"Down on the floor and give me ten sit-ups": British Sports Feature Film

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Introduction

ONE could be excused for thinking that the British sports feature film is, when compared to those produced in Hollywood, something of a new, fledgling genre especially given the rather scant focus and attention afforded to it by academics, critics and audiences alike. This is underpinned when comparison to other genres, such as the romantic-comedy or British gangster movie, is made given that these genres have enjoyed something of a renaissance over the last few years. Perhaps Drew Hyland was correct when he wrote, 'there seems to be a long standing prejudice that however popular a phenomenon sport may be, however widely its influence may permeate our culture, it is simply not "serious" enough to be a legitimate subject of intellectual inquiry' (1990).

In an attempt to redress the imbalance a little, the principal aims of this essay are to examine and discuss the British fictional sports feature film[1] through its historical development and then offer some discursive points as to what is intrinsically 'British' about these films.[2] One of the points for discussion that I will bring to the fore and that I will expand upon is whether the sports film, especially the British sport film, constitutes a specific genre such as the Western or Gangster. Or is it something of a 'sub-genre' of melodrama or a 'movement' rather like that associated with *film noir*.[3] This essay will address a number of points. I will map out a brief history of the sports film *per se* and then trace a history focusing upon those films I have identified as being British. The criteria I have chosen for this task are, in some cases, the nationality of the director or the nationality of the main actors or in what country the film was produced. By doing this I hope to highlight some of the issues that are pertaining to, and open to, debate when relating to the British sports film. I will investigate some of these issues by textual analysis of an independent British film that has sport as central to its narrative drive, namely, *The Girl with Brains in her Feet* (1997, Roberto Bangura).[4]

However, my approach to the fictional sports film, let alone the British sports film, is in itself rather pragmatic. I would argue that despite what I would consider some outstanding sports movies being produced and exhibited, there are many that richly deserve their obscurity and lack of audience and critical interest. Hence within the canon of film studies and criticism those films that could be identified as sports films are perhaps not regarded as drawing the same intellectual *gravitas* as other well established genre films. This opens up what is for me an interesting discussion into the appreciation and critical acclaim afforded to a film such as *Raging Bull* (1980, Martin Scorsese). Central to my discussion here is this question: is this a film acclaimed as a 'sports film,' therefore placing it within a specific genre establishing certain conventions *or* is it acclaimed as a film by one of the most prolific of those acclaimed as an '*auteur*'? In other words, because Martin Scorsese directed this film, it merits critical attention and elevates it above a typical and 'ordinary' genre movie. One could be forgiven for assuming therefore that the integration of sport and film should be a match made in 'movie making' heaven. Sport has courted controversy, notoriety and a special place in the hearts and minds of people living in western society. Sport tends to affect or has affected almost every individual in some way or the other, particularly in the western world, at some stage of their lives. As T. Miller and G. Laurence suggest, 'sport is probably the most universal aspect of popular culture...it crosses languages and countries to captivate spectators and participants as both professional and a pastime...passions are invoked that go beyond most other experiences' (2001, introduction).

The fantastic appeal that sport conjures can influence social and individual behaviour in a way that is unique. Sport can and has influenced politics; for example, the American boycott of the Moscow Olympics, the terrorist murder of Israeli athletes in Munich and, more 'at home', the political row over cost of the new Wembley stadium in London. Sport has enabled exceptionally talented people to excel. These people seem to transcend from mere mortals and become almost 'godlike' on earth. The global events that promote sport such as the Olympics, the World Games and the World Cup are the biggest on the planet. Multinational global companies such as Coca Cola, Nike, Benetton and BP spend millions of pounds, dollars and euros promoting their brands through sporting events and television companies embrace

sport because they know it will attract a vast audience. This leads R. Boyle and R. Haynes to recognise that:

> Sport and the media...are now integral components of what we often called the entertainment or cultural industries...sport has been important to those working within media studies and beyond even if they have little actual interest in sports per se...the business of sport matters to those whose primary interest may lie in the economics of the media industries and the political issues which relate to regulation and media policy... (2000, p. xi).

It is widely acknowledged that film, on the other hand, operates as a very powerful communicative media. Many of its different genres offer action, intense emotion, dramatic power and, as Patrick Phillips (2000. p.96), states a 'visceral excitement' that is stoked by the spectacle, image, sound and editing (whether this is so in the British sports feature film is discussed later, however). This power to communicate has meant that films, similarly with sport, have often been controversial. They have drawn discussion and analysis from many social arenas and they have occupied a 'special place' in the culture of western society throughout the decades whether it is in the form of a long awaited sequel or a blockbuster 'event' movie. They have often fuelled discourse and rhetoric on issues such as censorship (as in the 1970's and the 'video nasty' in the UK), audience effect (particularly upon the young and those perceived to be impressionable and likely to be influenced by images) and representations. H. J. Palmer (1987) wrote, 'films raise future issues, define future trends, analyse social events and...take events and issues of social history and turn them into representative metaphors of national and global life' and this appears to be a well argued and accepted point of view in contemporary film criticism.

When sport has been featured in films certain commentators have begun to analyse the issues that surface and are inherent within the narrative. For example, J. Halloran and P. Gray write, '...films about sport can show on screen wide issues such as politics, globalisation, professionalism, class, ethnicity, gender, race...' (1998, p.4). Similarly Stephen Booth, quoted by Howard Good (1997), also wrote about the sports films ability to '...tell more about the human condition e.g. friendship (*Bang the Drum Slowly*, 1974) or masculinity (*Long Gone*, 1987), failure (*Bull Durham*, 1988) or unfinished business (*Field of Dreams*, 1989)...'. Ellis Cashmore (2000, p.265) notes further that, 'film, more than any other medium, has been able to expose the darker side of sport graphically and in often disturbing detail.' He references John Huston's *Fat City* (1972) and Stanley Kubricks' *The Killing* (1956), amongst others, as those films that have 'ripped away the sentimentality and honor traditionally associated with sports to disclose the grimmer, unethical aspects that are integral to professional sports' (Cashmore, 2000, p. 266). However, despite what has been written above, a more common assertion is that the fictional sports movie is 'box office poison'. This is a view raised and aired by Sheed (1997. p.6) and shared amongst other commentators. The grounds for this assertion are quite strong, so to assume and argue otherwise is difficult. As an example, if one takes a look at different major web sites for information on film, the sporting film is not listed as a genre in its own right. It is more often than not included in the 'action', 'adventure' or 'drama' genre. In terms of monetary profit the sports film just does not figure. Films that are listed and included in the 'drama' genre include *Knute Rockne: All-American* (1940, Lloyd Bacon) the biographical story of the American football coach; also *The Hustler* (1961, Robert Rossen) starring the excellent Paul Newman as pool shark 'Fast' Eddy Felsen, and Tom Cruise racing in the 'Daytona 500' in the film *Days of Thunder* (1990, Tony Scott).

