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## The Importance of the Programme in Early Film Presentation<sup>1</sup>

### An Ideal Cinematograph Show

Cinematographers rejoice! The King and Queen of England have set an example to their subjects, which if followed as it should be, and generally is, will boom the business for a long time to come in every town and village of our beloved Empire. Through the courtesy of Messrs Fraser and Elrick, of Edinburgh we have in receipt of a copy of a programme brought back from Balmoral Castle where they had the honour of giving an ideal cinematograph entertainment. An exhibition of pictures »fit for a King« should, we imagine, be accepted by his subjects as a standard of excellence, both in quality and in the selection of the subjects.<sup>2</sup>

The above quotation is taken from *The Showman, An Illustrated Journal for Showmen and Entertainers* published in the United Kingdom. The *Showman* newspaper first appeared in September 1900 and continued in various formats until its demise in 1912. For this brief period of time reports can be found of both touring and fairground cinematograph shows which provide a weekly insight into the business from the viewpoint of the newly formed British film industry. The journal also contains articles devoted to the presentation of films, the promotion of topics and the *latest up to date scenarios that all showmen must incorporate into their presentation*. In the issue dated November 15, 1901, the editors reproduced in full the complete programme and running order of the fifty four titles that were presented at Balmoral in Scotland, in the hope that it would provide a format or template on which other film exhibitors could base future presentations. It would appear that to the practitioners of film exhibition, the presentation and programming of early film shows were an important factor in their success. By 1901 the novelty factor of living pictures had decreased in the United Kingdom, while new and innovative means of presentation were seen as important factors for its necessary growth and development. To some extent, organisers of film festivals and early film historians have overlooked the importance of the programming of films in the early years of cinema both in Europe and in the United Kingdom. Stephen Bottomore writing in *Film History* argues that the screenings of early material, in particular non-fiction films, »have been planned and executed with little reference to the context in which such films were originally shown in the years when they were made«.<sup>3</sup>

Musser and Nelson's study of Lyman H. Howe's travelling exhibition in America between 1880 and 1920 reveals the fluidity of the exhibition pro-

gramme in incorporating new innovations such as projected motion pictures. Howe, in line with other travelling exhibitors, varied his programme according to his audience and survived in the competitive world of early film exhibition through a number of factors; including showmanship by his use of the educational programme, the knowledge he had built up of the exhibition circuit during his time with the phonograph, and his concern for technical excellence. As the authors state:

Howe's organisation of these films relied on sophisticated editorial strategies.

In his selection and organisation of films, Howe had created what we call a cinema of reassurance.<sup>4</sup>

In Europe, recent work by Nico de Klerk has brought attention to the issue of programming and the importance of understanding the format in which discreet attractions were arranged in order to facilitate and increase audience size.<sup>5</sup> However, I would like to suggest that the programming of films and the context in which they were presented not only provides greater insight into the films themselves, but is also an important factor in understanding the eventual transition of the cinematograph from a touring itinerant form of entertainment, to being the mainstay of the entertainment industry by the First World War. In order to demonstrate this argument I will firstly examine the relationship between advertising and popular entertainment and place the film programme in the context of travelling exhibitions/shows of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Secondly, I will take as a case study the programmes and presentation formats of A.D. Thomas, a travelling film exhibitor who presented, commissioned and produced stand alone two hour films shows from 1899 onwards, at a time when film was largely exhibited as part of a variety show. Finally, I will conclude by demonstrating the effect Thomas's show had on film presentation in music halls and theatres in the localities he exhibited, by examining the shows presented at the St James Hall in Manchester in 1901.

### *Background*

The impact of advances in printing technology on advertising in the latter part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the cheapness of new printing techniques allowed a greater range and type of advertising material – posters, programmes, handbills, ephemeral – to be printed in large quantities. As Catherine Hail writes in *Fun Without Vulgarly*:

Entertainment has always needed advertisement. The earliest theatricals were advertised by word of mouth or by hand written bills. The earliest printed advertisements were typographic, simply printed in black lettering produced by the letterpress process. They served both as advance notice and programme and gave basic

information about the entertainment on offer – the titles of the plays, the times of the performance, the availability of the tickets and names of the best known performers.<sup>6</sup>

