



NEWSLETTER C-14

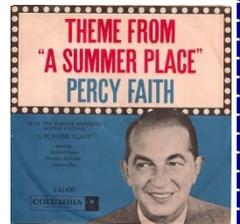
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It's Summertime, and the living is easy ...

We have reached the halfway point in this challenging year and still there is no certainty about when we can return to our familiar Wednesday evening slots. At least we have warmer weather, and in the words of Gershwin's famous tune, the fish are jumpin and the cotton is high, so perhaps you are bbqing in the garden with a rigged up white sheet and all the necessary technology for an outdoors screening of a favourite summer movie? Of course, open-air cinema is no new thing, and Southampton has boasted just a few such presentations over the past few years. In 2020, several films were scheduled such as **The Breakfast Club** and **Dirty Dancing**, and it is rumoured that on the weekend of July 10/11 this year there will be two outdoor screenings in the city, but it is not clear where or when. Nevertheless, going back through the years, there are plenty of summery film titles to consider for your back garden shindig (and yes, we (still/always) know what you did last summer) ...

Perhaps the best place to start our list of aestival films is, well, **A Summer Place**, a 1959 romantic drama directed by Delmer Daves, known for his **3.10 to Yuma** (the original) and many other great westerns. In the U.K. Percy Faith's version of the theme song from the film, which won a Grammy, is probably better remembered than the film itself.



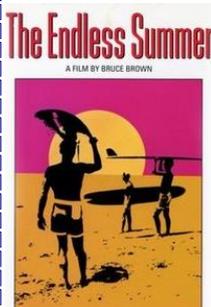
On a similarly musical note, how well you recall **A Summer Holiday** may depend on your age – it hit our fab screens (and the pop charts) in 1963 just when continental travel was beginning to open up to Britons (oh, how times are different presently). The film starred Cliff Richard



and the Shads, Una Stubbs, and Ron Moody, alongside a host of other British actors, and a double-decker London bus! It was the debut film from director Peter Yates who had further driving fame with **Bullitt** (1968) and **Mother, Jugs and Speed** eight years later.

A look at many of the "summer" titles shows that a good number of them are romantic dramas or coming-of-age stories, and one in the latter category is the seldom seen **Summer of '42**, made by cult director Robert Mulligan in 1976. His other films include **Inside Daisy Clover** (starring Natalie Wood and with a very early film appearance by Robert Redford), **Love with the Proper Stranger** (1963) and, from the previous year, the classic **To Kill a**

Mockingbird with Gregory Peck playing Atticus Finch. Mulligan's later summertime film is a beautiful piece, set on a soft-focus west coast US island – the names of the three youngsters coming of age say so much about their teenage innocence, Hermie, Oscy and Benjie, and the closing words are voiced over the credits by the first of those young men: "I was never to see her again. Nor was I ever to learn what became of her. We were different then. Kids were different. It took us longer to understand the things we felt. Life is made up of small comings and goings. And for everything we take with us, there is something that we leave behind. In the summer of '42, we raided the Coast Guard station four times, we saw five movies, and had nine days of rain. Benjie broke his watch, Oscy gave up the harmonica, and in a very special way, I lost Hermie forever."



Aloha Summer (yes a film, by Tommy Lee Wallace, USA 1988) suggests we move temporarily to a different coastline closer to home next. Unlike Putin-defying David Cameron with his dawn dip a few years ago, and natatory de Pfeffel splashing aimlessly about in Cornwall recently, none of the other G7 politicians were caught having an early morning surf in the Carbis Bay waves, but we should nevertheless mention the classic surf title **The Endless Summer**. Another title to fall into the "cult" category, Bruce Brown's film dates back to 1965, before surfing gained worldwide popularity outside of Hawaii, and the movie ran on the global tagline "In search of the perfect wave"; 29 years later it

spawned **The Endless Summer 2** and a **Revisited** version in 2000 – appropriately for surfers all of them can be found hanging ten on YouTube!



