

An Investigation of Rural Welsh Cinemas: Their Histories, Memories and Communities

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Thesis Abstract

This thesis explores rural Welsh cinema history, in terms of both exhibition practice and audience experience, prior to 1970. In doing so it provides new contexts for the burgeoning, though still underrepresented, field of rural cinema studies. In considering rural regions of Wales, this thesis also seeks to overturn a dominance of urban studies within the limited amount of scholarship concerning Welsh cinema history.

Utilising a combination of archival and ethnographic methodologies, this thesis then asks what were the unique factors of rural Welsh cinemagoing and exhibition history. Furthermore, this thesis rejects any view of rural Wales as a culturally homogeneous zone and considers if these experiences and practices vary across the differing social, political, economic and linguistic regions of the country.

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Introduction

The purpose of this doctoral study is to explore the history of rural Welsh cinema, both in terms of exhibition practices and the social experience of cinemagoing, prior to 1970. In doing so, it makes significant contributions to the burgeoning field of rural cinema studies and Welsh cinema history more generally. The methodological underpinning of this work is greatly influenced by the New Film History and New Cinema History traditions, with an emphasis on rejecting 'history from above' (Maltby, 2011: 32) and instead using a range of competing written and oral sources to explore an everyday history. Chiefly, this has been achieved through the undertaking of both archival and ethnographic investigations.

The background of this study

This doctoral study was born out of the research undertaken between 2013 and 2014 for my master's degree dissertation. The project was in essence a pilot study for this PhD thesis, where the historical and current perceptions and experiences of one rural Welsh cinema were examined. The case study venue for my master's work was the Magic Lantern Cinema, situated in the rural small-town of Tywyn on the west coast of Wales. During the course of the Magic Lantern study, several gaps in existing knowledge became starkly evident. These included the study of Welsh cinema exhibition and cinemagoing history, to which there have been no significant contributions since Steffan Moitra's (2012) that I could identify at the time of writing. Within the existing works (Hogenkamp, 1985; Berry, 1994; Ridgwell, 1995, 1997; Richards, H., 2003, 2005; Miskell, 2006; James, 2007; Moitra, 2012) there had also been a dominant focus on the urban and industrial communities of South Wales, resulting in a substantial oversight in the consideration of a specifically *rural* Welsh cinema

history. Indeed, also notable at the time was a gap in rural cinema history studies on a global scale, though this is now thankfully a vastly more developed area (Thissen and Zimmermann, 2016; Treveri Gennari, Hipkins and O’Rawe, 2018). The Magic Lantern study was very much rooted in its focus on just one venue, not least due to the time and word-count limitations imposed during the master’s study; however these gaps in existing knowledge and the fascinating archival and ethnographic data uncovered during the project left me with a desire to explore the cinema histories of other rural Welsh towns and villages.ⁱ

This decision to study rural cinemas as social institutions was further spurred by my own background, growing up in Llanfyllin, a small-town in rural Mid Wales. Though officially a town, having been granted a town charter in 1293 by Llywelyn ap Dafydd, its small population and distance from larger towns gave it the feel of a village. Growing up, I was some eleven miles from the nearest single-screen independent cinema, the Pola in Welshpool, and twenty-five miles from the nearest multiplex, Shrewsbury Cineworld. With limited public transport, my cinemagoing experiences, until my friends and I began passing our driving tests, were largely special occasions. This was either through a rare trip with parents or friends’ parents to the cinemas in Shrewsbury or Welshpool, or an excruciating two-hour round trip to Shrewsbury on one of the infrequent buses to pass through Llanfyllin. On occasion, however, the local film society would rent out Llanfyllin High School’s theatre to screen a 35mm print of a film that had usually been on general release some three-months prior. This experience was decisively different to those I had uncovered from respondents in Tywyn, where there had been a permanent cinema since at least the

1930s, and different again from my own experiences of cinemagoing in Aberystwyth as a university student, where there is currently a choice of cinema venue.

My experiences of growing up in Llanfyllin further informed the design of this project, in its goal to overturn how rural Wales has been typically represented within both existing scholarship and general debates within British culture. A number of sociological studies were undertaken of various rural Welsh communities during the mid-twentieth century (Rees, 1950; Frankenberg, 1957; Davies and Rees, 1960), all of which contain representations of rural Wales as seemingly unaffected by the modernity brought on by the industrial revolution. Similarly, when speaking to relatives or friends about my master's thesis, they exhibited genuine shock that Tywyn's Assembly Rooms (the building that now houses the Magic Lantern) hosted film screenings in the late 1890s. I am guilty of this too, as I was shocked as a teenager to learn that my elderly neighbour and her friends had taken trips to Liverpool and Manchester during the 1920s and 30s. I too had wrongly bracketed off rural Wales into a (perhaps idealistic) mythic location of hills, sheep, and chapel attendance. As this thesis conveys, a focus on the impact of the cinema as a technological development and social space presents quite a different history of rural Wales than the reader may expect.

The value of this thesis

Equally, it was my hope that this project would make some contribution in illustrating the value of film studies and film history to the general public. Such value was questioned by members of the public on two occasions during the dissemination of my PhD project audience questionnaire. Both incidents occurred via social media comments and both

overtly questioned the value of public funding and resources being given to a project concerning the history of rural Welsh cinemagoing. Of course, I did not engage with these debates directly on social media, yet I do offer a response to these arguments here. This is not to say that I do not understand the arguments of those who criticise this project and its AHRC funding, at a time where public-spending is limited and austerity is a daily issue for many people, it is not hard to understand why some may criticise a project such as this one. From an academic perspective, I attended a conference concerning memory studies in 2017; here I presented my paper on methodologies for eliciting rural cinemagoing memories alongside presentations on memories of war, famine, epidemics and sexual assault. During the conference a common light-hearted joke was that my topic was much more “fun” or “light”. Whilst said in jest, these jokes were suggesting that a study of cinemagoing was perhaps not as valuable as a study of more impactful events. Again, I see the argument. Memory studies of the momentous or traumatic, including a number of those presented at this conference, are valuable in contextualising important events in history and exploring their long-term ramifications, at personal and cultural levels.

My response to both this public criticism and to those who may not see the value in the study of cinemagoing history is this: the study of everyday or ordinary memories are as valuable to historiography as the momentous or extreme. In terms of academic insight and knowledge, the study of the everyday allows for an assessment and understanding of how life is experienced around the extraordinary. Even within periods of the extraordinary, memories or study of the everyday provides fascinating insight into the impact of such events on the general public through memories of cultural experiences such as cinemagoing; for example, Richard Farmer’s (2019) work on cinemagoing during the

German bombing of Britain during World War Two, which considers audience experiences of Blackout cinemagoing and its unique function as a space of light in contrast to the blanket of darkness outside of the cinema auditorium. As the ethnographic portion of this thesis conveys, the role of the cinema within rural communities facilitated both everyday experiences and the personally momentous; equally, these memories often elicited discussions beyond cinemagoing, with respondents using cinemagoing memories to frame and reflect upon their family relationships, economic situations and the politics of youth. Indeed, Kuhn, Biltereyst and Meers (2017) argue that the general field of memory studies has contained a 'good deal' of work concerning 'trauma', 'Holocaust memory' and 'postmemory', resulting in a tendency to 'emphasise' the significance and importance of the 'dysphoric' over the pleasurable elements of cultural memory (p. 4).

I would also argue that the value of cinema history research is not just scholarly. Whilst the study of Welsh cinema history is not particularly prevalent within existing film history scholarship, the past decade has seen a small number of non-academic history texts that *do* address this topic. These vary in quality and depth and, of course, are not subject to peer review. However, some, such as Philip Lloyd's *Silvograph: Arthur Cheetham 1865-1937 Pioneer Film-Maker* (2018), are the result of many years of research. Lloyd's interest is primarily with Cheetham's films, as opposed to his exhibition practices, yet the inclusion of interviews carried out with the showman's descendants and those who remembered him provided insights into his large personality and entrepreneurial spirit. There are also a number of local-history texts that, whilst not specifically focused on the cinema, commonly provide insight into the area's cinemagoing past. For example, William Troughton's *Aberystwyth Voices* (2000) not only contains rare images of Aberystwyth's Rink and Market

Street cinemas, but also oral testimonies of those who remembered attending them. Indeed, I have experienced first-hand the popularity of such localised histories and the value of them to those who experienced the periods under discussion. From speaking with interviewees and carrying out reminiscence sessions with the elderly patrons of Aberystwyth Day Centre, to emails received in response to a brief article I published on Aberystwyth's cinema history in the local *Ego* magazine, a palpable sense of enjoyment and engagement in discussing local cinema memories has been consistently evident amongst my respondents during this research, as well as interest in my academic study. For many, this was an opportunity to discuss and reflect on childhood, adolescence, the local area, formative dating experiences and even meeting future spouses.

Thesis structure

Chapter one is a literature review, reflecting upon the works that this thesis draws upon and the academic fields and traditions it aims to make contributions to. Initially, this chapter assesses the current state of film historiography, with particular discussion of Robert Allen and Douglas Gomery's 1985 call for a revision of how film history research is conducted, as well as the relations between the two traditions that have subsequently emerged: the New Film History and the New Cinema History. The differences found within these traditions are debated here, whilst their shared emphasis on drawing upon a multitude of sources and works from disciplines outside of film studies is considered through critical assessment of relevant scholarship discussed throughout this chapter. This chapter closes with a discussion of the complexities concerning uses of the term *rural* and how this thesis interprets and engages with rurality. With the existing theories and traditions that frame this thesis established, chapter two provides an overview of the methodological approaches employed

by this thesis and the works that influenced these choices. A discussion surrounding the choice of Aberystwyth as this thesis' case study town is also present here. Beyond reasons of logistical ease, Aberystwyth represents a complication of the discussions of Welsh cultural theory discussed in chapter one.

Chapter three is the first of two archival chapters, which explore rural Welsh cinema exhibition history from the 1890s until the beginning of the 1930s, often considered to be the commencement of the British 'Golden Age' of cinemagoing (Kuhn, 2002: 1; Stubbings, 2003: 66). Chapter three thus opens with a globalised discussion of the development of pre-cinema technologies such as the magic lantern and zoetrope and their influence on the development of recognisable early-cinema devices such as the Kinetoscope and Cinématographe during the late 1890s. Moving away from a global focus, the rest of this chapter uses archival sources, predominantly local and national newspapers, to explore the spread of these early technologies to rural Wales via the more urban southern cities of Cardiff and Swansea. In doing so, the role of touring cinema showmen (particularly Arthur Cheetham) is utilised as a framing device for exploring the potentially unique or prominent issues and factors of rural Welsh cinema exhibition until roughly 1906. In that year, Cheetham opened in Rhyl what is considered by Dave Berry (1994) to be Wales' first fixed-location permanent cinema (p. 41). As such, chapter four considers factors and consequences of early fixed-location cinemagoing and exhibition across rural Wales, with particular focus on how these factors varied throughout the differing social and economic regions of the country. Equally prominent here is the role of the cinema showman turned proprietor as a local celebrity and the observable impact their civic status and relationships had on their exhibition practices and relationship with audiences. Findings from this chapter

include issues related to Sunday opening and the 1909 Cinematograph Act, the rapid growth of cinema as an international industry and the effect of this on rural Welsh cinema showmen turned cinema proprietors, and the impact of choice and competition on exhibition practices and audience experience.

Chapter five signals a shift in chronology, with the previous chapter having considered rural Welsh cinema history until the 1930s and the establishment of fixed-location cinemas as common and popular institutions throughout the region. In doing so, a period of Welsh cinema history that has been previously neglected has been explored, with the majority of existing scholarship on Welsh cinemas concerning the 1930s, 40s or 50s. Here, however, there is a temporal jump, with both chapters five and six considering audience responses that predominately recall rural Welsh cinemagoing of the 1950s and 60s. This period of focus represents the decades most frequently discussed by respondents within my audience questionnaires and interviews. Chapter five opens with a discussion concerning this temporal jump, and positions the focus on the 1950s and 60s as being a continuation of the work on 'Golden Age' cinemagoing carried out during the 1980s and 90s (Stacey, 1994; Kuhn, 2002) ultimately arguing that my empirical research concerns a *Silver Age* of British cinemagoing history. Predominately drawing upon data from my audience questionnaire, this chapter provides a more detailed account of the questionnaire design, dissemination and quantifying process than found with chapter two. This data analysis not only explores the data-set as a whole, but also focuses on a notable split between those who primarily recall the environment of cinemagoing and those who primarily discuss watching films, evoking current debates found between the New Film History and New Cinema History traditions. Here, the chapter explores how factors such as class, age, gender and geographic

location within Dennis Balsom's (1985) Three Wales Model shape differing recollections of rural Welsh cinema and potentially inform the environment versus film split. Chapter six then aims to present a more micro-view of rural Welsh cinemagoing memories, in comparison to the previous chapter's broad geographic scope, and achieves this by drawing upon interview data that specifically concerns the case-study of Aberystwyth. Like the previous chapter, there is an opening discussion of methodology, including a more detailed account of this thesis' interview process than found in chapter two. Drawing on data from five representative respondent interviews, this chapter explores the impact of differing experiences and perspectives of rurality on rural Welsh cinemagoing. Findings include the importance of the small-town Saturday matinee, differing perspectives on cinema staff members, and the role of local geographies and other institutions as part of the rural Welsh cinemagoing experience.

This thesis closes with a conclusion chapter, which performs two functions. Firstly, I critically assess limitations that have both shaped this thesis' design and also emerged during the research and write-up stages; whilst also reflecting on what could have been done differently, methodologically and in terms of content and analysis. Secondly, I assess the key findings of this doctoral study, consider how effectively they have answered the project's research questions, and highlight the original contributions to existing knowledge provided by these findings.

ⁱ Findings of my master's study included: uncovering archival and anecdotal evidence that the venue had been used for motion picture entertainment since the late 1890s; the visitation of touring showmen to the area until at least the early 1930s; the impact of the North American military base located outside the town during World War Two and the related impact of Americanisation on the local youth; and the importance of new technologies such as livestreaming to older audiences and its role in bringing them back to the cinema.

Chapter One - Literature Review

'To do film history today, one has to become an economic historian, a legal expert, a sociologist, an architectural historian, know about censorship and fiscal policy, read trade papers and fan magazines, even study Lloyds Lists of ships sunk during World War One to calculate how much of the film footage exported to Europe actually reached its destination' (Elsaesser, 1986: 248).

This quote, taken from Thomas Elsaesser's review of the influential *Film History: Theory and Practice* (Allen & Gomery, 1985), conveys the philosophy of this doctoral study in its exploration of rural Welsh cinemagoing history. As will be outlined in this thesis' methodology chapter, meeting Elsaesser's call for exhaustive and wide-reaching primary source data collection was limited by the availability of relevant data. This philosophy is instead applied to the academic debates and approaches that this thesis draws influence from and responds to, achieved by reading beyond works from film studies and engaging with relevant scholarship from other disciplines. Drawing upon these wider debates allows for a scholarly implementation of Elsaesser's arguments. For example, to provide an original contribution to Welsh cinema history, relevant debates concerning rural Welsh sociology, culture and politics will be utilised to identify further vital functions of a specifically rural cinemagoing history. However, this is not to say that this thesis seeks to position itself away from the film studies discipline. Rather, by drawing on wider scholarship it reflects film historiography approaches following Robert Allen and Douglas Gomery's (1985) call for revision.

The call for film historiography to change

It is generally considered that Allen and Gomery's book *Film History: Theory and Practice* (1985) was one of the first works to call for such a revisionist approach to film and cinema history methods, and it has remained an integral text on the subject (Drake, 2013: 142; Bosma, 2015: 15). As Eric Smoodin notes, *Film History: Theory and Practice* was, for the time, unique in not focusing on a historical aspect of cinema, rather it considered how film studies scholars might re-approach film history (2007: 10). Allen and Gomery critique the previously established notions of history in relation to film studies, especially the approaches film historians had taken in uncovering the past. They argue that film historians had previously been guilty of approaching a film text or subject as a static object, frozen in time and meaning, as well as assuming 'a single, indisputable truth' about the text in question (Allen and Gomery, 1985: iv). They state that the study of film history, up to that point, hadn't been conscious of its 'approaches, successes and shortcomings', and that, for it to be a mature academic subject, such self-reflection needed to occur (p. iii).

They call for scholars interested in the history of film to also draw empirical influence from the work of historians or sociologists, and to embrace the wider concepts and considerations that may come from working across these disciplines (p. 4); especially the notions of an absolute truth or 'realism'. For the authors, such a revisionist approach can be applied to all facets of film history, and they provide suggestions for how technological, economic, aesthetic and social studies of film can be considered by the newly liberated social/historical film historian. In relation to an archival/audience study such as this thesis, they argue that a modern film historian can use their results to not only yield information about the history of film, but also to build a 'more general understanding of a particular city

or town' (p.193). Such a 'spatial turn', Jeffrey Klenotic (2011) argues, has allowed for a shift in focus within film historiography away from the city and onto a 'broad examination' of precise cinema locations 'within a multiplicity of sites', including rural villages and small-towns (p. 63). This is particularly valuable in relation to this thesis' research goal of exploring the social history of Wales and the role of cinemagoing within it. Indeed, this spatial turn in film studies allows for consideration of 'cinema's connections to the socio-spatial practices, flows and blockages within and between' new sites of study (ibid). Such an understanding can be achieved by utilising methods and theories associated with the aforementioned technological, economic, aesthetic and social studies, as is the case with many of the works drawn upon in this chapter.

Allen and Gomery were calling for film studies academics to think more like social scientists or historians than they may have done previously, including the notion that history should no longer totally be considered from *above* (e.g. from the perspective of institutions), but rather as a social history, one from *below*. That is not to say that historiography in other disciplines has always been practiced in such a revisionist manner. Indeed, the approaches of Allen and Gomery share many similarities with postmodern history studies, itself a conscious effort to move away from traditional concepts and methodologies of approaching the past. Sarah Street (2000), in the opening chapter of *British Cinema in Documents*, considers how postmodern historians have previously approached the study of the past (p. 1). Postmodernism, she states via citation of Georg Iggers (1997), was an opportunity for historians in the twentieth century to 'scrutinize' their methodologies and to 'embrace' politics, economics and culture, and the interaction between them (pp. 1 – 2). Notably, Willie Thompson (2004) argues that postmodernism truly found its footing within the

consciousness of historians in the late 1970s, as its influence slowly emerged from attempts to find alternatives to modernist approaches (pp. 6 – 7).

The New Film History tradition

If Allen and Gomery's call for action paved the way for a revision of film historiography, then two edited collections represent points of divergence that have since emerged, prompting further debates surrounding how film history can or should be approached: *The New Film History: Sources, Methods, Approaches* (Chapman, Glancy & Harper, 2007) and *Explorations in New Cinema History: Approaches and Case Studies* (Maltby, Biltereyst & Meers, 2011). In the case of *The New Film History*, it is how the authors apply the approaches championed by Allen and Gomery, rather than *what* the chapters discuss that has influenced my work. Indeed, most of the chapters focus their arguments around a particular film, filmmaker, or genre of film. Yet, it is the way in which Chapman et al. define an active moving away from 'old' or 'traditional' film history that is of value to this thesis.

Chapman et al., in their introductory chapter, define film history studies as having existed within two paradigms: one focussed on aesthetics and film form, and the other with film as a 'reflection or mirror' of society (Chapman et al., 2007: 2–3). For the authors, these paradigms exhibit static and passive approaches to film history, with the former having a narrow view of study, mostly concerning 'auteur' films with a focus on the text, eschewing cultural contexts of production (pp. 2–3). For Chapman et al., early examples of this 'narrow' film history approach include *A Million and One Nights* (Ramsaye, 1926) and *The Film Till Now* (Rotha, 1930), both of which share an affinity with art history in their concentration on aesthetic and form. The latter focus on film as reflection, they argue, is

born out of sociological studies, and whilst it provides more scope for discussions of a film's context within society than the former, it remains too 'simplistic' in how it considers film as a reflection of society. For the authors, this paradigm would have scholars accept what they see on screen as a straightforward depiction of reality, rather than a representation or 'mediation' (pp. 4-5). Having defined the *old* and the problematic paradigms within it, Chapman et al. lay out what defines their approach to the *new*, essentially a continuation of the move away from static and narrow foci: 'a greater level of methodological sophistication' (p.6). Firstly, they define the New Film History as requiring attention to historical 'process' and individual 'agency' in both the production and reception of films (ibid). Secondly, the New Film History shines importance on an expanded range of primary sources available to a researcher, including the analysis of memories. Finally, the New Film historian should be able to identify the differing discourses provided by the visual and aural qualities of a film, rather than, as has previously been the case, reading the film based largely on its narrative (pp. 7-8).

Yet, as previously mentioned, the majority of the chapters in this collection revolve around the analysis of films, though in a far broader contextual sense than had been previously afforded, rather than ethnographically informed explorations of audience reception or exhibition. For example, Melvyn Stokes (2007: 13) considers how *Gone with the Wind* (1939) evokes notions of the 'lost cause' - a romantic myth of the 'old' southern states of America, its traditions and involvement in the Civil War – but also, through certain shots and scenes, contradicts this 'moonlight and magnolias' depiction of the south. True to revisionist approaches, Stokes calls for a reappraisal of the traditional view of *Gone with the Wind* as fitting the 'lost cause' myth, as many films at the time did, and now viewing it as a text that

attempted to subvert these representations. This approach is very much in line with key writing on the New Film History. Indeed, even the term New Film History, first coined by Thomas Elsaesser in the review article 'The New Film History' (1986) (Chapman et al., 2007: 5), connotes that films themselves are the foundations scholars apply their new approaches to. Elsaesser, whilst reviewing *Film History: Theory and Practice*, discusses the New Film History as being born out of two types of pressure on film historians. The first, 'a polemical dissatisfaction' with the established narratives of early film pioneers and the dominant methodologies that formed these accepted histories (Elsaesser, 1986: 246). The second, a desire for academics to utilise materials now available to them through the preservation and restoration efforts of the world's archives. Elsaesser continues to state that the New Film History should be entitled 'the New History of Cinema' as the approach it takes allows for the acknowledgment of the 'complex historical, sociological, legal and economic phenomenon' that is cinema (p. 247). However, it is the term New Film History that has stuck and, as previously discussed, there has been a concerted effort from scholars within the tradition to keep arguments centred around films, with warnings made to those who subscribe to a focus on cinemas as institutions and social sites that they have perhaps lost sight of the importance of films to cinema history. Indeed, in a recent article Sue Harper (2019: 690), co-editor of *The New Film History*, seeks to remind film historians of the 'vital' functions films themselves present to audiences and their memories. Almost as a counterpoint to this, however, Biltereyst, Maltby and Meers, in the introduction of their recently published collection *The Routledge Companion to New Cinema History* (2019), note that a consequence of a heavy focus on film aesthetics and spectatorship is 'that this body of scholarly work has not been able to answer, or even address, key questions of cinema's history' (p. 2).

Indeed, some recent studies have instead shifted to a more dominant focus on social audience and exhibition histories, with the edited collection *Explorations in New Cinema History: Approaches and Case Studies* (Maltby, Biltereyst & Meers, 2011) having a pivotal role in contesting the focus on films within the New Film History tradition. Instead, it showcased the works of scholars who have expanded the boundaries of New Film History to include audience studies and investigations of the histories of cinemas as spaces of social cinemagoing. Prior to its publication, a number of scholars, including Jackie Stacey (1994), Annette Kuhn (2002), Mark Jancovich et al. (2003) and Kathryn Fuller-Seeley (2008), had applied the revisionist, interdisciplinary, and culturally conscious approaches championed by New Film History researchers as a tool for considering wider issues relating to the cinema, primarily in relation to cinema audiences. These studies all consider audience responses to films and engagement with cinema, as an institution, to be as informative about the politics – the academic approaches, functions and importance – of film history as any work that focuses primarily on a film or genre as a text, such as those found in Chapman et al.

Jancovich, Lucy Faire and Sarah Stubbings' (2003) *The Place of the Audience: Cultural Geographies of Film Consumption*, which mixed an ethnographic approach with archival research to investigate audiences' cinema choices in Nottingham, is explicit in its desire to move away from traditional histories of cinemas. The authors refer to Douglas Gomery's *Shared Pleasures: A History of Movie Exhibition in America* (1992), a thorough charting of the history of cinemas in North America, as being an 'internal' business history, resulting in

the 'meaning of film consumption' to historic cinemagoers being all but ignored (Jancovich et al., 2003: 3).

Maltby (2011), in the introductory chapter of *Explorations in New Cinema History: Approaches and Case Studies*, states that he and his co-editors consciously exchanged the word 'film' for 'cinema' in the book's title, done so as to distinguish it from film history (p. 4). He continues to argue that film history works have been largely 'detached from the circumstances' of the consumption of the films they analyse (p.7). As such, for Maltby, these studies treat films themselves as 'proxies for the missing historical audiences', resulting in the actual modes of circulation and responses of the audience being mainly ignored (ibid). Due to its exploration of rural Welsh cinema history as a social space of exhibition, it is the New Cinema History that this doctoral study would likely be described as sitting most comfortably within. However, the term New Film History will remain the framing expression used during this thesis to refer to both New Film History and New Cinema History traditions, unless specific reference to one or the other is required.

Memory studies/oral history

Within this audience focussed expansion of New Film History, the collection and analysis of memories has been a frequently used methodology, one that serves as a 'component' of 'understanding audiences and their behaviour', a key research goal of the tradition (ibid., 11). The discussion of how this thesis will collect, analyse, and utilise memories will serve better purpose in the following chapter on methods. However, it is important to establish the existing works concerning memory studies that will be drawn upon and inform this thesis.

The application of memory studies informed methodologies within film studies has become more prevalent over the past twenty years (Kuhn, Biltereyst and Meers, 2017: 3), no doubt as part of the response to a call for revision to film historiography. Indeed, as argued by Kuhn et al., film, communication and media studies have become prominent academic fields within the memory studies discipline. This, they argue, should not come as a surprise, as collective memory of the past century has been 'crucially informed' by mass media, with cinema 'perhaps especially' holding a prominent role within this field (ibid: 4). This growth of memory studies within film history scholarship (particularly that which concerns social cinema history), and the reciprocal prominence of film and cinema within memory studies itself, is well evidenced by Kuhn et al.'s arguments appearing within their introduction to a special edition of *Memory Studies* (2017), dedicated to using memory as a means of exploring cinemagoing experiences from the perspectives of cinema users.

Memory studies as a defined discipline has its roots – as so many approaches utilised in the New Film History do – within history and sociology, particularly the use of oral histories. James Fentress and Chris Wickham's *Social Memory* (1992) considers the rise of memory studies within the history and sociology disciplines and explores the value of memories within historiography. The authors argue that memories are unique amongst historical sources as they have a clear 'owner' and embody the sensation of an event, one that is personal to the respondent (pp. 3-5). Conversely, Sarah Street (2000), whilst discussing authorship in film historiography, notes that archival document sources that aren't intended for others to read – minutes written by civil servants, diaries – are often carefully composed

to have a 'semblance' of neutrality, requiring close analysis in order to uncover the nuances of their agency (p. 7). Meanwhile, those written for official distribution – film reviews, newspaper articles – will have a certain degree of agency attached. Yet, this agency is not necessarily that of the named author, rather the 'authorship' of the piece could be more representative of their place within a 'critical establishment' (ibid).

Within the film studies discipline, Kuhn and Stacey have been key figures in the utilisation of memory studies as a method for examining historical audiences' experiences at the cinema. Stacey's *Star Gazing* (1994) and Kuhn's *An Everyday Magic: Cinema and Cultural Memory* (2002) both pay as much credence to *how* something is said or recollected by their respondents as they do to what is said. Kuhn, in her chapter within *Explorations in New Cinema History* (2011: 85-99), describes cinema memory studies as drawing influence from oral history research traditions. Here, she invokes the paradigm associated with Maltby's call for a new cinema history by stating that the most 'striking' findings of such oral history studies are the extent to which respondents' cinemagoing memories revolve around the social experience, rather than the specific films they watched (p. 85). It is worth noting, however, that some scholars position oral history as having overlaps with reminiscence or memory studies – what is not said, how a memory is performed, the context of a memory – yet argue that the oral historian's concern with the interviewer/interviewee relationship separates them from other works of memory reclamation (Bornat and Diamond, 2007: 30). Further to this, Emily Keightley and Michael Pickering (2013) discuss memory studies and oral histories as having great potential for collaboration, yet they frequently meet at an impasse. For them, memory studies practitioners often view oral history as lacking theoretical influence, whilst oral historians consider memory studies to lack practical

orientation (p. 4). Keightley and Pickering's call for memory studies and oral history approaches to meet and benefit from the combined theoretical benefits (such as psychoanalysis, discourse analysis, notions of forgetting, and cultural memory theory) and practical benefits (deeper discussion of methodology and the techniques of memory elicitation) is approached within both Stacey and Kuhn's works. A further discussion of this notion will take place in the following methodology chapter; however, it is this thesis' aim to meet the call of Keightley and Pickering – building on such application as found in the works of Kuhn and Stacey within audience studies – and combine memory studies theory with oral history practicalities.

Searching for a *histoire totale*

There are some further methodological concerns with the study of memories that will be a key focus of the next chapter. Yet, even these concerns – primarily surrounding the notion of truth – are clearly informed by the approaches of the New Film History tradition. That is, within a postmodern approach to history, the establishment of a total truth is not paramount and should be acknowledged as constructed by versions and representations of the same event (Bennett, 1997: 223). Furthermore, the combination of memory reclamation with archival sources in this project is approachable through an understanding of realist theory, one of the integral aspects of the New Film History tradition as an alternative to the old. As Allen and Gomery (1985:17) note, a realist approach to film history demands that historical explanations should be 'tested' by comparing one's historical 'evidence' to competing explanations.

Notions of truth and realism are prevalent in postmodern historical studies. Sarah Street (2000) frames a distinction between 'the past' and 'history', something which occurred versus the interpretive constructions of historians, respectively (p. 1). Similarly, Barbara Klinger (1997) discusses the concept of 'histoire totale' or 'total history', where a researcher should not expect to reach a total or comprehensive truth, yet should approach their research with that goal in mind (pp. 108 – 110). Total history, Klinger states, involves the recognition of 'complex interactive environments or levels of society involved in the production of the event' (p. 109); such comprehensiveness allows for the application of synchronic or diachronic change analysis. Both, Klinger argues, are valuable in the total history approach to film studies, whereas the reliance on one can be detrimental to this approach; mirroring the critique of Allen and Gomery, she describes film historians as being 'stuck in synchrony' – considering a film only within the context of its production, for example (p. 111). For the author, both synchronic and diachronic approaches are associated with their own areas of study and methodologies that account for a total history of classical Hollywood cinema. Under the synchronic approach, Klinger outlines the role of three different areas of study. Firstly, 'cinematic practices' – the practices associated with film production, distribution, exhibition and personnel that shaped the film at the time of production, and the primary source material created by them, e.g. memos and posters (p. 115); this is therefore a film-focused mode of film history, akin to the work of Chapman et al (2007). Secondly, 'intertextual zones' – which acknowledge the relation between cinema and other media, art and business and the role of journalistic reviews and practices (Klinger, 1997: 117). This approach, when appropriated into a reception study, is productive in assessing formative influences on a film text, the expectations that audience members applied to their filmgoing based on other 'spheres' they engage with, and 'modes of

evaluation' other media may have had on cinema (p 117). Finally, within the synchronic, Klinger outlines the benefits and methods in investigating 'social and historical contexts' (p. 119). Here she discusses how the previous two areas operate within their own spheres, interact with each other and, also, with social and historical developments – the economy, contemporary laws, religion, politics, class, ethnicity, gender equality, family reception, ideology, and cross-cultural reception – at the time of production; when all three are combined a researcher can start to establish 'meanings for films' (pp. 119 – 122).

