above, excepting *Behind* which was written by Dave Freeman. Norman Hudis, who wrote the screenplays for the first six in the series, (from *Carry On Sergeant* (1958) to *Carry On Cruising* (1962)) before moving to Hollywood, claims to have written treatments for further *Carry Ons* which never saw the light of day. He recognised, for example, that the British seaside was 'created' for the *Carry Ons*, and came up with an idea for a film which centred around a theatrical troupe whose performances were to take place on the sands, giving the film its title of *Carry On Under the Pier if Wet* (Hudis, 2008: 58 – 59).

¹⁵⁶ Medhurst points out that *Carry Ons* are 'very much texts concerned with the south of England' and that 'Brighton is their Blackpool' (Medhurst, 2007: 137). Incidentally, Kenneth Williams much preferred the south coast resort in contrast to Blackpool, which he sums up with the following entry in his diary: Monday, 27 March 1961: 'Blackpool is the *end of the line*. It is the English Siberia. It is pure TORTURE. Hateful, tasteless,

daytrips of Lancashire mill workers, as well as serving as an almost exact visual representation of the following working-class 'chara' trip described at length by Richard Hoggart:

They have a nice walk past the shops; perhaps a drink; a sit in a deck-chair eating an ice-cream or sucking mint-humbugs; a great deal of loud laughter – at Mrs Johnson insisting on a paddle with her dress tucked in her bloomers, at Mrs Henderson pretending she has 'got off' with the deck-chair attendant, or in the queue at the ladies' lavatory. Then there is the buying of presents for the family, a big meat-tea, and the journey back home with a stop for drinks on the way. If the men are there, and certainly if it is a men's outing, there will probably be several stops and a crate or two of beer in the back for drinking on the move. Somewhere in the middle of the moors the men's parties all tumble out, with much horseplay and noisy jokes about bladder capacity (Hoggart, 1992: 147 – 148).

This appears to be one of Hoggart's more forgiving and nostalgic passages and as this was first published in 1957, the film sequence proves to be doubly nostalgic in 1971. Factory owner W. C. Boggs (Kenneth Williams) gets increasingly drunk and partakes of cockles, Bernie (Bernard Bresslaw) and Popsy (Margaret Nolan) poke their heads through a cut-out of Tarzan and Jane, and Vic (Kenneth Cope) and Myrtle (Jacki Piper) have a go on several of the Palace Pier's fairground rides including a ghost train, which recalls memories of the Blackpool Pleasure Beach sequence in *Sing As We Go*. On the return journey home, the coach party stops off at numerous typically British-named pubs, including The Red Lion, The King's Head, The Cricketers and The Royal Naval Arms. When they come across a pub with a 'no private coaches' sign, a crate of beer is retrieved from the boot for drinking on-board. Finally, the coach pulls up in a wood in order for the men (and women) to urinate amongst the trees, as in Hoggart's reminiscence, and with the same ribald tone.

In spite of the warm and raucous nostalgia of this sequence, *Convenience* ultimately suffers from a confused response to the era in which it was made, and

witless, bleak, boring, dirty, tat – IT HAS NOTHING. I loathe every disgusting minute of it, (Davies (ed.), 1993: 171 – Williams' italics and block capitals).

didn't make a success of lampooning the militant union politics of the Heath era. As Webber points out, 'the film's big mistake was that it poked fun at the unions primarily, and in doing so made the very audience the films appealed to, largely working-class, the butt of the joke – and the low box office receipts showed that the public weren't pleased' (Webber, 2008: 122). In *CinemaTV Today* Marjorie Bilbow claimed that she found the film 'uncharacteristically bad-tempered, as spiteful in much of its humour as a stand-up comic's nagging mother-in-law' (Bilbow, 1972: 29), whereas in the *Monthly Film Bulletin*, McGillivray stated that 'the level of humour, though noticeably cleaner than of late, [was] still rock bottom' (McGillivray, 1972: 28).

Several writers have referred to saucy seaside postcard humour in the same breath as the *Carry Ons*, including Webber who argues that 'they're as much a part of the British culture as fish and chips, Donald McGill's seaside postcards and Kiss Me Quick Hats' (Webber, 2008: 5). Actress Barbara Windsor also recalls an occasion when she herself realised the kinship between seaside postcards and the films:

People often ask me why I think the *Carry On* films have remained so popular. I put it down to the naughty-but-nice seaside postcard humour, loaded with double entendres. I played a season in Blackpool a few years ago and was walking along the pier with some friends when I suddenly started to laugh. They asked what was so funny and I said: 'Take a look around. What does it remind you of? *Carry On!*' They were all there on the posters and postcards. There was the fat lady – Hattie – with her skirts up showing her drawers. There was the lech, which was Sid. There was the little camp man, which was like Charlie and there was the bosomy blonde which was me. That's *Carry On*. A British institution and one which I'm proud to be part of (Rigelsford, 1996: 6).

Although Orwell's essay on the postcards of McGill¹⁵⁷ is a useful reference point for the *Carry Ons* (just as it was for the silent comedies I identified in Chapter 3), I would argue that the visual style of these films, and their use of innuendo owe

¹⁵⁷ Hunt claims that Orwell's essay is the 'most frequently cited text in defences of the tradition of mass-produced low comedy' (Hunt, 1998: 34).

more to the Bamforth cards of the 1960s and 1970s. These postcards, published, as they were, in a time when there was a more open acceptance of sexual imagery, included illustrations of breast and buttock nudity which wouldn't have been acceptable during McGill's earlier career. Many of the Bamforth postcards invariably include drawings of extremely buxom blonde women with the short skirts and exaggerated false eyelashes which were fashionable at the time. However, these postcards still used certain stereotyped characters, such as the hen-peck and the nagging wife that McGill had utilised so successfully.

One card, for example, shows a small, red-faced husband sitting in bed, beside his wife – identified as an unattractive harridan with curlers in her hair. The husband says: 'Do you think the doctor could give me some pills to improve my sex urge?' to which his wife replies, 'No Lad – he can only heal the sick – not raise the dead!'¹⁵⁸ Many of the 'nudist camp' cards use (unseen) male genitalia as the butt of their jokes. One example includes an image of a disconcerted gentleman warning a myopic woman to be more careful when pricking sausages in readiness for a barbeque.¹⁵⁹

This 'low' humour with its vulgar references to the body is very typical of the later *Carry Ons*, especially those which use the holiday as a situation for its comedy. Before I look at these films in more detail, however, I would like to go back about ten years and look at the brief phenomenon of British 'naturist' films. It is important to look at these in the context of the gradual introduction of nudity into mainstream cinema, and how they precede the later soft-core sex comedies of Robin Askwith, and the *Carry Ons*, for instance.

¹⁵⁸ 2/BAM – 42 in a series of 60. (A series of these Bamforth cards were reissued in a collection of 60 cards in 2008. The original dates are unpublished on the cards, but the illustrations all suggest the late 1960s and 1970s).

¹⁵⁹ 2/BAM – 41 in a series of 60

Naked As Nature Intended

The earlier trend for naturist holidays in the interwar years could be considered as an ideological response to the increasing urbanisation of society in the twentieth century. Angeloglou, for instance, groups naturists with 'vegetarians and the few people who wanted entirely to grow their own food or to weave their own fabrics' and suggests that the movement was a 'fad' for the middle-classes (Angeloglou, 1975: 71). In support of her claim, it could be argued that people who had to struggle to buy clothes would rather keep them on, but being reasonably 'well off' was also something of a necessity for the naturist, because followers had to meet each other in their 'well-screened gardens' or specially built 'nature camps' away from the public eye (Angeloglou, 1975: 71). By the time that naturism made its way into British films of the 1950s and '60s, however, McGillivray suggests that the subject merely offered filmmakers a relatively cheap way to construct a very slim narrative around the spectacle of naked breasts and buttocks – something the British public 'quite simply had never seen... on the screen before' (McGillivray, 1992: 20).

The first film to be screened in British cinemas which featured naked breasts, was the American naturist film *The Garden of Eden* (1954). Sponsored by the American Sunbathing Association, the British Board of Film Classification (BBFC) initially banned the film, but the film's distributor took its case to the London County Council, who passed the film for exhibition (McGillivray, 1992: 20). Nat Miller, who brought *The Garden of Eden* to Britain, subsequently made the first British naturist film, *Nudist Paradise*, in 1958. Actor Carl Conway has fond memories of making the film, comparing the experience to being 'just like a holiday' (McGillivray, 1992: 23).

Naked As Nature Intended (1961), however, remains the most notorious British naturist film. Filmed by George Harrison Marks, and starring his business partner and chief model, Pamela Green, this film is a nudie flick disguised, like most naturist films, as promotional material for the healthy pursuit of freeing the body

from the restriction of clothing. The secretary of the BBFC, John Trevelyan, initially told Marks that he would refuse to pass the film, but was 'finally bludgeoned into passing the film when Marks hoodwinked Charles Macaskie, the founder of the British naturist movement, to sanction its worthiness by taking part' (McGillivray, 1992: 45).

In many respects, the film is a lengthy tease, directed at a presumably salivating audience, who couldn't wait for the women in the film to remove their clothes. Up until this point, the film serves as a travelogue, and takes in almost as many attractions as *Hands Across The Ocean* did in 1946, including Stonehenge, Clovelly, the picturesque Minack amphitheatre (at Porthcurno), Lands End and Tintagel Castle.¹⁶⁰ Narrator, Guy Kinglsey Porter relays information about the sites in the form of a travel guide. He refers to the words of Tennyson: 'Black cliffs and caves and storm and wind' – emphasising the sublime Cornish land- and seascapes against which the women are framed.¹⁶¹ These are natural, unspoilt coastlines, which communicate the idea of the 'natural' pursuit of naturism.

Approximately 40-minutes into the film Pam (Pamela Green) meets two blonde women who are sunbathing naked on a private beach. This persuades Pam to try naturism for herself, as the narrator says:

"There's nothing shocking about enjoying the feeling of complete physical freedom that nudity brings. Their fine, brown skins and their healthy complexions, and their obvious sincerity, show Pam how mistaken she's been to think that only peculiar people become nudists."

Nevertheless, it was still important that genitals and pubic hair were not shown in order for these films to comply with the BBFC. When the characters finally remove their clothes, bags and towels are used to conceal the pubic area, or legs

¹⁶⁰ The film's working title was *Cornish Holiday* (Ezard, 1997: 15).

¹⁶¹ Tennyson made Tintagel famous due to its association with the legend of King Arthur, in his *Idylls of the King*, first published between 1856 and 1885.

are bent across the pelvis, and pubic hair is shaven. These are healthy, unthreatening bodies, with unbroken surfaces, like the marble statues of high art, rather than the corporeal bodies of Bakhtin, with 'its excrescences (sprouts, buds) and orifices...which leads beyond the body's limited space or into the body's depths' (Bakhtin, 1968: 317 – 318).

McGillivray suggests that the exhibition of these films worked under a kind of unspoken agreement between the filmmakers and censors, and as long as the films didn't overstep the boundaries of decency too far, then these 'nudies' could find limited screenings in cinemas which accepted such films:

The sight of these semi-clad people, virtually all of whom were attractive young girls, titillated an audience that was virtually all male. There cannot have been one sane adult in the country who believed these films were being made for the delectation of the sun worshipper, yet producers had to maintain this pretense at all costs for fear of being refused a certificate (McGillivray, 1992: 25 – 26).

What these films also provided was a gradual acceptance – by the public and censors – of sexual content and nudity, in more mainstream films. In 1969 *Carry On Camping* was the first of the *Carry On* films to include shots of bare breasts: in the opening sequence where the main characters visit a cinema to see a naturist film, and also in the oft-cited keep-fit scene where Barbara Windsor loses her bikini top.

Carry On Camping and Carry On Behind

As Leon Hunt points out, 'by 1969, [naturist films] were already consigned to history...the nudist camp, however, had been institutionalised as a comic locale in seaside postcards by the mid- to late-1960s', so its place as an object of mockery, and a framework for allowing nudity to be introduced into the series is understandable at that moment in time (Hunt, 1998: 38). In the 1960s, the *Carry On* series found relatively few difficulties in getting passed by the censors, as John Trevelyan wrote in 1964:

Some years ago, a well-known critic, when writing about one of the *Carry On* pictures, described it as “innocent vulgarity”, and I think this is a very apt phrase. They are based on the old and great traditions of the music hall, which has now largely disappeared as public entertainment. Perhaps this partly explains the popularity of these pictures. I cannot pretend that these pictures are always free from censorship troubles! But so far they have never given us problems that have no satisfactory solution and I think that Peter [Rogers] and Gerald [Thomas] can now anticipate our reactions with considerable accuracy, which is most helpful (cited in Bright and Ross, 1999: 72).¹⁶²

The *Carry On* films – produced by Peter Rogers and directed by Gerald Thomas – began in 1958 with *Carry On Sergeant*. This film became the ‘third top grossing film in the UK that year’, and was quickly followed by ‘*Carry On Nurse* – the biggest British film of 1959 – which was also successful in the United States and Europe’ (Bright, 1997: 27). According to Bright:

Carry On painted a portrait of the way the nation, apparently at ease with itself, looked in the later middle decades of the century. As such it is arguably an important historical work, although it is important to keep in mind that it was devised as entertainment (Bright, 1997: 27).

The films were made for relatively little money, and extremely quickly – usually being shot within six weeks. As Rogers recalls, when he and Thomas started working at Pinewood in the late 1950s, the studio was considered to be one of the more expensive British studios in which to work:

We were looked down upon as virtually amateurs...spivs coming in, and trying to knock something off without paying for it (Evans, 1993).

It was on the Pinewood sound stages where *Carry On Cruising* was filmed; after members of the cast momentarily hoped that they would be filming in the Mediterranean (Bright and Ross, 2000: 221). This was to be the last screenplay that Norman Hudis submitted. Talbot Rothwell, who had ‘made a name for

¹⁶² No reference is given for Trevelyan’s original quote.

himself penning material for *The Crazy Gang*, took up the mantle for the next twenty films' (Webber, 2008: 73). Webber summarises the difference in style between Hudis and Rothwell as follows:

While Hudis was adept at writing tear-jerking moments as well as comedy sequences, Talbot Rothwell's fortes were innuendo, double entendre and good old slapstick (Webber, 2008: 77).

The innuendo quotient in Rothwell's scripts was relatively small to begin with (as controlled by the censors), but the arrival of *Carry On Camping* in 1969, provided a watershed moment for the series, and one that Medhurst says signifies the beginning of the series' gradual decline into smut (Barr (ed.)1986: 183; and Medhurst, 2007: 131).

The film appeared at a crucial moment in time for changes in censorship by the BBFC. Bright and Ross explain that when the film was initially released, the A-certificate (which the film was granted) only permitted under-sixteens to see the film if accompanied by an adult. In 1970, however, 'the A-certificate was changed to allow unescorted entry for all, but with a warning to parents that some scenes might be unsuitable for a child'¹⁶³ (Bright and Ross, 1999: 84). This meant that post-1970, the breasts and buttocks in *Carry On Camping* were deemed suitable for an almost general audience, as long as some sort of parental supervision was in order. The AA-certificate was introduced at the same time to only allow people of age fourteen and upwards to see a film.

Carry On England was the first of the series to be awarded an AA-certificate on its release in late 1976. The film closed after three days in some cinemas, so producer Peter Rogers and director Gerald Thomas quickly withdrew the picture, and edited its over-excessive breast nudity for a 1977 re-release under an A-

¹⁶³ Equivalent to the PG or Parental Guidance rating which was issued in later years.

certificate.¹⁶⁴ The amendments, however, had little effect in finding an audience, and by the mid to late 1970s, the series was running out of steam. Bright and Ross cite the poor business that *Carry On England* met, for several reasons, the main ones being that with the more risqué content found in *Confessions...* films, the lewd, yet tame sex jokes of the *Carry Ons* couldn't compete, and that, in the 'age of the film blockbuster...small cinemas just couldn't attract big audiences', continuing:

Jaws was packing them in and, in the next couple of years, *Star Wars* and *Superman* overshadowed anything from Kenneth Williams and the *Carry On* gang (Bright and Ross, 2000: 187).

The last film of the series that David Trevelyan oversaw the classification of was *Carry On Behind* in 1975. The film is a noteworthy entry in the series in that it attempts to repeat the successful formula of *Carry On Camping*, but this time constructs its rather loose narrative around a group of people on a caravan site, rather than on a camping holiday. Where *Camping* offered relatively mild innuendo, however, in *Behind* the smut factor has been increased somewhat – the title itself being a rather lame pun on the buttocks, as emphasised in the animated title sequence where a series of tableaux involving wiggling bottoms is presented to the audience.¹⁶⁵ Much of the innuendo arises, for example, from mixed sexes having to share caravans, and from the now familiar *Carry On* motif of middle-aged men ogling and pursuing younger women.

In place of the naturist film which serves as a kind of introduction to *Camping*, *Behind* begins with another film-within-a-film. This time a striptease whets the cinema audience's appetite for the crude jokes which are to follow. The scene consists of an archaeological lecture called 'Getting to the Bottom of Things' –

¹⁶⁴ See: Bright, Morris, and Ross, Robert, *Carry On Uncensored, The Exclusive Behind-The-Scenes Story*, 1999, London: Boxtree, and Bright, Morris, and Ross, Robert, *Mr Carry On, The Life and Work of Peter Rogers*, 2000, London: BBC Worldwide Ltd.

¹⁶⁵ This title sequence includes a credit for CI Caravans Limited, who supplied the film with its caravans.

given by Professor Roland Crump (Kenneth Williams) – which is disrupted when silent footage of a stripper is accidentally shown to illustrate Crump’s narration about an archaeological dig by an Amelia Fosdyke. What follows is a vocal description of archaeological unearthing, juxtaposed with imagery of the cinematic usurper who gradually unpeels her apparel. For example, when Professor Crump asks his audience to “Notice the typical upland scenery”, a close-up of the woman’s breasts in spangley bra-top is shown. He continues by saying, “Neolithic man always preferred those areas, as the lower regions were often forrestry, and inclined to be swampy...” cue a shot of the woman’s buttocks in a tasselled skirt. Bakhtin’s description of the ‘grotesque body’ with its ‘mountains’ and ‘abysses’ is entirely fitting in this context:

The grotesque body is cosmic and universal. It stresses elements common to the entire cosmos: earth, water, fire, air... This body can merge with various natural phenomena, with mountains, rivers seas, islands, continents. It can fill the entire universe (Bakhtin, 1968: 318).

In contrast to *Camping*, however, where the naturists remain safely within the confines of a film-within-film, and don’t threaten to invade the familiar team of *Carry On* regulars, in *Behind*, the woman in the striptease reappears at the caravan site’s cabaret towards the end of the film, and sits on the laps of Crump/Williams and Arthur Upmore (Bernard Bresslaw). The analogy with the corporeal body and the holiday itself is also carried through to the caravan site which the archaeologists have discovered has been positioned on the site of a Roman brothel, complete with erotic mosaic. The mosaic is discovered in the campsite’s new cesspit, and the film climaxes with the caravans collapsing into these boggy archaeological excavations during a fierce British downpour. In an interview during the making of the film, actor Jack Douglas explained why British audiences enjoyed this type of humour:

These films have got a format... They’re not clever films or message films. They’re basic films, and I think we, as a nation are basic laughers. We like simple comedy where you don’t have to think about it (Munn, 1975: 11).

Healy echoes this sentiment, but points out that the films' 'celebration of the (low) body rather than the (high) mind as a source of humour' makes the films appeal specifically to a working-class audience, and distances them from the 'middle-class establishment' who see the films as 'trash for the masses' (Healy, 1995: 245).¹⁶⁶ Bright and Ross reveal how the censor finally relented and allowed Rogers and Thomas to exploit this 'low' and 'basic' humour in *Carry On Behind*:

After overseeing cuts, edits and appeals for most of the *Carry Ons*' history, John Trevelyan stood down from the BBFC in 1975, leaving Peter Rogers with a final gift. The board had wanted cuts made to *Carry On Behind*...if it was to retain an A-certificate [including the shots of bare breasts in the opening 'stripper film' scene]... After over a decade of *Carry On* snipping, Trevelyan agreed to let the film through intact and the film was passed as an 'A' without cuts (Bright and Ross, 1999: 87).

There is much conjectural discussion amongst fans as to which is the last of the great *Carry Ons*, with *Carry On Behind* sometimes being mentioned as the last good example. This question is entirely subjective, however, and it is clear that *Carry On Behind* rather lamely recycles gags from its predecessor, *Carry On Camping*. The scene where Vooshka enters the male washroom to find Crump having a shower, is a typical example, in that it mirrors a scene in *Camping* where Barbara Windsor's character covers the 'women's' washroom sign in order that Kenneth Williams enters by mistake. There is probably little point in criticising the repetitive nature of the films, however, because it is a familiarity with the content which helps to perpetuate the public's continuing affection for the series. Members of the *Carry On* team are not merely regarded as postcard caricatures, but also as a type of extended family, just as music hall stars like Fields and Formby were considered in the 1930s and '40s. Affection for the *Carry On* actors is also perpetuated by the behind-the-scenes stories regaled by Williams, Sims and Windsor on television chat shows, for example, and from books and journal articles about the series – especially stories regarding the less than salubrious conditions under which the team had to work.

¹⁶⁶ Mark E. Smith also considers the *Carry Ons* as appealing to 'dirty old men' and refers to the films in general as '[h]oliday-camp shit' (Smith, 2008: 23).

Much has been said and written, for example, about how the holiday-themed *Carry Ons* such as *Camping*, *Girls* and *Behind* were filmed during cold spells in spring and autumn.¹⁶⁷ Dilys Laye, remembers Gerald Thomas instructing the cast to ‘think sun!’ as they ‘shivered in [their] summer clothes’ during the making of *Carry On Camping*, whilst Elke Sommer explained during the making of *Behind* that ‘if it rains or snows they don’t care...They shoot it’ (Webber, 2008: 111 and Munn, 1975: 10 – 11). It is because of stories from behind-the-scenes like this (and the one about Barbara Windsor standing in sprayed-green-mud for the infamous bikini-bursting scene) that British fans of the *Carry Ons* seem to delight in the stoicism of the actors – braving the miserable climate in order to provide the audience with a few cheap laughs. These stories endear the cast to the British public, and arguably help audiences to recall their own miserable experiences of camping and caravanning during inclement weather. As Medhurst summarises:

They are films which for all their funniness also capture the poignancy of a culture cut off from deep feelings...a culture of hang-ups and let-downs, of trudges and traps, a culture where an endless cycle of carrying on stands in for actually getting on or going anywhere. Is this another reason why we keep watching them and can’t seem to let them go – because rather than just being crappy little English films, they are really films about the littleness and crappiness of Englishness? (Medhurst, 2007: 143).

Although this opinion of the *Carry Ons* is arguably viewed from a somewhat privileged standpoint – emphasising the ‘crappiness’ and isolation of a bygone culture – it also summarises a sense of grim nostalgia and stoicism that might be required for the bracing British holiday, as well as for the enjoyment of these films. I will now look at an example of another series of films from the 1970s, which arguably made a greater success of combining soft-core sex with humour, where the *Carry Ons* failed.

¹⁶⁷ Filming was scheduled to avoid the theatrical summer season and pantomime, when the actors were engaged in stage work (Rigelsford, 1996: 31).

The *Confessions* Films

As I suggested earlier, after most of the Hollywood majors retreated from Britain at the beginning of the decade, sexual content in films came to be seen as a financially important aspect of British films as the 1970s progressed. Sex and nudity was an essential way of attracting audiences, and sex films proved to be hugely successful. As McGillivray suggests, 'when most British films found it difficult to recoup their production costs from world sales, sex films made their money back from the home market alone' (McGillivray, 1992: 19). Some of the more sexually-explicit films of the decade such as *Come Play With Me* (1977)¹⁶⁸ and *The Playbirds* (1978), for instance, were backed by David Sullivan, a young entrepreneur who had 'made [his] first million' during his mid twenties, and wanted to break into film production (Sheridan, 1999: 77). The success of these films was largely due to their featuring the model Mary Millington – a woman familiar to readers of Sullivan's pornographic magazine *Whitehouse*. In spite of this connection with the sex industry, these films, like the *Confessions* series, featured household names such as Alfie Bass and Irene Handl, perhaps demonstrating that British actors couldn't afford to have any scruples about where their payslip was coming from, during a time of potentially low employment.