One director to include here, many of whose films have been screened at the Phoenix over the years, is legendary Swede Ingmar Bergman. Included in his vast canon of films are **Sommarlek (Summer Interlude)** (1951), **Sommaren med Monika (Summer with Monika)** (1953), and in 1955 **Sommarnattens leende (Smiles of a Summer Night)**, this last scoring 76% when we screened it as our classic film two years ago. Incidentally, Bergman did not exclude the other times of the year from his work; in 1960 he made **Jungfrukällan (The Virgin Spring)**, with **Nattvardsgästerna (Winter Light)** three years later, and 1978's **Höstsonaten (Autumn Sonata)** following, though clearly and perhaps strangely, these were all seasonally somewhat out of sequence.

Another summertime film that might fall into the classic category is **The Long, Hot Summer**, based on three scripts from William Faulkner and a powerful vehicle for husband and wife team Paul Newman and Joanne Woodward (Orson Welles, Lee

Remick and Angela Lansbury are also in the starry cast). The drama is set in the deep south of America, and whilst Gershwin's tune is certainly evoked in the setting though not heard in the film, the soundtrack includes the theme song by Mississippian blue yodeller Jimmie Rodgers.

Continuing a theme of sultry summer literary adaptations (and further recalling those jumpin' fish and the high cotton bolls), we come to **Suddenly Last Summer**, another 1959 release, this one directed by Joseph Mankiewicz. A Southern gothic mystery, the film starred Elizabeth Taylor and Katherine Hepburn in scarily hostile mode, with tags such as lobotomy, asylum, and dysfunctional family giving an idea of the Tennessee Williams-written storyline.



More recently (and screened at the Phoenix to a 78% audience vote)

Nathalie Press, Emily Blunt and Paddy Considine starred in Pawel Pawlikowski's Yorkshire-set **My Summer of Love**, in which working-class tomboy Mona meets the exotic, pampered Tamsin and the two women spend the summer discovering they have much to teach one another, and much to explore together.

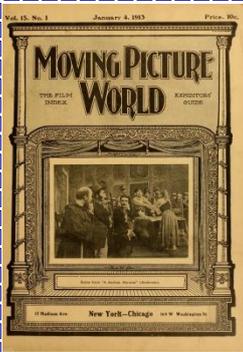
We started this piece in the summertime of that beautiful 1935 song, so let us draw things towards a close with three films actually entitled **Summertime**. The first is another Katherine Hepburn movie, directed mid-career by the wonderful David Lean from an H.E. Bates screenplay. In another romantic drama, we have an American spinster's dream of romance finally becoming a bittersweet reality when she meets a handsome - but married - Italian man while vacationing in Venice. One critic wrote "Ms. Hepburn portrayed the many stages of love so convincingly that it is difficult to remember it's just a movie." And you get the intrigue of Venice into the bargain.



Secondly, we add a translated **Summertime**, since the original French title, **La belle saison**, simply hints at that hot and sunny time, here set in 1971. Catherine Corsini's 2015 film is a real gem, dividing its time between sweltering big city Paris and the more relaxed, but still warm bucolic of the Limousin countryside, and concerning itself with the developing romantic relationship between feminist militant Carole, and rural farmer Delphine. The story works beautifully well beneath blue skies, although their friendship seems doomed ... And the third title, is actually the first moving picture released that I could find with the **Summertime** name. A black and white silent short, of course, it appeared in cinemas on July 18 1910 and all we know apart from that scanty information is that it is a romance!

Suffice here to give the lovely synopsis as it appeared in *Moving Picture World* magazine:

"When the ocean breezes and the green fields of the mountains are calling, that is the time that the young people usually take to -er, -er, be young people. But it does not usually happen that in one little spot you will find three couples, spoony as can be. And that is not all, for there is also an odd girl, and that's just where the story part of it comes in, for one day she misses the three couples rather suddenly. Mounting an elevation, she takes up a field glass and sights one couple just as the young man is putting a ring on the girl's finger. Then she trains her glass on the other couples, and the very same thing is transpiring. When her friends show her their rings, she is a little envious, of course, but takes it in good humor, because she's a little young