Only one director, Ron Shelton, has consistently embraced sports movies. He has directed a number of feature sports films in the USA which include *Bull Durham* (1988), *White Men Can't Jump* (1992), *Cobb* (1994) and *Tin Cup* (1996). Kevin Costner and Sylvester Stallone are the only film stars that have appeared in sports movies with any real consistency, although I accept that a number of sport stars have moved into film.[5] Hence Richard Cox *et al* observe 'in any overall assessment of sports movies it is essential to come to terms with the fact that films about sport play a minor, if not insignificant, role in the pantheon of cinema "classics"'(2000, p.139). But the sporting fictional film has largely been ignored with many of the films passing over into obscurity. Yet it was, in Luke McKernan's view, in his essay on sport and film, that, 'Cinema...widened people's views of the world, and certainly their view of the sporting world. It was the beginning of sport as a worldwide popular phenomenon, something that went hand in hand with the rise of film through the twentieth century...we see the birth of twins: motion pictures and mass appeal sport' (1996, p.115). Let's begin to examine possible reasons for this negligence.

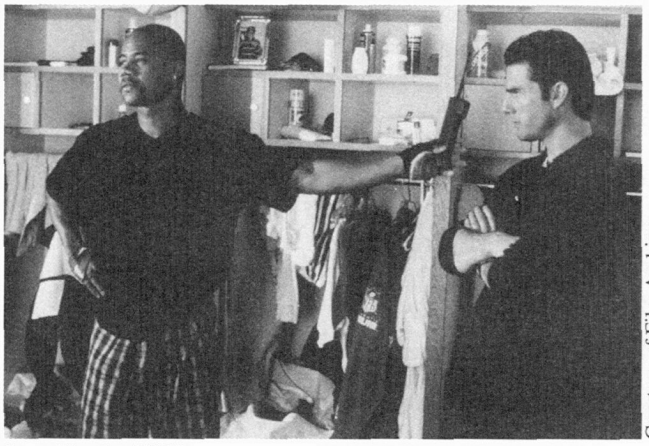
What is a fictional sports feature film?

David Rowe poses a general question 'what is a film genre' before attempting to apply his ideas to the sports film. Quoting David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson who suggest that 'most scholars now agree that no genre can be identified in a single hard and fast way' (1997, p.52) and Toby Miller who suggests that 'genres are about the interplay of repetition and difference, their organisation and interpretation by producers, audiences and critics' (1997a, p. 94). Rowe (1998) identifies what he recognises as a 'common basis to sports film as a genre'. He suggests 'that all films that deal centrally with sports are at some level allegorical; that they address the question of the dual existence of the social and sporting worlds as problematic, and that they are preoccupied with the extent to which (idealised) sports can transcend

or are bound by existing (and corrupting) social relations.'

Perhaps one of the reasons for this seeming aversion is the difficulty in offering a definition of a sports film that fits into a genre with recognisable conventions and codes; it is not as easy as perhaps one would first imagine. This is amply demonstrated by Zucker and Babich, who wrote that whilst compiling their references they limited their inclusions to 'spectator sports' although they have omitted films that are about bullfighting, hunting and fishing (1987, pg. 3).[6] Moreover J. H. Wallenfeldt writes in his introduction that despite the sports film being 'among the most engaging the cinema has to offer and one of Hollywood's specialities' there is a real identification problem as 'it isn't easy to define the difference between a sports film and a film with sports in it'. He goes on to state that his book concentrates on those films in which 'sports play a central role' that are 'competitive sports' (but which, again, excludes hunting, fishing, mountain climbing and martial arts) and 'special consideration has been given to their appeal to the sports fan and sports movie lover'. He sums up his whole approach by stating: 'what we have tried to do, then, is offer a guide that will lead you to the best Big Games, the most convincing reformations of crooked managers and floozie-distracted fighters, the most compelling strong-willed climbs from defeat to victory, the funniest lampooning of sports conventions, and the finest, most insightful biographies-films that not only tell us who won but that really give us the score' (1989). I find this quote useful in my discussion although I remain puzzled as to why martial arts films are omitted for example. To exclude certain categories, as indicated, loses insight and focus on some of the most enduring and influential films ever produced, distributed and exhibited during the last three decades.

One of the more prolific academics writing about sport and the movies, Ellis Cashmore (2000, pg.132) suggests that sports films are those that have used 'sports themes as their plot dynamic...and they usually end with a climatic triumph or disaster.' He goes on to identify three sub-genres of sports films: the dramatic/biographical, the comedy/fantasy and the documentary (Cashmore, p. 133-139). In the first category, Cashmore cites *Rocky* (J.G. Alvidsen, 1976), *Cobb* (Ron Shelton, 1994), *The Fan* (Tony Scott, 1996), and *All The Right Moves* (Michael Chapman, 1983) amongst many, many others. In the second sub-genre he places movies such as *Here Comes Mr. Jordan* (Alexander Hall, 1941), *Best Shot* aka *Hoosiers* (David Anspaugh, 1986), and *Jerry Maguire* (Cameron Crowe, 1997) which was an enormous hit on both sides of the Atlantic. The third sub-genre includes Leni Riefenstahl's highly controversial but incredibly shot *Olympische Spiele* (1938) as well as *Hoop Dreams* (Steve James, 1994) and the documentary film *Pumping Iron* (Robert Butler and Robert Fiore, 1976) in which a young Arnold Schwarzenegger poses and makes his film debut. This was followed by a prolific and highly successful career in Hollywood before moving, quite recently, into politics as Governor of California.



Courtesy of Film Archive

Jerry Maguire (1997)

These sub-genres by Cashmore are useful, up to a point, and interesting, although once again this highlights the difficulties that are inherent in the categorisation of film into genre or sub-genre, especially sports film. Although I will not discuss the third sub-genre, documentary, for the purposes of this essay as this form of filmmaking is outside my remit, the first two certainly merit a further look. I would suggest that the defining lines, as suggested by Cashmore, between, for example, *All the Right Moves* and *Best Shot*, being distinctive enough to place one in 'drama/biographical' and the other in 'comedy/fantasy' are very fine indeed. One could, with some justification, reverse these suggestions without prejudicing the sub-genre as suggested.

The Feature Sports Film: A Brief History

I think it is important at this point to reiterate a brief history of the sports film *per se* in order to then focus and establish its 'place' in British cinema history. The first sports productions were not 'fictions' but the 'topicals', those films rooted in actuality/documentary form, produced by the likes of the Lumiere Brothers and Thomas Edison. These served as the forebears of the feature film and the action in many instances centred upon horseracing and boxing. Thomas Edison, when the Kinetoscope first 'went public', showed body builder Eugene Sandow and a wrestling match as the subjects, amongst others, for public viewing in April, 1894. This is very significant suggests Luke McKernan (1996, p.109) as it 'represented the changeover from film as a medium of scientific study to a medium of entertainment.' He also writes that the Kinetoscope Exhibition Company, an Edison concessionaire, produced the world's first feature length film and it featured a boxing match between Mike Leonard and Jack Cushing in 1894. McKernan continues, '...in the early American boxing film we can see the very birth of American cinema-realism and drama, newsfilm and fakery, commercialism, populism, professionalism, two protagonists battling within the perfect stag-

ing, the ring...' supporting his view that 'boxing...created cinema' and in effect it heralded the 'birth of the cinema' (McKernan, 1996, p.110). The Lumiere brothers were responsible for the British produced *Football* in 1897.[7] Thomas Edison screened the first film on baseball in 1898, and the first feature film *Right off the Bat* was screened in 1915. The newsreels, such as those produced by Charles Pathé in France in 1908, began to provide the cinema going public with news, entertainment and spectacle.