The *Confessions* films were perhaps the most successful, and arguably influential, series of sex films, or rather sex comedies, of the decade. The films starred Robin Askwith as Timmy Lea, who was joined by familiar faces from film and television such as Liz Fraser, Tony Booth and Irene Handl (again). As Leon Hunt highlights, these films:

[f]illed a very specific and astutely gauged gap in the market as a combination of adult entertainment and good, clean fun. In this respect, their relationship with television was crucial. Like most 'X' films since the 1950s, they foregrounded elements that audiences couldn't yet see on

¹⁶⁸ This film includes a brief, incidental, seaside scene with Norman Vaughan performing on a pier.

television, but combined them with stars and generic pleasures which had largely been absorbed by television (Hunt, 1998: 115 – 117).

In his autobiography, Robin Askwith recalls how he became one of the most important actors in the British film industry of the 1970s. The *Confessions* series was financed by Columbia, who wanted to offer Askwith a six-film contract starting at £1,750 for the first film, rising to £6,000 for the sixth. Because of the unpredictability of the business in the early 1970s, actors were usually employed on a film by film basis, and as Askwith's agent pointed out to him, if he took the offer, he would be the only British actor alongside Sean Connery in the Bond films to have a long-term contract (Askwith, 1999: 17).

The *Confessions* films were a runaway success with the British public, although the critics hated them – *Films and Filming*, for instance, voted Askwith's bottom as 'the most horrible thing in British cinema' (Askwith, 1999: 112). Yet Askwith claims that *Confessions of a Window Cleaner* (1974) 'took its place in the Guinness Book of Records as the only British film to remain number one in the cinema top ten for a phenomenal ten weeks' (Askwith, 1999: 59).

The series never made it to six instalments, possibly because the films spawned so many imitations¹⁶⁹ that the market became saturated, and so, *Confessions From A Holiday Camp* (1977) was to be the last. The *Confessions* films were shot at EMI Elstree studios, but for the re-creation of 'Funfrall Holiday Camp', the cast and crew filmed on location for the first two weeks of the film's schedule. As Askwith recalls:

Filming...commenced on Monday 21st March at an unused holiday camp on Hayling Island,¹⁷⁰ which if they ever make a film about the Falklands crisis,

¹⁶⁹ Examples include *Adventures of a Taxi Driver* (1975), and *The Ups and Downs of a Handy Man* (1975).

¹⁷⁰ 'A long established camp previously known as the Sunshine Holiday Centre it was purchased by Warners in the mid 1980s [and had] accommodation for 800 people...Sold to Renowned Holidays in the mid 1990s and still open today', www.butlinsmemories.com/warners/camplist.htm, accessed 17/10/2008.

would be a perfect location...I spent the next two weeks on Hayling Island in and out of the sea, ponds and swimming pools. It, of course, was the coldest March on record (Askwith, 1999: 111).

And it looks it. It probably speaks volumes about the British attitude to sex, that this 1970s folk hero¹⁷¹ has to constantly keep a brave face in the bleakest of conditions, just like the *Carry On* actors before him, in order to be rewarded with his tally of unerotic sexual encounters in store rooms and the like. Matthew Sweet identifies the pessimism at the heart of British sex comedies which threatens to disrupt the viewing pleasures of the male audience, when he says:

What now seems most striking about British faux erotica from the 1970s is the way in which misery and angst threaten constantly to displace the erotic. *The Adventures of a Plumber's Mate* [1978] opens with a tracking shot of the hero's dismal bedsit. On the floor there's a half-eaten plate of last night's chicken and chips. A filthy-looking mouse crawls over the plate... (Sweet, 2006: 4).

In spite of the fact that Askwith says *Confessions From a Holiday Camp* was the 'most social' of the films to make – with the camp's owners organising discos in the bar every night – Askwith's stunts finally caught up with him, and he became very ill after filming water skiing scenes at Ruislip Lido 'where the visibility was challenged by *snow*'¹⁷² (Askwith, 1999: 112 – 114).

The film is rather different to the book on which it is based, possibly because the film budget wasn't big enough to include the section where Timmy Lea is sent to work at the Mediterranean camp for 'swingers': 'Love Island'. The book also features an interesting conclusion, considering it was first published in the crisis period of the early 1970s.¹⁷³ In the final chapter, the owner of the camp, Sir Giles, decides that the British public are not ready for the exotic Love Island, exclaiming

¹⁷¹ A folk hero is arguably what Askwith, as Timmy Lea, became for some working class men in this decade – film star would be stretching compliments too far.

¹⁷² My emphasis.

¹⁷³ Lea, Timothy, *Confessions From A Holiday Camp*, 1973 (first published 1972), London: Sphere Books. (Nineteen 'Timothy Lea' adventures were published between 1971 – 1979, including *Confessions From A Hotel*, which never made it to the screen. Timothy Lea was actually a pseudonym for Christopher Wood (Hunt, 1998: 120 – 122)).

that they would prefer to go back to a period of austerity, when pleasures (including sex) weren't so freely and openly available:

“I do not think that the British will ever take to sex with the same enthusiasm that they will respond to deprivation and hardship. It may be alright for the continentals but the island race requires sterner challenges before they can be genuinely amused” (Lea, 1973: 153).

Sir Giles suggests they create 'Funfrall Austerity' by opening a camp in an underground tube station, with 'piped Vera Lynn records and air-raid sirens, ration cards and queueing for everything,' continuing:

“It's what the British public have been waiting for. They're sick to death of all this affluence. It's like sex. It makes them feel shifty” (Lea, 1973: 154).

Although the film version doesn't end on this note, Sir Giles' idea of deliberately introducing grimness to the British holiday experience is more than doubly expressed by the cold, wet locations, shot at Hayling Island and Ruislip.

The films I have looked at so far in my investigation into the struggle between expressions of nostalgia and permissiveness, are arguably, relatively straightforward to read in their use of saucy seaside postcard humour as the basis of the 'low' culture which Medhurst (1992 and 2007) and Hunt (1998) make reference to. I will now analyse the 1973 Reg Varney film, *The Best Pair Of Legs In The Business*, which, for the sake of my argument, appears to express the 'crisis' of the early 1970s, with many more facets than the previously mentioned films. This crisis is one of identity – for the character of Sherry Sheridan (Varney), for the traditional British holiday, and for the film itself, which is an adaptation of a 'realist' TV play, but appears to have been marketed as a light-hearted comedy.

The Best Pair Of Legs In The Business Versus On The Buses

The Best Pair of Legs in the Business was originally a 1968 one-hour television play, written by Kevin Laffan, the originator of the soap opera *Emmerdale Farm*.¹⁷⁴ Christopher Hodson directed the TV and cinema versions, and both star Reg Varney in the role of Sherry Sheridan, a washed-up variety performer, with similarities to Archie Rice in *The Entertainer*.¹⁷⁵ Diana Coupland (familiar to TV audiences from *Bless This House* (1971 – 1976)) plays Sherry's long-suffering wife, Mary, who happens to be having an affair with the caravan park's manager, Charlie (Lee Montague). The film's press book summarises the film as follows:

'Sherry' Sheridan (Reg Varney) is a relic of the high days of Music Hall – an all-rounder, but with a limited talent in the art of compering, dancing the soft-shoe shuffle and putting over a creaking 'drag' act. In spite of delusions of grandeur, which includes an imaginary 'Command Performance', he's keeping the wolf from the door as a seasonal entertainer at a Caravan Holiday Camp Site – a soul-destroying occupation, especially at the end of the season, when the few remaining residents are more concerned with the bar than encouraging what might generously be called the light relief (*The Best Pair... press book, 1972*).

As this blurb would appear to indicate, the film has a rather depressing narrative, which perhaps stems from its origins as a television play in the 'realist' style – this was, after all, the era when the Wednesday Play introduced television audiences to hard-hitting dramas such as *Up The Junction* (1965) and *Cathy Come Home* (1966). *The Best Pair...* seems to expose nostalgic memories of the traditional seaside holiday, and the 'good old days' of variety as an unsatisfactory myth constructed by a community which (in the early 1970s) is falling apart.

As I argued previously, British cinema of the 1970s looked to the TV spin-off (especially the sitcom) in order that television audiences would visit the cinema to

¹⁷⁴ The television version was originally broadcast as an episode of *ITV Playhouse* on 28th December 1968.

¹⁷⁵ Clyde Jeavons of the *Monthly Film Bulletin* refers to Sherry Sheridan as 'the Archie Rice of the Butlin belt' (Jeavons, 1973: 48).

see familiar characters in scenarios which ‘opened out’ from their regular domestic settings. Bright and Ross claim that the Monty Python team ‘kick-started’ the trend with their film *Now For Something Completely Different* in 1971, and that TV spin-offs subsequently ‘[radiated] throughout the decade’ (Bright and Ross, 2000: 176). Although *The Best Pair...* is not a sitcom, its genesis in television is typical of the time, and its production came when Varney was one of Britain’s favourite entertainers, having made a name for himself in the BBC sitcom *The Rag Trade* and the London Weekend Television series, *On The Buses*.¹⁷⁶

On The Buses out-did most other TV sitcoms by inspiring three film spin-offs: *On The Buses* (1971), *Mutiny On The Buses* (1972) and *Holiday On The Buses* in the following year. The first instalment was Britain’s biggest box office success in the year of its release, out-grossing James Bond’s *Diamonds Are Forever* (1971) – Ronald Chesney recalls that the film was made for the relatively modest budget of £99,000 and took ‘millions’ (Attwood, 2008). It would appear that 1973 was Varney’s year. Riding high on the success of *On The Buses*, he had appeared in the film *Go For A Take* (in late 1972), and quickly followed this with *The Best Pair...* and *Holiday On The Buses*. He also released an LP in 1972 – *This Is Reg Varney* – which features him singing and playing the piano at Abbey Road Studios.¹⁷⁷

Both the television series and films of *On The Buses* are arguably more ‘basic’ and suggestive of Bakhtin than any of the *Carry Ons*, and it was probably this type of ‘low’ humour that a public unfamiliar with the television play of *The Best Pair...* may have expected from the film. Hunt, for example, highlights the corporeal obsession that *On The Buses* has with food – ‘no episode is complete without a meal-time discussion, words and half-chewed food flying every which

¹⁷⁶ *The Rag Trade* (1961 – 1963), *On The Buses* (1969 – 1973), both created by the writers Ronald Wolfe and Ronald Chesney.

¹⁷⁷ A 7” single from the LP was released to promote *The Best Pair Of Legs In The Business*. The tracks included an instrumental of the title music (with Varney on the piano), and a rendition of ‘Come On And Tickle My Fancy’ – a song he sings in the film.

way' – and points out that in the 1971 film of *On The Buses*, the 'meal' of sex is compared to eating by the cross-cutting between Jack 'nuzzling a [woman's] shoulder to Stan greedily biting into a juicy orange' (Hunt, 1998: 44). What Hunt doesn't identify here, however, is that eating is not only compared to sex, but is often referred to as fuel which feeds the body in readiness for sexual stamina – this is especially so when the food is served by a woman. So when Stan Butler (Varney) receives a second serving of fried food for his breakfast in *Holiday On The Buses*, and says (with a wink) to the nubile Italian cook, "Buildin' me up for the next time, eh?" it appears to be a very thinly veiled reference to culinary foreplay, in preparation for a forthcoming tryst between the pair.

The Best Pair... was released in the midst of Varney's comedy success, and the promotional material for the film foregrounds his appeal as a light entertainer. The cinema posters, for example, communicate a rather confusing message regarding the content of the film. Varney appears three times in the poster: in close-up (with a beaming smile), in full body (again smiling, but this time in full music hall garb of stripy blazer, flannels and straw boater), and thirdly in full female drag, pursing his lips. Coupland is also seen smiling, and the poster is finished off by a row of men with their trouser legs rolled up, ready for a knobbly knees contest. Incorporated into the quad-shaped posters is the tag line 'at his lovable entertaining best'. This looks for the entire world like a musical comedy, rather than the stifling backstage domestic drama that the film really is.

Reg Varney and Music Hall

As I suggested in Chapter 2 and later flagged up when discussing the careers of Fields and Formby, many of the performers in British holiday films appear to have experience of performing in seaside shows – experience which they arguably bring to their characterisations. Varney similarly started his career as a music hall musician and comedian. In his autobiography, Varney recalls busking on Southend beach in blackface in a story which has strong similarities to the busking scene in *No Limit*. He insisted on wearing this disguise in case he was

recognised by anyone from the East End of London, who might report back to his father who found busking 'degrading' – in much the same way that George Shuttleworth's landlady will not allow 'sand singers' in her house (Varney, 1990: 137 – 142).

Varney remembers the details of his first experiences of backstage life: the grim dressing rooms, the business of lighting each song to fit its mood, notices forbidding 'blue material', and the butterflies in the stomach before going on stage – all of which is nuanced in his characterisation of Sherry Sheridan (Varney, 1990: 92 – 98). He also brings his stage experience as a drag performer to the role, but doesn't exaggerate the campness of his character off-stage for comic effect – Sherry is therefore more believable than comedy stereotypes identified by Jeffries (2007: 12), for example.¹⁷⁸ In a 1973 interview, Varney talks about his understanding of Sherry's background in show business and how this affected his portrayal of the character – making his performances rough around the edges, rather than completely hopeless:

It would have been easy to get things badly wrong but that would have been a travesty. After all, Sherry had been given the job in the first place, so he's not completely lacking in talent. What I had to show was that while Sherry knows what is required of him, his talent doesn't match up to his ambitions (Firth, 1973: 9).¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁸ The dust jacket of Varney's 1990 autobiography states that in pantomime he 'invariably' played the dame. Kenneth Williams makes the following entry in his diary of Saturday, 31st January 1948: 'Toni and Vicky came to tea, and we went on to the Boltons Revue to see Reg Varney do his stuff. It was a very good show – quite gay in parts, with some lovely, oh luvly camping and drag! ...Went backstage after in order to congrat. Reg, who hasn't changed a bit since I saw him in Singapore with *Jamboree* [Stars In Battledress show]' (Davies (ed.), 1993: 21).

¹⁷⁹ Varney elaborates further on how he rehearsed his routines to fit the role:

Every evening when I got home from the studio I would go through the next day's shooting, carefully noting where I could mistime a gesture or fluff a line – something just to take the clean edge off Sherry's performance without doing something which, in real life, would have invited a slow hand-clap from the holiday camp audience. It was especially difficult to get the dance routines out-of-step. I'd spent years in variety doing this kind of thing and it required a real effort to mistime

The type of performer that Varney refers to here does suggest those seen in end-of-the-pier shows (often doing 'tribute' acts), which, although reasonably talented, have never quite made the big time. The term 'end-of-the-pier' and the idea of the seaside performer have come to signify second-rate entertainment: *Carry On Girls* screenwriter Talbot Rothwell recalls seeing a 'dreadful end-of-pier glamour show' compered by a man called 'Freddie Frolicker' (Rigelsford, 1996: 103) and the phenomenon has similarly been highlighted in the Manic Street Preachers' song 'Elvis Impersonator: Blackpool Pier', with the sample lyric:

Limited face paint and dyed black quiff
Overweight and out of date¹⁸⁰

The Caravan Park

Although several of the films discussed earlier in this chapter appear to offer a somewhat grim idea of nostalgia with regards to the traditional British holiday, *The Best Pair* arguably evokes the mood of the time more emphatically than other examples of the time, exposing the holiday on a cheap caravan park for the dismal experience it sometimes could be. The caravan holiday in Britain had originally been a middle-class pursuit in the 1920s and 1930s, as part of the fashion to 'get back to nature', just as the original pioneer holiday camps (such as the one at Caister, Norfolk) had been. Camping in a Romany style van had been a rare novelty for Bohemian types who wanted to get away from it all; the whole point of the holiday, as Angeloglou explains, was to 'rough it', by digging your own toilet, cooking over an oil stove, and by looking after the horse, which most city folk were not used to (Angeloglou, 1975: 49 – 50). This type of caravanning evokes a sense of play which is permitted as part of holiday fun,

it. I'd let the playback music start first, give it a few beats and then join in on the third or fourth beat, which made me appear out-of-step the whole time (Firth, 1973: 9).

¹⁸⁰ Lyrics by Richard James Edwards, published 1996.

whereas in reality Gypsies have been traditionally regarded as marginal figures. Hepple, for instance, points out that:

Local authorities today use the Highways Act 1959, and the Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act 1960, and various private Acts to discourage Gypsies in their area...[but] the Race Relations Board has been prepared to consider complaints in regard to discrimination in places of public resort against Gypsies (Hepple, 1968: 25).

Harper highlights the role that gypsies – or characters that have gypsy blood in them – have played in Gainsborough melodramas such as *Madonna of the Seven Moons* (1944), *Caravan* (1946) and *Jassy* (1947). She argues that they ‘symbolise an exotic, sexual energy which is conveniently outside any class domain’ but that this marginality can also be seen as a ‘social threat’ (Harper, 1994: 124 and 126). However, gypsies have also been romanticised in fairy tales and folklore, and their status as fortune-tellers, for example, has made them popular figures in fairs and at the seaside.

The seaside Romany has been acknowledged in film, but often as a figure of amusement – for example, where one of the main characters temporarily appears in disguise in what could be considered as another form of seaside ‘minstrelsy’. Much of the comic business in *Sing As We Go*, for instance, is given to Grace’s (Gracie Fields’) imitation of Madame Osiris,¹⁸¹ and in the seaside sequence in *Carry On At Your Convenience*, Sid Plummer (Sid James) appropriates Romany drag to mock Mr Bogg’s (Kenneth Williams’) celibacy by predicting a future of marriage and sexual fulfilment.¹⁸²

¹⁸¹ Signalled here as ‘exotic’ with apparently middle-eastern dress including a face veil.

¹⁸² The 1970s sitcom *Romany Jones* (pilot 1972, series 1973 – 1975, written by Wolfe and Chesney and starring Arthur Mullard and Queenie Watts) also brings attention to the social exclusion of the gypsy. In the series Gypsies are depicted as ‘argumentative, drinking, gambling, workshy, dole-drawing, loud-mouthed simpletons’ (Lewisohn, 1998: 572).

The static caravan parks of the postwar era show little evidence of their origins in the romanticised travelling holiday. Walton points out that caravan parks made significant changes to patterns in holidaymaking in the latter half of the twentieth century. Caravan holidays drew people away from the more traditional seaside towns to the 'hitherto remote and select resorts of Devon, Cornwall and even the Continent' for those who could afford it (Walton, 1978: 193). He also points out that:

Static holiday caravans were a great growth sector on many British coastlines in the post-war generation. They provided cheap accommodation and very limited scope for the development of year-round settlements or urban amenities, catering as they did for footloose, car-based holidaymakers who did not need the relatively labour-intensive services provided by the older boarding-houses which huddled around the declining railway stations (Walton, 2000: 43).

In the 1950s and 1960s, 'the coastline of Lindsey (Lincolnshire) saw caravan numbers increasing at 1,000 per year...from the 3,000 already present in 1950', and at the end of the 1960s there were as many as 4.5 million people taking caravan holidays (Walton, 2000: 43). The rows of static caravans were seen by some traditionalists to be an eyesore. In his 1974 poem, 'Delectable Duchy', Betjeman expresses a wish for them to be swept 'out to sea' by a 'tidal wave' (Betjeman, 1974: 21). *The Best Pair*... also arguably critiques the type of holiday taken at the fictional Greenside Caravan Park in the way it represents the holidaymakers, the camp's staff, and the insufficient amenities on offer.

Most of the action in the film is centred on Greenside's clubhouse, and a lot of it takes place at night – the darkness adding to the gloomy atmosphere. It's as if the lights have literally been turned off, pre-empting the blackouts of the early 1970s. As the campsite's only resident entertainer, Sherry attempts to construct some sense of community in the half-empty clubhouse by starting sing-a-longs – including 'Oh I Do Like To Be Beside The Seaside' – but the merriment appears to be forced. The atmosphere is like the aftermath of a party where the guests

have stayed too long – a hangover, perhaps from the affluence and optimism of the late 1950s and 1960s. It's as if the decade before hasn't lived up to its expectations, and the decade that has followed has seen both an economic and spiritual slump.

One particular sub-plot in the film, for example, follows two young male holidaymakers, Ron (David Lincoln) and Welshman, Dai (George Sweeny), who are stereotypically depicted in early 1970s fashion as sex-hungry louts, visiting the camp for 'birds'. As soon as they enter the clubhouse and spot a buxom woman on the dance floor, Ron comments that he likes 'them upholstered' and the camera zooms in on her breasts. Dai insists they buy condoms as a precaution against paternity suits, but Ron scoffs that all women are on the pill 'nowadays'. For the length of their stay they pursue Glad (Clare Sutcliffe) and Eunice (Penny Spencer) – two young women who shortly decide that they are not interested in being 'picked up'. Glad is particularly forthright and dismissive of the young men, comparing them to 'cold semolina' and accusing Ron of 'begging for it'.

Other holidaymakers include two middle-aged men (and their silent wives) who converse in Pinteresque fashion about the quality of the clubhouse's beer, and a corporeal 'eating lady' (as she is referred to in the credits) played by Claire Davenport.¹⁸³ The latter gorges on sandwiches, ice-cream, chips, and – not surprisingly – an indigestion tablet at various points throughout the film.

Sherry Sheridan

Unlike the lascivious Stan Butler in *On The Buses* – a character who often has a heightened and somewhat deluded sense of his own masculinity – Sherry Sheridan is a character whose life has reached a crisis point. Sherry appears to

¹⁸³ Davenport, with her tall stature and large frame was cast as a comical and sometimes intimidating presence in many 1970s television and film productions such as *On The Buses* (in 1971 and 1973), *Fawlty Towers* (1975) and *Carry On Emmannuelle*, for example.

be lacking any fixed sense of identity, regarding gender, sexuality, class and his job. This crisis of identity appears to embody the crisis of Britain at the time the film was made. As an entertainer who has just been dropped by his agent, Sherry's future job prospects look very bleak. In one scene he announces his alternative options as being "the Labour exchange, national assistance, and very shortly the old-age pension", and as a last resort, he rather pessimistically hopes for death.

In comparison with the young holidaymakers who visit the campsite openly looking for a quick fling, Sherry belongs to another era, and only makes coded references to sex in the guise of his stage persona. He sings Flanagan and Allen songs and does a terrible drag act that allows him the freedom to fill his gags with innuendo, when in actual fact he disapproves of the permissive society. In one particular scene he decries the world as a 'filthy, dirty' place, after discovering that his wife is having an affair.

Not only has Sherry been stripped of his role as a husband, and therefore his masculinity, but he has also lost his authority as head of the household. His son, Alan, for whom he paid to have a private education and then go on to university, is now effectively middle class and Sherry feels threatened by this. Sherry believes that Alan is also ashamed of his father for 'making a living by being a lady', even though his act is 'good enough for Royalty', as Sherry points out.¹⁸⁴

Monarchism

Sherry is a monarchist. His 'idea of England', as Stuart Hall would claim, is an imperial one, with 'a commitment to what Britain has shown herself to be capable of, historically...rooted in 'feelings about the flag, the Royal Family and the Empire' (Hall *et al*, 1978: 147). The film was made at a time when the Royal Family was relatively free from scandal, and it could be argued that the strong

¹⁸⁴ We find out at the end of the film, from Alan that Sherry – in drag – is the person who possesses the 'best pair of legs' to which the title refers.

Royalist sentiments of the time were a reaction again to the crisis of the period. Princess Anne's wedding was celebrated in the year of the film's release, and the Jubilee came four years later. These celebrations were part of a trend of nostalgia, as Britain desperately looked back to the Coronation of 1953 – a time when the nation was coming out of a period of austerity and rationing and was looking forward to better times.