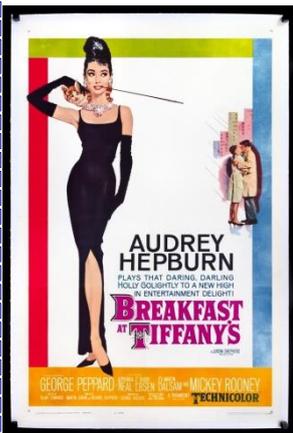
yet. Nevertheless, she plays a trick on them by buying a bogus engagement ring, and after picking out the prettiest of her brother's collection of his friend's pictures, she tells the girls that is the man who gave her the ring. But she never thought that that very man would come to visit her brother; he does; as soon as she sees him she gets so flustered and giggly that he views her with alarm, and even her brother can't explain it when they meet the other two girls and they recognize him from the picture and offer greetings. But finally the visitor realizes that he has fallen into a veritable lovers' haven, so he proceeds to draw out the little girl who acted so curiously. But he doesn't need to, for when he finds her she is looking at his picture."

Let's leave them innocently happy ... ❤️

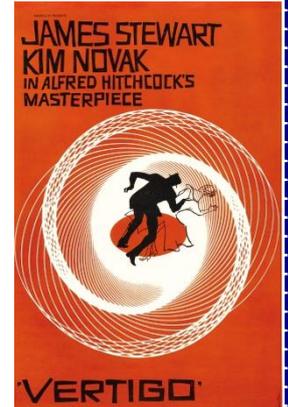
So as you sip a cooling Pimms or an ice-cold beer, we end this heatwave of a list with the nicely rhyming (though possibly atrocious) film **Judy Moody and the Not Bummer Summer** (John Schultz, 2011 USA). We think you'll not want to see this one so I'll not trouble you with a synopsis; I think it goes without saying that this is a title that is not even in our Selection committee's "Possibles" list. Phew!

What is your favourite film poster?

I first started public film screenings over in Lordshill, at the Oaklands Cinema I ran with our wonderful projectionist Jim McWilliams. We screened second-run titles, usually more mainstream than Phoenix fare, but at the time, and even into his later projecting days as the man in charge of spooling up, setting the gate, dimming the lights, and so on for the Phoenix, Jim was able to get "quad" posters for the films we screened and he even managed to obtain a lampbox in which he displayed the posters to give the genuine "what's on" effect.

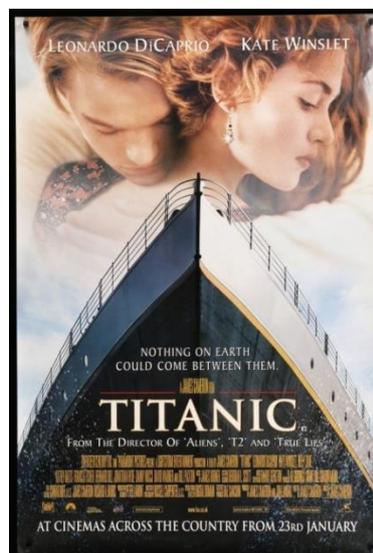
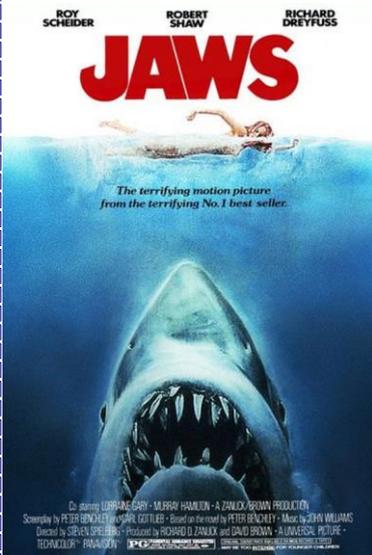
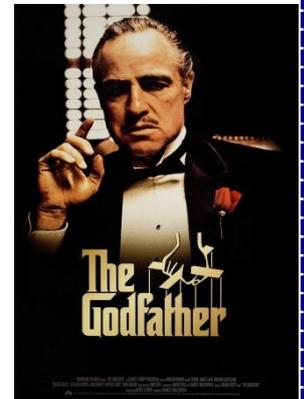


Many of the posters for the films we presented were impressive works of art in themselves, and it set me thinking about certain film posters that have become iconic within the genre. The poster for Hitchcock's **Vertigo** (Alfred Hitchcock, USA 1958) is a good example, whilst the shark's razor-sharp teeth tells us all we need to know about **Jaws** (Stephen Spielberg, USA 1975). Audrey Hepburn oozes class as she puffs on her cigarette for **Breakfast at Tiffany's** (Blake Edwards, USA 1961) and we are allowed to wonder who is pulling the strings in the poster for **The Godfather** (Francis Ford Coppola, USA 1972). The two in-love faces nevertheless appear doomed over the prow of **Titanic** (James Cameron, USA 1997), whilst knife-wielding Shelley Duvall is clearly not



a happy bunny, terrified as she is by Jack Nicholson's face on the poster for **The Shining**.