Sport coverage seemed to be the perfect arena in which those three underpinning criteria could excel. The number of sporting events increased so that soccer, cricket and rowing all enjoyed increased exposure. Boyle and Haynes (2000, pg. 2) suggest that by the 1930's, with Hollywood flexing its considerable muscle on a global scale, sport became central in the competitive world of newsreel companies and distributors. Tony Aldgate, in the same article, highlights the fact that production companies began to pay for exclusive rights to sporting events, which seems to strongly suggest that the concept of commercialism and its adoption by societies the world over is not such a new phenomenon after all (2000, pg. 32). Many sports, particularly in the United States, have been represented on the big screen and throughout the decades the sports film has continued to be produced, some with a measure of success and distinction alongside the measure of unsuccessful and distinctly lacking movies.[8] This is, of course, true of all genres.

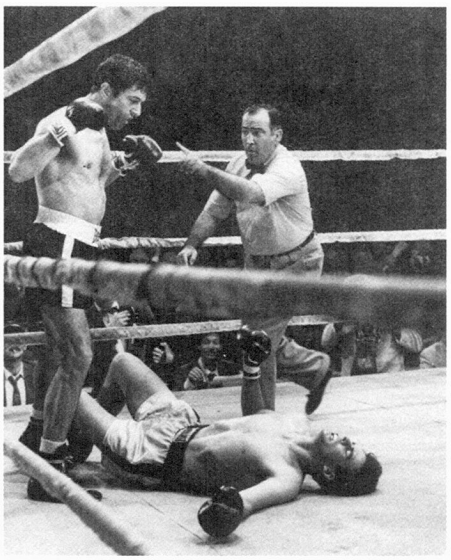
The British Sports Feature Film: A Short History

I began this essay by stating that the feature length sports film in the UK has generally been ignored and/or passed over. This is especially so in the wake of the romantic comedy and gangster genres, although many of these films seem to imitate, rather poorly in many cases *Lock, Stock and Two Smoking Barrels* (1998, Guy Ritchie) and the seminal *Get Carter* (1971, Mike Hodges). Nonetheless and perhaps somewhat surprisingly, British sports feature films do have a long and, in some cases, celebrated history. In the 1920's, for example, Alfred Hitchcock directed *Downhill* (1927) which opens on the rugby playing field of a public school and he continued with *The Ring*, also in 1927, which tells the story of two boxers falling in love with the same woman. The British actor, Victor McLaglen, starred in many films that featured boxing during this period. It is well documented, without any further comment, that both director and actor went on to achieve great success and notoriety in Hollywood. Director, producer and writer Walter West and his partner, actress Violet Hopson, produced many sports films, especially horseracing films that were very popular at the time. They included *Kissing Cup* (1920), *Son of Kissing Cup* (1922) and *The Stirrup Cup Sensation* (1924).

The industry has produced movies highlighting, for example, cricket, soccer and rugby, the sports that are arguably the most prominent in this country. There are other films that have integral sports elements or 'stand-out' scenes. They have lifted these films from being 'excellent', it could be argued, in their own right into films that are quite outstanding and which have long passed into cinema history in the UK.[9] British film pioneer, Edweard Muybridge (1830-1904), first used sport as central to his experiments in sequence/series photography. He often had athletes as his central subjects, as they were ideal in recording live action. Indeed Luke McKernen (1996, p.107) comments upon how sports were very significant amongst those films produced in the Victorian era. Henry Short and Birt Acres produced a commercial film of the University boat race between Oxford and Cambridge in 1896 and, with cricket becoming increasingly popular and the formidable W.G. Grace dominating the sport, these two filmmakers put the final test match between England and Australia onto celluloid in 1899. Other sports began to become filmed events for the public's consumption among them golf, wrestling, polo, water polo and gymnastics. The public's demand for a diet of spectacle, drama and realism was increasing and the fusion of film and sport could ably supply all of these (McKernen, p.115). However, this did change dramatically especially with the advent of TV and outside live sports coverage.

The British Sports Film: A Discussion

My assertion, then, is that the British output has been on something of a 'slow drip' and has generally caused no more than a ripple of interest with popular film magazine reviewers, film producers and filmgoers alike, in fact, the industry as a whole. Indeed Charles Barr (2003, p.630) writes, 'despite its important role within 20th century British culture, sport has not been nearly as prominent in British films as in Hollywood ones.' As stated, academic texts have not treated the British sports film any more favourably with serious examination of the sports film again sparse and spasmodic. From the front covers of texts about the British film industry one can ascertain that whilst there have been representations of the monarchy, gangsters and the working classes in evidence, films that can be identified as a sports movie are not to be found. When the British Film Institute published its 'top' 100 British films of all time the first film listed that encompassed sport to a greater or lesser degree was *Gregory's Girl* (1980, Bill Forsyth) listed at number 30 and *This Sporting Life* (1963, Lindsay Anderson) at number 52. The rather scant focus that has been afforded to the examination and discussion of sports films has tended to concentrate in the main upon *Chariots of Fire* (1981, Hugh Hudson) or *This Sporting Life*. Although simple and perhaps crude, these observations seem at odds in a country that purports to have sport as an integral part of its social fabric and film production at the core of its entertainment culture not only in contemporary times but in times past too. And yet sport and film are both omnipresent in western culture and one can draw upon many similarities between them. Both have visually and aurally enhanced drama resulting in dynamic spectacle,



Courtesy of United Artist

Raging Bull (1980)

which can engross the viewer/spectator and manifest itself in a roller coaster ride of emotions. Film and sport can create myths as well as 'living legends' of those blessed with talent, photogenic looks and a good agent.[10]

In the UK, the duration of attendance at a live soccer match, the premier sport here and the average length of a film are about the same. Both sport and film can produce idealised worlds for the onlooker. There are dedicated sports programmes on TV for both film and sport, and newspapers, magazines and journals (as well as journalists) write extensively on these phenomena. It may well be argued that those sports that are recognised as inherently British (soccer, rugby and cricket as mentioned) are not easily transferable to the silver screen although they seem to be the most favoured sports represented. But it does not take too much thought to realise that sports and fictional films in the UK are uneasy bedfellows for all concerned. Charles Barr writes, 'British sporting dramas have been a less attractive prospect for the international market...because our sporting activities don't translate into the elemental terms of intense struggle and confrontation that inform melodramas like *Raging Bull* (1980), *The Mean Machine* (1974) and *Pride of the Yankees* (1942)...' (2003, p. 630). I am not convinced that the three sports I mentioned above cannot translate into intense struggle for one moment if they are 'handled' in the appropriate manner. This has not often been the case and this one aspect may be overlooked here: that the director or actor is lacking the ability to provide the intensity, the *mise en scene* and the realism of physical endeavour that 'real' sport provides. A film that perhaps lifts it above 'the ordinary' and predictable and, indeed, reflects the realities of 'the sport' with any consistency. There is a lack of knowledge and skill in the ability to replicate and represent the mores of sport on the screen in many UK efforts. American directors Martin Scorsese and Oliver Stone notwithstanding, these two directors have been able to integrate those 'vital ingredients' that are needed to transfer sports onto celluloid and into a credible, believable sporting movie.