Historians have increasingly researched the importance and influence of such advertising materials from the 1850s onwards, in particular the poster.<sup>7</sup> Optional registration of advertising material at the Stationers Hall in London existed under Acts of Parliament between 1842 and 1912.<sup>8</sup> Due to this legislation, which resulted in many of the companies registering the original artwork through deposit, a large body of work has survived.<sup>9</sup> However, although the poster was perhaps the most visible form of advertising feature utilised by the showmen, it was only part of the huge plethora of ephemera of printed materials available in the late 1800s, including handbills, postcards and programmes. Ironically the handbill, containing the most up to date and localised form of information produced, survives very rarely in major collections with the exception of the material in local libraries and archives or the John Johnson Collection at the Bodleian Library.<sup>10</sup>

The programme was a staple of variety and musical theatre, fairground entertainments, the magic lantern and the circus. Buffalo Bill's Wild West's visit to the United Kingdom and Europe in 1887, 1893 and 1903/4 reveals the programme to be a forty to fifty page pamphlet incorporating a history of the show, Cody's vision of the American West, with the programme of events covering two to four pages.<sup>11</sup> These programmes underwent numerous editions with many different inserts produced for individual towns that the show was visiting. Ironically the insert itself is the main aspect of the programme that rarely survives, positioned as it is between the programme and the more ephemeral handbill.<sup>12</sup> Entertainment venues such as the Olympia and the Royal Agricultural Hall in London or Charter fairs such as Nottingham Goose Fair also produced programmes of this type.<sup>13</sup> The menagerie and circus programmes in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, in particular Bostock and Wombwell's Menagerie, also reveal this dual purpose – a keepsake of the show with history of the acts and animals with advertising features combined with the inserted programme.<sup>14</sup> However, the programme never truly reflected the actual presentation of events, as the circus and fairground show was a more fluid and changeable event relating as much to the context and locality in which the show was performed. Therefore, travelling show programmes, be they menageries, Wild West shows or circuses, were never a record of the actual event but were instead a combination of a souvenir, the marketing ploys of the showmen as a means of increasing revenue, and a promotional feature of what the audience could expect to see.

The introduction of film programmes into this fluid and rapidly expanding market of popular entertainment occurs in a variety of ways. Certain companies, such as the Biograph Company, registered their artwork, and exam-

ples of their poster designs can be found in the Public Record Office Copyright Collection in Kew.<sup>15</sup> However, the wonderfully graphic illustration depicted in the poster reveals little about the films on show. For that information we have to examine the venue in which the show was presented, the Palace Theatre of Varieties. The Biograph film show was placed in the already existing format of the London's Palace Theatre of Varieties programmes and formed part of a fifteen to thirty minute show in a larger three hour spectacle.<sup>16</sup> The travelling cinematograph showmen incorporated the film into an existing fairground show and promoted it as a new wonder of the age in the context of a constantly changing programme of events.<sup>17</sup> By 1900 the showmen maintained the variety aspect on the front of the show, but, in order to get maximum audiences for these films in a limited time period, presented a thirty minute programme inside the show consisting purely of films. The films increasingly became the focus of the event and the handbill, banner or the gag-card became the means in which films were advertised or programmed. Therefore, the film programme either became part of the actual physical scenery of the show through banners or gag-cards, or reflected the ephemeral nature of the attraction through the use of the handbill – the staple of fairground advertising.<sup>18</sup> Three examples of Randall William's handbills in the National Fairground Archive for instance, demonstrate this technique with the black and white bill advertising the name of the showmen with the films listed in no particular or different order on each handbill and the locality not explicit. These handbills could be utilised no matter the town or venue, and copies of the same handbill can be found in both Nottingham and Hull Local Studies collections.<sup>19</sup> In the case of prominent fairs such as Nottingham Goose Fair, and the World's Fair at the Royal Agricultural Hall in London, the shows were part of a larger programme of events promoted by the organisers of the fair. Examples such as *Nottingham Council's Programme of Events* published in 1899, reveal details of many of the shows and rides on offer during the fair with individual film titles highlighted as being part of the main attraction of the cinematograph showmen's advertisements.

Another way in which the programme was advertised was through local newspapers. The showmen for example would often promote a particular commissioned or local film, by advertising the fact in the newspaper in the days leading up to the holidays. However, the majority of these adverts contain details of the new film and not the full array of titles to be exhibited. A final way in which films were programmed was through the local pamphlets of events published by theatre owners in the late 1800s and early 1900s. Examples of these that survive in the British Library and local library collections in the United Kingdom include: the *Blackpool Amusements Official Programme for different resorts*, the *Liverpool and District Programme and Official List of Entertainments*, the *Glasgow Programme* and *The Manchester Programme of Entertainments*. These local sources contain detailed advertise-

Assembly Rooms, Great Malvern. | **SIX NIGHTS ONLY,  
MONDAY, SEPT. 22ND.**

# Edison's Grand Coronation Pictures,


Doors open at 7.30 p.m., Commence at 8.  
Saturday at 3.

