

HISTORY OF THE CINEMA INDUSTRY

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Additional information about
Gaumont Organisation added by
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- 1896 LUMIERE Bros., with M. Trewey as cameraman, gave first Commercial film show at the Polytechnic Regent Street, London.
- 1897 Walter & Turner First film renting company in Great Britain.
- 1898 GAUMONT Company is set up in Great Britain by A.C. Bromhead and T.A. Welsch
- 1901 Cricks & Sharp, Production Co., starts up at Mitcham, Surrey. PATHE establishes a branch in London.
- 1905 WALTURDAW CO. is formed by Walter & Turner
- 1906 HALE'S TOURS opens in Oxford St. London. Audience sees travelogues while seated (and shaken), in a mock-up railway coach.
- 1907 SOUND RECORDING SYSTEMS: GAUMONT synchronised sound and film known as the "Chronophonograph" and the "Elgephone", invented by Leon Gaumont in 1902. Cinematophone" (Walturdaw), and "Vivaphone, are well established. "Kinematograph Weekly" launched.
- 1908 GAUMONT organizes the first TRADE SHOW.
Two early British cinema circuits: "Electric Theatre" and "Biograph" launched.
- 1909 PROVINCIAL CINEMATOGRAPH THEATRES LTD. is formed, with Ralph Jupp announced as Managing Director.
CONTINUOUS PERFORMANCES became the general rule in cinemas.
- 1910 FILM: "From Gypsy hands", Cricks and Martin, producers.
- 1911 FILM: "Scott's Antarctic Expedition" by GAUMONT
FILM: "Sydney Street siege" by GAUMONT
- 1912 BRITISH BOARD OF FILM CENSORS established.
MERTON PARK STUDIOS and BUSHEY STUDIOS opened
"The Derby" (GAUMONT). One of the most famous scoops of all time; Gaumont cameraman photographs death of a suffragette Emily Davison, who threw herself in front of King's horse.
- 1913 TWICKENHAM STUDIOS (the largest film studios) opened by London Films Ltd.
- 1914 BOREHAM WOOD STUDIOS built.
The first true ANIMATED CARTOONS appear in Britain, made by Lancelot Speed.
The MARBLE ARCH PAVILION is opened.
- 1915 IDEAL FILMS, formally a renting company, enters production at Boreham Wood Studios.
SCALA THEATRE, London, taken over for showing of Griffith's "Birth of a Nation".
- 1916 "Battle of the Somme". Director of photography: J. B. McDowell. (5 reels). A striking film showing the first British tanks in action.
- 1917 T. P. O'Connor is appointed FILM CENSOR.
- 1918 CINEMATOGRAPH TRADE BENEVOLENT FUND set up.
- 1919 Henry Edwards starts as HEPWORTH's Director.
BRITISH LION operates at Boreham Wood Studios.
- 1920 Provincial Cinematograph Theatres owns some seventy cinemas.
"Alf's Button" produced.
First SUPER CINEMA opened at Dalston, London.
ALFRED HITCHCOCK starts work with "Famous Players", writing and designing titles.
- 1921 FILM: "Squibs". Featuring Betty Balfour, Mary Brough.
WILLIAM FRIESE-GREENE, British inventor of cinematograph apparatus, dies.

- 1922 BEACONSFIELD STUDIOS opened.
GAUMONT COMPANY BECOMES WHOLLY BRITISH: "GAUMONT BRITISH".
- 1923 TIVOL THEATRE, Strand, London is opened
- 1924 GAINBOROUGH PICTURES start production.
- 1925 The CAPITOL CINEMA, Haymarket, London, is opened.
FILM: "The Flag Lieutenant", featuring Henry Edwards. (8,900ft)
- 1926 BRITISH NATIONAL build new studios at Elstree.
PLAZA CINEMA, Lower Regent Street, London: and also the PLAZA, Kensington, London; claimed to be the largest cinemas in England.
- 1927 GAUMONT BRITISH PICTURE CORPORATION formed, and PROVINCIAL CINEMATOGRAPH THEATRES, becomes associated with it.
Herbert Wilcox opens new studios at Elstree, known as BRITISH AND DOMINION FILM CORPORATION.
GRANADA organises first regular CHILDREN'S MATINEES.
ASTORIA CINEMA, Charing Cross Road, London: opens.
- 1928 GAUMONT COMPANY is at this time, located in Sherwood Street, Piccadilly, London. (Showroom, and other departments, with Goods entrance in adjoining Denman Street.)
Staff, as remembered by L. G. Miller, at that time:

Sales Manager:	Mr. P. G. N. Hammond.
Assist. Sales Manager:	Mr. Snook.
Showroom clerks:	Messrs. Hopwood, Kendall, St. John
Film Dept. Proj. Room:	Messrs. Jack Abbot, Tokeley, Hunt, Greene (?).
Traveller:	Mr. Lee Harris.
Ace Cameraman:	Mr. Jack Ross.
Stock Department:	Mr. "Fel" Feldwick. (Manager). L. G. Miller, assistant.
Chief Engineer:	Mr. Tom Hargrave.
Engineers:	Messrs. Jenner, Henry Nicoll, "Auntie" Law, Cockett.
Goods Department:	Mr. Bill Leverett. (Manager). Mr. Harry Orpin, assistant.
Packing Department:	Mr. "Curly" Whitby, Chief Packer and Carpenter.
Packers:	Mr. Jack Cole: Alf Ladbury, Charlie Brown, "Mush" Gray, Tom Beasley.
Lady Secretaries:	Miss Wetherell, (Showroom). Miss Jolliffe, (Film Dept).

(Apologies to any personnal omitted.) Mrs. Collins, tea lady GAUMONT BRITISH offices, and also GAUMONT FILM STORAGE VAULTS, (under managership of Mr. Wood), were then located in Denman St.

THE INDUSTRY BRACES ITSELF FOR SOUND: The arrival of the SYNCHRONOUS SOUND AND PICTURE.

The original GAUMONT STUDIOS, (Mr. Templeman), Lime Grove, Shepherds Bush: become home of GAINSBOROUGH PICTURES.

EMPIRE, Leicester Square, and REGAL, Marble Arch, London, opened

CARLTON, Haymarket, London, changes over to films.

- 1929 FILM: "Piccadilly, featuring Anna May Wong.
FILM: "High Treason, GAUMONT'S FIRST SOUND FEATURE. The introduction of the 'BRITISH ACOUSTIC SOUND SYSTEM' in a full length feature. (Note: The Works of the B. A. F. Co., at this time, were located adjacent to the Palladium, in Argyle Street, London, under managership of Mr. Minor.

C. M. Woolfe becomes Joint Managing Director of GAUMONT BRITISH, now taken over by the OSTRER BROTHERS.

1930 New studios opened at Ealing.

LEICESTER SQUARE THEATRE, London: turns to films.

The first ODEON opens at Perry Bar, Birmingham.

GRANADA, Dover, in the Moorish style, and the enormous "Italian Renaissance" TROCADRO, at Elephant and Castle, London opens.

1931 Michael Balcon begins his five years as Director of Production at both ISLINGTON (GAINSBOROUGH), and GAUMONT BRITISH at Shepherds Bush Studios.

1932 FILM: "Rome Express", featuring Conrad Veidt, GAUMONT BRITISH the first production at the new studios opened in Lime Grove and "Jack's the Boy", featuring Jack Hulbert and Cicely Courtneidge, at the Shepherds Bush Studios, (GAINSBOROUGH).

LIME GROVE STUDIOS OPENED BY GAUMONT BRITISH.

1933 FILM: 'Private Life of Henry VIII', featuring Charles Laughton by LONDON FILMS.

FILM: 'Friday the thirteenth', featuring Jessie Matthews, Sonnie Hale, Edmund Gwen. (GAINSBOROUGH)_

Note. During the early thirties, the Gaumont Company transferred their premises to FILM HOUSE, Wardour Street, London. Mr. P. G. N. Hammond the original Sales Manager had left the firm, and his Place was taken by Mr. Lamb.

The new Showroom occupied the first floor facing Wardour Street, while the Engineering, Stock Department, Goods, and Packing, were all housed in a basement at the rear of the building, approached by a long sloping passageway, from Great Chapel Street.

SHEPPERTON STUDIOS opened at Littlewood Park. G. P. O. FILM UNIT formed.

J. ARTHUR RANK becomes interested in films.

CURZON CINEMA, Mayfair, London, the last word in luxury cinemas opens.

BRITISH FILM INSTITUTE established.

1934 FILM: "The Man who knew too much" (GAUMONT BRITISH), featuring Leslie Banks. Nova Pilbeam, Peter Lorre.

FILM: 'Evergreen', featuring Jessie Mathews, Sonnie Hale, Betty Balfour. (GAUMONT BRITISH)

FILM: 'Boys will be Boys', featuring Will Hay, Gordon Harker, Claude Dampier. (GAINSBOROUGH).

FILM: "Man of Arran". (GAUMONT).

J. ARTHUR RANK FORMS BRITISH INTERNATIONAL FILMS.

LONDON PAVILION becomes a cinema.

CINEMA HOUSE, THE STUDIO, later divided into STUDIO ONE & TWO. RITZ CINEMA, Leicester Square, London, opens.