Sherry constructs part of his national identity around his monarchist values, and name-drops the Queen at any given opportunity, his brief meeting with her being the highpoint of his career, and a boost to what little ego he has left. He stretches the story, however, beyond credibility, telling Glad and Eunice that his Royal command performance was by special request from her Majesty, and that his job at the caravan park is merely a 'paid holiday' between more important engagements. Later, we get a glimpse of a photograph of the occasion. The Queen is greeting a group of entertainers after their performance, but Sherry is on the back row, and not in close proximity to the monarch, which puts paid to his later claim that he's shaken hands with her.

The Tea Party

The culture clash between working-class entertainer and his educated son is brought to a head in a scene where Sherry and Mary go to have tea with Alan's prospective in-laws. Their son is due to marry into an upper-middle class family who live in a Georgian vicarage. During the visit, Sherry modifies his regional accent and mimics the vicar's body language by walking with his hands behind his back. When the vicar questions him about his job in a caravan park, Sherry disguises his shame about the job by saying that he has merely spent the summer there as a 'try-out', and that he intends to take over the site when he retires. Sherry feels that working in such a place is only acceptable if you are the owner, just as working as an entertainer is only acceptable if by Royal command.

The argument that ensues during the scene is triggered by Sherry not knowing the proper way to eat cake during middle-class 'tea'.¹⁸⁵ The vicar's Georgian silver tea service, handed down from his grandmother is a symbol of inherited wealth. Mary expresses her admiration for it – she sees it as a symbol of 'family', whereas Sherry is intimidated by it and tries to go one better by saying that he has eaten off gold plates with the Queen. No one believes his ludicrous claim, and the lie is further compounded by Sherry saying that it happened first at Buckingham Palace, then Windsor Castle.

Sherry's façade slips, however, when he stops speaking in Received Pronunciation, throws down his pastry fork and eats the cake with his hands – much to the disgust of everyone else. By trying to break their pretence by disregarding the rituals of eating with cutlery, plate and napkin, he reduces eating to its most basic function and makes it grotesque. When his lie about having eaten with the Sovereign fails to convince, he desperately claims that he has 'shaken hands with her'. Even this is a lie, and one which Mary refuses to back him up on.

The bitterness of Sherry, and his crisis of identity is foregrounded in a scene which could have come as light relief, set as it is in an English country garden, away from the bleak and depressing campsite. The setting, however, throws Sherry's inadequacies into relief. He doesn't fit in with the middle-class traditions of the past (and present), and without the support of his family, and uncertain job prospects, his future is uncertain too.

¹⁸⁵ Hall *et al* cite Ann Dummett who says that the upper middle-class tea is 'a leisured and unnecessary refreshment between lunch and dinner... [and yet this] practice restricted to the English upper-middle classes has come to represent something universal for the English as a whole: a class custom has become 'hegemonic'' (Hall *et al*, 1978: 156).

The Virgin Queen

Sherry also gives off very confusing signals about his sexuality – Ron comments, for example, that the entertainer “wants his chromosomes looked at”, whilst Charlie also points out that he “camps about the place like a fairy”. Sherry attempts to persuade the caravan park’s owner, Emma (Jean Harvey), however, that he is not homosexual, and that most of the very good drag performers in show business are ‘very masculine’. In some scenes Sherry appears confident enough about his masculinity to use campness in a threatening way – and therefore as a means of empowerment – by flirting with the fiercely heterosexual Ron, and calling him a ‘dream boy’.

Sherry’s attitude could be interpreted as one which questions the liminal freedom of the holiday resort as a place for heterosexual coupling, instead directing an ‘anything goes’ approach to it, but ultimately this bold persona collapses under the weight of its illusion. This is arguably demonstrated when Sherry admits his lack of sexual prowess, when he delivers the following line to Alan, whilst pulling on a pair of black stockings:

“If you are at all dubious about the facts of life I’m available at all times to confirm your suspicions. I assure you, the practise is even more ridiculous than the theory!”

Mary reminds Sherry that they “haven’t been man and wife for years”, which would explain why she has been driven to having an affair with Charlie. Sherry humiliatingly discovers this when the camp’s owner requests that he moves from a two-berth to a one-berth caravan. The end of his marriage is therefore symbolised by the downsizing of his mobile home to one with a single bed.

Sherry’s anxieties are arguably expressed most succinctly in his drag performance as Queen Elizabeth I, which he performs after receiving the shattering news of his wife’s infidelity. In effect, he is an embodiment of the

castrated cuckold, which brings poignancy to the ironic pun with which he greets his audience: “I’m the Virgin Queen!” He proceeds to recite lyrics which encapsulate the contradictions of his character, mixing nationalism, allegiance to the monarch and chastity, with bawdy innuendo:

When sister Mary passed away
And I was Queen *in facto*
For England’s sake, I did undertake
To stay *virgo intacto*
To men I’d wink, and let them think
I’d see them as appointed
But bed was out, without a doubt
And they all left disappointed

What e’er their tricks, to this I sticks
I’ll be as I’ve always been sir
Avoiding Harrys, Toms and Dicks
To stay a Virgin Queen sir
When Phillip rather rashly tried
To gain my hand by barter
I told him straight – you’ve had it mate
No one gets past my garter¹⁸⁶

Sherry breaks down mid-performance, and Dai says that the song-and-dance man is “not beyond a bit of dirt himself” to which Glad retorts “that’s different, it’s his job!”. She sees that Sherry’s smutty act is a façade, but her comment that Mrs. Sheridan is a ‘real lady’ brings further despair to the performer whose eyes glaze over as Glad imagines the romantic courtships of a pre-permissive society.

At the film’s conclusion, George and Dai taunt and call Sherry a “bloody queer!” and throw him into the camp’s swimming pool. Father and son are subsequently reunited when Alan saves Sherry from the pool, and Mary’s plans to leave her husband that night are interrupted by the news of his near-drowning. For the time being, it looks as if the family might be pulled together once more in this crisis,

¹⁸⁶ No credit is given for these lyrics, but presumably they are written by Laffan. Music by Harry Robinson.

but it will probably depend upon Sherry and Mary having to leave the restrictive confines of the caravan park.

Summary of *The Best Pair of Legs in the Business*

The film's caravan park setting is arguably a crucial factor in an analysis of Sherry's life, and in particular, his failing marriage with Mary. Unlike the highly decorated Romany caravans which travellers strived to make their homes, the basic utility-styled 1970s caravan is no place for Sherry and Mary to settle down for the rest of their married life. Most holidaymakers will spend no longer than two weeks at a time in the claustrophobic space of a caravan, with the knowledge that they have the comfort of home to return to when the holiday is over. Sherry and Mary do not have the luxury of such thoughts. When Sherry's future employment prospects seem uncertain, Mary suggests they should try and manage a pub. Many retired or semi-retired people from show business often adapt their careers to run pubs and boarding houses, as this often affords them with the opportunity to continue living a life similar to that on stage, with the bar area being the public realm of 'performance', and the rooms upstairs being the private space of home.¹⁸⁷ Sherry doesn't want this, as it would mean having to admit that his stage career is over. A half-empty club house in a caravan park is better than no career at all, as Sherry points out when he says, "it's not the London Palladium – but it's work!" If earlier representations of the holiday camp in films such as *Sam Small Leaves Town* and *Holiday Camp* attempt to construct an ideal working class community in the pre- and post- world war, in *The Best Pair...* community falls apart, prefiguring an emergent pessimism, later expressed in the crisis of the three-day week.

¹⁸⁷ Examples include Barbara Windsor who owned a pub in Amersham, Buckinghamshire in the 1980s (Ross, 2002: 178), and Mo Moreland, the 'Mighty Atom' of the Roly Polys dance troupe, who ran a hotel in Blackpool with her husband for five years. Moreland comments that 'hotels need to have personalities behind them...and running one suits the entertainer-type really well' (Crinnion, Jane, 'Famous Then, February 5 1984, Mo Moreland', *The Guardian*, Saturday February 5 2000), www.guardian.co.uk/theguardian/2000/feb/05/weekend7.weekend3, accessed 20/10/2008.

As I argued when looking at the publicity material for the film, *The Best Pair...* may have struggled to find an audience upon its release – Barker says that the film ‘was marketed half-heartedly by the distributors, never had a London premiere, and died the death’ (Barker, 2008: 34).¹⁸⁸ Critics of the time also recognised that for Varney fans who had delighted in the carnivalesque antics of Stan Butler and friends in *Holiday On The Buses*, his appearance in another holiday-themed film may have invited feelings of anticipation which were rebuked upon their experiencing the dark overtones of this pessimistic drama. Marjorie Bilbow, for instance summarised that the film might be:

Too sombre for Reg Varney’s fans to accept if they come prepared for belly laughs. Audiences that are not misled may react more favourably (Bilbow, 1973: 23).

Most critics, however, were unanimous in their praise of Varney’s ‘true-to-life’ performance, as Vincent Firth points out:

After Reg Varney’s tremendous success as a comedian in *On The Buses*, I had a legion of doubts about him making a success of this tragic-comedy role which seemed to me to call for a Laurence Olivier who, as you might remember, had a similar role as Archie Rice in *The Entertainer*. But I honestly felt that Varney’s Sherry was superior to Olivier’s Archie, and that I was witnessing the arrival of a great character actor who would seem to have a tremendous future in emotional and finely-balanced portrayals (Firth, 1973: 9).

Clyde Jeavons had mixed feelings about the film as a whole, but echoed Firth’s sentiments by saying that Varney ‘manages – wherever script and direction allow – to be both more moving and more convincing than even Olivier in the Osborne role’ (Jeavons, 1973: 48)

Conclusion

In this chapter I have examined how the holiday-themed films of the early to mid-1970s communicated somewhat confused messages about the nation as a

¹⁸⁸ The film doesn’t appear in box office table results in *CinemaTV Today*, following its release.

whole in a time of crisis. Many of the films I have mentioned, including the holiday-themed *Carry Ons*, *That'll Be The Day*, and *Holiday On The Buses* ideologically express feelings of nostalgia for the traditional British holiday, and in turn, feelings of national identity. This is arguably undermined, however, by a projection of 'permissive' masculinity, which excludes the family-centred ideology of the holiday in the postwar period.

I have also closely analysed *The Best Pair Of Legs In The Business* in order to reveal how its central character embodies certain crises of the time, including concerns about national identity, masculinity, class, and sex. The low-rent setting of the cheap caravan park also expresses the arguably futile attempts to hang on to traditional holiday camp communality in the face of less family-centred leisure pursuits. The '18-30 holiday' for instance, would become more prominent in the following decades to separate the types of males represented in the film – who are looking for sexually-available women – from family holidaymakers, for instance.

As I have highlighted, the 1970s saw the largest production of films with a holiday setting since the immediate postwar period, and at present, this pattern has not yet been repeated. There may be several reasons why there is a proliferation of such films in this period. It may be because they offer established television programmes an opportunity to frame 'spin-off' film narratives through the 'special event' of the holiday. The films also acknowledge the industry's need to produce films with 'domestic' appeal after the retraction of American finance at the end of the 1960s. However, as I have also suggested in this chapter, the films appear to address a rather grim sense of nostalgia in a period of relative economic and cultural instability, or as critics of the heritage industry might argue, '[the films attempt to shore] up national identity at a time when it is beset by uncertainties on all sides...compensating for the collapse of British power' (Samuel, 1994: 243).

In the next chapter I will be looking at some of the few holiday films which have emerged between the late 1970s and the present, in order to see how they might question feelings of national identity in the recent past.

Chapter 8 – Interrogating National Identity and the Holiday in Recent British Film

Introduction

In the last chapter I considered how holiday films of the 1970s ideologically re-constructed a sense of Britishness through their representation of the 'traditional' holiday at the seaside, in holiday camps and at caravan parks, in a period of economic and cultural crisis. Representations of the British embarking on foreign holidays could also be found in this period, for example, in *Carry On Abroad* and *Are You Being Served?* These films – although 'sending-up' their British characters by depicting them as comedy stereotypes – arguably construct a sense of Britishness by emphasising cultural or racial difference between the holidaymakers and the peoples of the country of which they are visiting. This is a theme I explored earlier, for instance, in the problematic encounter by the young British men and the Yugoslav characters in *Summer Holiday*. When cultural and racial difference is treated crassly for comic effect, racial stereotypes can be constructed, and, as Cliff Richard and director Peter Yates found, offence can be felt by an entire nation (and voiced by the government of that nation), who are represented by a small number of characters on screen.

In this final chapter I will be examining examples of holiday-themed films that have appeared since the end of the 1970s, and considering the extent to which these films re-produce the ideology of the dominant class or challenge it. One of the ways I aim to examine this is through representations of race.

I will begin by looking at the British film industry of the recent past, before considering the holiday and its role in some of these films. I will then pay particular attention to *Bhaji on the Beach* (1995) in order to see if this film produces a sense of Britishness that accommodates multiculturalism through the use of the holiday.

British Film of the 1980s and 1990s

British cinema of the 1980s and 1990s has been regarded as something of a 'renaissance' during *both* decades, which seems somewhat contradictory. Colin Welland, for example, notoriously announced the 'British are coming!' after *Chariots of Fire* (1981) won four Oscars including Best Picture in 1982, and yet, in the year 2000, Robert Murphy writes that a 'revival of British cinema' also occurred 'in the past five years' (Hill, 1999: 20, and Murphy (ed.) 2001: ix). These claims also tend to neglect the fact that the industry has continued to struggle with what Lindsay Anderson referred to in 1989 as 'the eternal economic problem' (cited in Dixon, 1994: 165). All of the above statements would seem to suggest that British cinema has seen an industrial and cultural decline since the 1960s, and that people have responded rather desperately to any signs of improvement.

As I suggested in Chapter 7, the 1970s were a difficult decade for the British film industry due to a reduction in American finance, and the struggles caused by the economic crisis and competition with television. Filmmakers attempted to address the latter problem by utilising actors best known for television roles, whilst at the same time offering cinema audiences a relatively more explicit view of sex and nudity which they often couldn't see on television at home. By approaching production in this way they were acknowledging the economic and cultural significance of television for British audiences, but also attempting to offer some sort of product differentiation between film and television with the content of X-rated and AA-rated films. Cinema struggled to compete with television in this way until the 1980s when filmmakers had to adapt yet again to several changes in the British film industry, one of which included embracing the cultural and financial significance of television, rather than denying it – something I will return to shortly.

The early to mid 1980s saw some distinct changes in governmental support and funding of the British film industry. The Quota System (founded in 1927) was suspended from 1 January 1983, with the Eady Levy being abolished shortly after with the introduction of the 1985 Films Act. A similar fate befell the National Film Finance Corporation, which was replaced by the British Screen Finance Consortium. The NFFC had 'invested in over 750 feature films' by the end of the 1970s, but between 1972 and 1979 'it was involved with only twenty-nine features' (Hill, 1999: 34 – 35). The Conservative government sought to encourage private investment in British Screen Finance by providing '£7.5 million over a five-year period at the end of which it was expected that the company should have become self-supporting' (Hill, 1999: 35). Channel 4, Cannon, Rank and Granada provided funding to British Screen between 1985 and 1989, with Channel 4 in particular showing the strongest commitment to financing British film production in this period. Part of British Screen's remit was to provide money for what it considered to be 'quality films' such as *The Belly of an Architect* (1987), *The Last of England* (1987) and *High Hopes* (1988), in contrast to the Eady Levy which had made payments 'regardless of merit', thereby funding movies which were sometimes considered as 'soft porn' (Hill, 1999: 36 and 38).

Channel Four arguably made the most significant and recognisable difference to changes in the British film industry of the 1980s – a glance through Gifford's *British Film Catalogue* (2001) reveals that the industry was notably dependent on the contribution of film production by Channel Four in this decade, proving that the industry had now recognised that it had to work – rather than compete – with television. The channel was established in 1982 as a subsidiary of the Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA) and was 'charged with a clear public service remit' which appealed to 'tastes and interests not generally catered for by the existing television services' – an ethos which also extended to its film production (Hill, 1999: 54).

Jeremy Isaacs (the channel's first Chief Executive) was determined for the channel to support the production of feature films, intended for domestic

television broadcast, and theatrical exhibition in Europe. The Cinematograph Exhibitors Association (CEA) stipulated that films could usually only be shown on television three years after cinema release, in order to gain maximum profits through cinema exhibition. Nevertheless, Channel Four 'persevered in providing some of its first commissions with a cinema release' and came to an agreement with the CEA that 'the bar would not apply to films costing under £1.25 million' (Hill, 1999: 55). The funding of films by Channel Four took three main forms: full funding, co-investment, and the pre-purchase of television rights. As Hill points out, 'full funding was most common in the early days when the track record of the channel was as yet unproven but it continued to be an option for the channel' and included such productions as *My Beautiful Laundrette* (1985) and Ken Loach's *Riff-Raff* (1990) (Hill, 1999: 56).

Central Television also introduced a film subsidiary, Zenith Productions in 1984, contributing to films such as *Wish You Were Here* (1987), *Prick Up Your Ears* (1987) and *Personal Services* (1987), whilst other commercial television companies such as Granada, London Weekend Television, TVS and Scottish Television similarly made their contribution to British film production in the 1980s. The BBC became increasingly involved in film production for the cinema from the mid 1980s onwards, with examples including *Dancing in the Dark* (1989), *Truly, Madly, Deeply* (1990) and Derek Jarman's *Edward II* (1991) (Hill, 1999: 60).

As part of its public service remit, throughout the 1980s, Channel Four had a commitment to funding films with 'especially original screenplays on contemporary social and political topics' particularly those which included characters who were under-represented in commercial, mainstream cinema, such as Johnny and Omar, the White-British and Asian-British gay couple in *My Beautiful Laundrette* (Hill, 1999: 56). However, the films were still expected to reach as wide an audience as possible, as Peter Todd highlights:

The demands of British financiers are primarily for films which can be showcased in cinemas, used for repeated television screenings, become

part of a library of films and, ideally, have the potential for a spin-off television series (Murphy (ed.), 2001: 20).

Costs were often kept low by filming on 16mm film stock, for example in the case of *My Beautiful Laundrette* which wasn't originally intended for cinema release (Dixon, 1994: 166). Channel Four has also guaranteed distribution of its films by '[launching] its own film distribution company, an echo of the integrated industry of the past but also a response to the growing threat from satellite and cable companies with their own specialised film channels' (Murphy (ed.), 2001: 20). Nevertheless, distribution of British films has increasingly been handled by the large, American companies (such as Twentieth Century-Fox, Warner Bros., Universal, Columbia Tri-Star and Buena Vista), especially after Rank Film Distributors ceased operation in the 1990s (Murphy (ed.), 2001: 20).

In terms of exhibition, the mid-1980s were a difficult time for British cinemas, with large numbers of the smaller, local picture houses closing down, and exhibition being reorganised through the emergence of the out-of-town multiplexes. As Todd points out:

The multiplex revolution has been essentially an American one, with National Amusements' Showcase Cinemas joining Warner Bros. and UCI in dominating the cinema market (Murphy (ed.), 2001: 18 – 19).

In contrast to this, the main exhibition outlet for 'non-mainstream films outside London' throughout the 1980s and '90s were the cinemas of the Regional Film Theatre Consortium, supported by the BFI' (Docherty, Morrison and Tracey, 1987: 53). The BFI has also continued to provide financial support to new filmmakers – such as Shane Meadows with *Smalltime* (1996) – and filmmakers who may otherwise have found it difficult to raise funds for projects which may be deemed as non-commercial, such as Andrew Kotting's film, *Gallivant* (1997), a semi-fictionalised account of a journey around the coast of Britain, which Kotting takes with his elderly grandmother Gladys, and his young daughter Eden, who has learning difficulties.

Kotting is a 'long-term member of the [London Filmmakers Co-op (LFMC)] with roots in experimental shorts as well as performance art and the film was the first BFI film to receive Lottery funding' (Murphy (ed.), 2001: 151). It is difficult to conceive of a film like *Gallivant* being made without the intervention of a funding body such as the BFI. The film is characteristic of the types of experimental works for which Channel 4 paved the way, from 1982 onwards – including, as it does, aspects of experimental film (some of it shot on super 8 stock), offering representations of minority groups (such as the elderly and disabled), and also revealing a rather eccentric representation of British identity and the landscape, through its experimental narrative and the presence of its director in front of, and behind the camera.

The National Lottery has also made a significant contribution to the funding of British film since its launch in 1995, with the Arts Council of England nominating DNA, Pathé and the Film Consortium in 1997 'for Lottery franchises and [encouraging] them to unify production, distribution and sales' (Murphy (ed.), 2001: 43).

The Holiday Film From 1980 to the Present

In many respects there has been what might be referred to as a 'fragmentation' of the British film industry over the past twenty to thirty years, leading to questions about what constitutes a 'national cinema'. This can be found, for example, in the various ways production and distribution is funded (from cinema, television, the National Lottery and private enterprise), from where it is funded (for example from British and American production companies), how it is exhibited (in American-backed multiplexes and regional arts cinemas) as well as in the content of the films themselves. This fragmentation has arguably resulted in there being fewer unified bodies of work or genres which potentially produce an idea of 'nation', as Street points out:

Most films are one-off productions without the security of a major studio's support. Companies come and go, and with them ideas and styles which, in a more stable economic environment, might have developed in subsequent films (Street, 2004: 112-113).

The holiday industry itself has become increasingly diverse over the past twenty to thirty years, and because of this, it could be argued that there is no specific type of holiday which could be considered as 'typically British'. Foreign travel has continued to be popular during the past three decades, and camping holidays have also increased in popularity, especially as a relatively cheap alternative to staying in hotels or travelling abroad,¹⁸⁹ and the holiday camp industry has also managed to survive, despite its continued denigration by the intelligentsia. Caravan holidays have similarly continued in popularity. Collectively, the Lincolnshire resorts of Cleethorpes, Mablethorpe and Ingoldmells now hold 'the highest concentration of caravans anywhere in Europe, with six and a half million visitors every year' (Barker: 2005). In the television programme *Rory and Paddy's Great British Adventure*, Paddy McGuinness claims that over 7 million people flock to Skegness every year with many staying 'in the town's 30,000 caravans' (Heffernan, 2008).¹⁹⁰

This diversification of choice has resulted in a decline of the mass holiday experience enjoyed by the Lancashire mill workers and holidaymakers of the immediate postwar era, for example, and in some ways shares common ground with the decline in cinema attendance which has resulted from an increase in a

¹⁸⁹ A report on *Central Tonight*, July 31st 2008, highlighted the increase in people choosing to go camping on holiday in Britain during that year. The programme suggested that an average family holiday abroad might cost about £3,400, whereas a camping holiday in the Peak District could be as cheap as £250 in comparison. One camping shop salesman commented that there had been a 55% increase in tent sales in the first half of 2008. The item was punctuated by clips from *Carry On Camping*.

¹⁹⁰ He goes on to explain that Skegness has so many excess caravans that the town has a cull eight times a year at the Skegness stock car stadium. The fragility of the caravans, and the transitory nature of the caravan holiday is arguably brought to light in the spectacle of this 'caravan destruction derby' where they are crumpled and flattened in an instant like cardboard boxes.

wider range of alternative leisure facilities in towns and cities, and also an increase in leisure forms such as television, DVD and computer games, which are consumed within the domestic sphere.

British films with a holiday setting have appeared somewhat sporadically since the relatively large concentration of films in the 1970s. During the 1980s the holiday was most noticeably represented in the television sitcom, which continued the tradition of the *Carry Ons* and television spin-off films of the 1970s. The BBC's *Hi De Hi* traded on comedy stereotypes and nostalgic memories of holiday camps of the 1950s and '60s, and remained popular throughout the decade from 1980 to 1988. Yorkshire Television's *Duty Free* (1984 - 1986), despite being a rather tired re-hash of the *Are You Being Served?* film, found popular appeal with viewers who were just beginning to explore the delights of the package holiday to Spain.

Television Christmas specials, however, have also re-presented the 'special event' of the holiday by 'opening out' the sitcom with location filming for seasonal editions of *Duty Free – A Duty Free Christmas* (1986), *Only Fools and Horses: Miami Twice* (1991), and *One Foot In The Grave – renamed One Foot In The Algarve* (1993).¹⁹¹ The broadcast of these programmes during the Christmas holidays appears to suggest an ideological separation from work. Christmas has long been a time when holiday and travel companies begin their huge advertising campaigns for the following year – the Christmas edition of *The Radio Times*, for instance, always includes a holiday supplement – and it could be argued that a time of year when most families are stuck at home gives travel companies the perfect opportunity to reach as many consumers as possible. These Christmas specials might have a similar effect on the viewing audience by putting the idea of the holiday in their heads.