## **EDISON'S** WORLD-FAMED ELECTRIC **ANIMATED PICTURES**


**Edison's Programme**

CONSISTS OF

### **20 SHOWS 20**

Edison's Dramas.  
Edison's Comedy.  
Edison's Cirous.   
Edison's Burlesque.  
Edison's Pantomimes.  
Edison's Minstrels.  
Edison's Acrobats.

**Edison, the Picture King.**

 Edison's Menagerie.  
Edison's Jugglers.  
Edison's Illusions.  
Edison's Panoramas.  
Edison's Excursions.  
Edison's Concerts.

**10,000 OF EDISON'S LATEST WONDERS.**



**Mr. B. KENNEDY,**

MANAGER.

To whom all Business Communications should be  
addressed.

  
Edison's Animated Pictures form the most popular  
and High-class Variety Entertainment in the World, com-  
prising Reality, Romance, Tragedy, Comedy Opera and  
Pantomime. Something to please every taste except the  
vulgar.

Doors open at 2.30 and 7.30; Early Doors at 2  
and 7 (2d. extra to all parts).  
Prices: 2s., 1s., and 6d.

Proprietors—  
The Original EDISON AMERICAN PHOTO CO.  
Manager—Mr. B. KENNEDY.

CHESTER-LE-STREET PRINTING COMPANY, FRONT STREET.

BARNES  
COLLECTION

ments of the array of entertainments on offer at the theatres in the locality and include adverts for many itinerant film shows from 1896 onwards. Examination of the advertisements placed by A. D. Thomas exhibiting as Edison-Thomas Pictures in the early 1900s in Manchester reveal a different type of film exhibition, the stand alone film show in which it is claimed the audience will see *Three Hours' Programme of unapproachable novelty and excellence*.<sup>20</sup>

### *The Programmer*

A. D. Thomas was one of the most colourful and incorrigible characters in early British film. Cecil Hepworth in *Came the Dawn*, describes him as an utter scamp, a very loveable fellow and one of the greatest showmen who ever lived.<sup>21</sup> As with other showmen of the late 1890s, he graduated from exhibiting Edison phonographs to projected film shows, which he billed as being provided by Edison himself. During his long and colourful career he masqueraded as both P. T. Barnum and to a greater degree Thomas Edison, but displaying the advertising ability and showmanship of the former. Between 1898 and early 1900 Thomas appears to have been based in the South of England with regular film shows in Brighton<sup>22</sup> and venues throughout London as part of a cine-variety bill.<sup>23</sup> By 1899 he claimed to have control of 21 film shows and ownership of 4000 film titles.<sup>24</sup> However, in 1900 he moved to the North of England and based his operations in Manchester. His business flourished, with multiple shows touring throughout the North and the parallel show in the South East region named the Edisonograph. By 1901, Thomas had camera crews filming actualities in Ireland and the North of England, which were probably printed and distributed by Mitchell and Kenyon due to the fact that over sixty of these titles now exist as part of the Mitchell and Kenyon Collection at the BFI. After his bankruptcy hearing in November 1902 the company and assets were sold to Walter Gibbons and Thomas reputedly left for the West Indies. According to Rachel Low he left England and went to Canada, returning once again to tour Britain with his Royal Canadian Animated Photo Company in 1905.<sup>25</sup> However, new evidence suggests that A. D. Thomas instead changed the name of his touring show to Edison and Barnum's Electric Animated Pictures and continued presenting regional film shows in towns and cities throughout the North of England.<sup>26</sup> The true extent of Thomas's impact on the early British film industry will be revealed during the course of the Mitchell and Kenyon Research Project.<sup>27</sup> However, for the purpose of this article, Thomas's shows in Manchester and his advertising techniques will be examined.

