

The BKS (British Kinematograph Society) was formed in London in 1931 and later changed its name to the BKSTS (British Kinematograph Sound & Television Society), and is now often known these days as BKSTS, The International Moving Image Society.

The Polytechnic in Regent Street was the site of the first regular public commercial exhibition of films in the UK from February 1896 onwards. The Polytechnic (now University of Westminster) went on to be a pioneer in professional level photography, film and television courses over the entire history of these media.

In 1932 The Polytechnic involved The BKS in the development and accreditation of the first professional level Higher Education courses in Film in the UK. These pages from 1933 & 1935 editions of "Sight & Sound" magazine chronicle the birth of the first professional level Higher Education course in Film in the UK and BKSTS involvement and accreditation.

A COURSE HELD AT THE POLYTECHNIC, LONDON, UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE BRITISH KINEMATOGRAPH SOCIETY

EARLY in the year 1932, a deputation of officials of the B.K.S., called upon the Director of Education at the London Polytechnic to explore with him the possibilities of arranging a course of instruction to suit the requirements of the industry.

After some two or three meetings, a draft scheme was prepared and an advisory committee brought into being. This committee consists of two panels: one to represent the industry and the other the teaching interests and the governing body of the Polytechnic. The full list of members reads: President, Mr. S. Rowson, Members of Executive, Mr. L. Eveleigh, Captain P. Kimberley, O.B.E., Mr. A. S. Newman, Captain J. Smith, Mr. W. Vinten, Captain A. G. D. West.

For the governing body: Sir Kynaston Studd, President of the Polytechnic; Mr. H. Swann, Mr. D. Humphrey, Director of Education, and the teaching staff, Mr. L. J. Hibbert, Mr. P. Kemp, and Mr. B. L. Worsnop.

The course is arranged to cover a period of two years tuition and deals with photography as the primary subject; it includes chemistry, physics, architectural design, electricity and magnetism, and A.C. current work at radio and audio frequencies.

At the present moment the students have completed their first year of study and are now embarked upon the second, advanced treatment of the many subjects that the film technician of today has to master. In the past, and to a certain extent in the present, the technical side of the film industry has suffered from too great a specialisation of its workers. It is obvious that the work of a director is not only made easier but more efficient if he can understand the technical difficulties of his scenario requirements and in addition realises the strength of each process as well as its limitations. Moreover, if the camera man and the sound recorder have a mutual understanding of the materials and apparatus for each other's job, the work is more likely to progress in a kindly manner and to a more satisfactory conclusion. Strict departmentalism is very good for the department but may be, and often is, very bad for the production of artistic unity in a film.

In modern production work it is necessary to make the fullest use of every means of extending the scope of the work and it is the aim of this present course to attain these ends by making for better understanding of the other man's job as well as a greater efficiency in one's own.

The work done in the first year is to be regarded as a foundation for the second. In this first year the main purpose is to acquire knowledge in the several subjects of the course; in the second year the aim is to turn this knowledge to practical account

and to correlate the various branches of information into the definite object of making talking films.

The desire to improve the product by recruiting into the industry a new type of worker has led the advisory committee to insist that all candidates for entrance to the course must have passed an approved examination in mathematics, physics, magnetism and electricity, chemistry and English of about the same standard as that of the London Matriculation.

The trade have already displayed great interest, through the B.K.S., and in addition by the provision of scholarships. The cost of tuition for the course is £50 per annum and scholarships of £50 each for the two years enable selected students to train for half fees. The generous donors of these scholarships include: - Mr. Sam Harris of *The Cinema*, Mr. Isidore Ostrer, Mr. Sidney Bernstein, *Film Weekly*, The Secretary of the Gaumont-British Picture Corporation, Mr. C. M. Woolf, Mr. Oscar Deutsch and the *Kinematograph Weekly*.

STEREOSCOPIC FILMS

At an address given to the Royal Photographic Society on October 3rd, Dr. Herbert E. Ives, who has been engaged in research at the Bell Telephone Laboratories, demonstrated a series of still pictures in stereoscopic relief, shown without the aid of viewing apparatus. One of the pictures was in colour, and it was explained that colour photography was possible by the same method used for producing the effect of relief. Stereoscopic films have already been made by Dr. Ives by projecting a special type of picture on a screen consisting of a series of glass rods. The result is that the two eyes of any member of the audience receive separate and different images from different surfaces of the rods, and these images correspond with those received by looking at a real and solid object. The difficulty as far as commercial stereoscopic films is concerned is that extreme accuracy is needed in projection.