Which film posters stay in your mind? Let us know at our usual address and we will try to reproduce them in a future Newsletter.



Non PC films from the past – does it matter?

As I write this piece, the debate at Oriel College Oxford rages over the statue of Cecil Rhodes, with some dons allegedly refusing to lecture to students from that college. I was recently taken to task by a good friend of mine when I voiced an opinion about the “felling” of the Colston statue in Bristol. Like some other critics of the protest action, I suggested that in some ways this was an act of cultural vandalism in that if society is to move forward from the “bad old days” of colonialism, slavery, etc. the best way is to educate people about the kind of folks who perpetrated certain acts that are now seen in a very different historical light. Thus, the presence of statues (or whatever) of people like Colston and Rhodes can be an effective tool for education *if, and only if,* they are accompanied by clear explanation of the “wrongdoer’s” deeds and how we may, in very different, more open times, see how negatively such acts impacted on those who were on the receiving end.



Of course, this is not an easy thing to discuss, never mind resolve, and we should be mindful of where our policies might lead us. In another cultural field, Michael Jackson was once the darling of pop music. All that changed when revelations were published of a more tarnished side of his character, and the suggestion has been that radio stations etc. should no longer play his music. The BBC states that the artist has not been banned, although one wonders when any of his hits (and they were huge) were last played by our national broadcaster. As for **Bob Martin, Fred and the Nature Gang: Return of the Gopher Fred**, and **A Boy, a Girl and a Bike**, you can rest assured these three films will never appear on the BBC’s schedules, because they include Jimmy Saville in the cast list. Perhaps I should be grateful no known copy exists of one episode - **The Flight of the Red Shadow** - of my favourite series ever **Hancock’s Half Hour** (on both wireless and TV), since Rolf Harris was one of the actors on screen. Of course, closer to our cine-world, we have the #Me Too/Harvey Weinstein story now well-established and with a strong educational message behind it that has clearly made significant progress against the kind of actions for which Weinstein was proved guilty. That man has 326 movies listed on the imdb as producer, from films like **The Secret Policeman’s Other Ball** and **Scandal** in the 1980s through to titles including **The Hateful Eight** and **Tulip Fever** in the couple of years before his downfall. I mention the latter film because it was recently shown on BBC TV and is presently still available on their iPlayer set-up. Most recently, of course, we also have the case of actor Noel Clarke – one Phoenix member has suggested he is the U.K.’s own Harvey Weinstein, and the BAFTA organisation has found itself somewhat embarrassed by the events of their film



awards evening. Clarke is under a cloud for similar alleged perpetrations to those of Weinstein, and ITV pulled the final instalment of their Clarke-starring **Viewpoint** serial at very short notice once those allegations were published. Whilst his CV is much shorter than that of the American producer, if the allegations are proved true, one presumes his acting career may be at an end, but does that mean films such as the very popular **Fishermen’s Friends** from 2019, or the **Dr. Who** episodes over five years in

which he played Mickey Smith, will be off broadcasters’ programming lists? Will Trekkies have to throw away their DVDs of **Star Trek Into Darkness** (Clarke played Thomas Harewood) and will the cinematic curtains be drawn across the progress of Sam Peel from **Kidulthood**, through **Adulthood** to **Brotherhood** (and thus presumably no **Pensionerhood!**)? To the best of my knowledge, neither Weinstein nor Clarke was ever involved in a film called **Minefield!**

Of course, there are hundreds, nay thousands, of films out there with no such “difficulties” attached and it is to be hoped that the Phoenix would not programme anything that is offensive to anyone, but as you can see this may not always be an easy task for the film selection group!