Aaron Baker (1998) offers this similar point when he expresses that, 'heightened realism in scenes in which the star competes is especially important in validating an ideology of agency that assumes that individual performance in these situations counts most in making the athlete what he is'. Here Baker is suggesting that the average filmgoer and/or sports fan has a preconception, an idea of what it takes to achieve greatness in the highly competitive world of elite sports. If this is not translated well onto the screen due to poor directing, acting, script and less than convincing physical prowess, then any 'reality' hoping to be achieved or any belief in the 'ideology of agency', are immediately dispelled and the film negated and dismissed.[11] Furthermore, Rowe makes a very good point when he poses this fundamental question, 'Why, in view of the massive amount of media coverage of sports, from live and recorded TV footage to the daily press reports and analysis to documentary film and video, would any sports aficionado feel the need to see sports treated as fiction?' (1999: 353). The argument is taken up by David Thompson writing in the British cinema magazine *Sight and Sound*. He argues that actors, despite honourable intentions, are not sportsmen and women, who have if they are at the top of their profession, invested in years of training, honing their skill levels, developing their mind and body in co-ordinated power, finesse, speed and endeavour. Because the spectator can see, hear, smell and *feel* the action in its whole form the film that employs the constant long shot, cut, edit and fragmented body does nothing to help overcome the sense that the spectator *is watching a film*. As Thompson says the fan '*can smell the fake*' (1996, p.13-15).

If I can expand a little here; a good film, let alone great film, for example, about soccer has never really been transferred well onto film in my view, despite it being the premier sport in the UK. There may be some exceptions to this, however, when analysing and looking at issues surrounding soccer notably 'hooliganism' in films such as *I.D.* (1995, Philip Davis) and *The Firm* (1989, Alan Clarke).[12] Thompson, however, goes on to critique a number of sporting films including John Huston's *Escape to Victory* (1981), which, without doubt, suffers from the poor sporting skills of Sylvester Stallone, Michael Caine and the poor acting skills of Pele, Bobby Moore *et al*. It is not helped either by what Thompson calls rather disparagingly Huston's 'cockamamie scenario' which leads him to write 'is there anything more grotesquely fabricated than the bad sports film?' (1996, p. 13). Likewise Nick Hornby writing about his love of 'truly terrible football films' cites *Yesterday's Hero* (1979, Neil Leifer) as 'probably the worst British film since the war'. Its attempt to inject real footage and soccer stars into its narrative is 'breathtakingly daft...Zelig it isn't...' (1993, *Sight and Sound*, 3 [5]).

Cricket fares a little better but not a great deal so. On the subject of cricket films Charles Barr (2003) suggests that 'the strong

heritage and class associations of cricket have made it an attractive subject, touched on frequently in short scenes or in dialogue; yet it has never formed the central theme of a successful film.' The sport is arguably too slow a game to provide ample highs and lows of dramatic struggle although Oscar Ove's Channel Four Films production of *Playing Away* (1997, Horace Love) goes very close in the final twenty or thirty minutes. The cricket match at this climatic end of the film is exciting although the film is more about the representation of race relations and class struggle. Indeed Ronald Bergan (1982, p.12) points out that cricket in British films appears 'more often as a necessary adjunct to the creation of an English atmosphere e.g. Accident' than about the sport itself. This all seems to infer that more often than not the British sport feature film, cricket notwithstanding, is more about the melodramatic 'happenings' off the field of play than on it with such issues as racism, sexism, class and gender being explored within such a film. That is to say the sports film is used, as Peter Brook (1976) suggests, to situate 'disturbing social issues that are otherwise repressed' (in Aaron Baker, 1998, p.130). Aaron Baker himself argues 'sports movies generally frame history as adequately represented by the individual desires, goals and emotional dramas of the main characters, often in a biopic story' (1998, pg.130). Often the British sports film portrays sport as the means through which individuals attempt to overcome their social situation or problems as in the aforementioned *Yesterdays Hero*. Similarly, the sport is instrumental in an effort to fight back against all the odds as in *Twentyfourseven* (1997, Shane Meadows), or through which they can fight prejudices and values that denigrate individuals to second class citizens as in the UK's most famous sports feature film *Chariots of Fire* (1981, Hugh Hudson). This emphasises what I feel is integral to the British sports feature film: that the hero is not necessarily deserving or will achieve success. It all seems to suggest that the UK sports film need not have 'heroes' that are 'top of the heap' as in many American productions.

The amount of actual sport shown varies a great deal also, although it is central to the narrative. As Nunes and Sinyard (1981) purport 'the definition of what that means provides the thematic substance of sports films.' In other words the sport *per se* is not the most important aspect of the film with the emphasis being placed upon, in most cases, the individualised melodramatic elements contained within the story. Sport, with its heady mix of agony, ecstasy, passion and drama allied to the sublime execution of technique whilst under intense pressure culminating in an aesthetic of 'the physical' are more often than not shown to be of secondary importance to the melodrama unfolding off of the field of play. This is evident in many films covering many sports such as soccer in *When Saturday Comes* (1996, Maria Giese), boxing in *Twentfourseven* (1997, Shane Meadows) and rugby in *Up n' Under* (1998, John Godber). Hence the main character(s) of the film must overcome formidable obstacles and moral dilemmas, which in its own way begins to affirm the main protagonist's morality. However as Nunes and Sinyard (1981) point out 'according to the films fashions and authorial inflections or particular film periods...in a modern period where moral consensus could be said to be elusive it is possible to have a cynical sports film where success is connected with the ruthlessness and dirty tricks rather than the moral reward'. This may indeed provide insights into the psychology of the nation as suggested by Ronald Bergan (1982). The power, the glory, the nationalistic fervour and any 'connection' to the mores of capitalism as in many Hollywood productions are not really evident and brought to the foreground. The legacy of the British *New Wave*, which I will extrapolate upon shortly, is still very evident and relevant to British filmmaking and there is a suggestion here also that there is an anti-capitalist ideology present that is distinctive and distinguishable among British filmmakers.[13]

