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## PREVIEW SCREENINGS AND THE SPACES OF AN EMERGING LOCAL CINEMA TRADE IN SCOTLAND

María Antonia Vélez-Serna

*Selecting and booking films to make up a programme that suited a particular audience was a crucial skill for exhibitors in the competitive conditions of the early cinema trade in Britain. This article argues that access to trade previews of the films was necessary for this choice to be meaningful, and it studies the emergence and regularisation of trade shows in Glasgow, Scotland, as an indicator of the forms of agency retained by independent cinema managers and renters. By documenting its different local manifestations up to 1920, the trade preview is shown to be a particular reception context, with its own spaces and codes of conduct. Furthermore, in a thriving non-metropolitan film trade, such as the Scottish one, it was an important social routine where informal networks could be nurtured and information shared. Thus, by looking at the micro-cosmos of the private projection room, it is possible to get a glimpse of how the trade functioned on the ground and how it understood its social position during a time of great upheaval, before it conformed to a more centralised, institutional model.*

Choice is a form of power in market relationships, and in the film trade, the exhibitor's ability to select a programme has been a crucial point in the struggles between different sectors of the industry. In the first quarter of the twentieth century, the new medium of the moving image emerged in the intersection of earlier entertainment practices, reaching a wide variety of audiences with the rapid expansion of commercial exhibition around the world.<sup>1</sup> The relatively decentralised structures of distribution and exhibition in the early film trade were in tension with its tendencies towards corporate concentration and institutionalisation, shaping

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the emergent social practice of cinema as a profoundly contradictory construct.<sup>2</sup> Connecting the international circulation of mechanically reproduced films with the always local instances of exhibition and reception, the regional ambit of the film trade was, as Paul S. Moore has written, essential to the emergence of cinema as a mass practice.<sup>3</sup> Its importance, however, has been under-documented by research paradigms that align themselves with national boundaries or, more recently, concentrate on local histories.

This article sheds light on the material underpinnings of the early film trade on a regional basis, documenting trade shows as an important function of a regional hub city. It focuses on the emergence of Glasgow as a distribution centre for the Scottish exhibition trade. Scotland's status as a peripheral market to London's global reach, and as a stateless nation with distinct social institutions but joint legal and fiscal systems, sets the scene for the development of a successful cinema trade and a famously keen audience.<sup>4</sup> By the start of the First World War, Scotland had a population of just under five million, distributed unevenly, with high density along the central belt (on the axis connecting Glasgow and Edinburgh), the West coast south of the river Clyde and the East coast from Fife to Inverness. The expansion of permanent cinemas had followed this population pattern so that, by 1914, most small towns had a regular show, with over 550 venues in 154 locations.<sup>5</sup> Mapping this landscape of non-metropolitan exhibition was one of the goals of the 'Early Cinema in Scotland, 1896–1927' research project, funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council at the Universities of Glasgow and Edinburgh. The research team's historical approaches to exhibition, distribution, cinema-going and film production have shed light on the flexibility and variation in local practices across Scotland, and the degrees of autonomy enacted in the sector's relationship to London and the global cinema trade.

Diversity in exhibition requires adaptability in the film supply and access to choice for the exhibitors. In the film trade, informed choice requires the ability to preview films before booking. Thus, trade shows are materially necessary for the existence of a regional film trade as an economic sector. Furthermore, as a particular reception context that has received very little attention, trade shows constituted a vital meeting point in a commercial network that still relied on personal acquaintance to a large degree. Glasgow, home to almost one in five people in Scotland in 1911, and a world-leading industrial centre, emerged as the heart of the Scottish film trade and a significant hub for the North of England, overshadowing Edinburgh and Newcastle. Glasgow's booming population, connected to shipbuilding, engineering, textiles and ancillary trades, had welcomed cinema in music halls and fairgrounds before 1907.<sup>6</sup> After that point, the growth of film exhibition was swift, and by the start of the First World War, Glaswegian viewers could watch films at any of the 97 venues licensed for cinema.<sup>7</sup> These exhibitors were able to obtain their film supply from local renters since 1908, and by the end of the war, the Glasgow trade was second only to Manchester as a British provincial hub, with 35 renters and agents operating in the city.<sup>8</sup>

As Richard Brown points out, the regional dynamics of the British film trade need to be studied in relation to their integration to the national context.<sup>9</sup> The resistance posed by the Scottish case to London-centric modes of integration is thus particularly interesting. If, as Paul Moore writes, cinema as a 'mass practice'

connected places in a region to a mass market rather than each other, then the practice of programming—selecting, sourcing and presenting films and other attractions to an audience—was the concrete enactment of that modern impulse. Each cinema manager had to choose how to use the products of the international film industry to create a show and therefore to create the possibility of certain forms of experience for a local audience.<sup>10</sup> Within recent historiographical approaches that see the *cinema event* rather than the film text as the relevant unit of analysis, programming is increasingly understood as a creative practice.<sup>11</sup> This is important for a non-metropolitan historiography; it recognises the agency of peripheral or provincial members of the film trade not involved in film production.<sup>12</sup> It also sheds light on the power relations that were enacted in the practice of selecting and booking films, shaping the particularities of national, regional and local film cultures.

Before the 1920s, the degree of control that exhibitors had over their programmes was at the core of the difference between the American and British film trade, and it punctuated many of the disputes that shaped the trade during its first three decades.<sup>13</sup> While the vertically integrated structure of the American market sustained growing production budgets by effectively buying the films before they were made, in Britain, as commentator Harold Levine pointed out in 1914, ‘not a foot is “placed” before it is actually “viewed”’:

As Great Britain is wanting in the advantage of a ready and reliable domestic source of supply, it naturally has become an international dumping ground for the film output of the world. Every reel of film made on the face of the earth ultimately is tagged and placed on the bargain counter of this ‘free for all’ market.<sup>14</sup>

In this system, exhibitors could get their films from any renter and renters could buy from any manufacturer. This ability to pick and choose gave exhibitors and renters some bargaining power over producers, and hinted at a closer relationship between audience taste and film sales.<sup>15</sup> However, making choices required a lot of work by exhibitors themselves or what Levine called an ‘alert corps of viewers who hold the sieve with vigorous vigilance’ on their behalf. Market choice necessitates access to information, including in this case the ability to see the product. Viewing films is, thus, one of the transaction costs involved in navigating the film market, both for the customer and for the supplier. Concrete barriers, such as geographical distance, disposable time and capital, meant that not all potential buyers had access to the same information about the goods on offer. These disparities shaped the emerging hierarchies of the cinema trade. Like other industries at the turn of the twentieth century, the cinema as an economic sector favoured corporate, oligopolistic models and ‘quality races’ that marginalised small-time traders.<sup>16</sup> The changing roles of trade previewing reflect these trends, which are also connected to the institutionalisation of film as a self-contained spectacle during cinema’s ‘second birth’.<sup>17</sup> At stake through these transformations was the positioning of cinema as part of, or an alternative to, everyday life—a rebalancing of its ordinary and extraordinary dimensions. This tension is a structural force, never resolved, but playing out in the regional trade as well as in broader exhibition and production trends. The move from itinerant to fixed-site exhibition, accompanied

by the development of a distribution system based on renting rather than outright sales of films, was a key moment in this relationship.