## *The Programme*

The term programme can be used to mean the actual printed text which records the way the films were exhibited on a particular occasion, or the actual composition of a show. In this section the programme as a printed document will be examined. Thomas, in line with other travelling showmen, utilised the full range of advertising material at his disposal. Such was his affinity with the poster that Cecil Hepworth wrote:

He plastered the whole town wherever he went, and he went nearly everywhere, with tremendous posters in brilliant colours describing his wonderful shows and his still more wonderful self. [...] He would parade the town in person, mounted high on an open lorry, actively turning his camera on every little knot of people he passed. As the lorry was plastered with his colourful posters telling them to come and see themselves at such and such hall tonight, it left the people in no doubt as to what he was doing.<sup>28</sup>

The evidence for Thomas's fondness for advertising is demonstrated by the different types of material that survive today including handbills, posters and most importantly film programmes.<sup>29</sup> Three of Thomas's film programmes survive in the Barnes Collection and each relate to a different venue and are different in format and content. This is not surprising if we examine the fact that in 1901 alone Thomas's company was presenting film shows in 27 different venues throughout the North of England, the Midlands and Scotland.<sup>30</sup> Many of these were parallel shows and during his exhibition in Manchester from April onwards, Thomas's managers were presenting shows in Glasgow, Dundee, Birmingham, Grimsby, Morecambe and Halifax. Thomas's film programmes display features in common with other more established travelling concerns, in particular the emphasis placed on the figure and history of the showmen and the grandiose claims of innovation and fame. However, a major difference is that the film titles are the main feature. Ranging between four to six pages, the printed pamphlet lists film titles, the outline of the programme, advertising features for local products and details of the Edison company's other concerns. The three programmes all contain different titles and relate to different venues. The programme for the Grimsby Temperance Hall is simply titled *Edison's World Famous Electric Animated Pictures*, whereas the Birmingham Curzon Hall is presented as *The Edison Historiograph: An Illustrated Programme of the Thomas-Edison Animated Photo Co.* When Thomas appeared in Great Malvern in 1902 the show changed to *Edison's Grand Coronation Pictures*. Unlike the Balmoral Programme referred to in the beginning of the article, ›Edison‹ showed a mixture of actuality and fiction films combining these with tableaux and live entertainment relating to the Boer War. Each programme was broken down into two parts comprising eight to ten

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# Edison's Programme.

## PART I.

- 1—OVERTURE.
- 2—100 AMUSING, INTERESTING AND ENTIRELY NEW ANIMATED PHOTOGRAPHS specially taken by Edison's Operators, depicting Scenes Laughable, Curious, and Amazing, in all parts of the World.
- 3—HOLIDAY SCENES at Blackpool, Morecambe, and other Popular Resorts.
- 4—The Latest Novelty in Animated Photography—  
EDISON'S SINGING FUTURE, "ORA PRO NOBIS."
- 5—THE CHINA WAR. Magnificent Series of Animated Pictures, the only genuine pictures ever taken of the Chinese Horror, including the Destruction of the *Baku Fu* by the Allied Fleet. Attack on a Mission Station. Panorama of Hong Kong Harbour. Grand Review of German Troops by H.M. the Emperor of Germany. The Brave Indian Troops, Goutzkas and Sikhs, en route for Peking.
- 6—ENTRANCING FAIRY SPECTACULAR TABLEAUX (with Choral and Musical effects).  
"The Fairy of the Black Rocks."  
"Santa Claus, or the Christmas-Dream."  
"Little Red Riding Hood and the Weir Wolf."
- 7—STAG HUNT. The only Animated Picture taken of this exciting sport.
- 8—THE GREAT CATHOLIC PROCESSION.

INTERVAL OF FIVE MINUTES.

## PART II.

- 9—GRAND OPERATIC SELECTION by the BAND.
- 10—ANIMATED PICTURES. The Turn-out of the Fire Brigade. Synopsis:—The Alarm. The Call. The Brigade to the Rescue. Subduing the Flames. Gallant Rescue from the Burning Building.
- 11—ANIMATED PICTURES of well-known Local People. Workpeople leaving the Factories.

\* Scenes at the Cod Fishery. \*

\* A Trip to Newfoundland . . \*

Edison the Electrician.

Edison is Unequaled.

Edison is Supreme.

## Edison the Picture King.

Edison does To-day what others do To-morrow.

Edison Governs the World in Animated Photography.

12—

Magnificent Military Spectacle—

(E.C.)

### A CALL TO ARMS.

SYNOPSIS—Boer Treachery—Saved by a Nurse—Tommy's Last Shot—Tommy's Dream on the Battle Field—The Fight for the Despatches—Attack on Fort Itala. Special Firing Party of 20 Soldiers.

13—EDISON'S New and Splendid Production—

### \* A TRIP TO THE ALPS. \*

The Ascent of the Matterhorn—The Valleys and Waterfalls of Switzerland—Alpine Tourists Crossing a Glacier—The Mountains of Perpetual Ice.

During this picture Edison's Choir will sing "EXCELSIOR!" with unique effect.

14—

### The Race for the American Cup.

15—THE FUNERAL OF THE LATE DOWAGER EMPRESS FREDERICK.