Marcia Landy also highlights this when she writes that 'sports are another arena in which to explore working-class male conflicts' (1991, p.252). This view perhaps insinuates, wrongly in my view, that sport is the domain of the male working classes and not really the middle class (or females). She then analyses the film directed by Pen Tennyson *There Ain't No Justice* (1939). Landy recognises that for Tommy (played by the late Jimmy Hanley), the film's working class central character's decision to fight 'is thus motivated by the desire to save her (his sister)...' rather 'than the glory'. Furthermore 'Tommy's crusading actions are accounted for by his deep loyalty to family, to the point of self-sacrifice, and are inseparable from the battle he wages against social and economic exploitation' (Landy, 1991). This seems to emphasise and recognise in no small measure those core values and social priorities often associated with the British working class. This may cause some debate as to the conventions (or lack of) that may go some way to collectively identify the British sports film. But this view could be challenged. Chris Hewitt writing in the UK movie magazine *Empire* (August 2002, p.146-147) suggests:

> the last second winner, scored by the plucky hero against impossible odds. The never-ending triumph of the indefatigable human spirit...the comedic training montage in which our heroes foul up with hilarious results. Where would movies be without sport? And where...would we be without sports movies? The sports movie is also a universal template on which directors hang all manner of musings about the human condition...*Gladiator* and *A Knights Tale* are, at their very core, sports movies.

Perhaps even more obscurely, Dennis Gifford, writing in the *British Film Catalogue 1895-1995*, suggests that the British sports film is 'a dramatic film, usually involving crime, in which the central theme is a sport such as boxing, football, horse racing etc.'.[14] The British film industry and hence the production of British films has always been under funded and under valued by various governments be they Labour or Conservative (although each would deny

this I am sure). This state of affairs has led to comments such as the following by the influential *Sight and Sound* magazine. The magazine's editorial stated 'the UK industry has never been very good at supporting the careers of its artistic talent' (May 2004, p.3). Similarly Geoffrey Mcnab, in the same magazine (*Sight and Sound*, pp.36-38) quoting an 'insider' writes 'it's very nice for producers to have that money (tax breaks initiated by the New Labour government) but if you ask what is this doing to improve the quality of the work coming out of the industry, it's hard to say it has done anything at all...' and this without doubt impacts upon the rudiments of the particular body of films addressed in this essay.

I would also argue that there appears to be a legacy present, although perhaps unintentional but still powerful just the same, left by the British *New Wave* movement in the late 1950's and early 1960's that informs the UK film industry, in general, and sports movies produced by the industry, in particular. Undoubtedly the *New Wave* directors had the ability and skill to present gritty social realism on screen at relatively low production costs. They also managed to maintain, and secured, a certain validity and value often accredited to 'art' cinema. This continues to be a concern of the under funded UK film industry. It seems to me that the British fictional sports movie has always been caught between the two points of contention. On one hand, those films, of which there are but a few, produced to attract the largest possible audience, which John Goldlust (1987, p. 64) suggests are designed to achieve 'outstanding financial returns' and those small budget 'art' films to be, in other words, 'intellectual, high culture' films (Goldlust, 1987, p.64). By concentrating upon the social realism sports films tend to pay less attention to the sport itself. This view is supported by Ellis Cashmore (2000, pg. 266) who comments that:

> several films have used sports as metaphors for other areas of social life. There is a vital British tradition that starts with Lindsay Anderson's 1963 *This Sporting Life* set in the North of England, where Richard Harris's mud spattered struggle on the rugby field parallels the rest of his life and, in many senses, that of the northern working class in the 1960's. In 1962's *The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner,* directed by Tony Richardson, cross-country running is a simile for a young working-class offender's gutsy clamber out of a correctional facility.

And as David Rowe again states very succinctly 'this means that any representation of sports in verbal, written, or visual language must attend closely to the relationship between real and imagined sports worlds and to the intimate or remote subjectivities that are, in turn, stimulated by it' (Rowe, 1998, p. 353). Richard Cox *et al* qualifies this view when they suggest that 'Britain's film history is in many respects different from that of Hollywood. While both countries have produced a whole host of sports films, the British tradition is one steeped in the tradition of treating sport as a "serious" art form, even when, paradoxically, the topic has comedic qualities' (2000, pg.139) and although I support this statement, I do not understand why comedy cannot be part of the 'art' film movement. But this situation problemitises the production and reception of the UK sports film further. It is, so to speak, caught between 'a rock and a hard place'. It is neither produced, distributed nor exhibited in the 'blockbuster' mould, this despite overtures by the Government for the UK film industry to compete with the best of Hollywood. Nor does it really appeal to the 'art-house' filmgoer who does not perceive sport as being a 'legitimate' theme for the 'intellectual' film. To expect large funding for a genre/category that has been 'hit-and-miss' at best cannot be seen as plausible or cost effective. Even as an 'art house' movie the sports film struggles 'to connect' in any consistent manner.

Continuing with this idea of 'legacy' as a possible ideological confinement in the British film industry, the British sports film has never really been in the position to or placed any emphasis upon the importance of what R. Gruneau terms the 'spectacularisation' of sport (1989, pg.134-156). David Stead emphasises this point by stating that 'the Olympics have gone far beyond the status of a sports event...the opening ceremonies have become spectaculars tailor made for the medium of television...' (in B. Houlihan, 2003, pg.195). The BBC, the public broadcasting institution of the UK, spent millions of pounds sterling and dedicated many hours of TV coverage to the Olympics in 2004. This is something that the British sports movie just cannot match. It does not have to be the global phenomenon that is the Olympics though, live coverage of smaller events on terrestrial and satellite television can 'outdo' almost anything the British sports feature film can offer in terms of the spectacle. Allied to this is the sense of immediacy, the viewing of a live event in which the outcome is not known, which generates its own special excitement. The anticipation of the elite sports persons clashing 'head to head' in a highly charged competitive arena underpins this spectacle. And now, of course, the advancement of technology when applied to television has enabled the virtual involvement of viewers as exemplified by Stead

Courtesy of Warner Bros.