During the itinerant years, there had been several ways of obtaining films: by visiting the manufacturers' offices; by catalogue, from travelling salesmen or from other showmen.<sup>18</sup> Release dates were not particularly important, and so purchases tended to be sporadic and opportunistic. Itinerant showmen had included visits to the film manufacturers and the informal film trading that happened in large fairgrounds as part of their annual travel plans, and thus they were often able to see the films before buying. The interconnected networks of fairground travelling and other public entertainments resulted in a relatively decentralised trade, and also in commercial relationships built on tradition and personal trust.<sup>19</sup> For instance, buyers had been able to request films 'on approval', reserving the right to return them without paying if they found them unsuitable. During the first decade of the twentieth century, the client base expanded rapidly beyond personal acquaintance, making these trust-based arrangements harder to maintain.<sup>20</sup> This created considerable trouble, to the extent that one of the clauses in the controversial European manufacturers' agreement (the Paris Convention) of 1909 stipulated that 'any film supplied on approbation shall be returned undamaged within 48 h of its receipt, and shall not in the meantime be used for the purpose of public exhibition or shown before a paying audience'.<sup>21</sup> The Convention fell through, and so in his 1911 *Handbook of Kinematography*, Colin Bennett still voiced the complaint that 'manufacturers have sent films on approval, and in some cases allowed over a week to elapse before their return, to find that the subjects are sent back badly scratched and worn, with a letter stating that the applicant finds them unsuitable for his requirements'.<sup>22</sup>

The alternative to this practice was viewing the films in the manufacturer's showrooms, on demand. Since most of these offices were based in London, provincial exhibitors were at a disadvantage and were compelled to rely on the emerging layer of intermediaries, the renters. During the first few years of permanent exhibition, the growth of 'film services' offering a complete programme reflected not only the faster turnaround of films required by permanent venues, but also the unequal access to information and choice in a geographically centralised market. This was the case for Glasgow exhibitor James Joseph (J.J.) Bennell, when he turned his itinerant public-hall show into a long-term lease of the Wellington Palace, a large venue in the southside of Glasgow which became one of the first permanent cinemas in the city:

At the beginning of my Wellington Palace enterprise, I hired my films from Mr. Jury. We had to leave it to his firm to make such selections on our behalf as he thought best. It was quite impracticable for us to see the films in advance or to choose any subjects for ourselves. Film travellers were not known in those days, and the only place where films could be seen in advance was in the London showrooms of the manufacturers and agents.<sup>23</sup>

This situation changed quickly, however, with the emergence of local branches of London renters in Scotland, as well as regional companies. From 1908, it became possible for Scottish exhibitors to view films in Glasgow and Edinburgh, with occasional visits by agents to other cities. This development was one of the

necessary conditions for Scottish exhibitors to thrive, as the regional trade created an interface between international circulation and decentralised local enterprise, with the flexibility to accommodate the distinctive patterns of an emergent film culture. It is significant that several of the first Scottish renters were also exhibitors, like J. J. Bennell, who started trading after establishing a circuit of eight cinemas. His position guaranteed both access to the London market and knowledge of local audiences. But while Bennell's clients were now able to preview the product, films for sale continued to be shown only in the London offices, on the appointed 'view days' for each manufacturer. In their new guise as renters, Bennell and his wife started travelling to London showrooms every other Monday, watching film after film over four long days:

[B]y dividing the work between us, and by the courtesy of the selling firms, who gave us the opportunity of seeing two weeks' issues at one sitting, we managed to get through the work by Thursday noon as a rule, and leave London at 2 p.m. each Thursday. To do this we generally worked till 11 p.m. at least one night.<sup>24</sup>

The Bennells put such gruelling work behind them in 1911, by opening a permanent London office and appointing their son, Ritson, as a film buyer.<sup>25</sup> The training for this job involved a few months travelling to client cinemas in Newcastle, Manchester and Birmingham, to get an idea of the audience and its preferences. Then, Ritson saw films with his father in the London showrooms, where he 'pointed out to him why [he] accepted this for purchase and rejected that.'<sup>26</sup> This hands-on training supports the idea that British regional exhibitors were particularly attentive to their audiences' tastes and their local nuances. Hence, the job of film viewer or buyer required familiarity with those tastes, which could only emerge from long local experience. When he made his slightly belated move to renting in 1912, George Green, another of the original Scottish cinema-circuit owners, appointed James Dearden as the company's London agent. Dearden had been engaged with Green's in different capacities since the fairground days, and still returned to Glasgow in the summer to help out at the Carnival. Such experienced eye allowed Green's to boast, in 1914: 'Buying largely on the recommendation of their own reviewer in London, Messrs. Green secure the best subjects'.<sup>27</sup>

Maintaining a London office was not cheap. Green's London branch cost almost £400 for the year ending March 1918. On top of that, Fred Green travelled regularly to the capital to make purchases, at a time when Green's were buying more than £20,000 worth of films every year.<sup>28</sup> Jack Baker, a much smaller Glasgow renter, also claimed to travel often to London, so he could promise: 'Every film has been viewed and is booked to you by the viewer. No matter what class of subject you ask for, you obtain it here to suit your patrons'.<sup>29</sup> This rhetoric emphasizes how *personal* selection based on local experience gave regional renters an edge over their competition. While London exhibitors, even small-time ones, could arrange to visit at least some agents' offices to see films, only a few of the Scottish cinema owners were able to select first-hand the material they would put on their screens, and thus the importance of selection by regional renters was even greater. What they decided to buy for the Scottish market became the backbone of the regional trade, and defined the boundaries of choice for peripheral exhibitors.

As the scope for live performance and showmanship decreased, the selection of films also became the main arena for the exhibitor's agency, a key element in competition against other venues, and a large part of the cinema manager's job.

At the beginning of 1911, the *Bioscope* noted that there were many different film booking methods in use, from the cinemas that relied on a twice weekly bundle of films picked by the renter, to 'the man who has a 'say' in the selection of his program' and wanted to know what would be released the following week in order to make an informed choice.<sup>30</sup> The selective exhibitor was in the minority, and since all renters could buy from most producers, there was not much difference between their packaged programmes (other than by price bands); the question of individual film choice only really came to the fore with the transition to feature programming.

Although it came to be associated with long narrative films, the initial market meaning of the term 'feature' was a film that could be booked individually and was not included in regular programmes.<sup>31</sup> As competition between cinemas intensified due to their density in urban areas, and earlier forms of venue differentiation such as live turns and showmanship became rarer, individual films became more salient in audience choice.<sup>32</sup> The greater impact that film selection could have on the box office, and the increased cost of feature films, made information-gathering even more important for exhibitors. This could come from the film synopses published by manufacturers, the national and regional trade journals or a subscription to one of the London firms specialising in film reviewing.<sup>33</sup> However, none of these notoriously partial sources could replace the growing need for preview screenings.