These synchronic considerations, Klinger argues, need to be supplemented when one considers the ever-changing modes of 'cinematic practices' that occur since a film's release (p 123). To illustrate this argument, she discusses the then popular laserdisc technology and how the production and distribution of Hollywood film was no longer confined to the studio system. Furthermore, she argues that art-house cinemas, home video and television production now allow for classic films to be 'resuscitated' for audiences, an audience they weren't produced for (p. 123). For such diachronic considerations, Klinger outlines a 'suggestive mapping of terrains' that indicate, through 'new moments in history', how such resurrection is performed (p. 123). These terrains are: revivals and retrospectives, reviews (Klinger cites the trend in the 1970s for nostalgia reviews of classic films), academic theory and criticism, re-broadcast on television, home-video reproduction, fan culture and the role new technologies play in contemporary fandom of classic stars, the biographical legend (the contemporary meaning of a star, film or director that has been influenced by 'legends' since a film's release), and, finally, cross-cultural reception (pp. 124 – 127). Such a diachronic approach applies to my analysis of audience memories of past cinemagoing that are recollected from contexts of the present.

Applying the realist method, and Klinger's synchronic/diachronic approaches, to this project's use and analysis of memories and archival materials will provide the nuanced understanding needed to consider respondents' memories in relation to primary source, archival texts that document the histories of Welsh cinemas, their audiences, and cinemagoing. Notably, such an application is used in Helen Richards' article, 'Memory Reclamation of Cinema Going in Bridgend, South Wales, 1930 – 1960' (2003). Here she focuses on the memories of respondents to forge an 'alternative' local history of cinemagoing in the Welsh mining community of Bridgend, an approach that offers the view of the people who experienced it, instead of the dominant 'official' archival sources such as 'local newspapers' (p. 342). However, in her later article, 'Cinema as an Attraction: Representations of Bridgend's Cinema Exhibition History in the Glamorgan Gazette, Wales, 1900 – 1939' (2005), the author utilises such newspapers as her primary source, with the intention of establishing such an 'official' history (p. 429). Evoking notions of realism and New Film History, she asserts that this piece could never be a 'complete' official history; rather it is just one 'official' history, a newspaper's engagement with exhibition marketing, that could complement other studies and historical approaches in order to provide a 'fuller history of cinema exhibition in South Wales' (p. 429). Between these two articles, Richards is positioning memory studies as an alternative to dominant official histories, a type of history that can never be complete. I suggest that considering both methods, the alternative discourse provided by memories and the analysis of more traditional 'official' archival sources, can work together as complementary devices towards achieving a total history of cinema as social space of exhibition. Indeed, Richards' work is testament to this; as both articles concern Bridgend, a far better understanding of the area's cinemagoing history can

be extracted when both articles are considered as companion pieces. Ultimately, it is the aim of this project to draw influence from Richards' combination of archival sources and memory reclamation that relate to cinemagoing during the same time period.

Cultural vs Personal memory

Within memory studies there is a debate focused on comparisons between two differing modes of memory study: the study of *individual* memory versus *collective* (or cultural) memory. The debate arises from the desire of academics to establish if the analysis of memories conveys greater detail about wider cultural issues, prevalent at the time of the memory, or primarily the experiences of an individual, i.e. the person who is remembering. Though I will be discussing the methodological implications of this further in the following chapter, this is an argument that any study involving memories should acknowledge within its approach. Historian Anna Green (2004: 41) positions cultural theorists as traditionally considering individual memories to be 'insignificant', especially in comparison to the 'dominant, public affirmations' of collective memory. However, this thesis shares Astrid Erll's (2008: 2) understanding of cultural memory as being 'the interplay of the present and past in socio-cultural constructs' which allows for individual acts of remembering to relate to a cultural or collective understanding. Her goal is to establish a framework for cultural memory studies, and as part of this she delves deeper into the relationship between individual and collective memory.

Erll outlines two levels of how culture and memory intersect, the cognitive (individual memory) and the social and medial (collective) (pp. 5 – 6). She describes the cognitive level as 'biological memory', the concept that no memory is purely individual, but shaped by

collective contexts of the people we meet and the media we use, allowing us to create individual cognitive schemata for remembering the past and encoding new experiences (p. 5). Here memory is literal and the cultural is metonymic, representing the influence of the socio-cultural on memory (ibid). For Erll, this conception of collective memory is prominent in oral history, social psychology and neurosciences (p. 5). The second level considers memory to be metaphorical, wherein social groups construct a shared past utilising a symbolic order of media and institutional agency (p. 5). Societies don't remember literally, rather the reconstruction of a shared past resembles the processes of individual remembering, for example the role of selection and perspective in creating versions of the past (p. 5). Summating, Erll argues that these levels can be individually described but overlap in practice. She states that a pre-cultural individual memory doesn't exist, yet there are no collective or cultural memories detached from the individual and only existing within media (p. 5). 'Just as socio-cultural contexts shape individual memories', she writes, 'a memory which is represented by media and institution must be actualised by individuals. (p. 5)' However, Anna Green (2004: 36), drawing from psychoanalytic theories of unconscious mental schemas, states that individual memories within such a paradigm of the individual versus the collective often 'fit' unconscious 'cultural scripts or templates' and that, as such, individual memory is either absorbed by cultural memory, or is to be considered passive. This approach differs from the perspective of some scholars, such as Kuhn (2010), who view individual memory to be an opportunity to examine how individuals reconstruct the past or emotionally respond to it.

Richard Maltby (2011: 5), writing in *Explorations in New Cinema History*, discusses considering an audience as active as relating directly to postmodern approaches. Quoting

Peter Miskell, an economic historian who studied Welsh cinema history, Maltby (2011: 5) argues that some historians view films as a symbol of a post-literate world, where people can read but won't. However, Maltby, drawing upon the arguments of Hayden White, counters that historians should learn the specialist lexicon, grammar and syntax of visual evidence (p. 5). Maltby continues to argue that such notions are born out of postmodernism and that, in the case of the historical film, audiences utilise active reading to produce interpretations of the past, rather than passively accepting that what they're seeing is reality; a concept that complements the arguments of Chapman et al and their arguments surrounding audiences as 'readers' of film (2007: 8). Away from film reception, Green's consideration of memory respondents unconsciously fitting within cultural scripts is indirectly challenged by the work of memory studies scholars such as Thomas J Anastasio et al. (2008), who propose that individual remembering and cultural memories can coexist, methodologically and theoretically. They argue that the processes of individual and collective memory are the same, even if the results are 'different on different levels' (p. 41). Therefore, they perceive the individual and cultural to be 'analogous' processes (p. 2) that can be considered at the same time, potentially in contention with each other as results, yet the researcher isn't forced to focus on one or the other. This is where the approaches of Kuhn, Stacey, and those of this thesis can be placed: acknowledging the complexity of memories on both an individual and cultural level within the same project and exploring the consequences of multi-level memories, as discussed by Anastasio et al.

Critical Debates about and within the New Film History

It would be remiss to not mention some potential hazards and existing critiques of the New Film History tradition, though finding mention of them in the works cited earlier has proven

difficult. As mentioned previously, there has been somewhat of a schism between those who particularly align their research with either the *film* or *cinema* traditions, with both Sue Harper's (2019) and Daniela Treveri Gennari and Sarah Culhane's (2019) recent articles aiming to reaffirm the importance of the film text within cinema history studies.¹ Other, more specific, disagreements have arisen within the tradition, particularly in relation to the gathering and interpretation of evidence. Melvyn Stokes, in his introductory chapter to the edited collection *American Movie Audiences* (1999), discusses arguments that have occurred between authors operating within the New Film History tradition and those who found issue with its revisionist approach. Specifically, Stokes considers the academic back-and-forth between Robert Allen, Robert Sklar and Ben Singer, in which Sklar challenged the methodologies and revisionist purpose of Allen's work concerning Manhattan – wherein Allen claimed that his research proved the middle classes embraced cinema earlier than generally believed – with Singer following up with a similar critique (Stokes, 1999: 3). Sklar, Stokes states, viewed Allen as having underestimated the number of Nickelodeons present in Manhattan during his analysis of the 1906 – 1912 period (ibid). The issue, Stokes and Sklar contest, is that other archival evidence has shown that there could have been as many as 600 cinema venues operating at that time and that Roy Rosenzweig's 1983 study portrayed the continual opening of cheap, working class cinemas resulting in a dominance of working-class audiences until at least 1914. As such, Sklar accused Allen of revising history for his own benefit and as 'diminish[ing] the significance of immigrant and working-class audiences' (p. 3). Stokes continues to describe how, some seven years later, Ben Singer wrote an article again criticising Allen's underestimation of figures and challenging his depiction of the Nickelodeons as attracting mostly middle-class audiences (p. 3). Stokes doesn't utilise these examples to dissuade revisionist approaches, however it does serve as

a warning for a tradition that puts emphasis on the use of primary sources. Stokes charts the fallout from Singer's argument as supporters of Allen's approach and evidence speak out against Singer and Sklar's criticism, whilst some agreed that generalisations, underestimations and perhaps not enough archival research was utilised by Allen (pp. 4 – 5). Indeed, Stokes concludes that what we can take from the Singer-Allen controversy is refined primary source data and healthy differing discourses surrounding early cinema exhibition in New York (p. 5), that, whilst this spat was unfortunate, it challenged both Allen and Singer to dig deeper, uncover further sources, and present different representations of those sources for scholars to disseminate and discuss (Grieverson, 2005: 47).

In Allen's (1996) own response to Singer, the author touches upon what I perceive to be a potential methodological issue with the New Film History tradition's heavy utilisation of primary source data: the difference between 'accuracy and adequacy' of data (p. 76). That is, though Allen concedes that Singer's list of theatres was more *accurate*, he views his own as more *adequate* for the purposes of his research (p. 77). Singer, Allen claims, has included far too many theatres, flattening them under the term nickelodeon whereas some may be considered under a myriad of other terms, resulting in the discussion of patterns of difference between types of cinema disappearing from his work (p. 77). The arguments between Singer and Allen evoke Jeffery Klenotic's (1994: 47) description of New Film Historians sometimes acting like a 'dog chasing its own tail' in pursuit of a methodological approach that will present a 'truth'. So, whilst the fight to keep upturning archival evidence and methodologies is of benefit, it represents a double-edged sword, one where, very public, arguments over whose primary data is more accurate or adequate can erupt and a researcher can waste time chasing their tail searching for a truth, a notion I've already

addressed in this chapter in relation to a total history. Indeed, this debate highlights the importance of self-consciousness in the interpretation of evidence within the New Film History tradition. Sarah Street (2000: 3) considers, in relation to researching audience responses to films, the importance of utilising supplementary evidence to support the interpretation that one extracts from empirical data. For her, a researcher must always consider the place a document has within their argument, acknowledging that a researcher shouldn't be put off from making conclusions, even if the perceived logic of postmodernism is to question any interpretation (pp. 8 – 9). Rather, Street argues, a document's status in an issue is not something that is taken for granted, yet the support of other relevant sources can increase the validation of a researcher's interpretation.

Archival approaches to twentieth century cinema history

During the early stages of this research, I was guilty of conflating the prominent use of archival documents, particularly those of a quantitative or statistical nature, with what Street (2000) would describe as charting the 'past' rather than discussing 'history' (p. 4). My focus was arguably too fixated on the ethnographic and I limited myself to believing that only ethnographic data could be used to explore the social and cultural functions of cinema history. However, through my own archival research and reading relevant scholarship, the valuable contributions archivally informed data – including those based almost entirely on statistics – can have in exploring the relationship between cinema and society became clear. Indeed, this thesis contains chapters heavily informed by archival data and it seeks to make a valuable contribution to the presentation of social exhibition history through the use of archival sources.

This thesis, whilst broadly considering the history of rural Welsh cinemagoing prior to 1970, has ultimately focussed on two specific periods within this time span, rather than attempting to account for the whole period, with archival sources prominently informing the analysis of the first of these periods from the 1890s to the 1920s. Other studies, however, have sought to present a complete timeline of chronology for their chosen topic through their use of archival sources. For example, one seminal text, Douglas Gomery's (1992) *Shared Pleasures: A History of Movie Presentation in the United States*, provides a broad overview of exhibition history. Gomery charts the rise of cinema exhibition in the USA from the early days of Edison's Kinetoscope parlours and the Nickelodeon up until the time of publication. His sources are primarily archival in their nature, with particular focus on the economics of the industry, the income of cinemas, the wage paid to employees, the business deals, conglomerates, and monopolies that surrounded the industry. Gomery acknowledges that there has been a shift in emphasis within film studies onto the experience of the spectator, with many 'fine books and articles' that approach exhibition in this way (1992: xix). He, however, is more concerned with the 'changing material conditions' of exhibition, through focus on the film business, that can offer a beginning for a 'complete re-examining' of how film history academics tackle reception (p xix).

Jeffrey Richards' (1984) *The Age of the Dream Palace: Cinema and Society in 1930s Britain* (reprinted in 2010) provides a thorough overview of cinema's role within 1930s English society, through the uncovering and analysis of a myriad of archival sources contemporary to the period. Chapman et al. (2007) highlight this work and its exhaustive archival methodology as being an 'important revisionist landmark' (p. 7). Richards (1984) positions his approach as being 'both historical and contextual' (p. 5), and the work opens with what

he defines as an examination 'of the role of cinema-going in people's lives in the Thirties' (p. 8); though it is worth noting that discussions of Wales and Scotland are limited, with Wales typically inferred as being addressed when references are made to statistics relating to England and Wales. In lieu of eliciting ethnographic data, Richards relies on social surveys, such as Mass-Observation, censor manuscripts, trade papers, a number of local and national newspapers and even House of Commons debate records, amongst other primary sources, to construct a picture of cinemagoing and exhibition practices of the time. Richards, who would later contribute to *The New Film History* and edit *The Unknown 1930s: An Alternative History of the British Cinema, 1929 – 1939* (1998), imposes wider theoretical frameworks and concepts in latter chapters of *The Age of the Dream Palace*. Two sections – one on censorship, the other on the impact of stardom – particularly evoke the practices of the burgeoning New Film History tradition, due to their specific consideration of cinema as a 'cultural and social force' (Richards, J., 1984: 89) with issues of censorship and fan responses to stars serving as examples of the revisionist approaches to cinema history that would follow over the next thirty years.

Stuart Hanson's (2007) *From Silent Screen to Multi-Screen: A History of Cinema Exhibition in Britain since 1896*, another chronological study tracking up until the period of publication, combines a broad overview of the period with case study micro-histories. Indeed, chapters five through seven all deal with such foci: the shopping mall's impact, the 'experience' of the multiplex in relation to attendance figures, the potential correlation between developments in film marketing and developments in cinema (2007: 4). However, like Gomery, his primary investigation is tracking economic development and audience

statistics, provided through archival sources, and he presents his findings by following a linear timeline from the late 1880s up until the time of publication.

The 1930s and 40s have proven to be a popular period for academics considering British cinemagoing history, which is unsurprising as it is considered a Golden Age in terms of cinema attendance (Stubbings, 2003: 66). As will be discussed further in chapter three, this thesis focuses its ethnographic attention on the post-Golden Age period of the 1960s and 70s. Sarah Stubbings notes a rise in cultural or popular nostalgia for this Golden Age during the 1980s and 90s (*ibid*), decades which presented film historians of the period with a generation of retirees and their memories. The research of this doctoral study was conducted between 2015 and 2019, and it was notably easier to locate respondents who could recall the 1950s and 60s, rather than the 1930s and 40s. This shift is well represented within the recently published edited collection *The Routledge Companion to British Cinema History* (Hunter, Porter, and Smith. eds., 2017) which contains a wealth of work that directly concerns a post-Golden Age British cinema landscape, with only a handful of the collections' thirty-nine chapters considering the Golden Age. ⁱⁱ

This is not to discount the value of works that focus on this Golden Age period. Indeed, there are relevant debates and approaches to be drawn upon from these works and considered in relation to later periods. John Sedgwick (2000), in his book *Popular Filmgoing in 1930s Britain*, analyses ledgers and box office records taken from his cinemas of study to produce a far more quantitative study than the other works considered here. This numerical and statistical focus is due, in part, to Sedgwick's experiences studying economics and social history as a postgraduate student, experience he then applies to existing film theory and

film historiography (p. ix). Whilst his book does not use qualitative methods to consider audience experience, its quantitative data analysis informs findings surrounding social contexts of cinema history. For example, one case study utilises box office receipts and ledgers to compare the performance of the top one hundred films exhibited in Bolton – a highly industrial and working-class area – in comparison with the national performance of those films. Furthermore, Sedgwick, like Richards (1984) utilises archival methods to address stardom, through the application of his statistically informed popularity index that is used to assess and compare the popularity of films starring certain actors (Sedgwick, 2000: 187). For example, he theorises, using his POPSTAT methodology, that the popularity of certain actors can be tied to the genres they appear in, yet America comedy actors were far less popular than their UK counterparts (pp. 193 – 194).ⁱⁱⁱ Here, Sedgwick is taking heed of Street's approach of utilising a wide range of archival sources to make informed interpretations from evidence. The use of quantitative statistical data to uncover social factors of Golden Age cinemagoing is further explored within the work of Sue Harper (2004), who has used an extant 1930s ledger of Portsmouth's Regent cinema to explore lower middle-class tastes. Here Harper argues that this lower middle-class audience 'allayed its anxieties about its place in the world' through the choosing of films which 'would confirm its own attitudes on culture and sexual probity' (p. 577). Harper specifically notes that her findings do not substantially conflict with the similarly quantitative work of Sedgwick or, more notably, the highly qualitatively informed work concerning the period carried out by Kuhn. Thus, not only can statistical archival resources be used to explore social issues of cinemagoing history, but as Harper suggests, their results can be used as complementary or competing evidence alongside the ethnographic to further explore cinema history and as part of the push for a *histoire totale*.

The study of early cinema history

This thesis also seeks to contribute to existing scholarship on early cinema exhibition history; particularly of the 1890s, a period that saw the introduction and rapid development of recognisable exhibition and filmmaking technology. These developments are discussed in detail in Chapter Three of this thesis, drawing upon scholarship that is again limited in scope compared to discussions of Golden Age cinemagoing. There have been valuable new additions to the study of early cinema history found in recently published edited collections. For example, *Cinema, Audiences and Modernity* (Biltereyst, Maltby, and Meers, 2012) contains two chapters that consider the 1890s, with Åsa Jermudd exploring Swedish spaces of exhibition between 1897 and 1911, whilst Annemone Ligensa discusses German cinemagoing and the emergence of Asta Nielsen as one of the country's first film stars between 1895 and 1914. Bryony Dixon's chapter 'The Origins of British Cinema, 1895 – 1918', from *The Routledge Companion to British Cinema History* (Hunter, Porter, and Smith, 2017), is a valuable tracing of early British cinema history and notes the lack of attention paid to this period of history (p. 23). Her work here is heavily focussed on film rather than exhibition or audience experience, yet the author does touch on Britain's earliest projected exhibitions and the competing technologies utilised by rival early film pioneers. It is these competing pioneers, the evolution of filmmaking and exhibition technology and the rapid international spread of the medium that is largely discussed in other existing works of the period. Stuart Hanson (2007), again with a British focus, has discussed the pre-cinema technologies that evolved and inspired the pioneers of the 1890s. Of particular value to this thesis, Hanson continues to explore the importance of the touring fairground picture show, which he describes as being in its 'heyday' from 1897 – 1914 within Britain.

Two valuable resources with a more dedicated focus on this early period of cinema history are the edited collections *Cinema: The Beginnings and the Future* (Williams, C., 1996) and *American Movie Audiences* (Stokes and Maltby, eds., 1999). Williams' collection contains sixteen chapters dedicated to the early period of exhibition within Britain. Dominant themes of these chapters include a focus on the pre-cinema exhibition technologies and their evolution into recognisable cinema, the initial exhibitions of projected cinema in England, and the content and modes of early filmmaking. These chapters provide a strong overview, albeit a predominantly English-focused one, of early cinema history in Britain and offer strong points of comparison and context for this thesis' study of early Welsh cinema history. Amongst these dominant themes, one chapter stands out as somewhat unique and valuable to this thesis, Richard Brown's 'Marketing the Cinématographe in Britain'. Beyond a rare mention of Wales (Cardiff), this chapter provides insight into the marketing techniques of both the Lumières and other innovators of the period. As this thesis uses marketing materials as a prominent archival source, the patterns and issues of early cinema marketing practices noted by Brown provide important contexts for my archival investigation.

Stokes and Maltby's edited collection, as the title suggests, is more focussed on early audiences and exclusively American ones. However, the chapters within contain notable explorations of audiences with differing social, economic and religious backgrounds. Judith Thissen explores the experiences of New York City's Jewish community between 1905 and 1914, whilst Giorgio Bertellini considers Italian-American responses to the 'fabricated' representations of Italy found in widely distributed American made films between 1908 and 1915. Elsewhere, Alison Griffiths and James Latham examine Harlem's changing ethnic and cultural construct between 1896 and 1915, and how the rapid increase of African-Americans

moving to the district during this period is represented through exhibition practices. Finally, in relation to differing social contexts, Roberta Pearson and William Uricchio explore New York City's children as a substantial minority audience for nickelodeons, and this young audience's central role in the city's cultural elites' attempts to regulate the fledgling medium. Whilst this thesis is not positioning Wales as being as socially diverse as New York City during this period, the attention paid to individual cinemagoing audiences of the period provides credence for exploring how cinemagoing practices and memories may reflect differing social areas of Wales. Again, there is a single chapter present within this collection dedicated to early cinema marketing, with Kathryn Fuller discussing itinerant film exhibitor Bert Cook, active in upstate New York between 1897 and 1911, and his use of audience representation within his advertising. Similar practices, as will be discussed elsewhere in this thesis, can be observed within the advertising of rural Welsh cinema showmen, with Fuller's work providing an important global point of comparison.

The study of Welsh cinemagoing and exhibition history

A noted absence in the aforementioned works of New Film History, cinemagoing and exhibition history is a consideration of Wales. Thus far in this chapter, other than Helen Richards' two articles, there has only been a fleeting mention of works that consider Wales' cinema history. This, sadly, is reflective of how little has been written about cinemagoing or exhibition history in Wales.

A strong indicator of Wales' absence within cinemagoing and exhibition scholarship is evidenced by five influential books concerning British cinema history: *The Unknown 1930s: An Alternative History of the British Cinema, 1929 – 1939* (Richards, J., 1998); *Popular*

Filmgoing in 1930s Britain (Sedgwick, 2000); *The British Film Business* (Baillieu & Goodchild, 2002); *From Silent Screen to Multi-Screen: A History of Cinema Exhibition in Britain since 1896* (Hanson, 2007), and *The Routledge Companion to British Cinema History* (Hunter, Porter, and Smith, 2017). These works all claim to primarily discuss Britain yet contain all but no mention of Wales. Where there is fleeting mention of Wales it is usually part of a statistic and preceded by 'England and...'. Wales, we must assume from these works, just follows the statistical patterns and trends of the far more populous England. Wales has also been ignored within the burgeoning field of rural cinema history studies. Two recently published edited collections *Cinema Beyond the City* (Thissen and Zimmermann, 2016) and *Rural Cinema Exhibition and Audiences in a Global Context* (Treveri Gennari, Hipkins, and O'Rawe, 2018), as will be discussed here later, are invaluable in furthering the state of rural cinema history scholarship yet contain no mention of Wales. Indeed, the latter, whilst being 'innovative in bringing in discussions of North American and European ruralities' with international case studies, contains no contexts or debates relating to Britain at all (p. 3). *Cinema Beyond the City* does contain consideration of Britain, with four chapters concerning England and one on Scotland. There are, however, a few existing works that explore the history of Welsh cinemagoing and exhibition as their core consideration, though they are not rurally focussed.

David Berry's (1994) *Wales and Cinema: The First Hundred Years*, is a thorough and detailed tracking of the films produced in Wales and those that depict Wales. Indeed, Peter Miskell (2006: 1) alludes to Berry's comprehensive work on Welsh film as satisfying the need for that particular avenue of research. Films made in or depicting Wales are of key interest to Berry's work, though the author also pays some attention to the early history of cinema

exhibition in Wales. These discussions, though brief and still largely urban focused, provide some context and identify themes informing the early history of cinema in Wales, particularly in relation to two of Wales' most notable touring showmen, William Haggard and Arthur Cheetham. Indeed, Berry positions these touring showmen and their contemporaries as being key to the early development of cinema exhibition away from Wales' largest urban centres, and this is something that I will investigate further throughout the thesis. Miskell's (2006) *A Social History of the Cinema in Wales 1918 – 1951: Pulpits, Coal Pits and Fleapits* is one of the few existing works to consider the history of exhibition and cinemagoing in Wales. Miskell, who developed the book from his history PhD thesis, doesn't approach his research as a film studies academic. Rather, he tackles the concepts with the mind-set of a business historian. Consequently, his study lacks the necessary engagement with film theory to truly place it within the New Film History tradition, though certainly engages with the economic, political and cultural concepts of postmodern history – through the uses of primary source quotes attributed to cinemagoers and cinema practitioners, and the presentation of multiple and differing accounts, from a variety of source types, of the same event, as discussed by Street. However, despite Miskell's assertions that it is a book about 'film-going' and that he is keen to examine the contribution of Welsh cinema's role as a 'social and economic' institution, this study lacks consideration of prevalent debates that surround audience studies and spectatorship studies (p. 1). This poses an issue when considering current work on cinemagoing or the history of exhibition in Wales, as Miskell's book remains the only long form academic publication concerning cinema exhibition history within Wales, yet is not in dialogue within other studies within these fields. His work does briefly discuss the social impact, along with presenting archival sources, of cinemas in mid and north Welsh towns such as Aberystwyth, Welshpool, Wrexham, Rhyl, and Llandudno.

However, his focus is overwhelmingly on Cardiff, Swansea and the industrial Valley regions of South Wales.

As previously discussed, Helen Richards has twice approached the history of exhibition and cinemagoing in Bridgend, utilising archival approaches and memory reclamation techniques, respectively. However, her selection of Bridgend poses the same issue regarding the gaps of knowledge within the scholarship of Welsh cinema history. The scholarship that exists mostly focusses on the more industrial South Wales region and all but ignores the rural Mid Wales region and the north. Particularly, as with Helen Richards' work, this South Wales focus is heavily tied to the working-class mining communities of the region and the impact of left-wing politics on their social cinema history, most typically during the 1930s. In 1985, Bert Hogenkamp published an article that drew upon committee minutes of the Tredegar Workmen's Institute, which, along with many other mining institutes in the region, would host film screenings. Here, he highlights the types of films shown at the venue, particularly those made in – or depicting – Spain (in the throes of a revolution) or Soviet Russia, which reflected the burgeoning left-wing politics in this heavily working-class area. Hogenkamp's work in relation to South Wales cinema history was built upon in the 1990s by Stephen Ridgwell. In the first (1995) of two articles published on South Wales' cinema history, he provides a broader geographic overview of the region, including Cardiff and Swansea in his discussions of the role of the cinema in a region that suffered from severe and long-term unemployment more than any other area of Britain during the 1930s (Ridgwell, 1995: 593). Ridgwell highlights the prominence of a 'community spirit' found and actively maintained within South Wales' cinemas, regardless if they were the larger more opulent venues located in Cardiff and Swansea, or the cheaper 'run-down' spaces. Here, and in his second

publication on the topic (1997), Ridgwell makes comparable observations, and draws on similar primary sources, to Hogenkamp about the types of films and political climates present within not just one mining institute cinema, but several across the region, noting that they represented 'a specific set of local circumstances' (p. 78). However, Ridgwell here also discusses the need of these venues to also represent the desire of local audiences to see popular mainstream productions, as well as the financial benefits for doing so.

This tension is further discussed in Robert James' (2007) article 'A Very Profitable Enterprise: South Wales Miners' Institute Cinemas in the 1930s', which utilised a ledger from the Cwmllynfell Miners' Welfare Hall to consider attendance, film bookings, and notable events to further explore the relationship between mining community cinemas, their local political, social and cultural audience demands as well as their own financial needs. Building on observations made by Ridgwell (1997), James notes that the screening of Hollywood productions was a seemingly popular choice with both the mining committees and audiences, more so than British (typically English) films, as these US productions were often heavily critical of entrenched wealth and were more likely to present 'a more radical interpretation of the social order' (p. 37). Stefan Moitra's (2012) chapter 'Cinema and the South Wales Miners' Institute' in *Cinema, Audiences and Modernity* (Biltereyst et al., 2012) again focuses on the links between the labour movement and South Wales working-class cinemas, though his study moves beyond the 1930s and examines these cinemas up until the 1950s. As such, he charts their rise but also their downfall, positioning the mining institute cinema as being a complex but 'exceptional' example of 'other cinema' (p. 111). Methodologically, Moitra primarily extracts his qualitative and quantitative data from contemporary ledgers, committee meeting minutes and trade journals, whilst drawing on

concepts of 'other cinema', considering the impact of film outside of a theatrical context, that he attributes to Maltby and Stokes (p. 100).

Clearly, there is a gap in current scholarship around the cinemagoing practices and exhibition histories of cinemas in rural Wales. However, the work that does exist strives to create impetus for a project like mine to be carried out, primarily by their resistance to simply position their work in comparison to England. James' (2007) article is particularly prominent in considering the study of Welsh audiences as offering a unique research opportunity, that will potentially harbour different results and discussions than pre-existing works on 'British' cinemagoing. He notes that, for Britain as a whole, 'there is limited evidence about the cinema-going tastes of the working classes', suggesting that research of the heavily working-class Wales could build on current understandings of British cinemagoing, not just act as a comparison (p. 27). Backing this up, he positions the mining communities of South Wales as being part of a 'unique political culture', one that couldn't be compared with other areas of Britain (p.27). His arguments are echoed by Stefan Moitra's (2012: 111) description of institute cinemas as being 'exceptional' in their form and organisation. The works discussed here in relation to South Wales have, as such, resulted in a key position for current scholars interested in the study of Welsh cinema history: one where studying Wales for the sake of comparison to England isn't enough to contribute to our understanding of exhibition or cinemagoing history within the UK. Rather, for James and Moitra, the emphasis is on how the unique practices of this Welsh community can add to our understanding of cinema-going as part of British history, especially for the working classes in the 1930s.

Rural studies of cinema history

It is all too easy to make the assumption that scholars who have focussed on South Wales have done so for pragmatic reasons: accessible archival resources, a larger population to consider, pre-existing works considering similarly populated or economic areas elsewhere in the world, making for easier comparison. However, there has been an emergence of work on rural cinema in other areas of Britain, and elsewhere in the world, that illustrates the value and necessity of studying rural cinema history.

Notably, a respectable amount of rural cinema scholarship is centred on the communities of rural Australia. This is partly due to the continued work of Karina Aveyard, who has published research predominantly focused on rural cinemagoing, particularly in Australia. Her PhD thesis *Rural Cinema: Film Exhibition and Consumption in Australia and the United Kingdom* (2012a: iii) focused on Australia as a primary fieldwork location, and utilised the United Kingdom for 'contextualisation and comparative analysis'. This research was utilised and built upon for Aveyard's book *Lure of the Big Screen: Cinema in Rural Australia and the United Kingdom* (2015). Here, one of the author's main foci is to highlight the 'distinctive and noteworthy' traits of rural cinemas and cinemagoing, and to place non-metropolitan cinema within 'broader industrial and sociocultural contexts' (Aveyard, 2015: 3). For Aveyard, this culminates in breaking down the 'crude city-rural dichotomy' that sees the city viewed as progressive, whilst the rural is disconnected from current trends (p. 3).