Chariots of Fire (1981)

who states 'replays, camera angles and interviews are employed to enhance this effect...stump cameras in cricket coverage get you close to the action. You too can see what it is like to face the bowling...' (Stead, 2003, pg.196). Arguably, the only sports film that has really captured the hearts and minds of the British public and became the focal point for critics and academia ever since, particularly when sport in British movies is analysed and discussed, is *Chariots of Fire* (1981, Hugh Hudson) all those years ago.[15] This was the film that inspired the screenwriter Colin Welland to pronounce 'the British are coming' at the Oscar awards ceremony and Adair and Roddick (1985, pg.76) to suggest that some sort of British film renaissance began with this film. They suggest that this film above all others 'captured the spirit of the times' perhaps exemplifying Bergan's (1982) point about 'psychology of the nation' alluded to earlier (nationalistic fervour, the 'bulldog' spirit, dogged determination and a battle against adversity all figure large in UK national psyche and in the UK cultural representations). Waymark (1984) wrote that this film was the '...affirmation of the old amateur spirit in a time when audiences have tired of the tantrums of today's rich sportsmen...' The appeal of *Chariots of Fire* has been in a deep-rooted British conservatism that is laced with elitism and tinged with a 'never say die' attitude (or perhaps so at the time). As Alan Tomlinson (1988) suggested, '*Chariots of Fire*, in revealing to the British public a set of social divisions and inner conflicts and then providing a resolution in the form of nationalist integration, offered a metaphor of adaptation and equilibrium...it operated as a nostalgic evocation of traditional values to the British viewer'. Perhaps this was true at the time. Whether one could say the same in 2005 is difficult to assess. Perhaps only when another *Chariots* wins the prestigious accolades and plaudits the USA and UK film industries convey can we then begin to formulate the mood and values of British society.

I would now like to present an analysis of an independent British sports film that perhaps helps to identify and highlight some of the points raised in my discussion.

The Girl With Brains in Her Feet (1997, Roberto Bangura, UK)[16]

The opening credits to this film tell us that what we are about to see takes place in 1972 in Leicester, England. The outside location shots indicate an inner city, working class area, possibly one of the council run estates at the time of Braunstone, Imperial Avenue or Netherhall. The opening scene shows the beginning of a competitive sprint race (a suitably attired official tells the competitors to 'take their marks', 'set' before firing a starting pistol) in an athletics stadium. The camera focuses upon a girl in the centre lane and centre of the other competitors suggesting that she will be the main character in the film. As the race progresses the young athlete is shot in 'slow motion', her face and shoulders filling the screen and her heavy breathing, as the race begins to take its physical toll, becomes very audible. Before the race finishes the screen 'fades to black' (this scene is repeated towards the end of the film and becomes most significant as it represents the climax of her athletic endeavours). The girl is 13-year-old schoolgirl, Jacqueline 'Jack' Jones, a child of a mixed race relationship. She lives in a 'single parent' home with her white mum, Vivienne. The father has long gone. The relationship between mother and daughter we continuously observe is full of tension and very fraught at times but in certain scenes towards the end of the film, not without its tender moments. 'Jack' is the outstanding athlete and games player at her school (not only does she excel at athletics but also stars in the hockey and netball teams). Her 'promise' is being nurtured and developed by the school Physical Education teacher, Mr. Loughborough, (which is perhaps a somewhat satirical reference to Britain's premier Sport and Physical Education University) almost to obsession. He undertakes her training sessions with rigid discipline, praising and chastising her in equal measure. We learn that he hopes she will go on to win the athletics 200 meter (then 220 yards) race at the forthcoming Championships to be held at the Leicester Athletics Stadium.

However, Jacqueline does not see her life completely dominated by athletics. Indeed, after the 'fade to black' mentioned above takes place, the very next scene shows her in the bathroom of home. She is looking at herself in the mirror, pulling faces at herself and secretly smoking a cigarette (something her mother disapproves of but is not really discouraged by her 'soft' Aunt Margaret who at times is almost a surrogate mother). In between her training and running which we regularly see, we also witness Jack's relationship with her school friends, especially 'best friend' Maxine. The increasing pressure she is put under along with her natural curiosity as a young teenager to indulge in not only smoking cigarettes but sex, drugs, friendships, boys and alcohol is also identified. Her life is 'speeding up' and she appears to want to live it like her running—quick and fast with no slowing down. In fact, in one significant scene, her arts teacher, Miss Charnwood, tells Jacqueline to 'slow down' not only when she is drawing but also as a reference to the way she is beginning to conduct her life. It turns out to be quite prophetic given her 'lust for life'. This all runs parallel with her increasingly dysfunctional home life and the pressure her PE teacher puts her under to buy new training shoes and train (he even gets her off of a detention given by a colleague so that she will not miss her session).

Whilst running in the school cross-country race, Jack is so far in front of the others that she stops to have a cigarette. Here she meets David 'Spanner' Spencer, a handsome drifter who works on a nearby farm as a casual labourer. In the setting of a local romantic beauty spot, Bradgate Park and in the shadow of 'Old John' a longstanding monument to times past, Jack is persuaded by the

charming, attentive 'Spanner' to meet him on the following Monday evening. Despite this being a training night, she skips training and meets him. They have sex and smoke cannabis. Despite Jacqueline's belief that she loves 'Spanner' and that he loves her (she even writes to 'Fiesta', an 'adult' magazine telling them of her 'first time' in a romantic, innocent way), 'Spanner' moves on and disappears not getting in touch or leaving a forwarding address. Jacqueline realises that she is now pregnant. Her attention also turns to her forthcoming race in the Championships.

The race commences (it is a repeat of the scene that opened the film). Although leading for most of the race (again shot in 'slow motion') Jack stumbles and falls at the very last few meters. She fails to finish and the scene ends with a long shot of her prone and forlorn on the astro-turf. Mr Loughborough takes her home, dismissing her now that she has failed in his expectations of her potential. Her mother knows of Jacqueline's condition, something she has accidentally discovered and shows sympathy, empathy and caring towards her daughter. Vivienne also shows her daughter a photograph, for the first time, of her father. The photograph seems to suggest, from the uniform he is wearing, that he was in the armed forces (possibly a G.I. based in England after the Second World War) and an Afro-American. Vivienne and Jacqueline also attend a church meeting, and the very last scene is of Vivienne and Vic, her long time boyfriend, getting married and Jacqueline looking very happy about it all. Whether she keeps the baby or not is a matter of conjecture. The film ends.

As well as being a naturalistic film, full of good performances especially from the children, this is witty and humorous but at times tinged with the seriousness of a young teenage girl embroiled in the trials and tribulations of 'growing up'. What director Roberto Bangura and screenwriter Jo Hodges have accomplished here is to present a number of varied themes into a film that is essentially about one girl's involvement in sport whilst competing with all that life is 'throwing' at her. The opening scene indicates, I suggest, that this is a sports film or at the very least a film that has sport as a central theme. Furthermore, it is an interesting sporting film if for no other reason than the main character, Jack, is a girl of mixed race. However as I have indicated in my discussion previously, the film also deals with Jacqueline's loss of innocence, her rites-of-passage, battling with her desires, emotions, and family and friends' wishes. She embarks on her own personal journey of discovery; of sex, of deceit, of a father she never knew, the bitter/sweet memories, and the overwhelming joy of not only reconciliation with her mother but the beginning of a 'new' family and chapter in her life.