In London, trade shows had started as a way to draw publicity to selected films, but had become standard practice by 1910. These private screenings were attended by both renters and exhibitors—potential buyers and their clients, which created an environment where reactions to the film circulated instantly, and allowed buyers to gauge its market potential. Glasgow trade shows, in contrast, only became common around 1913 and were meant mainly for exhibitors, organised by renters—but promoted by manufacturers. One of the first companies to promote trade shows in Glasgow was Warner's Feature Film Co, which published ads in the *Bioscope* in early 1913 listing their releases. At that moment, the trade was up in arms against the steps taken by some companies, starting with Pathé, to stop selling films on the open market and instead rent them out directly. In this dispute, Warner made much of the fact that it had sided with the open market. A consequence of this was that Warner features could be obtained from different renters, and so they got three trade screenings in Glasgow on Tuesday afternoons: First at Green's (1 pm), then at Bendon's (3 pm) and finally at Gaumont's (5 pm).<sup>34</sup> A similar situation applied for the distribution of Edison's *Mary Stuart* and *Who will marry Mary?* later that year, as well as some popular serials such as *Adventures of Kathlyn* (Selig 1914), with trade shows run in Glasgow by Bendon, Gaumont, and either Green's or BB; and in Edinburgh by Anglo-American Films.<sup>35</sup>

This promiscuous availability of open-market films was a problem when applied to features, which were intended to differentiate your cinema from the one down the road. Rival managers could end up with the same films, obtained from different renters. This justified the emergence of 'exclusive' renting, in which the film was controlled by a single renter for a region, and this company would

run the local trade show. By emphasising choice and inflating the value of individual titles, exclusive films brought about a transformation of trade-show practice in Scotland. Exclusive renters were of different kinds, and this was reflected on the way they showed the films to the trade. There were opportunistic buyers who controlled very few films and had little capital; they would visit the theatres and try to convince individual managers to book the film. There were the large, established renters, such as Bendon and BB Pictures, who ran a features/exclusives line alongside their regular programme business, and thus used the same spaces and methods as they did for open-market product. By 1917, the market was split, with the average cinema programme containing both open-market and exclusive films, in addition to the topical newsreel which was usually obtained by subscription.<sup>36</sup> Assembling a programme thus required cinema managers to enter into negotiations with more than one company, and as many as seven or eight.

The interaction between all these different agents created a very complex system, where selecting films could take up a large part of the working day. One of the first Glasgow managers, William McGaw of the '55' or Argyle Electric Theatre, remembered 'viewing thousands of feet of film every day'.<sup>37</sup> The physical and social space of the trade show was thus not only a requirement for the functioning of the film market, but also the main context in which exhibitors encountered films and interacted with each other. The second part of this article examines the different places in which trade shows took place in Glasgow and considers these screenings as key social nodes in a regional trade network.

### Trade shows in renters' premises

Trade screenings first took place in manufacturers' and renters' premises, which tended to be rather unprepossessing. As Low Warren remembered, from his London experience,

[i]n the early days there were no "first nights", no Sunday evening shows, no elaborate prologues, no specially augmented orchestras, no illustrated synopses of the film that cost two or three shillings apiece, no audiences of a thousand or fifteen hundred [...] the publicity manager had not yet appeared on the scene. The films arrived without any preliminary flourish of trumpets, and we were bidden to see them in cellars beneath the business premises, often seated on upturned packing-cases, perilously near the arc of the projector, and always in dead silence.<sup>38</sup>

In 1908, Gaumont became the first film company to establish a branch in Scotland and offer viewing facilities, at their offices at Glasgow's Trongate.<sup>39</sup> Through their marketing of equipment, in particular Chrono projectors, Gaumont came into contact with many of the pioneering exhibitors. When they tried to obtain J. J. Bennell's custom, their main appeal was that he would be able 'to see in advance in Gaumont's showroom at Glasgow practically all the films issued, and should have the choice of selecting [his] own programme'.<sup>40</sup> Since the same films could be obtained from several renters, viewing conditions were a factor of competition between renters. Improvements in screening rooms, however, often ran



against practical constraints, since most distributors—in Glasgow as well as London, Manchester and elsewhere—worked out of rented premises, usually office or warehouse space or in leftover bits of exhibition venues. Of the pioneer Scottish renters, Pathé, Gaumont and the Bendon Trading Company were located in the crowded city centre of Glasgow. The BB Pictures and Green's Film Service, having grown out of exhibition circuits, were located next to cinema venues outside the city centre: BB Pictures in the Wellington Palace to the South and Green's in the carnival grounds to the East. Even though these two companies owned their premises, their renting operation was initially not their primary focus and space was limited. As J.J. Bennell recalled, 'When we bought our first films our general offices and all our work was done at Wellington Palace. We found a cupboard there which became our first film store'.<sup>41</sup>

The changing premises of Glasgow renters provide evidence of the rapid development of the regional trade, and of the importance of screening spaces. From that cupboard, Bennell developed a suite of offices in a hall under the main auditorium, used to store up to two million feet of film.<sup>42</sup> United Films' 'luxuriously fitted' new offices were said to have 'every facility for seeing the films', and when George Green's renting business started the trade press claimed that its premises at the Carnival similarly 'provided every facility for showing customers the various films in operation'.<sup>43</sup> In fact, this was no more than a disused winding room behind a cinema, but 'the number of customers increased so rapidly that a portable building was utilised [...] with a projection room in the rear'.<sup>44</sup> In the space of three years, Green's moved four times, to ever larger premises.

The importance of Glasgow as a distribution centre had been growing steadily since 1908, keeping pace with the booming exhibition sector. Business growth was only one of the factors motivating trade removals; concerns over celluloid storage had intensified after a devastating fire in Gaumont's Glasgow offices in August 1912, spurring local authorities to seek regulatory powers. Although a more detailed discussion of celluloid regulations exceeds the remit of this article, Glasgow Corporation's attempt to regulate celluloid storage, and rising insurance premiums due to increasing awareness of fire risks, encouraged many renters to find new accommodation.<sup>45</sup>

These changes after 1914 tended to intensify clustering around particular areas of the city centre (although not to the same extent as in London, where the trade had already consolidated its presence in Wardour Street). Bennell and the Bendon Trading Company, which had been operating from the south side of the city, moved downtown, as did Green's Film Company, leaving their East End Carnival site. In their successive reshuffling, the established firms often left their old offices to the new companies that were emerging in connection to the exclusive trade. For instance, Gaumont moved from the Trongate to Dunlop Street, across the road from the BB Pictures, and then to Mitchell Street, making room for the North British (N.B.) Exclusive and Feature Co., a company constituted only months earlier.<sup>46</sup> Several of Glasgow's film businesses were situated between St Enoch railway station and the river Clyde; another cluster formed along the top part of Renfield Street, which had traditionally been a theatrical area and the heart of Glasgow's entertainment district (see Figure 1). This clustering pattern, influenced by the locations of railway stations, is similar to the one identified in Manchester by

