Cinema-by-Sea
Film and cinema in Brighton & Hove since 1896
David Fisher

A complete history and Compendium of Information about Film and Cinema in Brighton & Hove and district
Cinema-by-Sea
Cover
Background photograph of Hove beach by David Fisher; stills from Grandma’s Reading Glass (George Albert Smith, 1900), Fire! (James Williamson, 1901), Curzon Kinema, Brighton (1936), Brighton Rock (John Boulting, 1947) and Jigsaw (Val Guest, 1962)

Frontispiece
A queue (of extras) in the rain outside the Rothbury Cinema, Portslade from Lady Godiva Rides Again (1951)

This page
Arrival and Departure of a Train at Hove (George Albert Smith, 1897)
Cinema-by-Sea

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David Fisher

TERRA MEDIA
David Fisher was editor of the international media journal *Screen Digest* from 1974 until 2011. He also edited and designed around 100 other publications for Screen Digest. He was Executive Editor of *Television—Journal of the Royal Television Society* from 1978 to 1982.

He was a co-opted member of the Interim Action Committee on the British Film Industry and its successor, the British Screen Advisory Council, from 1982 to 1989. Among numerous other positions, he served as a representative on the advisory committee of the European Audiovisual Observatory in Strasbourg between 1992 and 2007 and was an associate fellow of the University of Warwick 1994-2003, where he taught part of a postgraduate course in European Cultural Policy.

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Hove Fire Brigade hurtles along Cromwell Road in *Fire!*
(James Williamson, 1901)
You probably know what it’s like when you are watching a film or television programme and unexpectedly see a local scene that you recognise. There’s that frisson of identifying your own reality. Well, perhaps not if you live in Buckingham Palace or 10 Downing Street. But there is a fascination with seeing the familiar: your town, your neighbourhood, your street.

If that can still happen, imagine what it must have been like for the citizens of Brighton & Hove in 1896 who paid their sixpences or shillings to see ‘the sensation of the century’ at the Victoria Hall opposite the West Pier. Among the moving pictures, the ‘animated photographs’, they saw was the scene on the beach across the road. Long before audiences were shown the sights of the California coast, for many around the world their first sight of the sea was not the surf at Malibu but the shingle at Brighton.

Brighton & Hove immediately became one of the principal centres of film-making activity, not just for the UK but for the world, alongside Paris, New York and London. By the end of the century and for much of the following decade local film-makers made Brighton & Hove (mainly Hove) as important as anywhere in the world with their ground-breaking, sophisticated understanding of production and editing techniques.

In the first years of the twentieth century Britain developed a thriving export market, especially to the United States. Indeed, it might have continued longer but for the efforts of Thomas Edison and his patent-wielding associates to undermine sales of European films to American cinemas.

Early cinema history is still being unearthed and what was once presented as fact has now been superseded by more recently discovered information. In my first term as a film student 45 years ago I was lucky enough to spend many hours, several days a week, sitting in a darkened theatre learning about the history of cinema from the doyen of film historians, Roger Manvell. We saw films by the great French cinema magician Georges Méliès and the American pioneer of narrative film Edwin S Porter. We did not see films by the English cinema magician George Albert Smith nor the British pioneer of narrative film-making James Williamson. They had yet to be assigned their rightful place in the story of cinema.

The full significance of Brighton’s achievement, of what Smith and Williamson achieved through intuition, analysis or trial-and-error, was barely recognised at the time they were working, nor acknowledged for many years after.

It was not until 1945 that the city was put on the media history map in an essay by...
GEORGES SADOUL, who coined the phrase ‘l’école de Brighton’ (the Brighton school) to describe the work of Collings, Smith, Williamson and ALFRED DARLING. The study and writing of film history and theory was only just getting into its stride in the mid-1940s, especially in France.

Sadoul may have unknowingly trampled on the sensitivities of the good people of Hove—which is, after all, where most of the work was done—but eventually this proved to be a transformative publication. In 1968 an exhibition organised by the British Film Institute (BFI) about the Hove film pioneers was held during the Brighton Festival.

The real breakthrough came in 1978 when the International Federation of Film Archives (FIAF) held its 34th Congress, appropriately enough, in Brighton. This established the scope and agenda for the future study of early cinema that has continued ever since. An unprecedented collection of 548 films from the earliest days of the cinema around the world was screened before the conference at the Brighton Film Theatre in North Street.

Since then the academic study of early cinema has flourished. More and more of the old films have been issued on DVD or posted online and some early ones still turn up unexpectedly. Even while this book was being prepared, two important discoveries were made in the archives: G A Smith’s film The Death of Poor Joe and Edward Turner’s colour test film from 1902.

Although that first phase of activity is now well recognised by film historians, the following period, which could be characterised as the first colour film era, is less well known and still in need of further research. The first successful colour test films were shot by George Albert Smith at Southwick in 1906, the year in which he patented the system that was later dubbed Kinemacolor. By the end of 1910 a total of 61 colour films had been shot, around 35 of them in the Brighton area. In 1910 Charles Urban’s Natural Colour Kinematograph Company took over James Williamson’s ‘film factory’ in Cambridge Grove, Hove as a precursor to the astonishing output of more than 200 Kinemacolor films that were released by 1912. Many of these were shot in Hove.

So the story has to be told of not just the rise and fall of colour film technology but also the all-too-rapid decline of Brighton and Hove’s place in film-making. And, of course, the occasions since then when it has been put back onto the big screen.

This is a book about film and cinema in Brighton and Hove. It is not intended to provide a history of cinema and film-making in general. For that the reader is referred to the many general histories, some of which are listed in the Resources section at the end of the book. So the book does not go into detail about events when what began as local film-making moved away from Brighton—as, for example, the production of Kinemacolor films under licence in America and France.

The intention is to tell the story for the general reader, although it is hoped that by assembling so many facts in one place it will also be of use to social and cultural historians.

The function of this book, therefore, is to chart the history of Brighton & Hove’s chequered involvement with the movies. It describes how an industry grew out of those first picture shows of 1896 in five main components:

- the narrative history of film and cinema in Brighton & Hove—including Southwick and Shoreham,
- the cinemas and other places where films have been shown,
- the films made wholly or partly in Brighton & Hove from the first single-shot silent films to the most recent digital video productions,
- the people involved (excluding those who are still living),
- the places where films were made and people lived, with a separate section for the film production studios.

Extensive efforts have been made to check and double-check information. Nonetheless, it is likely that some information presented here may prove inaccurate. If unidentified errors have been incorporated from incorrect sources, they are repeated here for the sake of completeness and in the hope that future work will correct them. For, of course, if they are not errors, they ought to be here. On the other hand, new errors may have been introduced and in the end any author must accept responsibility for everything. So I do. Corrections and comments would be most welcome and will be included on the brightonfilm.com website.

By the way, Brighton is sometimes used to stand for the area of Brighton and Hove (and Shoreham and Southwick). This is done purely for convenience. The significance of each part of the city and its neighbours should be revealed in the following pages.

David Fisher
Brighton, November 2012
It is almost impossible to imagine, in our world of round-the-clock multi-channel television, the impact that the first flickering shadows of films had on the public of late Victorian England. In a teeming age of discovery and invention, the advertisements that proclaimed ‘living pictures’ to be the sensation of the age were not exaggerating. Various attempts were made from the early 1870s onwards to capture photographic images of movement, principally by Étienne-Jules Marey and Léon Bouly in France and by two Englishmen, Eadweard Muybridge and Wordsworth Donisthorpe, the former working in the United States. However, the first successful attempt at creating what we would now recognise as a ‘film’ is generally agreed to be a fragment recorded in October 1888 by a Frenchman, Louis Le Prince, in the garden of his father-in-law’s home in Leeds. Another Englishman, William Friese Greene, working in London (but with past and future links to Brighton), took out a patent in 1889 for an ‘improved apparatus for taking photographs in rapid series’.

William Kennedy-Laurie Dickson, a Scot working at the Edison laboratories in New Jersey, established in 1892 the principle of 35mm film with perforations in either side of the series of images, fed vertically through a camera—essentially the standard that has persisted ever since. This became the Kinetoscope, which Dickson called ‘the crown and flower of nineteenth century magic’.

This peep-show device, of the kind later known, somewhat disparagingly, as a ‘what-the-butler-saw’ machine, proved very popular. The first Kinetoscope parlour opened for business in New York on 14 April 1894 and the first outside the US on Oxford Street, London on 17 October. A machine was installed at the Brighton Aquarium in 1895. The trouble with the Kinetoscope was that only one person at a time could see the pictures.

The real breakthrough was projection onto a screen. The first projected images were seen during 1895, beginning in Paris with Auguste and Louis Lumière’s Cinématographe on 22 March. The early demonstrations were precisely that: showing trade and professional bodies that the technology worked. At the very end of the year the Lumière brothers gave the first public exhibition of films on 28 December 1895 in the Salon Indien at the Grand Café, 14 boulevard des Capucines, Paris. An audience of 33 people, including the magician and future film-maker Georges Méliès, paid one franc each for admission.

In January 1896 the first private demonstrations were held in London, and on 21 February the first UK commercial film screenings of the Lumière Cinématographe began at the Regent Street Polytechnic in London. The admission charge was one shilling (5p). Among those who saw the films during their three-week run was an optical
lanternist and showman from Hove, GEORGE ALBERT SMITH. On 9 March the Cinématographe shows moved to the Empire Theatre of Varieties in Leicester Square.

Meanwhile, ROBERT W PAUL, an English electrical engineer had been involved in moving pictures since making a copy in 1894 of Edison's Kinetoscope, which had not been patented in the UK. Paul developed the technology to include projection on a screen and started to make his own films in February 1895, working with a photographer, Birt Acres, who consequently made the first film shot in Britain (other than a test strip), outside his home in Barnet, north London. Paul's films were shown to the public for the first time at the Finsbury Technical College in 21 February 1896, on the day the Cinématographe opened in Regent Street. On 19 March he began screenings using his Theatrograph projector at the Egyptian Hall in Piccadilly and two days later at the Olympia exhibition halls. That led to a two-week engagement at the Alhambra music hall in Leicester Square, which eventually extended to four years.

Films arrive in Brighton
Until now all film shows in England had been in London. On the same day that R W Paul's shows began at the Alhambra, 25 March 1896, the first show outside the capital was held at the PANDORA GALLERY, at 132 King's Road, Brighton, opposite the West Pier.

By the beginning of July the Pandora Gallery had become the VICTORIA HALL. On 6 July 1896 R W Paul's 'Celebrated Animatographe' began a run of shows there that was so popular with residents and visitors that it continued well into the autumn.

Other film shows in Brighton, using variously named projectors, were to follow during the remainder of 1896. The Cinographoscope at the IMPERIAL HOTEL in Queen's Road at the end of September. Chard's Vitagraph at the Empire Theatre of Varieties (later the COURT CINEMA) in New Road from mid-October. The Hove Camera Club's annual exhibition at Hove Town Hall in November had some animated photographs organised by JAMES WILLIAMSON, a chemist with a shop in Church Road, Hove, where he developed and printed photographs for his customers. And finally, at Christmas R W Paul's Theatrograph (another name for the Animatographe) featured in the Christmas pantomime at the THEATRE ROYAL.