300 Cinemas in Britain. 20% have under 500 seats

3.5% " " 2,000 "

1935 Film "The Thirtynine Steps, featuring Madeline Carroll, Robert Donat, Godfrey Tearle. (GAUMONT BRITISH).

FILM: "Saunders of the River", featuring Paul Robeson, Leslie Banks. LONDON FILMS.

FILM: "Scarlet Pimpernel", featuring Merle Oberon, Leslie Howard, Raymond Massey. LONDON FILMS.

FILM: "The Iron Duke", featuring George Arliss, Ellaine Terriss, Gladys Cooper. (GAUMONT BRITISH).

GENERAL FILM DISTRIBUTORS is set up by J. ARTHUR RANK, and C. M. WOOLF.

PINEWOOD STUDIOS opened, with J. ARTHUR RANK as Chairman.

WARNER BROS. start production at Teddington Studios.

THE NATIONAL FILM ARCHIVE is inaugurated.

1936 FILM: "Things to Come"; featuring Raymond Massey, Ann Todd. LONDON FILMS.

FILM: "Rembrandt", featuring Charles Laughton, Gertrude Lawrence. LONDON FILMS.

FILM: "The Secret Agent", featuring Madeline Carrol, John Guilgud, Peter Lorre, Michael Redgrave. (GAUMONT BRITISH)

FILM: "The Great Barrier". (GAUMONT BRITISH).

FILM: "Rhodes of Africa". (GAUMONT BRITISH).

TECHNICOLLOUR open studios in London.

STATE KILBURN cinema opens. The LARGEST CINEMA IN EUROPE.

1937 FILM: "The Young and the Innocent", featuring Nova Pilbeam, Arthur Rigby. (GAINSBOROUGH).

FILM: "Oh, Mr. Porter", featuring Will Hay, Moore Marriot, Graham Moffat. (GAINSBOROUGH).

FILM: "Elephant Boy", featuring Sabu. LONDON FILMS.

GAUMONT BRITISH CLOSE SHEPHERDS BUSH STUDIOS.

ODEON, Leicester Square, and CLASSIC, Baker Street, London, opens

1938 FILM: "Pygmalion", featuring Leslie Howard, Wilfred Lawson, Wendy Hillier.

FILM: "The Lady Vanishes", featuring Margaret Lockwood, Michael Redgrave. (GAINSBOROUGH).

WARNER CINEMA, Leicester Square, London, opens on site of Daly's Theatre.

Note: In the early 1930's British Acoustic Films Limited, transferred their premises from Argyle Street, London, to their new factory at Woodger Road, Shepherds Bush, West London. (Dr. O. K. Kolb being in charge of the Laboratories, and Mr. Leslie H. Bacon connected with the development of the B. A. F. Sound Recording System. "Duosonic" being one of the trade names of the wide frequency range systems.)

1939 J. ARTHUR RANK becomes member of the ODEON BOARD, and the circuit takes over PARAMOUNT THEATRES.

ALL CINEMAS were closed on September 3rd, later were open to 10.00pm. in "neutral", and "reception" areas. Many cinemas are requisitioned for war purposes. For example, food is stored at PINWOOD studios, and parts of DENHAM and ELSTREE are taken over. ASSOCIATED BRITISH PICTURES move to 'Welwyn.

The PRINCE OF WALES THEATRE, Piccadilly converts to film exhibition for the screening of Chaplin's "The Great Dictator"

1941 J. ARTHUR RANK is Chairman of ODEON (306 cinemas), and GAUMONT BRITISH (251 cinemas).

The BRITISH FILM PRODUCER'S ASSOCIATION formed.

About 170 cinemas closed by ENEMY ACTION.

BRITISH ACOUSTIC FILMS moves to Mitcheldean.

1942 C. M. WOLFF dies.

1943 ODEON forms a CHILDREN'S CINEMA CLUB.

LESLIE HOWARD killed in a plane destroyed by enemy action.

1944 The RANK ORGANISATION forms a Children's Entertainment Division under Mary Field.

1945 330 Cinemas have been destroyed by enemy action.

1946 J. ARTHUR RANK launches "This Modern Age".

The BRITISH FILM ACADEMY formed.

JOHN DAVIS becomes Managing Director of the RANK ORGANIZATION

1947 CIRCUIT MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION is formed, comprising the ODEON and GAUMONT BRITISH circuits.

1948 ABC ELSTREE STUDIOS opened.

HAMMER FILMS COMPANY is formed with studios at Bray.

1949 ISLINGTON STUDIOS are closed.

J. ARTHUR RANK sells LIME GROVE STUDIOS, SHEPHERDS BUSH, to the BRITISH BROADCASTING COMPANY for TELEVISION Studios.