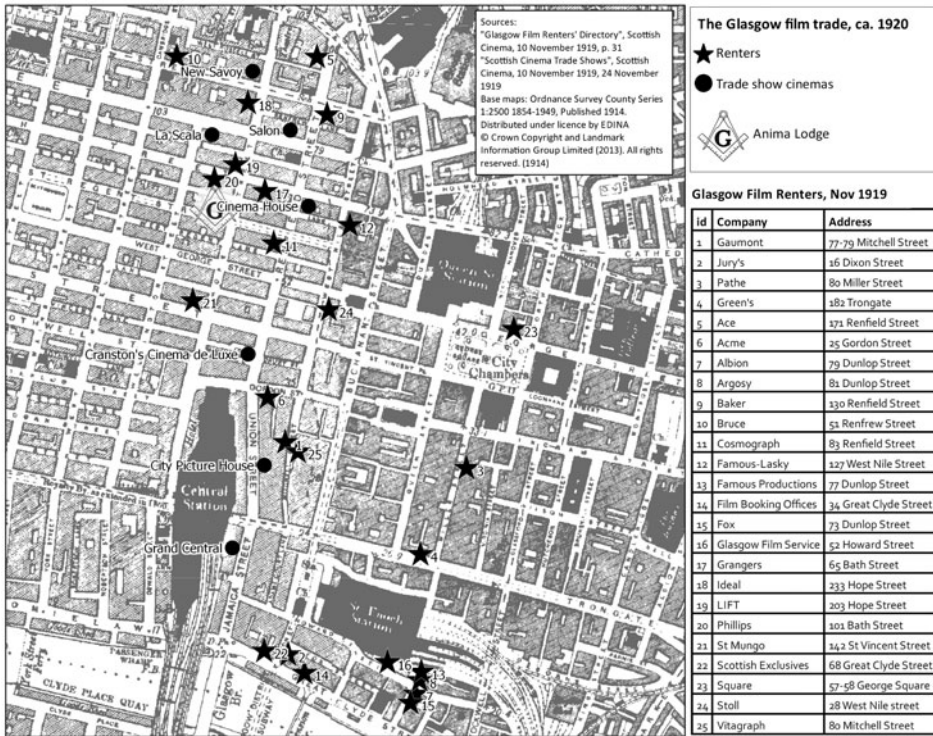


Figure 1. Geography of the Glasgow film trade around 1920.

Brown.<sup>47</sup> The centrality or otherwise of renters' premises seemed to reflect their general position in the trade: Local renter Jack Baker had a main office on Renfield Street, but he acquired a new warehouse and projection room in a building that had housed the first premises of the University's veterinary school, and went on to become a garage.<sup>48</sup> Squeezed between two railway termini, the premises were not too far from the company's office, but they were separate from the cluster of renting companies, which seemed to suit a highly opinionated renter who often kicked against local CEA decisions.

Providing a screening space was an important factor in these removals. Viewing films 'on upturned packing-cases' was no longer the norm, and the ad hoc screenings in warehouses, when it was not uncommon that prospective buyers would find 'on arrival at the specified time that preparations are not complete, the operator is at lunch, the film is out elsewhere on approval, or else he is kept waiting for others to turn up', gave way to more professional operations.<sup>49</sup> Trade shows became a regular occurrence in Glasgow during the years around the start of the First World War. The best evidence of the importance afforded to the physical environment for film presentation is provided by the descriptions given of Jury's newly opened premises after 1914, worth quoting in full:

Situated in Dixon Street, within easy reach of all the railway stations, and close to the city's centre, Messrs. Jury's new premises are ideal for their purpose, and so planned that all necessary business can be carried out in

comfort and with the utmost dispatch. On the ground floor are situated the manager's office, booking office, cashier's office, telephone exchange, and a spacious showroom for projectors, hall furnishings, etc. The showroom is worthy of special mention. With its stained glass roof, fibrous plaster, floral-wreathed frieze, tapestry panelled walls, and drop and flambeau electric fittings, it impresses and pleases, while lending distinction to the rooms adjoining. The same scheme of decoration is carried out in the booking office and managerial sanctum. In the basement, a cosy projection theatre is provided, which is, in a word, a reduced facsimile of a perfectly equipped cinema house. Rich carpeting covers the floor, comfortable tip-up chairs give the acme of comfort, walls are panelled in a warm tone of red, and the frieze and roof are decorated with choice designs in fibrous plaster work. A convenient "rake" gives all visitors a clear view of the screen, which is enclosed in as natty a little proscenium as could well be imagined. The projector, a Kalee model, is in a fireproof operating-box outside the projection room. The dispatch department is also in the basement [...] The film storerooms have been fitted out anticipatory of future legislation, and comply with the latest decrees of the Defence of the Realm Act applicable to London, but not yet necessary in Glasgow.<sup>50</sup>

Gaumont's new place in April 1915 had, like Jury's, a suite of offices on the ground floor and a projection theatre in the basement, next to the film storage vaults, poster store, facilities for examination, repair, packing and dispatching of the films.<sup>51</sup> Pathé's premises, which were owned by the company, boasted a private theatre seating three hundred and a 'waiting room elegantly panelled in oak for exhibitors', besides their machine showroom and spacious offices.<sup>52</sup>

Despite these advances in comfort, trade shows in renter's premises remained a variable experience. According to a description of a generic London trade show by the popular magazine *Pictures and the Picturegoer*, there was no music, and the films were often shown at a much faster speed, as there might be enough for two programmes. Exhibitors could request that part of the film be skipped (maybe a reel or two) or the film ditched altogether. These were interactive events which required exhibitors to imagine their own presentation strategies before judging the films, so constant comments from the audience punctuated the irregular quality of the product.<sup>53</sup> And yet, the idea of concentrated attention as the appropriate mode of reception for films can be seen to be gaining ground when the Glasgow trade press registered the dissatisfaction about 'those who attend Trade Shows, and are rather obtrusive in their criticisms and laughter to the annoyance of others who desire concentration on the subjects being screened'.<sup>54</sup> Impatient, disruptive audiences were not desirable from the perspective of renters and manufacturers trying to convince them of the extraordinary qualities of their films. As the formal characteristics of feature films moved towards classical modes of address, so the conditions in which they were introduced to the trade changed to encourage a more immersive form of attention, rather than the instrumental view of earlier trade shows. This was partially achieved through a change of venue: Presenting films to the trade in grander theatrical surroundings gave the manufacturers or renters a better chance to impress clients, and in many cases also created a publicity opportunity.