The programme included local scenes shot by ESMÉ COLLINGS, who was also involved in putting on the shows.

Local film-making begins
A number of places can claim to have witnessed pioneering efforts in the making of films: West Orange NJ, New York, Lyon, Paris, Blackburn, Berlin, Walton-on-Thames and Holmfirth (of Last of the Summer Wine fame) among them. But few can claim an equal role to Brighton and Hove in advancing mere film towards its status as 'cinema'. Yet this achievement was barely recognised at the time, nor for many years after.

It was not until 1945 that the city was put on the media history map in an essay by the French film historian GEORGES SADOUL, who coined the phrase 'l'école de Brighton' (the Brighton school) to describe the work of ESMÉ COLLINGS, GEORGE ALBERT SMITH, JAMES WILLIAMSON and ALFRED DARLING.

In adopting that name Sadoul may have unknowingly trampled on the sensitivities of the good people of Hove—which is, after all, where most of the work was done—but this proved to be a transformative publication. The study and writing of film history and theory was only just getting into its stride in the mid-1940s, especially in France. Even the doyen of British film historians, Roger Manvell, had yet to catch up with the early events on his own doorstep. In 1968 an exhibition organised by the British Film Institute about the Hove film pioneers was held during the Brighton Festival.

But the watershed came in 1978 when the International Federation of Film Archives...
## Chronology

A year-by-year account of film and cinema in Brighton & Hove

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1910

March 1 The regular Kinemacolor programme is introduced at the Palace Theatre, where it runs for 18 months.

March Natural Colour Kinematograph Company is established by Charles Urban. G A Smith sells his interest in Kinemacolor for £5,000 (equivalent to around £475,000 in current values) to Ada Jones, who soon marries Urban. Smith makes numerous films in Kinemacolor but he and Urban fall out within a couple of years.

July 6 A royal party visits the Kinemacolor show at the Palace Theatre.

- Dave Atrott makes 10 films for Williamson.
- James Williamson directs his last film: a pioneering natural history study of butterflies.

September James Williamson ends film production.

November 25 Cinematograph Act, the first UK legislation specifically concerned with film, resulting from concern over fires caused by the highly combustible nitrate film stocks, requires cinemas to be licensed by local authorities.

November 30 G A Smith is granted a US patent for colour kinematography (no 941,960), for which he had applied in June 1907. It is probably about now that Kinemacolor opens a studio at 4500 Sunset Boulevard in Hollywood.

December 11 G A Smith and Charles Urban present the first American screening of Kinemacolor films at Madison Square Garden in New York.

December 15 James Williamson gives a lecture to an invited audience at Brighton Aquarium on ‘The Kinematograph as an Educative Medium’ with illustrations of natural history films and other documentaries, including How They Made a Man of Billy Brown (1908).

1911

- Six permanent cinemas open in the Brighton area, one a purpose-built building, the others in converted buildings.
- Charles Urban resigns from the Charles Urban Trading Company to concentrate on developing the products and market for Kinemacolor.

February 1 Tom Barraford, proprietor of the Hippodrome dies at Hippodrome House in Middle Street, Brighton.

February 28 Star Cinema opens in a former Congregational Chapel in Shoreham.

Spring Cinema-de-Luxe is opened by Electric Theatres (1908) Ltd in the former printing works of the Brighton Gazette at 150 North Street, Brighton.

June The Kinemacolor Company of America is formed.

August The Electric Bioscope in Western Road expands into the next-door shop and is fitted out with dimmable auditorium lights, curtains revealing the screen and an orchestra. The name changes to Queen’s Electric Theatre.

- James Williamson withdraws from film production and moves his company to London. His premises in Cambridge Grove are acquired by Charles Urban’s Kinemacolor company, the Natural Colour Kinematograph Company, which also has a studio in the south of France. The rear of the Brighton premises, backing onto the railway line just to the west of the junction of the lines from Hove to Brighton and London, still shows the word Kinemacolor in large white letters.

July The Gem Electric Cinema ‘penny gaff’ is opened by Mr J W Thompson in a shopfront site at 36a London Road, Brighton, seating 60 on wooden benches.

Admission costs 2d or 3d for adults, 1d or 2d for children.

- The first Kinemacolor drama production to be released is The Story of Napoleon.

September 22 The first purpose-built cinema to open in Brighton is the Duke of York’s Cinema at Preston Circus, which soon follows the renamed Queen’s Electric Theatre (see 1909) This is still operating under the same name as an independent art-house cinema. It is marked by a plaque.

October 13 Natural Colour Kinematograph Company (NCKC) advertises in Cinematograph and Lantern Weekly that ‘Full Advantage has been taken of the Recent Phenomenal Weather Conditions and a large number of Comic, Dramatic, Historic and General Natural Color Motion Picture Subjects have been secured at Brighton under the production of Mr Theo Bouwmeester’. More usually known as Theo Frenkel (Bouwmeester is his maternal grandfather’s family name), this Dutch actor and film-maker in fact makes around 100 films for NCKC. Not all are made at the Cambridge Grove facility.

December 10 Empire Picture Theatre, opened by Harry Scriven in Haddington Street, is the first cinema in Hove.

- People’s Picture Palace cinema, soon renamed the Arcadia Cinema, is opened by F R Griffiths in the former Arcadia Theatre of Varieties at the junction of Lewes Road and Park Crescent Place, Brighton.

1911

- No fewer than nine cinemas open in Brighton & Hove and district during the year, including two that are purpose-built and two that will continue in operation for more than 60 years.

February 22 Charles Urban leases E Distin Maddick’s Scala Theatre in London for a year to showcase Kinemacolor.

March 15 Prince’s Imperial Picture Palace and Theatre is opened by H Gutteridge at North Street, Portslade.

April 11 Electric Empire Picture Palace opens at 76-77 George Street, the first purpose-built cinema in Hove.

June 6 Academy Cinema opens at 59 West Street, Brighton [below]. The opening programme includes Kinemacolor films, with a talk by G A Smith.

June 22 The Coronation of George V is filmed in Kinemacolor.
Within a single century cinema went from being the sensation of the late Victorian age to become the most popular and potent form of mass entertainment and then to being the functional place for an occasional night out. Exactly 50 years after the very first films shows, cinema-going in Britain rose to a phenomenal peak of 1.64 billion admissions in 1946. It then slid back to almost zero (54 million) over the next 40 years but has crept back up again since the mid 1980s.

The first film shows were ad hoc affairs, held wherever a projector and screen could be set up. Audiences flocked to see the programmes of one-minute films of a train arriving at a station, or simple street scenes, or a procession going by, or children playing on the beach at Brighton.

Films arrive in Brighton

On 25 March 1896, on the very day Robert W Paul began his pioneering film shows at the Alhambra in Leicester Square, London, the first show outside the capital was held at the Pandora Gallery, at 132 King’s Road, Brighton, opposite the West Pier. It had been due to open a day earlier but was ‘unavoidably postponed’. These early film shows were sometimes prone to technical difficulties. Shows were held daily from 11:30 am.

There is no certainty which projector was used and which films were shown, nor indeed who ran the shows. At first the advertisements referred to ‘the Cinématographe’, which changed, confusingly, to ‘the Cinématographe or Vitascophe’ in the advert that appeared in the Sussex Daily News on 4 April. But for the mention of the ‘Vitascophe’, this would appear to confirm that a Lumière machine was used. The Vitascophe was the name of the projector designed by Thomas Armat and built by the Edison company in the USA. It was shown to the press on 4 April 1896 and put into commercial service on 23 April. So clearly the display in Brighton could not have used that projector.

Indiscriminately. The name ‘Vitascophe’ may just have appeared in the trade press for the first time when the advertising copy changed, but whether it came about in that way is far from clear.

It is interesting to note that in the replacement ad, the moving pictures take second place to X-rays, which were also news. Wilhelm Röntgen had announced his discovery of X-rays at the turn of the year and it may have been this exhibition that prompted James Williamson to acquire an X-ray machine for his pharmacy practice in Hove. The subject was raised in the review of the show that appeared in the Sussex Daily News on 26 March:

There is something almost awesome in the development of the art of photography during the past twelve months. Scarcely a day passes but there is a record of some cure of long suffering by the “new photography”, enabling medical men to locate the seat of mischief. In comparison with Professor Rontgen’s startling and far-reaching discovery, the latest development of instantaneous photography, the Cinematographe, can only occupy a position of secondary importance, though its results are scarcely less astonishing and distinctly more entertaining to the general public. Considering the present scarcity of these machines, Brighton is to be congratulated upon counting the Cinematographe as one of its attractions. The Pandora Gallery, opposite the West Pier, was opened yesterday for the exhibition of this marvellous invention, the Cinematographe, which is really an improvement on the kinetoscope, enlarges and projects upon the screen what is, to all appearance, a moving photograph, but, in reality, a series of “snap-shots” of the same scene passing before the eye at the incredible speed of 900 per minute. The succession of images follow one on the other at such...
infinitesimal intervals that the effect conveyed to the retina is perfect in its illusion of continuous vitality. The subjects of the pictures, which will be changed weekly, are principally dances, but it is hoped shortly to shew the King’s-road, the cycle promenade, and other local incidents that will doubtless attract the crowded audience they deserve.

For the Easter holidays the Pandora added new scenes and used an ironic verbal formulation to promote the ‘enormous success of “Trilby”. Svengali’s death-scene to the life!’ Trilby by George du Maurier, published in 1894, was the literary sensation of the time and was produced on stage by Herbert Beerbohm Tree in September 1895. The leading Punch cartoonist, du Maurier died in October 1896. The film was described in the Edison catalogue as ‘very funny’.

By early July the Pandora Gallery was re-named the Victoria Hall. On 6 July 1896 an extended run of R W Paul’s ‘Celebrated Animatographe’ began. The programme ran for 11 hours a day from 11:30 am, admission 6d (2½p), reserved seats 1s (5p). The Brighton Gazette (7 July 1896) gives a vivid account of the opening and hints at the continuing problems of putting on such shows.

Reports of the extraordinary effects produced by Mr R. W. Paul’s instrument, the animatographe, now being shown at the London Alhambra, have roused the curiosity of Brightonians to a considerable pitch. It was inevitable that before long they should have an opportunity, here on the spot, of testing for themselves the truth of the statements circulated, and yesterday the first opportunity was afforded to them of so doing. Mr R. W. Paul has brought an instrument, similar to that being shown at the London Alhambra ...

[and] he is giving daily exhibitions at the Victoria Hall, nearly opposite the West Pier. A number of ladies and gentlemen accepted invitations to be present at the inaugural exhibition yesterday, when the animatographe was manipulated by the inventor in person. Making allowances for preliminary difficulties, which can easily be met in future, the performance was remarkably successful. In fact, one or two "scenes" which were put through twice came out much better at the second than at the first trial. The pictures included several which have already become famous. The victory of Persimmon in the Derby, and the arrival of the Paris express at Calais, were both received with enthusiasm; but, artistically, a much better picture was obtained in a boat scene at Brighton. The troubles of landing experienced by a party of young men and women are most clearly and humorously portrayed [sic]. Another excellent effect shows the entrance to the West Pier at a busy moment; while a party of young people, whose movements are conspicuous, might easily be recognised. Then there is a representation of a rough sea at Ramsgate, two or three street scenes in London, a conjuring performance by David Devant, and various other subjects. The entertainment has necessarily to take place in total darkness, but the otherwise weird effect is relieved by music.