A London hospital is testing for a period of three months a miniature stereoscopic cinema, known as the "Turville cinematographic muscle and fusion training apparatus" for the cure of squint. The apparatus is used as a peep-show, and consists of two little screens, lenses, eye-pieces, and a projector producing twin images. Mr. A. E. Turville, who demonstrated his invention at the Optical Trade Exhibition last month, claims that the eyes are gradually trained to correct fusion and that children will be sufficiently interested in this entertaining form of treatment to persevere until the cure is complete.

religion and a personal acquaintance with its impact on human life. On the other hand, amateurs, even if the initial difficulties of finance could be surmounted, would need to take all possible pains to master the technique of film production; people who are accustomed to seeing first-class finished productions in their Picture Houses on week days will not be impressed on Sundays by religious films which are obviously amateurish. But despite the difficulties, I believe it to be desirable that the production and the scenario work should be kept in the hands of religious people, who would probably require the aid of professional technicians, such as cameramen and scene designers.

Care in Choice of Apparatus

Churches or parishes which are proposing to make use of the cinematograph for religious purposes will be well advised to exercise great care in the matter of technical equipment. There is a great deal to be said for the use of silent films, which, of course, give far more latitude for the teaching or preaching which would accompany the film; the drawback

to sound films, from the point of view of the preacher is that you lose touch with your congregation and in any case it might be a wise policy to refrain from getting any sound apparatus till there is more standardisation and until there is a machine with more light power than is at present marketed. It is well to consult carefully those with expert knowledge before deciding which of the various available projectors to instal in Church or Hall. Moreover, a good screen with a properly prepared surface, such as silvered aluminium or the beaded surface, is an important and an expensive item.

That there is a great future for religious films is in my view, hardly open to doubt. There is a clear case here for careful investigation, leading to appropriate action. Indeed, it is understood that a Council, national and interdenominational in scale, has quite recently been formed under the auspices of some of the highest authorities in the Church of England and the Free Churches. It is imperative that Christian Church in this land and overseas should courageously, wisely and without undue delay, grasp this new and great opportunity

POLYTECHNIC SCHOOL OF KINEMATOGRAPHY

THE Annual Exhibition of films made by students of the School of Kinematography at the Regent Street Polytechnic was given on May 22nd. The programme consisted of the following films, all of them 16mm. silent:—

Magyarország	- - -	(M. V. Hoare)
Pithead Bath	- - -	(P. J. Davis)
City Waterway	- - -	(G. C. Rand)
Spring	- - -	(Sudhys Ghatak)
Water	- - -	(Alexis Tidmarsh)
Greyhound Racing	- - -	(W. J. Veevers)
Coal	- - -	(E. Gordan Taylor)
Wheels	- - -	(Gilbert E. R. Tomes)
Sarnia	- - -	(C. A. Tingley)

The best film in the programme was *Wheels*, which showed how wooden wheels are made. Mr. Tomes knew exactly what he wanted to show and had included only what was strictly relevant. The stages from choosing the wood to the fitting of the iron rims were clearly presented and well edited so that the film was both instructive and entertaining. The photography was excellent throughout. As a record of an industry which is dying out the film is of historical importance. Of the other films in the programme *Magyarország* was interesting as an attempt at a documentary in three distinct parts, each contributing to a comprehensive picture of Hungary to-day. *Pithead Bath* contained too much material about mines generally, which tended to obscure the main subject of the film, and *Coal*, while it contained some good material, was scrappy. *Water* was an ambitious attempt to portray the many processes through which water passes before it reaches the consumer, but was too compressed to

be clear. In general, the standard of photography was high, the subjects of the films were important and worthy of treatment as well as providing good film material, but the presentation of the material was too often dull. The directors of the films should be congratulated on the effective way in which they commented to their own films as they were projected and on the musical accompaniments

W. F.

TRAINING COLLEGES AND EDUCATIONAL FILMS

The Summer Meeting of the Metropolitan Branch of the Training College Association held at Goldsmiths' College on Friday, May 17th, was devoted to a conference on the use of films for educational purposes. A large and representative meeting witnessed demonstration film lessons with classes of local schoolchildren, given by Miss Fawcett and Mr. Cons, who used the 16mm. silent version and the 16mm. sound version respectively of *Wheatlands of East Anglia* (G.B.I.). The demonstration film lessons were followed by an exhibition of educational films on other subjects in the school curriculum. Mrs. Lowe, the Chairman of the Education Committee of the L.C.C., and Miss Counsell, Principal of Whitelands College, opened the discussion, which centred round the general question of the value of films in schools and the relative value of silent and sound films. Mr. Dean, Warden of Goldsmiths' College, was in the Chair and thanked all those who had contributed to the success of the conference and particularly Mrs. Lowe for her expression of the interest and close consideration which the L.C.C. were giving to the means by which the best use might be made of the educational potentialities of films.