### Trade shows in cinemas

The functions of the press preview and the trade screening had been combined before, for the introduction of the first long features in 1911. In that year, United Films held an 'invitation performance' of their version of *Rob Roy*, the longest film made in Britain to that date. With four hundred guests, including the Lord Provost and city magistrates, the show featured special musical arrangements and was held in the Picture House, a large, luxurious cinema in the centre of Glasgow.<sup>55</sup> This was also the venue, a month later, for Jury's 'press view' for their Milano exclusive, *Adventures of Ulysses*, which was shown simultaneously in Edinburgh's own Picture House (both part of the PCT cinema chain).<sup>56</sup>

As the list of notable guests suggests, these screenings were a public relations exercise intended to get local authorities on the trade's side, so they were perhaps not, strictly speaking, trade shows. Low Warren claimed that the first public trade show in London took place on Easter Tuesday, 1912, at the Court Theatre, Tottenham Court Road, for Selig's *Christopher Columbus*.<sup>57</sup> The *Cinema and Property Gazette* remarked of the London show that '[the film] was perfectly shown, the effects were excellent, and the incidental music charming and singularly appropriate'.<sup>58</sup> In the same issue of the journal, New Century continued to advertise the feature, promising 'to anybody genuinely interested' that they would 'afford facilities to see [the film] under actual working conditions'. Between 18 and 23 March, 1912, New Century organised screenings of *Christopher Columbus* for showmen, the press and educational authorities in Manchester, Liverpool, Leeds, Newcastle, Edinburgh and Glasgow (at the Vitagraph theatre). Ahead of the release in early April, they produced substantial printed matter, including a manual on how to approach 'the local press, the clergy, the educational authorities'.<sup>59</sup> This speaks of a wide-ranging effort to direct the public reception of the film by constructing an exemplary exhibition situation.

In other cases, however, presenting films in cinemas was a necessity rather than a choice. Companies that did not have large premises in Scotland, such as Ruffell's, Hibbert's and the MP Sales Company, started running their trade shows at a few city-centre cinemas, hiring the venues (and part of the staff, often including some musicians) in the morning or early afternoon. Two companies with offices in Edinburgh, the Newcastle Film Company and Anglo-American Films, also adopted the same practice for their Glasgow shows. By 1915, there were trade shows in Glasgow every weekday, and the *Entertainer* complained repeatedly of the clashing times that resulted either from competition or lack of coordination between renters:

Why will Renters continue to pursue the foolish policy of holding Trade Shows on a day fixed by another house. Surely some method might readily be found to obviate the difficulty set Managers of dividing themselves between two houses at a given hour. Trade Shows are valueless unless the pictures are seen, and then you put a further strain on the worried Manager in choosing which show he will attend. All the time he looks at the other fellow's goods he thinks of yours.<sup>60</sup>

Although this weekly journal set up a scheme to allow renters to check for clashing shows before announcing a screening, there were bound to be overlaps. On a sample week in 1916, a total of 18 screenings are listed, with six each on Tuesday and Friday, these being less busy days for managers since the change of programme took place on Monday and Thursday.<sup>61</sup> Of the total, eight trade shows were taking place in cinemas. The first cinema chosen to host trade shows was the De Luxe, one of the original storefront venues on the Western end of the commercial thoroughfare of Sauchiehall Street, which had a small auditorium and must have been cheaper to rent. On the same street, but closer to the city centre, the Salon also became a trade show venue. As more companies entered the renting trade, more cinemas were put to this use in the mornings. The City Picture House, the King's Picture Theatre, the La Scala, the Grand Central, and the Cinema House in Glasgow and La Scala in Edinburgh, all became the location for trade shows on various weekdays, generally at 11 in the morning. After it opened in 1916, Cranston's Picture House became a favourite. This cinema was part of an elegant larger building containing cafes and restaurants and owned by Kate Cranston, the famous pioneer of the Glasgow tea-room movement and patron of Charles Rennie Mackintosh.<sup>62</sup> Indeed, several of the venues mentioned above were remarkable for having well-appointed tea-rooms, where luncheons were occasionally offered to the trade. This suggests that, besides guaranteeing that 'the best operators were behind the machines', other factors influenced the choice of venue.<sup>63</sup> With a busy schedule and long days, the trade show and the lunchtime socialising that followed it were important perks in a cinema manager's working life, as well as opportunities for the kinds of informal interaction that allowed the regional trade to thrive. As the *Entertainer* reporter said of the Tuesday morning screening of *Tillie's Punctured Romance* (at the De Luxe), '[e]verybody who is anybody in the trade was there, and when the Critics enjoy themselves, wont they just pay up'.<sup>64</sup>

Such link between enjoyment and profit is a reminder that, besides its utilitarian role as part of the transaction costs of film circulation, the trade show was also a distinct social setting, defined as a business space but containing elements of leisure. Although there were a number of female cinema managers, reviewers and renters, the trade show tended to be a masculine environment. Low Warren remembered that, even in the Spartan conditions of early trade screenings in renters' premises, 'they never forgot to hand round the cigar-box, and usually at half-time a whisky-and-soda or a cup of tea would appear, as if by magic, which made the task more pleasant, especially on a hot summer's afternoon'.<sup>65</sup> As these functions became more common and the stakes higher, hospitality standards rose accordingly. In 1914, a disgruntled observer noted that private screenings 'sometimes develop into miniature social functions', and deplored his encounter with 'a Sunday review in the North where intoxicants 'ad lib' were provided for the 'refreshment' of the reviewers'.<sup>66</sup> The Bendon Trading Company, which had a background linked to the Temperance movement, offered a cup of tea rather than whisky; the local trade paper still celebrated it as 'very thoughtful'.<sup>67</sup> Whatever the hospitality, it was considered important to uphold the professional nature of these events. A London exhibitor complained, in 1913, that

the legitimate buyers and reviewers [were] farcically turned away to make room for children with their nursemaids, aunts and cousins, who make use of these so-called private Trade reviews for a cheap afternoon's outing.<sup>68</sup>

It was common for trade members to pass their invitations to friends and relatives. That the objections to these 'interlopers' were, in part, based on a gendered definition of the space is evident from the fact that they did not seem to arise when, in 1916, Fife cinema manager Tom Gilbert decided to start taking wounded soldiers with him to the Glasgow trade shows he attended. Celebrating his initiative, the *Bioscope* claimed that 'over a thousand soldiers' had been entertained, a dozen at a time.<sup>69</sup>

The previews were occasions for gossiping and sharing information, as this sketch in cartoonish vernacular, entitled 'Overheard at a Trade Show', suggests:

Wull: Are ye gaun?

Jock: Gaun whaur?

Wull: Tae the trip, man—tae the trip—Sunday furst, ye ken [...] I got the wire frae wan o' thae Committee chaps.<sup>70</sup>

These two fictional managers are talking about a trade outing, in this case a steamer trip down the Clyde. Luncheons, meetings of the Cinematograph Exhibitors' Association, and charity functions filled the social calendar. The Glasgow Cinema Club was established in 1919, after an experience of collective organising for alternative forms of film transport during the railway strike of that year. Representing most of the original Scottish exhibitors, the Club had a monthly luncheon and decided to start a Masonic lodge, Anima 1223, which was chartered in August 1920.<sup>71</sup> Supported by these initiatives, the Glasgow trade was a tight-knit, geographically dense network. By the end of the 1910s, the 25 established film renters in Glasgow, and the seven cinemas holding regular trade shows, were all within a quarter of a square mile, that is, within a ten-minute walk or short tram-ride from the three main passenger stations.