The experience of watching in a totally dark room was weird enough to merit comment. R W Paul had filmed the 1896 Derby on 3 June and screened the results in London the next day. The Brighton & Hove Guardian (8 July 1896) was exuberant in its praise:

We strongly recommend the exhibition to our readers, as upon the whole one of the most
the Danish-Swedish film *I, A Woman* (*Jeg—en kvinde*) but then relented.

Such variations and deviations have rarely occurred since. However, the emergence of a richer independent film-making culture—high-definition video production provides the cheapest and most accessible means ever to shoot movies—has brought local authority licensing departments back into the frame. Micro-budget films that have not been through the costly process of applying for a BBFC certificate can apply for a local classification for screenings within the city.

**Technological alternatives**

A surprising number of alternatives to conventional films have been seen in Brighton cinemas, even in the early days. The first was the colour films made by the Natural Colour Kinematograph Company with the name Kinemacolor (see page 141). These films were a features of the programming at the Academy Cinema when it opened in 1911 and continued there for the next two or three years.

In 1914 two Brighton cinemas showed experiments in 3D film, a concept on which inventors, including William Friese Greene in Brighton, had been working for almost as long as pictures could move. The Arcadia had the Stereoscopogaph projection system, about which nothing is known. However, at around the same time the Palladium put on shows of Kinoplastikon, ‘films without a screen’, along with other films on the normal screen. This was developed by Theodore Brown, whose day job was as editor of Kinematograph and Lantern Weekly. He was a prolific inventor and an associate of Charles Urban. This idea was based on the stage illusion known as ‘Pepper’s ghost’ in which images are projected onto a pane of glass, angled at 45 degrees to the audience.

In 1924 the Empire Picture Theatre in Hove showed Plastigram 3D films. This was an anaglyph system, requiring the audience to wear spectacles with separate red and green filters over each eye. The Regent screened a 3D film that did not require glasses (known as ‘autostereoscopy’) in 1925. It is not known which technology was used but it probably involved a beaded or lenticular screen, using a principle similar to the plastic cards in which the image appears to move when the card is tilted from side to side.

With the advance of television in the early 1950s, Hollywood studios looked to new film formats to retain audiences. A brief surge of interest in 3D gave an opportunity for a collection of mainly British 3D films to fill the gap while new films were made. In the summer of 1951 one of the hits of the Festival of Britain was the Telekinesis (later the National Film Theatre). A programme of 3D shorts produced by a company called Stereo-Techniques was shown. The sales director was Kenneth Nyman, proprietor of the Curzon Kinema in Brighton. The films were screened at the Curzon in special morning shows in April 1952, admission 6d (2½p).

MGM revived an anaglyph format that it had first tried in 1941 and which was now released as Metroscopix to support the main feature, screened at the Savoy, Brighton and the Granada, Hove.

The first 3D feature film shown in Brighton, *Man in the Dark*, was seen at the Essoldo in June 1953. Unusually, it ran in separate performances and at premium prices. *Bwana Devil* (‘A lion in your lap, a lover in your arms’) came hot on its heels the next week. Two weeks later the Technicolor chiller *House of Wax* opened at the Astoria for a four-week run, immediately followed by another stereoscopic sensation, *Sangaree*, on the newly installed wide screen. The Astoria continued to be Brighton’s only 3D venue into 1954, showing films that had already been on ABC-owned first-run screens (the Savoy and Granada) in ‘flat’ versions.

However, it was Cinemascope that won out in the battle of the formats and 3D fizzled out by mid 1954. We had to wait more than 40 years for stereoscopy to re-emerge in the digital age, after more than a century of development. All Brighton’s cinemas (but not all screens) are now equipped for digital 3D screenings. However, it is debatable whether the revived interest in 3D at the end of the 2000s can survive to rise above the level of another short-lived gimmick.

For some, although not for technological reasons, foreign-language films are regarded as just as unconventional. In the 1950s mainstream cinemas showed occasional foreign films, such as *Bicycle Thieves*, *Mon Oncle*, *French Can-Can* and *Le Salaire de la Peur* (*The Wages of Fear*), although it was the Continentale and the shorter-lived Brighton Film Theatre that were the more regular venues for European cinema.

European films were popular in mainstream cinemas in the 1950s:

1 Bicycle Thieves
2 Mon Oncle
3 French Can-Can
4 An audience watching a 3D film in the 1950s
Continentale Cinema
Sudeley Place, Kemp Town, Brighton
operated 1920-1986

King’s Cliff Cinema/Sudeley Place Picture House
1920-1943

Metro Cinema 1948?

Metro Playhouse 1949

Playhouse Cinema 1949-1951

Continental Cinema 1951-1986

1920 Opened as the King’s Cliff Cinema (also known as the Sudeley Place Picture House) in a converted Congregational chapel (built in 1891), converted by local architects Denman & Matthew (Brighton). Proprietors are W & R A Easter. Continuous shows, three changes a week, 300 seats, prices 6d-1s 6d. Proscenium is 21 feet wide.

1921 Tea room at the back is knocked through into the main auditorium, adding 78 seats.

1924 Prices are reduced to 5d-1s 3d.

1930 Owned by Mrs L Reith Fellows (see also TIVOLI, Western Road, Hove). GB-Kalee sound system installed.

1931 Proprietors are L & A Bell.

1934 Prices reduced to 4d-9d.

1939 September 2 Re-opens after (still incomplete) refurbishment. It closes the next day under the wartime restrictions on cinema opening.

1941 Proprietors are now H S Walker and D J Hayes. Programmes daily from 14:15. Prices 5d-1s 2d.

1942 Prices 4d-1s 6d

1943 May Re-opens after temporary closure since 1941.

1946 Renamed Metro News Kine by the new owners (Jack Leslie & Co) with a news theatre policy, but reverts to feature films by the end of July. Prices now 10d-1s 6d, continuous from 15:15, booked at the hall; proscenium width now 14ft, according to the Kine Year Book (KYB) British Acoustic Films (BAF) sound system.

1946 November 30 Changed from cinema use to become the Playhouse Theatre with a repertory company.

1948 Acquired by MILES BYRNE, who at this time is entering the cinema business in Hereford, which becomes his main base. Sunday shows of French films are introduced. The repertory theatre is dispensed with in favour of films and gives its last performance on 26 March 1949.

1949 March 28 Renamed the Playhouse Cinema, leased to GEORGE FERNIE.

1950 December Closes for installation of heating and 300 new seats.

1951 April 30 The name is changed to Continental Playhouse and almost immediately after to the Continental Cinema, showing European films.

1953 January Infra-red heating system installed.

1957 Listed as run by G H Fernie. Prices 1d 6d-3s 2d.

1961 Converted for Cinemascope. Prices 1s 6d-3s.

1965 Owned and, following the death of George Fernie, also managed by the Miles Byrne Organisation (now at 2 St John’s Road, Burgess Hill). Complete refurbishment carried out at a cost of £5,000. Programming changes to art-house films (Jules et Jim) in the evenings, soft porn films (My Bare Lady) in the afternoons, with Hollywood runs for the holidays. [The art-house films are later dropped in favour of an all-sex regime.]

1967 Brighton Council refuses to accept the BBFC certificate (X, subsequently reduced to 15) for Joseph Strick’s film of James Joyce’s Ulysses and briefly bans the film. [Byrne’s Orion Cinema in Burgess Hill is meanwhile allowed to show the film.] 1968 Brighton Council briefly refuses to accept the BBFC X-rated classification for the Swedish film I, A Woman.

1968 Capacity now given as 267 seats. Prices 4s, 5s. Screen 20ft x 9ft, Cinemascope.
1931 Two changes weekly. Prices 6d-1s 10d.
1932 An optical sound system is installed. Prices 7d-1s 10d.
1936 In response to the refurbishment of the nearby CURZON, the Tivoli is redecorated, with new projectors, new carpets, new seats with padded arm rests and, at the front of house, a new canopy and revolving door.
1934 Prices 6d and 1s.
1946 November 2 Closed while a new, larger projection box is constructed with access from the front of house, to replace the previous one, which was condemned as a health and safety risk (see 1912).
1946 December 26 Re-opens.
1948 Acquired by HARRY JACOBS, who also owns the CURZON. Prices 10d and 1s 9d, 350 seats, continuous performances, booked at the hall; proscenium 20ft.
1950 April Land acquired behind the cinema is used to extend the auditorium by 60 feet.
1950 May 15 Re-opens with the name Embassy Cinema; 398 seats; Walturdaw sound system.
1953 Prices 1s-2s 8d.
1957 Prices 1s-2s 9d; two changes weekly.
1961-62 Prices 1s 6d-3s.
1967 Acquired from Harry Jacobs by MILES BYRNE, booked at Byrne House, 2 St John's Road, Burgess Hill.
1979 May Planning permission to split the building into a gambling club and smaller cinema upstairs is refused, so Byrne looks to take over the BRIGHTON FILM THEATRE (see PRICE’S CINEMA).
1981 April 25 Closes. The final films are a double bill of The Spaceman and King Arthur and Dumbo.

Victoria Hall
132 King's Road, Brighton
operated 1896
- This was previously the PANDORA GALLERY.

1896 July 6 R W PAUL’s ‘Celebrated Animatographe’ begins a run of shows that lasts until November. Admission 6d, reserved seats 1s.
- The Gem Cinema is at this address in the 1950s.

West Pier Pavilion
King’s Road, Brighton
operated 1895-c1914
1895 spring Several Edison kinetoscope machines were installed on the pier.
1900 October A programme by Gordon & Co of London, Sons of the Empire, includes films of the Boer War and JAMES WILLIAMSON’S Attack on a Chinese Mission. Regular shows at 15:00 and 20:00 daily. Around this time Gordon & Co ran the Rotunda and a separate franchise on the pier for Edison’s phonograph and kinetoscopes.
1910 Alfred J West’s Our Navy and Our Army films are still being shown.
1912 October ‘Open air day and night cinema’ is an attraction at the pier head. Three two-hour shows daily at 11:00, 15:00 and 19:30. A special ‘day and night screen’ is set back within a black proscenium ‘resembling a big tent’ forming an enclosure seating 400 people. It was still in operation six months later.
- A Mutoscope machine was on the pier in 1901 (see below).

Mutoscope parlours
One of the attractions on the West Pier in 1901 was a Mutoscope machine—the classic penny-in-the-slot ‘what the butler saw’ device—in which the sequence of film images was printed onto cards that flipped over as the handle is turned, creating the illusion of movement. Clearly a hit with the lads in their caps, knickerbockers and boots.

The country’s first Mutoscope parlour outside London opened at 22 Western Road, Brighton at the end of November 1898. The business was based at 27b West Street, which also had viewing facilities, and there were other parlours around Brighton from the end of 1898 until around 1903, at 105 King’s Road and 50 Western Road. The manager at West Street in 1901 was a Mr Alexander, in 1902-03 Mr C Glenister.
In the beginning the simplest way to make films was to point the camera at anything—the beach, the street—and shoot. For the time being, that was enough to create 'the sensation of the century'.