16—HERR RICHARDE SAWADE, the World's Greatest Lion Tamer, in his complete Performance in a Den of 30 Forest-bred Lions, Tigers, Bears, and Wolf Hounds.

17—Marvellous reproduction of the Celebrated Comedian, "Little Tich," in all his eccentric antics and dances.

18—GENERAL BULLER AT ALDERSHOT.

19—A HISTORY OF THE BOER WAR. All the latest events reproduced in a series of Unique Animated Pictures.

20—GRAND MUSICAL FANTASIA by EDISON'S MILITARY BAND, entitled—"Reminiscences of a Voyage in a Troopship to South Africa.

21—GRAND ALLEGORICAL TABLEAUX—"Britannia's Welcome to her Valiant Sons."

### AND OTHER SUBJECTS TOO NUMEROUS TO MENTION.

VIVAT REX!

GOD SAVE THE KING!

### Change of Animated Pictures Nightly.

NOTE—Owing to the great length of the Programme, and the constant introduction of NEW SCENES (reproducing the incidents of the day as they occur), the above Programme is subject to alteration—fresh novelties being added at each representation. A selection from the above pictures will be shown nightly, forming a Three Hours' Programme of unapproachable novelty and excellence.

Come and see your own Portraits and those of your friends upon the Screen in Animated Photography.

This Programme is subject to Alteration.

EDISON STANDS ALONE—THE MASTER MIND OF THE WORLD.

Edison the Wonder Worker.

different acts or sections. The first part consisted of eight sections advertising over 100 *Amusing, Interesting and entirely New Animated Photographs specially taken by Edison's Operators* and included holiday scenes from well known Northern seaside resorts, scenes from the China or Boer War and then a tableau. Part II commenced with *Animated Pictures of well known Local People*, including factory gate films and the turn out of the Fire Brigade. The concluding part of the show was titled *A Call To Arms*, accompanied by a *Special Firing Party of 20 Soldiers*.<sup>31</sup> Unlike cinematographic presentations in music halls, the live action or variety acts were in the minority on the bill and were linked to the film presentations with Edison's Military Band accompanying the War films, or the *Grand Allegorical Tableaux of Britannia's Welcome to her Valiant Sons*. Depending on the date of the programmes, additional film titles were added to either Part I or II. For example in the Grimsby programme, *THE LIFE OF JOAN OF ARC* is included at the start of the exhibition and *DICKENS CHRISTMAS CAROL* is shown as part of the finale. Thomas then added a notice on the programme stating:

A Change of Animated Pictures Nightly.

NOTE- Owing to the great length of the Programme, and the constant introduction of NEW SCENES (reproducing the incidents of the day as they occur) the above Programme is subject to alteration, fresh novelties being added at each representation. A selection of the above pictures will be shown nightly, forming a Three Hours Programme of unapproachable novelty and excellence...

EDISON STANDS ALONE. THE MASTER MIND OF THE WORLD.<sup>32</sup>

Therefore, in common with other itinerant exhibitors, Thomas used the programme as a means of promoting the whole event rather than providing an actual record of the performance. The major advantage of film exhibition over other forms of entertainment at the time was the immediacy with which the programme could be altered to reflect the events of the day. This factor was one that Thomas used to his advantage during his time in Manchester in 1901 with the use of local films as a programming tool.

### *The Local Venue*

By 1901 the boom for local pictures was widespread and filmmakers such as Hepworth, Mitchell and Kenyon and Warwick were offering their services to itinerant showmen.<sup>33</sup> Advertisements in *The Showman* newspaper reflect this trend:

To Showman. The most popular Cinematograph Film in a Travelling show is Always a Local Picture containing Portraits which can be recognised. A Film showing workers leaving a factory will gain far greater popularity in the town where it was taken than the most exciting picture ever produced.<sup>34</sup>



Mr. A. D. THOMAS,

Who produced and exhibited the Royal Visit before their Majesties and Lord Derby's distinguished Guests the same evening at Knowsley Hall,

**BY ROYAL COMMAND.**

Miles and Miles of Pictures.

SUCCESS OF THE SEASON.

**GREAT ST. JAMES'S HALL,**

OXFORD STREET, MANCHESTER.

**TWICE DAILY, 3 & 8.**

THE ROYAL CANADIAN ANIMATED PICTURE CO.'S  
**10,000 ANIMATED PICTURES. 10,000**

INCLUDING-

Gorgeous and Unique Reproduction in Animated Photography,

**Their Majesties' Visit to Manchester**

THE ENTIRE FUNCTIONS.