While in Glasgow, trade shows became an everyday fixture, with 20–40 films being previewed every week, their purpose was being transformed in line with new business strategies. Vertically integrated companies had stopped selling films on open-market lines, and while many Scottish firms acted as exclusive agents for these companies, the trend was towards centralisation.<sup>72</sup> As early as 1914, Trans-Atlantic sent invitations to Scottish exhibitors for trade shows in London, and by 1919, it was not considered extraordinary when the General Film Co. announced they would cover the train fare for managers who wished to attend 'the only trade show for the United Kingdom' of *Auction of Souls* (Selig, 1919), as long as they were 'interested in a sound business proposition'.<sup>73</sup> London trade shows started to develop into rather extravagant spectacles, running into pre-release theatrical first-runs in the West End which featured large orchestras, atmospheric presentations and live prologues. These special performances, like *Rob Roy* and *Christopher Columbus* back in 1911–1912, were more PR campaign than simple product testing, as they invited prestigious guests in an attempt to gain press coverage, social legitimacy and market buzz that could drive up prices.<sup>74</sup> The presentation of *Auction of Souls*, rather than being spectacular, was framed by worthy speeches as fitted the grim subject of the



film; it secured a Scottish buyer and was shown to the Glasgow trade a couple of months later at the Salon, this time introduced by a city Councillor.<sup>75</sup>

Like the star system and other branding strategies, these costly ways of 'booming' the film, coming from producers or agents who had exclusive control over certain titles, tended to further erode the position of independent and peripheral exhibitors. While the normal practice had been to run trade shows approximately six weeks before the release date, exhibitors were so anxious to get certain films before their competitors that they started booking films months ahead, without seeing them. This was compounded after the end of the war by a crisis of oversupply which ended up with a lag of up to 18 months between trade show and release.<sup>76</sup> Advance booking thus became endemic, benefitting renters, as they gained financial security, but curtailing the exhibitor's flexibility.<sup>77</sup>

Block booking was another related force affecting exhibitors' choice and the power balance of market relationships. While ostensibly it was a way to curb the excesses of exclusive renting, where film prices were fixed arbitrarily and were spiralling out of control, block-booking was very contentious and indeed still is.<sup>78</sup> In Scotland, the discussion around block-booking was mixed with the mistrust around direct renting, first introduced by Essanay in the summer of 1915 on the strength of their control of new Chaplin works.<sup>79</sup> In this arrangement, only the first instalments of a block of films needed to be trade-shown before a contract for up to one year's supply was signed. This put manufacturers at a great advantage over exhibitors, and it was one of the forces helping consolidate the American industry over the British. As such, it was one of the matters raised in the 1927 Cinematograph Films Act, better known for the introduction of a British production quota. A less discussed clause in the 1927 Act prohibited blind-buying and curtailed advance booking, by requiring that a film was shown to the trade before being offered on the market. While such prescriptive measures could not guarantee the continuation of regional trade shows, the strength of the Scottish market justified the cost of maintaining a Glasgow or Edinburgh office for many American distributors. Local independent renters, on the other hand, saw their role shrink as market conditions changed, and thus the significant expertise built up over three decades was channelled almost exclusively into the exhibition trade.

## Conclusion

Trade shows were both a transaction cost and a social situation that responded to, but also helped implement the processes of industrialisation and institutionalisation of cinema during its first two decades. The changing practices and spaces associated with trade screenings in the Scottish market were indicative of broader negotiations between the different spheres of the trade. In the early years, the decentralised network of itinerant exhibition had been served by similarly dispersed forms of film buying and previewing. The first instances of expansion and the transition to renting led to a brief period of centralised control that underserved Scottish exhibitors until the development of a regional distribution sector. The subsequent expansion of the trade was based on the idea that audience preferences varied, and hence programming decisions needed to be taken locally. Trade shows allowed

exhibitors to make crucial decisions in an increasingly differentiated and competitive market. The introduction of direct renting and block-booking in the second half of the 1910s repurposed regional preview screenings, foregrounding their function as a prescriptive enactment of the ideal conditions of presentation, and promoting forms of showmanship which were increasingly codified by producers.

While the distribution sector in Glasgow was comparable to that of other British regional hubs such as Manchester and Newcastle, its catchment area was considerably larger, serving up to 400 venues as compared to around 200 for Manchester. Furthermore, the distinct 'Scottish' identity of the regional trade, including a separate legal framework and company registry, bolstered a critical relationship to London that allowed Glasgow renters to retain autonomy while linking up with metropolitan networks. Like in Norway, the Netherlands, and provincial France, in the UK the outright sales of films had allowed local exhibitors and investors to become independent renters.<sup>80</sup> More centralised systems, such as the American structure of regional exchanges and the conglomeration of Canadian film companies after 1910, did not depend on individual film choices and thus trade shows did not have the same importance.<sup>81</sup> While in most cases the position of regional independent distributors declined after the rise of exclusive and direct renting during the First World War, several Glasgow renters were able to negotiate this transition successfully. The ability to 'boom' the film and to offer convenient previewing facilities was also a key to survival in the exclusives business.

In recent years, historians have turned their attention to exhibition contexts beyond the commercial theatrical screening, describing myriad forms of 'useful' cinema.<sup>82</sup> This Glasgow case study recognises the role of trade shows, not only as an instrumental film-viewing situation, but also as a social meeting point in a network of business relationships built on personal acquaintance and reputation. This informal bonding was as important as the physical infrastructure of railways and communications to nurture the emergence of cinema in Scotland. In the first decades of the twentieth century, independent regional renters succeeded in maintaining a regular supply system that catered for the diversity of Scottish venues and audiences, offered a substantial selection of films, and facilitated the circulation of information through preview screenings, so that cinema managers had a real choice in their programming. The active role of independent regional distribution in sustaining the conditions of possibility for a distinctive film culture in Scotland is manifest in the oak-panelled micro-cosmos of the trade screening theatre.