But then the urge made itself felt to put something different in front of the camera. Why not also make local versions of the films the Lumière brothers had shown to such resounding applause in Paris and London? So Collings shot *Hose Scene*, recreating *L’arroseur arrosé*, the film seen in the Lumière poster (see page 9)—possibly the first staged scene filmed in Britain—and *Train arriving at Dyke Station*. When in 1897 G A Smith made *Arrival and Departure of a Train at Hove* (see the title page) he could have been copying either.

Collings lost interest in film very quickly and his activity barely lasted out the year. But at the beginning of October 1896 he made what is probably the first ever film featuring a named, established performer. AUGUSTE VAN BIENE and company were appearing at the Eden Theatre in his musical melodrama *The Broken Melody* in the week ending 3 October. [For the record, MARIE ILLINGTON was starring a few doors away at the THEATRE ROYAL that same week.] Collings filmed van Biene in a scene from the play. A second film, entitled *Musical Party, Van Biene*, was also shot.

In November Collings was in Paris, where he filmed the Csar, stopping off in London on the way back to record the Lord Mayor’s Show.

The other significant 'first' attributed to Collings is *Victorian Lady in Her Boudoir*, in which the lady removes her outer garments in a manner that earned the film a reputation as the first 'blue movie', deemed suitable only for gentlemen's smoking parties. He also filmed some short scenes commissioned by the Irish actor-manager Lewis Sealy for inclusion in stage shows to accompany live performers and singers.

George Albert Smith picked up where Collings left off. In his first year as a film-maker, 1897, Smith made 40 films (or 34 if different scenes in series are not counted separately), including his own versions of some popular films, such as *Children Paddling at the Seaside* and
It was also one of three films from that year in which he used superimposition in addition to the jump cut. This was a difficult effect to achieve and involved careful planning. The main scene had to be shot first. Then the film was wound back in the camera and re-exposed through a circular mask designed to fit the new image into the blacked-out area of the main scene.

Music hall provided a ready supply of performers for early films, not least those who lived in Brighton. (They rarely lived in the more genteel environs of Hove.) Over the next few years novelty acts were filmed much as they were performed on stage, usually when on the bill at one of the local halls. G A Smith made an ‘animated portrait’ of Marie Lloyd, one of the visiting greats, outside the Alhambra Theatre (the future Palladium Cinema) on King’s Road in 1898, although this was more of a staged documentary, albeit one obviously made with her collaboration.

James Williamson was bringing himself up to speed with a mixture of actuality scenes—cricketers at the Sussex county ground, holiday-makers in the fairground at Devil’s Dyke, Barnum’s circus parading along Hove seafront—and comedies. For performers Williamson, lacking Smith’s contacts, usually looked no further than his own children and himself. He made his first film appearance in 1898, daughter Florence the following year. But more significantly his two eldest sons, Alan and Colin, featured as Two Naughty Boys in three films made in 1898, with more to follow in due course. The concept of the comedy series was born, soon to be taken up even more enthusiastically by G A Smith over the next couple of years in half a dozen films with Tom Green and Mr Hunter as The Two Old Sports and other such pairings. Although Williamson’s work was not (yet) as technically adventurous as his Hove contemporary’s, the descriptions of his sketches suggest a very pleasant English sense of humour.

If 1899 proved to be a relatively quiet year in terms of output, it did produce one film that is regarded as a major landmark in film technique: The Kiss in the Tunnel. Smith took existing footage by another film-maker, of a popular kind known as a phantom ride—shot from a flat car in front of a railway engine—and, at the point where the train goes into a tunnel, inserted his own scene of a man and woman (played by Smith and wife Laura Bayley) inside a carriage. He gets up, removes his top hat, kisses her, then sits down (on his hat) as if nothing had happened, just before the train emerges from the tunnel. This is claimed as probably the earliest example of film editing, in the sense of what later theorists called
Theatre on Western Road, Brighton in 1909—as it happened, one of the longest surviving cinema sites in the city through its various names, including the CURZON. In 1911 he formed the Brighton and County Film Company. The one minute Xmas Greeting Film that he made towards the end of the year was probably a trial run for screening to patrons at his cinema. It was not entirely unknown for cinemas to screen locally-made films: the HIPPODROME and the PALLADIUM had started showing their own newsreels in 1909 and the Empire Picture Theatre followed suit with Eddie Scriven’s newsreels the following year. Speer himself had started to programme the Pathé Animated Gazette during 1911.

Serious production got under way in 1912—and the company was renamed Brightonia—with two more sustained efforts, a melodrama and a crime story, shot on location in the area. Speer directed these films himself but for the six films made by Brightonia in 1913 the company brought in an actor/director, ARTHUR CHARRINGTON, about whom little is known. The production ambitions were on a new scale. One of the films, The Grip of Iron, lasted almost an hour. Perhaps it was Charrington who brought along a group of actors who not only formed the nucleus of a repertory company at Brightonia but went on after the First World War to make films at Shoreham. Among them were NELL EMERALD (sister-in-law of stage star Stanley Lupino and aunt of IDA LUPINO), her sister Monnie Mine, FRANK E PETLEY and H AGAR LYONS, who, a year after Brighton, was in the new film colony of Hollywood to appear in the first Kinemacolor feature film.

Meanwhile, seven miles to the west, a group of music hall comedians started to make films of their best-known sketches, using the ruin of an old fort at Shoreham, dating from Napoleonic times, as a ‘studio’. The Sunny South Film Company made eight short films in 1914-1915 before F L Lyndhurst, one of the founders, took over the business and changed its name to the Sealight Film Company. For this he built a glass-house studio (see page 204) further west, at King’s Gap, on a concrete slab that was laid on the shingle, adjacent to the newly built Church of the Good Shepherd. However, the new company made only one four-reel film, directed by Lyndhurst, in 1916.

With war raging just across the Channel, Lyndhurst then sold the studio to the Olympic Kine Trading Company, a film distributor that was probably thinking of a move into production. If so, it never happened and Olympic sold the studio on, without ever rolling the cameras, to FRANK E SPRING, a film producer from Lancashire who had recently set up the Progress Film Company. All 17 films made at Shoreham by Progress were directed by SIDNEY MORGAN and photographed by STANLEY J MUMFORD. The studio had a repertory company of actors, although it was a feature of British cinema at that time (perhaps a function of its size) that actors and directors were frequently reunited in various combinations. Progress was riding the wave of production in the wake of war.

A major fire of some studio buildings in 1922 stopped Progress in its tracks and the company never recovered. It leased what was left of the studio facilities to Walter West and then the Carlton Film Company, which made the last films at Shoreham for 34 years. Sidney Morgan and Frank Spring went on to make films for Julius Hagen’s Astra-National Productions and Sidney Morgan played the part of Joxer Daly in Alfred Hitchcock’s film of Juno and the Paycock (1930).

The last silent film made in the Brighton area was called Auntie’s Antics. It was a classic (and quite early) example of a ‘quota quickie’. The 1927 Cinematograph Films Act introduced a requirement for all British cinemas to devote at least five per cent of screen time to British films, starting on 1 October 1928. This small but guaranteed market was targeted by producers and distributors who saw an opportunity to make cheap films simply to satisfy the quota—never mind the quality. Auntie’s Antics was made at Preston by a couple called Wilf Gannon and Hilda Sayer for £114 and sold on to a distributor for £125. It may well have been little more than an amateur production for all we can tell. That was the whimper with which Brighton film-making came to an end for the time being.
Many films were made in Brighton and Hove during the early silent film era. In the first year of production alone, 1896, possibly more than two dozen films were shot in Brighton, most apparently in the area between the two piers. Esmé Collings made several story films that were probably shot in Brighton, in addition to the topographical titles listed below, and made at least 25 films in 1896.

Not all the films listed here were necessarily shot in Brighton and Hove—usually evidenced from the title—but were made by film-makers working from the city, where the films would usually have been processed and printed. In the interests of completeness of the listings for Brighton & Hove film-makers, these are included but titles are shown in lighter type.

Some films have alternative titles. The earliest productions never had a title on the actual film, so the names are those given in catalogues or programmes. The first titled films appeared around 1902—G A Smith’s Santa Claus being perhaps the first. As films were sold outright, different showmen/exhibitors gave the films different titles. This can lead to confusion. Despite extensive checking and attempts at rationalisation, it is therefore possible that some films have been listed more than once.

Dates are normally of release, based on inclusion in catalogues and trade advertising, and can be assumed to be soon after completion of the film, except as stated.

### Films: silent 1896

† Films known to have survived

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Films that can be viewed online (usually on YouTube)</th>
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† † Films known to have survived

Cross-references to names of people in the biographies section are in SMALL CAPITALS

Films marked # were offered for sale in Germany in January 1897 by Romain Talbot, a Berlin distributor, who gave the length as 23 metres (90ft). This is probably an exaggeration.
The big news event of 1902—apart from the end of the Boer War—was Edward VII's coronation, the first such ceremonial since Queen Victoria's in 1838 and the first since the advent of the cinematograph. The Mutoscope and Biograph company had secured the rights to film the actual event, so Charles Urban of Warwick Trading Company commissioned a version of the ceremony to be co-directed by George Albert Smith and Georges Méliès and made with actors in advance at Méliès' Star Films studio in Montreuil, Paris. The idea was to have the film ready for release at the time of the event on 26 June. However, the king fell ill and the coronation was postponed until 9 August. This still shows that the lavish production of the Coronation of Their Majesties King Edward VII and Queen Alexandria [sic] (alt title Le Sacré d'Édouard) would probably have outshone its actuality rivals, hinting at the enhanced production values that were to come.

kitchen, building the fire in the range and blacking the boots, Smith cuts from the wider establishing shot to closer shots to direct the audience's attention. In particular, he uses close-ups of Laura Bayley as Mary Jane playing to the audience's attention. In particular, he uses close-up shots of the camera when she admires her smudged face in a mirror and of her pouring paraffin on the fire in which she winks at the camera. This is an unusual and significant breaking of the 'fourth-wall' convention, drawing the audience into complicity with her actions. When the fire explodes and blows Mary Jane up the chimney, Smith uses a jump cut just as the cloud of smoke expands to take Mary Jane out of shot. She next appears (in life-size dummy form) emerging from the chimney and descending in pieces. The close-up of her tombstone, effectively an intertitle—complete with 'Rest in Pieces' joke—gives way to a graveyard scene through a vertical soft-edge wipe—both pioneering aspects of film grammar. Finally, the women who visit the grave are scared away by Mary Jane's superimposed ghost. She reaches down the paraffin can and returns to the earth as her cat stands by the grave. A substantially extended reworking of Biograph's How Bright Made the Fire (1900) and a two-shot Edison film, The Finish of Bridget McKeen (1901), this shows the level of sophistication to which Smith's filmmaking has aspired. Released in the US by Biograph, Kleine, Edison and S Lubin, April 1903. See page 81.