The studies carried out by Aveyard in her work required a multi-method approach of qualitative and quantitative data collection, the latter including statistical data available from public records. As I will discuss later in this chapter, placing the rural is a complex issue

and such statistical data can be key to understanding the differing definitions that relate to the term. Earlier, however, I suggested that such data is harder to obtain for a rural area, hence why researchers gravitate to more populous areas. Dylan Walker's (2007) article 'Rural Cinema Audiences in South Australia in the 1930s' concurs, arguing that finding rural data, especially from past eras, is a rewarding challenge (p. 353). Indeed, Walker's choice to focus his analysis on the rural town of Snowton was made due to the comparably large amount of archival data available to him (pp. 353 – 354). This allowed him to compare the focussed data collected on Snowton with the wider statistics for Australia and that region. Walker used his findings to propose trends and hypothesis that others may find in studies of rural cinema in differing nations, particularly in relation to why certain films were selected for screening and rural audience responses to genres of film.

As established, a common theme of current rural cinema scholarship is to consider comparisons to the non-rural or wider trends of the country or region, particularly in terms of exhibition. This is true of Meers, Biltreyst and Van De Vijver's (2010) article 'Metropolitan vs Rural Cinemagoing in Flanders, 1925 – 75', which focusses on the oral history findings of their 'The "Enlightened" City' research project, which took place in Belgium. The oral history findings of this project tie it closely to my own; as Biltreyst et al. note, the analysis of the 'stories' collected made it clear that the memory reclamations were, similarly to Kuhn's (2002) findings, 'strongly focussed on the social act of cinemagoing rather than on particular films' (p. 274). What emerged from these memories were recollections tied to the physical structures of the cinemas and definitions of the audiences that attended them. The latter draws on issues of class and religious backgrounds; Biltreyst et al. argue that the social and religious issues at play could influence the films selected and

what audience groups attended which cinema in both metropolitan and rural contexts. Such segregation resulted in small-towns and rural areas having multiple cinemas that would be known as specifically Catholic or socialist venues (p. 277). Biltreyst et al.'s approach of channelling their focus on different, specific case studies – this article is part of a wider research project – reveals the complex social constructs and mechanics that can influence a population's cinemagoing habits and the exhibition choices of their cinemas. This has proven to be a relevant matter within my own research, with a number of social, cultural, religious, economic and geographic issues informing cinemagoing and exhibition practices within both rural and urban Wales.

Making comparisons of the rural to the metropolitan – or, indeed, between Wales and England in scholarship surrounding Wales – is understandable, especially in these emergent times of rural cinema studies. However, as Kathryn Fuller-Seeley and George Potamianos note in the introductory chapter to *Hollywood in the Neighborhood: Historical Case Studies of Local Moviegoing* (Fuller-Seeley, 2008), comparison between diverse rural areas, with differing geographical and social climates, should also be undertaken (p. 13). For the four chapters in this book that are concerned with rural cinema – each focussed on a different area of the United States of America, but all concerned with the establishment of cinema in these areas prior to 1922 – Fuller-Seeley and Potamianos note strikingly similar patterns in the communities' fluctuating interest in cinema and the role of early cinema proprietors (p. 13). If instead, the comparison of each rural area had been made to their nearest respective metropolitan town or city, then Fuller-Seeley and Potamianos' noted similarity in differing rural cinemagoing contexts would not have been observed. The comparison of differing rural locales is most prominent in longer form investigations of rural exhibition, such as

Aveyard's use of Britain as a comparative to Australia and here in Fuller-Seeley's edited collection. Indeed, my work seeks to see if patterns between differing Welsh communities show comparable or differing examples of history, memories, films shown and attendance figures, especially owing to the varying economies, geographies and religious groups across rural Wales.

More recently, two edited collections, *Cinema Beyond the City* (Thissen, J. and Zimmermann, C., 2016) and *Rural Cinema Exhibition and Audiences in a Global Context* (Treveri Gennari, D., Hipkins, D. E. and O'Rawe, C., 2018), have provided fresh approaches and debates to the burgeoning field of rural cinema studies. *Cinema Beyond the City*, though not chiefly focussed on the rural with works present that explore towns and suburbs, has one particularly valuable chapter in relation to rural cinema history and touring operations. Here, John Caughie (2016) explores 'small-town' cinema history in Scotland and notes that the 'standard historiography' of cinema 'struggles to capture' the diverse experiences of a population by failing to account for the rural (p. 35). One observation from Caughie's work that is of particular value to this thesis is his discussions surrounding early rural Scottish exhibition and 'civic endorsement' (p. 28). Here, the author notes that touring cinema showmen within Scotland's rural small-towns benefitted from the endorsement of local political and religious institutions. With such an endorsement, then often placed within a screening's advertising, the fledgling medium of cinema was afforded approval from a reputable source within the community. The relationship between rural Welsh cinema showmen, their audiences and local institutions will be a key discussion within the third and fourth chapters of this thesis, particularly in relation to the touring cinema showman turned fixed-location cinema proprietor.

Rural Cinema Exhibition and Audiences in a Global Context is, as its title would suggest, decidedly more focussed on what the editors and chapter authors consider to be rural than *Cinema Beyond the City*. Of course, what is considered to be rural is often debatable and contextual, a notion that is discussed elsewhere in this chapter. Treveri Gennari et al., in their introductory chapter, position the collection as not simply considering rural cinema as having lagged behind the experience of 'metropolitan modernity', but rather it seeks to consider the 'hybrid' forms of modernity present within the 'uneven' landscape for globalised ruralised contexts in order to garner a more 'complete' understanding of cinema's influence on different societies and cultures (pp 2 – 3). To do so, the collection features chapters exploring a wide and diverse geography. Amongst chapters concerning the more typical northern European, North American and Australasian examples, the collection includes studies of China, Thailand, Brazil, South Africa and Kenya. Though this thesis does not suggest that Wales is not a western country, there is value in being able to reflect upon rural studies centred around non-western countries, particularly those that experienced a similar colonial relationship with England as Wales has.

Not limited to Caughie's recent chapter and his wider AHRC funded *Early Scottish Cinema, 1896-1927* research project, the study of rural Scottish cinema history has received more attention than that of rural Wales. Trevor Griffiths' (2012) *The Cinema and Cinema-Going in Scotland, 1896 – 1950*, though far from focussed on it, does discuss the rural and rural audiences: how the changing economy of Scotland impacted on rural cinemagoing experiences over the time period. The chapter 'Beyond the Dream Palace' (pp. 218 – 252), a look at Scotland's non-commercial cinemas, most prominently discusses the experiences of

rural communities in Scotland. The sources for Griffith's work are predominately archival, mostly business ledgers and regional newspapers. The sheer amount of archival data he sourced for this work, especially for his rural chapter, was extremely encouraging for the archival prospects of this project. Ian Goode (2011) has, in a more focussed manner, also tackled rural cinemagoing in Scotland in his article 'Cinema in the Country: The Rural Cinema – Orkney (1946 – 67)'. Goode, noting that rural cinema studies represent an 'under-researched and developing area', approaches the way in which the very remote Orkney obtained and exhibited films, along with what factors aided or abetted the cinematic goals of this rural community (p. 21). Similarly to Griffiths, Goode's paper positions the non-commercial cinema as having a large role in rural-Scottish cinemagoing and exhibition during this period. Goode has recently been the Project Leader of the AHRC funded *Major Minor Cinema: Highlands and Islands Film Guild 1946-71* research project. A major study of the cinema culture and history of the remote Highlands and Islands region of Scotland, this project conveys a positive upswing in the attention rural cinema histories are being afforded, including its employment of a range of qualitative data and oral histories.

Though not dedicated to rural Scotland, Caughie, along with Trevor Griffiths and Maria A. Vélez-Serna, has also recently published the edited collection *Early Cinema in Scotland* (2018). A few chapters within this collection provide key contexts and points of comparison for factors of early cinema history that this thesis considers in relation to rural Wales. Vélez-Serna's chapter 'Travelling Bioscopes and Borrowed Places' (2018a) provides valuable insight on early touring cinema in both rural and urban Scotland, the role of showmen as key figures within this practice and the types of improvised spaces utilised for such shows (ranging from exhibitor provided tents to local halls). The author also explores the decline of

the touring trade – particularly in Scotland’s towns and cities – as the popularity of the medium increased during the turn of the twentieth century, leading to a proliferation of fixed-location venues post 1910. The opening of such fixed-location venues in both rural and urban spaces is discussed in more detail in her proceeding chapter, ‘Fixed-site Cinemas and the First Film Renters’ (2018b). The notion of civic endorsement is again broached by Caughie within this collection, with his chapter ‘Cinema and Cinema-going in Small Towns’ exploring the differing relationships – ranging from indifference to damnation – between the Church and cinema across the country. Discussions of cinema staff are also prominent within this collection, and not just in relation to Vélez-Serna’s reflections on the role of touring showmen, with Trevor Griffiths’ chapter ‘Making a Living at the Cinema: Scottish Cinema Staff in the Silent Era’ considering Scotland’s early cinema staff, from usherette to manager. Similar to Gomery’s discussion of American cinema staff members in *Shared Pleasures*, Griffiths largely focuses on what a staff member would have experienced in Scotland during that period, in relation to pay, gender disparities, unionisation and day-to-day responsibilities. Griffiths closes his chapter by noting that Scottish silent cinema staff ‘lacked the prominence given to the stars of the silver screen’, a notably different perspective to Eva Balogh’s (2017) work on urban English and American usherettes of the 1930s through 50s as being viewed with the ‘cultural status that corresponded to that of the female starlet’ (pp. 44 – 45). These differing cultural, geographic and temporal perspectives on cinema staff provide valuable contexts for this thesis’ fresh contributions to the topic through discussion of rural Welsh cinema staff, particularly in relation to how they were viewed by audiences.

It is clear that there are emergent contrasts between current works on rural cinemagoing; with discussions of choice of films, the economic form of the cinema – community or private – comparisons to audiences and exhibition in metropolitan areas, and the influence of party politics on these rural audiences. Wales, however, has been distinctly underrepresented in these existing works; yet, as discussed below, this isn't the case in sociological works on rural communities. Overall, however, the emergent scholarship of rural cinemagoing provides great influence and credence for this project and its goals.

Identifying the rural

It is wrong, however, to assume that all of these scholars employ the same definition of the rural. Indeed, the rural nature of Flanders described by Biltereyst et al., where audiences taking a trip to a city wasn't difficult, seems very different when compared to the remoteness of Walker's Snowton. It is important for my project to define what is rural within Wales, especially the potential for it to be a discursive term, a sliding scale of factors that can define a rural space. The importance will be in achieving this thesis' goal of exploring differing practices and experiences and understandings of rural Welsh cinemagoing that are potentially impacted by both physical and social geographies. Indeed, defining the rural of Wales will allow me to compare and contrast with the definitions and findings of other rural cinema scholars. As such, I will be exploring audience understandings and definitions of the rural as part of my qualitative research.

Drawing from the physical and human geography disciplines, authors such as Keith Halfacree (1993) position the notion of a rural space as one that is hard to define. Halfacree argues that it is a matter of 'locality' and that definitions based on socio-cultural

characteristics and descriptive definitions rely upon a 'false conceptualization of space' (p. 23). Halfacree also offers a 'provocative' suggestion in utilising 'social representation' as we move into post-modern understandings of the rural as locality: that an immaterial definition may have increasing dominance over previous concepts of locality. (p.23; p.34). Michael Woods' *Rural Geography: Processes, Responses and Experiences in Rural Restructuring* (2005) provides a wide overview of existing academic interpretations of 'the rural' and how the concept can differ due to personal contexts and interpretations. These latter arguments are key in the understanding of this thesis: what I consider rural, having grown up in a rural Mid-Wales village, may be very different to someone from an area of a denser population. Woods' work highlights the need for further empirical research on how cinema audiences conceive of the rural, with Wales providing the ideal setting for examining such conceptions.

Woods also notes an issue that this project was sure to face, population statistics. Such statistics, he argues, can complicate what we define as rural and a researcher should consider more than just population at face value. His example is of Aberystwyth, where the town ward has a population of 10,000, 'sufficiently' considered rural. However, this only represents the town centre, and the neighbouring wards bring the wider figure closer to 20,000 (pp. 4 – 5). His second warning around population statistics relates to their comparative worth, arguing that a thousand-person strong outpost in Nebraska could be decidedly populous for its area, whereas a thousand-person settlement in Massachusetts is likely to be considered rural, for its respective area (p. 5). Woods also agrees with Halfacree's theory of utilising social representation in defining the rural, arguing that it shifts researchers away from statistics to consider the social constructs that individuals build to define their own rural identity (p.11). This thesis heeds the warning from both studies and

considers the population statistics, social constructs, economies and advice from the publications of the Office of National Statistics, as well as conceptions of the rural drawn from audience memories. The Office of National Statistics, for England and Wales, has four categories of settlements: urban – 10,000 and above –, town and fringe, village, and hamlet and isolated dwelling, the latter three all being considered 'rural' (Ons.gov.uk, 2016).

Though these offer a rough guideline, when considered in conjunction with the theories and warnings of Halfacree and Woods I can begin to establish my own scale definition of the rural in Wales.

Also important to this thesis, are the self-identification and cultural observations of Welshness, concepts which have been considered against geographical, historical, social, linguistic and cultural contexts. Often, Welshness, or Welsh national identity, is defined by the concept of 'the other', typically by those who observe Welshness as a non-participant and define their distance from it (Jones, N., 1997: 135). Methodologically speaking, this has allowed sociologists to position themselves away from their subjects and to study how Welsh people interact with those who are conceived as 'others', those who perhaps do not self-identify as Welsh. However, in terms of Welshness, there is potential otherness within definitions and ideals of the Welsh national identity itself. This concept has been visualised by the 'Three Wales model', based on the linguistic patterns, self-identity and political party affiliation of differing areas of Wales (Jenkins, G., 2007: 282). The model was championed by Denis Balsom (1985), who asked Welsh voters, and analysed voting patterns from the 1979 election, if they felt 'British', 'Welsh', or 'English' (Perrins, 2015: 38-39). Balsom noted that there was an interrelationship between political leaning, ability to speak Welsh and national identity. He proposed three groups of Welsh people: The Welsh speaking, Welsh identifying

group 'Y Fro Gymraeg', usually situated in North and West Wales, the non-Welsh-speaking yet Welsh identifying group, 'Welsh Wales', usually linked to southern Wales, and the British identifying non-Welsh speakers found in the remainder of Wales, the 'British Welsh' (Balsom, 1985: 6). He also noted a 'maverick' category of Welsh speakers who identify as British, rather than Welsh. Though based on empirical data, these groupings are to some extent generalisations; however, the key aspect to take from Balsom's work, for this thesis' approach to considering Welshness and national identity, is held in his assertion that national identity is a stronger discriminator than ability to speak the Welsh language (pp. 6 – 7). The Three Wales model is an inspiring aspect of this research, the interrelationships of identity it proposes will be called upon in this study's assessment of the differing – or similar – cinemagoing histories of the wide-spread and diverse areas of Wales this thesis explores.

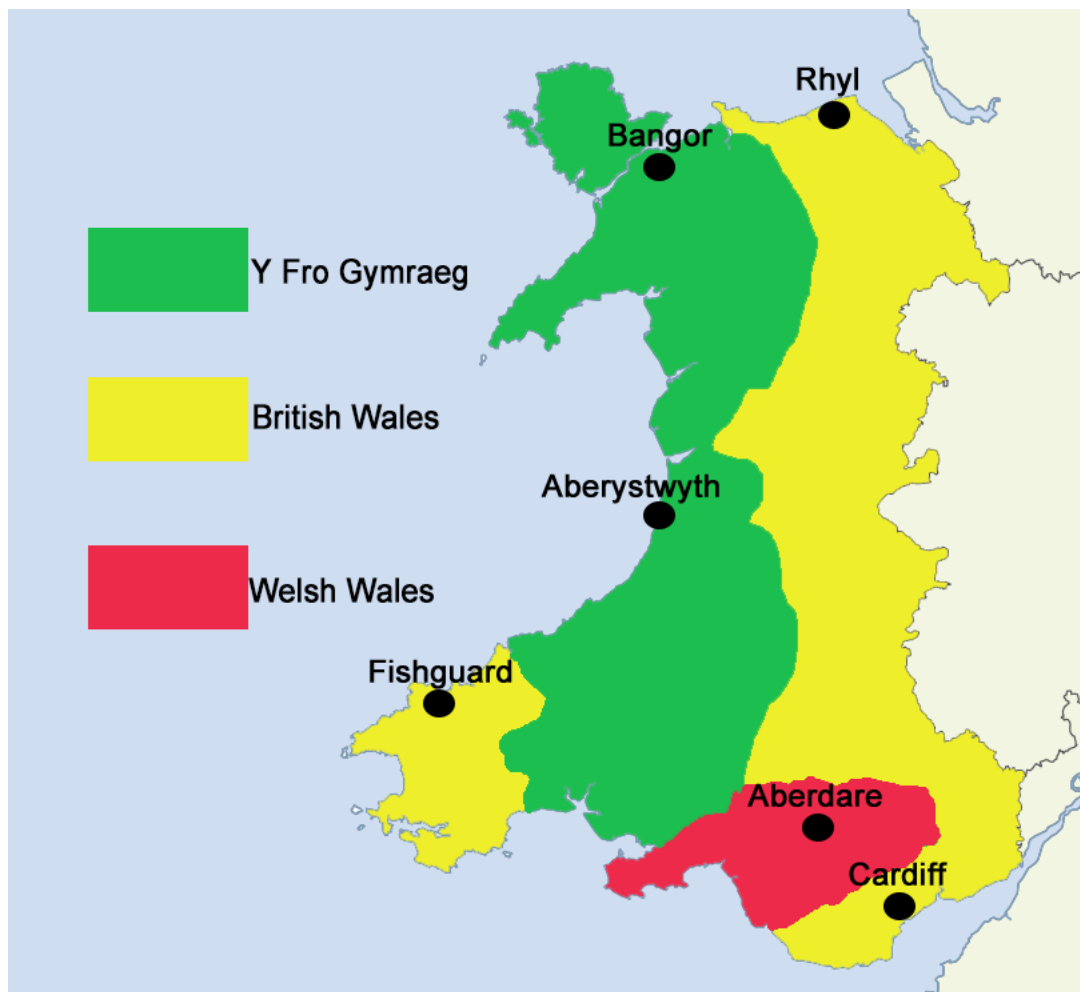


Fig. 1.1 – The Three Wales Model. Adapted from Balsom (1985).

There are some valid criticisms of Balsom’s Three Wales Model from scholars, and it is by no means a definitive representation of Wales’ social, political and linguistic makeup prior to 1970. Chris Williams (2005: 14) has described the model as a ‘museum piece’, noting that it is guilty of ‘marginalizing’ Welsh identity within border communities, particularly if applied to contemporary Wales. As noted by John Osmond (2002: 80) the model has been highly influential within historical and social studies of Wales over the past three decades, notably evidenced within Bridget Taylor and Katarina Thomson’s edited collection *Scotland and Wales: Nations Again?* (1999) where a number of the chapters reference Balsom in relation to both Welsh and Scottish national identity and its relationship to voting patterns. It will therefore be applied to my research with caution and explored alongside relevant primary

source and scholarly data to consider if an area is accurately represented by the models' regions. With Williams' criticism acknowledged, the model retains value for this pre-1970 study, especially in its aim to move away from considering Wales as a single homogenous cultural zone.

It is clear that whilst cinemagoing scholarship on rural Wales is underdeveloped, academics from other disciplines have approached the rural areas of Wales with political and sociological interest. Though considering periods contemporary to their publication, there are four books that all provide influence, credence and points of opposition for this thesis' arguments. All four are studies of rural life in Wales published in the mid-twentieth century. A mixture of macro and micro studies, they largely represent the type of hierarchal or *from above* historiography that this thesis seeks to position itself against, and present rural Wales as being void of 'hybrid modernity' as discussed by Treveri Gennari et al. (2018: 2 – 3).

In 1957, Ronald Frankenberg published *Village on the Border*, an ethnographical social study of life in the North Wales border village of Pentrediwaith, a fictitious name for the village that translates to 'village of no work' (vii). Key to this work are group activities and notions of community, especially in relation to the housing estate and village events such as football matches and the carnival. Interestingly, Jenkins acknowledges the notion of 'others', in the form of 'Pentre people' and 'outsiders', noting that, even within the 'Pentre people' class, there are divisions that are reminiscent in language use and political leanings to the Three Wales Model (p. 65). Alwyn D. Rees (1950) conducted a similar social study of Llanfihangel yng Ngwynfa, also a border village and very close to my hometown of Llanfyllin. Less ethnographic in its methodology and featuring more quantitative analysis^{iv} than

Frankenberg's work, there seems to be recurring themes in the importance of organised social events and institutions, and the role of Welshness. Indeed, Rees selected Llanfihangel due to its strong Welsh identity and prevalence of first language Welsh speakers (p. v). Concepts associated, in retrospect, with the Three Welsh Model are once again at play here, as Rees acknowledges the uniqueness of Llanfihangel reserving so much of its language and Welsh identity, despite being so close to the border and firmly within Balsom's British Wales grouping, a finding that supports Williams' criticisms of Balsom's model. However, Rees does suggest that the culture may have been somewhat 'modified' by English influence, especially in comparison to its neighbouring counties to the West (p. v).

Rees' investigations cover the economic and the social aspects of living in this rural Welsh village, including the role of religion, social status, family life, neighbourhoods, youth culture, the physical structure and use of houses, and recreation. Sadly, there are no mentions of cinemagoing – perhaps indicative of its standing within the minds of mid-twentieth century sociologists, or due to lack of interest from the people of Llanfihangel – however, other sociological studies of rural Welsh communities do mention the cinema. *Welsh Rural Communities* (1960), an edited collection by Elwyn Davies and Alwyn D. Rees, features four case studies of west and north west Wales, putting forward economic, geographical and cultural differences from the border communities focused on in the aforementioned works. Indeed, in David Jenkins' chapter – the research for which was conducted in 1949 – on life in Aberporth, the role of the cinema is prominent in a discussion and analysis of 'bunched' groups, essentially differing social classes within the community. He notes that older generations of 'bunched group A', representative of upper or middle class, aren't concerned with the cinema, whereas its draw for 'bunched group B' and the

youth as a whole is palatable (Jenkins, D., 1960: 15; 20 – 21). The notion of these buchedd groups, it is worth mentioning, have become somewhat of a fixture in other rural Welsh sociological studies of the period, with Isabel Emmett (1964: 11) utilising them in *A North Wales Village*. As Emmet notes, not only does Aberporth have a cinema within the community, but Cardigan, which houses the nearest secondary school – teaching primarily in English –, has a more ‘modern’ one (p. 21). In a study similar in structure and focus to Rees’ work on Llanfihangel, David Jenkins (1971) published a more thorough assessment of life in rural south-west Wales, focussed predominately on the turn of the twentieth century. Again, there is no mention of cinemagoing; however, like Rees’ and Frankenberg’s studies, the social structures, roles and habits of rural Welsh communities are well documented and inform this thesis’ understanding of rural Wales’ social history.

Conclusion

Evidenced in this chapter are the works, from a mixture of disciplines, that this thesis draws upon to frame its arguments in order to answer its research questions. The two key functions discussed here are the importance of the New Film History and New Cinema History – and how this thesis can both contribute to these traditions and draw from works within it – and the current lack of scholarship on rural Welsh cinemagoing and exhibition history, set against the current emergence of works concerning rural cinemagoing and exhibition history in other nations. Furthermore, in considering notions of Welsh national identity and what defines the rural, this thesis is able to reflect upon wider discourses and concerns of rural Wales’ social history. These are specifically evidenced in the sociological studies of rural Wales, mostly researched during the period this thesis considers, that present a particular perspective on early-to-mid twentieth rural Welsh life. All of these

frameworks, findings and concepts will greatly benefit the investigation of my key research questions:

- What was the evolution of exhibition in rural Wales, how does this compare to research findings on South Wales, England and other rural areas of the world, and what factors shaped or hindered the development of dedicated cinemas in rural Wales?
- What social, religious and cultural factors, issues of national identity or other aspects impacted on cinemagoing habits, perceptions (including modes of memory reclamation) and exhibition practices in differing areas of rural Wales?
- How did (and do) the cinemagoing audiences of rural Wales consider themselves in relation to definitions of the rural, and what differences or similarities are there between the cinemagoing habits, perceptions and exhibition practices of those communities that class themselves as more rural compared with those close to metropolitan areas?

I believe that by addressing these questions I will be making a strong contribution to existing knowledge within the New Film History tradition and the works that have been considered throughout this chapter.

ⁱ Treveri Gennari and Culhane (2019) utilise oral history testimonies in this article to investigate the relationship between image, oral narrative and memory. In doing so, the authors seek to address how the film text as an object of study can fit within the New Cinema History tradition.

ⁱⁱ Not all the studies within this collection are audience focussed, however.

ⁱⁱⁱ Sedgwick's highly quantitative POPSTAT methodology is discussed in further detail in the proceeding chapter.

^{iv} His analysis includes population statistics, quantitative reports rather than descriptions of social habit, maps of the area and diagrams of buildings

Chapter Two – Methodological Approaches

With the previous chapter having established the academic fields and traditions this thesis aims to sit within and contribute to, it is prudent to here consider the methodological approaches, both from practical and theoretical standpoints, that have been utilised to address this thesis' research goals. This, as the reader will have ascertained from the previous chapter, is a complex undertaking owing to the mixed-methods approach required of a new film historian. As such, this thesis calls upon two core methodologies which serve as both contrasting and complementary approaches in answering my research questions. These are archival investigation and an ethnographic audience study. Here I will consider the benefits and potential limitations of these methodologies, discuss their employment in other works, and assess how they will be implemented within this project.

Choice of case-study area

As discussed in the previous chapter, this project seeks to uncover the history of cinemagoing and exhibition in rural Wales; a geographic area that has been all but forgotten in existing scholarship surrounding Welsh and British cinema history. Indeed, what few works there are on Welsh cinemagoing focus predominantly on the more populous southern areas of Cardiff, Swansea or the southern mining valleys (Hogenkamp, 1985; Ridgwell, 1995; 1997; Richards, 2003; 2005; James, 2007; Moitra, 2012) or only feature very brief mentions of Mid or North Wales (Berry, 1994; Miskell, 2006). It was therefore imperative that I chose to carry out my research in areas that reflected these neglected areas of Wales. However, this was not as simple as randomly picking points on a map, effectively the vast majority of Wales, in terms of area, has been all but ignored within

Welsh cinemagoing scholarship. Consequently, this thesis focuses on audiences that represent the two-thirds of Dennis Balsom's (1985) Three Wales Model that have been marginalised by current scholarship. As discussed in the previous chapter, the Three Wales Model splits Wales into three, based upon political leaning, ability to speak Welsh and self-identification of national identity. The areas of South Wales discussed in existing scholarship would, when considered within this model, represent Welsh Wales, areas that are historically Labour party strongholds and whose population identify as Welsh, yet typically don't speak the Welsh language (Balsom, 1985: 6). Therefore, works such as those of Richards, James and Moitra fail to account for perceptions and memories of audiences who represent the British Welsh or Y Fro Gymraeg identifiers, as well as the predominantly mid and northern regions associated with them. As such, this thesis carries out its research in areas where these previously unconsidered audiences and histories can be located; areas that would fit within Balsom's arguments for the Y Fro Gymraeg, the British Welsh, as well as those that might potentially complicate or challenge Balsom's model. Indeed, as discussed in the previous chapter, it is important to acknowledge and test the limitations of this model through this thesis' research.

When first designing this research project, the plan was to study ten case study towns from across rural Wales. However, this quickly proved to be a mammoth undertaking for a PhD thesis, not least due to the large period of time under investigation and the vast amount of archival and ethnographic data that would have to be uncovered and analysed. With these considerations in mind, the ten areas were reduced to three: Pwllheli, Llandrindod Wells and Aberystwyth. These three chosen areas aimed to reflect the social, economic, political and cultural diversity found within rural Wales. These areas also reflected perspectives on

the Three Wales Model areas that have been under-represented in existing research: Y Fro Gymraeg (Pwllheli), British Wales (Llandrindod Wells) and a complication of the model (Aberystwyth). Such an approach was designed to collect varying perceptions of cinemagoing from their respective rural communities. Indeed, for this project to be effective in its research goals, it was imperative that each area had a unique or potentially contrasting facet according to these criteria. However, upon distributing the project's research questionnaire and assessing the wide geographic spread of respondents, it became apparent that focusing on just three areas would ultimately limit the use of this collected data. Ultimately, the decision was made to focus on a single case study town, upon which the chapters of this thesis will primarily focus. Altering this approach allowed for one town to act as a focal point of study, whilst data concerning the myriad of other towns, villages and communities discussed within the questionnaire responses was afforded more necessary attention than if I had been strictly trying to balance three focused case studies.

Aberystwyth was chosen as the primary case study for a number of reasons, not least its rich cinema history. As will be explored in the coming chapters, the town has housed a number of cinemas since 1910 often with multiple venues being open at any one point in time. On a personal note, it is the town I have mostly lived in for the past decade and I have developed connections with people and organisations that were of help in accessing archival data and disseminating both physical and digital versions of the research questionnaire. Though writing about the study of contemporary rural cinemas in Australia, Karina Aveyard (2012b) – who chose to study ten rural areas – discusses the benefit of utilising social anthropology methodologies in one of her cinemagoing communities of study. Aveyard moved to the rural town of Sawtell for two years and actively engaged with

the local community to garner a better understanding of their cinemagoing habits and perceptions, especially in comparison to the relatively brief ethnographic visits made to assess the other nine areas, though questionnaires were distributed and interviews carried out in all ten areas. Although this thesis does not assess current audience perceptions, Aveyard's social anthropological approach allowed her to become embedded within the community and become familiar with the necessary gatekeepers needed to help carry out her audience research (Aveyard, 2012b: 658-659). From a practical standpoint, Aveyard discusses living in the area as making it easier to collect 'significant' amounts of research materials such as photographs and written notes (p. 658). Similarly, Aberystwyth houses the National Library of Wales, which contains an archive of Welsh newspapers and a number of staff, such as William Troughton, who have strong knowledge of the local area's history.ⁱ The town also houses Ceredigion Museum, which was previously the Coliseum cinema and actively maintains collections related to its exhibition history. Finally, the Ceredigion county archives are located above the town library, containing a wide range of Aberystwyth specific collections and staff members who themselves have researched the town's social history. Over the course of this PhD I have built relationships with all three of these institutions and have vastly benefited from the ease of access to them, their collections and staff knowledge.

Practicalities aside, Aberystwyth occupies a unique position from an economic standpoint amongst my selected areas: it is a university town and has been since 1872. This results in it having a dual population, those who are locals and have a history with the town or an economic connection through employment, in contrast to the transient students, who live in the area for their studies yet originate from other areas of the country or the world. Of

course, that is a generalisation and there will be instances of people attending Aberystwyth University who were born and raised in the area, or non-students who wouldn't be classed as locals in the community. However, the duality of a town that has historically had working-class rural agricultural, maritime and tourist trades – one that would be expected of a remote west Wales seaside town – but also the prominence of a university, including middle-to-upper-class students and academics, is fascinating to a researcher interested in 'the particularity of place' (Caughie, 2016: 35) in relation to how exhibitors chose and marketed their films, and the cinemagoing habits of these audiences. Indeed, whilst the town had a working-class local population and infrastructure, the rising prominence of 'academic villadom' resulted in lavish houses being built along Llanbadarn and St. David's roads, evidence of a burgeoning middle-class forming in the early twentieth century and exemplifying the duality of Aberystwyth's population (Morgan, 1981: 128). As such, Aberystwyth represents a complication of the Three Wales Model. The town is located firmly within what Balsom would consider to be the Y Fro Gymraeg region, where one would expect a prevalence of Welsh language use and Welsh nationalism. Balsom (1985) does make allowances for a 'maverick' (p. 6) group of British-identifying Welsh speakers; however, it is not this that complicates Aberystwyth's relationship with the model. Rather, this complication arises from the emergence of a more prominent anglicised middle-class demographic within the town, during the late Victorian period. This complication further informed the decision to choose Aberystwyth as a case study area, especially as a means of engaging with a complex cinemagoing landscape allowing for comparison with other areas of rural Wales that more precisely represent Balsom's model.