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## Notes

1. On the entanglement between the institutional, technological and aesthetic lineages of early cinema see Joe Kember, *Marketing Modernity* (Exeter, 2009); André Gaudreault, *Film and Attraction: From Kinematography to Cinema* (Urbana, IL, 2011).
2. Francesco Casetti has written about some of these dialectic contradictions as the development of an ‘oxymoronic gaze’, a re-articulation and negotiation that makes compromises with modernity. Francesco Casetti, *Eye of the Century: Film, Experience, Modernity* (New York, 2008), 2–5.
3. Paul S. Moore, *Now Playing: Early Moviegoing and the Regulation of Fun* (Albany, 2008), 9.
4. Trevor Griffiths, *The Cinema and Cinema-going in Scotland, 1896–1950* (Edinburgh, 2012), 1.
5. According to figures compiled by Dr Trevor Griffiths from the *Kinematograph Year Book* for 1915.
6. Adrienne Clare Scullion, “‘The Cinematograph Still Reigns Supreme at the Skating Palace’: The First Decades of Film in Scotland”, in *Moving Performance: British Stage and Screen, 1890s–1920s*, eds. Linda Fitzsimmons and Sarah Street (Trowbridge, 2000), 80–100.
7. This included 85 cinemas and a dozen of other venues used less regularly. In the second volume of her *History of British Film*, Rachael Low compares the cinema provision of the main British towns, but severely under-reports Glasgow’s figures at 42 (London, 1950/1997), 50.
8. Richard Brown, ‘The Missing Link: Film Renters in Manchester, 1910–1920’, *Film Studies* 10 (2007): 58–63, 60.
9. *Ibid.*, 63.
10. Paul S. Moore, ‘The Social Biograph: Newspapers as Archives of the Regional Mass Market for Movies’, in *Explorations in New Cinema History: Approaches and Case Studies*, eds. Richard Maltby, Daniel Biltereyst, and Philippe Meers (Oxford, 2011), 263–9, 264.
11. On the ‘eventfulness of the experience of cinema’ see Robert C. Allen, ‘Reimagining the History of the Experience of Cinema in a Post-moviegoing Age’, in *Explorations in New Cinema History*, eds. Maltby, Biltereyst, and Meers, 51.
12. As Richard Maltby has noted for the American market, ‘for every actor, writer, electrician or painter employed in Hollywood’s production industry in 1939, there were five distribution company salespeople, projectionists, ushers and box-office clerks [...] and around 2000 [audience members]’. Richard Maltby, ‘New Cinema Histories’, in *Explorations in New Cinema History*, eds. Maltby, Biltereyst, and Meers, 8.
13. Ian Jarvie, *Hollywood’s Overseas Campaign: The North Atlantic Movie Trade, 1920–1950* (Cambridge, 1992), 6.

14. Harry Z. Levine, 'An Analysis of the English Market', *Moving Picture World*, September 5, 1914, 1350, <https://archive.org/details/movingpicturewor21newy> (accessed November 5, 2013).
15. In his report on 'The Motion Picture Trade in Europe' for the *Moving Picture World*, E.H. Montagu identified several differences between market conditions in the UK and the US, pointing out that 'theatres [in the UK] select the programs, not the renter; and, consequently, it is absolutely imperative that the taste of the public be catered to, as they practically select the films'. E.H. Montagu, 'The Motion Picture Trade in Europe', *Moving Picture World*, 11 July 1914, 192, <https://archive.org/details/movingpicturewor21newy> (accessed 5 November 2013).
16. Gerben Bakker, *Entertainment Industrialised: The Emergence of the International Film Industry, 1890–1940* (New York and Cambridge, 2008), xx.
17. Andrew Shail, 'Cinema's Second Birth', *Early Popular Visual Culture* 11, no. 2 (2013): 97–9. See also Charlie Keil, 'Integrated Attractions: Style and Spectatorship in Transitional Cinema', in *The Cinema of Attractions Reloaded* ed. Wanda Strauven (Amsterdam, 2006), 193–203.
18. A.C. Bromhead, 'Reminiscences of the British Film Trade', *Proceedings of the British Kinematograph Society*, 1933, 4.
19. On the fairground roots of these networks, see Vanessa Toulmin, "'We Take Them and Make Them": Michell and Kenyon and the Travelling Exhibition Showmen', in *The Lost World of Mitchell & Kenyon*, eds. Vanessa Toulmin, Simon Pople, and Patrick Russell (London, 2004), 65; for a discussion of the Scottish case, see M.A. Velez-Serna, 'Mapping Film Exhibition in Scotland before Permanent Cinemas', *Post Script* 30, no. 3 (2011): 25–37.
20. Richard Brown, 'The Missing Link: Film Renters in Manchester, 1910–1920', *Film Studies* 10 (2007): 58.
21. 'This Is IT!', *Bioscope*, 4 March 1909, 7; on the European convention, see Jon Burrows, 'When Britain Tried to Join Europe', *Early Popular Visual Culture* 4 (2006): 1–19.
22. Colin N. Bennett, *The Handbook of Kinematography* (London, 1911), 245, <https://archive.org/details/handbookofkinema00bennuoft> (accessed 24 May 2014).
23. J.J. Bennell, 'The B.B. Film Service From Start to Finish', *Bioscope*, September 20, 1917, xvi–xvii.
24. *ibid.*, xvi.
25. 'Items of Interest', *Bioscope*, 16 March 1911.
26. Bennell, xvii.
27. 'Scottish News and Notes', *Bioscope*, 29 October 1914, 447.
28. 'Green's Trading and Profit and Loss Account for Year Ending 31 March 1918, 5/8/35', Scottish Screen Archive, Glasgow.
29. 'Advert', Jack C. Baker, *Entertainer*, 7 November 1914, 8.
30. 'Film Releases', *Bioscope*, 5 October 1911, 3.
31. Michael Quinn, 'Distribution, the Transient Audience, and the Transition to the Feature Film', *Cinema Journal* 40, no. 2 (2001): 37–8.
32. Michael Hammond, *The Big Show: British Cinema Culture in the Great War, 1914–1918* (Exeter, 2006), 47.

33. As a member of the trade explained to the 1917 Cinema Commission: 'There are a number of viewers, both male and female, who spend their time in viewing films for many theatre proprietors, and whose reports can be purchased by any Exhibitor who wishes to subscribe to such service'. These inaugural film critics, according to the witness, were 'looked upon as censors', since they assessed the moral tone as well as the suitability of each film for particular audiences. National Council of Public Morals (NCPM), *The Cinema: Its Present Position and Future Possibilities* (London, Williams and Norgate, 1917), p. 194, <http://www.archive.org/stream/cinemaitspresent00natirich> (accessed 24 May 2014).
34. Advert, Warner's Feature Film Co, *Bioscope*, 15 May 1913, 508–9. Glasgow thus came in the first half of a weekly trade-show tour that saw the Warner programme screened at Newcastle on Monday, Leeds on Wednesday, Manchester on Thursday and Liverpool on Friday.
35. Adverts for *The Adventures of Kathlyn* (Selig), *Mary Stuart* (Edison), *Bioscope*, 28 August 1913; Advert for *When the Earth Trembled* (Lubin), in *Bioscope*, 30 October 1913, 410.
36. NCPM, *The Cinema*, 197.
37. G. Holmes, Typescript of Interview with William McGaw, 5/7/208, Scottish Screen Archive, Glasgow.
38. Low Warren, *The Film Game* (London, 1937), 12. The *Bioscope* criticised the 'indifferent manner' in which films were projected as poor salesmanship, and encouraged manufacturers to up their game: How to Sell Films, *Bioscope*, August 26, 1909, 3.
39. This was also Gaumont's first British film hire office outside London, according to A.C. Bromhead, 17.
40. Bennell, xvi. With at least seven branches throughout Britain and its own factory for striking positive prints, Gaumont was in a unique position to offer such choice. However, after giving the system a try, Bennell found that Gaumont was not in fact able to supply the range of films he expected and went back to receiving a pre-selected programme from Jury's.
41. *ibid.*, xvi.
42. Cinematograph Film Stores: Important Report to the Glasgow Corporation, *Bioscope*, 19 September 1912.
43. Away up North, *Bioscope*, 8 December 1910, 57; Away up North, *Bioscope*, 15 February 1912, 445.
44. Scottish Renter's Rapid Rise, *Bioscope*, 19 April 1915, 459.
45. While the discussions on the regulation of celluloid storage took place, a test case was also fought in Leeds over the need for a license under the Cinematograph Act of 1909 for renters' showrooms or private theatres: Rehearsals of Picture Shows: Important Leeds Prosecution, *Scotsman* (Edinburgh, 26 September 1912), 8, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/483451467> (accessed 10 October 2013).
46. Cinema Chit-Chat, *Entertainer*, 30 January 1915.
47. Richard Brown, 60.
48. Advert, Jack C. Baker, *Entertainer*, 14 November 1914, 6.
49. Bennett, 246.
50. Jury's Pictures (Scotland), Limited, *Bioscope*, 28 January 1915, 369.
51. Gaumont's New Premises, *Entertainer*, 17 April 1915, 5.