The Monk in the Monastery Wine Cellar (50ft). Released in the US by Biograph, April 1903.
The Monk in the Studio (100ft). Featuring D Philippe.
The Monk's Ruse for Lunch (100ft). Featuring D Philippe.
Mother Goose Nursery Rhymes (totalling 550ft or 600ft). Features Tom Green. Eight scenes, probably re-enacted from a pantomime: Goosey Gander, Hey Diddle Diddle*, Jack and Jill, Little Miss Muffet, Old King Cole and Blackbird Pie*, Old Mother Hubbard*, Old Woman in a Shoe, Sing a Song of Sixpence (*copies survive from Biokam versions). Smith may have shot two versions of some or all parts on standard 35mm and 17.5mm Biokam. Released in the US by Edison, February 1903.

Oh That Collar Button! (50ft).
Old Lady Tries to Thread Her Needle † (45ft)
Possibly the version of Grandma Threading Her Needle (1900) released in the US by Edison, September 1902. A 45ft copy with this title dated 1902 is in the National Film Archive.

Pa's Comment on the Morning News † (44ft/75ft).
A 'facial' , showing Pa reading the paper, thumping the table and breaking his boiled egg, which smells bad. Released in the US by American Mutoscope and Biograph Company, April 1903. Also released in a 17.5mm Biokam version with the title How Pa Reads the Morning Paper.

Pantomime Girls Having a Lark (50ft). Possibly made to show during a stage performance.
Policeman and Burglar † (46ft). A policeman finds a burglar at work, they fight and the policeman makes an arrest. Possibly originated on 17.5mm Biokam. May be the last scene of After Dark (qv).

Robinson Crusoe † (53ft). Scenes from a pantomime featuring a parrot and a monkey as well as Mr and Mrs Crusoe and some dancing girls. Crusoe may be played by Laura Bayley. A section called Pierrots survives.

Tambourine Dancing Quartet (135ft).
That Awful Cigar (alt title A Bad Cigar) (100ft).
May be a copy or re-release of A Bad Cigar (1900).
Tommy and the Mouse in the Art School (alt title Little Willie and the Mouse) (50ft).

Tommy Atkins and his Harriet on a Bank Holiday (30ft).
Too Much of a Good Thing (50ft).
The Two Old Sports at the Music Hall (75ft). Latest in the series by Tom Green and Mr Hunter.
This chance is soon offered by the policeman leaving his coat and helmet outside a house where he is entertained by the cook. The tramp makes excellent use of these on a country road, where he extracts a tip from a scorching motorist. He then sends the policeman on a fool's errand on being asked concerning the lost property and feels amply revenged. (Butcher's catalogue).

Two Brave Little Japs (September, 490ft). War melodrama.

James Williamson for Williamson Kinematograph Company (WKC), all also distributed by Charles Urban Trading Company

Brown's Half Holiday † (July, 400ft). Brown wants to play tennis but his wife gets him to help with spring-cleaning. Tasks go wrong. He traces a gas leak, is blown up and thrown onto the tennis court.

An Eclipse of the Moon (December, 170ft). Comedy.

In the Good Old Times (October, 55ft). A 'facial'.

Our New Errand Boy † (August, 388ft). Williamson appears as the grocer, his son Tom as the errand boy, who gets up to tricks that culminate in his being chased by a group of adults. The film runs for nearly six minutes and, although there are only 12 shots, the narrative has pace and style. Williamson mixes types of composition: the shop (Hodder's at 2 Lorna Road) is filmed square on with people arriving from various angles. The scene of the two boys crossing the railway bridge has the rest of Wilbury Villas in the background and the water cart scene also shows the road stretching beyond. Three scenes make use of the corners of buildings to show people approaching from two angles. Released in the US by Williamson & Co, 14 March 1908.

The Polite Lunatic (September, 100ft). A lunatic tries to return a putty knife to a workman who runs away in fear, leading to a comedy chase.

The Prodigal Son, or Ruined at the Races (August, 585ft). Williamson's longest film to date, in 10 scenes and running for almost 10 minutes. 'An excellent picture story, well told, in natural scenery, with good racecourse scene.

The Real Sea Serpents. Uncertain.

The Rival Barbers † (July, 125ft). 'Barber No 1 displays a striking advertisement which Barber No 2 adds to, to the detriment of Barber No 1. Some boys and a gent see the joke, but not Barber No 1, who, thinking he has caught the delinquent, hands the gent into his shop, lathers him and kicks him out again to the amusement of Barber No 2, who comisserates with his rival.' (Butcher's catalogue).

Released in the US by Williamson & Co, 15 February 1908.

Sausages (July, 275ft). 'A loafer is given a job of carrying round the streets a board with the following legend: “Above is what Chopper's Sausages are made from” , above being a picture of a fine prize pig. But the man soon tires of his job, and is enticed to enter a public house with an acquaintance, leaving his boards outside. On resuming his boards he fails to notice that some bill-posters had changed the pig for a cat. The fame of this novel advertisement finally reaches...
Considering that so many hundreds of films had been made in Brighton and district right through the silent era, it was as much as 20 years after the introduction of sound that the first talkie was made locally—and it is still without question the most iconic of all: Brighton Rock (shot in 1947). There had been one visiting production before that, The Hundred Pound Window, in 1943, featuring a 20-year-old Richard Attenborough. In 1948 the Royal Pavilion had its first ever starring role in The First Gentleman but it was the rather less prestigious production of The Adventures of Jane, the first feature to come out of the recently opened Brighton Film Studios, that heralded an era when more regular use was made of Brighton as a film location.

Brighton’s fame had not faded in the hiatus since the end of the silent era. Apart from being a convenient and familiar seaside site within easy reach of London, it retained its widespread reputation for its Regency connections, its leisure and illicit sex and even for its crime, including gruesome murders.

Its reputation extended even to Hollywood. Who would have expected that the musical that gave the world the two classic hit songs Night and Day and The Continental—The Gay Divorcee (1934)—was partly set in ‘Brighton’? (Actually, it was set in racy Brighton, but we all know that does not mean staid Eastbourne.) In 1945, RKO made a film in Hollywood, The Brighton Strangler, that was supposed to be set in Brighton, although its depiction of the seafront owed less to any actual topographical research than to the imagination of RKO’s art department recalling the rugged rocks of Cornwall’s coastline in Hitchcock’s Rebecca.

Films and the city
For the early pioneers, the city was home, so it featured naturally, first by providing scenes simply to be photographed, then as the backdrop for action. Usually this meant somewhere convenient. James Williamson left a legacy of images showing Hove as it was after the turn of the century, especially close to his pharmacies in Church Road and Western Road, and even more so near his studio at what is now Cambridge Grove. Many places are virtually unchanged since his day. Then there are lost scenes, such as Magnus Volk's Daddy Long-Legs electric railway that ran from Madeira Drive in Brighton out to Rottingdean through the briny. That was filmed by R W Paul and both G A Smith and Williamson. Smith went up to the Jack and Jill windmills to make The Miller and the Sweep, while Dave Aylott took cast and crew to Hangleton and onto the Downs for the films he made for Williamson in 1909.

Films made in Brighton and Hove since then can be divided into those that are set in the city and those that have found it convenient to use the city. The two best-known films in the former category are, without question, Brighton Rock and Quadrophenia (1979). Both have storylines that are historically and intrinsically rooted in the place.

Despite these examples, Brighton was probably too cosmopolitan a place, too close to London, to establish a regional film culture as, say, Manchester did during and after the Second World War, when the two most popular film stars in the north-west of England were Bing Crosby and the Lancashire comedian Frank Randle in films that came out of the Manx Films studios in Dickinson Road, Didsbury (later the first home of the BBC’s Top of the Pops). The numerous northern film stars of the 1930s and 1940s, like Gracie Fields and George Formby, had only one south-coast counterpart: the cheeky chappie, Max Miller. All comedians, you’ll notice. These were the days when ‘real’ actors were trained out of their regional accents. When that started to change either side of 1960, Brighton offered no equivalent to the gritty northern kitchen-sink dramas.

Brighton’s principal stock-in-trade from Brighton Rock onwards was crime. To some extent this was in keeping with the prevailing taste for noir, reflected in the novels of, say, Patrick Hamilton, James Curtis and Graham Greene. Between 1949 and 1964 Brighton Film Studios was the mainstay for local production. Murder and intrigue were regular fare (although death was perhaps not as frequent as in television’s Midsomer). A characteristic in the 1970s was comedy—end-of-the-pier style (Carry On) or farce (Loot).
Films can be divided into those that use Brighton, Hove and district simply as a location to represent somewhere (anywhere) else and those that use it as the specific setting for all or part of the story. The latter group can then be subdivided into the ones actually filmed in the city and those that never came near the place, except for the odd establishing shot.

The listing (in alphabetical order) is of feature films, which in general means over one hour running time, although some B-features of not quite that length are included here. Then films set but not shot in Brighton and a selection of short films and newsreels follow.

All feature-length titles in chronological order
- Released on DVD

Filmed in Brighton

1940s
- 1943: The Hundred Pound Window
- 1948: The First Gentleman [US title: Affairs of a Rogue]
- 1949: The Adventures of Jane

1950s
- 1950: The Dark Man
- 1951: Lady Godiva Rides Again
- 1951: Penny Points to Paradise
- 1952: Ghost Ship
- 1952: Hot Ice
- 1952: My Death is a Mockery
- 1953: Genevieve
- 1953: The Girl on the Pier
- 1953: Solution by Phone
- 1953: The Straw Man
- 1953: Take a Powder
- 1954: Adventure in the Hopfields
- 1954: Children Galore
- 1954: Mad About Men
- 1954: One Good Turn
- 1954: The Young Lovers
- 1955: Alias John Preston
- 1955: Cast a Dark Shadow
- 1955: The Flaw
- 1955: The Master Plan
- 1955: The Secret
- 1955: Alive on Saturday (released 1957)
- 1957: Hell Drivers
- 1957: Quatermass II
- 1957: Rogue’s Yarn
- 1958: Battle of the V1 [US title: Missiles from Hell]

1960s
- 1960: Linda
- 1961: The Night We Got the Bird [US title: Who’s Cuckoo?]
- 1961: Nudes of the World [US titles: Nudes of all Nations; The Sun the Place and the Girl]
- 1961: KIL 1 [US title: Skin Game]
- 1962: Jigsaw
- 1963: The Edgar Wallace Mystery Theatre: The Double
- 1963: Shadow of Fear
- 1964: The Chalk Garden
- 1965: Be My Guest
- 1968: La Ragazza con la Pistola [English title: Girl with a Pistol]
- 1968: Oh! What a Lovely War
- 1969: On a Clear Day You Can See Forever
- 1969: The Big Switch [alt title: Strip Poker]

1970s
- 1970: Loot
- 1971: All the Right Noises
- 1971: Carry On at your Convenience
- 1971: Die Screaming, Marianne
- 1971: Sporting Chance
- 1971: Villain
- 1972: The Flesh and Blood Show [alt title: Asylum of the Insane]
- 1972: Made
- 1973: Carry On Girls
- 1974: The Black Windmill
- 1977: Come Play With Me
- 1979: Quadrophenia