¹⁹¹ *Duty Free – A Duty Free Christmas* (1986): Broadcast on ITV, Christmas day at 9pm, *Only Fools and Horses: Miami Twice* (1991): Broadcast on BBC 1 in two parts, Christmas eve at 7.30pm and Christmas day 3.10pm (after the Queen's speech), *One Foot In The Algarve* (1993): Broadcast on BBC 1, Boxing day 9.05pm: <http://ftvdb.bfi.org.uk/sift/title/479955?view=transmission> accessed 28/11/2008.

On the few occasions when the holiday has appeared in cinema films over the past three decades, these examples are often comedies – long established as the genre which best communicates the carnivalesque and joyful atmosphere which most holidaymakers hope for – but there have also been dramas (which use Britain’s coastal landscape for dramatic effect), stage adaptations, and films which explore the liminal attractions of burgeoning sexuality that the seaside sometimes offers. Although *Wish You Were Here* (1987) does not follow the narrative of a holiday, it is set in a seaside town with a heroine, Lynda (Emily Lloyd) who works on a fish and chip stall and tearoom frequented by lunching ladies. It is in the latter location where, Justine King points out, ‘Lynda’s final outrageous outburst of carnivalesque rebellion’ takes place, ‘as she jumps on a table and proclaims to the assembled company of the sedate seaside tearoom where she works that she is pregnant’ (Higson (ed.) 1996: 222). *She’ll Be Wearing Pink Pyjamas* (1985) might be considered as a typical Channel Four film of the 1980s, with its exploration of women’s issues (this time set on an all-female outward bound course in the Lake District), but as King suggests, the film suffers somewhat from the initial impression it gives of ‘clumsy, misogynistic stereotypes of femininity’ (Higson (ed.) 1996: 220). *Shirley Valentine* (1989) is a film version of Willie Russell’s successful stage play, and explores the idea of the fleeting holiday romance with forty-something Shirley (Pauline Collins) rediscovering her femininity and a sense of personal fulfilment after a brief sexual fling with the Greek national, Costas (Tom Conti).

In the 1990s and 2000s, the television spin-off has also re-emerged (with mixed results).¹⁹² *Guest House Paradiso* (1999) is a rather puerile attempt to re-

¹⁹² A rather amusing comment on the uninventive idea of the holiday-themed television spin-off can be found in *The League of Gentleman’s Apocalypse* (2005). In the film, characters from *The League of Gentleman* television and radio series challenge the scriptwriters with ideas for the big screen adaptation of the programme. Brassy and tasteless Pauline’s (Steve Pemberton) suggestion that the characters all go on holiday abroad – “they get there and the hotel’s not finished, no one speaks the lingo!” – is clearly signalled as unoriginal and turned down flat.

package the sometimes-inventive sitcom *Bottom* (1991 – 1995), with the two main characters working in a hotel by a nuclear power station, but dispels into a cavalcade of vomit. *Kevin and Perry Go Large* (2000), is perhaps, thematically, one of the most significant holiday films of the last decade, which frames the holiday as a mass experience. Based on Harry Enfield's television comedy sketches involving Kevin the teenager (Enfield) and his friend, Perry (Kathy Burke) the film found some appeal by re-locating the action to Ibiza, satirising the dance music craze of the late 1990s and early 2000s and the type of holiday popular with young, ecstasy-fuelled, 'loved-up' clubbers. Perry continues a lineage of seaside 'peepers' from 19th century engravings to 20th century postcards, and films from the silent era to *Carry On Girls*, by arriving at the beach with his camcorder and ogling women by zooming in on their bikini-clad breasts. Like *Guest House Paradiso*, the film uses 'gross-out' comedy such as penile erection jokes, the hazards of excrement in the sea, and in one particularly gruesome scene, presents the audience with a spectacle of pus exploding from two young women's infected naval piercings during a makeover scene.

The film, however, was on the pulse of popular music culture of the time, and for this reason tends to reinforce the hedonistic culture of drugs, dance and sex which it is satirising. The film makes full use of its locations by including tourist gaze shots of Ibiza's beaches, back street gift shops and images of the dance clubs themselves, and is soundtracked with club anthems of the time including Underworld's 'King of Snake' and Fatboy Slim's 'Love Island (4/4 Mix)'.¹⁹³ There are also examples of commercial intertextuality within the film, including shots of Virgin Airlines planes and travel paraphernalia, along with 'Mates' condoms which the teenage boys pack, and which are also a product of the Virgin/Richard Branson empire.

¹⁹³ A tie-in soundtrack CD with numerous club music tracks was released to promote the film.

It could be argued that the film pastiches the youth-versus-adult themes of films like *Summer Holiday*, and in this instance, makes a mockery of the two ‘teenage boys’ who are being played by an adult man and woman. Kevin and Perry have read in a pornographic magazine that sex is freely available at Ibiza – which is why they hope to lose their virginity at the resort – yet Kevin balks at the idea that his mother and father have a sex life and that they have heard of the band Oasis. He considers his parents to be “saggy and rotted” and cannot contemplate that anyone of their generation can lead such a full life. At the film’s conclusion, however, the two boys succeed in losing their virginity with Gemma and Candice (Tabitha Wady and Laura Fraser) on the beach at sunrise. As the camera pulls out, it reveals that they are not alone in their sexual encounter, and that dozens of other couples have had the same idea – in much the same way that dozens of holidaymakers end up sleeping on the beach in *Bank Holiday*, ruining the romantic plans of Catherine and Stephen.¹⁹⁴

In spite of the crowds seen in *Kevin and Perry*... there appears to have been a move away from representations of the mass, working-class holiday in British films of recent years. The seaside holiday, for example, has latterly been represented as a quiet and contemplative experience, or a place where the sublime sea enhances the atmosphere of dramatic scenes. In *Some Voices* (2000), two lovers (Daniel Craig and Kelly MacDonald) consummate their relationship in Hastings; in *London to Brighton* (2006), a prostitute, Kelly (Lorraine Stanley) and young girl, Joanne (Georgia Groome) flee to the south

¹⁹⁴ The excessive type of holiday as represented in *Kevin and Perry Go Large* has continued to be popular despite the relative decline in the popularity of dance music. In *The Observer* of 27th July 2007, for example, Helena Smith rather sensationally paints a picture of young, British holidaymakers rampaging through the Greek resorts of Malia (Crete), Cavos (Corfu) and Laganas (Zakynthos), biting off the noses of bartenders, beating a shopkeeper who asked them to drive less recklessly on their Quad bikes, and ‘participating in an open-air oral sex contest’ (Smith, 2007: 3). In some respects the descriptions bear a similar resemblance to any major British city on a Friday or Saturday night, with the exception, perhaps, that the distance between the Mediterranean resort and ‘home’ diminishes any sense of responsibility, and increases the loss of inhibitions in a somewhat extreme echo of the liminal frolics at the British seaside in the preceding centuries.

coast to escape from gangsters, and Joanne is compelled to paddle in the sea upon their arrival. In the Lottery-funded Film Four film *Venus* (2006), ageing actor, Maurice (Peter O'Toole) dies on the beach at Whitstable in the arms of his young 'Venus', Jessie (Jodie Whittaker).

Director Shane Meadows has made reference to the seaside holiday in three of his films. In *This is England* (2007), Shaun (Thomas Turgoose) recalls happy memories of a holiday in Great Yarmouth with his deceased father – a fallen soldier of the Falklands war. The daytrip to Chapel St Leonards on the Lincolnshire coast taken in *A Room For Romeo Brass* (2003) recalls a scene at out-of-season Skegness in his earlier film *Smalltime* (1996). The daytrip in *Romeo Brass*, however, proves a terrifying experience for young boy Knocks (Ben Marshall), when the local oddball, Morell (Paddy Considine) – who Knocks and Romeo (Andrew Shim) have been treating as the butt of their pranks – suddenly turns and threatens to kill the young boy's parents. On this occasion, the holiday takes an unexpected sinister turn, and leaves the audience concerned about the vulnerability of the two young boys who have gone on a trip so far from their Nottingham home with a virtual stranger.

Last Resort

A sobering picture of the British Seaside in decline can be found in Pawel Pawlikowski's *Last Resort* (2000).¹⁹⁵ Out-of-season Margate is the location for the film's fictional Stonehaven: a place populated by 'penny-arcade drifter[s]' like Alfie (Paddy Considine) and also used as 'a dumping ground for immigrants, runaways and inner-city scroungers' (Sinclair, 2001: 17 and 18). The Dreamland amusement park, as in Lindsay Anderson's *O Dreamland*, is once again shown to be a rather bleak and depressing place, although on this occasion, the holiday crowds have deserted the place, leaving a few elderly bingo players and local eccentrics to rattle around the complex.

¹⁹⁵ The pun of the title has been used previously in Martin Parr's collection of photographs of the British seaside resort New Brighton in 1985. See: Parr, Martin, 1997 edition, *The Last Resort: Photographs of New Brighton*, London: Dewi Lewis.

The film centres on a young Russian mother Tanya (Dina Korzun) and her son Artiom (Artiom Strelnikov) who arrive in Britain to meet Tanya's boyfriend, and then apply for asylum when the latter doesn't show up at the airport. The local authorities house Tanya and Artiom in a huge, ugly tower block (which overlooks Dreamland and the beach), in what is arguably the most misconceived piece of town planning imaginable. As Allen points out, 'the beach is denied both a tourist gaze and a liminal potential' and 'the flats visually contradict our expectations of the British seaside and brutally block out any wider view' (Allen, 2008: 62 – 63). The depressing nature of Stonehaven is thrown into greater relief by the mural in Tanya and Artiom's flat which depicts an idealised tropical island scene complete with palm tree and sunset. Alfie offers romance and friendship to Tanya and Artiom respectively, but mother and son are trapped at the resort which the latter jokingly refers to as the "armpit of the universe", and where asylum seekers have to sell blood or survive on vouchers to buy battered fish with "no fish in it", as Artiom observes.

Allen considers how the coastline in *Last Resort* works to entrap, rather than offer freedom to the asylum seekers housed in the tower block overlooking the beach, and also how the traditional, liminal potential that the seaside offers through saucy postcards and the promise of freely available sex is reversed by the misery imposed upon sex workers such as Tanya, who resorts to appearing in cyber porn in order to raise funds for her escape from the town:

That joyful sexual liberation becomes commodified duress reveals how leisure becomes its antonym when liminality is invoked but limited. The sexual freedom that was previously embodied in the seaside zone is now available, internationally, via cyberspace, and far from offering release it is shown to entrap and degrade (Allen, 2008: 68).

Like the Kordas and Emeric Pressberger before him, Pawlikowski is an émigré who can perhaps stand back and observe the British character, and therefore represent a more original take on British identity than other filmmakers born in

Britain. Raised in Poland and brought to Britain with his mother at the age of fifteen, Pawlikowski started out as a documentarist on the BBC's Community Programme Unit in the mid-1980s, and has 'emerged as one of Britain's most influential and important filmmakers' (Pulver, 2004: 10 – 11).¹⁹⁶ In her review of *Last Resort*, Lizzie Francke points out that this BBC film is yet another example of recent cinema releases which owes a debt to television:

The fact that this low-budget drama wasn't originally intended for theatrical release also reminds a film industry in flux of television's lasting contribution to British cinema – after all, it was in television that the likes of Ken Loach, Mike Leigh, Stephen Frears and Alan Clarke first honed their directorial skills. Given its small-screen origins, it's a sweet irony that *Last Resort* turns out to be one of the most richly cinematic films produced in the UK in the last 12 months (Francke, 2001: 52 – 53).¹⁹⁷

Perhaps the most successful examination of the traditional British seaside resort on film, and certainly one of the most academically discussed in recent times, however, is *Bhaji on the Beach*, which follows a group of holidaymakers on a daytrip to Blackpool. During the film, the cinema audience is treated to the spectacle of the resort in what is arguably the most revealing portrayal of the town since *Sing As We Go* – a place which Ciecko describes as 'liberal and liberating' yet 'stiflingly cluttered and consumerist' (Ciecko, 1999: 76). *Bhaji on the Beach* includes all the familiar cultural practices which an audience would recognise as contributing to a traditional British holiday, including a paddle in the icy sea, donkey rides, fairground rides, consuming of chips and candy-floss, and a musical accompaniment by the Wurlizer organ. The film also captures a tourist gaze of the town with spectacular views from the Tower, and shots of the night time illuminations. Where *Bhaji on the Beach* does break new ground, however,

¹⁹⁶ In his review of Pawlikowski's film *My Summer of Love* (2004) Tim Adams contrasts the film with other British movies of the time which offer a clichéd vision of Britain, largely aimed at an American audience: 'While new movies *Wimbledon* and *Layer Cake* continue to portray England as a theme park of upper-class eccentrics and cockney geezers, it takes a Polish director to offer a dose of realism' (Adams, 2004: 5).

¹⁹⁷ *Last Resort* was shot on Super 16 rather than the usual cinema gauge of 35mm film.

is that the film is the first in Britain to be directed by an Asian-British woman, and features an almost all-female cast. Before I analyse this film in more detail, I would like to reconsider some points about national identity and representation of race in British film.

National Identity and Race in the British Holiday Film

As I have already suggested, the majority of the films I have examined so far, tend to represent Britishness as white and English – although there are rare occasions where white Scottish and Welsh characters appear.¹⁹⁸ As far as racial representations are concerned, non-white British characters have largely been conspicuous by their absence in most of the holiday films analysed in this thesis, (even as late as the 1970s),¹⁹⁹ and race has only been alluded to in the form of blackface minstrelsy which occurs in *No Limit*, *Summer Holiday* and *Every Day's A Holiday*, the latter including a fantasy sequence where John Leyton's character imagines himself as a black artist in the style of Nat 'King' Cole and sings to himself in his bedroom mirror. Rare examples of black characters can be found in two films of the 1930s. In *Sam Small Leaves Town*, Brookins and Van, two African-American song and dance men make an appearance at the holiday camp in the film's finale. Stanley Holloway's character announces the act as "a dark secret", and the two performers join in with the racial puns with the following patter:

"Every time I look at you, you remind me of the bird family."

"What bird?"

"The blackbird."

Although the appearance of these two performers may seem rather unusual in a film which is built around the British music hall character of Sam Small, they do

¹⁹⁸ For example, the Scotsman Andy (James Copeland) in *Innocents in Paris*, and Welshman Dai (George Sweeney) in *The Best Pair of Legs in the Business*. In the latter film, Dai's 'otherness' is marked when Sherry says that the Welsh have a strong, sexual libido – something which Dai recalls when he gets his revenge by throwing the entertainer in the swimming pool.

¹⁹⁹ In 1977's *Confessions From a Holiday Camp*, the name of the character 'Blackbird' (Nicola Blackman) demeaningly marks her race and sex.

not disrupt the narrative because they are 'contained' within the holiday camp's stage show. The characters lend an air of relatively sophisticated American musical entertainment to the film – one plays the piano whilst the other tap dances – although, culturally, they could also arguably represent an Americanisation of holiday attractions which cultural critics of the 1930s and '40s found to their distaste.²⁰⁰

Similarly, in *Bank Holiday*, a black barman serves drinks in a sophisticated cocktail bar to the two young women, Doreen and Milly. Like the song and dance men in *Sam Small Leaves Town*, this character, although representing a cultural 'other' (working as he does, behind an American style cocktail bar), also appears narratively non-threatening because he is employed in a subservient, or deferential position to the customers in the grand hotel where he works.

Positive representations of black characters began to emerge in British films of the late 1950s and '60s such as *Sapphire* (1959), *Flame in the Streets* (1961) and *A Taste of Honey*, but along with British Asian characters, continued to remain largely absent from screens until two decades later. Ciecko, for instance, (citing Jim Pines) points out that the 1980s were a 'watershed' moment for 'black British independent film and video' with the emergence of 'collectives such as Sankofa, Black Audio Film and Video, Ceddo, and Retake', explaining:

These groups were formed after the 1981 Brixton riots, which raised consciousness about the need for politically constructive creative labour, and the Workshop Declaration, which gave support (with funding from Channel 4, the British Film Institute, and the now-defunct Greater London Council) to non-profit media production units, community focal points for media education and production (Ciecko, 1999: 69).

Channel Four also supported black and Asian filmmakers by giving them a visual presence on television and in the aforementioned cinema releases *My Beautiful Laundrette* and *Bhaji on the Beach*.

²⁰⁰ See for example, my references to Orwell and Huxley in Chapter 5.

Bhaji on the Beach

Bhaji on the Beach has been appropriated in several different ways in order to signify several different cultural representations, and therefore the film appears to speak to different groups of people in different ways – no matter what the film's preferred reading may be. Sarita Malik (in Higson (ed.) 1996) sees it as an example of both Black British, and British-Asian cinema, whereas Ciecko sees the use of the term 'black' in 'characterising the Asian presence in Britain' as 'problematic' as it tends to 'conflate' and 'homogenize' Afro-Caribbean and Asian cultures, and instead chooses to identify the director, Gurinder Chadha as Punjabi (Ciecko, 1999: 67). In contrast to this, Eleftheriotis examines *Bhaji On The Beach* in terms of European rather than British cinema, questioning how a 'convergence between European film policy, the strategies of the industry and the reality of the market' has a bearing on the 'diversity' which is expressed in the product, with European funding – for example by the European Council's EURIMAGES – assisting the 'development of transnational partnerships and the production of films that can effectively cross cultural and national borders' (Eleftheriotis, 2000: 93 – 94). Justine King, however, sees it as an example of the 'women's film' claiming that:

Chadha's film mobilizes a liminal space to bring together a heterogeneous group of women in a space marked off from the everyday world of men, work and family commitments (Higson (ed.) 1996: 230).

Despite these different claims for 'ownership' of the film, Chadha herself claims that she is very much influenced by films such as *A Taste of Honey*, *Up The Junction* and the *Carry Ons*, which she says have 'a very constructed sense of Englishness', and considers '*Bhaji* as a very English film' (Stuart, 1994: 26 and Leach, 2004: 225). It would appear, therefore, from the list of examples set out above, that there is no single reading of a film such as *Bhaji on the Beach*, which arguably manages to speak for, and appeal to, a number of audiences on different levels. These conflicting views might also raise questions about what constitutes a national cinema – something which I will return to later.

The film is characteristic of the type of film which emerged from Channel Four during the 1980s and 1990s in that it gives a voice to what might be considered a 'minority' group, as Karen Alexander points out:

Bhaji's co-writer and director, Gurinder Chadha, traces her interest in filmmaking back to seeing *My Beautiful Laundrette*. Chadha, a journalist at the time, felt filmmaking was the best way to tell the stories she wanted to hear. What engaged critics and audiences alike was the opportunity of seeing and hearing from a section of the community so often constructed as silent (Murphy (ed.), 2001: 112).

As I have pointed out, the film stakes a claim in British film history, by being the first to be directed by an Asian woman in Britain, but Malik argues that 'British-Asian identity is not dwelt on in the film, it just is' (Higson (ed.) 1996: 212).

Actress and writer Meera Syal took the original idea for a seaside comedy to Chadha, but the director decided to bring dramatic elements to the script and introduced 'the two most taboo subjects within the Asian community – mixed relationships and separation and divorce' (Stuart, 1994: 26). As a comedy-drama which confronts these topics, along with generational disputes and the questioning of a woman's role within the home, the script generally finds the right balance between humour and issues, although Anwar sees the way the film handles the latter as 'heavy-handed' and says that the depiction of the characters suffers as a result (Anwar, 1994: 47 – 48).

However, as a holiday film, *Bhaji on the Beach* follows a distinct pattern set before by films such as *Sing As We Go* and the numerous versions of *Hindle Wakes*. After introducing the various characters including Asha (Lalita Ahmed) and Rekha (Souad Faress), the film depicts the holiday journey, which is undertaken in a mini bus from Birmingham to Blackpool. The shots of the bus travelling up the motorway are accompanied by a Punjabi version of the Cliff Richard song 'We're All Going on a Summer Holiday', an intertextual comic reference to what is arguably the best-known holiday-themed song after 'Oh We

Do Like To Be Beside The Seaside'. Cultural similarities between Britain and India are acknowledged on the trippers' arrival, when Rekha (the only non-British Asian on the trip and currently visiting from India), cries "Bombay!" upon her first glimpse of the Golden Mile. One hilarious moment arises when the relatively bland seaside delicacy of a bag of chips is made palatable by the first-generation British Asians Pushpa (Zohra Segal) and Amrik (Amer Chadha-Patel) who liberally sprinkle chilli powder over their food²⁰¹. It could be suggested that the critiquing of a typically British food such as chips offers a thematic response to jokes seen in previous films such as *Innocents In Paris* and *San Ferry Ann* (1965) where supposedly exotic food such as snails, frogs and live lobsters cause alarm in the British holidaymakers who have travelled abroad²⁰².

As Malik contemplates, *Bhaji on the Beach* suggests a new 'hybrid identity' of British-Asianness:

In *Bhaji on the Beach*, we see an ensemble of Asian women temporarily inhabiting a public sphere (Blackpool beach) which is predominantly associated with 'Englishness' and 'Whiteness'. The quintessential 'Englishness' of Blackpool is juxtaposed with the 'Indianness' of the female protagonists, both culturally and visually. At the same time we do not get the sense that any one culture has been 'crossed over' or been assimilated, but that a new form of cultural identity is emerging. This hybrid identity is 'British-Asianness', a fluid evolving entity, which cannot be reduced to any one thing (Higson (ed.) 1996: 213).²⁰³

Although 'Chadha is loathe... to claim television as an influence', preferring to 'pay her debt to the Indian cinema around which much of her social life as a teenager in Southall was organised', the film rather clumsily makes use of too many fantasy sequences which have the feeling of television sketches and disrupt the narrative as a result (Stuart, 1994: 26). The most successful fantasy

²⁰¹ This act of flavouring the chips may invite questions about what now constitutes the 'national' dish. It could be argued, for example, that a curry is now just as popular (if not more so) in Britain as fish and chips.

²⁰² This is also highlighted in the poor quality portion of fried fish which Russian Artiom complains about in the aforementioned scene in *Last Resort*.

²⁰³ King similarly says that *Bhaji on the Beach* and *East is East* (1999) explore 'subcultural or intercultural dynamics' (King, 2002: 163).

sequence is arguably the Bollywood musical style dance between Asha and seaside entertainer Ambrose (Peter Cellier), but its effect is undermined somewhat by the numerous dream sequences which have already preceded it. Up until this point Asha has been happy to be chaperoned around Blackpool by this English gentleman who regales her with tales of his theatrical career and takes her to the pier where a small group of elderly holidaymakers join forces in performing the actions of 'The Birdy Song' to Wurlizer accompaniment.

Ambrose represents the British seaside resorts of the past and dresses in the traditional blazer and boater style of performers like Sherry in *The Best Pair of Legs in the Business*, but he also mistakenly considers an 'Indian film' to be the Colonialist type such as *Gunga Din*, *Curse of the Maharaja* and *Bhowani Junction*. As Ciecko points out (citing Homi Bhabha) Ambrose invokes the 'Orientalist discourse of stereotypes and exotica' and by naming these Colonialist films makes Asha 'finally recognizes how her otherness functions as a fetish' (Ciecko, 1999: 75).²⁰⁴ The exotic architecture of the glass-domed orangery in the Blackpool park where this scene is filmed also reinforces the imperialist ideology which Bennett mentions in his description of the 'Indian façade to [Blackpool's] south pier' and 'the main frontispiece to the Pleasure Beach, in the style of an Indian palace' (Bennett *et al* (eds.), 1986: 141).