Reserved Seats,  
3/- & 2/-

**CONSTANT CHANGE OF PROGRAMME.**

Plan & Bookings at  
CRANE'S LTD.,  
Deansgate.

2,000 Seats, 1/- | 3,000 Seats, 6d. | 3,000 Seats, 3d.

Doors open 2-30 and 7-45. Early Doors 7 o'clock, 2d. extra.

Thomas realised the importance of local scenes by the fact that he dedicated a section of his four page pamphlets to this type of feature. He also advertised local films in a variety of ways. Firstly, as Hepworth revealed he paraded through the streets with a handcart or horse and carriage during filming advertising the fact that these films would be on show that evening at St James Hall. Contemporary evidence for this account can be found within the Mitchell and Kenyon films in the British Film Institute.<sup>35</sup> The recent restoration of some twenty titles relating to Manchester which are accredited to Thomas, reveal not only the advertising boards but Thomas himself positioning the crowds to look at the camera, with scenes of young children mingling with the crowd handing out handbills for the show.<sup>36</sup> In order to display the up to date nature of the show, full page or half page adverts were taken out in the local press with details of the films to be shown that week. In the case of Manchester, these adverts were placed in the *Manchester Programme*, a high quality publication controlled by the music hall and theatrical operators that was circulated throughout the city and in the venues. The advertisements placed by Thomas reveal details of the film titles and the programme changes from May to September 1901 and the return visit on 1 October. Unfortunately the issues for this period are incomplete, but the examples that survive reflect the changes made to the film programme by Thomas during his visit. The first advert appears 6 May 1901 and features a magnificent animated picture of the *TORPEDO FLOTILLA VISIT TO MANCHESTER* and *Magnificent Animated Pictures of the Brave Manchester's at Wagon Hill*.<sup>37</sup> A review of the show that appeared the following week in *The Showman* states: »New attractions have been se-

cured, including pictures of the Knutsford May-day Festival (Crowning of the May Queen), the gallant Manchester Regiment at Wagon Hill, etc«.38

The following month Thomas advertised five more local titles including the LORD MAYOR OPENING THE NEW ELECTRIC CAR SYSTEM, the RETURN OF THE MANCHESTER VOLUNTEERS and the WHIT-MONDAY PROCESSION AND CATHOLIC PROCESSION.<sup>39</sup> On 15 July, the MANCHESTER & SALFORD HARRIERS & CYCLISTS' PROCESSION is featured. Edison's Animated Pictures continued exhibiting at St James Hall during August and presented a mixture of war features, local films and sporting events. A. D. Thomas returned to St James Hall in September with an entire change of pictures. He proceeded to make Manchester the centre of his Northern operations with his brother Mr J. D. Thomas acting as manager. The show was advertised as *Manchester Day by Day and the World's History Portrayed in Animated Photography*.<sup>40</sup> The Company continued to exhibit films throughout 1901 and 1902 with occasional two week breaks in venues near to Manchester such as Salford and Oldham.

### Conclusion

The effect of the Thomas-Edison Animated Photography show on other cinematographic exhibitions in Manchester is apparent in a variety of ways. Firstly during his initial visit, rival exhibitors introduced local films into the music hall programme.<sup>41</sup> Secondly, the position of films on the programme of these rival variety bills changed dramatically and adverts in the *Manchester Programme* for these events start to include details of the film titles on show. This is demonstrated by the appearance of a similar size advert to Thomas's on the same page and within the same column for a film show at Lewis's in Market Street. This advert which is similar in format and presentation to Thomas's, also features Boer War films, A TRIP TO MENAI STRAITS and scenes from *Johannesburg's Working Gold Mines*.<sup>42</sup> Thirdly, after Thomas's visit, other travelling cinematograph showmen hire venues in Manchester and advertise two to three hour film shows comprising a mixture of specially commissioned local scenes, fiction titles, films of royalty and events of national interest. These include the visit of the North American Animated Photo Company under the management of Ralph Pringle in May 1902 and April 1903, Sydney Carter with his New Century Pictures in May 1904, December 1905 and a return visit in 1906.<sup>43</sup> In January 1906, Gale and Polden's Animated Pictures presented a two hour show of *Naval and Military Life in the King's Service Afloat and Ashore*, and the reappearance of A. D. Thomas in 1905 with The Royal Canadian Animated Picture Co.<sup>44</sup> Unlike Thomas who operated his own camera crew, in order to present a constant supply of local titles, both Pringle and Carter commissioned Mitchell and Kenyon to film key scenes in Manchester.<sup>45</sup>