1980s
- 1983: The Ploughman’s Lunch
- 1986: Mona Lisa
- 1987: Wish You Were Here
- 1988: A Handful of Dust

1990s
- 1993: Dirty Weekend
- 1994: Mainline Run
- 1995: Fanny Hill
- 1995: Night Warrior: Deadly Jade
- 1995: Richard III
- 1997: Project: Assassin
- 1999: Don’t Go Breaking My Heart
- 1999: The End of the Affair

2000s
- 2000: The Big Finish
- 2000: Circus
- 2001: Me Without You
- 2001: Motion
- 2001: Plato’s Breaking Point
- 2001: Redemption Road
- 2001: Summer Rain
- 2003: Ashes and Sand
- 2003: The Blind Spot
- 2003: The Johnna Man
- 2003: Stewed
- 2004: Andrew and Jeremy Get Married
- 2004: The Intuition Shorts
- 2004: Left for Dead
- 2004: Wimbledon
- 2005: MirrorMask
- 2005: Richard III
- 2005: Tan Lines
- 2005: Tomorrow
- 2006: And When Did You Last See Your Father?
- 2006: Cassandra’s Dream
- 2006: The Da Vinci Code
- 2006: Fixers
- 2006: January 2nd
- 2006: London to Brighton
- 2006: The Penalty King
- 2006: Sixty Six
- 2007: The Boat that Rocked
- 2007: Brighton Wok: The Legend of Ganja Boxing
- 2007: The Damned United

2010s
- 2010: Brighton Rock
- 2010: Fly Trap
- 2011: Between the Silence
- 2011: City of Dreamers
- 2011: Profile of Fear

Set but not filmed in Brighton
- 1933: To Brighton with Gladys
- 1934: The Gay Divorcee
- 1937: It Began in Brighton
- 1938: Bank Holiday
- 1939: Inspector Hornleigh on Holiday
- 1943: Millions Like Us
- 1945: The Brighton Strangler
- 1945: Pink String and Sealing Wax
- 1947: Mrs Fitzherbert
- 1948: Uneasy Terms
- 1948: Good Time Girl
- 1951: The Magic Box
- 1954: Beau Brummell
- 1961: The Day the Earth Caught Fire
- 2009: The Damned United

How many have you seen?
Adventure in the Hopfields

alternative title: Hop Dog
UK | b&w | 60 mins | 1954
d John Guillermin; w John Cresswell from a novel by Nora Lavin and Molly Thorp; ph Kenneth Talbot; p Roger Proudlock; prod Vandyke Picture Corporation and Children’s Film Foundation; dist British Lion
cast Mandy Miller, Melvyn Hayes; uncredited: Jane Asher, Edward Judd, Anthony Valentine.
● A child runs away after being left behind when all the family and neighbours go off for their annual hop-picking holiday in Kent.
● Made at Brighton Film Studios. Location filming mainly at Goudhurst in Kent, but with an extended sequence of the girl hiding out in the Jill windmill on the downs at Clayton, north of Brighton.
● The film was believed lost until a copy was found being thrown out at a Chicago television studio.
• Clips are on YouTube.

The Adventures of Jane

UK | b&w | 53 mins | 1949
d/p Edward G Whiting; w Alfred Goulding, Con West and Edward G Whiting; ph Jack Rose; prod Brighton Studios
cast Christabel Leighton-Porter, Dennis Price, Peter Butterworth
● Made at Brighton Film Studios and various Brighton locations, including the Gaiety Cinema, Brighton station, Marine Drive at Roedean and the Tudor Close Hotel in Dean Court Road, Rottingdean.
● A placard in the background of the scenes at the station advertises the auction rooms in St Nicholas Road, which Brighton Film Studios had recently taken over.
● Whiting’s only film as director, although he produced five films; the fourth, Schweik’s New Adventure (1943), was coincidentally Richard Attenborough’s second film, after In Which We Serve, before The Hundred Pound Window.
• Released on DVD with Murder at 3am.

Alias John Preston

UK | b&w | 66 mins | 1955
Released June 1956
d David MacDonald; w Paul Tabori; ph Jack Cox; p Sid Stone; prod Danziger Productions
cast Christopher Lee, Alexander Knox, Betta St John, Sandra Dorne, Patrick Holt, Bill Fraser, Betty Ann Davies
● Psychological crime thriller about a schizophrenic murderer who settles in an English village.
● Filmed at Brighton Film Studios but with no evident sign of local locations.
● A version running 71 mins was released in the USA by Associated Artists Productions in December 1955.
• Released on DVD in the USA.

Alive on Saturday

UK | b&w | 58 mins | 1955 (released February 1957)
d Alfred Travers; w Brandon Fleming; ph Hilton Craig; p Brandon Fleming and Geoffrey Goodheart; prod Pan Productions
cast GUY MIDDLETON, Patricia Owens, Geoffrey Goodheart, John Witty
● Thriller, shot at Brighton Film Studios.

All the Right Noises

UK | colour | 92 mins | 1971
US release January 1973
d/w Gerry O’Hara from his own novel; ph Gerry Fisher; p Si Litvinoff and John Quested; prod Si Litvinoff Film Production and Trigon Films; dist Twentieth Century-Fox (US)
cast Olivia Hussey, Tom Bell, Judy Carne, Lesley-Ann Down
● Drama about older married man having an affair with a teenager.
● Filmed mainly in London with scenes in Manchester and on Brighton beach.
• Released on DVD and Blu-ray.

Ambleton Delight

UK | colour | 110 mins | 2008
d Daniel Parkes; w Itsuka Yamasaki and Daniel Parkes; ph Anna Carrington; p Daniel Parkes and Sinead Ferguson; prod Parkes Productions and Ferguson Pictures
cast Jos Lawton, Brian Capron, Ernest Worthing, Kristina Ann Howell, Samantha Bolter, Andrew Elias, Duncan Armitage, Judith Ellis-Jones, Sofia Sanchez, Shirley Jaffe, John Hayden
● Drama about village intrigue, made on a £6,000 budget and a 12-day shooting schedule. with actors and crew mainly from the region.
● Shot mostly in Alfriston, Sussex, scenes in Brighton at the Marina (the Master Mariner kitchens), Marine Square Gardens and Manor Way, Whitehawk.
● Premiered at the End of the Pier International Film Festival in Worthing on 25 April 2009, winning the award for Best UK feature film. It was also best feature film in the British Independent Film Festival 2010. Jos Lawton won best actor in a leading role at the International Filmmaker Festival 2009.
• The film has its own website.
kind to avant garde experimental work. Space precludes the same detailed listing as for feature-length films and this is only a selection. Many titles have no form of outlet, except at occasional local club screenings. Sadly, hardly anyone bothers to programme shorts films any more. However, about a third of those listed here can be viewed on YouTube, shootingpeople.org, Vimeo, circ69.co.uk or IMDb. Often the work of emerging talent, some are as good as anything you’ll see—inventive, challenging, visually stunning.

All in colour except as stated.

Alice, Through the Wonderglass 2012 | Brighton Film Maker's Coalition (trailer)
Alphabetic 2006 | b&w animation | 5 mins | d Mark Collington
Apparently 2006 | 4 mins | d Kevin Squelch
Archie 2010 | 16 mins | d Nick Brackenbury
ARP 2006 | 9 mins | d Daniel Parkes
art:house 2008 | 30 mins | d Paul Loman and Barbara Myers
ATM 2006 | 2 mins | d Daniel Parkes
Beth 2011 | 16 mins | d Gaz Wastman
Bird Feeder 2007 | 9 mins | d Jo Barnes
Boy, Gone Bad 1996 | 23 mins | d Ross Boyask and Phil Hobden
Brave Young Men 2009 | 30 mins | d Sam Leifer
Brighton 1956 | 9 mins | d John King
Brighton 2011 | 4 mins | d Jamie Alexander and Giles Campbell Longley
Brighton West Pier, The Rise and Fall 2003 | 7 mins | Matt Crocker
Chance of Rain 2011 | 15 mins | d William Ranieri
Chasing Heaven 2002 | 28 mins | d Claudia Solti
Constable 027 2009 | 14 mins | d Christopher Lee Ball
Conversation with Yourself 2011 | 8 mins | d William Ranieri
Cregan 2007 | 11 mins | d Stephen North
Crossed Lines 2008 | 15 mins | d Keith Eyles (trailer)
Crossed Words 2010 | 7 mins | d Tom Sands
The Crunch 2009 | b&w | 20 mins | d Luther Jones
Dance of Shiva 1998 | 26 mins | d Jamie Payne; cast Sanjeev Baskar, Kenneth Branagh, Julian Glover, Paul McGann, Samuel West
A Day in Brighton 2006 | 4 mins | d Geraint Hughes
Dial N for Nerdor 2010 | colour/b&w | 11 min | d Marcus Hutton
Drama School 2011 | 25 min | d Jamie Patterson (trailer)
Easy Hours 2009 | 3 mins | d George Ravenscroft
Elia's Dream 2008 | 9 mins | d Christianne van Wijk
Entree 2005 | 7 mins | d Sue Whitting
Fast Learners 2006 | 10 mins | d Christoph Röhl
Femme Fatale 2004 | 10 mins | d Lisa Holles
Fish Can't Fly 2006 | 3 mins | d Richard Murphy
Four Brothers and a Funeral 2005 | 15 mins | d Sara Proudfoot-Clinch
Frank 2010 | 12 mins | d Kate Herron
Gone 2003 | 10 mins | d Matthew Thompson (winner, BBC Talent New Film-makers Award 2003)
Goo 1999 | b&w | 1 min | d Simon Wilkinson
Goodbye 2008 | 21 mins | d Patrick Gather
Greensleaves 2010 | 13 mins | d Stephen North
Home Video 2011 | 15 mins | d Robert Camburn
Homecoming 2003 | 15 mins | d Emma Farrell
I Don't Think It's a Potato 2010 | 5 mins | d Kristyna Vosecka
I Put My Heart into This Film 2007 | 21 mins | d Lawrence Mallinson
I See Me 2005 | 15 mins | d Barbara Myers and Paul Loman
Indecenton 2011 | 8 mins | Brighton Film Makers' Coalition
Inside 2009 | 4 mins | d Ross Shepherd
The Journey 2006 | 17 mins | d Katrina Medina Mora
Kiss Chase 2005 | 5 mins | d Maxim Jago
The Last Chance 2007 | 16 mins | d Lawrence Richards
Let's Go Crazy 1951 | b&w | d Alan Cullimore at Brighton Film Studios; cast Peter Sellers
Life Sentence 2006 | 1 min | d Shaun Troke
The Lift, a ghost story 2011 | 8 mins | d Jason Davison and Dick Douglass
London to Brighton in Four Minutes 1952 | b&w | 5 mins | BBC Film Unit
Lone Wolf 1998 | 15 mins | d Ross Boyask
Lost Connection 2011 | 23 mins | d James Keaton; cast Stephen Fry, Celia Imrie (clip, trailer)
A Lump in the Road 2005 | 7 mins | d Heathen Dixon
Magic Journey 2006 | animation | 1 min | d Simon Carter
Manjinga 7: Monsters in the Sky 2009 | 5 mins | d George Ravenscroft
The Mask 1953 | b&w | d Don Chaffey for RTL Productions at Brighton Film Studios
Matches 2010 | 4 mins | d Daniel Morris
Matchseller 2010 | 3 mins | d William Ranieri
Meat 2007 | 13 mins | d William Ranieri
Mother's Day 2009 | 14 mins | d Clive Ford
North Atlantic 2010 | 15 mins | d Bernardo Nascimento
Odd Shoe 2008 | 10 mins | d Paul Cotter
On Stony Ground 2009 | 10 mins | d Rehana Rose
Peerless: Memories from the West Pier 2006 | colour/b&w | 16 mins | d Daniel Parkes
The Pig’s Family 1997 | 30 mins | d Martin Guggisberg
Playground Express 1955 | b&w | 17 mins | d John Irwin (at Brighton Film Studios)
A Postcard from Brighton 2009 | 12 mins | d Guy Pitt
Promenade 1968 | 40 mins | d Donovan Winter [released as support for Planet of the Apes]
Pucker Up! 2001 | 6 mins | d Katie AIdley
Quiet Mary Fish Momma 2004 | 8 mins | d Simon Wilkinson
Red Letter 2008 | 10 mins | d Edilberto Restino
Red Letter 2011 | 23 mins | d Tom Marshall
Robot 2008 | 4 min | d Matthew Keen
Sewn 2010 | 16 mins | d James R Kipping
She Don't Look Back 2011 | 8 mins | d Christopher Brown
A Silent Whistle 2009 | 12 mins | d Russell Kyle
Six Grand Slam 2000 | 20 mins | d Ross Boyask
Sleep 2001 | 10 mins | d Matthew Thompson
The Snowman 1982 | animation | 26 mins | d Dianne Jackson and Jimmy T Murakami
The Stars and the Stones 2000 | b&w | 7 mins | d James Hughes
Stiletto 2006 | 9 mins | Ewan Gorman
Ein Stück vom Himmel 2007 | 4 mins | d John Hillcoat
Suspected 2010 | Maria Alexopoulou
The Tainted Heart 2009 | 10 mins | d Tim Pieraccini
Tenacity 2008 | 14 mins | d Daniel Parkes
Theatre of Souls 2007 | 9 mins | d John Hoye
This is Not England, This is Brighton 2012 | 24 mins | d Ash Brosnan and Nathan Godfrey
To Kill a Kieran 2005 | 40 mins | d Mark Powell (trailer)
To Let 2009 | 6 mins | d Harry Scriven
Trace 2008 | 9 mins | d Gavin Toomey
Unusual Journey 2006 | 1 Min | d Matthew Hellett
Varasova 2008 | d Stavroula Lialiou
Walking Shadows 2000 | 40 mins | d John Langridge
West Pier 2001 | animation | 5 mins | d Mark Collington
West Pier 2010 | 4 mins | d Jacques Sirot
West Pier 2012 | b&w | 8 mins | d William Ranieri
You're Gonna Wake Up One Morning 2003 | 28 mins | d Mark Jay
briefly lived in the Lewes Road area of
Brighton, working as a photographer. Turner
wanted to develop a system of three-colour
cinematography and worked with Frederick
Marshall Lee, a financier. They came up with a
modified 38mm film camera in which a
rotating disc with red, green and blue filters
between three blanking sections replaced the
shutter. Each frame in turn was exposed
through one of the filters. The projector had
three lenses with a similar rotating filter
wheel. Turner and Lee were granted a patent
(no 6,202) on 29 March 1899. Both the
prototype camera and projector were made by
ALFRED DARLING in Ditchling Rise, Brighton
and the films were processed by G A SMITH at
St Ann’s Well Gardens.