Nascent archival and scholarly investigations also informed the decision to choose Aberystwyth as this thesis' case study town. Searching through the National Library of Wales' online newspaper archive for mentions of cinema exhibition technologies during the 1890s and early 1900s brought up a large number of results for one Arthur Cheetham, a touring showman turned cinema proprietor. Cheetham had been a brief point of discussion in Dave Berry's *Wales and the Cinema: The First Hundred Years* (1994) (though this had largely focussed on his operations in and around Rhyl, North Wales) and had received a fleeting mention within Peter Miskell's (2006: 115) work. It became apparent from these preliminary archival searches, however, that Cheetham was a prominent figure within early cinema history across rural Mid and North Wales and, as will be discussed in chapter four, opened Aberystwyth's first dedicated cinema in 1910. Drawing on this archival material, I began to draft a narrative of Cheetham's operations in rural Mid and North Wales and Aberystwyth's relationship within his operations. It was clear that his prominence and exhibition operations, and their lack of discussion within existing scholarship, were evocative of the under-explored history this thesis aims to represent, and that Aberystwyth had been a key location in Cheetham's career.

As previously discussed, the choice of Aberystwyth was also spurred by the town having housed a number of cinemas during the twentieth century. This has facilitated investigation of the differing exhibition and marketing practices of Aberystwyth's and rural Wales' cinemas in relation to their local demographics and audience demands. Indeed, Jancovich et al. (2003: 174) discuss specific cinemas as having 'different meanings for different people'. They cite an example of Nottingham's Moulin Rouge cinema being seen by many of their female respondents as being home to 'the dirty mac brigade' or as being a 'sordid' venue.

However, the researchers found that some respondents highlighted the qualities that made the cinema seem dirty or seedy to others as being factors informing its distinction for them. For example, the Moulin Rouge would show European films or European art cinema, which marketed and featured sexual and adult themes. Some respondents – their given example being a male retired maths teacher – welcomed this choice of exhibition as a move towards a more European art cultural influence in Nottingham, whilst others saw these films as promoting ‘obscenity and perversity’ (p. 174; 179). The presence of multiple cinemas within Aberystwyth has allowed for both archival and ethnographic investigation of differing audience opinions and perspectives concerning these venues, often informed by social context and evoking the New Film History’s emphasis on the different meanings and interpretations of historical phenomena.

Approaches to archival research

The initial research undertaken for this thesis was archival, with the National Library of Wales’ Welsh Newspaper collection and online archive proving to be invaluable as a tool for tracing rural Wales’ early cinema history. This led to an engagement with Brendan Duffy’s (2005: 123) argument that there are two existing approaches to archival research: *source-oriented* and *problem-oriented*. The former refers to when access to an archive or a set of sources informs a research question or presents potential new avenues of investigation, whereas the latter sees a researcher responding to problems developed through the reading of secondary sources and academic works. After consulting the few works that discuss Wales’ history with cinema (Hogekamp, 1985; Berry, 1994; Ridgwell, 1995; 1997; Richards, 2003; 2005; Miskell, 2006; James, 2007; Moitra, 2012), I began to search the Welsh Newspaper online archive with the keyword *cinema* and set the results to descending

order by date. This immediately uncovered one issue with this online resource; at the time of writing the collection has only been digitised up until 1919. However, it continues to be a valuable asset in tracing the very early history of cinema exhibition in Wales, both rurally and in urban centres. Simply searching 'cinema' brought up thousands of results, quite often including the same adverts repeated across several different newspapers from the same day. As such, it was necessary to change tack and to take advantage of having access to primary sources that could potentially track the earliest history of cinema exhibition in Wales. This, due to the archive's cut-off date of 1919, would keep me focussed on a roughly twenty-five-year period. To achieve this, I changed the archive's results to display in ascending date order and decided to use more specific search terms than simply "cinema". I started by searching for the earliest forms of cinema technology that I was confident would have been present in at least Cardiff. For example, Edison's kinetoscope or the Lumières' cinematograph, two of the earliest forms of cinema exhibition technology in its most recognised form (Salt, 2009: 35-36). This method proved fruitful as I collected hundreds of screenshots from the archive of advertisements, editorials, opinion pieces, gossip columns, news reports, and even joke columns that pertained to these early forms of cinema technology.

It is important to note that I am not a fluent Welsh speaker, which has to some extent impacted on my access to certain documents. The large percentage of newspapers for the period under investigation were published in English, and even Welsh language ones typically contained English advertisements for anything cinema related. Welsh language articles that I believed did contain references to cinema history were sent to Aberystwyth University's translation service or passed to fluent friends and colleagues. However, it is

more in relation to other archival research and the activity of following narratives of history where my lack of fluency has potentially most impacted. Within English language archival documents, I have been able to follow narrative strands and timelines at my own pace and over a vast number of documents, many of which have not provided any useful evidence, but I did not want to risk skipping them. Though there were substantially more documents in English that I came across, this process was not possible for those composed in Welsh. As such, there is potentially space for a Welsh language researcher to build upon my work and explore a history of Welsh cinemagoing and exhibition as represented within Welsh language documents.

Using local newspapers as primary sources

Even from these early archival searches it was clear that primary sources such as newspapers would be vital to this thesis, for both complementing and informing audience investigation – which will be discussed later in this chapter – and filling in the gaps that, sadly, would be impossible to extract from audience investigation. Furthermore, the utilisation of such primary sources provides key contextual information, which informs this thesis' choice and analysis of other forms of archival sources. However, as discussed in the previous chapter, which reflects on the historiography of the New Film History tradition, it is vital to analyse primary documents not just in relation to their content but also their context, validity and value as a source. Helen Richards (2005: 429), in her study of Bridgend's exhibition history via the study of one local newspaper, describes a newspaper as providing an 'official' history, not necessarily of the events reported but of the way in which the newspaper reported – or didn't report – an event. Sarah Street (2000) argues that when assessing archival documents in relation to cinema, there are certain methodological issues

that a researcher needs to consider: a document's type, its authorship, the agency of the document,ⁱⁱ its context, the impact of the document both in the long-term and short-term, its archival scheme or relation to other documents within an archive, and its interpretive significance within the researcher's arguments (pp. 6 – 8). These points are all prudent when considering newspapers as a historical source, especially issues of agency and authorship. As such, newspapers provide one viewpoint of a time, that needs to be assessed with the acknowledgment of who wrote them, the affiliations or ownership of the paper and cultural contexts of the time. They can, however, provide one piece of a puzzle of evidence that, when assembled with other archival sources, can create a better – or wider – understanding of a period of history. Richards explains that her research into the official history of the *Glamorgan Gazette's* reporting of cinema exhibition in Bridgend could be collated with other primary sources to create a 'fuller' history of that area, not just one based on the way it has been presented in one newspaper.

Alongside gossip columns and articles concerning cinema, the primary use of newspapers within this thesis is related to the analysis of advertisements. In terms of agency, these advertisements are particularly valuable as representations of how exhibitors presented their businesses and often themselves as showmen or proprietors. As will be discussed in chapters three and four, methods of advertising could vary across Wales according to local social contexts. Equally, those who toured or owned cinemas in a number of areas, such as Arthur Cheetham, would modify their exhibition practices according to these contexts, which is reflected through their newspaper advertising. The success this thesis has had in collecting a wealth of cinema advertisements from the 1890s up to the 1970s from particularly local rural newspapers is somewhat at odds with the experiences of other

researchers. Paul Moore notes, in relation to his test of 1900s and 1910s Canadian newspapers as effective sources of archival data, that whilst newspaper advertisements were common-place and 'relatively reliable' in documenting the exhibition history of cities, such advertisements were far less common in the newspapers of rural areas (2011: 273). Thankfully, even newspapers that cover the more rural areas of Wales consistently include not only advertising but also reports of cinema activities for the week. Indeed, the location of these within a number of Welsh newspapers is fairly consistent. For example, *The Cambrian News* typically features cinema and theatre advertisements on page four, with cinema reports on page eight of its usual daily editions.

Later in this chapter, there will be a discussion of how the audience research methodologies of this project will be utilised in conjunction with these archival findings to work towards a 'fuller' history as described by Helen Richards. However, it is important to first consider the other archives and avenues of archival investigation that shall be utilised to build upon the somewhat limited scope of the Welsh Newspapers Online archive. In addition to the National Library of Wales' digitised Welsh newspapers archive, there are a few online archives available that continue to be great resources for this project.

Crowdsourcing in this digital age is becoming increasingly popular, and The People's Collection Wales is a testament to the utilisation of this model within a cultural history archive. Typically, these archives are hosted online and allow users from the general public to upload archival documents of varying types, they are also usually moderated and hosted by previously existing archival establishments (Theimer, 2014: x). The National Library of Wales has embraced this model and carried out a large-scale crowdsourced project to

collect Welsh place names, working in conjunction with People's Collection Wales and the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales (Dafis et al., 2016: 145). The People's Collection Wales is itself a crowdsourcing platform, hosted online and designed to allow the people of Wales to upload and share any historical documents they may have (www.peoplescollection.wales, 2016). Like the Welsh Newspaper online archive, the People's Collection allows searching by keyword and is a little more advanced in allowing filter by type and content. For example, it is possible to search for documents within the specific fields that are classed as "arts and culture". A further filter within "arts and culture" is "carnivals"; thus, knowing from my initial newspaper research that bazaars around Wales were a popular home for Kinetoscopes in the late 1800s and early 1900s, I searched the keyword "Kinetoscope" within this filter which immediately narrowed down the number of search results. Similarly, it is possible to narrow searches down to types of document and it is the varying types of documents available through the website that made it a potentially key asset to this thesis. Not only does it contain photographs, maps, and scanned documents, it also encourages people to upload stories and memories about their experiences in Wales.

It's not just individuals who can upload archival documents to the People's Collection. Organisations with a research or constitutional interest in Wales also utilise the website to host some, if not all, of their findings. For example, the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales hosts a number of their documents and collections on the site. The Royal Commission is sponsored by the Welsh Government and has a remit of 'developing and promoting understanding of the archaeological, built and maritime heritage of Wales' (www.rcahmw.gov.uk, 2016). They currently have just under twenty-thousand

items available on the People's Collection, many of which are then categorised into searchable collections based around a theme, particular building, area of interest, or even where a particular set of documents were found or donated from. These collections proved to be of great use, thanks to the user-friendly design of the People's Collection's website, as when an item is found and is part of a collection, a hyperlink to the collection as a whole is made available. This has proven to be a fruitful method of finding further and relating archival documents. The Royal Commission also has its own partner online archive, Coflein, which is less user friendly but contains more focussed information per result. For example, a result for a particular cinema building will automatically contain all the images, maps and related archives for the building.

However, as with the Welsh Newspaper archive's limited date range, there are limitations to online archives, mostly due to the time-consuming and expensive nature of digitising archival documents. In relation to this, consideration will be made of the rationale employed by the digital archivist and their choices in determining which documents are worth the time and expense of digitising. As such, it is possible that documents that relate to my investigation may not be seen as a priority for digitisation by archives. Therefore, I used a number of physical archives which required a different set of methodological skills than searching online databases. For Welsh newspapers post 1919, I systematically examined the National Library of Wales' physical collection. On a practical level, this required more planning in advance than simply searching by keywords. The collections are largely available on microfiche, which are freely available to the researcher with little assistance required from library staff. This approach requires a certain degree of pre-

research to ascertain which volumes of newspapers it is worth requesting, rather than picking dates or editions at random and hoping something relating to cinemas crops up.

This is where the reciprocal relationship between this thesis' archival research and audience investigations begins. That is, audience responses informing newspaper archival investigations and the question of which dates and editions to focus upon, in line with Moore's (2011: 253) assertion that early twentieth century newspapers are 'an archive of cinema's reorganisation of social life'. It stands to reason then that events that are prominent in the memory of respondents may have also been present within the columns of local newspapers. Indeed, my early research with the Welsh Newspaper online archive provided plenty of reports on the cinema that weren't simply advertisements or announcements. These included gossip columns that would summate people's experiences of attending early cinema, correlating with Moore's assertions that most small-town newspapers had some variation of a gossip column that can be a valuable resource for a film historian investigating a social history of cinemagoing (p. 263).

Using local archives

Furthering these archival searches beyond newspapers not only meets the call of New Film Historians to gather as many primary sources as possible (or work towards building a wider view of history as discussed by Helen Richards), but it also assisted in providing further threads or narratives of history to follow. With Aberystwyth chosen as this thesis' case study area, I also sought out smaller local archives. This was exemplified through the use of the Ceredigion Museum's archive, which, rather serendipitously, is housed in Aberystwyth's former Coliseum cinema and contains collections concerning the cinema's history.

In 2016 there was a call on the BBC Wales News website, noting that the museum was carrying out an oral history project on its history as a cinema. I contacted the museum and began an email dialogue with Amanda Partridge, who organised this oral history project. She provided access to Ceredigion Council's archive database system, as well as to their physical archives within the museum. During this first visit, we uncovered a set of posters advertising 'Borth Cinema', 'Llanarth Cinema', 'Tregaron Cinema' and a couple of other venues claiming to be housed in small satellite villages around the Aberystwyth and Ceredigion area. Each poster advertised at least three films that were shown over a number of weeks, usually on the same day or days of the week. For example, Borth Cinema's poster advertises *The Red Danube* (1949) on Monday, August 27th and *The Moose Hangs High* (1948) on Thursday, August 30th. This pattern follows for *Key Largo* (1948) and *Two Years Before the Mast* (1946) the following week, and for *Tension* (1949) and *The Wonderful Urge* (1948) the week after that. Clearly, there were films being shown in Borth, likely in 1949 or the early 1950s as suggested by the poster dates.

I now had a more focussed period of investigation, the month of August in those years, to research newspapers local to Borth. Here the reader will begin to see this thesis' dual approach, in line with Duffy's description of *source-oriented* and *problem-oriented* forms of archival research. My access to this archive led me to this material, however, none of my secondary source material to this point had indicated that there was a cinema in Borth, a small satellite village five miles north of Aberystwyth accessible through a short train journey. Indeed, cases such as this archival finding prompted this thesis to reconsider how it classed audiences from satellite villages such as Borth, with the questionnaire then asking

respondents to freely state both where they were living at the time and which cinemas they would visit.

This allowed for a consideration of satellite villages such as Borth, and their audiences, to enter into this project's analysis and arguments, and serves as an example of how this project's archival research informed the design of its audience research. This, along with the visual similarity between all the posters, their shared design and publication company, the way in which films are presented at these 'cinemas' (once or twice a week on set days) and the small size of the villages they're housed within (which all suggests that this is a touring cinema operation) have established a path towards both source and problem orientated research approaches. What little scholarship there is on rural Welsh cinemagoing (Miskell, 2006) makes no mention of small villages like Borth or Tregaron. However, Emrys Jones' (1960) sociological study of Tregaron, which was carried out between 1945 and 1950, discusses the small town's Memorial Hall which, according to Jones, was used as 'a cinema, a concert hall, a public meeting room and a police court' (p.67). One of the project's research goals is to bridge the gaps in current scholarship on rural cinemagoing, scholarship which contains no consideration of cinemas in small rural villages such as Borth. However, the posters I have found and Jones' sociological study indicate a possible rural touring cinema operation within the Ceredigion area. Further research will uncover whether this is the case or not, however, the worth of utilising local archives is evident. New avenues of investigation have been opened, problems I had wished to address with my research goals have a new-found credence and the goal of finding specific dates to investigate within the newspaper archive had been achieved.

As previously discussed, I had access to Aberystwyth's archives with relative ease. However, I did not have pre-existing relationships or access to gate-keepers for archives concerning other regions of rural Wales. Thankfully, Archives Wales (www.archives.wales, 2016) contains a fully updated list of archives available throughout Wales. They also include the contact information of the archive, what it's likely to hold, their opening times and if there are any special requirements for gaining entry. Alongside the archives of the Welsh universities, the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales, and the National Library of Wales, there are also a number of county and local archives available throughout Wales. Indeed, Peter Miskell utilised both the Caernarfon and Denbighshire record offices and the Ceredigion Museum for his fleeting studies of cinemagoing outside of South Wales (2006: 212). However, there are some potential complications, due to the changing county boundaries and names within Wales during the twentieth century. The Local Government Act of 1972, which came into effect on 1 April 1974, saw the creation of eight new counties in Wales, mostly through the combination of previously existing ones (Jones, J. G., 2014: 173). For example, Pwllheli, which had previously been in Caernarfonshire, was now in Gwynedd; and Monmouth, formerly of Monmouthshire, was now situated in Gwent. This change lasted only two decades, when the Local Government Act 1994 divided Wales into twenty-two unitary authorities, whilst the previously established counties were still used for ceremonial purposes (Watkin, 2007: 175) As such, a researcher investigating the history of Wales may need to carefully consider which archive to utilise. For example, Gwynedd currently has two record offices which pertain to their old county boundaries, the Meirionnydd Record Office and the Caernarfon Record Office. Bala was historically part of Meirionnydd, however, a search of Gwynedd Council's online database suggests that documents relating to Bala can be found in both offices

(diogel.cyngor.gwynedd.gov.uk, 2016). Ultimately, it proved to be the Ceredigion county archive that was most frequently used during this research, due to the project's employment of Aberystwyth as a case study town.

Types of documents

With the practicalities of which archives to utilise settled, it was important to consider what types of documents could be uncovered and what role they had within this research. A popular method of tracing the economic history of cinemas is the analysis of the logbook or ledger. These documents provide the researcher with an overview of what films a cinema exhibited during a period of time, along with ticket takings and other economic information such as wages or sales of concessions. Robert James' (2007) study of one South Wales miners' institute cinema utilises a ledger as its chief source of analysis. He argues that a ledger is one of the few primary sources available to a researcher that can provide information on working-class tastes in cinema, whereas general or non-class specific tastes can be evidenced through film popularity lists or contemporary studies such as the Bernstein questionnaires (p. 27). Miskell (2006: 114) similarly used 'cash books' as one method to trace the social history of the Central Cinema in Porth and states that he had access to the ledgers of Aberystwyth's Coliseum cinema at the Ceredigion Museum (p. 212), which I have also enjoyed access to. From such ledgers, it is possible to gain a better understanding of the economic history of cinemas, as well as the tastes and preferences of their audiences, investigated through this project. As James (2007) notes, when the economic or class status of an area is known, the choices of film exhibition conveyed through the ledgers, and the attendance figures for them, can allow a researcher to begin to form arguments about the cinemagoing habits and preferences of that class or group (pp:

27 – 28). A key value of the Coliseum's ledgers to this thesis was in their role during the interview stage of this thesis. Containing a complete account of films shown from 3rd January 1938 to 27th November 1976, the ledgers provided an opportunity to engage with interviewees about specific films or genres that proved popular during the period. As will be discussed later in this chapter, the purpose was not necessarily to elicit memories or discussions specifically relating to the films in the ledgers, but rather to enable the ledgers to act as spurs to memories relating to those subjects. For example, mentioning the success of *The Sound of Music* (1965) at the venue prompted one respondent, Sheila, to briefly describe the film as her favourite before embarking on a lengthy discussion of how 'packed' the venues of Aberystwyth frequently were and the rituals of behaviour that were commonplace for audiences.

Ledgers have some limitations, however. They are often difficult to find, especially in anything near an extant form. Indeed, the Coliseum's ledgers are the only ones I could find for Aberystwyth's cinemas. Even in an ideal situation where an extant ledger is located and contains film titles as well as financial information, there are 'limits to what the records of one particular cinema can tell us about audience taste' (Barefoot, 2017: 99). Consequently, insights on taste extracted from ledgers can be supplemented by other archival or ethnographic sources to either complement or complexify one's findings. Barefoot also argues that ledgers can be used to explore other issues aside from audience taste, and uses copies of ledgers concerning the Tudor Cinema, Leicester to consider both the commercial operations of the venue and cinemagoing experience of its patrons (ibid).

For areas or venues that have no existing ledgers, John Sedgwick (2000) developed the POPSTAT methodology to gauge the popularity of films utilising secondary contemporary sources such as the Kinematograph Year Book and local newspapers. The POPSTAT system creates an index of relative popularity for a film in a cinemagoing area by mathematically creating a mean of cinema 'weight' based upon its potential gross capacity, which is then used to work out a film's place on the index by multiplying the weighting of the cinema in which it is playing by the billing status and length of run that it had there, then summing for all cinemas in the sample that screened the film (pp. 70-72). The data for the required information is compiled from the aforementioned contemporary sources such as newspaper reports, advertisements and trade reports such as the Kinematograph Year Book, as well as from existing secondary sources from the works of other academics (Sedgwick, 2006). Sedgwick later published an article in which he was able to test the accuracy of POPSTAT by comparing its results to the newly discovered 1934 ledger of one Portsmouth cinema (Sedgwick, 2006). On this basis, he concluded that POPSTAT is a 'reliable' method of gauging a film's popularity within a given area or cinema, when compared to the actual attendance figures provided by the newly discovered ledger (p. 73). Petr Szczepanik (2012: 167) offers a simplified version of POPSTAT by assessing the length of a film's run over a range of cinemas, allowing the researcher to assume audiences' response to a film at a particular cinema or area in comparison to others. Szczepanik states that this is particularly needed when there isn't a wealth of data available to follow Sedgwick's 'strict' methodology (p. 184). Ultimately, the popularity of specific films has not emerged as a chief point of discussion for this thesis based on my gathered audience memories and their relation to this thesis' research questions. Yet, acknowledging approaches such as Sedgwick's or Szczepanik's is important in understanding what can be achieved with certain sets or

provisions of data. Moreover, at points this thesis does consider matters of popularity and taste in relation to certain genres or types of film during particular periods, or even preferences of venue choice. As such, acknowledging these approaches has been valuable in assessing and understanding audience preferences, particularly for the early period of rural Welsh cinema history.

Mixed methods

With the types of archival documents that this thesis hopes to uncover, and their place within this research, established, it is appropriate to reflect on the reciprocal relationship between this archival investigation and the project's second methodology, ethnographic audience studies. I made a methodological decision to begin the project's archival investigation several months prior to designing and implementing its audience study/oral history component. This choice was made to allow for the collection of items that could serve as memory prompts, when carrying out interviews and focus groups, as well as potentially informing the question design of the questionnaires. Annette Kuhn (2010) discusses, in particular relation to photographs and family photograph albums, the power of archival documents to prompt 'verbal performances of memory' (p. 305). Penny Tinkler (2013), whilst discussing Kuhn's work on memory prompts, notes that whilst photos are certainly not the only archival document that can be used to elicit memories, they have a particular power in doing so as they visually capture a 'moment in time' (p. 64). Kuhn (1995) later discussed the caution researchers should take when utilising archival and photographic prompts for memory. For her, memories do not simply 'spring out of the image itself', rather they are generated as part of a network of memories that shift between past and present (p. 14). The photo acts as a conduit to this narrative and the researcher should not

expect the respondent to simply describe what is happening in the photograph and what their relation may be to it. Rather, it should be seen as the spark that can ignite a narrative path or stream of memories, which may or may not actually be related to the particular document.

Another concern is the understanding that memories are fallible representations of the past. However, the value of memories in this project is not just drawn from their content and role as supplements in establishing a wider historical “truth”; how a memory is discursively constructed and presented by a respondent is also valuable to the analysis of audience perceptions of cinemas and their cinemagoing history. As discussed in the previous chapter, concepts of memory narrative and discourse relate to notions and arguments surrounding personal and cultural/collective memories. Through assessing both the content and discursive construction of memories as evidence of cinema history and cinemagoing experience, this project engages with both schools of thought. That is, whilst the memories elicited through this thesis’ audience investigations – and their discursive production – may tell personal stories and histories, they can then be collated as part of a broader cultural or collective understanding of rural cinemagoing. For this particular project, this will be enabled by the coding of qualitative responses that will allow for their quantitative analysis, as a method of understanding wider perceptions and uses of cinemas by rural Welsh audiences. This quali-quant methodology will be discussed in further detail later in this chapter.

However, before considering the discursive assessment of memories, and quali-quant methods of data analysis, it is important to first discuss the methods of collecting memories

this project utilises: questionnaires, interviews and focus groups. These three methods, their selection influenced by academics working within audience studies and oral history fields, each have their advantages and disadvantages as tools to aid the answering of this thesis' research questions.

The first of these methods, questionnaires, has been chosen for three primary reasons: firstly, its practicality as an easily disseminated research tool, secondly, the ability to easily include both qualitative and quantitative questions, and, finally, due to the effective use of questionnaires within the previous academic work focused on studies of rural cinemagoing, memory studies and more general audience studies that have influenced the design and undertaking of this project. Though a burgeoning field, existing studies of rural cinema audiences have frequently involved the implementation of questionnaires. Karina Aveyard (2015), for her book *Lure of the Big Screen*, employed questionnaires to 'broaden audience participation beyond oral testimonies' at four of her areas of study – two in the United Kingdom and two in Australia (p. 155). Here Aveyard utilised questionnaires to complement and further her findings from the formal and informal interviews she had previously carried out. Similarly, Annette Kuhn (2002), in her study of audiences' memories of 1930s cinemagoing, utilised questionnaires when it became apparent that the interest generated in the project could not be accommodated by time intensive interviews alone, again highlighting the relative ease and scope of questionnaire use (p. 245). My thesis has operated in a reverse manner to both Aveyard and Kuhn, with questionnaires being disseminated before the carrying out of interviews and questions and choices of interviewees being informed by analysis of questionnaire data. Ultimately, I utilised questionnaires to pool as large a respondent base as possible, then used interviews to

explore specific findings in more detail. Hipkins, Gennari, and O’Rawe (2018) similarly used questionnaires to cover a wide-geographic spread of rural Italy, ultimately receiving over 1000 responses from respondents aged over sixty-five who recalled attending ‘provincial’ cinemas during the 1950s (p. 118). Much like this thesis, Hipkins et al. followed up their questionnaire with 160 half-hour interviews. Interviewees were chosen based on memories that closely represented definitions of the rural from the period of examination (ibid). This allowed the researchers to better concentrate their analysis of memories around a specific definition of rurality, whereas their questionnaire’s statement to potential respondents had asked for ‘provincial’ memories, eliciting a mixture of rural, small-town and urban periphery responses. Again, the combination of questionnaires and interviews allowed for a more rigorous methodological pursuit, similar to this thesis’ use of interviews to further explore themes raised through questionnaire analysis.

Archival findings have also been used to inform this project’s questionnaire design so, like Aveyard, it has been influenced by preliminary findings. For example, early archival searches indicated that it was common-place across rural Wales for film showings to be put on in improvised spaces (such as a church hall, assembly room, or school). With a desire to learn more about these experiences, which could potentially have been specific to those living in the smaller villages of rural Wales, a question concerning watching films away from the cinema was included in the questionnaire. Indeed, using prior research to inform question design within a questionnaire is prominent within the work of scholars investigating audience memories. Jackie Stacey (1994), in her study of the placement of movie stars within the memories of wartime and post-war British female audiences, designed her questionnaire in response to the ‘themes’ of over three-hundred-and-fifty letters she

received in response to requests published in four women's magazines, which requested readers write to her about their favourite or least favourite stars of the period (pp. 59-60). This resulted in the structure and content of Stacey's project's questionnaire changing from simply 'asking about stars', as had been her initial intention, to situating the questions about stars within broader 'remits' in the form of four sections (p. 60). This structure, Stacey explains, was designed to 'facilitate the processes of recollection'; rather than having detailed 'cold' questions about stars, the mix of star-based questions with inquiries and calls to recollect their general cinemagoing habits and perceptions at the time encouraged respondents to 'submerge' themselves within their memories and the process of remembering (pp. 60-61).

Clearly, there are precedents, within prior audience studies, of designing a questionnaire influenced by existing research. In the examples given here, the researchers have designed the structure and questions of their questionnaires based upon preliminary audience research findings. Whilst this thesis' questionnaire design was not informed by such preliminary audience research, archival data influenced its construction and aided the prompting of memories during the interview process. The notion of memory prompts was discussed earlier in this chapter, in relation to Kuhn's (2010) arguments for utilising photographs as a way to spark memories and processes of remembering amongst respondents. Such prompts are touched upon within Stacey's work, in the initial letter of request she sent to four women's magazines, she consciously mentioned a few popular stars from her period of investigation. This was done, she explains, to act as 'memory-joggers', which would re-ignite memories of those reading the letter (Stacey, 1994: 60).

Whilst some elements of this questionnaire were influenced by archival findings, it was the

interview process that most benefitted from such archival findings as ‘memory-joggers’, as will be discussed later.

The benefits of questionnaires as a tool to elicit memories or perceptions from a wide range of respondents, in terms of geography and demographics, are made clear in the work of audience scholars such as Aveyard, Stacey and Kuhn. Indeed, other key works within the field of audience studies, including many of those mentioned in the previous chapter, have also relied on these benefits of questionnaires. Jancovich et al.’s (2003) study of the cinemagoing habits and perceptions of Nottingham audiences used a highly qualitative questionnaire, alongside interviews and focus groups, as one of their main methods of engaging with respondents. Similarly to this thesis, their work also considered the history of cinemagoing within Nottingham and assessed this through the use of primary and secondary sources, as well as including a question about cinemagoing memories within the questionnaire. However, their questionnaire's design focussed more on contemporary uses and perceptions, rather than targeting a particular history or memory recollection from a particular time period, which was instead a chief concern of the interviews and focus groups (Jancovich et al., 2003: 251).

Thus far, the value of questionnaires as an easily disseminated tool to elicit and then collect memories and qualitative information has been evidenced by the works that have influenced this project. However, questionnaires are also valuable in their ability to collect quantitative data. Indeed, the ease with which quantitative data can be analysed is attractive for a researcher, which has led to some academics quantifying the qualitative responses of their questionnaires. Such a ‘qualiquant’ approach is taken by Martin Barker et

al. (2008) in their study of *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy audiences (p. 219). Here, they address a historic suspicion and hesitance to mix techniques amongst those who subscribe to qualitative data collection and assessment and those who prefer quantitative methods. Barker et al. initially bridge this gap, in their questionnaire design, by mixing qualitative questions with quantitative ones. For example, after asking respondents to select a quantitative answer, from multiple choice options, the researchers designed the questionnaire so that a qualitative 'explain your answers in your own words' question directly followed it (pp. 219 – 220). This, the researchers argue, not only aided their goal to make their questionnaire 'fun' to fill in, but also allowed them to assess how many people were able to categorically position their opinion (quantitative) and then consider the differing ways in which respondents explained it, in their own words. Jackie Stacey (1994: 61-62) also employed a similar technique in her memory reclamation project questionnaire. For her, this mix of open-ended and closed questions also reduced the risk of repetition and boredom for the respondent.