Eleftheriotis claims that the last shot where Asha imagines the rain washing Ambrose's brown make-up away at the end of the dream sequence constructs their cultural difference in 'racial terms', placing her 'within a racist discourse that disavows her romance and negates the possibility of cultural interaction' (Eleftheriotis, 2000: 97). However, it could be argued that Ambrose is the figure

²⁰⁴ The two younger members of the group, Ladhu (Nisha Nayar) and Madhu (Renu Kochar) are also paired with two white-British male characters during the day-trip. One of these boys appears to fetishize Madhu as 'exotic', like Ambrose does with Asha, by commenting on the beauty of her skin, which he says looks "all golden, like the top of a sesame seed bap". Racial difference is largely forgotten in these scenes, however, because these characters are represented as teenagers, which assimilates Ladhu and Madhu through youth culture.

who most accurately represents 'difference' here. He is the character who has entered Asha's dream by 'disguising' himself as a Bollywood film star. Because Ambrose is an entertainer, the scene also appears to critique the traditional masquerading of the end-of-pier performer in blackface, which, although recognised as problematic in a racially diverse Britain of the 1990s, still existed in some seaside towns at the time the film was made.

In *Bhaji on the Beach*, cultural practices such as donkey rides, paddling and eating of ice-creams serve to ideologically construct some sense of history and stability for the cinema audience, whilst at the same time challenging a sense of taken-for-granted-ness by having these seaside activities performed and enjoyed by a group of people who are (as I previously suggested) 'often constructed as silent' (Murphy (ed.), 2001: 112). A sense of tradition is questioned in both white-British and Asian-British cultures, for example, with the portion of chips flavoured with chilli powder by first-generation British Asians, and conversely when Pushpa is coerced by the younger members of her group into joining a troupe of white, male strippers in their nightclub act. When Chadha was questioned in a *Sight and Sound* interview whether the film was a 'deliberate attempt to invade white-only spaces' she took issue with the claim, saying:

I don't like the word invade. It implies a traditionally European view of history: them and us, they are taking our land, that sort of thing. What I am saying is that there is no such thing as ours and theirs. There is no part of Britain or England that I can't lay claim to (Stuart, 1994: 26).

In some respects, this questioning of the British seaside as a 'white-only' space recalls recent discussions on the absence of black and Asian people in Britain's national parks and countryside. Ethnic minorities have traditionally been under-represented in promotional material for Britain's countryside and heritage attractions, which often appear to privilege white, middle-class consumers, although the National Trust, for instance, have aimed to address this sense of

exclusion in recent times.²⁰⁵ Phil Kinsman argues that for ethnic minorities, 'citizenship is not enough; some kind of belonging born of personal knowledge of Britain is required to avoid estrangement from the nation' (Millborne (ed.) 1997: 23). Whilst Neal and Agyeman similarly suggest that even if this lack of representation is ingrained, rather than deliberate, 'the powerfulness of a dominant way of seeing can be reflected in hiddenness and invisibility, subordination and marginalisation' (Neal and Agyeman, 2006: 2).

Even if black and Asian communities from the Midlands and northern cities of Britain are visiting and setting up businesses in resorts such as Blackpool and Skegness, their apparent lack of representation in films with a holiday setting, other than *Bhaji on the Beach*, mediates these people as 'invisible' (Neal and Agyeman, 2006) in British seaside resorts. The characters in *Bhaji on the Beach* are arguably assimilated through the narrative by their taking part in cultural practices of the seaside and fairground, but their cultural difference still appears to be acknowledged by Asha's, Ladhu and Madhu's need to return to their group of friends at the end of the film. As Eleftheriotis argues, 'the film rigorously resists representations of difference as otherness while at the same time engaging in a thorough exploration of positions and power structures articulated around difference' (Eleftheriotis, 2000: 97).

²⁰⁵ An item on the BBC's *Countryfile* on 9th November 2008 highlighted how the National Parks and National Trust are aiming to invite increased spending of what they refer to as the 'brown pound' by making black and Asian communities more aware of what the British countryside has to offer. Narendra Bajaria, the first Asian chairman of the Peak National Park says there is a lack of information about the countryside amongst black and Asian communities, and that this needs to be addressed in order to engage these people – something which the Mosaic Partnership (incorporating the National Parks and Youth Hostel Association) has endeavoured to do over the past three years. Anna Russell of the National Trust similarly claims that this organisation is currently aiming to increase its number of black and ethnic volunteers, and has made a start in cities such as Birmingham and Bristol but is hoping to spread this 'better practice throughout the trust' (Brogan, 2008).

Conclusion

As outlined at the beginning of this chapter, over the past twenty to thirty years there hasn't been what might be called a 'typical' British cinema, as many British films differ in form and content from the heritage films of Merchant Ivory, to the perennial James Bond franchise, and the increasingly tired but still prolific gangster genre. Women, black and Asian directors are still largely underrepresented in what is still a predominantly white, male industry, but as Gurinder Chadha has proven with her more recent film *Bend it Like Beckham* (2002), those who may originally have been given a break by the public service ethics of a broadcaster like Channel Four, can 'cross-over' into relatively mainstream success. By looking at films made by traditionally 'marginal' ethnic groups Higson questions whether there is still a 'national' cinema, arguing instead that:

It might in fact be more useful to think of [the films] as embodying a new post-national cinema that resists the tendency to nationalise questions of community, culture and identity. The concept of post-national cinema surely better describes films that embrace multiculturalism, difference and hybridity (Ashby and Higson (eds.), 2000: 39).

It could be argued, however, that such films still work to construct a sense of nation, regardless of multiculturalism, because these films are, in fact, representative of the changing face of the nation. Higson recognises this to a certain extent by claiming that John Hill disagrees with his argument, saying that we should not:

[u]nderestimate the possibilities for a national cinema to re-imagine the nation, or rather nations within Britain, and also to address the specificities of a national culture in a way that does not presume a homogeneous and "pure" national identity (Hill quoted in Ashby and Higson (eds.), 2000: 39 – 40).

This can be seen, for example, in the representation of the holiday in British film over time. Films such as *A Seaside Girl*, *Sing As We Go*, *Holiday Camp*, *Carry On Behind* and *Bhaji on the Beach* are all very different but share common

characteristics, which I have highlighted throughout this thesis, and which potentially construct an audience's understanding of the British on holiday. The shifts in holiday patterns, and the move from the exclusive and 'rational' pastimes of the aristocracy, to the consumerist holidays of the masses have served to foreground different cultural hierarchies from the elite to working classes. In addition to this, the cinematic representation of the holiday from working-class carnivalesque seaside resort (in *Sing As We Go*) to exotic European tour (*Summer Holiday*) construct very different representations of Britishness, and therefore acknowledge that a sense of nation is something that shifts over time, adapting to new cultural, as well as technological transformations.

As suggested in Chapter 1, nationhood can be considered in terms of an 'imagined community' (Anderson, 1991), constructed through representations and motifs such as the flag and the monarchy, as well as through state borders such as the British coastline itself. Nationhood can also be constructed through the cultural representations of 'banal nationalism', which largely go unnoticed on a day-to-day level (Billig, 1995). If this sense of community is 'imagined' and not set in stone, it is an arguably fragile or – as Malik (in Higson (ed.) 1996: 213) and Eleftheriotis (2000: 99) might refer to it – 'fluid' concept and therefore open to certain shifts, changes and reinterpretations over time. As Chadha herself points out:

What I've tried to do with all my work is to open up all that stuff – what it is to be British. What I'm doing is making a claim, as well as documenting a history of British Asian people (Quoted in Stuart, 1994: 26).

Conclusion of Thesis – Summarising Representations of National Identity in the British Holiday Film

Throughout this thesis I have argued that the holiday film can ideologically construct feelings of national identity through its representation of the traditional British holiday. I concluded the last chapter by saying that national identity is not 'fixed' and that it is an ideological concept which shifts and changes over time. By analysing the holiday film across a century of cinema it may be expected that a number of different representations of national identity can be revealed, from the sedate middle-class holidaymakers of *A Seaside Girl* to the hedonistic holidaymakers of *Kevin and Perry Go Large*. As I have demonstrated, these identities are often marked by distinctions of class, gender and race, although I have also highlighted representations of social mixing: of the different classes (in the case of *Holiday Camp*, for example), and of multiculturalism.

The holiday film, however, may arguably invite as many questions as answers about representations of the British character. The national identities examined here, for example, have to be considered in the context of the holiday, rather than the every day, and therefore might offer representations of the British character which contradict representations seen in other types of film. As I suggested in Chapter 1, a holiday displaces people from the familiar surroundings of their daily lives, and therefore might encourage them to behave differently to how they would at home: by either putting on airs and graces, or by letting their hair down. Cinema, like the picture postcard and the holiday guide, mediates the holiday and may unconsciously influence the way the holidaymaker behaves. Although there have been representations of the middle-class holiday, British film has, for the most part, chosen to represent the holiday as a popular working-class experience, and this is arguably because the cinema itself is a popular form of entertainment.

My research on the holiday film can be seen as a continuation of previous studies on British national cinema, but it also builds upon this by linking film analysis to readings of the holiday, and of popular culture in general. This condensed study invites further discussion about the representation of leisure in film and its construction of national identity.

A thorough reading of film (and consequently a thorough understanding of its ideological processes) should not merely include textual analysis, but should also aim to incorporate an investigation into the way audiences receive it, and how this in turn might be reflected in their lives between visits to the cinema. In Chapter 2, for instance, I looked at sociological research on audiences in order to understand how cinemagoers might engage with the holiday film, and subsequently go about constructing holidays of their own. I have also considered how cinema and the holiday can be linked by feelings of temporary escape, for example, in the experience of being taken “out of yerself” which holidaymaker Elsie Dawson refers to in *Holiday Camp*, and which cinemagoers similarly refer to in research by Richardson and Sheridan ((eds.) 1987: 120). In order for these films to make an impression on the cinemagoing audience, however, this sense of freedom should ideally be linked to ‘something that really might happen in real life’ (Mayer, 1948: 182 – 183).

Although I have offered a new and original area of research I do not intend to draw a line under everything I have discussed. Just as ideas of national identity shift and change, an analysis of the holiday and British film could be considered as an open-ended and on-going project. In Chapter 2 I indicated where further research on the holiday film might lead to in my reference to the function of film as an attraction at holiday resorts mentioned by Eyles (1996: 180) and Kuhn (2002: 244). There is also the opportunity to look at how the holidaymaker mediates their own experience of the holiday by framing it in personal holiday films. These home movies invite further questions about agency, and could be analysed in context with other non-fictional films which re-present the holiday.

In my final chapter, I suggested that the British seaside has recently been represented in a number of films where characters visit the coast in a quiet, introspective mood. It is sometimes difficult to analyse the meanings of such texts when living in the period in which they are released, but it appears that, in the first decade of the 21st century, there has been a renewed interest how the coastal landscape can reinforce feelings of national identity, tradition and security in what might be considered as a period of uncertainty. This can also be seen in the continued popularity of the BBC television series *Coast* (2005 – present), and the programme *Britain's Favourite Drives* (2009). Reality TV shows such as *Holiday Swap* (2003) and *Wakey Wakey Campers* (2005) have also re-presented the idea of the traditional British holiday. It will be useful, perhaps, to look back on these films in the coming decade and consider what they say about Britain today.

The traditional British seaside resort appears to be undergoing some sort of renaissance and continues to be acknowledged, for example in newspaper colour supplements that recommend the most fashionable places to eat seafood and the best beaches to surf.²⁰⁶ 'Coffee table' books such as the collection of Butlin's postcard illustrations introduced by Martin Parr, *Our True Intent is all For Your Delight...* (2002), and Peter Williams' *The English Seaside* (2006), record holiday resorts as sites of heritage interest. Contemporary art appears to play an important role in the acknowledgement of the seaside's relevance to British culture and society in the 21st century. In the summer of 2008 the Folkestone

²⁰⁶ *The Observer* Magazine of 27th June 2004 was a 52-page seaside special which included information on beach wear, ice-cream parlours, interviews with artists and musicians who reside by the sea, and details about some of the best places to eat around the British coast. *The Guardian* similarly produced a special 'Guide to the Seaside' in July 2007; a pocket-sized booklet which catered for all sorts of preferences from those who like sandy beaches, others who want to find the perfect place to swim, and those interested in marine life, fossils, and unusual rock formations. The seaside's link to culture and history is highlighted with references to Turner's painting 'The Fighting Temeraire', Barbara Hepworth's inspiration from St Ives, through to Anthony Gormley's recent work 'Another Place' which consists of '100 cast-iron replicas of his own body facing out to sea...[on] Crosby Beach in Liverpool' (Herd (ed.), 2007: 67).

Triennial showcased the work of a number of artists including Richard Wentworth whose:

discrete interventions around the town describe[d] nearby local flora on a number of blue plaques – privet, the plane tree, a weeping ash in the graveyard – none of which was an indigenous species. [This alluded to a subtext about identity] in a town with its share of asylum seekers and its mistrust of outsiders (Searle, 2008: 18).

As I outlined in Chapter 1, Prime Minister Gordon Brown's high profile holiday to Southwold in the summer of 2008 also prompted discussions about the idea of a traditional seaside holiday being 'fashionable' again (Jack, 2008: 32).²⁰⁷ With this revival of interest in the British seaside resort, and its representation in art, print media and television, the holiday certainly seems ripe once again for film representation. But, as I have found when examining the fluctuating nature of the industry in its shifts between commercial and artistic success and decline, this communal experience of film is largely dependent on efforts by the British film industry to sustain a substantial domestic audience who can delight in the cinematic idea of the holiday.

²⁰⁷ 'Almost certainly by accident – intent has been a bad friend recently – Gordon Brown has done a fashionable thing. He is going to Southwold for his holidays' (Jack, 2008: 32).

Indicative Filmography²⁰⁸

1896:

Landing At Low Tide, R W Paul, Directed by Birt Acres
Comedy. Brighton

1897:

Children Paddling at the Seaside, G A Smith, Directed by GA Smith
Comedy. Southwick

1898:

Sloper's Visit To Brighton, Directed by James Williamson
Comedy. Brighton. Donkey rides, bathing

1899:

Landing At Low Tide, Haydon & Urry
Comedy

The Interrupted Courtship, Warwick Trading Company
Comedy. Couple try to steal kiss in busy hotel lounge

They Do Such Things at Brighton, Warwick Trading Company
Cast: Will Evans
Comedy

1900:

An Incident on Brighton Pier, Directed by GA Smith
Comedy. 'The masher mashed'

A Wet Day at the Seaside, RW Paul
Comedy. Children make 'seaside' in their bathroom

²⁰⁸ Most of the information here as been sourced from Gifford, 2001, except the films released after 1994, the information for which I have gathered from the BFI database, and from the films themselves.

I have excluded American-British co-productions which have been funded mostly by American money, or have American stars, writers and/or directors, and therefore appear more 'American' than 'British'. These include, for example: *The Light in the Piazza* (1961), *The Roman Spring of Mrs Stone* (1962), *Two For The Road* (1967), *Funny Bones* (1995) and *Mr. Bean's Holiday* (2008).

1901:

Interior of a Railway Carriage – Bank Holiday, Hepworth. Directed by Percy Stow
Comedy

1902:

Tommy Atkins and His Harriet on a Bank Holiday, Directed by GA Smith
Comedy. Coster couple dance

The Swells, RW Paul
Comedy. Men peep into girl's bathing machine and die of shock

1903:

A Trip to Southend or Blackpool, Directed by James Williamson
Comedy. Discomforts of a crowded railway compartment

1904:

The Great Sea Serpent, Directed by James Williamson
Comedy. Boy puts worm in seaside telescope.

Professor Richard Codman's Punch & Judy Show. Directed by John Codman
Comedy. Llandudno. Seaside puppet performance.

Mixed Bathing, Directed by Alf Collins
Comedy. Brighton. Fat husband flirts with swimming girls

Lovers on the Sands (aka A Stroll on the Sands), Directed by Alf Collins
Comedy. Brighton

On Brighton Pier, Directed by Alf Collins
Comedy. Brighton

A Day at Brighton, Directed by Alf Collins
Comedy. Brighton

A Trip to Paris (USA: An Englishman's Trip to Paris from London), Hepworth
Directed by Lewin Fitzhamon
Comedy

1905:

Mr Brown's Bathing Tent, Directed by Percy Stow
Comedy. Folkstone. Boys pin 'Ladies' sign on man's bathing tent.

The Inquisitive Boots, Hepworth, Directed by Lewin Fitzhamon.
Cast: Sebastian Smith
Comedy. Hotel 'Boots' peeps through keyholes

The Annual Trip of the Mothers' Meeting, Hepworth, Directed by Lewin Fitzhamon
Cast: Sebastian Smith, Thurston Harris
Comedy. Southend

Father's Picnic on the Sands, Cricks & Sharp
Comedy

Peeping Tom, Cricks & Sharp, Directed by Tom Green
Comedy. Hotel guest bores hole in wall and is caught by girl's husband

1906:

When Father Got a Holiday (Reissue: 1913), Directed by Percy Stow
Comedy. Mother, father and large family go for a cycle ride

Seaside Lodgings, RW Paul, (Directed by JH Martin)
Comedy

A Lodging House Comedy, Directed by Alf Collins
Comedy. Boots has revenge on drunken toff by changing room numbers.

Our Seaside Holiday, Sheffield Photographic Company
Directed by Frank Mottershaw
Comedy. Family of six go to seaside by train

Seaside Views, Cricks & Sharp, Directed by Tom Green
Comedy. Tramps peep into bathing machine and get caught

Caught by the Tide, Clarendon (Gau) Directed by Percy Stow
Adventure. Couple cut off by tide, are hauled to cliff top

The Troubles of a Seaside Photographer, Walterdaw
Comedy. Mishaps of a photographer at seaside

When Cripples Meet. Gaumont. Directed by Alf Collins
Comedy. Margate. Invalids fight when Bath chairs collide

Her Morning Dip, Gaumont. Directed by Alf Collins
Comedy. Margate. Peeping Toms surprised when comely girl is revealed by her costume as bony

Rescued by Lifeboat, Gaumont. Directed by Alf Collins
Adventure. Margate. Lifeboat launched to rescue capsized trippers

1907:

When the Mistress Took Her Holiday, Alpha Trading Co. (Walterdaw)
Directed by Arthur Cooper
Comedy. Servants don absent employers' clothes and have party

A Sailor's Lass, Hepworth, Directed by Lewin Fitzhamon.
Cast: Dolly Lupone, Lewin Fitzhamon
Chase. Bognor

Simpkin's Saturday Off, Hepworth, Directed by Lewin Fitzhamon.
Cast: Thurston Harris
Chase. Bognor. Man rides carriage, goat-cart, cycle etc.

A Seaside Girl, Hepworth, Directed by Lewin Fitzhamon.
Cast: May Clark, Frank Wilson, Thurston Harris
Chase. Bognor

A Tramp's Dream of Wealth, Hepworth, Directed by Lewin Fitzhamon.
Cast: Thurston Harris, Gertie Potter
Comedy. Bognor

Dumb Sagacity, Hepworth, Directed by Lewin Fitzhamon.
Cast: Gertie Potter, Blair the dog
Animal. Bognor

Short-Sighted Jane, Gaumont. Directed by Alf Collins
Chase. Myopic woman collides with people and is chased into sea

A Letter in the Sand, Hepworth, Directed by Lewin Fitzhamon.
Cast: Dolly Lupone, Thurston Harris
Chase. Bognor

The Artful Lovers, Hepworth, Directed by Lewin Fitzhamon.
Cast: Thurston Harris, May Clark, Dolly Lupone, Frank Wilson
Comedy. Bognor. Suitor saves girls' father from drifting bathing machine

Dying of Thirst, Hepworth, Directed by Lewin Fitzhamon
Adventure. Bognor

The Heavenly Twins, Hepworth, Directed by Lewin Fitzhamon.
Cast: Thurston Harris, Gertie Potter
Comedy. Bognor

Perserving Edwin, Hepworth, Directed by Lewin Fitzhamon.
Cast: May Clark, Thurston Harris
Comedy. Bognor

1908:

A Day's Holiday, Williamson. Directed by James Williamson
Comedy. Miseries of a family forced to spend holiday at home

Put Pa Amongst The Girls. Gaumont. Directed by Alf Collins
Comedy. seaside. Man flirts with girl and is caught by wife.

A Thoughtless Beauty (aka *Forced to Consent*), Hepworth, Directed by Lewin Fitzhamon.

Cast: Gertie Potter

Comedy. Bognor. Couple tie girl's father to pier post and marry in boat

A Fascinating Game, Hepworth, Directed by Lewin Fitzhamon

Cast: gertie Potter

Comedy. Bognor

An Unfortunate Bathe, Hepworth, Directed by Lewin Fitzhamon

Cast: Gertie Potter

Comedy. Bognor. Girls trick old men by exchanging their clothes

A Visit to the Seaside, Natural Color Kinematograph Co, Directed by G A Smith
Comedy. Brighton. Seaside scenes including girl falling in sea from boat and men peeping at bathing girls. (First British colour film).

The Schoolboy's Revolt, Hepworth, Directed by Lewin Fitzhamon.

Cast: Bertie Potter, Gertie Potter

Comedy. Bognor. Two boys play pranks with bathing machine, boat etc.

Father's Holiday. Wrench

Comedy. Misadventures of family man on holiday

1909:

A Seaside Episode, Cricks & Martin, Directed by A E Coleby

Comedy. Bexhill. Man flirts with girls and is caught by wife

1910:

A Night Attack, Empire Films (Butcher)

Comedy. Seaside lodgers find fleas in bed

Off For the Holidays (Reissue: 1914), Clarendon. Directed by Percy Stow

Comedy

Looking for Lodgings at the Seaside, Acme (C & M), Directed by Fred Rains.

Cast: Fred Rains

Comedy. Family sleep in boat and drift out to sea

His Majesty's Guests Steal a Holiday, Barker. Produced by Will Barker

Comedy. Convicts overpower warders and have holiday in jail

A Spoilt Child of Fortune, Hepworth, Directed by Lewin Fitzhamon

Drama. Lulworth. Tramp swims to save spoilt girl, cut off by tide

1911:

Tilly at the Seaside, Hepworth, Directed by Lewin Fitzhamon.

Cast: Alma Taylor, Chrissie White

Comedy

Happy Harold's Holiday, Walturdaw
Chase

Simpkins' Dream of a Holiday, Natural Color Kinematograph Co. Directed by (Walter Booth) Theo Bouwmeester
Trick, Clerk dreams of a country holiday and mysterious happenings to his clothes

A Seaside Introduction, Hepworth, Directed by Lewin Fitzhamon
Cast: Hay Plumb, Alma Taylor
Comedy. Brighton

Didums and the Bathing Machine, Clarendon, Directed by Wilfred Noy
Comedy. Child exhibits father as Wild Man from Borneo

A Seaside Comedy, Natural Color Kinematograph Co. Directed by Theo Bouwmeester
Comedy

1912:

Didums on His Holidays, Clarendon. Directed by Wilfred Noy
Comedy. Child exchanges labels on Ladies' and Gentlemen's bathrooms

A Country Holiday, Directed by Stuart Kinder.
Cast: Irene Vernon
Comedy

Brown's Day Off (Reissue: 1915), Cricks & Martin, Directed by (Edwin J Collins).
Comedy. Henpeck has day by sea, where wife takes his photograph

1913:

By the Sea, Selsior. Mercy Manners
Musical. Dance to synchronise with cinema orchestras: Bathing girls interrupted by masher

It's Best to be Natural, Clarendon, Directed by Percy Stow
Comedy. Southend. Childhood sweethearts meet again and pretend to be still youthful

Bumbles' Walk to Brighton, Ec-Ko (Univ), Directed by W P Kellino.
Cast: Phillippi
Comedy

What a Holiday! Cricks (C & M), Directed by (Charles Calvert)
Comedy. Misadventures of three men on river camping holiday

Her Pony's Love, Gaumont, Directed by Lewin Fitzhamon.
Cast: Constance Somers-Clarke, Fred Urwyne
Animal, Bognor

Bumbles' Holiday, Ec-Ko, Directed by W P Kellino.
Cast: Phillip
Comedy

Landladies Beware, Martin (C & M), Directed by (Dave Aylott)
Comedy. Seaside landlady forced to board tramp for a week

John Willie at Blackpool (Reissue: 1916 *Smiffy at Blackpool*), Sphinx (Davidson).
Comedy

Henpeck's Holiday, Sphinx, (Davidson)
Comedy. Blackpool

The Dustmen's Holiday, Ec-Ko (Univ), Directed by W P Kellino.
Cast: Albert Egbert, Seth Egbert
Comedy. Swansea

By the Sad Sea Waves. Dart (Cosmo). Directed (Stuart Kinder)
Comedy. Henpeck has day out while wife is away.