Needing more funds for further
development, the pair approached CHARLES
URBAN, then still manager of the Warwick
Trading Company, the leading British film
distributor, which also had an interest in
making and selling equipment. In 1902 Lee
drifted away from the project but Turner
carried on alone until he died suddenly of a
heart attack on 9 March 1903 at the age of
only 29.

Turner’s system was deemed impractical,
not least because he had adopted a non-
standard (38mm = 1.5 inches) film gauge. It was
by no means uncommon for inventors to adopt
odd film sizes. Working in a gauge other than
35mm was a way of preventing the new system
being used with existing equipment.

A second problem was the frame rate.
‘Persistence of vision’ works when still images
are projected at such a speed that one image is
still being processed by the brain when the next
one appears. Early film adopted a speed of 16
fps (frames per second), below which flicker
was deemed unacceptable. To record three
primary-colour images in sequence and still
achieve the effect meant filming at a challenging
48fps.

A reel of film donated by Charles Urban to
the Science Museum (probably in 1937) was
discovered in 2012 in the National Media
Museum and digitised, revealing high quality
colour images. One of the short scenes was
filmed in St Ann’s Well Gardens, Hove, showing
a girl and boy, thought to be G A Smith’s own
children, Harold and Dorothea. However
impressive, the film shows the problem of
recording each colour sequentially: the slight
movement between each frame causes fringing
of the colours.

Urban bought up the Turner and Lee
patent and asked G A Smith to carry on with
the work, which Smith seemed only too
willing to do. He left St Ann’s Well Gardens in
August 1903, handed the lease to A H Tee and
moved to Roman Crescent in Southwick,
where he named his house Laboratory Lodge.
He also more or less abandoned film-making
and lived off savings and income from
previous film activities.

G A Smith takes on the research
Smith was very pragmatic about the project.
In a notably practical and business-like letter
to Urban from Laboratory Lodge in Southwick
on 21 March 1904 (now in the British Film
Institute collection), he wrote, ‘I should like to
arrange a co-operative scheme [his emphasis]
—you to keep me posted & supply your new
perfected machinery & I to adapt my colour
methods to it. Under this suggested arrange-
ment your company would handle the results
of my method, & the advantage would be
mutual.’ Urban was at the time developing an
improved Bioscope, which, suitably adapted,
Smith envisaged would be used for his colour
films.
By the standards of the average British city, Brighton & Hove has produced or been home to an unusually high proportion of people involved in the performing arts and the media. The tradition goes back to Regency times when fashionable society sought its entertainment at the Royal Newburgh Assembly Rooms and patronised dancing masters.

With the coming of the railway in 1841 it was not only the population that grew rapidly—doubling in the next 30 years, and adding as many more again in the following 30 years. So too did the number of places for popular entertainment, drawing into Brighton performers of all kinds. By the time film-making began in the late 1890s the Brighton music halls, like the theatres, were on a par with those in London. Top acts were attracted to the Alhambra, the Oxford, the Canterbury Hall, the Pavilion Wine and Music Rooms, the Empire, the two piers and, slightly later, the Hippodrome.

The first people to appear on film were the ordinary folk playing on the beach or strolling along the seafront or the pier. But even in that first year of film-making, 1896, Esme Collings shot a scene from a popular melodrama of the time, The Broken Melody, with its writer-performer Auguste Van Biene.

George Albert Smith, one of the two great Hove pioneer film-makers, seems to have had the idea of recording famous people, for novelty value if not for posterity, and took his camera to Winchelsea in East Sussex to film the great actress Ellen Terry at home as early as August 1897. The following year he made an ‘animated portrait’ of the music hall star Marie Lloyd on the seafront outside the Alhambra.

But by then story-telling was beginning to emerge as the future of film. So when the Hove pioneers needed performers, they were to be found on the doorstep. The earliest to be identified who appeared regularly were G A Smith’s wife Laura Bayley and Tom Green. James Williamson used Sam Dalton in several films. Sometimes their stage acts were recorded, as in Williamson’s Clever and Comic Cycle Act (1900) by Lotto, Lilo and Otto and Captain Clives and his Clever Dog Tiger (1902). So Lassie and Uggie are in a canine tradition that began in Brighton. Not to mention the cat(s) in Smith’s films.

A significant number of screen acting careers, including a substantial proportion of those who appeared in films made at Shoreham, began around the start of the Great War and lasted until only the late 1920s. A fair proportion of the 91 actors profiled here fall into this category: the ones who did not survive the transition to sound, although it may be misleading to ascribe this to the sound of their voices. Film acting also began to change around that time to a more naturalistic style. Some of the film drop-outs survived perfectly well on the stage.

Actors listed in stage yearbooks from the silent film era rarely acknowledged their film work—oh, my dear, not the moving pictures! Alice de Winton, Maude Cresswell and Langhorne Burton were among the few who mentioned film work in Who’s Who in the Theatre. Music hall artistes, on the other hand had no such reticence.

The second largest category in this section comprises cinema exhibitors: 40 of them. The early ones rarely lasted long in business. Indeed, bankruptcy was a notable feature among them. Five bankrupts are identified here, plus one who failed to run a former cinema as a theatre. But none can match William Friese Greene’s familiarity with the bankruptcy courts. Frank Launder, however, began working life in the office of the Official Receiver. Perhaps that experience informed his writing of the delicious Alistair Sim cameo of a desperate but stoical film producer in Lady Godiva Rides Again.

Cinema exhibitors have also been the hardest to track down and there are at least 25 more identified as running local cinemas about whom nothing has been discovered and thus are not represented. Some of the profiles that have made it into the following pages are sketchy, to say the least. Two of them, notably, were active in local politics. The 28 film directors divide in roughly equal numbers between silent cinema and the later period.

But it is the pioneers who deserve—and receive—the most detailed attention. Although the term ‘Brighton school’ coined by Georges Sadoul is a bit of a misnomer, the concentra-
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The people</th>
<th>Classified listing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Inventors/engineers</strong></td>
<td>Alfred Darling W Lascelles Davidson E F Grün Benjamin Jumeaux Ernst Smith Edward Turner Colin Williamson Stuart Williamson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Architects</strong></td>
<td>Robert Atkinson Frank Matcham</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Designers/Artists</strong></td>
<td>Carmen Dillon Peter Strausfeld</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Publicists</strong></td>
<td>James Hardiman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Entrepreneurs</strong></td>
<td>Walter de Frece S F Edge J Henson Infield Edmund Distin Maddick Baron Nugent Charles Urban</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Administrators</strong></td>
<td>W T Bradshaw James Quinn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Politicians</strong></td>
<td>Walter de Frece E E Lyons Alfred Cooper Rawson Alfred J Sadler</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Agent</strong></td>
<td>Dennis Selinger</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Other</strong></td>
<td>Jacqueline Nearne Edmond J Spitta A H Tee</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
tion of talents in Brighton and especially Hove at the dawn of cinema made a contribution to the early development of the cinema that arguably matched and even outstripped anywhere else in the world. Smith, Williamson, Alfred Darling and, however briefly, Collings are now gaining the recognition they deserve, along with Charles Urban.

The list is perhaps over-inclusive (such can be the nature of an encyclopaedia). To qualify for inclusion, people must be dead and the list excludes performers known only for television work. Nor does it allow in those whose only connection was a period spent at boarding school. This latter restriction covers such luminaries as the actors George Sanders, his brother Tom Conway, Michael Hordern, Beatrice Beckley and the actor-writer Miles Malleson. Nonetheless, it would be possible to go on adding to the list indefinitely. This list will have to do for now.