As such, there are benefits to both the researcher and the respondent when qualitative and quantitative questions are adequately and cohesively mixed together within a questionnaire. However, as briefly mentioned earlier, researchers interested in analysing audience perceptions sometimes cross the quali-quant divide even further, and quantify qualitative data. Barker et al. (2001), in their study of audience responses to the controversial film *Crash* (1996), analysed the qualitative responses to their research and coded them based on two criteria: whether they were 'liking', 'neutral' or 'disliking' in relation to the film (a question of taste, the researchers argue) and if respondents expressed 'approval', 'neutral' or 'disapproval' discourses about the film's controversial content and

subject matter, a more subjective issue (p. 156). Consequently, Barker et al. constructed a nine-cell structure (fig. 2.1) to easily present the quantified qualitative data regarding audiences' views of the film. This structure allowed the researchers to group and classify qualitative data from various sources together – reviews of the film and audience responses, for example (p. 156). Thus, this quantified grouping system allowed for consideration of the relations between criticism and defence of *Crash*, as well as the relationship between journalistic responses to the film and those of the audience (pp. 156-157). Though this project may not directly employ this nine-cell system, the usefulness of Barker et al.'s model in its compiling and quantifying of qualitative data is important. Along with questionnaires, this thesis seeks to extract qualitative data from archival sources as well as interviews and focus groups in order to assess perceptions of rural Welsh cinemagoing prior to 1970. A system such as Barker et al.'s allows for the assessment of audience opinions on dual-levels and can be modified to meet the needs of this project, especially when considering areas where there was a choice of cinema. For example, did respondents enjoy both the film selection at the venue and the venue itself, or did the draw of the film negate the disapproval they harboured for the cinema?

<p style="text-align: center;">+ + = Liking + Approval</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">+ 0 = Liking + Neutral</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">+ - = Liking + Disapproval</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">0 + = Neutral + Approval</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">0 0 = Neutral + Neutral</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">0 - = Neutral + Disapproval</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">- + = Disliking + Approval</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">- 0 = Disliking + Neutral</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">- - = Disliking + Disapproval</p>

(Fig. 2.1: Barker et al, 2001: 157).

Though Barker et al.'s method of aggregating opinion and perceptions from a number of sources is applicable to this project, there are further ways in which qualitative data can be quantified within audience studies. Arlene Fink champions the use of 'codes' to make qualitative data far easier to analyse and work with at a statistical level. She suggests that researchers find a common phrase that can surmise the content of a number of responses (Fink, 1995: 60). For example, during my MA research many respondents indicated that they thought the Magic Lantern cinema was an "important place for the community" of Tywyn, though the exact words expressing this varied across responses. As such, and drawing from Fink's ideals of a clear, unique and easily catalogued set of codes, I coded this type of response as "PFC" or "place for the community". Of course, coding in this manner results in the specificity of qualitative content being lost or marginalised. As such, it is important to this project that the mixed methods quali-quant approach that is applied through coding

remains balanced, and that the quantitative does not usurp the qualitative worth of responses. However, as the discussion on the discourse analysis of memories later in this chapter will show, balancing the qualitative with the quantitative allows for different types of analysis to be performed. The coding of qualitative responses in this project allows for the easy tallying and then analysis of the differing opinions and perceptions within respondents' memories, relating to Barker et al.'s approach of identifying patterns that cross responses and grouping them on that basis. In turn, they can then be organised into a database and used in conjunction with other responses from the questionnaire to start forming patterns that can inform and address this project's research questions. For example, Barker et al. (2001), within their nine-cell table, considered the coding of positive, neutral and negative responses to *Crash* in conjunction with the nationality of the qualitative data's source. This allowed the researchers to easily compare national responses, allowing them to start considering whether there are regional and cultural influences on what creates a controversy (p. 161).

Questionnaire distribution

The questionnaires employed by the works discussed thus far have either been distributed in entirely hard copy form, a mixture of online and hard copy, or hosted entirely online. There has been a move, in the past couple of decades, towards the use of online questionnaires. For example, Barker et al. (2008: 222) explain that of their 24,739 respondents, only 2,253 completed a paper version, whilst 22,486 completed the online version. In contrast, Aveyard's (2015:155) study of rural British and Australian cinemagoers was distributed to 570 homes via letterbox drop and reply-paid envelope, resulting in a return rate of only 37% percent. As I will discuss here, one method of dissemination is not

necessarily better than the other, rather the demographic of the questionnaire's intended audience can substantially inform which method is most effective.

It had been my suspicion that online responses would not be as prominent as they may have been in other audience studies projects, especially those investigating contemporary audiences. Indeed, Hoggart et al. (2002) state that most online questionnaire respondents are 'young wealthy males' (p. 177). This evaluation had seemingly stood the test of time; Thomas Alcott's (2017) recently completed PhD study of wrestling audiences utilising digitally disseminated questionnaires as an initial ethnographic methodology with, of the 538 responses, 86.6% identifying as male. As Alcott notes, it may be easy to assume that wrestling audiences are predominantly male, yet his further research, reflecting on other scholarship and the opinions of those within the business of wrestling, suggest a more balanced gender breakdown (pp. 138 – 139). Furthermore, 72.5% of Alcott's respondents fell within the 22 – 39 age brackets whilst just 12.8% were over 40 (pp. 141 – 142).

As my thesis explores the perceptions and memories of audiences prior to 1970, it had seemed that online dissemination would not be practical as a sole distribution method for attracting responses. Indeed, when carrying out my master's degree research in 2014, which considered both current and historical uses of one rural Welsh cinema, forty-six out of the total 149 respondents completed an online questionnaire. I would argue that, because of the time of writing, 2002, Hoggart et al.'s claim does not fully represent the wider and more prominent level of internet access and usage at the time of this project's undertaking. The number of UK households with access to the internet has risen drastically since 2002, with the Office of National Statistics reports of UK internet users showing 46% of households

with access in 2002 (2008: 1) whilst that number had grown to 86% in 2015 (2015: 11). This growth in access has then potentially changed the primary internet userbase as described by Hoggart et al. The Office of National Statistics' 2016 (pp. 4) report highlights that the largest growth of recent internet users were women aged 75 and over at (69%), women aged 65 to 74 (80.7%) and men aged 75 and over (80.3%). Furthermore, 75.8% of women and 72.5% of men aged 65 to 74 had used the internet within three months of the time of report's publication (p. 5). However, internet usage of older generations in Wales is presented independently from England. Data from the 2014-2015 National Survey for Wales (2015) highlights that 63% of those between the ages of 65 and 74 claimed they used the internet for personal use, whilst that figure drops to 29% for those aged 75 and over.

There has been a rise in use of social media amongst older generations that has vastly benefitted the dissemination of this thesis' research questionnaire. 7.8 million of Britain's 44.1 million current Facebook users are over the age of 55 (Statista 2018a), whilst the platform as a whole is losing younger users, it has seen growth in over 55-year-old usership (*The Guardian*, 2018). This growth in over-55 social media use is potentially linked to ease of access and the recent rise of affordable smart devices, with smartphone ownership between 2012 and 2016 rising by 50% amongst 55-64-year-olds, 36% amongst 65-74-year-olds and 15% (from almost 0%) amongst those over 75 years-old (Statistica 2018b). A quantitative study of 'silver surfers' in the largely rural county of Hertfordshire (Choudrie & Vyas, 2014) argued that availability of high-speed internet and ease-of-use of internet-enabled devices has seen older-generations adopting social media (p. 302). A 2016-2017 Welsh Government survey indicated that 84% of Welsh households had internet access, with 40% of people over the age of 75 now actively using the internet in comparison to 22%

in 2012-2013 (Gov.Wales, 2017: 9). This report also indicates that similar increases are evident within other elder demographics, with 50-64-year-olds rising from 76% to 88%, and 65-74-year-olds jumping from 54% to 72%. Overall, 73% of Welsh over-50s access the internet for personal use (ibid: 9). Thus, it has become easier in recent years, even compared to my previous research project of 2013-14, to disseminate information to those who potentially have memories of rural Welsh cinemagoing prior to 1970.

Indeed, social media has proven to be a valuable resource not only in distributing the research questionnaire, but also engaging in a virtual version of Karina Aveyard's social anthropology approach and gaining archival materials. There are a large number of Facebook pages and groups dedicated to different facets of Wales. Sometimes these are quite broad such as *You Know You're From Aberystwyth When You...* (Facebook, 2018a), which has over 12,000 members and is a space for general conversation and observations about the local area. Local history, perhaps due to its observable older active user-group, is a common theme in this group, with users frequently posting their own photos or asking others for information on an event, place or person. Beyond these more generalised pages, there are those that are specifically focussed on local history such as *The History of Bangor: Cataloguing our Memories* (Facebook, 2018b) – 10,000 members – or *Historical Rhayader and Surrounding Area* (Facebook, 2018c) – 1,316 members. Whilst these typically have fewer followers than the more generalised pages, they benefit from their specificity of historical focus and have fewer issues of off-topic conversation. There is even a page dedicated to the history of Welsh cinemas, aptly titled *Welsh Cinema Photo History* (Facebook, 2018d), with over 2,000 members. I identified and posted a link to my bilingual research questionnaire, hosted through Google Docs on my own webpage, to as many

groups as I could find after having first messaged the moderators for permission. This was extremely productive, not only were 236 digital questionnaires received via this route (94% of the total figure), but the comment sections of the questionnaire posts often contained back-and-forth conversations between group members discussing their memories of cinemagoing. Karina Aveyard (2012b) has discussed the benefits of social anthropology and observation for garnering an understanding of rural cinema perceptions (p. 649). These comments sections allowed for a virtual implementation of this approach that was specifically focussed around memories of rural Welsh cinemagoing. Indeed, the majority of moderators and group members welcomed my research and actively engaged with the questionnaire and comments sections. Yet, there were a couple of minor instances where comments were negative. One of these came from *You Know You're From Aberystwyth When You...* where a commentator questioned the general validity of such academic research. I ignored the comment and did not delete the post, as a number of others were commenting in a helpful manner, however other group members argued for the importance of such history to them before a moderator deleted the original negative comment. In another instance a group moderator for a page dedicated to my hometown of Llanfyllin accepted my post, but then immediately commented on it suggesting that the research was a waste of public money. In this instance, I decided to delete the post to avoid further off-topic conversation or risk an inundation of fake questionnaire responses.

There are, of course, potential benefits to an online questionnaire above a physical one beyond its ease for the researcher, in terms of dissemination, and as a prominent tool for polling online based communities. Booth-Kewley et al. (2007) argue that their online questionnaires created a 'sense of disinhibition' created by absolute anonymity and lack of

the researcher's presence, as respondents to online questionnaires were more forthcoming in their answers and provided more detail about their sexual endeavours, when compared to those who completed paper questionnaires (p. 463). Though I am not quizzing my respondents on their sexual history, it is possible that memory reclamation may benefit from such a sense of disinhibition in the honesty or depths of answers received; also, an online questionnaire may be preferred by some respondents for this reason. However, as noted by Hoggart et al. (2002: 177), such anonymity and disinhibition could lead to purposefully false answers that Phellas et al. (2012: 183) argue can be submitted for malicious reasons.

In her work, Aveyard (2012b) noted issues of respondents being conscious of her position as a researcher, though she argues that such issues were limited in Sawtell as a larger rural town and due to her extended time in the area. Respondents who saw her often became familiar with her presence and research goals, whilst the town was large enough for her to not stick out or become widely known as the 'out of town researcher', as she had done in the smaller areas of study or ones she frequented less (p. 656). From a practical standpoint, these are considerations this project needs to ensure are addressed. In Aberystwyth, a town in which I have lived for nearly a decade and that, as a university town, has a population relatively used to the endeavours of academics, my prominence as a researcher was arguably lessened in terms of impacting on responses. Aveyard experienced issues of 'positivism' – respondents speaking and responding in ways to leave a positive impression about the cinema on Aveyard – and self-conscious responses due to her position or status as a researcher, at these smaller or less frequently visited areas of study (p. 658). As such, an

approach is needed to address how such positivism or self-conscious responding can be minimised in my areas of study, as it was for Aveyard in Sawtell.

John Brewer (2000: 20), in his significant work *Ethnography*, cites the influence of the researcher and subsequent positivism as the key criticisms of taking an ethnographic approach. Whilst, I argue, the historical focus of this thesis mitigates some concerns of a researcher influencing the usual activities and day-to-day life of audiences, issues of positivism are a prominent concern. One method to overcome such issues is the promise of anonymity in the questionnaire. The Aberystwyth University ethics approval process for the thesis requires that all respondents have the option to remain anonymous. I have also informed respondents that all names given in the ethnographic portions of this research will be changed if their responses are drawn upon in the final thesis. As such, questionnaire respondents and interviewees know that their responses will not be attributed directly to them, creating a sense of disinhibition in anonymity similar to that discussed by Booth-Kewley et al. This, when mixed with the efficacy of utilising informal interviews to trigger responses rather than considered answers, as well as the focus on historical perceptions and uses rather than contemporary observations, reduces the risk of inhibited or conscious responses. Whilst the issue cannot be totally avoided, remaining conscious of it will aid the minimisation of its impact.

However, this is not to say that there is no value in using a physical questionnaire. Indeed, my previous research managed to garner twice as many physical questionnaires than digital, and the opportunity to physically meet audiences worked well for that project in its singular focus on the Magic Lantern and its place as a community focused venue. Moreover, whilst

there has been a marked upturn in the numbers of over 50s using the internet in Wales, this is not to say everybody has such access or engages with the types of social media channels that have benefited this current research. Consequently, physical versions of the questionnaire were also disseminated, though the return of these was far fewer than for digital copies at only 6% or 16 copies. Indeed, it proved difficult to get physical copies of the questionnaire completed. I attended screenings of films in Aberystwyth and Pwllheli with little luck; those I spoke to who were interested were either too young or had already completed the questionnaire online. Those that were completed were largely due to the help of my PhD supervisor's mother and her friendship group.

Triangulation of methods

Despite all the benefits a well-designed questionnaire provides for a researcher, there are limitations in its use for the reclamation of memories and engaging in the non-linear, fluid process of memory reclamation that Kuhn discusses. This thesis requires a way to interact more directly with respondents and their recollection of memories. Whilst the questionnaire can act as a strong tool for cheaply and easily gathering a wide-range of memories, it is limited by the length of qualitative responses that can fit on a physical page, or the number of questions that can be asked before the respondent loses interest.ⁱⁱⁱ Equally, questionnaires restrict the active role of a researcher, and the ability to ask questions in response to particular recollections, thus continuing the process of remembering. Aveyard (2012b) notes that her research on rural cinemagoing communities used a 'mixed-method' approach, a combination of three methodologies to ensure that the nuanced perceptions of audiences are self-consciously and reflectively engaged with by the researcher (pp. 648-649). Similar to the already discussed mixing of archival research with

questionnaires, or crossing the quali-quant divide, the mixing of differing qualitative audience investigation methods can result in a more thorough project, especially in relation to the collection and analysis of memories.

Aveyard's three intertwining and reciprocal methodologies were ethnographic, narrative and social anthropology techniques, respectively. Ethnographic, the observation of participants with limited interaction from the researcher, is suited to projects such as Aveyard's – where the current habits and behaviours of the audience are under investigation – but not best suited for a project considering historical uses and eliciting memories. Narrative, for Aveyard the use of written surveys and organised interviews, are being utilised in this project, with a discussion of organised interviews and focus groups coming later in this chapter. However, this thesis does take influence from the ethnographic observation principle through attendance of various rural Welsh cinemas and, indeed, observing comments from Facebook. Through this, Aveyard argues, a researcher can garner a better understanding of an area and its history from actually seeing it, rather than simply reading about it (pp. 654 – 655). Furthermore, James Hamill (1990: 25) calls for the combination of interviews with traditional Denzin (1970) inspired observation techniques – which Aveyard (2012b: 654) draws influence from – to create a 'modern' form of observation that can 'describe cultures' in a more thorough and interactive manner.

As such, it's the latter of these three methods, social anthropology, that this project combines with Hamill's ideals of modern ethnography in order to capture memories and perceptions whilst dispersing the questionnaire. Indeed, Aveyard reasons that her social anthropology method is 'intertwined' with the ethnographic and narrative work carried out

in support of her project, thus creating a 'triangulation' (pp: 653; 657). Social anthropology, within Aveyard's study of British and Australian rural audiences, revolved around her immersion within one community, Sawtell, having actively moved to the area and lived among the community for two years. As such, this in depth and close form of audience investigation was only carried out within Sawtell, whilst investigation of the other nine areas drew on just her ethnographic and narrative approaches. It is indicated that ethnographic and narrative approaches were also employed in Sawtell, with the inclusion of social anthropology emerging over time (p. 649). In opposition to the purposefully non-interactive positioning of her observation methods, here Aveyard regularly attended film screenings and casually spoke to audience members about their habits and perceptions (p. 657). She kept written records of her observations and collected qualitative data through a diary and maintained an ethics discipline of informing anyone – even during casual encounters – of her professional interests in the area's cinema and its audiences (pp. 657-658).

As the questionnaire responses were largely digital for this thesis, there were fewer opportunities to engage in casual conversation during dissemination. However, I would engage with some Facebook commentators who asked me a question or presented a particularly notable piece of information; equally some contacted me directly via Facebook's messaging system with further information. Similarly, some respondents also got in touch via email with further details about their experiences or to express a general interest in the project. I also took the opportunity to take part in informal conversations with those who may have memories of rural Welsh cinemagoing. For example, I hosted a reminiscence session at Aberystwyth's Day Centre, where a small group of men and women in their eighties and nineties took the opportunity to discuss their memories of cinemagoing in the

area. I declined the opportunity to make this an *official* session with the completing of questionnaires, as the carers at the event noted that some of the group had varying degrees of dementia. I also co-hosted an event at the Ceredigion Museum (formerly the Coliseum cinema) with BBC Radio Four's Francine Stock. Here Stock and I discussed the history of the Coliseum and four selected films that had played there between the 1930s and 60s. At the end of the event we engaged in a question and answer session with the audience, where a common thread of discussion was memories of attending the cinema. Stanley Cohen (2002), in his study of the moral panic surrounding the mod and rocker social groups, used a similar technique as a key part of his research.^{iv} He cites his use of 200 'informal' interviews as being influenced by community studies (p. 19). For Cohen, this method allowed him to prompt a reaction, rather than a considered and composed response. To an extent, my semi-structured interview process presented similar responses, however respondents were to some degree prepared for the interview process, with a couple having even prepared notes of what they might bring up. Social anthropology opportunities, such as the Stock event and day centre visit, prompted new avenues of investigation for my research and also allowed me to share findings of my research with the public.^v

In keeping with the theory of ethnographic triangulation to thoroughly investigate an audience, and due to this thesis merging Aveyard's observation and social anthropology methods together, this project positions archival investigation as the third within the triad of complementing methodologies. Similarly, Annette Kuhn (2002) used a triangulation of historical, ethnographic and film-based investigations. She argues that each methodology produces a different story that, whilst informative and potentially presenting 'new knowledge', will only provide a nuanced understanding of how cinema works if the

researcher 'works at the point where historical, ethnographic and textual stories meet' (Kuhn, 2002: 7). Indeed, Aveyard discusses Campbell and Fiske (1959), early pioneers of triangulation within social science, as using the method to enhance validity and mitigating the variances that inevitably come from relying on one source of data (Aveyard, 2012b: 653).

As the previous chapter noted, the combination of differing methodologies to create a nuanced set of results that may complement or contrast with each other is indicative of the frameworks found within the film history traditions this project seeks to draw influence from and contribute towards. Indeed, Barker and Mathijs (2012), discussing the triangulation utilised in their *The Lord of the Rings* audience project, argue that any researcher undertaking a triangulation methodology should do so with conscious acknowledgment that all perceptions are 'limited, biased and positional', and that the combination of methodologies does not reap any form of 'truth', rather the perspectives gathered can now be relativised (p.674). Again, this self-aware stance on notions of truth is indicative of the New Film History tradition. Biltereyst, Lotze and Meers (2012) have discussed triangulation as a benefit to the New Cinema History tradition's specific concern of social investigation (p. 692). Researching the cinemagoing history of two Belgian cities (Ghent and Antwerp), the authors combined political economy and socio-geographical research of the exhibition areas with programming analysis and oral history approaches to argue that cinemagoing as a social practice was more informed by 'social routine', 'community identity', 'class' and 'social distinction' than by 'movies, stars and programming strategies' (ibid). This 'three-layered' methodological structure, they argue, benefited their investigation by providing important 'corrections and nuances' that may have been missed

if just one approach was employed (p. 708). Sharing in Biltereyst, Lotze and Meers assertion that triangulation can 'enrich our knowledge of the meaning and experience of cinema', this thesis' combination of archival research, questionnaire dissemination and in-depth interviews ensures that my research questions are thoroughly explored and answered (ibid).

Interviews

Having discussed the practicalities, benefits and potential challenges of utilising archives, questionnaires and informal ethnographic interview techniques, I shall here discuss the final methodology employed by this project for collecting data, semi-structured interviews. There is within the remits of film and media audience studies and memory studies projects, a prominent use of interviews as a method of extracting qualitative data from respondents. If questionnaires are a method for sampling a wide spectrum of respondents, then interviews are an opportunity to have more detailed and fluid discussions, albeit with far fewer respondents. As noted earlier, many researchers who utilise both questionnaires and interviews, as is the case with this thesis, carry out the interview stage after receiving questionnaire responses. This, as evidenced in Kuhn's work (2002: 245), allows for a dual benefit of questionnaires as a data collection method in their own right, and as a tool for locating individuals who are willing to be interviewed. In the case of this thesis, and as will be discussed in more detail in chapter six, patterns of response that emerged from the questionnaire data informed the decision of who to approach for interviews, as a means of extracting further relevant information concerning these patterns. Aveyard (2012b: 656), in her study of rural Australian and British cinemagoers, combined interviews with questionnaires as part of her 'narrative approach' within her triangulation model. However, as previously discussed, Aveyard utilised questionnaires after the interview process, as a

method of collecting wider perceptions in addition to the ethnographic, narrative and anthropologic approaches undertaken. With her triangulation focussed on understanding current perceptions of cinemagoing, this grouping together of questionnaires with interviews is understandable. However, their separation as different point of triangulation within this thesis highlights the importance of the data gathered from both, as well as the historical focus of the project.

However, the “narrative” component of interviews is not lost from this conversion. Rather, the very purpose of interviews within this thesis is to heighten their narrative qualities and benefits as a tool for working with memory. As already discussed, questionnaires, despite having a number of benefits, are limited when it comes to extracting and working with detailed and lengthy memory reclamations, from the practical standpoint of limited writing space or the carrying over of social media writing styles into the questionnaire, to the more abstract issues of their static presentation and the lack of input from the researcher to work fluidly with responses and prompt further reclamations through asking follow-up questions.^{vi} As Kuhn (2002: 243) argues, whilst an interview can follow a structured set of questions, maintaining an open approach and having an element of spontaneity is a benefit when working with memories. Indeed, as discussed earlier, memory is not linear and allowing respondents to stray freely from one topic to another is indicative of the memory reclamation process. For a researcher to insist on sticking to set questions or structure would be detrimental to the aim of eliciting memories. Of course, that is not to say there are limited benefits to having a structure or a set list of questions to refer to. Indeed, having pre-written questions can ensure that there is never a lull in proceedings and if the respondents are not providing answers that can provoke spontaneous avenues of

questioning, then there are questions to fall back on. Similarly, if the respondents are on the other side of the spectrum and begin to dominate a conversation, then the researcher has a structure and different questions to interject with or offer to other members of the group. Parity between interviews, in terms of the content covered, can also be achieved through the utilisation of a semi-structured plan. Such parity will aid comparative analysis of interviews conducted with differing respondents.

Furthermore, having a plan in terms of the types of questions one will ask – even if spontaneous and reactive questioning is expected – can be beneficial. In relation to memories, Kuhn (2002: 243) discusses the worth of alternating the pattern of questioning from the specific to the abstract; from discussing a local cinema to discussing how the respondent feels about that cinema. This method ties into Kuhn's work on utilising family photographs as a memory reclamation tool and appreciating the nuances of discussing the physical (in terms of place and space) and the abstract memories that can be summoned by it, as discussed earlier. Also of relevance in relation to this is Kuhn's (2002) arguments for using archival stimulants to help elicit memories during an interview. Here, she states that they were not used to be 'leading' or intrusive, rather to ignite the flame of recollection and to prompt conversation (p. 243). Clearly, there is validity in employing interviews to extract memories and approach them in a far more fluid and spontaneous manner than is allowed through questionnaires. However, it is also important to consider how this qualitative data will be analysed.

Oral history and discourse analysis of memory narratives

In keeping with the New Film History and mixed methods approaches this thesis seeks to utilise, aspects of oral history have influenced the decision of choosing interviews as a method of collecting memories. Indeed, in relation to the researcher's presence within the interview and questionnaire process, Patricia Leavy (2011: 5) argues that a researcher must be 'fully present' with the person 'narrating' their story, to both engage with their narrative and read beyond its surface content. Indeed, Portelli (1981) argues that oral sources are 'narrative sources' and, therefore, a researcher concerned with oral history must draw from analysis methods developed in the theory of literature: discourse analysis (p. 98).

Portelli's call for oral historians to use discourse analysis techniques to examine and extract knowledge from narratives garnered from ethnography, as well as the works of other audience memory investigators (Stacey, 1994; Kuhn 2002), have influenced this project's choice of discourse analysis to examine the memories uncovered. Furthermore, the choice of discourse analysis will aid the answering of this project's research questions, particularly the desire to assess perceptions and experiences of rural Welsh audiences. For a discourse analyst, the concern of a memory is not simply *what* a respondent has written or said – the content of the memory – but also *how* they write or say it. The conscious or subconscious discursive formation of memories can, for some researchers, be key in extracting personal and cultural memory perceptions beyond the overt content of the memory – the constructed presentation and message of the memory that the respondent intends the listener to hear or read.

There are, for this project, two scholars whose work surrounding audience memories, within the field of film and television studies, have been a key methodological inspiration

for this project's employment of discourse analysis: Jackie Stacey (1994) and Annette Kuhn (2002). Drawing on Lacanian psychoanalysis, Stacey examines women's memories of female film stars, and considers female audiences to employ two forms of memory when discussing their favourite film stars of the past. These are *iconic* and *narrative* (p. 67) compositions of memory. Iconic memories, Stacey argues, are typically 'frozen moments', atemporal in their construction of a 'pure image' (ibid). Examples she gives for this include Bette Davis' 'flashing and rebellious eyes' and 'Rita Hayworth's flowing hair'. Such atemporal memories are not just applicable to stars themselves, but also the contexts in which female spectators remember themselves in such 'frozen moments' (ibid). For example, Stacey writes of one respondent who recalled being sat in front of a mirror and trying to style her hair in the way Bette Davis did in a particular film. Here, Stacey argues, the respondent's own reflection has replaced that of Bette Davis and has 'become the subject of this iconic memory' (p. 68). That is, the respondent is not directly remembering watching a film with Bette Davis in it, rather she is remembering a facet of her fandom, one that still features the star as an icon, a visual sign that is associated within the respondent's memory of both Bette Davis and her childhood. Whilst the need to assess female memories of female film stars may not be prevalent in this thesis, the notion of an iconic memory as being one that is 'frozen' in time, removed from any temporal context and becoming a 'pure image', is a key understanding of memory of relevance to this study (p. 67). This has been particularly valuable in exploring factors of rural Welsh cinemagoing memory that have become almost atemporal in their construction, with weekly childhood matinee-going being a prominent example.

Stacey's second form of memory, narrative, involves a temporal shift from iconic memory. For Stacey, narrative memories present 'temporally located sequential stories of cinema-

going' (1994: 68), in which her female audiences constructed themselves as heroines. Here it is how the respondents craft a narrative around themselves as well as in relation to the subject – female Hollywood stars within Stacey's research – that is of discursive importance. This narrative form and how the respondent discursively places themselves within their own story is more prominent within the analysis of the memories this thesis uncovers. Indeed, Annette Kuhn (2002: 9-10) utilised similar discourse analysis techniques to consider perceptions via memories of cinemagoing in the 1930s. Kuhn's discussion of discursive 'tropes' or 'registers' that are used to place oneself in relation to a subject – or indeed, make the person remember the subject – builds on the work of Stacey's narrative memory theory, and aids the credence of using such narrative discourse analysis to extract meaning from the memories of my respondents. These tropes, or registers, represent the degree to which a respondent 'implicates' themselves within the story or narration of a memory (Kuhn, 2002: 9).

Kuhn argues that there are four registers of self-address: repetitive, anecdotal, impersonal, and past/present (pp. 9 – 10). Discursively, they are identified and distinguished by the language respondents use to describe their involvement in a narrative. For example, the *impersonal discourse* register is typically represented by a respondent referring to themselves in the third person or as a 'social commentator', rather than as a participant. For Kuhn, this register sees a respondent either 'standing aside from what happened' or positioning themselves as 'expert witnesses' to an event (p. 10). In opposition to this distanced trope is the *anecdotal* register, here the respondent positions themselves as a protagonist, often achieved through the use of a first-person narrative (ibid).

The most commonly used trope, for Kuhn, is the *repetitive* register, where the respondent implicates themselves as being central to the event, as with the anecdotal register, but also the memory represents their 'habitual' involvement, often as part of a collective. An example given by Kuhn for this repetitive register is 'I always went with my mother' (ibid). Even from this short statement the discursive value is rich, the respondent places themselves as the protagonist and implies a ritual or habitual repetition of attending the cinema with their mother. Indeed, this memory could also be assessed under Kuhn's final trope, the past/present register. This register focuses on how a respondent organises time within their memory narrative, covering a range of 'narrator, story and narratee' relationships (ibid). The most common example, Kuhn argues, is for a respondent to make a simple comparison between the past and the present, a 'detached' observation that is always 'rooted in the present' (ibid). This register also allows for the consideration of the respondent's engagement with the activity of remembering and with what detail past events are remembered at certain stages of their lives. This latter point is something this project is keen to develop and build upon. Kuhn acknowledges that differing gender, cultural, social and class backgrounds may influence which discursive registers respondents utilise. For example, Kuhn writes that middle-class male respondents are more likely to use the impersonal register (pp. 9-10) and even notes that rural respondents had different perceptions and levels of interest in certain film stars in comparison to those from urban backgrounds (p. 118). This is a factor that is of interest to this thesis, when comparing the memories – both in terms of content and discursive construction – between those who experienced different levels of rurality.

Stacey's theories and Kuhn's narrative tropes have aided the answering of this project's research goals by enabling an understanding of *how* respondents remember going to the cinema, and where they position themselves and the cinema within those memories. For example, those who commonly use a repetitive register will suggest a frequency of cinemagoing and a habitual relationship with the cinema; in opposition to this, those who frequently employ the impersonal register may be positioning themselves away from cinemagoing, or as commentators on other people's usage. Similarly, and due to this thesis calling for respondents to discuss cinemas that are now long closed or have seen several renovations, Kuhn's focus on 'place-memory' is also important to acknowledge in terms of analysing shifts in memory reclamation discourse. 'Place-memory', for Kuhn, is the contrast drawn by the comparison of a place or landscape as it was and as it is now (2002: 30). Kuhn also suggests that tropes of place-memory discourse can differ between rural and more urban respondents, with the subtle changes in rural landscapes – especially in comparison to the rapid development of British cities in the post-war era – resulting in far fewer instances of place-memory discourse registers from rural dwellers (p. 28). Kuhn's discussion of place within memory also considers 'memory maps', the way in which respondents 'lay out a *mise en scene*' to frame their recollections (p. 18). The depth and register choice in discursive topography in a respondent's memory map allows for the respondent to insert themselves fully into their memory, remain positioned in the present, or fluctuate between the two. For Kuhn, every respondent's personal memory map and topography is different, yet shared themes and place narratives constitute a cinema specific cultural memory (p. 17). Key to this is the trope of 'walking', being within walking distance of a cinema or cinemas and walking being the chief mode of transportation for her respondents in the 1930s (p. 34).