Many different issues are 'touched upon' from early on but not in any great depth. The question of racial attitudes and tensions in Leicester in 1972 is never really tackled directly. The schoolchildren never really show any racist attitudes towards Jacqueline and any reference to the race issue, which was problematic in Leicester in the 1970's, is downplayed. Comments therefore tend to be 'off-the-cuff' and confrontation within this issue avoided. The only real reference is shown at the house where Jack delivers a morning newspaper. It is 'For Sale—To Whites Only' which is a direct reference to the actual policy employed by racist house-sellers on the estates at the time and condoned by racist political parties such as the National Front. To paraphrase Michael D. Giardina's view, the narrative does not really allow for an interrogation of the racial struggles that were evident in Leicester at this time (2003, pg.65-82). Other issues such as life within a single parent family are represented in a rather low-key way. Religion becomes prominent (interestingly Vivienne is heard praying on a couple of occasions in the privacy of her own bedroom and she takes her daughter to a religious meeting after discovering the pregnancy) suggesting perhaps a reappraisal and redemption of morals and values through a rediscovery of religion. The final scene in which Vivienne marries Vic, to Jacqueline's obvious approval, may strongly indicate and suggest the importance of a strong, heterosexual marriage in the upbringing of children. However it is in the athletic/training scenes that the film picks up pace and it is here we see Jacqueline attempting to progress in an activity at which she obviously excels. The effort that the young actress, Joanna Ward, puts into the running sequences looks genuine and she appears to be comfortable with the activity as does the director (predominately long and medium shots are used). One scene where she runs a number of 'shuttle runs' in the school gymnasium shows her athletic prowess. The two scenes in which she is shown playing hockey and netball are a little more awkwardly shot and performed. She seems to effortlessly cut through the opposition to score a goal in the hockey match, her opponents standing by allowing her to do this without even a token effort to stop her. The netball, similarly, shows Jack shoot for the net; the director then cuts to the ball going into the net, then cuts back to a joyous Jack jumping up and down surrounded by appreciative teammates. Unfortunately, to this commentator anyway, the fallibility shown by directors and actors to maintain a certain 'authenticity' in action sports sequences is ably demonstrated here and it does nothing to change the views expressed in my earlier discussion.

The relationship between Jack and her coach/PE teacher is also interesting. After the race which Jack fails to complete he takes her home. As he is about to leave he says, 'I'm sorry Jacqueline I don't think I can help this time. Go on' which seems to suggest one of two things. That he cannot now do any more for her to realise her athletic aspirations *or* he cannot do anything for her now that she is pregnant (which presupposes that Jacqueline has confided in him on the way home). The detachment and 'coldness' in which this is done, especially in Jacqueline's emotional turmoil, highlights the fact that all through the film Jacqueline is 'giving' to other people and when she wants to 'take' a little it is not forthcoming, although she does later find support in her mother and the church as mentioned. The film has an authentic 'feel' about it. The characters are suitably dressed in the fashions of the

1970's; the cars, the housing and generally the whole *mise en scene* provide the viewer with a look at the not-so-long ago past. A rousing 70's oundtrack featuring artists such as T-Rex, Slade and The Sweet punctuate the film.

This film encapsulates the themes and style discussed earlier. It is a film that has its sporting theme wrapped up in layers of social drama. There is a certain 'Britishness' about the 'look' of the film too. I think its 'nod' to the legacy of the 'new wave' is also amply demonstrated in the naturalism of the actors, outside location shots and realistic language and situations. This small budget film (another underpinning element of British films) uses what resources it has to the maximum. In this way it can neatly 'fit' into the category of British sports movie with ease. How would this film have been handled differently if made in Hollywood? Certainly the budget would have been greater. This perhaps would enable it to become a movie with one or two well known actors in the lead roles (the most recognisable 'face' in this British film is John Thompson who has achieved great success on television and as a 'stand-up' comedian). It would probably have emphasised the physical aspects of the sport a great deal more, utilising the editing techniques that are now so familiar in many action sequences.

Conclusion

The British fictional sports film has a long and at times distinguished history. It has been used as a medium to address other issues besides the actual sport in a rather melodramatic manner. To slightly change a question posed by Douglas Booth (1996) when he asked 'are surf films and videos historically significant?' I ask 'are the British sports films historically significant?' and my response is the same as the one offered by Booth. For British sport enthusiasts, nurtured on their particular sports, the answer is a resounding 'yes'. For the cultural commentators, the sports film can be used as 'cultural artefacts' that offers a 'snap-shot' of the times, the values and the issues that were evident in a particular period. I finish by again paraphrasing Booth (1996). British sporting films and videos are invaluable sources for historians of sport subcultures. Like all sources they have the potential to reveal aspects of the past and present. Of course, that potential depends upon how thoroughly social historians (and I would add, commentators and academics) interrogate them and the type of questions they ask.

Notes

1 My passion for sport, in particular soccer, and a love of film have been the main motivations for me to engage with what could arguably be seen as one of the most underrated and ignored of film 'types'—the fictional sports film.

2 This does not exclude reference to fictional sports films produced in the USA. Indeed many quotes and extracts from supporting academic/critical essays will be made from American publications as the quantity of writing and interest in the subject seems to surpass that output of the United Kingdom. This may be due to the fact that the fictional sports movie enjoys much greater exposure in terms of production, distribution and exhibition in the USA than in Britain. To emphasise one point a little further I shall not be addressing documentary/actuality films on this occasion but will concentrate solely upon fictional texts.

3 This, I appreciate, raises a rather 'thorny' set of issues about genre and its use and creation. For further discussion see, for example, McFarlane, B. (2003:248); Landy, M. (1991); Cooke, P. & Bernink, M. (1999: pp.137-228); Krutnik, F. (1994); Turner, G. (1993: 85-89); Hayward, S. (1996:15-166); Stanley, R. H. (2003:239-274).

4 Roberto Bangura was born in London in 1962. His CV includes two short films and some TV work as director.

5 Sylvester Stallone arguably began his box-office super-stardom with the Oscar winning *Rocky* (1976, John G Avildsen) and turning it into something of a franchise with *Rocky 2* (1979), *Rocky 3* (1982), *Rocky 4*. (1985) (all of which he directed) and *Rocky 5* (1990, John G Avildsen). Kevin Costner, often underrated because of his more thoughtful movies, has starred in and collaborated with Ron Shelton on *Bull Durham* and *Tin Cup* and has appeared in *Field of Dreams* directed by Phil Alden Robinson in 1989.

6 If not, one could include films such as *The Deerhunter* into this category of film. They also only include films that have sport as an integral element to the narrative. This in itself is problematic. They include Oshima's *The Ceremony* and Loach's *Kes* because of the importance of their sports sequences alongside Abbott and Costello.

7 This is a little known documentary short directed by Alexandre Promio in 1897. It was preceded by the Lumiere Brothers' produced sport documentary *A Friendly Boxing Match* in 1896.