1914:

Oh What a Day! Hepworth, Directed by (Hay Plumb)
Comedy. Holiday husband loses ticket and hides in trunk.

Winky Goes Camping. Bamforth (YSA) Directed by Cecil Birch.
Cast: Reggie Switz
Comedy

Fun on the Sands at Blackpool. AKA *Fun at the Seaside*. Blackpool Town Hall (KTC).
Cast: August, September, E Hannaford, E Alrag
Comedy. Family's misadventures at Blackpool beach and funfair

1915:

The Painted Lady Betty. Hepworth. Directed by Frank Wilson.
Cast: Tom Powers, Alma Taylor, Chrissie White
Romance. Lyme Regis

Oh My! Bamforth (YCC) Directed by Cecil Birth.
Cast: Reggie Switz
Comedy. Hotel porter causes confusion by exchanging room no.s.

Sharps and Flats. Bamforth (YCC) Directed by Cecil Birth.
Cast: Reggie Switz.
Comedy. Camping holiday

Pimple's Holiday. Picadilly (Browne). Directed by Fred Evans.
Cast: Joe Evans, Fred Evans
Comedy. Two men meet their wives on holiday at the Karsino.

Bertie's Holiday. Moonshine (YCC).
Cast: Bertie Wright
Comedy. Yokel dons clothes of his dude double.

Nipper's Busy Holiday. Reissue: 1919, *His Busy Holiday*. (Globe) John Bull (Davidson)
Cast: S Reginald, Lupino Lane
Comedy

1916:

Silas at the Seaside. Picadilly (Browne). Directed Joe Evans.
Cast: Joe Evans
Comedy. Bumpkin is robbed and takes job as Bath chair attendant.

1917:

Pimple's Motor Tour. Picadilly (Walturdaw). Directed Fred Evans, Joe Evans.
Cast: Fred Evans
Comedy

Curly's Holiday. Tower. Producer, Director J. F. Carr.
Cast: J. F. Carr
Comedy. Blackpool. (In conjunction with £5 prize for discovering 'Curly' in audience).

1918:

Hindle Wakes. Diamond Super (Royal). (Adapted from Stanley Houghton's 1912 play).
Directed by Maurice Elvey
Cast: Norman McKinnel, Colette O'Neil
Romance. Blackpool

Miss Mischief. Midland Actors. Directed by Max Leder
Cast: Phyllis Lea, Dorothy Brame, Bruce Channing
Comedy. Blackpool

1920:

Trotter on the Trot. Southend Films. Directed Tom Aitken
Cast: Arthur Lenville, Irene Tripod
Comedy. Southend. Henpeck tries to elude wife at seaside

Down on the Farm. Empire Comedies (Film Sales). Directed by Maurice Sandground
Cast: Charles Stevens, Muriel Sothern
Comedy. Man and chorus girl spend holiday on health farm

Three Men in a Boat. Artistic. Directed by Challis Sanderson. (Novel Jerome K Jerome)
Cast: Lionelle Howard, Manning Haynes, Johnny Butt
Comedy

The Holiday Husband. Alliance (Shaftsbury). Directed by A. C. Hunter
Cast: Harry Welchman, Irma Royce

Drama

1921:

Pins and Needles. Gliddon d' Eyncourt Productions. Directed by John Gliddon
Cast: Francis Innys, Elizabeth Brandt
Comedy. Margate. Man on motor scooter follows girl and saves her from cad

Four Men in a Van. Reissue: 1925 (United; cut) Direct Film Traders/Titan. Directed
by/Script by Hugh Croise. S (novel) 'R. Andom' (We Three and Troddles).
Cast: Manning Haynes, Donald Searle, Moore Marriott
Comedy. Episodic misadventures of friends on caravan holiday

1922:

Keeping Man Interested. Quality Plays (Walturdaw). Directed by George A. Cooper
Cast: Sydney N. Folker, Joan McLean
Comedy. Couple change minds about separate holidays and mistake each other for
burglars

1925:

The Only Man. Retitled: *The Leading Man*. Directed by Harry B. Parkinson
Cast: Moore Marriott
Comedy. Canvey Island. Wife catches husband flirting in bathing beauty contest

Milestone Melodies. (Series). Reciprocity. P. G. B. Samuelson. Directed by Alexander
Butler
Musical picturisations of lyrics. 'I Do Like to be Beside the Seaside'

1926:

Walter's Day Out. British Super Comedies. (Wardour). Directed by James B. Sloan
Cast: Walter Forde
Comedy

1927:

Hindle Wakes. USA: Fanny Hawthorne. (Adapted from Stanley Houghton's 1912 play).
Produced by Maurice Elvey, Victor Saville. Directed by Maurice Elvey.
Cast: Estelle Brody, John Stuart
Romance. Blackpool

1928:

Weekend Wives. BIP (Wardour). Directed by Harry Lachman
Cast: Monty Banks.
Comedy. Deauville

1929:

The Three Kings. British and Foreign films (Silent). Directed by Hans Steinhoff
Cast: Henry Edwards, Evelyn Holt, Warwick Ward
Drama. Blackpool. Clown loves young housekeeper and saves her from fire caused by jealous lion-tamer

Atlantic. (Trilingual). Reissue: 1935. BIP (Wardour). Producer/Directed E. A. Dupont
Cast: Madeleine Carroll
Drama. Transatlantic passenger liner strikes iceberg and sinks

The Hate Ship. (Bilingual). Directed by Norman Walker
Cast: Jameson Thomas, Jean Colin
Crime. Son of murdered Russian count invites suspects on revenge cruise

1931:

No Lady. Reissue: 1943. Gaumont. Directed by Lupino Lane
Cast: Lupino Lane
Comedy. Blackpool

Hindle Wakes. Gaumont. (Adapted from Stanley Houghton's 1912 play). Produced by Michael Balcon, Directed by Victor Saville
Cast: Sybil Thorndike
Drama. Blackpool

1932:

Hotel Splendide. Film Engineering (Ideal). Directed by Michael Powell
Cast: Jerry Verno, Vera Sherburne
Comedy. Clerk inherits seaside hotel built on field where ex-convict buried loot

Strip, Strip Hooray! BIP (Pathe). Directed by Norman Lee
Cast: Ken Douglas, Betty Norton
Comedy. Photographer blackmails fiancée's father with sunbathing snaps

Old Spanish Customers. BIP (Wardour). Directed by Lupino Lane
Cast: Leslie Fuller, Drusilla Wills, Binnie Barnes
Comedy. Spain. Henpeck on prize holiday mistaken for toreador

Holiday Lovers. Harry Cohen (Fox). Directed by Jack Harrison
Cast: Marjorie Pickard, George Vollaire
Romance. Couple meet on holiday and each pretend to be rich

1933:

To Brighton With Gladys. George King (Fox). Directed by George King
Cast: Harry Milton, Constance Shotter
Comedy. Man must take rich uncle's pet penguin from London to seaside

Three Men in a Boat. ATP (ABFD). Directed by Graham Cutts. (Novel Jerome K. Jerome)
Cast: William Austin, Edmond Breon, Billy Milton

Comedy

1934:

On the Air. Reissue: 1939. (EB) British Lion. Directed by Herbert Smith
Cast: Davy Burnaby, Anona Winn, Max Wall
Musical. Radio stars on holiday help village vicar stage concert

Boots! Boots! Reissue: 1938. (Amb; 25 mins cut). Blakely (Butcher). Directed by Bert Tracey
Cast: George Formby
Musical. Hotel 'Boots; and scullery maid star in cabaret

Autumn Crocus. ATP (ABFD). Producer/Directed Basil Dean
Cast: Ivor Novello
Romance. Teacher on holiday falls in love with married innkeeper

Seeing is Believing. B & D Paramount British. Directed by Redd Davis
Cast: Billy Hartnell
Comedy. Police recruit mistakes girl for thief and trails her aboard father's cruise ship

Sing As We Go. Reissue: 1953. (EB). ATP (ABFD). Producer/Director Basil Dean
Cast: Gracie Fields, John Loder, Stanley Holloway
Comedy. Blackpool

1935:

All At Sea. Fox British. Directed by Anthony Kimmins
Cast: Tyrell Davis, Googie Withers
Comedy. Timid clerk spends legacy on sea cruise and poses as author

No Limit. Reissue: 1946. ATP (ABFD). Produced by Basil Dean, Directed by Monty Banks
Cast: George Formby
Comedy. Isle of Man

Little Paper People. (ABFD). Producer/Director Margaret Hoyland
Trick. Paper marionettes: Victorian foibles and seaside characters

1936:

Love At Sea. B & D/ Paramount British. Directed by Adrian Brunel
Cast: Rosalyn Boulter
Comedy. Girl on cruise loves reporter accused of robbing her elderly suitor

Unlucky Jim. Master (RKO). Directed by Harry S. Marks
Cast: Bob Stevens, Agnes Lenton
Comedy. Adventures of two boys on half-day's holiday

1937:

Not Wanted On Voyage. USA: *Treachery on the High Seas*. Dela Films (BL). Directed by Emil E. Reinert. (Based on play by Maurice Messenger *Murder in the Stalls*)

Cast: Bebe Daniels, Ben Lyon

Comedy. Singer and crooks seek ruby necklace during transatlantic voyage

Ship's Concert. WB-FN (Warner). Directed by Leslie Hiscott

Cast: Claude Hulbert, Joyce Kirby

Musical. Luxury cruise passengers put on show to aid stowaway actors

Catch As Catch Can. Reissue: 1943 (200 ft cut); 1947 *Atlantic Episode* (Stah) Fox

British. Directed by Roy Kellino

Cast: James Mason

Crime. Girl smuggles diamond aboard transatlantic liner and crooks try to steal it

Change For a Sovereign WB-FN (FN). Directed by Maurice Elvey

Cast: Seymour Hicks, Chili Bouchier

Comedy. Ruritania. Drunken double takes place of king on holiday

Transatlantic Trouble. Retitled: *Take it From Me*. WB-FN (FN) Directed by William Beaudine

Cast: Max Miller

Comedy. Dud boxer elopes on liner with lady and his pursuing manager is mistaken for millionaire

Non-Stop New York. Reissue: 1947 (NR) Gaumont (GFD). Directed by Robert Stevenson. S (Novel) Ken Attiwell (*Sky Steward*)

Cast: John Loder, Anna Lee

Crime. 1940. Gangsters try to kill chorus-girl witness who stows away in transatlantic airliner

The Live Wire. Reissue: 1946 (NR) Tudor/Olympic (BL), Directed by Hernert Brenon. S (Play) Stafford Dickens (*Plunder in the Air*).

Cast: Bernard Nedell

Comedy. Yankee trickster reforms and turns worthless land into spa

Sam Small Leaves Town. Reissue: 1942, *It's Sam Small Again* (Fed; 9 mins cut) British Screen Service. Directed by Alfred Goulding.

Cast: Stanley Holloway

Comedy. Butlin's, Skegness

1938:

Bank Holiday. USA: *Three on a Weekend*. Reissue: 1951 (GFD; 18 mins cut), Gainsborough (GFD). Directed by Carol Reed.

Cast: John Lodge, Margaret Lockwood, Wally Patch, Kathleen Harrison

Drama. Brighton

It's In The Blood. WB-FN (FN). Directed by Gene Gerrard. S (Novel) David Whitelaw (*The Big Picture*).

Cast: Claude Hulbert
Comedy. Film fan on day trip to Bologne catches jewel thieves

Double or Quits. WB-FN (Warner). Directed by Roy William Neill
Cast: Frank Fox
Crime. Reporter is double of thief who steals rare stamps on transatlantic liner

Hey! Hey! USA! Reissue: 1951 (17 mins cut) Gainsborough (GFD), Directed by Marcel Varnel.
Cast: Will Hay, Edgar Kennedy
Comedy. Tutor on transatlantic liner mistaken by gangster saves millionaire's son from kidnappers

1939:

Inspector Hornleigh on Holiday. 20th. Century Productions (20th). Directed by Walter Forde.
Cast: Gordon Harker, Alistair Sim
Crime

The Middle Watch. ABPC. (Based on play by Ian King and Stephen King-Hall) Directed by Thomas Bentley.
Cast: Jack Buchanan, Greta Gynt.
Comedy. Girls accidentally taken to sea aboard battleship must be hidden from admiral

1940:

Return to Yesterday. Reissue: 1944 (Renown), Ealing/CAPAD (ABFD). Directed by Robert Stevenson, Screenplay (Play) Robert Morley (*Goodness, How Sad*).
Cast: Clive Brook, Anna Lee
Romance. Hollywood star posing as actor joins seaside repertory company and falls for affianced leading lady

1941:

Gert and Daisy's Weekend. Reissue: 1945 (Sherwood; 10 mins cut), Butcher.
Cast: Elsie Waters, Doris Waters.
Comedy. Cockney sisters take evacuees on a trip to the countryside

1943:

Millions Like Us. Reissue: 1947 (ABFD; cut), Gainsborough (GFD).
Cast: Eric Portman, Patricia Roc, Gordon Jackson.
War. Family spends peacetime holiday at the seaside prior to Second World War

1944:

Hotel Reserve. RKO. Directed by Lance Comfort, Max Greene
Cast: James Mason
Crime. France, 1938. Hotel guest unmasks spy who used his camera by mistake

1945:

Here We Come Gathering. Wallace (GFD). Produced and Directed by Barry Delmaine.
Children, Kent. Unpopular boy on fruit-picking holiday rescues girl from sandpit

1946:

Hands Across The Ocean. Gordon (BL). Directed by Harry Gordon
Cast: Pearl Cameron, Sgt Bill Swyre
Romance. GI and English girl fall in love and tour England

Under New Management. Reissue: 1948 *Honeymoon Hotel* (cut). Mancunian (Butcher).
Producer and Director John E. Blakeley.
Cast: Nat Jackley, Norman Evans
Comedy. Sweep inherits hotel and staffs it with army pals

Quiet Weekend. ABPC (Pathe). Directed by Harold French
Cast: Derek Farr, Barbara White
Comedy. Family spend hectic weekend of romance and poaching at country cottage

1947:

Bank Holiday Luck. Baxter (ABFD). Directed by Baynham Honri.
Cast: Fred Wynne, Olive Sloane
Comedy. Builders recount adventures on previous bank holiday

Bush Christmas. Reissue: 1950 (ABFD), 1971 (15 mins cut). Ralph Smart Directed by
Ralph Smart (GFD)
Cast: Chips Rafferty
Children. New South Wales

Holiday Camp. Reissue: 1948, 1954 (Monarch, 12 mins cut). Gainsborough (GFD).
Directed by Ken Annakin.
Cast: Flora Robson, Dennis Price, Jack Warner, Kathleen Harrison
Comedy. Butlin's, Filey

Brighton Rock. ABPC (Pathe). Directed John Boulting
Cast: Richard Attenborough
Crime. Brighton, 1938

1948:

The Gentlemen Go By. AIPGB (Electa). Directed by J. Widgey Newman, John Calthrop
Cast: Conrad Phillips, Alastair Bannerman
Crime. Ex-sailor joins smuggling gang using holiday camp as front

Holidays With Pay. Reissue: 1950 (cut). Film Studios Manchester. (Mancunian).
Producer and Director John E. Blakeley.
Cast: Frank Randle, Tessie O'Shea
Comedy. Blackpool. (Extract in *Tonight's The Night*, 1960, *Seaside Frolics*)

1949:

Forbidden. Pennant (BL). Produced and Directed by George King
Cast: Douglas Montgomery, Hazel Court
Crime. Blackpool. Chemist tries to poison extravagant wife

A Man's Affair. Concord (Ex). Produced and Directed Jay Gardner Lewis
Cast: Hamish Menzies, Cliff Gordon
Romance. Ramsgate. Playboy tries to spoil miner's holiday romances

Dick Barton Strikes Back. Exclusive. Directed by Godfrey Grayson
Cast: Don Stannard, Sebastian Cabot
Crime. Blackpool. Foreign agents beam atomic rays from top of Tower

Old Mother Riley's New Venture. Reissue: *Mother Riley's New Venture*, 1953. Harry Reynolds (Renown). Directed by John Harlow
Cast: Arthur Lucan, Kitty McShane
Comedy. Dishwasher becomes hotelier and is framed for gem theft

1950:

Last Holiday. ABPC/Watergate (AB-Pathe). Produced by Stephen Mitchell, A. D. Peters, J. B. Priestley, Directed by Henry Cass, Screenplay by J. B. Priestley
Cast: Alec Guinness, Kay Walsh
Comedy. (Torquay)

The Mysterious Poacher. Reissue: 1973 (18 mins cut). G-B Instructional (GFD). Directed by Don Chaffey
Cast: Herbert Leidinger
Children. Austria. Holiday children help gamekeeper trap poacher

Ha'Penny Breeze. Storytellers (AB-Pathe). Directed by Frank Worth
Cast: Don Sharp, Edwin Richfield
Drama. Suffolk. Ex-soldier turns 'dead' village into yachting centre

1951:

Worm's Eye View. Reissue: 1955, (Renown). Byron (ABFD). Directed by Jack Raymond.
Cast: Ronald Shiner, Diana Dors
Comedy. 1942. Adventures of a group of airmen billeted on seaside landlady

Penny Points to Paradise. Advance/PYL (Adelphi). Directed by Tony Young.
Cast: Harry Secombe, Alfred Marks, Peter Sellers
Comedy. Brighton

Encore. Two Cities/Paramount (GFD). *Winter Cruise* segment Directed by Pat Jackson
Cast: Kay Walsh

1952:

Brandy for the Parson. Group 3 (ABFD). Directed by John Eldridge

Cast: James Donald, Kenneth More

Comedy. Couple on yachting holiday become involved with brandy smugglers

Hindle Wakes. USA: *Holiday Week*. Monarch. (Adapted from Stanley Houghton's 1912 play). Directed by Arthur Crabtree

Cast: Lisa Daniely, Leslie Dwyer, Brian Worth

Romance. Blackpool

1953:

Genevieve. Reissue: 1960. Sirius (GFD). Produced and Directed by Henry Cornelius

Cast: Diana Sheridan, John Gregson, Kay Kendall, Kenneth More

Comedy. Brighton

Innocents in Paris. Reissue: 1956 (Renown, 10 mins cut). Romulus (IFD). Directed by Anatole de Grunwald

Cast: Alastair Sim, Ronald Shiner, Claire Bloom, Margaret Rutherford

Comedy. Seven stories of British tourists on a weekend trip to Paris

The Girl on the Pier. Major (Apex). Directed by Lance Comfort

Cast: Veronica Hurst, Ron Randell

Crime. Brighton

A Day to Remember. Group (GFD). Produced by Betty E. Box, Directed by Ralph Thomas. S (Novel) Jerrard Tickell (*The Hand and the Flower*)

Cast: Stanley Holloway

Comedy. Adventures of public house darts team on day trip to Boulogne

1954:

A Letter From the Isle of Wight. Rayant (ABFD/CFF). Directed by Brian Salt

Cast: Robin Doyer, Joy Ray

Children. Coastguard's son and visiting cousin saved from sea by lighthouse keepers

Calling All Cars. Fancey (NR). Directed by Maclean Rogers

Cast: Cardew Robinson

Comedy. Friends on a motoring holiday pursue two girls

Mystery on Bird Island. Rayant (BL/CFF). Directed by John Haggerty

Cast: Mavis Sage, Jennifer Beach

Children. Alderney. Holiday children catch smugglers using bird sanctuary

1955:

The Lyons in Paris. Hammer (Ex). Directed by Val Guest

Cast: Bebe Daniels, Ben Lyon, Barbara Lyon, Richard Lyon

Comedy. Complications when family spend holiday in Paris

Out of the Clouds. Ealing (GFD). Directed by Basil Dearden
Cast: Anthony Steele, Robert Beatty
Smuggling and romance in fogbound London airport

The Love Match. Group 3/Beaconsfield (BL). Directed by David Paltenghi
Cast: Arthur Askey, Thora Hird
Comedy. Lancashire. Football fans try to replace stolen holiday funds

Playground Express. Grendon (BL/CFF). Directed by John Irwin.
Cast: Peter Butterworth, Humphrey Kent
Brighton

Song of Norway. Fancey (NR). Directed by Maclean Rogers
Cast: Eric Micklewood, Adrienne Scott
Oslo. English girl becomes hotel receptionist, enters ski race and is rescued from crevasse

Raising a Riot. Reissue: 1960. London/Wessex (BL). Directed by Wendy Toye
Cast: Kenneth More
Comedy. Father copes with children on holiday in old windmill

The Secret. Laureate/Golden Era (Eros). Directed by Raker Endfield
Cast: Sam Wannamaker, Mandy Miller
Crime Brighton

No Love For Judy. De Lane Lea/Archway. Directed by Jacques De Lane Lea
Cast: Ellette Mauret, Zoe Newton
Comedy. Riviera. Model on holiday steals companion's boy friends

Doctor At Sea. Group (GFD). Directed by Ralph Thomas. S (Novel) Richard Gordon
Cast: Dirk Bogarde, Brigitte Bardot
Comedy. Misadventures of medical officer aboard passenger-carrying cargo steamer

Cast a Dark Shadow. Frobisher (Eros). Directed by Lewis Gilbert. S (Play) Janet Green
(Murder Mistaken)
Cast: Dirk Bogarde, Margaret Lockwood
Crime. Brighton

1956:

Fun on a Weekend. Carlyle. Produced and Directed by Oliver Negus
Cast: Chris and Jennifer
Children. Cornwall. Children rescue boy stranded on beach

A Touch of the Sun. Raystro (Eros). Directed by Gordon Parry
Cast: Frankie Howerd
Comedy. Hotel Porter inherits £10,000 and has staff pose as guests to impress prospective purchasers

Three Men in a Boat. Remus (IFD). (Novel Jerome K. Jerome) Directed by Ken Annakin
Cast: Laurence Harvey, Jimmy Edwards, David Tomlinson

Comedy

1957:

Small Hotel. Welwyn (AB-Pathe). Directed by David MacDonald

Cast: Gordon Harker, Marie Lohr, John Loder

Comedy. Old hotel waiter refuses to be replaced by young girl

Not Wanted On Voyage. Byron/Ronald Shiner (Renown). Directed by Maclean Rogers

Cast: Ronald Shiner, Brian Rix

Comedy. Stewards thwart jewel thieves on cruise to Tangiers

Barnacle Bill. USA: *All At Sea.* Ealing (MGM). Directed by Charles Frend

Cast: Alec Guinness, Irene Browne

Comedy. Seasick sailor runs stationary cruise on old pier in spite of council opposition

1958:

Next To No Time! Montepelier (BL). Directed by Henry Cornelius. Screenplay (Novel)

Paul Gallico (*The Enchanted Hour*)

Cast: Kenneth More, Betsy Drake

Comedy. Shy designer gains confidence during nightly 'lost hour' aboard Queen Elizabeth

Girls At Sea. ABPC. Directed by Gilbert Gunn. Screenplay (Play) Stephen King-Hall, Ian Hay (*The Middle Watch*)

Cast: Guy Rolfe, Ronald Shiner

Comedy. Girls taken to sea on battleship must be hidden from admiral

Further Up The Creek. Byron/Hammer (Col). Directed by Val Guest

Cast: David Tomlinson, Frankie Howerd

Comedy. Lieutenant, put in charge of old frigate, is unaware that bosun is hiding paying passengers

1959:

The Captain's Table. Rank (RFD). Directed by Jack Lee

Cast: John Gregson, Peggy Cummings

Comedy. Cargo captain takes over luxury cruise and gets involved with widow and adventuress

Nudist Paradise. Reissue: 1962. Orb International. Directed by Charles Saunders

Cast: Anita Love, Carl Conway

Spielplatz. American art student falls for girl and joins nudist camp to be near her

1960:

The Nudist Story. Danziger (Eros). Directed by Ramsey Herrington

Cast: Shelley Martin, Brian Cobby

Nudist camp

The Entertainer. Woodfall/Holly (Bry). Screenplay (Play) John Osborne. Directed by Tony Richardson
Cast: Laurence Olivier, Brenda de Banzie, Roger Livesey, Joan Plowright
Drama. Morecombe, 1956

No Kidding. USA: *Beware of Children*. GHW. Screenplay (Novel) Verily Anderson (*Beware of Children*). Produced by Peter Rogers, Directed by Gerald Thomas
Cast: Leslie Phillips, Geraldine McEwan
Comedy. Couple inherit holiday home for deprived children of the rich

1961:

Ticket to Paradise. Bayford (Eros). Directed by Francis Searle
Cast: Emrys Jones, Patricia Dainton
Romance. Italy. Travel agent and tourist fall in love, each thinking the other is rich

Some Like It Cool. SF Films. Directed by Michael Winner
Cast: Julie Wilson, Thalia Vickers
Devon. Nudists

Don't Bother To Knock. USA: *Why Bother To Knock*. Haileywood (WPD). Directed by Cyril Frankel. Screenplay (Novel) Clifford Hanley (*Love From Everybody*)
Cast: Richard Todd, Nicole Maurey, Elke Sommer, Judith Anderson, June Thorburn
Comedy. Edinburgh. Travel agent's European girlfriends all arrive together

A Taste of Honey. Woodfall (Bry). Produced and Directed by Tony Richardson.
Screenplay (Play) Shelagh Delany.
Rita Tushingham, Dora Bryan
Blackpool sequence

Nudes of the World. Miracle/Searchlight (Miracle). Directed by Arnold Louis Miller
Cast: Vivienne Raimon, Monique Ammon
Beauty queen runs nudist camp in lord's grounds and appeases postmistress with fete for crippled daughter

Naked As Nature Intended. Markten/Compass (Compton). Produced and Directed by Harrison Marks
Cast: Pamela Green, Stuart Samuels
Travelogue/ Cornwall nudist camp

1962:

Carry On Cruising. GHW. Directed by Gerald Thomas
Cast: Sidney James, Kenneth Williams
Mediterranean cruise

World Without Shame. Mistral (Gala). Directed by Donovan Winter
Cast: Yvonne Martel, Larry Bowen
Nudist. Pools winners live naked on Mediterranean island

Jigsaw. Figaro (Britannia). Directed by Val Guest. Screenplay (Novel) Hilary Waugh (*Sleep Long, My Love*).