52. Glasgow Notes, *Bioscope*, 26 June 1913, 949.
53. Duncan Keith, Launching an Exclusive, *Pictures and the Picturegoer* 9:106, 25 February 1916, 501–2, <https://archive.org/details/pictureg09odha> (accessed 16 October 2013).
54. Cinema Chit-Chat, *Entertainer*, 19 June 1915, 5.
55. Away up North, *Bioscope*, 19 October 1911.
56. The *Bioscope* carried a story about the great expense incurred to get the films to Glasgow and Edinburgh on time for a 9 am screening, when the films arrived in London after the last train. Jury's Magnificent Exclusive Subject, *Bioscope*, 23 November 1911.
57. Warren, 12–13.
58. A Carefully Thought-out Campaign, *Cinema News and Property Gazette*, April 1912, 4, <https://archive.org/details/cinewgaz01cine> (accessed 30 August 2013).
59. Advert for *Christopher Columbus*, *Bioscope*, 14 March 1912, 764–5.
60. Cinema Chit-Chat, *Entertainer*, July 10, 1915, 5.
61. Glasgow Trade Shows, *Entertainer*, 21 October 1916, 13.
62. Perilla Kinchin, *Tea and Taste: The Glasgow Tea Rooms 1875–1975* (Oxon, 1991).
63. Minutes of the CEA Edinburgh and East of Scotland Branch, 25 May 1919, 5/11/17, Scottish Screen Archive, Glasgow.
64. Cinema Chit-Chat, *Entertainer*, 27 March 1915, 5.
65. Warren, 12.
66. This must refer to the North of England; as far as I can ascertain, there were no trade shows on Sundays in Scotland. Foreign Trade Notes, *Moving Picture World*, 15 August 1914, 950, <https://archive.org/details/movingpicturewor21newy> (accessed 16 August 2013).
67. Cinema Chit-Chat, *Entertainer*, 1 May 1915, 7.
68. The Bioscope Parliament, *Bioscope*, July 31, 1913.
69. Who's Tom Gilbert? *Bioscope*, 26 October 1916.
70. Overheard at a Trade Show, *Entertainer*, June 19, 1915.
71. Cinema Club (Glasgow) 1919–1940, PP 1975 197.9, Glasgow Museums Resource Centre. In other places, 'Cinema Clubs' or exchanges were established to conduct trade shows, providing a private theatre and full orchestra for different renters, but this does not seem to have been the case in Glasgow. For Leeds, see Louis J. Mannix, *Memories of a Cinema Man* (n.l., n.d.) 7, 36. (With thanks to Dr Melanie Selfe who brought these self-published memoirs to my attention and lend me her copy).
72. Kristin Thompson, *Exporting Entertainment: America in the World Film Market, 1907–1934* (London, 1985), 35.
73. Cinema Chit-Chat, *Entertainer*, 21 November 1914, 5; Advert, *Scottish Cinema*, 10 November 1919, 17.
74. Julie Brown, 'Framing the Atmospheric Film Prologue in Britain, 1919–1926', in *The Sounds of the Silents in Britain*, eds. Julie Brown and Annette Davison (New York and Oxford, 2013), 205.
75. Armenian Atrocities Filmed, *Scotsman*, 16 February 1920. <http://search.proquest.com/docview/482987227> (accessed 5 November 2013).

76. Foreign Expert Sees Increase in Exports Coming, *Exhibitors Trade Review*, 31 December 1921, 322, <https://archive.org/details/exhibitorstrade00test> (accessed 7 August 2013).
77. An example of this can be found in the minute books of the Queen's Rooms cinema in Aberdeen. Unsatisfied with its performance, the directors appointed a new manager, just to find that the previous one had already booked films for nine months ahead, and the suppliers would not rescind them. Minutes, Queen's Rooms Cinema Syndicate Ltd. Minute Book No. 1, Minutes for 22 November 1916. Cinema Museum, London.
78. In an interesting discussion on block booking, F. Andrew Hanssen comes to the conclusion that, rather than a monopolistic strategy, it was a way to 'cheaply provide in quantity a product needed in quantity'. While the technical argument is better left to the economists, it can be said that regardless of the producers' intentions and their effects on the American market, the British and Scottish situations, with their existing distribution practices, meant that block booking was a significant and unwelcome attack on the exhibitor's autonomy. F. Andrew Hanssen, 'The Block Booking of Films Re-Examined', in *An economic history of film*, eds. John Sedgwick and Michael Pokorny (Oxon, 2005), 121–150.
79. Trevor Griffiths, *The Cinema and Cinemagoing in Scotland, 1896-c.1950* (Edinburgh, 2012) 179–181; Thompson, 82.
80. On France and Norway, see 'Renaud Chaplain, La Distribution Dans la Région Lyonnaise: Entre Spécificités Locales et Stratégies Nationales (1908–1914)', and 'Gunnar Iversen, Local Distribution: The Case of Jens Christian Gundersen in Norway', both chapters in *Networks of Entertainment*, eds. Frank Kessler and Nanna Verhoeff (Eastleigh, 2007), 41–6, 131–6. The Dutch case is discussed by Ivo Blom, *Jean Desmet and the Early Dutch Film Trade* (Amsterdam, 2003); Thunnis Van Oort, "'Christ Is Coming to the Elite Cinema": Film Exhibition in the Catholic South of the Netherlands, 1910s and 1920s', in *Cinema, Audiences and Modernity*, eds. Daniel Biltereyst, Richard Maltby, and Philippe Meers (London and New York, 2012), 50–63.
81. Gregory A. Waller, 'Mapping the Moving Picture World: Distribution in the United States circa 1915', in *Networks of Entertainment*, eds. Kessler and Verhoeff (Eastleigh, 2007), 94–102.
82. See, for instance, the essays gathered in Marta Braun et al., eds., *Beyond the Screen: Institutions, Networks and Publics of Early Cinema* (New Barnet, 2012), and of course in Charles Acland and Haidee Wasson eds., *Useful Cinema* (Durham and London, 2011).

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