Birt Acres was born in the USA to British parents, who died during the American Civil War. He attended university in Paris, returned to travel and work around remote parts of the USA before settling in England. He made his first films in 1894 and early the following year collaborated with R W Paul to make films, using a camera of their own design, for which Acres applied for a patent on 27 May 1895. After several private shows of his films, he gave the first public screening in London on 21 March 1896, followed by a royal command performance on 21 July 1896. He made at least three films on Brighton beach in August 1896—among the first and similar to the ones made by Esme Collings—which were included in the Animatographe shows at the Victoria Hall in King's Road, Brighton.

Acres set up his own business, the Northern Photographic Works at 45 Salisbury Road, Barnet, Hertfordshire in April 1896 when he and Paul ended their partnership and later moved it to Nesbitt’s Alley, Barnet (see also James Williamson). In June 1898 he patented the Birtac, a 17.5mm film system for amateur use, spurring Charles Urban to develop the Biokam with Alfred Darling.

Elizabeth Allan was born 9 April 1908 at Skegness, Lincolnshire and died 27 July 1990 in Hove

Chesney Allen, famous as the partner of Bud Flanagan and a member of the Crazy Gang, made 12 comedy films in that context between 1932 and 1946, with a final 13th Crazy Gang film outing in 1960. Okay for Sound (1937), which had run successfully on stage at the Brighton Hippodrome the previous year, is the only film on which he had a writing credit. He and Flanagan also appeared in the classic documentary Listen to Britain (1942). His childhood home was at 21 Park Crescent Place, Brighton.

William E Allen was born 5 April 1893 in Brighton and died 13 November 1982 at Midhurst, Sussex

Hylton Allen made his stage début in 1899 and thereafter toured extensively in the United States and South Africa between appearances in the West End and on Broadway. His first film part, in Caesar and Cleopatra, did not come until 1945 at the age of 65 and was uncredited. He was credited in the three other films he made between then and 1951. The son of a butcher and farmer, in early childhood he lived at 24 Market Street. He was educated privately in London before returning to join his family at 8 Clifton Terrace, Brighton. In later life he lived at Haywards Heath.

Alfred Hylton Allen was born 25 October 1879 at Pulborough, Sussex and died 6 February 1975 at Cuckfield, West Sussex

Bobby Andrews appeared in Sidney Morgan’s Fires of Innocence (1922) for Progress Film Company at Shoreham. He had previously made three films in 1920 and appeared in one more subsequently. He was educated at Lewes, made his stage début in 1906 at the age of 11 and had many juvenile roles in the West End. He went to the USA in 1911 and appeared on stage in Chicago. He joined the Royal Naval Air Service 1915-1918 and returned to the stage to play character parts. He met Ivor Novello in 1916 and their relationship lasted for 35 years.

Robert Tobias Andrews was born 20 February 1895 in London and died 1976

Robert Atkinson established his architectural reputation designing cinemas, his most accomplished work being the Regent Cinema, Brighton (1921),
influential film-makers in the first decade of the cinema, and perhaps even pre-eminent among them, given his contribution to the development of narrative technique.

James A Williamson was born 8 November 1855 at Pathhead, Kirkaldy, Scotland and died 18 August 1933 at 593 Upper Richmond Road, Richmond, Surrey.

Lilian Williamson, third daughter of James Williamson, took the title role in her father's film The Little Match Seller (1902). She was later a typist-clerk in the company office. She visited her sister in the USA in 1912-13. She lived in Golders Green, London. Last seen alive on 21 March 1938, her body was found in the Thames off Prince's Wharf eight days later. She left nearly £4,800.

Stuart Williamson was born 29 August 1889 in Hove and died 29 March 1938 in Bermondsey, London.

Tom Williamson, the sixth child and third son of James Williamson. He had the lead part in Our New Errand Boy (1905), appeared in his father's film The Orange Peel (1907) and with his brother Stuart in the revived version of Two Naughty Boys (1909), directed by Dave Ayloott, by which time Tom was working as a clerk in the London office. He worked at Automatic Film Printers Laboratories and in 1931 joined Gevaert, the film stock manufacturer in Harlesden, London. He was president of Cinema Veterans (1903) in 1953.

William Edward Winton was born 1852 in Shoreham and died 8 November 1932 in Shoreham.

Anthony Woodruff was a familiar face on television from 1951 until the mid 1980s, including a three-year stint on the Crossroads soap opera. He was in half a dozen feature films, usually playing 'respectable' characters.

Derrick Wynne was a film production manager who became the head of Brighton Film Studios during its most active period in the mid 1950s. He had a production company, Wynne Productions, based at the studio and was also on the board of RLT Productions, for which he co-produced Take a Powder (1953). He lived at Ravenscourt, 2 Belmont, Brighton at that time, then at 18 Brunswick Terrace, Hove. After leaving the studio he settled in Seaford. His first wife was Elizabeth Bloch.

Bernard Youens is best remembered as gruff northerner Stan Ogden in the television soap opera Coronation Street from 1964 for almost 20 years until a few months before his death. Early in his career, as Bernard Graham, he appeared in three films between 1947 and 1949 for the then flourishing regional production company Mancunian Films.

Bernard Popley was born 28 December 1914 in Hove and died 27 August 1984 in Salford, Lancashire.
The places
A selection of residences and film locations.

Adelaide Crescent, Hove
- Penny Points to Paradise (1950) and Me Without You (2001).

Albany Villas, Hove
36: the childhood home of the cricketer and film actor Sir Charles Aubrey Smith.

Albion Hill
- Lady Godiva Rides Again (1951). See also Ewart Street, Islington Road, Quebec Street.

Albion Street, Southwick
- Shadow of Fear (1963). The Picture House (later called the Plaza and the New KINEMA) from 1914 to 1948, until gutted by fire. Council flats are now on the site.

Aldrington Basin, Portslade

Alexandra Villas
13: the home of Esmé Collings, to which he moved from 59 Dyke Road.

Ann Street
- St Bartholomew’s Church in Heathen (2009).

Arundel Drive East, Saltdean
The final home of George Robey from 1953.

Arundel Street
24: rented by William Friese Greene as a family home from 1905 to 1907 and the address on his colour cinematography patent application in May 1905.

Arundel Terrace
7: the home of J Hensom Infield in the 1930s.

Bartholomews
- Jigsaw (1962). The surrounding area is also seen.

Bear Road

Belmont
2 ‘Ravenscourt’: home of film producer Derrick Wynne when co-producing Take a Powder (1953).

Bigwood Avenue, Hove
9: birthplace and lifelong home of film archivist Graham Head.

Blackrock Valley
The proposed site in 1925-26 for a British National Film Studio (see pages 206-208).

Blatchington Road, Hove

Borough Street
- Angus, Thongs and Perfect Snogging (2007).

Brighton Road, Clayton
- Jack and Jill windmills in The Miller and the Sweep (1898), Adventure in the Hopfields (1954), Battle of the V1 (1958) and The Black Windmill (1974)

Brighton Road, Shoreham
342: the Coliseum cinema from 1920 to 1941. Now the site of the Adur Civic Centre.

Brunswick Square, Hove
30: the home of Dan Benjamin, who owned the Prince’s Cinema in North Street, Brighton from 1935 to 1947.
58: the home of cinema exhibitor James Van Koert just after World War II.
- Penny Points to Paradise (1950), Dirty Weekend (1993).

Bungalow Town, Shoreham Beach
A development along the coastline, mainly comprising chalets in Old Fort Road, many formed by using one or more redundant railway carriages. It was popular with thespians and music hall artistes. The future screenwriter Charles Bennett was born here. See also Crescent Road, Old Fort Road.

Burlington Street
- 25: the last home from 1948 of film and stage comedian Max Miller, who died here in 1963, marked by a British Music Hall Society plaque. (See also 160 Marine Parade, New Road, Brighton and Ashcroft in Kingston Lane, Shoreham.)

Where streets have been renumbered, the current number of the building is used as the principal reference.

indicates that the site is marked by a plaque, the source as named.

More residences are identified in the biographies in Part 7
indicates a film location. See also Part 5, Films: The sound era for a list of film locations.

1 Bartholomews as it was in 1962 in Jigsaw, when it went down to the seafront, as it should still have done
2 Jill windmill in 1954 in Adventure in the Hopfields
Studios

There have been four main film studios in the Brighton & Hove area. The first three were of the ‘glasshouse’ type, built to allow in the maximum of daylight in the days before artificial lights were used. The fourth was in a converted parish hall.

And then there is the little known story of the one that, had it been built, would undoubtedly have been the largest and most important film studio in the whole country. It was intended to put British film-making back on the map. If only...

**St Ann’s Well Gardens**

George Albert Smith, who leased the pleasure gardens between 1892 and 1904, started making films around the turn of the year 1896-97. On the map (overleaf) the gardens are to the north-west of Furze Hill. Smith used the Pump House in the grounds (‘The Chalybeate’ on the map) as his ‘film works’ and at first built simple sets in the gardens.

The future film comedian Tom Green probably began his connection with Smith as a set builder and decorator. That may be him up the step ladder. Hard to tell. Sets initially consisted of a painted backcloth on a wooden frame. In *The Old Maid’s Valentine* (1900) the message that the old maid holds up in her living room is blown about by the wind. In *The Death of Poor Joe* (1901) the shadows of the nearby trees are stippled on the snow covered garden gate and wall. Generally, although clearly artificial, the backdrops are competently executed.

In 1900 Smith signed a two-year exclusive contract with Warwick Trading Company (WTC), run by Charles Urban. He built a small studio in the grounds of St Ann’s Well Gardens with financial support from Urban. On the evidence of *Poor Joe*, which was made in March 1901, the studio was not in regular use until after that date. It consisted of a glasshouse over a stage measuring approximately 30 feet wide by 16 feet deep, with wooden doors forming one end of the building. The stage apron could be pulled forward between the doors.

In September 1900, the WTC catalogue describes Smith as ‘Manager of the Brighton Film Works of the Warwick Trading Company’.

Excursions into the immediate surroundings of St Ann’s Well Gardens were rare in Smith’s films; he preferred to shoot in studio conditions. However, *As Seen Through a Telescope* (1900) was filmed just outside the gardens, next to the Lodge in Furze Hill. G A Smith left St Ann’s Well Gardens in August 1903 when he moved to Roman Crescent, Southwick to work on the colour film project that...
The first film show in Brighton was held in March 1896, only three months after the Lumière Cinématographe caused a sensation in Paris. Local film-making began immediately. Brighton & Hove became one of the principal centres of film-making for the world, alongside Paris, New York and London. Such was the cluster of local talent that the ‘Brighton school’ (actually it was mainly in Hove) was soon making a major contribution to the history of the cinema, with a ground-breaking, sophisticated understanding of production and editing techniques that are still in use today. By the end of the century and for much of the following decade Brighton & Hove was as important as anywhere in the film world.

This book tells the story of cinema-going and film-making in Brighton, Hove and Shoreham. With details of 800 silent films, over 140 feature films, around 50 cinemas and 240 people, it tells the tale of the invention of colour cinematography in Southwick and the sad case of the lost studios of Whitehawk, and comes right up-to-date in the age of digital production and exhibition to show that Brighton is once again a vibrant film city.