Cast: Jack Warner, Ronald Lewis
Crime. Brighton

The Punch and Judy Man. MacConkey (WPD). Directed by Jeremy Summers

Cast: Tony Hancock, Sylvia Sims
Comedy. Seaside entertainer, married to social climber, spoils mayor's celebration cabaret

My Bare Lady. Meadway/Notram Sewil (Compton). Directed by Arthur Knight

Cast: Julie Martin, Carl Conway
Nudist. Orpington. American war hero converts tourist to naturism

1963:

Summer Holiday. Ivy/Elstree (WPD). Directed by Peter Yates

Cast: Cliff Richard, Lauri Peters, Ron Moody, The Shadows.
Musical. European tour

The Leather Boys. Raymond Stross (Garrick). Directed by Sidney J. Furie. S (Novel) Eliot George

Cast: Rita Tushingham, Dudley Sutton, Gladys Henson, Colin Campbell
Butlin's Bognor Regis sequence

Take Off Your Clothes and Live. Miracle/Searchlight (Miracle). Directed by Arnold Louis Miller

Cast: Ian Michael, Gino Nennan, Jenny Lane
Cannes. Nine girls and male hosts spend naked holiday searching for treasure

Eves On Skis. Keatering (Gala). Produced and Directed by Michael Keatering

Cast: Elizabeth, Karl, Karen
Teenage London girl spends nudist holiday in the Austrian Alps

The V.I.P.s. MGM British. Directed by Anthony Asquith

Cast: Elizabeth Taylor, Richard Burton, Louis Jourdan, Margaret Rutherford
Passengers for New York stranded at London Airport

The Reluctant Nudist. Avon Overseas (Gala). Directed by Stanley Pelc

Cast: Annette Briand, Jeremy Howes
Nudist. Spielplatz

1964:

It's A Bare, Bare World. Antler (SF). Directed by Stanley Lang

Cast: Vicki Kennedy, Carol Haynes, Vera Novak
Nudist. Windsor. Girls persuade friends to join nudist camp

The System. Winner-Shipman (Bry). Directed by Michael Winner

Cast: Oliver Reed, Jane Merrow

Romance. Torbay. Beach photographer sleeps with rich holidaymaker and falls in love with her

The Beauty Jungle. USA: *Contest Girl*. Rank (RFD). Produced and Directed by Val Guest

Cast: Janette Scott, Ian Hendry, Edmund Purdom.

Drama. Reporter helps Bristol typist to become professional beauty contest winner

Wonderful Life. USA: *Swinger's Paradise*. Ivy (Elstree). Directed by Sidney J. Furie

Cast: Cliff Richards, Susan Hampshire, The Shadows.

Musical. Canary Islands. Cruise scene

Every Day's A Holiday. USA: *Seaside Swingers*. Fitzroy/Maycroft (GN). Directed by James Hill

Cast: John Leyton, Mike Sarne, Freddie and the Dreamers, Ron Moody.

Musical. Butlin's Clacton

1965:

Be My Guest. Three Kings (RFD). Directed by Robert Asher

Cast: David Hemmings, Avril Angers

Musical. Brighton

San Ferry Ann. Dormar (BL). Directed by Jeremy Summers

Cast: Rodney Bewes, Wilfred Brambell, Ron Moody, Joan Sims

Comedy. Misadventures of British holidaymakers in France

Cuckoo Patrol. Eternal (GN). Directed by Duncan Wood

Cast: Freddie and the Dreamers.

Comedy. Misadventures of Boy Scouts at summer camp

1966:

That Riviera Touch. Rank (RFD). Directed by Cliff Owen

Cast: Eric Morecambe, Ernie Wise

Comedy. France. Girl reforms and helps holidaymakers thwart jewel thieves

Hotel Paradiso. Maximilian (MGM). (Adapted from Feydeau farce). Produced and Directed by Peter Glenville

Cast: Alec Guinness, Gina Lollabrigida, Robert Morely

Comedy. Paris. Compromising complications of couples at disreputable hotel. (Shown 1971)

1967:

Poor Cow. Fenchurch/Vic

Directed Ken Loach

Cast: Carol White, Terence Stamp

Drama. Includes scenes of both a seaside holiday and camping holiday

1969:

Carry On Camping. Adder (RFD). Produced by Peter Rogers, Directed by Gerald Thomas

Cast: Sidney James, Kenneth Williams, Hattie Jacques, Barbara Windsor
Comedy. Devon. Camping holiday

What's Good For The Goose. Tigon. Directed by Menahem Golan

Cast: Norman Wisdom, Sally Geeson

Comedy. Assistant bank manager falls for amorous teenager during seaside conference

All At Sea. Anvil (CFF). Directed by Ken Fairbairn

Cast: Gary Smith, Steven Mallett, Stephen Childs, Norman Bird
Children. Boys on holiday cruise catch painting thief in Tangier

1970:

And Soon The Darkness. ABPC (WPD). Directed by Robert Fuest

Cast: Pamela Franklin, Michelle Dotrice

Crime. France. Nurses on cycling holiday in France become involved with sexual murderer

1971:

Carry On At Your Convenience. Peter Rogers Productions (RFD). Directed by Gerald Thomas

Cast: Sidney James, Kenneth Williams, Joan Sims

Comedy. Brighton sequence

1972:

Carry On Abroad. Peter Rogers Productions (Fox-Rank). Directed by Gerald Thomas

Cast: Sidney James, Kenneth Williams, Barbara Windsor, Joan Sims, Hattie Jacques

Comedy. Package holiday to Mediterranean island

1973:

The Best Pair Of Legs In The Business. Sunny/Anglo-EMI (MGM-EMI). Directed by Christopher Hodson

Cast: Reg Varney, Diana Coupland, Lee Montague

Comedy. Holiday camp comedian discovers his wife is having an affair with the owner

That'll Be The Day. Goodtimes/Anglo-EMI (MGM-EMI). Directed by Claude Whatham

Cast: David Essex, Ringo Starr

Musical. Holiday camp scenes

The Sea Children. Pan (CFF). Directed by David Andrews

Cast: Earl Younger, Lesley Dunlop.

Children. Malta. Holiday children discover strange world beneath sea

Summer Holiday. Pacesetter. (CFF). Directed by Philip Leacock.

Cast: Ivor Bowyer, Jill Gibbs
Children. Adventures on a school holiday

Carry On Girls. Peter Rogers Productions (Fox-Rank). Directed by Gerald Thomas
Cast: Sidney James, Joan Sims, Barbara Windsor
Comedy. Brighton. Women's Lib group tries to foil bathing beauty contest

Holiday On The Buses. Hammer (MGM-EMI). Directed by Bryan Izzard
Cast: Reg Varney, Bob Grant, Doris Hare, Wilfred Brambell
Comedy. Wales. Pontin's at Prestatyn

1974:

Swallows And Amazons. Theatre Projects (EMI). Directed by Claude Whatham
Cast: Virginia McKenna, Ronald Fraser
Children. 1929. Children on holiday in the Lake District play pirates

1975:

Tommy. Stigwood (Hemdale). Directed by Ken Russell
Cast: Ann-Margret, Oliver Reed
Holiday camp sequence

Carry On Behind. Peter Rogers Productions (Fox-Rank). Directed by Gerald Thomas
Cast: Elke Sommer, Kenneth Williams, Joan Sims, Jack Douglas, Windsor Davies
Comedy. Caravan park. Archaeologists cause trouble with their excavations behind a holiday camp

1977:

Are You Being Served? Anglo-EMI. Directed by Bob Kellett
Cast: John Inman, Mollie Sugden, Frank Thornton
Comedy. Department store personnel take a holiday in Spain

Confessions From A Holiday Camp. Swiftdown (Col). Directed by Norman Cohen
Cast: Robin Askwith, Anthony Booth, Doris Hare
Sex. Entertainment officer's exploits at a holiday camp run by ex-prison officer

1979:

That Summer. Film In General (Col). Directed by Harley Cockliss
Cast: Ray Winstone, Tony London.
Drama. Torquay. Ex-Borstal boy enters swimming contest and is framed for burglary by Glasgow youths

1980:

The Great British Striptease. Amaranth (Target). Directed by Doug Smith
Cast: Bernard Manning, Su Pollard
Sex. Blackpool. Sixteen women compete for £500 prize for best striptease act

1985:

She'll Be Wearing Pink Pyjamas (Pink Pyjama Productions/Film Four (Virgin)). Directed by John Goldschmidt

Cast: Julie Walters, Anthony Higgins

Comedy. Lake District. Assorted women on an Outward Bound course

1987:

Wish You Were Here. Zenith/Working Title/Film Four (Palace). Directed by David Leland

Cast: Emily Lloyd, Tom Bell, Jesse Birdsall

Sex. Worthing, 1951

1988:

A Summer Story. ITC (Warner). Directed by Piers Haggard

Cast: Imogen Stubbs, James Wilby

Romance. Dartmoor. Holidaymaker recalls his youthful affair with farmer's niece.

1989:

Shirley Valentine. Gilbert/Russell/Paramount (UIP). Directed by Lewis Gilbert

Screenplay (Play) Willy Russell.

Cast: Pauline Collins, Tom Conti

Housewife flies to Greece for sexual adventure

1992:

Blame It On The Bellboy. Bellboy/Hollywood (Warner). Directed by Mark Herman

Cast: Dudley Moore, Richard Griffiths, Patsy Kensit

Comedy. Venice

Dirty Weekend. Scimitar (UIP). Directed by Michael Winner

Cast: Lia Williams, Rufus Sewell

Sex. Brighton

1993:

Bhaji On The Beach. Umbi/Channel 4 (First Independent). Directed by Gurinder Chadha

Cast: Kim Vithana, Jimmy Harkishin, Lalita Ahmed, Shaheen Khan, Zohra Segal

Drama. Birmingham women take a day trip to Blackpool

1996:

Smalltime. Big Arty Productions/BFI. Directed by Shane Meadows

Cast: Mat Hand, Dena Smiles, Shane Meadows

Drama. Includes trip to Skegness

Gallivant. Tall Stories/BFI/Channel 4/Arts Council of England. Directed by Andrew Kotting

Cast: Gladys Morris, Eden Kotting, Andrew Kotting

Travelogue. Semi-documentary journey taken by a family around the coastline of Britain

1999:

Hotel Splendide. Filmfour/Toc Films/Renegade Films. Directed by Terence Gross
Cast: Toni Collette, Daniel Craig, Katrin Cartlidge
Drama. Crumbling spa hotel peopled by eccentrics

Guest House Paradiso. Universal/House Films/Vision Video. Directed by Adrian Edmondson
Cast: Rik Mayall, Adrian Edmondson, Vincent Cassel, Bill Nighy, Fenella Fielding
Comedy. Voyeurs run seaside guest house adjacent to nuclear power station

A Room For Romeo Brass. Alliance Atlantis/BBC Films/Arts Council of England/Company Pictures/Big Arty Productions. Directed by Shane meadows
Cast: Andrew Shim, Ben Marshall, Paddy Considine
Drama. Includes day trip to Chapel St Leonards

2000:

Last Resort. BBC Films. Directed by Pawel Pawlikowski.
Cast: Dina Korzun, Paddy Considine, Artiom Strelnikov, Lindsey Honey.
Drama. Margate. Muscovite asylum seekers are held at seaside resort.

Some Voices. Filmfour/British Screen/Dragon Pictures. Directed by Simon Cellan Jones
Cast: Daniel Craig, David Morrissey, Kelly MacDonald.
Drama. Includes seaside excursion to Hastings

Kevin and Perry Go Large. Icon/Tiger Aspect Pictures/Fragile Films. Directed by Ed Bye.
Cast: Harry Enfield, Kathy Burke, Rhys Ifans
Comedy. Teenage boys become star DJs and lose virginity on holiday in Ibiza

2001:

The Martins. Icon Entertainment International/Tiger Aspect Pictures/Icon Productions/Isle of Man Film Commission. Directed by Tony Grounds
Cast: Lee Evans, Kathy Burke
Comedy. Man robs wealthy couple of holiday tickets and takes his family to the Isle of Man

Arthur's Dyke. Evolution Films/Quirky Films. Directed by Gerry Poulson
Cast: Pauline Quirke, Brian Conley, Dennis Waterman
Comedy. Walking holiday on English-Welsh border

2006:

London To Brighton. LTB Films/UK Film Council/Steel Mill Pictures/Wellington Films.
Directed by Paul Andrew Williams
Cast: Lorraine Stanley, Johnny Harris, Georgia Groome
Drama. Prostitute and child flee to Brighton to escape gangster

Venus. Channel 4/UK Film Council/Venus Pictures/Free range Films. Directed by Roger Mitchell

Cast: Peter O'Toole, Jodie Whittaker

Drama. Includes journey to Whitstable beach

2008:

Somers Town. Tomboy Films/Mother Vision/Big Arty Productions. Directed by Shane Meadows

Cast: Thomas Turgoose, Piotr Jagiello

Drama. Two boys dream of holiday to Paris on Eurostar

Bibliography²⁰⁹

ABC Film Review, January 1965, pp. 24 – 25

Adams, Tim, 26th September 2004, 'New Balls Please', *The Observer* (Review), p. 5

Addley, Esther, 'Neglected or Deserted, Seaside Awaits Turn of the Tide', *The Guardian*, March 10 2007, pp. 6 – 7

Adorno, Theodor, *The Culture Industry*, 2006, London: Routledge

Alderson, Frederick, *The Comic Postcard in English Life*, 1970, David & Charles: Newton Abbot

Aldgate, Anthony, and Richards, Jeffrey, 1999, *Best of British, Cinema and Society from 1930 to the Present*, London: I. B. Tauris

Aldgate, Anthony, and Richards, Jeffrey, 1986, *Britain Can Take It, The British Cinema in the Second World War*, Oxford: Blackwell

Allen, Steve, 2008, 'British Cinema at the Seaside – the Limits of Liminality', *Journal of British Film and Television*, Volume 5, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, pp. 53 – 71

Altman, Rick, 1989, *The American Film Musical*, London: BFI

Althusser, Louis, 'Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses', in Storey, John (ed.) 2006, *Cultural Theory and Popular Culture, a Reader*, (third edition), Essex: Pearson

Anderson, Benedict, 1991, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, London: Verso

Angeloglou, Maggie, 1975, *Looking Back at Holidays (1900-1939)*, EP Publishing

Annakin, Ken, 2001, *So You Wanna Be A Director?* Sheffield: Tomahawk Press

Anwar, Farrah, February 1994, *Sight and Sound*, volume 4, no. 2, pp. 47 – 48

Ashby, Justine, and Higson, Andrew (eds.), 2000, *British Cinema, Past and Present*, London: Routledge

Askwith, Robin, 1999, *Confessions of Robin Askwith*, London: Ebury Press

Atria, Bill, 19th December 1963, *Kinematograph Weekly*, p. 4

Atria, Bill, 17th December 1964, *Kinematograph Weekly*, p. 8

²⁰⁹ Name of publication is given where author is unknown.

- Atria, Bill, 19th December 1969, *Kinematograph Weekly*, pp. 8 – 10
- Babington, Bruce (ed.), 2001, *British Stars and Stardom, from Alma Taylor to Sean Connery*, Manchester: Manchester University Press
- Bakhtin, Mikhail, 1968 edition, (translated by Iswolsky, Helene), *Rabelais and His World*, London: MIT Press
- Barker, Dennis, 17th November 2008, 'Obituaries: Reg Varney', *The Guardian*, p. 34
- Barker, Dennis, 11th February 2006, 'Obituaries: Freddy Laker', *The Guardian*, p. 37
- Barr, Charles (ed.), 1992, *All Our Yesterdays, 90 Years of British Cinema* (second edition), London: BFI
- Baxendale, John and Pawling, Christopher, 1996, *Narrating the Thirties, A Decade in the Making: 1930 to the Present*, London: Macmillan
- Bayley, Stephen, 6th August 2006, 'Comment: They're leaving on a jet plane, damn them' *The Observer*, p. 29
- Bell, Claudia and Lyall, John, 2002, *The Accelerated Sublime*, London: Praeger
- Bennett, Tony, 'Hegemony, Ideology Pleasure: Blackpool' in Bennett, Tony, Mercer, Colin, Woollacott, Janet (eds.), 1986, *Popular Culture and Social Relations*, Milton Keynes: Open University Press
- Betjeman, John, 1974, *A Nip in the Air*, London: John Murray
- Bilbow, Marjorie, 1st January 1972, *CinemaTV Today*, no. 9961, pp. 28 – 29
- Bilbow, Marjorie, 24th February 1973, *CinemaTV Today*, no. 10020, p. 23
- Billig, Michael, 1995, *Banal Nationalism*, London: Sage
- Billings, R. H., 7th August 1947, *Kinematograph Weekly*, p. 17
- Billings, R. H., 18th December 1947, *Kinematograph Weekly*, pp. 13 – 14
- Billings, R. H., 17th December 1953, *Kinematograph Weekly*, pp. 10 – 11
- Billings, R. H., 14th July 1955, *Kinematograph Weekly*, no. 2507, p. 14
- Billings, R. H., 15th December 1955, *Kinematograph Weekly*, p. 4
- Billings, R. H., 13th December 1962, *Kinematograph Weekly*, pp. 6 – 7
- Bioscope*, 30th September 1909, no. 155, p. 34
- Bognor Regis Post*, 20th January 1951, p. 3

- Bognor Regis Post*, 28th November, 1959, p. 5
- Bognor Regis Post*, 12th December, 1959, p. 5
- Bognor Regis Post*, 19th December, 1959, p.16
- Bourdieu, Pierre, *Distinction, A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, 2006, London: Routledge
- Box, Betty, 2000, *Lifting the Lid, The Autobiography of Film Producer Betty Box, OBE*, Lewes: The Book Guild
- Bragg, Steven, and Harris, Diane, 2000, *Sun, Fun and Crowds: Seaside Holidays Between the Wars*, London: Tempus
- Bret, David, 1995, *Gracie Fields, The Authorized Biography*, London: Robson Books
- Bret, David, 1999, *George Formby: A Troubled Genius*, London: Robson Books
- Bright, Jim, September 1997, 'Carry On Remembering', *Classic Television*, no. 1, pp. 25 – 33
- Bright, Morris, and Ross, Robert, 1999, *Carry On Uncensored, The Exclusive Behind-The-Scenes Story*, London: Boxtree
- Bright, Morris, and Ross, Robert, 2000, *Mr Carry On, The Life and Work of Peter Rogers*, London: BBC Worldwide Ltd
- Brignall, Miles, 13th September 2008, *The Guardian*, pp. 1, 6 – 7
- Butlin, Billy, 1982, *The Billy Butlin Story, A Showman to the End*, London: Robson Books
- C. A. W., Weds 6th August 1947, *Today's Cinema*, p. 14
- Chambers, Deborah, 2001, *Representing the Family*, London: Sage
- Chanan, Michael, 1980, *The Dream That Kicks, The Prehistory and Early Years of Cinema in Britain*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul
- Chapman, James, 1998, *The British at War, Cinema, State and Propaganda, 1939 – 1945*, London: I. B. Tauris
- Ciecko, Anne, Spring 1999, 'Representing the Spaces of Diaspora in Contemporary British Films by Women Directors', *Cinema Journal* 38, No. 3, pp. 67 – 90
- Cook, Pam, 1997, *Gainsborough Pictures*, London: Cassell
- Coysh, A. W., 1984, *The Dictionary of Picture Postcards in Britain 1894 – 1939*, Suffolk: The Antique Collector's Club
- Crosland, C. A. R., 1961, *The Future of Socialism*, London: Jonathan Cape

- Cross, Gary (ed.), 1990, *Worktowners at Blackpool, Mass-Observation and Popular Leisure in the 1930s*, London: Routledge
- D. R. 12th July 1955, *Today's Cinema*, Vol. 85, no. 7307, p. 8
- The Daily Cinema*, Wednesday 9th January 1963, pp. 6 – 7
- The Daily Cinema*, 30th October 1964, no. 8984, p. 6
- Davies, Russell (ed.), 1993, *The Kenneth Williams Diaries*, London: Harper Collins
- De Certeau, Michel, 1988, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, London: University of California Press
- Dean, Basil, 1973, *Mind's Eye, An Autobiography 1927 – 1972*, London: Hutchinson
- Debord, Guy, 2002, *The Society of the Spectacle*, seventh edition, New York: Zone Books
- Dixon, Wheeler Winston (ed.), 1994, *Re-Viewing British Cinema, 1900 – 1992, Essays and Interviews*, Albany: State University of New York
- Docherty, David, Morrison, David and Tracey, Michael, 1987, *The Last Picture Show? Britain's Changing Film Audiences*, London: BFI
- Donnelly, K. J., Winter 1998, *The Perpetual Busman's Holiday, Sir Cliff Richard and British Pop Musicals*, *Journal of Popular Film and Television*, pp. 146 – 154
- Dyer, Richard, 2002, *Only Entertainment* (second edition), London: Routledge
- Eleftheriotis, Dimitris, Spring 2000, 'Cultural Difference and Exchange: A Future for European Film', *Screen*, 41: 1, pp. 92 – 101
- Evans, Eric J. and Richards, Jeffrey, 1980, *A Social History of Britain in Postcards 1870 – 1930*, London: Longman
- Eyles, Allen, 1996, *Gaumont British Cinemas*, London: BFI
- Eyles, Allen, 1989, 'Hits and Misses at the Empire', *Picture House*, Volume 13, pp. 25 – 26, Cinema Theatre Association
- Eyles, Allen, Gray, Frank, and Readman, Alan, 1996, *Cinema West Sussex, The First Hundred Years*, Chichester: Phillimore
- Ezard, John, 1st July 1997, 'Obituary: George Harrison Marks: Naked Ambition', *The Guardian Features Page*, P. 15
- Fields, Gracie, 4th August 1934, 'Ee, I Wish I Was With You', *Picturegoer Weekly*, pp. 10 – 11