As discussed in the previous chapter, this project considers personal memory to be analogous to collective memory. As such, it has been possible to compile and analyse personal memories to find patterns of collective memory, a process that has benefitted from the quantification of qualitative responses. For example, by keeping a consistent coding of respondent's discourse type and memory content, evidence of collective memory may be visible in relation to what is being said about a cinema or period of cinemagoing by a particular group or demographic. Furthermore, once a pattern of collective memory has been identified, it can be assessed and tested alongside other contemporary sources, for example newspaper articles, to explore differing representations of local history, ones potentially informed by issues of political or professional agency. Cinema advertisements published within newspapers can serve as an example, as they are likely to always present positive qualities of the venue, which may be at odds with cultural memories relating to its cleanliness, quality of the image or other factors. This cultural memory may in turn appear to be at odds with newspaper reports about the cinema, which from my own research are invariably positive, yet these are typically the same publications being paid by the cinema proprietor to host weekly or even daily advertisements.

Conclusion

The discursive analysis of memories, a key component of this project as a work of oral history and consideration of the types of memory that can be constructed, is key in assessing the perceptions and experiences of pre-1970 rural Welsh cinemagoing and, thus, answering this project's research questions. As discussed earlier, this qualitative data will be analysed and then quantified through discursive codes, to aid the understanding of perceptions and patterns of cinemagoing. This audience studies proponent of this thesis

covers two methodologies within the triangulation approach this thesis utilises – questionnaires and ethnographic interviews, which are both supported by and work symbiotically with this project’s ongoing archival research. Such a mixed-methods approach aids this thesis’ desire to fully engage with approaches central to the New Film History, as well as providing a strong methodological basis for uncovering a wide, both in terms of geography and time period, history of rural Welsh cinemagoing.

ⁱ William is the Visual Images Librarian at the National Library of Wales and has published collections of photography specifically concerned with Aberystwyth’s history. Being able to meet William and discuss the town’s history and the library’s collections was highly beneficial to this thesis.

ⁱⁱ Street (2000: 7) positions agency as *why* a text was created and *what* was its purpose. For her, there is frequently a ‘gap’ between a document’s ‘ostensible purpose and its *real* purpose’. This *real* purpose can be identified, she argues, by a researcher who reads ‘against the grain’.

ⁱⁱⁱ Of course, this is not so much of an issue with digital copies of a questionnaire. However, as is discussed in more detail in chapter three, it seemed that online respondents typically carried their social media discourse types into the questionnaire. As such, responses were typically short and often truncated.

^{iv} Cohen’s study was originally published in 1972

^v It was through the day centre visit that the disciplinarian and local celebrity type role of the town’s usherettes during the 1940s, 50s and 60s first became apparent to me

^{vi} The matter of social media influenced discourse is discussed in more detail in chapter five. A large number of digital questionnaires contained quite truncated discourse, evocative of the type I witnessed within the comments of Facebook posts.

Chapter Three – Touring Cinema Practices within Rural Wales

If one reads the small number of sociological studies of rural Welsh life published in the mid twentieth century, then it would be easy to mistake the region as being void of modernity. This thesis shares Arthur Neal's (2007) understanding of modernity as being evoked and facilitated by the results of the industrial revolution, along with the subsequent introduction of electricity and automation in production and agriculture. These developments would eventually lead to easier and more efficient agriculture, mass production of products and the movement towards 'modern economic growth' (p. 8), which all brought a focus on profit-making and a move away from the influence of traditional institutions such as the dominance of the church. Of course, this definition is firmly located within the contexts of western Europe and North America and is evoked later in this chapter by the role of Thomas Edison's – himself a symbol of modernity – Kinetoscope and the Lumière Cinématographe's respective impact on both early cinema entrepreneurs and audiences in Europe and America. Indeed, this chapter agrees with and explores Joe Kember's (2009) arguments that early cinema technology represents the impact of modernity upon pre-industrial forms of visual entertainment, such as the magic lantern or zoetrope (p. 3).

In the works of Rees (1950), Frankenberg (1957), Davies & Rees (1960), and Jenkins, D. (1971), rural Welsh life is depicted as revolving around agricultural or manual skilled work, school and chapel. As discussed in this thesis's literature review, mentions of the cinema in these works are fleeting, if present at all. It is debatable that, in the areas studied in these works, the cinema simply was not notable enough to be considered by these sociologists as a reportable part of rural Welsh life. It is also arguable that cinemagoing would not, at the

time of the writing of these works, have received much academic attention. As already discussed in this thesis, cinema studies as an academic pursuit would have been in its infancy during this period, focussing initially on film as an aesthetic text and debates surrounding auteur theory and chiefly operating out of France through the work of early film critics such as Bazin and Truffaut and the journal *Cahiers de Cinema* (Allen & Gomery, 1985: 255).

As such, both this chapter and the one that follows argue that the cinema by the 1930s had become – if not integral, then a familiar – part of day-to-day life within rural Wales. It is the assertion of this chapter that the fleeting mention of the cinema in sociological studies of rural Welsh life is likely due to academic vogue or the sheer normality of cinemagoing at this time, rather than a lack of cinemagoing experience or venues of exhibition. More specifically, this chapter asks how early cinema technology spread to Wales, initially through the southern cities and then to rural areas, and to what extent an existing form of media - local and national newspapers - represent the role of these technologies within the public sphere. Such advancements of rural Welsh cinema exhibition are framed throughout this chapter with discussions of both formative cinema technology and the pioneering inventors, entrepreneurs and auteurs who aided the introduction and spread of exhibition to the country and its rural regions, as well as uncovering the tensions and relations between the technology (on the one hand) and the inventors and entrepreneurs (on the other). This will be primarily achieved through analysis of advertisements and articles found within local and national newspapers contemporary to the period, as well as the use of primary source archival material such as posters and tourist guides. Unlike other chapters in this thesis, the use of ethnographic sources will not be employed. This is due, in part, to the period under

consideration here being largely pre-current-memory, a period of history that is now no longer accessible through ethnographic means. It is also an opportunity to provide an 'official or professional' history of the development of cinema within rural Wales and Wales more generally, as Helen Richards (2005: 429) discusses in her study of how the southern Welsh town of Bridgend's cinema exhibition history is represented within one local newspaper. As she argues, such a history can only ever be a 'representation', yet the following chapters will utilise an ethnographic approach to offer competing evidence for the role of cinema within rural Welsh life.

The emergence of moving picture technologies

To trace the history of cinemas and cinemagoing in rural Wales, it is important to first consider the evolution of early cinema production and exhibition technology on a global scale, followed by its rapid adoption as a form of public entertainment in both England and Wales in the late 1890s. This is a discussion that, to a certain extent, has been carried out by David Berry (1994), though his arguments and evidence mostly focus on South Wales through extended discussions on technologies such as the Kinetoscope and Cinematograph and southern-based key exhibitors such as William Haggar. There is, however, a brief focus on Arthur Cheetham and his early period of making and exhibiting of films around North Wales, primarily Rhyl. Yet, this discussion fails to account for his reach and influence within rural Mid Wales and as the founder of the first dedicated cinema in Aberystwyth, the Palladium.

Through discussion of archival and secondary sources, particularly national and local newspapers, it becomes clear that cinema as a form of entertainment and spectacle – and

later as a narrative art form – was ingrained in the public consciousness of rural Wales by 1910. In order to consider the evolution of cinema as a space of public experience in Wales, from a touring trade to requiring dedicated cinemas (venues that primarily operated as permanent spaces of fulltime film exhibition), this chapter focuses on the case study of Arthur Cheetham, a pioneering Welsh filmmaker and cinema entrepreneur. His skill as a marketer and filmmaker, and the picture quality of his projector and screen, rendered his name synonymous with the best that pre-1940 cinema had to offer in rural Wales. As will be discussed, his name was often prioritised in advertisements and newspaper reports over that of films and their stars. In existing scholarship, there is some attention paid to the role of the touring cinema showman and their importance to rural cinema histories. Often, discussions of showmen are brief and part of a broader overview of an area's cinema history, though no less important in providing themes and trends of the role of the itinerant showman that this chapter can seek to draw upon. For example, Cara Caddoo's (2004) research on black American cinemagoers briefly discusses the importance of black showmen in providing exhibition opportunities for segregated audiences, typically bringing their projectors to spaces that black audiences could more easily access such as schools or churches (p. 16). Similarly, Paul Moore (2018) considers the relationship between the expanding Canadian railway system, touring showmen and rural western Canada's early cinema history. Themes of accessibility, from the perspective of audiences and exhibitors alike, and the spread of cinema from urban centres are common foci within existing considerations of the role of the touring showmen. These themes are very much present within this chapter's exploration of early rural Welsh cinema history and the country's showmen. However, this chapter also seeks to build upon these themes of access and development to further explore the specific exhibition practices of showmen and how the

rapidly developing medium of cinema, emergence of audience expectations and the rural Welsh showman's desire to operate over a relatively vast geographic area affected these practices from the late 1890s to roughly 1905.

There is a tendency, when considering the history of cinema technology to reach back to early moving image technologies such as the magic lantern and the zoetrope (Hanson, 2007: 8). Though important, especially Eadweard Muybridge's experiments with photography and the primitive Zoöpraxiscope projector (Parkinson, 1995: 13), I argue that the history of cinema truly starts in the 1890s with Thomas Edison and William Dickson's Kinetoscope "peep-show" viewing device and Kinetograph camera. Though the introduction of the Lumière brothers' projection system and international distribution model in 1895 is justly regarded as the inception point of cinema as a recognisable global institution (Chapman, 2003: 56), it is arguably Edison who bridged the gap between formative and recognisable filmmaking technologies – as well as experimenting with modes of exhibition, licensing and international distribution – that provided the foundations for the business of cinema to be built upon. As early as 1888, Edison had promised to produce a visual version of his popular phonograph (Spehr, 2009: 23) – an early wax-cylinder sound recording and playback device – and it would only take a few short years for the Wizard of Menlo Park to deliver on this promise. Edison, and William Dickson, his often-forgotten assistant in the development of the Kinetoscope, would eventually unveil the Kinetoscope to the general public with the opening of the Holland Brothers Kinetoscope parlour, New York on April 14th 1894 (ibid).

Edison and Dickson's initial experiments borrowed from the phonograph in utilising a cylinder, wrapped in photographic film, to capture images and provide the movement

necessary to create the illusion of motion (Phillips, 1997: 14). Ultimately, they would work with George Eastman (of Eastman Kodak) to develop what would become the industry standard for the next century: 35mm celluloid film, one inch wide and three-quarters of an inch tall, with four perforations on either side (Raimondo-Souto, 2007: 5; Spehr, 2009: 24). The perforations in this film stock were key, allowing for sprocket wheels in both the Kinematograph – the Kinetoscope’s sister camera – and Kinetoscope to control the movement and speed at which the celluloid passed the device’s shutter (Phillips, 1997: 34-35). As with Muybridge’s experiments, which were reported in various Welsh newspapers of the time, including the *Aberystwith Observer* (5th April 1879: 6), the Kinetoscope’s development and launch would have been known to those reading national Welsh newspapers at the time.ⁱ

The Kinetoscope in urban Wales

On May 19th 1894, the *Evening Express* – distributed throughout the Cardiff region – reported that Edison was giving the ‘last few touches’ to the Kinetoscope, with the author describing the device as photographing ‘living bodies’ at forty-six ‘photographs per second’ to create the ‘illusion’ of being an animated picture (p. 3). This report is somewhat inaccurate by inferring that the Kinetoscope itself could record images. Rather, it was the Kinematograph – or other early camera prototypes – that filmed the scenes, not the Kinetoscope. Of note, however, is the author describing the device at present as being ‘only a toy’, with Edison planning to ‘perfect’ the technology to allow it to ‘throw [...] animated photographs upon a curtain, with the aid of a magic lantern’, as well as combining the Kinetoscope with the Phonograph to ‘make the picture speak’ (ibid). This report was reprinted in the *South Wales Echo* (May 19th, 1894: 2) on the same date, as well as in *The*

Cardiff Times (May 26th, 1894: 3) the following week. Welsh language newspapers of the period also reported the invention of the Kinetoscope (*Y Cymro*, 14th June 1894: 7), meaning reports of such modernity weren't limited to English language newspapers, at a time when 50% of the country was fluent in Welsh according to the 1901 census (Jones, R. and Lewis, 2019: 98). This figure notably represents a decline in fluency, with an estimated 95% of the country being Welsh speakers in 1801 compared to 43.5% by 1911 (ibid). However, and akin to issues of conflated England and Wales statistics, these Wales-wide percentages do not portray the nuances of Welsh language proficiency around the turn of the twentieth century. The population of Wales rapidly grew in this time, rising from 601,767 in 1851 to 2,442,041 in 1911, with this growth mostly occurring within the industrial southern regions (ibid: 99-100). West and North Wales, however, maintained a relatively strong Welsh speaking demographic during this period. For example, the 1911 census indicates that 92.1% of those living in Merioneth and 91.1% of those in Cardiganshire were fluent Welsh speakers (Evans, 1998: 217).^{ii iii}

The *Evening Express* report omits any discussion of this new technology as a potential form of artistic entertainment, suggested through its comparison to a toy; though, beyond demonstrating Edison's correct predictions for the future of synchronised sound cinema, it does present the view of this invention being a natural extension of existing technology. The article references both photography and magic lanterns, as well as inferring the Kinetoscope's limitation as a single-person device. Muybridge's experiments, as already highlighted, had received similar attention in the Welsh press to Edison's, so the concept of photography being used to create an illusion of movement was far from ground-breaking in this context. Indeed, the illusion of movement created through the rapid flickering of images

had entered the British public zeitgeist with the Zoetrope being sold as a novelty item and toy in the 1860s, with replacement paper-strips – on which the images were printed – being sold for less than the price of newspaper (Enticknap, 2005: 7). The Magic Lantern had also long been growing in sophistication – with Muybridge’s Zoöpraxiscope being an amalgamation of the two popular devices (Huhtamo, 2011: 9) – and lantern displays were popular throughout Wales during the 1800s (*The Aberystwyth Observer*, 30th December 1871: 4; *The Cardiff Times*, 26th January 1866: 6).

Indeed, the *South Wales Echo* (10th October 1894: 2) later described the Kinetoscope as being a ‘sort of improved Zoetrope’ to easily summate the device to the reader. The article continues to highlight the term ‘living picture’, describing a film of a skirt-dancer being ‘just as one sees her on the stage’, and also providing a more detailed description of how the device operates, focussing on how the forty-three frames per-second recording and playback creates the illusion of movement. Also of note in this article is the writer’s discussion on if it would be possible for the Kinetoscope to play film in reverse. ‘It is conceivable that people would be amused’ to see ‘the clean-shaven man become the man in need of a shave’ (ibid), the author writes, predicting what would become a hallmark of the ‘cinema of attractions’ (Gunning, 1990) period of spectacle focussed filmmaking, which would shortly follow the Kinetoscope and cinematograph’s introduction. The article closes by stating that there had been a private showing of the device in London the previous night. The Kinetoscope had now arrived in the United Kingdom and those who had been following its developments through the Welsh press would not have long for their chance to witness it. Indeed, the familiarity of the Kinetoscope to Welsh audiences, especially in relation to the Zoetrope, is perhaps best represented by the looping nature and short length of Edison and

Dickson's early films.^{iv} The articles discussed here convey the understanding that the Kinetoscope was an evolution of these primitive technologies and had a technical potential far in advance of its ancestors.

On 17th December 1894, the Kinetoscope made its Welsh debut in Cardiff's Philharmonic Hall (Berry, 1994: 19). The event was foreshadowed by an article in the *Evening Express* (1894: 2) on 13th December, describing the latest invention from the 'fertile brain' of Thomas Edison as 'at last' due to arrive in Cardiff. This article, like the ones previously discussed here, gives a brief overview of how the Kinetoscope works, though with two distinctions. First, the article prefaces its description of the Kinetoscope by stating 'so widespread is the interest that has been shown in this invention that few are now ignorant of its general nature' (ibid). This points to the publicity that Edison and his Kinetoscope - though not Dickson - had enjoyed in the press to this point, as well as it being perceived as an evolution or logical progression of photography and existing motion devices, as discussed. Secondly, the article highlights the role of electricity, a symbol of modernity so often associated with Edison, as being a pivotal aid in the photography process of collecting '1,200 distinct pictures' in the space of twenty-five seconds (ibid). The electric current, the author states, 'imparts life to the still image of the photograph'. The focus on electricity here not only provides a far more hyperbolic and less technical explanation of the Kinetoscope than those previously discussed, it also establishes a clear difference between the Kinetoscope and existing technologies such as the Zoetrope or Zoöpraxiscope.

Though Edison's device had to compete with the tight-rope walking Lloyd brothers and 'Magna, The Floating Lady' (*South Wales Daily News*, 17th December 1894: 1), the

newspaper advert for the week's entertainment at Stoll's Panopticon – housed within Cardiff's Philharmonic Hall – gave top billing and prominence to the Kinetoscope and its featured film, *Scene in a Barber's Shop* (1894). The advert (fig.1) describes *Scene in a Barber's Shop*, and the experience of using a Kinetoscope in great detail. As with previous articles, this advert highlights the distinctiveness of moving image technology from other familiar art forms. It details that this scene is not 'imaginary' or 'emanating from the pencil or brush of some artist'; rather it is an 'accurate photograph quickened into life of a scene that has actually occurred' (*South Wales Daily News*, 1894: 1).

STOLL'S PANOPTICON, PHILHARMONIC HALL AND BUILDINGS,
ST. MARY-STREET.

OPEN ALL DAY.—ADMISSION SIXPENCE.

Attractions in the Theatorium :—
THE LLOYD BROTHERS ON THE TIGHT-ROPE,
And other Specialists
IN OTHER SECTIONS OF THE EXHIBITION,
Amongst manifold items of interest, the features are
MAGNETA, THE FLOATING LADY,
Whose Evolutions in Mid-air, entirely unsupported, are an incomprehensible and unsolvable mystery; and
EDISON'S LATEST INVENTION,
THE GREATEST SURPRISE OF THIS GENERATION,
THE EDISON KINETOSCOPE.

SEE IT THIS WEEK, FOR WHEREAS THE FEE FOR SO DOING IS INCLUDED IN THE
ORDINARY ADMISSION CHARGE OF 6D PAID ON ENTRANCE,
NEXT WEEK A SEPARATE EXTRA CHARGE MUST BE MADE.
THE EDISON KINETOSCOPE IN OPERATION!
SCENE IN A BARBER'S SHOP.

The beholder, who is looking down through the window of the Kinetoscope Cabinet, sees the interior of a barber's shop.

A man is reclining upon a barber's chair, about to be shaved. The barber goes to his case, secures his cup, makes a lather, and with this proceeds to lather the man's face. Meanwhile a coloured gentleman, who is probably acting in the capacity of porter, boot-black, and "general utility," is moving about the room. He picks up a paper and sits down to read it. Another customer comes in, pulls off hat and coat, takes a cigar from his vest pocket, lights it, picks up a paper, and sits down to smoke, read, and await his turn. The coloured gentleman aforesaid finds something very funny in the newspaper he is reading, and thereupon he crosses the room and points out the amusing article to the waiting customer. They both laugh, and show every sign of amusement.

Meanwhile the barber has been shaving his man, and both the "shaver" and the "shavee" have been going through many motions, the one plainly evincing his desire to hurry through the work of shaving and be ready for the "next;" the other as plainly showing the results of this immoderate haste on the part of his "executioner" by sundry grimaces and wince when the razor takes off sections of his cuticle. On the wall is seen the appropriate sign, "With or Without Chloroform," which is readily understood after witnessing the torture of the man in the barber's chair. Now, it should be understood that this is not an imaginary scene, emanating from the pencil or brush of some artist; but an ACCURATE PHOTOGRAPH QUICKENED INTO LIFE OF A SCENE THAT HAS ACTUALLY OCCURRED.

Every movement, from the walking of the man across the floor to the sweep of the razor, and even the very blink of an eyelash (so marvellously distinct and true to nature is the reproduction) is recorded, and is witnessed by the beholder through the window of the Kinetoscope. Even the smoke of the cigar which the man is smoking is blown across the face of the scene, and slowly disperses in the air—a most remarkable evidence of the fidelity of kinetoscopic reproductions.

ON OCTOBER 14TH LAST, THE "MANCHESTER GUARDIAN"
said in a Leading Article on
THE EDISON KINETOSCOPE,

"Mr Edison, who has accomplished many marvels, is not content to rest upon his laurels, but is developing new and startling inventions. One of these, the 'kinetoscope,' is intended to reproduce motion as the phonograph reproduces sound, though not in the same manner. The basis of the kinetoscope is photography. If, for example, Mr Edison desires to show us a moving picture of a man taking off his coat, the data of the actual scene are first recorded by the camera at the rate of forty-three successive photographs in each second. When these separate pictures of the changes of attitude that occur to a man when disembarassing himself of his outer covering are set in motion at the same speed as that at which they were taken they unite to form one complete picture, and the photographic figure is seen to take off its coat with an absolute fidelity to nature. This will no doubt remind some readers of the zoetrope, the zogyroscope, and other scientific toys with even more aggravating designations. But practical applications will doubtless be found for Mr Edison's latest invention. We are told that the apparatus in which this reproduction takes place is a cabinet about 4ft. high, 2ft. wide, and 1ft. 9in. deep. It contains the celluloid film band, the apparatus for reconstructing the disjointed views, and a small electric motor for driving the apparatus. The chief detail of the mechanism is a flat metal ring having a slot in it, which makes about 2,000 revolutions per minute. The film passes rapidly over the ring, beneath which is a light. The spectator looks through a lens on to the film, and every action recorded on it passes under his view. The marvels now told of the kinetoscope are in the green wood; what may we expect in the dry? Mr Edison now shows on a small scale 'all the features of an original stage production,' but by and by he proposes to make a partnership between the phonograph and the kinetoscope, and by enlarging the figures and throwing them on a screen produce or reproduce a drama. What would the theatrical public give for such a reproduction, say, of 'Garrick? Yet the next century may possibly be able to have an accurate repetition of Irving's voice and gestures. How will the new machine affect the action and delivery of the orator who knows that every movement of voice and limb is being recorded for the admiration or the amusement of posterity? The possibilities of the kinetoscope are great and multifarious."

Fig. 3.1 – Kinetoscope advertisement in the *South Wales Daily News*, 17th December, 1894: 1

However, despite the sheer size and prominence of the advert – and the Kinetoscope within it – by the week of Christmas the Kinetoscope was sixth billing at Stoll's Panopticon (Berry, 1994: 20). By coincidence, one of those acts above the Kinetoscope was Punch and Judy

showman Professor Richard Codman, father of John Codman, a north Welsh filmmaker and exhibitor who will feature later in this chapter (ibid; *South Wales Daily News*, 24th December, 1894: 1). David Berry (1994: 20) argues that the Kinetoscope and its films failed to have much of an impact on Wales and the Welsh people, and it was projected cinema that caught public attention. Whilst Berry is right in his assertion that the Cinematograph - and other projection-based exhibition technologies - would ultimately become the system of choice for filmmakers and exhibitors, both in Wales and more generally, he does not account for the Kinetoscope's role as a touring symbol of modernity outside of Cardiff.

A 'wanted' notice in the *South Wales Daily Post* (1st February 1895: 1) requested a Swansea shop to exhibit 'Edison's Kinetoscopes', preferably on the main thoroughfare. The wanted notice seemingly worked, as less than a week later 'Edison's Masterpiece and Latest Invention' was advertised as 'now exhibiting' in Swansea's Alexandra Arcade (*South Wales Daily Post*, 6th February 1895: 2). Though a markedly less prominent advert than for its appearance in Cardiff – potentially due to the role of Stoll's Panopticon and its other acts – it regardless shares the hallmarks of other Kinetoscope adverts of the time. Full of hyperbole for the quality of the machine, its films and the 'inventive genius' of Edison himself, it also considers the Kinetoscope's advancements over the Zoetrope. The Zoetrope and other 'scientific toys' are described as providing 'at best very poor imitations of life-like action' (ibid).

This was, however, the first time the Kinetoscope had its own parlour within Wales, removed from the attraction of tight-rope walkers or levitating women. The pressure on this venture to attract audiences on its own merit is hinted at through the text 'adjoining

Lipton's premises' below the addresses of the exhibition space. Coincidentally, or conveniently, the Swansea Kinetoscope advert adjoins, directly above, one for Lipton's, the largest and most visually striking advert in the newspaper. In comparison to the Cardiff advertisements, five films are discussed as being available, although *A Scene in a Barber's Shop* still receives more attention and a slight description rather than just being listed. By 13th February, operations had moved to Swansea's Oxford Street, with advertisements now highlighting that this location was opposite a particular greengrocer (*South Wales Daily Post*, 13th February, 1895: 1). Though no longer able to piggyback on the prominence of Lipton's, the adverts for the Kinetoscope were now included amongst those of local theatres and music halls, rather than food and service shops, and on the front page.

There are few records, that I have been able to find, of Welsh audiences' responses to the Kinetoscope. One exception is an account from 'The Post Bag' section of the *South Wales Daily Post* (15th February 1895: 2), shortly after the debut of the Kinetoscope in Swansea.

The jovial report describes a local tailor, well known for his 'festive proclivities', as indifferently describing the Kinetoscope experience as being 'no different from other photographs I've seen, only it moves on a bit' (ibid). Though intended for comic effect, this statement reinforces my discussion of the Kinetoscope and burgeoning cinematic technology as being perceived publicly to be an evolution, rather than a sudden leap.

Despite the hyperbole of Edison's advertisements, its design as a single-person peepshow – and the short loops that constituted its films – likely did not represent much of a change from existing technology to audiences of the time, despite the radical technological achievements of the Kinetoscope and Kinematograph.

The Kinetoscope would often be the subject or punchline of jokes in Welsh newspaper humour columns, frequently revolving around the technical limitations of the device. For example, one joke in the *South Wales Echo* (25th May 1897: 4) featured a man's wife asking him why the European war he predicted had not occurred yet; 'I suppose the Kinetoscope people are not ready' is his reply and the punchline. Other than being prophetic, this throwaway joke implies common knowledge of the Kinetoscope and the recording operation of the Kinetograph. A prominent international boxing rivalry, Fitzsimmons versus Corbett, was also frequently reported on in Welsh newspapers in 1897. Often mentioned within reports of their encounters was the use of the Kinetograph and Kinetoscope to record and allow audiences to relive the fight. Corbett had history with the Kinetograph, having been the subject of a specially organised fight at Edison's Black Maria film studio in 1894. The resulting film, directed by Dickson, 1894's *Corbett and Courtney Before the Kinetograph*, saw Corbett go glove-to-glove with Peter Courtney and was the second of such fights recorded at Black Maria (Philips, 1997: 66). The Corbett-Fitzsimmons fights, however, were not recorded in a film studio but rather in an actual ring before a live audience. The Kinetograph was there to document the event, rather than being the cause for the event. An 1896 Fitzsimmons fight had previously been planned to receive the cinematic treatment, though the *South Wales Daily News* (22nd June 1896: 3) reported that the use of the Kinetoscope equipment had failed.

The *Evening Express* (17th March 1897: 2), *South Wales Echo* (18th March 1897: 2), and *South Wales Daily Post* (18th March 1897: 3; 19th March 1897: 3) all highlight the presence of the Kinetoscope in the build-up and post-fight reporting of the bout, contested in Carson City, Nevada, with particular focus on the share of money the fighters received from the

Kinetoscope enterprise. Corbett, the loser, received \$13,000 from his share of the Kinetoscope money, for comparison the fight purse was \$15,000 (*South Wales Daily Post*, 19th March 1897: 3). The resultant film, directed by Enoch Rector, required 11,000 feet of film at a specially designed 63mm gauge to ensure that the fight could be caught in its entirety, both in terms of time and screen real-estate (McKernan, 1996: 111). Lasting nearly two hours, it was arguably the first feature length film (ibid). Ultimately exhibited through the Veriscope projection system, Welsh audiences would eventually see the film on Boxing Day 1897, when it had a one-week residency at Cardiff's Philharmonic Hall (*Evening Express*, 22nd December 1897: 1). The economic impact of the Kinetoscope is evidenced in the *Evening Express* article, drawing parallels with modern day televised sports finances, as is its importance as an aspect of a highly anticipated international sporting event. A reader of a Welsh newspaper would be able to follow the coverage of the fight, as well as comprehending the Kinetoscope's role of documenting the event and the economic impact this burgeoning form of entertainment was capable of. Importantly, unlike the other articles and adverts examined so far, the way in which the Kinetoscope and Kinetograph operate are not discussed here, assuming the reader's knowledge about these devices. Furthermore, the fact that Edison's invention is mentioned at all within all the discourse, hype and permutations of Welsh newspapers' coverage of the prize-fight highlights the interest and familiarity readers would have with the relatively new technology.

The Kinetoscope's spread to rural Wales

The Kinetoscope also made its way to both rural and urban areas of northern Wales, most frequently appearing at bazaars. Bazaars were fair or carnival type events, and were typically, judging by their advertising and reports in Welsh newspapers, fund-raising

opportunities for local concerns. This was the case for Caernarfon's 'Moriah Grand Bazaar', held between the 18th and 21st September 1895 (*The North Wales Observer and Express*, 6th September 1895: 1), which was organised to clear the £4,000 debt of the Moriah chapel's organ and schoolrooms, as described by its poster (XD9/385, 1895). The fund-raising nature of rural Welsh bazaars is highlighted in this poster and both Welsh (*Y Genedl Gymreig*, 3rd September 1895: 1) and English (*The North Wales Observer and Express*, 6th September 1895: 1) newspaper advertisements, as is the appearance of the Kinetoscope, described as being 'to the eye what the Phonograph is the ear'. First advertised in July of that year (*Y Werin*, 13th July 1895: 1), the Kinetoscope receives top billing in both Welsh and English advertisements, though it is in a smaller and less prominent font than the Royal Marine Light Infantry Band's lower listing. Less than a year after making its debut in Cardiff, the Kinetoscope had spread to North Wales, an area with vast differences in economy, politics, culture and language to the populous cities and towns of the south. By comparing the Kinetoscope to the Phonograph, a degree of pre-existing knowledge about these symbols of cultural modernity is expected of the reader. Indeed, as *The North Wales Observer and Express* (13th September 1895: 8) writes, in an article about the Kinetoscope, many readers would 'doubtless possess some knowledge of "living pictures"'. Seemingly referring to both the Kinetoscope and previous steps in the evolution of filmmaking technology, this statement and the lack of explanation surrounding the concept of the Kinetoscope in the bazaar's advertising, suggest an existing understanding of the Kinetoscope and moving pictures within rural North Wales. Early cinema technology, such as the Kinetoscope or later projection systems, spreading to rural areas through pre-existing institutions or events is similarly evidenced by Jeffrey Klenotic (2018) in his study of the touring cinema history of rural New Hampshire, USA. He notes that, before the establishment of dedicated touring

cinema showmen, it was 'touring theatre companies' and 'medicine shows' who provided the region's initial experience of cinema (ibid: 95-96).

The Kinetoscope had previously visited the urban north-eastern Welsh town of Wrexham in April 1895 (*The Wrexham Advertiser*, 6th April 1895: 5) and reference is made to the device in a 1894 copy of the North Wales circulated *Flintshire Observer* as seeming 'likely to become as common a penny show as was the Phonograph' (22nd November: 7). Again, comparisons between the Kinetoscope and the Phonograph are made, suggesting the familiarity with both this new technology and the older, but no less technologically advanced, audio device. When Colwyn Bay's St. Paul's Church held a bazaar, to aid church maintenance, in June 1895, the Kinetoscope and the Phonograph were both on 'central display' in the hall (*The Weekly News*, 21st June 1895: 2). In a newspaper write-up of the event, the Kinetoscope is described as especially drawing interest and the bazaar's handbook is quoted as, once again, drawing parallels between the impact of the Kinetoscope and the Phonograph (ibid).