8 Baseball, for example, has been represented in *Pride of the Yankees, Pride of St. Louis, Take Me Out to the Ball Game* and *Eight Men Out*. Boxing is the most prolific sport in the movies with some 204 'appearances' (this is followed by horse racing at 139 'appearances' and American football at 123). Boxing has *The Set-Up, Rocky, Raging Bull* and Michael Mann's *Ali* amongst its credits. American football, golf and horse racing have all enjoyed their moments of celluloid glory with films such as *North Dallas Forty, Tin Cup* and, more recently, the Oscar nominated *Seabiscuit* paying their respects to the aforementioned sports respectively. Athletes and the Olympics have also enjoyed a measure of success with *Personal Best* and *Prefontaine* taking the lead.

9 Who can, for example, forget the late, great character actor Brian Glover in *Kes* (1969, Ken Loach)? He plays a 'games teacher' (Physical Education teacher) brilliantly imitating Manchester United and England soccer legend Bobby Charlton in this film. Or the young Tom Courtney, perhaps, refusing to break the winning tape in the final moments of *The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner* (1962, Tony Richardson).

10 The notion of 'living legends' was interestingly raised recently in the British media who reported a spat between screen actress and movie legend Lauren Bacall and an interviewer who dared to suggest that Nicole Kidman was a 'living screen legend'. Ms. Bacall was not impressed!

11 That is this talented individual rising above the rest through hard work and sacrifice, superior physical and mental aptitude.

12 These two films explored the violent world of the soccer hooligan and the appeal of 'belonging' to a so-called soccer 'firm'. They were laced with gritty realism and actors who were convincing in the roles they played. These films also touched not only a football problem but also one that became viewed as a very real social problem too.

13 This, I appreciate, is a rather speculative idea. It needs 'testing out' through more detailed research and investigation.

14 Immediately the inclusion of 'crime' being seen as a central theme problematises the distinctions of a sports movie and places it within the realms of the gangster or thriller genre.

15 This film was acclaimed 'best picture' (one of three Oscars) in 1981, beating the likes of *Atlantic City*, *On Golden Pond*, *Raiders of the Lost Ark* and *Reds* along the way. The film won a raft of awards and accolades from BAFTA, the Golden Globes and the New York film critics. It probably remains and represents the UK's only real challenge to Hollywood's domination of the sports movie in cinema history. The success of the film was due in no small part to the timing of its release.

16 Producer: Dan Boyd; Screenplay: Jo Hodges; Director of Photography: Peter Butler; Editor: Alan Ross; Production Designer: Lynn Bird; Music: Rob Lane; Production Company: Lexington Films; Ward/*Jacqueline 'Jack' Jones*; John Thompson/*Mr. Loughborough*; Jodie Smith/*Maxine*; Samantha Wheatley/*Miss Charnwood*; Joshua Henderson/*Dave 'Spanner' Spencer* Mossie Smith/*'soft' Aunt Margaret*; Richard Bremner/*Vic*.

Filmography

Accident: Joseph Losey, UK, 1967
Ali: Michael Mann, USA, 2002
Any Given Sunday: Oliver Stone, USA, 1999
Atlantic City: Louis Malle, Canada/France, 1981
The Call of the Road: A.E. Coleby UK, 1920
Chariots of Fire: Hugh Hudson, UK, 1981
Days of Thunder: Tony Scott, USA, 1990
Downhill aka *When Boys Leave Town* (in the USA): Alfred Hitchcock UK, 1927
Eight Men Out: John Sayles, USA, 1988
Escape to Victory aka *Victory* on release in the USA: John Huston, USA, 1981
Fat City: John Huston, USA, 1972
The Firm: Alan Clarke, UK, 1989
Get Carter: Mike Hodges, UK, 1971
The Girl with Brains in Her Feet: Robert Bangura, UK, 1997
Gregory's Girl: Bill Forsyth, UK, 1980
Kes: Ken Loach, UK, 1969
The Hustler: Robert Rossen, USA, 1961
I.D.: Philip Davis, UK/Germany, 1995
The Killing: Stanley Kubrick, USA, 1956
Kissing Cup: Walter West, UK, 1920
Knute Rockne: All American: Lloyd Bacon, USA, 1940
Lock, Stock and Two Smoking Barrels: Guy Ritchie, UK, 1998
The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner: Tony Richardson, UK, 1962
North Dallas Forty: Ted Kotcheff, USA, 1979
On Golden Pond: Mark Rydell, USA, 1981
Personal Best: Robert Towne, USA, 1982
Playing Away: Horace Love, UK, 1987
Prefontaine: Steve James, USA, 1996
Pride of St. Louis: Harmon Jones, USA, 1952
Pride of the Yankees: Sam Wood, USA, 1942
Raiders of the Lost Ark: Stephen Spielberg, USA, 1981
Raging Bull: Martin Scorsese, USA, 1980
Reds: Warren Beatty, USA, 1981
Right Off the Bat: Thomas Edison, USA, 1915
The Ring: Alfred Hitchcock, UK, 1927
Rocky: John G. Avildsen, USA, 1976
Rocky2 : Sylvester Stallone, USA, 1979
Rocky3: Sylvester Stallone, USA, 1982
Rocky4: Sylvester Stallone, USA, 1985
Rocky5: John G. Avilsen, USA, 1990
Seabiscuit: Gary Ross, USA, 2003
The Set-Up: Robert Wise, USA, 1949
Son of Kissing Cup: Walter West, UK, 1922
The Stirrup Cup Sensation: Walter West UK, 1924
Take Me Out to the Ball Game: Busby Berkeley, USA, 1949
There Ain't No Justice: Pen Tennyson, UK, 1939
This Sporting Life: Lindsay Anderson, UK, 1963
Tin Cup: Ron Shelton, USA, 1996
Twentyfourseven: Shane Meadows, UK, 1997
Up n' Under: John Godber, UK, 1998
When Saturday Comes: Maria Giese, UK, 1996
Yesterday's Hero: Neil Leifer, UK, 1979

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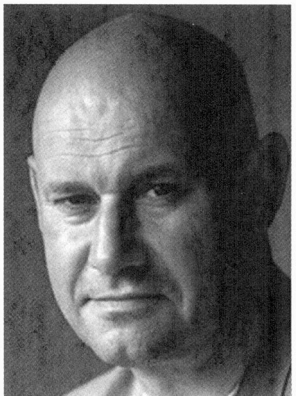

Glen Jones is a senior lecturer in media studies at Staffordshire University, UK. Although his main interest and expertise is in film, he teaches on many other media related modules such as television and radio, and contributes to post graduate supervision and teaching also. He has written two entries for the *Encyclopedia of British Film*. One focuses upon trade union representation and the other upon political film. Quite recently he produced a number of biographies for the Internet service *screenonline* commissioned by the British Film Institute. Whilst working as an associate lecturer on a number of film courses for the Open University, he gave a conference paper entitled 'Squids, Bugs and Aliens—the Future is Out There and the Future is Hollywood' in which he explored representation of 'the future' in films such as *Strange Days*, *12 Monkeys*, and *Starship Troopers*. Jones' research interests are currently in the sports feature film, the British film industry post 1997 and issues surrounding film censorship.