- Firth, Vincent, April 1973, *ABC Film Review*, pp. 8 – 9
- Fischer, 1987, Richard, *British Piers*, London: Thames and Hudson
- Francke, Lizzie, March 2001, *Sight and Sound*, volume II, no. 3, pp. 52 – 53
- French, Philip, 24th February 2008, 'Screen Legends', *The Observer*, P. 16
- Frith, Simon, 1988, *Music for Pleasure: Essays in the Sociology of Pop*, Cambridge: Polity Press
- Garfield, Simon, 2005, *Our Hidden Lives, The Remarkable Diaries of Post-war Britain*, London: Ebury Press
- Gaughan, Gavin, 24th November 2006, 'Obituaries: Diana Coupland', *The Guardian*, p. 43
- Geraghty, Christine, 2000, *British Cinema in the Fifties, Gender, Genre and the 'New Look'*, London: Routledge
- Gifford, Denis, 2001, *The British Film Catalogue, Volume 1, Fiction Film 1895 – 1994*, 3rd Edition, London: Fitzroy Dearborn
- Gillett, Phillip, 2003, *The British Working Class in Postwar Film*, Manchester: Manchester University Press
- Gilroy, Paul, 2005, *There Ain't No Black in the Union Jack*, London: Routledge
- Lewisohn, Mark, 1998, *Radio Times Guide to TV Comedy*, London: BBC Books
- Lowerson, John, 'Battles for the Countryside', in Gloversmith, Frank (ed.), 1980, *Class Culture and Social Change, a New View of the 1930s*, Brighton: Harvester
- Gray, Fred, 2006, *Designing Seaside*, London: Reaktion Books
- Guide to Torquay, Paignton, Dartmouth and South Devon*, (no date, circa 1940 – 1945), London: Ward, Lock and Co.
- Hall, Stuart, Critcher, Chas, Jefferson, Tony, Clarke, John, Roberts, Brian, 1978, *Policing the Crisis, Mugging, the State, and Law and Order*, London: Macmillan
- Halliwell, Leslie, 1989, *Halliwell's Film Guide*, Seventh Edition, London: Paladin Grafton Books
- Harper, Sue, 1994, *Picturing the Past, The Rise and Fall of the British Costume Film*, London: BFI
- Harper, Sue, 2000, *Women in British Cinema, Mad, Bad and Dangerous to Know*, London: Continuum

- Harper, Sue, 2004, 'A Lower Middle-Class Taste-Community in the 1930s: Admissions Figures at the Regent Cinema, Portsmouth, UK', *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television*, Volume 24, No. 4, pp. 565 – 587
- Harper, Sue, 2006, 'Fragmentation and Crisis: 1940s Admissions Figures at the Regent Cinema, Portsmouth, UK', *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television*, 26:3, 361 – 394
- Harper, Sue and Porter, Vincent, 2003, *British Cinema of the 1950s, The Decline of Deference*, Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Hassan, John, 2003, *The Seaside, Health and the Environment in England and Wales Since 1800*, Hampshire: Ashgate
- Hau, Michael, 2003, *The Cult of Health and Beauty in Germany, a Social History, 1890 – 1930*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press
- Healy, Murray, Autumn 1995, 'Were We Being Served? Homosexual Representation in Popular British Comedy', *Screen*, volume 36, number 3, pp. 243 – 256
- Hennessy, Peter, and Seldon, Anthony (eds.), 1987, *Ruling Performance, British Governments from Atlee to Thatcher*, Oxford: Blackwell
- Hennessy, Peter, 2007, *Having It So Good, Britain in the Fifties*, London: Penguin
- Hepple, Bob, 1968, *Race, Jobs and the Law in Britain*, London: Allen Lane
- Hepworth, Cecil M., 1951, *Came the Dawn, Memories of a Film Pioneer*, London: Phoenix House
- Herd, Mike (ed.), July 2007, *Guardian Guide to the Seaside*
- Hern, Anthony, 1967, *The Seaside Holiday, The History of the English Seaside Resort*, London: The Cresset Press
- Hetherington, Kevin, 1997, *The Badlands of Modernity, Heterotopia and Social Ordering* London: Routledge
- Higson, Andrew, 1995, *Waving the Flag, Constructing a National Cinema in Britain*, Oxford: Clarendon Press
- Higson, Andrew (ed.), 1996, *Dissolving Views, Key Writings on British Cinema*, London: Cassell
- Hill, Amelia, 5th May 2007, 'Travel: The New Tobacco', *The Observer*, p. 23
- Hill, Jeffrey, 2002, *Sport, Leisure and Culture in Twentieth Century Britain*, Hampshire: Palgrave
- Hill, John, 1999, *British Cinema in the 1980s*, Oxford: Oxford University Press

- Hoggart, Richard, 1971 and 1992 editions, *The Uses of Literacy*, London: Penguin, London: Penguin
- Hockenull, Stella, 2008, *Neo-Romantic Landscapes*, Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing
- Holloway, Stanley, and Richards, Dick, 1967, *Wiv a Little Bit o' Luck, The Life Story of Stanley Holloway*, London: Leslie Frewin
- Hudis, Norman, 2008, *No Laughing Matter, How I Carried On*, Clacton on Sea: Apex Publishing
- Hunt, Leon, 1998, *British Low Culture, From Safari Suits To Sexploitation*, London: Routledge
- Huxley, Aldus, 1994, *Brave New World*, London: Flamingo
- The Independent*, 26th June 2000, p. 7
- Inglis, Fred, 2000, *The Delicious History of the Holiday*, London: Routledge
- Iser, Wolfgang, 1974, *The Implied Reader*, London: John Hopkins University Press
- Iser, Wolfgang, 1978, *The Act of Reading, a Theory of Aesthetic Response*, London: John Hopkins University Press
- Jack, Ian, 7th January 2005, 'The Lost World', *The Guardian* (G2), pp. 4 – 6
- Jack, Ian, 19th July 2008, 'Fashionable Paddling – Or Why the Browns Chose Southwold', *The Guardian*, p. 32
- Jackson, Peter, and Penrose, Jan (eds.), 1993, *Constructions of Race, Place and Nation*, London: UCL Press
- Jancovich, Mark, Faire, Lucy, with Stubbings, Sarah, 2003, *The Place of the Audience*, London: BFI
- Jeavons, Clyde, March 1973, *Monthly Film Bulletin*, volume 40, no. 470, p. 48
- Jeffries, Stuart, 9th March 2007, 'The Comedy of Cruelty', *The Guardian* (supplement), p.12
- Jenkins, Allan (ed.), 27th June 2004, *The Observer Magazine*
- Jones, Stephen G., 1987, *The British Labour Movement and Film, 1918 – 1939*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul
- Kuhn, Annette, 2002, *An Everyday Magic, Cinema and Cultural Memory*, London: I. B. Taurus
- Kinematograph Weekly*, 28th October 1954, p. 26

- Kinematograph Weekly*, 10th January 1963, p. 8
- Kinematograph Weekly*, 5th November 1964, no. 2979, p. 8
- King, Geoff, 2002, *Film Comedy*, London: Wallflower Press
- Krippendorf, Jost, 1987, *The Holiday Makers*, London: Heinmann
- Kynaston, David, 2007, *Austerity Britain 1945 – 1951*, London: Bloomsbury
- Laing, Stuart, 1986, *Representations of Working-Class Life 1957 – 1964*, London: Macmillan
- Landy, Marcia, 1991, *British Genres, Cinema and Society, 1930 – 1960*, Oxford: Princeton University Press
- Laybourn, Keith, 1990, *Britain on the Breadline, A Social and Political History of Britain Between the Wars*, Gloucester: Alan Sutton
- Leach, Jim, 2004, *British Film*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Levy, Shawn, 2002, *Ready, Steady, Go! Swinging London and the Invention of Cool*, London: Fourth Estate
- Lewis, Jon, 1992, *The Road to Romance and Ruin, Teen Films and Youth Culture*, London: Routledge
- Loder, John, 20th April 1934, 'What I Think of Gracie', *Film Weekly*, p. 13
- Lott, Tim, 1996, *The Scent of Dried Roses*, London: Penguin
- Low, Rachael, and Manvell, Roger, 1948, *The History of the British Film 1896 – 1906*, London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd
- Low, Rachael, 1985, *Film Making in 1930s Britain*, London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd
- Lowenthal, David, October 1991 'British National Identity and the English Landscape', *Rural History, Society, Culture*, vol.2, no.2,
- McGillivray, David, February 1972, *Monthly Film Bulletin*, volume 39, no. 457, p. 28
- McGillivray, David, 1992, *Doing Rude Things, The History of the British Sex Film 1957 – 1981*, London: Sun Tavern Fields
- McRobbie, Angela, 2000, *Feminism and Youth Culture* (second edition), London: Macmillan Press Ltd
- Maxford, Howard, September 1996, 'Call Sheet: Summer Holiday', *Film Review*, pp 44 – 47

- Mayer, J. P., 1946, *Sociology of Film, Studies and Documents*, London: Faber and Faber
- Mayer, J. P., 1948, *British Cinemas and Their Audiences, Sociological Studies*, London: Dennis Dobson Ltd
- Mayne, Richard, 1983, *Postwar, The Dawn of Today's Europe*, London: Thames and Hudson
- Medhurst, Andy, August 1992, 'Carry On Camp', *Sight and Sound*, pp. 16 – 19
- Medhurst, Andy, 2007, *A National Joke*, London: Routledge
- Merseyside Socialist Research Group, (Members of), 1992, *Genuinely Seeking Work, Mass Unemployment on Merseyside in the 1930s*, Merseyside: Liver Press
- Millborne, P, 1997, *Revealing Rural 'Others' – Representation, Power and Identity in the British Countryside*, London: Continuum
- Moat, Janet, 1995, *The British Cinema Source Book, BFI Archive Viewing Copies and Library Materials*, London: BFI
- Monthly Film Bulletin*, August 1947, Volume 14, no. 164, p. 111
- Monthly Film Bulletin*, September 1955, Volume 22, no. 260, p. 134
- Monthly Film Bulletin*, December 1964, Volume 31, no. 371, p. 176
- Moorhouse, Sydney, 1955, *Holiday Lancashire*, London: Robert Hale Limited
- Motion Picture Herald*, 3rd March 1956, Volume 202, no. 9, p. 801
- Morgan, Kenneth, 2001, *Britain Since 1945, The People's Peace*, second edition, Oxford: Oxford University Press
- Mowat, Charles Loch, 1976, *Britain Between the Wars, 1918 – 1940*, London: Methuen
- Muncie, John (ed.), 2003, *Understanding the Family*, (second edition), London: Sage
- Munn, Mike, July 1975, 'Carry On Behind The Scenes', *Film Review*, Volume 25, pp. 10 – 11
- Murphy, Robert, 1992, *Sixties British Cinema*, London: BFI
- Murphy, Robert (ed.), 1997, *The British Cinema Book*, London: BFI
- Murphy, Robert (ed.), 2001, *British Cinema of the 90s*, London: BFI
- Murphy, Robert (ed.), 2001, *The British Cinema Book*, second edition, London: BFI

- Neale, Sarah, and Agyeman, Julian, 2006, *The New Countryside? Ethnicity, Nation and Exclusion in Contemporary Rural Britain*, Bristol: Polity Press
- North, Rex, 1962, *The Butlin Story*, London: Jarrolds
- The Optical Lantern and Cinematograph Journal*, 1906, Volume 3, no. 87, p. 37
- The Optical Lantern and Cinematograph Journal*, 1906, Volume 2, p. 227
- Orwell, George, 2000, *Essays*, London: Penguin
- Orwell, George, 1989, *Homage to Catalonia*, London: Penguin
- Osgerby, Bill, 1998, *Youth in Britain Since 1945*, London: Blackwell
- Palin, Michael, 1987, *Happy Holidays, The Golden Age of Railway Posters*, London: Pavilion Books
- Parr, Martin, 1997 edition, *The Last Resort: Photographs of New Brighton*, London: Dewi Lewis
- Parr, Martin (ed.), 1999, *Boring Postcards*, London: Phaidon
- Parr, Martin (Introduction), 2002, *Our True Intent is all For Your Delight, The John Hinde Butlin's Photographs*, London: Chris Boot
- Petrie, Duncan J., 1991, *Creativity and Constraint in the British Film Industry*, London: MacMillan
- Phillips, Tom, 2000, *The Postcard Century, 2000 Cards and Their Messages*, London: Thames and Hudson
- Pickering, Michael, 2008, *Black Faced Minstrelsy in Britain*, Hampshire: Ashgate
- Pimlott, J. A. R., 1976, *The Englishman's Holiday, A Social History*, second edition, Sussex: The Harvester Press Limited
- Poole, Julian, 'British Cinema Attendance in Wartime: Audience Preference at the Majestic, Macclesfield, 1939 – 1946', *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television*, Volume 7, No.1, 1987, pp. 15 – 34
- Porlock, Kit, 1947, *Holiday Camp, Book of the Film*, London: World Film Publications Ltd
- Porter, Laraine, and Burton, Alan, 2001, *The Showman, The Spectacle and the Two-Minute Silence, Performing British Cinema Before 1930*, London: Flick Books
- Powell, Michael, 1992, *A Life In Movies*, London: Mandarin Paperbacks
- Powers, James, 22nd February 1956, *Hollywood Reporter*, Volume 138, no. 30, p. 3
- Priestley, J. B. Priestley, 1994, *English Journey*, London: Mandarin

- Pulver, Andrew, Friday 8th October 2004, 'Pole Position', *The Guardian* (supplement), pp. 10 – 11
- Read, Sue, 1986, *Hello Campers! Celebrating 50 Years of Butlin's*, London: Bantam Press
- Richard, Cliff, 2008, *My Life, My Way*, London: Headline Review
- Richards, Jeffrey, 1984, *The Age of the Dream Palace, Cinema and Society in Great Britain 1930 – 1939*, London: Routledge
- Richards, Jeffrey, 1997, *British Films and National Identity, From Dickens to Dad's Army*, Manchester: Manchester University Press
- Richards, Jeffrey, 1998, *The Unknown 1930s: An Alternative History of the British Cinema 1929-39*, London: I.B. Tauris
- Richards, Jeffrey, 1987, and Sheridan, Dorothy, (eds.), *Mass Observation at the Movies*, London: Routledge & Kegan Paul
- Rigelsford, Adrian, 1996, *Carry On Laughing, A Celebration*, London: Virgin
- Rollinson, William, 1967, *A History of Man in the Lake District*, London: J. M. Dent and Sons Ltd
- Romney, Jonathan and Wootton, Adrian (eds.), *Celluloid Jukebox, Popular Music and Movies Since the 1950s*, 1995, London: BFI
- Ross, Robert, 2002, *The Carry On Companion*, London: Batsford
- Rotha, Paul, 1934, 'Films of the Quarter', *Sight and Sound*, Volume 3, No. 11, pp. 115 – 119
- Samuel, Raphael, 1994, *Theatres of Memory, Past and Present in Contemporary Culture*, London: Verso
- Sandbrook, Dominic, *Never Had It So Good, A History of Britain From Suez to the Beatles*, 2005, London: Little Brown Books
- Scarborough Borough Council Tourism and Leisure Services, (no date – circa 2009), *Naval Warfare* programme
- Searle, Adrian, 21st June 2008, 'Folkstone Triennial', *The Guardian* (Review), p. 18
- Shafer, Stephen C., 1997, *British Popular Films 1929 – 1939, The Cinema of Reassurance*, London: Routledge
- Sheridan, Simon, 1999, *Come Play With Me, The Life and Films of Mary Millington*, Guildford: FAB Press

- Shields, Rob, 2002, *Places on the Margin, Alternative Geographies of Modernity*, London: Routledge
- Shurmer-Smith, Pamela, and Hannam, Kevin, 1994, *Worlds of Desire, Realms of Power, a Cultural Geography*, London: Edward Arnold
- Sinclair, Iain, March 2001, 'The Cruel Seaside', *Sight and Sound*, Volume II, no. 3, pp. 16 – 18
- Skeggy and East Coast Visitor's Guide*, 2009, Boston: Whitespace Publishers Ltd
- Sladen, Chris, 2002, 'Holidays at Home in the Second World War', *Journal of Contemporary History*, London: Sage Publications, pp. 69 – 89
- Smith, Helena, 27th July 2007, 'Curse of the Boozy Britons Returns to Greek Resorts', *The Observer*, p. 3
- Smith, Mark E., 2008, with Collings, Austin, *Renegade: The Lives and Tales of Mark E. Smith*, London: Viking
- Solomons, Jason, 5th October 2008, 'This Much I Know: Ken Russell' *Observer Magazine*, p. 10
- Sopocy, Martin, 1978, 'A Narrated Cinema: The Pioneer Films of James Williamson', *Cinema Journal*, Volume 18, no.1, page 1,
- Staff, Frank, 1979, *The Picture Postcard and its Origins*, 2nd edition, London: Lutterworth Press
- Staples, Terry, 1997, *All Pals Together, The Story of Children's Cinema*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press
- Stevenson, John and Cook, Chris, 1994, *Britain in the Depression, Society and Politics 1929 – 39*, London: Longman
- Storey, John (ed.) 2006, *Cultural Theory and Popular Culture, a Reader*, (third edition), Essex: Pearson
- Street, Sarah, 2004, *British National Cinemas*, London: Routledge
- Stuart, Andrea, 1994, 'Blackpool Illumination', *Sight and Sound*, volume 4, no. 2, pp. 26 – 27
- Sturcke, James, 30th August 2008, *The Guardian*, p. 10
- Sutton, David, 2000, *A Chorus of Raspberries, British Film Comedies 1929 – 1939*, Exeter: Exeter University Press
- Swern, Phil, and Childs, Mike, 1995, *Box Office Hits*, Middlesex: Guinness Publishing
- Swinglehurst, Edward, 2007, *Family Life in Britain 1900 to 1950*, London: Futura

- Symons, Julian, 1972, *Between the Wars, Britain in Photographs*, London: Batsford Ltd
- T.K., 1962, *Monthly Film Bulletin*, p. 19
- Thorpe, Andrew, 1992, *Britain in the 1930s*, London: Blackwell
- Tincknell, Estella, 2005, *Mediating the Family, Gender, Culture and Representation*, London: Hodder Arnold
- Turner, Steve, 2008, *The Bachelor Boy*, London: Carlton Books
- Urry, John, 1995, *Consuming Places*, London: Routledge
- Urry, John, and Rojek, Chris, 1997, *Tourist Cultures: Transformations of Travel and Theory*, London: Routledge
- Urry, John, 2002, *The Tourist Gaze*, (Revised edition), London: Sage Publications
- Usai, Paolo Churchi, 1994, *Burning Passions, An Introduction to the Study of Silent Cinema*, London: BFI
- Varney, Reg, 1990, *The Little Clown, An Autobiography*, London: Hodder and Stoughton
- Visitor Guide* (Scarborough), 2009, Yorkshire: Yorkshire Regional Newspapers
- Walters, William (Traffic Manager), 1977, *Bass, Ratcliff and Gretton Limited Excursion to Scarborough*, Burton upon Trent: The Bass Museum
- Walton, John K., *The English Seaside Resort, A Social History 1750 – 1914*, 1983, Leicester: Leicester University Press
- Walton, John K., 1998, *Blackpool*, Edinburgh and Lancaster: Edinburgh University Press/Carnegie Press
- Walton, John K., 1978, *The Blackpool Landlady, A Social History*, Manchester: Manchester University Press
- Walton, John K., and Walvin, James, 1983, *Leisure in Britain 1780 – 1939*, Manchester, Manchester University Press
- Walton, John K., 2000, *The British Seaside, Holidays and Resorts in the Twentieth Century*, Manchester: Manchester University Press
- Walvin, James, 1978, 'Down to the Sea in Drovers', in *Leisure and Society (1830-1950)*, London: Longman
- Walvin, James, 1978, *Beside The Seaside, A Social History of the Popular Seaside Holiday*, London: Allen Lane.

Ward, Colin and Hardy, Dennis, 1986, *Goodnight Campers! The History of the British Holiday Camp*, London: Mansell Publishing Limited

Ward Lock's *Red Guide to The Kent Coast*, (no date published circa late 1960s – early 1970s), London: Ward, Lock & Co.

Warren, Patricia, 1995, *British Film Studios, An Illustrated History*, London: B. T. Batsford Ltd

Webber, Richard, 2008, *50 Years of Carry On*, London: Century

Williams, Christopher (ed.), 1996, *Cinema: The Beginnings and the Future*, London: University of Westminster Press

Williams, David, R., 1993, *Cinema in Leicester 1896 – 1931*, Loughborough: Heart of Albion Press

Williams, Peter, 2002, *The English Seaside*, Swindon: English Heritage

Wordsworth, William, 1955, *Poetry & Prose*, Selected by Merchant, W. M., London: Rupert Hart - Davis

Wright, Patrick, 1991, *On Living in an Old Country*, (second edition), London: Verso

Wyatt, John, 1987, *The Lake District National Park*, Devon: Webb and Bower Publishers Ltd

Wyatt, Justin, 1994, *High Concept and Marketing in Hollywood*, Texas: University of Texas Press

Yass, Marion, 1975, *Britain Between the Wars, 1918 – 1939*, London: Wayland Publishers

BFI Special Collections:

BFI Special Collections: Basil Dean Collection

BFI Special Collections, Muriel and Sydney Box Collection Item 15, Muriel and Sydney Box diary 1943 – 1947

BFI Special Collections: Nettlefold Studios Special Collections, collated by Geoffrey Faithfull

Lansdell, Avril, *If it Moves – Film It! A History of Film-making in Walton-On-Thames 1900-1939*, a booklet from an exhibition/film show held at Weybridge Museum in 1973, curated by Avril Lansdell (from Nettlefold Studios Special Collections)

Priestley, J. B., *Sing As We Go*, 1934, BFI Special Collections, Script Session Number from Script Catalogue S 252

Winn, Godfrey, 1946, First Master Script of *Holiday Camp*, BFI Special Collections, Script catalogue item no. S14262

Television:

Attwood, Rita (Producer and Director), 2008, *Comedy Classics: On The Buses*, Productions

Barker, Jonathan (Producer and Director), 2005, *Coast*, BBC/Open University

Bowering, Rachel (Series Director), 2006, *Nation On Film – Holidays*, BBC and Open University, BBC 4

East Midlands Today, 9th September 2008, BBC 1

East Midlands Today, 10th September 2008, BBC 1

Evans, Kim (executive producer), 1993, *Hollywood UK*, BBC 4

Hodson, Christopher (Director), 1968, *The Best Pair Of Legs In The Business*, (television version), Yorkshire Television/ITV Productions (BFI viewing copy)

Humphries, Steve, (Producer and Editor), 2006, *Disappearing Britain, Beside The Seaside*, BFI, Lion Television, The History Channel: A Lion Testimony Film for Channel Five

Jackson, David M., (executive producer), 8th February 2006 (Repeated transmission date), *Legends: Amazing Gracie*, BBC 4

Kelly, Spencer, 2005, *Wakey Wakey Campers*, Twenty Twenty Television for Channel Four

Morgan, Christine (series producer), 1999, *Heart of the Matter* 'Unpacking Holidays' BBC Manchester and CTVC

Moyle, Franny (executive producer) and Marc Heffernan (producer/director), 2008, *Rory and Paddy's Great British Adventure*, IWC Media Limited for Five

Rogan Teresa (Series Producer), 9th November 2008, *Countryfile*, BBC Productions, Birmingham

Thompson, David (producer/director) and Sweet, Matthew (writer), 2006, *Silent Britain*, BBC 4/BFI

Webb, Steve (writer/director), 2006, *Holmfirth Hollywood*, BBC 4

Wooding, Paul (Producer), 1992, *Perpetual Motion: The Routemaster Bus*, BBC Bristol

DVD:

Summer Holiday DVD commentary, 2003 by Peter Yates and Jonathan Sothcott

VHS:

British Pathe News – *1931 A Year to Remember*, 1992, Ingram Video

Press Books:

The Best Pair Of Legs In The Business, 1973, National Screen Services Ltd, BFI

Sing As We Go, BFI

Summer Holiday Press Book, 1963, BFI