This is only a sample of the material to be found within the local film programmes in the United Kingdom. This case study has centred on a three month period in the remarkable career of A.D. Thomas, but comparable studies could be attempted on any number of itinerant showmen, or indeed any of the twenty seven venues that Thomas operated from during the early 1900s. Thomas's early film shows in Manchester created a market for stand alone film exhibition, a factor not lost by the showmen who came after Thomas and this pattern was repeated in other localities. They were really the true precursors to the permanent cinema shows of the 1910s, in that audiences began to respond to features, thematic or individual advertising ploys relating to the films and expected a constant change of programme. By removing the cinematograph from the constraints of the music hall, Thomas created a larger and more fluid space in which to develop early film. This examination of how early films were programmed and received in the early 1900s, will hopefully contribute towards a greater understanding of the technical, artistic and commercial pressures, which were instrumental in the development of the early film industry.

### Notes

1 I would like to thank John Barnes for providing access to the Thomas material in the Barnes Collection, Tim Neal, Richard Brown and David Williams for essential research material, and especially Nico de Klerk for his insight into the issues of programming in film history.

2 *The Showman*, 15 November 1901, pp. 157-158.

3 Stephen Bottomore, »Rediscovering early non-fiction film«, *Film History*, Vol. 13, No. 2 (2001), p. 160.

4 Charles Musser and Carol Nelson, *High Class Moving Pictures: Lyman H. Howe and the Forgotten Era of Traveling Exhibition, 1880-1920*, Princetown University Press, Princetown 1991, p. 53.

5 See Nico de Klerk, »Pictures to be Shewn: Programming the American Biograph«, in: Simon Pople and Vanessa Toulmin (Eds), *Visual Delights: Essays on the Popular and Projected Image in the 19th Century*, Flicks Books, Trowbridge 2000, pp. 204-223.

6 Catherine Haill, *Fun Without Vulgarity: Victorian and Edwardian Popular En-*

*tertainment Posters*, The Stationary Office, London 1996, pp. 3-4.

7 See the range of publications issued by the Public Record Office including Catherine Haill's, *Fun without Vulgarity*, Julia Wigg, *Bon Voyage: Travel Posters of the Edwardian Era*, HMSO, London 1996, Robert Wood, *Victorian Delights*, Evans Brothers, London 1967 and John Hewitt, »Poster nasties: censorship and the Victorian Theatre poster«, in: Simon Pople and Vanessa Toulmin (Eds), *Visual Delights: Essays on the Popular and Projected Image in the 19th Century*, pp. 154-169.

8 Haill, p. 2.

9 See also Catherine Haill, *Theatre Posters*, HMSO, London 1983.

10 For details of the Johnson Collection see *The John Johnson Collection: Catalogue of an Exhibition*, Bodleian Library, Oxford 1971.

11 National Fairground Archive NFA PAM BUFF/490 and NFA PAM Q BUFF/544. See also R. L. Wilson and Greg Martin, *Buffalo Bill's Wild West: An American Legend*, Greenhill Books, London 1998, for

details of the numerous programmes published by Cody during the Show's thirty year history.

12 Fred Neill is currently researching the changes in Buffalo Bill English Programmes from the various tours. He has demonstrated that even editions that appear to be identical have different programme of events published in the centre of the programme.

13 See *Royal Agricultural Hall Catalogue and Programme of Events World's Fair, 1900-1901*, Barnes Collection.

14 See *Visitor's Guide and Illustrated Catalogue of Bostock and Wombwell's Monster Menagerie, 1890*, Nottingham Central Library, L38.93. Also *Visitors Guide and Illustrated Catalogue of Bostock's Late Wombwell's Grand Star Menagerie, 1888*, Nottingham Central Library, L 39.93.

15 See Michael Jubb, *Cocoa and Corsets*, HMSO, London 1984, for reproduction of the Biograph Poster from 1900 PRO reference COPY 1/70 folio 85.

16 See Nico de Klerk, »Programme of Varieties: The Palace Theatre of Varieties«, *Griffithiana*, No. 66-70, 1999/2000 (»The Wonders of the Biograph«), pp. 241-247.

17 See Mervyn Heard, »'Come in please, come out pleased': the development of British fairground bioscope presentation and performance«, in: Linda Fitzsimmons and Sarah Street (Eds), *Moving Performance: British Stage and Screen, 1890s to 1920s*, Flicks Books, Trowbridge 2000, pp. 101-111.