By mid-1895 the Kinetoscope had begun to spread through North Wales, including more rural areas such as Caernarfon. It is clear from the articles discussed here that the invention wasn't a great surprise for audiences. Rather the Kinetoscope was well telegraphed by local newspapers during 1894 (*Flintshire Observer*, 22nd November 1894: 7; *The Llangollen Advertiser*, 6th July 1894: 3), as well as previous moving-picture and audio devices which had introduced the notion of life being captured and replayed. This is particularly notable in the frequent comparisons between the Kinetoscope being to the visual what the Phonograph was to the audible. In November 1894, North Walianians were even presented with the chance

to purchase a Kinetoscope for their own business endeavours, with advertisements running in *The Llangollen Advertiser* promising a '1,000 per cent' return on their investment (30th November: 2).

The Cinématographe

However, the Kinetoscope's monopoly and popularity was short lived, both in Wales and internationally. On 28th December 1895, Auguste and Louis Lumière premiered their Cinématographe, an all-in-one camera and projection device, before a paying audience in the Salon Indien basement room of Paris' Grand Café (Parkinson, 1995: 16). This was far from the world's first projection unit, however competitors such as the Bioscope, Photozoötrope, Eidoloscope and Phantoscope failed in their attempts to capture the attention of pioneering filmmakers, the public or financiers, certainly within Europe (ibid; Spehr, 2009: 41). Ultimately, cinema is about films – both their quality and spectacle – and the practicality of the Cinématographe as both a camera and projector, as well as being substantially lighter than the 1,100 pound and electricity reliant Kinetograph, allowed the Cinématographe's filmmakers more freedom, particularly in choice of location (Hunningher, 1996: 51). This portability, coupled with being manually powered by a hand-crank, allowed early filmmaking to take to the streets, moving away from the artificial setting of Edison's Black Maria studio. The films were still unedited and short, akin to Edison and Dickson's early offerings, however the subjects of their films weren't overtly staged and aimed to represent the subjects' day-to-day activities. *La Sortie De l'Usie Lumière à Lyon* (1895) and *L'Arrivée d'un Train en Gare de la Ciotat* (1895) serve as two prominent examples of this freedom, through the filming of workers leaving a factory and a train pulling into its station, respectively. If Edison and Dickson's films, as their advertisements discussed earlier attest,

aimed to portray living-pictures or living-photographs, then the Lumière's work was the living embodiment of the Realist art movement (Braudy, 1976: 29). The Kinetoscope's films, whilst ground-breaking, relied on the highly controlled and curated setting of the Black Maria studio, sharing in the staged and static qualities of portrait photography. The Lumière's films, even if the subjects were instructed in their actions, created representations of recognisable life. As Parkinson argues, the limitations of the Kinetoscope's films were 'exposed' by the emergence of the Lumières and their Cinématographe (Parkinson, 1995: 17). As the Zoetrope and Muybridge's experiments had evolved into the Kinetoscope and Kinetograph, the Cinématographe was the next step in cinema's evolution into the art form we recognise today.

The Cinématographe debuted in Britain on February 21st 1896, in the Great Hall of the Polytechnic Institution, London (Hunningher, 1996: 41). The enterprising Lumières employed agents around Europe to showcase their system, with the magician and shadow artist Felicien Trewey chosen to present the Cinématographe in Britain (Poppo & Kember, 2004: 35). This London event was reported in Wales, with the *South Wales Daily News* (27th February 1896: 4) writing, in a short article, that the Cinématographe – the Lumières are not mentioned, potentially due to their relative lack of fame in Britain at the time or their distribution model that focussed attention on the technology rather than the inventor – is 'far in advance of Edison's Kinetoscope as that wonderful instrument was in advance of the old "wheel of life"'.^v However, it wasn't to be Trewey or an official Lumière Cinématographe that would stage the first projected films in Wales, rather British inventor Birt Acres would host a screening with his projection unit on 10th April 1896, for the Cardiff Photographic Society (Berry, 1994: 22). Acres, an optical instrument maker, also devised – working with R

W Paul (Hunningher, 1996: 41) – a hand-cranked portable camera system, with which he filmed the Oxford and Cambridge boat race in spring 1895, and on January 14th 1896 he debuted his projection unit to the Royal Photographic Society in London (Oakley, 1964:35). With the Cinématographe eventually debuting in Wales on May 11th 1896, at Cardiff's Empire theatre (*South Wales Echo*, 11th May 1896: 2), Acres had twice trumped Trewey and the Lumières and would, along with his former collaborator turned competitor R. W. Paul, shoot the earliest footage in Wales (Oakley, 1964: 35-36). On the 27th June 1896, Acres shot scenes of the Prince of Wales, Queen Alexandra and other members of the Royal Family as they visited Cardiff (Berry, 1994: 23). Paul, a British inventor who had constructed peep-show devices akin to the Kinetoscope, shot street scenes of Queen Street, Cardiff in October 1896 (Berry, 1994: 21).

It is perhaps due to the prospering Acres that the first Welsh newspaper advertisement for the Cinématographe's Cardiff debut highlights that it was the 'original Lumière' device on show and was under the stewardship of Trewey (*South Wales Daily News*, 27th April 1896: 1). This approach is even more prominent for the advert on the day of the Cinématographe's debut, where it is fully titled 'The Lumière Cinématographe' and described as 'the original, not a copy', again Trewey is also mentioned (*South Wales Echo*, 11th May 1896: 2). This advertisement also highlights the popularity of the Cinématographe to audiences in London, here described as the 'Metropolis' (ibid). This, I argue, is an attempt by the advertiser to emphasise the Cinématographe's status as a symbol of modernity and culture; if it is popular with the citizens of the 'Metropolis' then it must be of note. As Aled Jones argues, London in the nineteenth century was viewed with a 'combination of awe, anxiety and suspicion' by the Welsh public and press (Jones, A., 2000: 313). Like the

Kinetoscope before it, the Cinématographe next began screening in Swansea, making its debut in the Empire theatre on 13th July 1896. The *South Wales Daily News* (13th July 1896: 3) article announcing this debut praises the technology of the Cinématographe as a 'wonderful instrument' and, evoking the rapid development of cinema technology in the previous two years, claims it prompts one to wonder 'what next?'

The Cinématographe versus the cinematograph

The marketing approaches of the Lumières at this time, such as highlighting the officiality of their machine, were born out of a carefully constructed desire for a brand image for the Cinématographe, the Lumière name, and the intrinsic link between the two. Richard Brown (1996: 64) describes the Lumières' business strategy as being 'essentially managerial rather than entrepreneurial', and highlights that the brothers ensured the 'premium' image of the Cinématographe away from London by signing contracts with the most prestigious theatre companies of the time (p. 68). These contracts included the Moss, Thornton and Stoll companies (ibid), who operated theatres in Cardiff and Swansea and would later merge in 1899 to form a powerful music-hall and entertainment circuit around Britain (Davis, T., 2000: 176). Brown notes, however, that just about every British camera and projector maker or cinema entrepreneur were warning audiences to beware of imitations (1996: 68).

Like the Kinetoscope before it, the local newspaper advertisements from the period show that the Cinématographe soon spread from the populous south to the rural reaches of north and mid Wales through attendance at bazaars (*The North Wales Express*, 30th April 1897: 5). However, exhibitors of both the official Cinématographe and the projection devices of industrious inventors commonly described by newspapers under the same name – often

anglicised – began to book public venues to host screenings around Wales. Bernard Edward Jones, writing in 1915, discusses the term ‘bioscope’ as also becoming a general descriptor for projection devices and exhibition events (p. 11). Local north and mid Welsh newspapers from around the turn of the twentieth century frequently refer to both the bioscope and cinematograph, sometimes within the same advertisement with bioscope describing the event or building – similar to modern day use of the word cinema – and cinematograph, now anglicised, referring to the projector (*Llandudno Advertiser*, 29th March 1909: 8). Like attendance at Bazaars, bioscopes and the exhibitors behind them were often touring or seasonal attractions, particularly in rural areas of Wales prior to the 1930s.

Arthur Cheetham and the emergence of the rural touring cinema in Wales

Three of Wales’ most prominent exhibition entrepreneurs during this period were William Haggar, who mostly operated in the south, Arthur Cheetham, and John Codman, the latter two exhibiting throughout north and mid Wales (Berry, 1994: 36). Cheetham and Codman both took the opportunity to not only license films for exhibition, but to also use their respective camera systems to film scenes of Welsh life (pp. 36-37). Cheetham, who arguably had a more prominent and longer lasting impact on the cinema exhibition landscape of rural Wales than Codman, serves as the case study for the remainder of this chapter. Here and in the following chapter, I will utilise Cheetham as a means of exploring the shift from a touring trade to the establishment of permanent cinemas in rural Wales, as well as drawing on globalised contexts of rural exhibition history for comparative purposes.

David Berry (1994), in his work concerning the history of Welsh cinema, frames Cheetham as an important early exhibition pioneer operating in and around North Wales. However,

this relatively brief discussion of Cheetham fails to account for and examine the impact he had on rural areas of Mid Wales, particularly his role in the cinemagoing exhibition history of Aberystwyth. Born in Derby in 1864, Cheetham moved to Rhyl in 1889 (Barlow, O'Malley, and Mitchell, 2005: 66) and initially made a living as a phrenologist, 'electric medical healer' and organiser of stage shows, in which he would appear (Berry, 1994: 36 – 37). Cheetham, often using the self-appointed title 'professor', would also install and showcase electric lighting fittings – including the very first electric light in Rhyl (*Rhyl Journal*, 12th May 1894: 4) – and hosted magic lantern shows around North Wales during the early 1890s (*Rhyl Journal*, 12th January 1895: 2). He was, by the introduction of the Cinématographe, an experienced marketer of his entertainment, health and commercial services and well known within North Wales, especially for his knowledge of electricity.

The earliest evidence of his intentions to exhibit films comes from an advertisement and follow-up article in the *Rhyl Record and Advertiser* on 16th January 1897. An advertisement on page four of the local newspaper proclaims that Mr. A. Cheetham will give his 'New and Marvellous Entertainment of Living Pictures, or Animated Photographs' on January 19th, 1897. Further detail is provided on page five, where an article discusses the upcoming event. Both the advertisement and article, like many of those concerning visual entertainment in South Wales, highlight that such living pictures are 'the rage' in London. The article explains that Cheetham has recently purchased one of the 'latest instruments' for projection, with the advert declaring that this 'instrument' is a cinematograph – notably using the Anglicisation of the word, suggesting a Lumière inspired device rather than the official product. The article further details that the device Cheetham has purchased projects pictures at twice the size of 'inferior instruments', highlighting the extent to which the term

cinematograph had become a catch-all for projection units and the potential familiarity the people of Rhyl had with film exhibition and projection. Rather than the advert describing the inner workings of the device or exhaustively highlighting the spectacle of the moving image, as Kinetoscope and Lumière advertising had done previously, Cheetham's marketing revolves around highlighting the quality of his image in comparison to other shows audiences may have seen. This is a marketing technique, along with the use of his own name, that Cheetham continues to employ throughout his cinema career.

Contemporary to Cheetham, the newspaper advertisements of other Welsh exhibitors in 1897 typically relied on the value of the cinematograph's name as their chief marketing strategy, whilst rare instances of discourse concerning the quality of their devices is done without the flair and hyperbole of Cheetham. For example, advertisements for cinematograph shows in both Swansea (*The South Wales Daily Post*, 8th January 1897: 3) and Barry (*Barry Herald*, 16th April 1897: 4) provide no embellishment or marketing nuance further than having 'cinematograph' in a larger font and providing the dates and times of the respective event. The Swansea advertisement does highlight the 'great expense' of providing this entertainment, though this claim is in a small font and suggests more the financial clout of the theatre proprietor, whose name is in the same font size as 'cinematograph', than of the quality of the device or its films. An advert for a cinematograph show at Cardiff's The Empire theatre does attempt to create distinction by advertising the 'Biograph', a modified cinematograph described by the advert as being 'a marvellous improvement on the cinematographe (sic)' (*Evening Express*, 1st July 1897: 1). Yet, this proclamation is in a significantly smaller font than both the name of the theatre and the device's name, with details of how this invention is an improvement on the average

cinematograph given in a less hyperbolic manner than Cheetham, and in a smaller font still. 'Everything is shown life-size' is far less evocative of superior quality and spectacle than Cheetham's claim that his system projects images to a size twice that of 'inferior instruments' (*Rhyl Record and Advertiser*, 16th January 1897: 4). Cheetham's marketing practices, perhaps not surprisingly for a former independent phrenologist, clearly identified the need to elevate his device over that of others', especially given the burgeoning popularity of the medium and the number of prospective exhibitors jostling for the attention – and money – of audiences. Also clear is his desire to build a brand, one synonymous with high quality living picture entertainment, around his own name. This is attempted by both the Barry and Cardiff advertisements but, in both instances, the names of the showmen are in a smaller font than that of the respective theatres' proprietors.

Cheetham's films

Rhyl's familiarity with projected entertainment, and thus Cheetham's need to highlight the quality of his system over competitors, is highlighted in a *Rhyl Journal* (23rd January 1897: 2) article reporting on the January 19th show. Here the writer states that 'London professionals' had previously projected films at the Palace Theatre, however Cheetham's show was 'far and away the better exhibition'. They also note that Cheetham showed 'views' of the local area, yet these are described as photographic slides, most likely part of the traditional magic lantern shows he had previously been touring (*Rhyl Journal*, 4th January 1896: 3; *Rhyl Record and Advertiser*, 23rd January 1897: 5). However, it would not be long before Cheetham, perhaps influenced by the popularity of his lantern slides, began filming scenes of Welsh life. In January 1898, Cheetham, having spent a year touring North Wales and making improvements to both his projector and marketing approach, returned to

Rhyl with scenes he himself had recorded of the local area (Berry, 1994: 38). The *Rhyl Journal* (15th January 1898: 7) reports that, on the 13th of that month, Cheetham had shown a film he shot locally that previous week.

The scene is taken on Rhyl sands, with the newspaper declaring that its showing created 'much excitement' and that the faces of the little children depicted were 'easily recognised' (ibid). Cheetham's advertising of this event had heightened emphasis on the quality of his projector and screen, the combination of which he dubbed the 'Silvograph' (*Rhyl Record and Advertiser*, 8th January 1898: 4). The name Silvograph would feature in the majority of Cheetham's advertising from this point, and the term became synonymous with him and the quality of picture he guaranteed. Indeed, this advertisement boasted that he projected 'the largest pictures' in the country and that he was presenting 'improved and perfected' living pictures via the Silvograph (ibid). 'The largest pictures' claim is to be taken literally, as an article on the same date in the *Rhyl Journal* (8th January 1898: 7) proclaims the upcoming show features Cheetham's new twelve-foot-wide screen and 2,000 candle equivalent candle projector. As discussed previously, gone is the necessity to explain the theory and mechanics of motion picture technology to audiences, rather Cheetham is able to focus on why his system is superior. Audiences may not have known if 2,000 candle power was more powerful than any other projector system, but it evokes brightness and picture quality. Likewise, Cheetham promises the largest screen in the country – though it is difficult to be certain whether this refers to Wales or the rest of Britain – which, regardless of the factual accuracy, instantly elevates his product over that of his competitors. Bigger and brighter, is Cheetham's message, and it is a marketing practice still utilised by current cinema chains in a bid to attract audiences. A similar advertising trope is evidenced by Kathryn Fuller (1999)

in her discussion of New York's competing touring showmen, where hyperbole relating to screen quality was commonplace (p. 121). At this point, Cheetham seemingly did not face as much direct local competition as that experienced by his New York counterparts, yet he was already utilising his marketing as a means of associating his name and brand with the pinnacle of motion picture excellence. To cement the quality and prestige of his show, Cheetham's 8th January advertisement in the *Rhyl Record and Advertiser* notes, in bold font, that Queen Victoria herself had witnessed his productions at Balmoral.

What is missing from this advert is a clear indication of the films playing at the event. Indeed, the only detail given about the films on show is their description of being new, with no hint given that he would be showing moving pictures of the local area. A report in the *Rhyl Record and Advertiser* (22nd January 1898: 5) describes the film of Rhyl sands as being an intended surprise for the audience, with a promise of more to come from Cheetham. This report attaches larger praise, and highlights positive audience reactions, to other films shown. It reports that scenes of a football match were met with cheers of 'goal' when the ball crossed the line and that scenes from the Greco-Turkish War were met with a standing ovation. Yet, the 'crisis of excitement' was reached when a film showing the Queen's carriage and guards was displayed, dubbed by the article as 'without doubt the finest animated picture seen' (ibid). This is not to infer that Cheetham's own footage was met with negative response, with the author noting that the beach scenes were a 'grand success', especially as a first attempt, with audiences able to recognise the children. It may seem odd that some of the earliest footage of Welsh life wouldn't be highlighted in the advertisement, however it seems that Cheetham – an experienced tourer of magic lantern and entertainment at this point – recognised the value of having a trial for such important

footage before an audience with no expectation of it. His advertisements, as discussed, dealt in hyperbole and proclamations of quality, with the films he purchased being of the best quality and shown on his large and bright screen. If his own films, quickly recorded and developed the previous week, as claimed by the article, did not match the quality expected from audiences of the Cheetham brand, then it would be potentially damaging to him, especially when depicting locales known to the audience.

Throughout the remainder of 1898 and 1899 Cheetham continued to tour his Silvograph and purchased films around North Wales, also producing his own short actualities as he went (Berry, 1994: 39-40). During this period of filmmaking, both European and American filmmakers were mostly filming, distributing and exhibiting 'actualities', and Cheetham did not break from this formula. Tom Gunning (1990) describes this early period of cinema, the 1890s and the decade following, as the 'cinema of attractions', with the touring mode of cinema in this period, the expectations of audiences and the role of the showman – such as Cheetham – reflecting the 'lack of concern with creating a self-sufficient narrative world upon the screen' (p. 65). Actualities were the earliest mode of filmmaking – genre perhaps not being an apt term here – as evidenced through the discussions earlier in this chapter regarding the films of Edison and Dickson and the Lumières. Arguably, the Lumières' practice of filming purported impromptu scenes of life is more evocative of the *actual* of actuality, with early Edison and Dickson films being clearly staged events in the highly-controlled environment of the Black Maria studio. Yet both Dickson and Lumière films, and those of their immediate contemporaries such as Acres and Paul, were shot to represent real-life with this feat being enough to attract and sustain an audience. Such early actualities, as discussed previously, were short – rarely more than a minute – and, in the

case of the Kinetoscope and other devices, sometimes looped. Editing was a rarity in early examples of actualities, but the splicing and ordering of film became increasingly common within actuality filmmaking moving into the 1900s (Gunning, 2017: 162), and resulted in the emergence of this new mode of film within the cinema of attractions.

A discussion of actualities, trick films, the burgeoning development of fictional narrative and its relation to continuity editing practices is important in understanding the context of the films Cheetham chose to make and exhibit during this period. The roots of editing can, however, be traced back to both Dickson and the Lumières. The latter, Gaudreault argues, intended for their short single shot actualities to be ordered in a particular way during an exhibition to follow the chronological order of events, with changes in camera location (1996: 74-75). However, as Barry Salt discusses, the showmen who would license such films would usually show them without 'much regard' for the content or order (1996: 171). As evidenced within Cheetham's early newspaper advertisements, a film's content was not of the highest priority for the exhibitor, or the audience, with the spectacle of the device and its quality – as well as supplementation provided by the role of the showman and his accompanying entertainments – being enough to attract an audience (Richards, H., 2005: 434 – 435).^{vi} Regardless of the intended ordering, a good showman would provide context with narration during a film's showing (ibid), though it is clear that the actual filmmakers had a nascent sense for the ordering and collective value of multiple short scenes. This practice of ordering or reordering shots would inform the development of the 'trick film', the second mode of filmmaking that is commonly collected under the term cinema of attractions (Gunning, 1994: 41). The origins of the trick film can be traced back to the Edison Company's *The Execution of Mary Queen of Scots* (1895), which, despite being just eighteen

seconds long, is the earliest known example of a true cut within a film (Salt, 1996: 171). As the titular Mary – portrayed by the Kinetoscope company secretary, Robert Thomae (North, 2016: 39) – lays her head on the chopping block, the camera is stopped, a dummy is swapped with Thomae, the camera is then restarted and the executioner decapitates the dummy (Salt, 1996: 171).

Theatrical illusionist turned pioneering filmmaker, Georges Méliès, built upon this technique – though it is argued he independently and quite accidentally discovered the effects of stopping and starting the camera (Chanan, 1996: 117) – to create trick films such as *The Astronomer's Dream* (1898). The stop-start techniques used by Méliès allowed for characters to appear in a puff of smoke, a blackboard drawing to start dancing, as well as for the changing of the camera's viewing angle and the backdrops of the set. Trick filmmakers continued to innovate with spectacle and editing over the coming decade, with the chase sequence becoming a popular set piece within this proto-genre. These ambitious chase films, and their use of continuity editing from shot to shot, would ultimately aid the development of narrative filmmaking and linear editing in its recognisable form today. Yet, early examples of trick films that utilised continuity editing, such as G. A. Smith's *Come Along, Do!* (1899), James Williamson's *Attack on a China Mission* (1901) and Edwin Porter's *The Great Train Robbery* (1903), required the showman to exhibit the reels – each containing a scene – in a specific order for full effect of the narrative (Salt, 1996: 171 – 176). In the case of *The Great Train Robbery*, the infamous shot of the bandit character shooting at the camera could be placed at either the start or the end of the film, as stated by its accompanying sales catalogue (ibid, 176).

Cheetham chose not to film his own fiction trick films, opting instead to maintain the production of actualities, filmed in Wales and other areas of Britain (Berry, 1994: 37). His touring trade would also balance the use of purchased actualities and fiction during the cinema of attractions period prior to 1906. However, certainly throughout this touring period of his career, it was his ability to film indigenous scenes that local papers highlighted as being the chief attraction in his schedule. Yet Cheetham's own advertising within these newspapers often balanced the prominence of his own films with those he had acquired, especially if they were shot abroad. An example of this can be seen from his visit to Aberystwyth, Machynlleth and Tywyn in 1900, where scenes of the Transvaal War receive equal billing with his own footage of a royal visit to Conway (*Cambrian News*, 9th March 1900: 5). Indeed, it is seemingly the case that the press of the time treated film, including those shot by Cheetham, as being akin to photography. An 1899 write up in the Conway based newspaper *The Weekly News and Visitors' Chronicle* (27th January: 5) does not overtly provide titles for Cheetham's films, rather it states the 'subjects' of them, such as 'The Nigger Minstrels at Colwyn Bay', 'Scene in Penmaenmawr Station', and 'A Rough Sea at Rhyl'. Though effectively titles of the films, their description as being representations of subjects evokes the practice of photography, rather than that of a classical art form, such as the way in which paintings or plays are titled. Whilst contemporaries such as Acres and Paul transitioned from actualities to fiction and his South Wales counterpart, William Haggart, specialised in fiction shorts, Cheetham was seemingly confident in the continued popularity of the actuality film and local scenes amongst his north and west Welsh audience base. John Caughie and Janet McBain (2016) similarly discuss the role of local filmmaking by showmen within the contexts of early Scottish cinema history. They present these films as 'local topicals' that in their infancy included similar depictions of local scenes and events as those

shot by Cheetham (p. 145). They differentiate these types of local scenes from the actualities first shot by the Lumières based on their initial intended audience, with Lumière productions such as *Workers Leaving The Lumière Factory in Lyon* (1895) consumed by Paris' upper-middle-class audiences, whilst Scotland's local topicals were produced to entice factory workers and other members of the working-class into the cinema, often through the specific goal of capturing the faces of local audience members, as also evident in Cheetham's filmmaking (p. 146).

For Cheetham and local Welsh newspapers, film was seemingly an extension or development of photography and magic lantern lectures, in opposition to the route taken by others, such as Méliès, who treated film as an extension of theatre, and the more creative uses of magic lantern technology. Again, this stems from the earliest discussions of cinematic technology within the Welsh press, as touched upon earlier in this chapter, where the focus was on their ability to recreate and represent real life, rather than subvert it. Those wanting more than reflections of their local environment on display would also be treated to the accompaniment of Cheetham's entertainment ensemble. Half of the previously discussed *The Weekly News and Visitors' Chronicle* report on Cheetham's Conway show is dedicated to songs performed by singer Madame Rose and the comedy musical sketches of Archie D. Melvin, who also added piano accompaniment to the films on show (ibid). Also mentioned is Cheetham's promise to return the following year with new films of North Wales, adding that his Welsh scenes had proven popular in thirty English towns, 'a grand advertisement for North Wales' (ibid).

Cheetham in Aberystwyth

Within local North Welsh papers, up until the 1906 opening of his first fully fledged dedicated cinema in Rhyl (Berry, 1994: 41), there was a familiar pattern to the reporting of Cheetham arriving in a town or village to put on his show. Up until the opening of his first cinema, the local newspapers would run advertisements – sometimes accompanied by a short announcement in the relevant columns – with a follow-up report on the show in the next issue. Even in the earliest period of his touring career, his advertisements in North Welsh newspapers would be prominent and the column inches of dedicated reports would be relatively long. This was true for whether he was visiting Bangor (*Gwalia*, 8th January 1898: 4), Conway (*The Weekly News and Visitors' Chronicle* 27th January 1899: 5), or Denbigh (*Denbighshire Free Press*, 23rd April 1898: 5). Cheetham's touring trade was a certified hit within North Wales, with Cheetham himself becoming a local celebrity. Cheetham's prominence and scope of travel within north Wales have been relatively well documented in existing scholarship, however acknowledgement of his importance to Mid Wales – especially the cinema exhibition history of the Aberystwyth area – is lacking in these works.

So far David Berry's seminal *Wales and Cinema: The First Hundred Years* has been a valuable resource for this chapter, yet the section of his work dedicated to early cinema exhibitors outside of South Wales is comparatively brief. Most importantly, his discussion of Cheetham focuses entirely on the exhibitor's exploits around the North Wales region. However, it is clear from local newspapers that Cheetham had a presence in Mid Wales, especially on the western coast, and would ultimately establish Aberystwyth's first fully fledged permanent cinema.

What is seemingly Cheetham's first visit to Aberystwyth comes in the first month of his exhibition career, with an advertisement in the local newspaper *The Cambrian News* (29th January 1897: 5) declaring a 'one night only' visit from Cheetham on January 29th 1897. In comparison to the advertisement for his first exhibition in Rhyl just ten days prior, it is clear that Cheetham's name does not carry as much prestige in Aberystwyth as it would in Rhyl during this period. Local celebrities, or 'localebrities' are argued by Rebecca Williams (2016) to be a prominent cultural aspect of smaller nations such as Wales, due to the typically heightened proximity and familiarity between them and their local audience (pp. 163; 166). By 1897 Cheetham already had this localebrity status in Rhyl, gained during his previous pursuits as a phrenologist, electric healer and organiser of live entertainments. Indeed, the Rhyl advertisement for Cheetham's first show on January 19th 1897, as discussed earlier, features his name as prominently as the 'living pictures' description of the event. The Aberystwyth advertisement includes a small biography of Cheetham and the most prominent text in the whole piece is the declaration of 'the rage of London and Paris', referring to projected moving picture shows. Evoking the prestige of these two major cities, as this chapter has noted as common in Welsh exhibition advertisements of the time, is also present within the Rhyl advertisement, but in a smaller font than Cheetham's own name or the description of the event. The Aberystwyth advertisement also includes more detail about the content of the event, in which Cheetham describes his device as being the finest outside of London, though this detailing paragraph focuses on the still photographs of Wales, Ireland and England that were also on show. I would argue that this approach of altering the advert to heighten the cultural link to London and Paris, as well as giving more detail about the content of the event, rather than relying on the title 'living pictures, or animated photographs' to attract audiences, reflects the differing experiences of Rhyl and

Aberystwyth with early cinema exhibition to this point. As argued earlier, it is stated in a Rhyl newspaper report (*Rhyl Journal* 23rd January 1897: 2) on Cheetham's exhibition that the area had been visited by other exhibitors, resulting in Cheetham focussing his advertisements on why his system was superior to others. However, his approach to Aberystwyth suggests that this existing knowledge or experience of such shows is minimal. Indeed, I have been unable to find mention of moving pictures visiting Aberystwyth prior to this, and a report of the event – which incorrectly gives Cheetham's first initial as 'R', again highlighting his lack of fame in this area – makes no comparisons to previous similar exhibitions and states that the audience was 'accorded a treat which will not soon be forgotten', suggesting that this was a special and unique occasion (*The Cambrian News*, 5th February 1897: 5).

Cheetham returned to Aberystwyth in April 1898 – this time holding his exhibition in the Pier Pavilion, a venue commonly used by entertainers of the time – rather than the Assembly Rooms (*The Aberystwyth Observer*, 14th April 1898: 2), though analysis of newspaper advertisements suggest that Cheetham focussed his efforts on North Wales throughout most of 1897 to 1899. During this period, Aberystwyth did receive a smattering of cinematograph exhibitions from others, usually as part of a wider event such as a fair. Notably, the Aberystwyth Improvements Company put on a cinematograph show on January 11th 1898 for students of the area's Sunday schools, all attendees were also gifted toys and fruit (*The Cambrian News*, 7th January 1898: 8). In line with the report of Cheetham's 1897 exhibition, this article positions living pictures as a marked treat within Aberystwyth, rather than a familiarity. However, throughout 1898 and 1899, the exhibition of living pictures across Aberystwyth and the local area became a more common

occurrence, with Fred E. Young being a popular exhibitor throughout mid-Wales. Indeed, Mr Young would exhibit in smaller towns and villages such as Aberaeron and Talybont in April 1899, the latter of which *The Aberystwyth Observer* (6th April 1899: 2) notes was likely receiving its inaugural living picture exhibition.

Indeed, it is perhaps because of Young that Cheetham only hosts a couple of exhibitions during this period. From 1898 to mid 1899 Young was prominent in showing films across the belt of Mid Wales, including Aberystwyth, Newtown, Welshpool and Montgomery, with a marketing strategy that was similar to that of Cheetham's in North Wales. Young's advertisements would highlight his own name in large font, without relying on a description of how animated pictures or the cinematograph operated, and including a bill full of singers and other entertainments. Young would often also perform a 'sacred concert' on a Sunday, adding a sense of legitimacy and religious approval to the event (*The Cambrian News*, 3rd June 1898: 5).^{vii} This sense of legitimacy was heightened on occasion by evoking Richard Codman's practice of using the self-imposed title of 'professor', adding a scientific quality to Young, who would also perform magic tricks and shadow puppetry – which he called 'refined drawing-room entertainments' – during his events (*The Montgomery County Times*, 5th November 1898: 1). Arguably, Cheetham and Young would make such efforts to legitimise their shows due to the infancy of the cinema medium in this period. The relationship between cinema showmen and Sunday entertainments will be discussed in more detail in the following chapter in relation to fixed-location cinemas. However, it's notable that Cheetham would also host sacred concerts during his touring career. Such observation of the Sabbath went arguably beyond just striving for legitimacy, rather it evidences the efforts of rural Welsh showmen to meet the cultural demands and

expectations of their audiences, an audience that would be particularly devout within rural Mid and North Wales during this period. There are similar globalised examples of this practice in relation to religious audiences, with Cara Caddoo (2014: 30) noting the important role sacred concerts played as part of touring exhibitions for black audiences within rural American states such as Maryland and Georgia.