18 For examples of showmen programming films on fairgrounds see Vanessa Toulmin, »The Cinematograph at the Goose Fair, 1896-1911«, in: Alain Burton and Laraine Porter (Eds), *The Showman, the Spectacle & the Two-Minute Silence*, Flicks Books, Trowbridge 2001, pp. 76-86.

19 The handbills are reproduced in Vanessa Toulmin, *Randall Williams, King of Showmen: From Ghost Show to Bioscope*, The Projection Box, London 1998.

20 Taken from Edison's Animated Pic-

tures Programme, 1902, Barnes Collection. However, Thomas also commonly used wording of this kind in newspapers adverts from 1900 onwards.

21 Cecil Hepworth, *Came the Dawn: Memoirs of a Film Pioneer*, Phoenix House, London 1951, p. 58.

22 Programme for the Brighton Alhambra, Monday 5 March, 1900, Brighton Public Libraries, BB 792/BRI for details of Edison-Thomas Royal Vitascope. However, Thomas's run at the Alhambra commenced in September 1899 according to reports in *The Encore*, 11 January 1900.

23 Tony Fletcher, »The London County Council and the Cinematograph (1896 - 1900)«, *Living Pictures: The Journal of the Popular and Projected Image before 1914*, Vol. 1, No. 2, December 2001, pp. 69-83.

24 See Richard Brown and Barry Anthony, *A Victorian Film Enterprise: The History of the British Mutoscope and Biograph Company, 1897-1915*, Flicks Books, Trowbridge 1999.

25 Rachel Low and Richard Manvell, *The History of the British Film, 1896-1906*, Allen and Unwin, London 1948.

26 Research by David Williams in the *Durham Chronicle* 10 April 1903, has uncovered evidence of Edison shows in Durham in 1903, and the appearance of A. D. Thomas in the Mitchell and Kenyon films after 1902 also disputes the claim that he left the film business.

27 The Mitchell and Kenyon Project is a three year research collaboration between the National Fairground Archive and the BFI. The aim of the project is to research, date and contextualise 780 non-fiction films donated by Peter Worden to the BFI. For further details of the project and to see examples of the films restored please see [www.bfi.org.uk/collections/mk](http://www.bfi.org.uk/collections/mk) and [www.shaf.ac.uk/nfa](http://www.shaf.ac.uk/nfa).

28 Hepworth, p. 58-59.

29 For further details of this material see the John Johnson Collection at the Bodleian Library, the Public Record Office and the Argyle Theatre of Varieties posters in the National Fairground Archive, Univer-

sity of Sheffield and individual music hall programmes in the Bill Douglas Centre, University of Exeter.

30 Survey of reviews in *The Showman* for 1901 reveals the extent of A. D. Thomas's film shows and this figure will increase once the full extent of the material in the Mitchell and Kenyon Collection has been researched which relates to additional exhibitions presented by Thomas.

31 These features are repeated in the three Thomas programmes referred to in the text and are part of the Barnes Collection.

32 Edison's World Famous Electric Animated Pictures Programme, Temperance Hall, Grimsby, Barnes Collection, p. 3.

33 See Vanessa Toulmin, »Local Films for Local People: Travelling showmen and the commissioning of local films in Great Britain, 1900-1902«, *Film History*, Vol. 12, No. 2, 2001, pp. 118-137.

34 *The Showman*, 21 June 1901, front page onwards.

35 See note 27.

36 Mitchell and Kenyon Collection, Nos. 437 to 451.

37 *Manchester Programme*, 6 May 1901, Manchester Local Studies Collection.

38 *The Showman*, 17 May 1901, p. 325.

39 *Manchester Programme*, 10 June 1901, Manchester Local Studies Collection.

40 *Manchester Programme*, 30 September 1901, Manchester Local Studies Collection.

41 See adverts in the *Manchester Programme* from May 1901 onwards and the lack of such adverts before the arrival of the Edison-Thomas show.

42 *Manchester Programme*, 5 August 1901, Manchester Local Studies Collection.

43 Information for Pringle taken from the Mitchell and Kenyon Collection which lists Mitchell and Kenyon filming local scenes for Ralph Pringle in Manchester in May 1902, other details from the *Manchester Programme*, 18 December 1905, 16 April 1906.

44 For Gale and Polden see the *Manchester Programme*, 29 January 1906, for the Royal Canadian Animated Picture Co, see *Manchester Programme* 7 August 1905.

45 Many of the films which survive in the Mitchell and Kenyon Collection, have the names of exhibitors scratched onto their leaders. The names of twenty four exhibitors have been found. Information relating to Carter and Pringle's activities in Manchester has been taken from these leaders.