Largely though, Cheetham focussed on North Wales for his exhibitions during this period. This northern focus makes sense from a business perspective; he lived in Rhyl, was already well known in the area, and his visit to Aberystwyth during his very first month as a film exhibitor– January 1897 – may have been somewhat of a litmus test of the event’s potential popularity in the area and the ease of transporting his equipment and performers from their North Wales base. Yet, in 1899, when Young takes a full-time position as Recreation Manager of Pwllheli’s new recreation grounds and retires from the touring exhibition trade (*The Carnarvon and Denbigh Herald*, 30th June 1899: 5),^{viii} Cheetham becomes a frequent visitor to the Aberystwyth area. Yet, by the point of Cheetham’s return to exhibiting in the Aberystwyth area in 1900, the local community had far greater familiarity with projection exhibition than his last show in April 1898. This familiarity is highlighted by a letter published in the 27th July 1899 edition of *The Aberystwyth Observer* (p. 4). The letter, signed off with the pen-name ‘Modesty’, complains that there are ‘two or three’ places in Aberystwyth where living pictures are exhibited, some of which the writer has liked, but have shown ‘vulgar’ scenes of a dancing girl. Modesty requests that the exhibitors remove this film, and films like it, from their repertoires. Here, cinematograph exhibition in the area had become popular and prominent enough to receive a complaint and request of censorship.

The earliest indication of his return to Aberystwyth is an advertisement placed in *The Cambrian News* (9th March 1900: 5) that is, coincidentally, right above one for Pwllheli Recreation Ground's upcoming cycle race, with Fred E. Young listed as the event contact. Despite relative familiarity with projection technology in the area by 1900, Cheetham's marketing techniques still differed slightly from those used in North Wales, though this potentially represents the evolution of his advertising for both regions over the coming years as the touring cinema trade became increasingly more common. Cheetham was now using the Silvograph brand in his advertisements, which, whilst not in existence during his first visit, had been omitted from the report of his 1898 show in the Pier Pavilion. Indeed, for this returning advertisement 'Silvograph' is the most prominent text of the whole piece, with his own name relegated to relative obscurity in an average font size and smaller than even the headlining film *The Transvaal War*. This potentially indicates his relative lack of fame in the area, resulting in the Silvograph name requiring more attention with the goal of eventually becoming synonymous with the quality and experience of exhibition that his own name possessed in North Wales. Interestingly, however, the advert for *The Transvaal War* film showing in Rhyl from the month previous – February 1900 – does not feature Cheetham's name at all. 'Silvograph' here is in a highly prominent font, far more so than in its Mid Wales counterpart. Both adverts contain a list detailing the other films on show and both lack the hyperbole and descriptors of quality used by his adverts of the late 1890s. Arguably, after three years of building his Silvograph brand, Cheetham no longer needed to include his own name in his Rhyl advertisements – though it is worth noting that reports of the events still prominently mention him by name – and, similarly, there was less of a need to highlight the system's quality as it was well known and had few competitors.

It is also worth noting that, in the advertisements for both areas, the promise of locally filmed footage is far less prominent. This would suggest that audience tastes had changed since the late 1890s and that Cheetham was responding to this. An advertisement for a 1902 visit to Aberystwyth and Fishguard lists 'New Welsh pictures, new war pictures, new comic pictures, new copyright pictures' as the films on show. Conversely, this advertisement highlights that the Silvograph company had made their own recordings of Penbryn Male Voice Choir, which audiences would hear through the company's 'giant concert-phone', described as being 'the rage of Wales at the present time' (*The Cambrian News*, 21st March 1902: 4). This advert also features a tendency for nepotism that would be common in Silvograph advertisements of the next decade, as Cheetham's son, Gus, 'the Marvellous Boy Pianist', made his Aberystwyth debut. Though the status of 'Master Gus Cheetham' as Cheetham's son is not overtly highlighted, the use of 'Master' implies the relationship. Indeed, his description as Master Cheetham and 'the Marvellous Boy Pianist' are also used in Cheetham's North Wales' advertising, where his family and relationships would be better known to audiences.

Cheetham's burgeoning local celebrity status

Cheetham's 1900 return to Aberystwyth was sandwiched between stops in Tywyn and Machynlleth, followed by visits to Llanidloes, Dolgellau and Bala the following week (*The Cambrian News*, 16th March 1900: 5). From 1900 to 1906, Cheetham is somewhat of an irregular visitor to Aberystwyth and the local area, perhaps due to an increase in the geographic scope and frequency of his tours. As mentioned previously, he follows a 1902 visit to Aberystwyth with a trip to Fishguard, a small but busy fishing town in

Pembrokeshire. This is, however, the furthest south into Wales that Cheetham's touring trade ventured, at least on the basis of the evidence acquired for this project. Simply put, though Cheetham's visits to Aberystwyth in this six-year period were not overly frequent or consistent, his schedule of shows in general was tightly packed and frequent, as evidenced by tracing his advertisements in a variety of local Welsh newspapers over this period.

Furthermore, Cheetham was making journeys without a motor vehicle until 1905, with a *Rhyl Record and Advertiser* (1st April 1905: 7) article dedicated to his purchase of one, highlighting the cost and inconvenience of train travel that it would save his touring operation. This article also serves as testament to Cheetham's local celebrity status within North Wales and as a living symbol of modernity to the area, especially in Rhyl, with the writer noting that 'any casual observer' would have 'easily seen' that Cheetham 'has always shown considerable enterprise in his business'. Parallels can be made here to John Caughie's (2016) discussions concerning Scottish showmen and their relationship with 'civic endorsement', particularly from local politicians and officials (p. 28). However, unlike his Scottish counterparts, the *Rhyl Record and Advertiser* article highlights the value of the press itself to Cheetham's endorsement, particularly through the highlighting of his other contributions to the area. Indeed, the article notes his role in introducing electric light to the town as well as having debuted animated pictures in 'every town of importance in North Wales', though fails to mention his stint as a phrenologist or electric healer. Of course, as evidenced earlier in this chapter, Cheetham was not even the first person to show moving picture technology in Rhyl. However, his celebrity image and prominence as a film exhibitor had gifted him this role within the cultural memory of the press. The motor vehicle is a key symbol of modernity, a concept discussed and defined earlier in this chapter, and the article itself highlights that his purchase of one is simply 'his latest adaption of modern invention'.

Purchased in January of that year, the author notes that at the time of writing Cheetham had used the vehicle to make several separate trips to English counties such as Gloucestershire, Oxfordshire, and Leicestershire, amongst others, estimated by the author to have put 1,500 miles on the car's clock. It is not overtly stated that these trips were part of a Silvograph tour, but the author notes that it would be used for Silvograph tours in the winter months and in the summer for trips and that, they theorise, made Cheetham the first person to use a car for this purpose. This scheduling statement ties in with a pattern I have found in Silvograph newspaper advertisements: from 1900 to 1906 it is rare for Silvograph shows to feature in the July, August or early September of any year, with August not featuring a mention of the Silvograph for any year during this period, at least based on the newspaper coverage I've been able to access. This self-imposed limited date-range of touring activity for the period, mixed with travel limitations and a busy schedule over a vast geographic area, suggests why appearances in Aberystwyth were not overtly frequent, but rather more in line with his schedule for North Welsh towns such as Conway and Colwyn Bay, both of which have gaps in Silvograph related advertising and reporting in *The Welsh Coast Pioneer*, most notably between 13th February 1903 and 23rd February 1906. This gap is actually larger than the two years between Cheetham's 1904 and 1906 Aberystwyth visits, despite both towns being geographically closer to his Rhyl base. The seemingly scattered nature of Cheetham's Aberystwyth appearances were not necessarily indicative of lack of interest in moving pictures within the town, certainly Fred E. Young had managed to attract large audiences throughout the area. Rather, the expansive area Cheetham sought to cover and a schedule that included time off during the summer months, as well as his personal

role as the master of ceremonies, meant that frequent appearances at any one town would be an impracticality and potential impossibility.

Despite the purchase of a motor vehicle, symbolic of both the post-industrial revolution and modernity Cheetham had introduced to many areas of rural Wales and his economic success at doing so, his touring career was in its final year. Once again, through the next step within his exhibition career, Cheetham's activities can be examined as a means of tracking the rapidly changing landscape of cinema exhibition within Wales – as well as shifts in filmmaking and audience expectations – as he moves away from touring and instead focuses attention on the opening of dedicated cinemas. The issues and debates that surround cinema exhibition within rural Wales during this next period of change – the impact of competition, a move away from the cinema of attractions towards narrative filmmaking, clashes with existing institutions such as local government and the church, and the economic growth of cinema as industry, within Wales and Britain as a whole, resulting in the introduction of controlling legislation such as the 1909 Cinematograph Act – are also considered through Cheetham and other Welsh exhibitors within the next chapter of this thesis.

Conclusion

This chapter has sought to build upon the limited number of existing works, primarily those by David Berry, that focus upon the early history of cinema exhibition within Wales, a limitation that is especially pronounced when considering rural areas of the country. Through analysis of local and national Welsh newspapers, the spread of early exhibition technologies – first the Kinetoscope then the Cinématographe – from their country of

invention to Wales has been explored. In both instances, this chapter located their initial demonstration and success within Cardiff and Swansea, before later identifying their appearance in rural areas through their prominence within travelling enterprises: first bazaars and fairs, and later through dedicated touring cinema showmen. Importantly, as this chapter has considered, these new technologies were not a sudden surprise for Welsh audiences in either rural or urban Wales, due to the reporting and thus common knowledge of formative technologies that paved the way for the invention of recognisable exhibition technology. Moving from the foundation and emergence of cinema technology within Wales, and using Cheetham as an example, I have explored the role of the rural Welsh touring showman as a prominent part of early rural Welsh cinema history and as a 'localebrity' (Williams, R. 2016) figure, and the tensions that emerge between the use of his own name and that of his company within advertising. This was most evident in areas where his local celebrity status – and, thus, the association of quality it brought to his exhibitions – was muted in comparison to his hometown of Rhyl and its surrounding area. In relation to this, comparisons were made between the marketing and practices of Cheetham and other rural Welsh showmen, such as Fred E. Young. Finally, the role of Cheetham as a producer and exhibitor of local actuality scenes has been discussed within two contexts. Firstly, in comparison to the two modes of filmmaking that were preeminent during this cinema of attractions period: actualities – which Cheetham's scenes can be considered – and trick films. Secondly, the role and prominence of these locally shot films within his marketing and show programmes, which also contained films procured from other filmmakers. Despite the press focussing discussions of Cheetham's shows around his local scenes, his marketing from the period frequently gave them the same prominence as scenes filmed in other areas, particularly in relation to topical world events such as the Transvaal War, suggesting a

demand from early rural Welsh audiences to see beyond their locality. Importantly, this chapter also provides a new source for globalised contexts of the rural showman and their practices, building on recent scholarship concerning showmen (Caddoo, 2014; Klenotic, 2018; Moore, 2018) and rural cinema history more generally (Treveri Gennari, Hipkins and O’Rawe, 2018; Thissen and Zimmermann, 2016).

Overall, it is clear that the first twenty years of cinema exhibition in Wales saw a rapid development in terms of technology, business and audience familiarity with this new medium, which ultimately laid the foundations for cinema to become an important and familiar part of rural Welsh entertainment and social activity, prior to 1970. Moving beyond the limitations and perceptions of being a toy that devices preceding the Kinetoscope experienced, within a short span of time cinema exhibition, most prominently through variations of the Cinématographe, became a common and familiar source of entertainment within rural Wales. This development within a rural Welsh context has been traced through examination of Arthur Cheetham’s touring and filmmaking career from 1897 to 1905, and his role as the auteur showman. By the end of this eighteen-year period, the popularity of these touring shows with rural Welsh audiences signalled the need for another development in cinema exhibition: the opening of fixed location cinemas that operated daily.

ⁱ The reader will notice that *Aberystwith Observer* is later referenced as the *Aberystwyth Observer*, with the publication moving away from the anglicised ‘ith’ to the Welsh spelling of ‘yth’ in the late 1800s.

ⁱⁱ Merioneth was a former county of Wales that is now part of Gwynedd

ⁱⁱⁱ Cardiganshire was a former county of Wales that is now largely part of Ceredigion

^{iv} Kinetoscope films were typically forty-two feet in length, with an ideal projection rate of forty-three frames per second (Phillips, 1997: 17-18), with most films running for less than a minute (Berry, 1994: 22). Furthermore, these early productions lacked narrative, designed to simply showcase the faithful recreation of life that the device was capable of. *Fred Ott’s Sneeze* (1894) depicts the titular Ott sniffing a pinch of snuff and then sneezing, with a total length of five seconds. Such short and, importantly, looping depictions of human activity do not wildly differ from the visuals provided by a Zoetrope or Zoöpraxiscope, in narrative form.

^v As demonstrated within Welsh newspaper articles referenced earlier in this chapter, Edison had a high degree of international fame prior to the Kinetoscope's British debut.

^{vi} This argument is shared by Helen Richards' research on early touring cinema within the South Wales town of Bridgend. She highlights the simplicity and focus on the feat of exhibition in the advertising of touring cinema showmen in comparison to other travelling acts such as fairs, which utilised large, grandiose advertisements centred around their central attraction (Richards, H., 2005: 434 – 435).

^{vii} Sacred concerts were a popular event held throughout Wales on Sundays in lieu of entertainment deemed unsuitable for the Sabbath. Local Welsh newspapers from the period of Cheetham and Young's respective touring operations highlight sacred concerts as consisting of the host delivering sermons and a choir leading various hymns and gospel songs for audiences.

^{viii} Much like the *Aberystwith Observer*, *The Carnarvon and Denbigh Herald* used the anglicised spelling of Caernarfon.

Chapter Four: Early fixed-location cinemas in rural Wales

Introduction

As evidenced in the previous chapter, the twenty years following the Kinetoscope's debut in Wales saw the popularity of moving picture exhibition rapidly flourish, with entrepreneurial showmen such as Arthur Cheetham introducing the technology to rural Wales through a touring operation. The aim of the previous chapter was to explore the introduction of cinema exhibition to Wales and its rural areas, in line with a wider research goal of this thesis of exploring the importance and familiarity of cinemagoing to pre-1970 rural Welsh audiences. This chapter continues this examination of cinema as a visible part of rural Welsh life, considering how a move away from a touring trade with the opening of dedicated cinemas aided the birth of habitual cinemagoing within the rural Welsh town of Aberystwyth.

Arthur Cheetham again serves as a primary case study here, predominately due to his opening of the first fixed-location cinemas in both Rhyl and Aberystwyth and successful transition from touring showman to cinema proprietor. As touched upon in the previous chapter, this thesis considers Cheetham to represent a form of local celebrity that is, as Rebecca Williams (2016) discusses, particularly notable within the social construct of small nations such as Wales. Such a prominence of local celebrities is, she argues, due to the increased proximity and sense of familiarity such figures can acquire across a relatively small population, often aided by a presence within Wales-dedicated media such as television, radio and newspapers (pp. 163; 166). I argue that this form of local celebrity is a permutation of the 'subcultural' celebrity as discussed by Bertha Chin and Matt Hills (2008),

which they define as being ‘restricted rather than general’, as they are recognised by specific audiences rather than being ‘culturally ubiquitous’ (p. 253). Kerry Ferris (2016) also puts forward this argument and overtly discusses the local celebrity as a specific type of subcultural celebrity, that can include anyone who is ‘seen, recognized, and followed by more people than they can keep track of’ (p.393). She lists the ‘lifeguard at the pool, the cashier at the market and the waitress at the diner’ as examples. I argue that touring showmen turned cinema proprietors, such as Cheetham, fulfilled this role within rural Wales. In the case of Cheetham and others, the rural Welsh cinema proprietor often established a role within the local community that extended beyond simply being the manager of the venue. John Caughie (2016), in his exploration of rural Scottish cinema history, notably discusses the benefits of ‘civic endorsement’: the relationship between cinema proprietors and their communities, typically including institutions such as local government, religious leaders, and the local press, as well as audiences (pp. 28-29; 33). In relation to Cheetham, as well as other rural Welsh cinema showmen, this chapter will consider the impact of civic endorsement on cinema operations, and local celebrity status, and if issues of endorsement and relationships with local institutions differ across the varying geographic and cultural areas of rural Wales or urban areas. As such, this chapter examines whether early dedicated rural Welsh cinemas faced unique issues tied to their rural location or showmen, in comparison to those in the populous city of Cardiff and the industrial southern valleys mining community of Aberdare and the cinema of William Haggart.

This exploration of how exhibition practices altered across differing geographic and cultural areas of Wales represents this chapter’s chief original contribution to existing knowledge,

particularly in relation to the role of the cinema proprietor. As noted in this thesis' literature review, there is little comparative work available in relation to Welsh cinema history. Indeed, Miskell's (2006) study, though largely focused on the southern region, goes the furthest in drawing comparisons between differing Welsh exhibition and cinemagoing history contexts. Yet his study begins in 1918, a date by which, as this chapter will illustrate, fixed-location cinemas were common across Wales. Berry (1994) also goes some way in exploring both Cheetham and Hagggar's exhibition histories, though with no overt comparisons between the two or reflection on differing cultural contexts. Indeed, Cheetham's operations outside of Rhyl are only briefly discussed. Away from a specific Welsh context, this chapter will also provide contexts for globalised comparisons and the burgeoning number of works that reflect upon, though rarely as their chief focus, the early cinema showmen or proprietor (Caddoo, 2014; Caughie, 2016; Klenotic, 2018; Moore, 2018; Pryluck, 2008). Indeed, this chapter shares in Gregory Waller's (2008) assertion, made in relation to rural America, that the showman is integral to the small-town cinema and its 'abiding appeal' as a local venue (p. 181).

Since its inception a decade prior, the British cinema industry had grown at an exponential rate during the 1900s, prompting the introduction of the 1909 Cinematograph Act. This legislation imposed stringent security procedures upon cinema exhibitors and granted local authorities the power to manage the licensing of cinema venues, as well as paving the way for councils to impose censorship (Williams, D., 1997: 349). As such, this chapter explores the impact of the cinema industry's growth within the context of rural Welsh exhibition, as well as considering the tensions between Cheetham and the changing landscape of exhibition that includes competitors, the increased powers of local authorities, the demands

of an audience that was now familiar with cinema, and the shift in filmmaking from a cinema of attractions to fledgling narrative cinema. The chief methodology of this chapter is the uncovering and analysis of archival sources, primarily local and national newspapers contemporary to the time. As with the previous chapter, this methodological decision is influenced by a desire to present and analyse an *official* history. Though newspapers are only one evidential part of any understanding of the past, the use of newspapers allows for analysis of the advertisements purchased and designed by the cinema owners and exhibitors themselves, as well as an examination of how the development and success of the burgeoning cinema industry was reflected in newspapers with their own political, commercial and audience satisfaction agendas. The undertaking of my own ethnographic methodologies to uncover qualitative data is made impossible by this chapter's covered time period, which considers the inception of dedicated rural Welsh cinemas in 1906 up until the next major shift in moving-picture exhibition, the successful introduction of synchronised-sound in 1927 and the dawn of the Golden Age of British cinema history.

Moving from touring to fixed-location cinemas

The previous chapter concluded with cinema exhibition in rural Wales having grown into a familiar event, with touring showmen – Arthur Cheetham being the most prominent within rural North and Mid Wales – making and procuring films to attract and entertain audiences. This chapter, however, explores a major shift in the landscape of cinema exhibition in both rural Wales and Britain more generally. That is the demise of the touring exhibition industry and the establishment of permanent, dedicated cinema venues that operated on a near daily basis. It was perhaps, alongside the ever-increasing popularity and familiarity of cinema amongst rural Welsh audiences, the sheer inconvenience of a touring trade that

prompted Cheetham to open his first fixed location cinema in the May of 1906, within Rhyl's Central Hall (Berry, 1994: 41). Indeed, his decision to do so predates the Cinematograph Act of 1909, and the safety and licensing regulations it imposed, that prompted many others across Britain to stop touring and open fixed-location cinemas (Gomes, 2008: 240). Based upon advertisements and reports in newspapers contemporary to the time, Rhyl had always, as his hometown, hosted more Silvograph exhibitions than any other town on Cheetham's circuit, making the opening of the first fixed-location cinema within the relatively large town a logical choice. An article from the *Rhyl Journal* (26th May 1906: 4) highlights the benefits of a fixed location over that of a touring trade for audiences, especially noting the impact that readily available electricity will have (fig. 4.1). Electric lights, it states, were specially fitted throughout the hall, with a permanently fixed screen and an electrically driven motor attached to the projector – allowing for a far steadier rate of projection than a hand-cranked system – all of which 'could not be done for an exhibition fitted for a few days only'. Notably, the article also describes the projector and related apparatus as being enclosed in a 'fixed room', a precursor to the now familiar projection box. This cinema proved to be a success, with *The Rhyl Record and Advertiser* (2nd June 1906: 5) noting that 'each evening the audiences have been growing steadily' and that this has been 'much beyond the promoter's sanguine expectations'. Playing a different set of films every evening at seven and eight thirty (*Rhyl Journal*, 2nd June 1906: 5) – as well as flexibly opening on wet afternoons – Cheetham himself is identified as the reason for the 'immense success' of the fledgling cinema, due to his 'enthusiasm and personal attention' (*Rhyl Record and Advertiser*, 4th August 1906: 5).

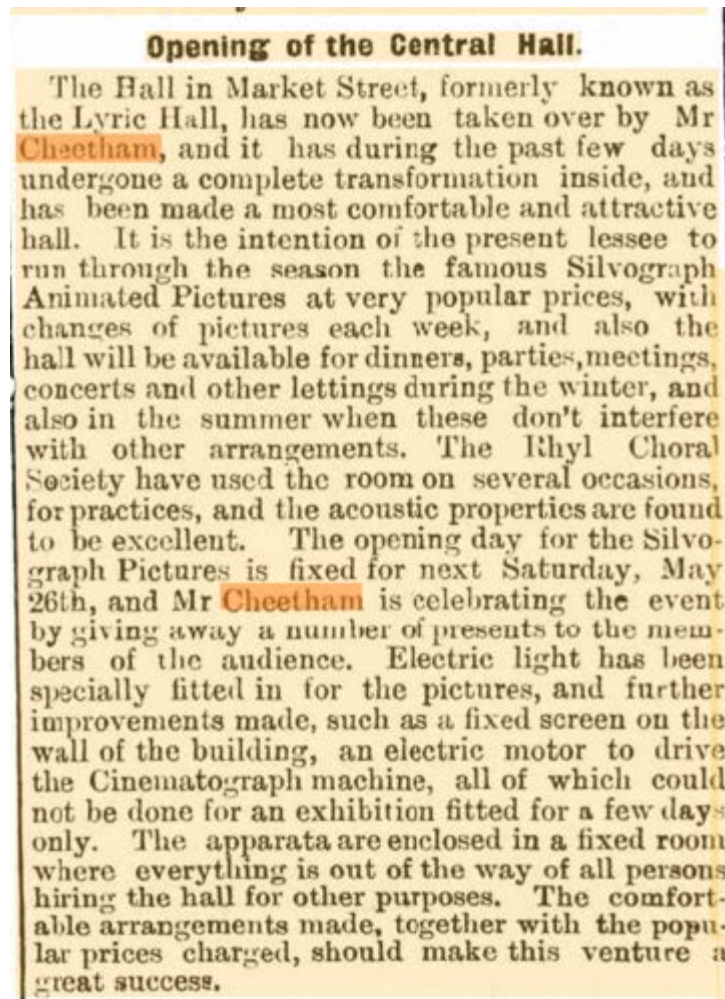


Fig. 4.1 – Article from the *Rhyl Journal*, 26th May 1906: 4ⁱ

From the opening of the cinema until 1910, it seems that Cheetham was almost entirely focused on this Rhyl venue, with no evidence within contemporary newspapers suggesting that he was simultaneously touring during the period. As noted by the *Rhyl Record and Advertiser*, Cheetham himself was key to the success of his Rhyl cinema, due to his showmanship, requiring his presence at the cinema in its formative years. Furthermore, the operation would surely come at a certain cost and investment, with refurbishing and improvements made in July 1908 (*Rhyl Journal*, 25th July 1908: 2) and May 1909 (*Rhyl Journal*, 29th May 1909: 6) respectively, on top of the initial introduction of electric lighting and seating when the cinema was converted in 1906. The fixed cinema also produced

certain political issues too, with Cheetham and the local council clashing over matters such as his overhanging signage, resulting in the council forcefully trying to remove the sign. It's clear that Cheetham did not have civic endorsement, as discussed by Caughie (2016), from Rhyl council. However, he enjoyed popularity with audiences and the local press. Indeed, a crowd gathered and were reportedly vocally in support of Cheetham and opposed to the council's decision (*Rhyl Journal*, 29th June 1907: 4). Furthermore, Cheetham filmed the efforts of the council workers and hosted a screening of the footage, presenting his side of the argument to audiences that week (*Rhyl Journal*, 6th July 1907: 4). This debacle, though presented as being humorous – and very much pro-Cheetham – in the local press, highlights the importance of the cinema as an institution of modernity to audiences of Rhyl. The crowds who gathered to witness the removing of the sign reportedly compared the councillors to donkeys, symbolic of an antiquated style of life and agricultural technology in comparison to the modernity of Cheetham with his electric light, motor car and cinematograph. It is important to note, both for Rhyl and his later endeavours in Aberystwyth, that the endorsement of Cheetham and his popularity, as represented within the local press, was likely not harmed by his weekly purchasing of advertising space within a number of papers. This is therefore, of course, a somewhat mediated history, though it regardless conveys Cheetham's conflicting civic response within Rhyl.

It is perhaps clear then why Cheetham did not tour during this period, including no visits to Aberystwyth, with a mixture of financial and political concerns to focus on and his role as an attraction alongside the films on show. However, he did, on the 9th September 1908, open a temporary sister cinema in the nearby resort town of Colwyn Bay (*The Welsh Coast Pioneer*, 10th September 1908: 8). This temporary Colwyn Bay cinema initially promoted three

different showings a day, with an entire change of films each week, and came to an end in December of that year (*The Welsh Coast Pioneer*, 30th December 1908: 5). Cheetham thus now experimented with a second fixed cinema, if only on a temporary basis, suggesting that his supply of films and their value to audiences was enough to sustain a trade when he was not personally on hand to be the host. As both the Rhyl and Colwyn Bay cinemas operated simultaneously, one would have to do without Cheetham's presence and the Colwyn Bay cinema is reported, as with the Rhyl location, to have attracted 'large audiences' nightly (*The Welsh Coast Pioneer*, 5th November 1908: 2). At this point in Welsh cinema history, exhibition practices and the demands of audiences had once again evolved, though arguably evoking the practices of the early Kinetoscope shows in Cardiff and Newport in utilising a fixed location.

Marketing of Cheetham's North Wales Cinemas

Cheetham's advertising for both his Rhyl and Colwyn Bay cinemas was, especially in comparison to his previous practices, markedly minimalistic, with the promise of frequent and varied films seemingly enough to attract audiences in both towns; 'no repetition', a Rhyl advertisement promises (fig. 4.2). Cheetham, especially in such adverts for Rhyl, is less concerned with comparing the quality of his system to other cinematograph exhibitors than he once had been, rather he now declares the venture as 'the premier entertainment in Rhyl', comparing and elevating his cinema above that of traditional entertainment such as the theatre or music hall. Indeed, David Berry (1994: 41) describes Cheetham's Rhyl cinema advertisements as being a 'sop to' the middle-class audience of the area, a demographic that he was 'anxious' to appeal to due to their prominence in the town. William Uricchio and Roberta Pearson (1993) note that the latter half of the 1900s saw US production studios

and exhibitors move towards an interest in attracting wealthier middle-class audiences to mix with existing working-class patrons and create a 'mass audience' (p. 197). The authors primarily explore this matter in relation to film texts, noting that the movement included attaching a sense of 'high culture' respectability to cinema and 'upgrading' its subject matter 'to accord with those of more respectable media' (pp. 196 – 197).

**“ The
Silvograph.”**

The Premier Entertainment of the
Rhyl Season is to be found at the
CENTRAL HALL, MARKET STREET

Living Pictures

A DAILY CHANGE.

NICE ROOM—RE-ARRANGED

THREE TIMES DAILY.

BUT NO SUNDAY SHOW
(“ Six days shalt thou labour.”)

No Repetition. No Vulgarly

Attend once, and you will attend
again.

Fig. 4.2 – Advertisement from the *Rhyl Journal*, 12th June 1909: 5

This advertisement then evokes the arguments of Uricchio and Pearson, as well as the marketing practices of Fred E. Young, in promoting the films on display as wholesome and of the highest moral standards. It prominently states 'no vulgarity' and, in bold lettering, 'but no Sunday show' which is followed by a purported bible quote of 'six days shalt thou labour'. The latter practice is similar to Young's and Cheetham's touring era practice of replacing a Sunday film showing with a sacred concert, designed to show respect for the Sabbath and appealing to devout audiences. Interestingly, whilst the Silvograph title is prominent, Cheetham's name is not present on the advertisement at all. However, a new facet of his advertising is the closing mantra of 'attend once and you will attend again', evoking a promotion of a habitual style of cinemagoing that is only possible with a fixed location cinema. The promotion of the variety of films on display, along with Cheetham's new habitual attendance mantra and the lack of his own name, highlight the importance of films to the period's audiences, particularly ones on a constantly updating roster that would justify such habitual attendance. This again ties into Cheetham's reasoning for advertising that he would not run shows on Sunday in the British Wales-aligning Rhyl area, the cinema was a potentially ritualistic and frequent experience for audiences, much in the same way as church or chapel attendance. Yet, unlike his battles with the council, Cheetham was clearly being careful not to upset religious institutions with the presence of his cinema.

When compared to the advertising practices of fixed location cinemas in the more populous and industrial southern areas of Wales, there are some marked differences. William Haggart – perhaps better known for his filmmaking – had long been touring his bioscope show around South Wales and, in 1910, had a permanent cinema in the Welsh Wales mining town of Aberdare, as well as maintaining a touring trade throughout the area and having

purchased a theatre in Llanelli in the June of that year (*The Cambrian*, 24th June 1910: 6).

Like Cheetham, Haggar had roots in touring entertainment prior to purchasing a projector or becoming a filmmaker. However, unlike Cheetham, his background extended further back into the creative side of entertainment, having been a showman for thirty years by the time of producing his first film in 1901 (Berry, 1994: 47), as opposed to Cheetham's mixture of employment and experiences before becoming an exhibitor. His Aberdare 'Picture Palace' is described as being 'splendidly lit' by electric lighting, comparable to the newspaper advertising of Cheetham's Rhyl cinema (*The Aberdare Leader*, 1st January 1910: 4). In general, Haggar's advertisements for his Aberdare cinemas are much more detailed and less minimalistic than those used by Cheetham for his Rhyl cinema in the same period. Both men take out large spaces within their respective papers, in relation to other entertainment advertising such as theatres. However, Haggar's advertising focused far more on the content of the films and entertainments on display, with the singing and recital entertainments – though set to a backdrop of living pictures – sharing the same prominence and description as the films (*The Aberdare Leader*, 12th February 1910: 4). At this stage, Haggar's name was far more prominent than Cheetham's within his respective advertising and is done as part of a cosy narrative, reminding audiences of 'Old Haggar's pleasant Sunday evenings' and noting that 'good fires' will be kept all day to ensure warmth. However, this is an advertisement specifically for a Sunday screening, something that Cheetham was notable in his advertising in Rhyl as abstaining from, as discussed earlier, whereas Haggar presents a cosiness to his cinema, somewhere for audiences to attend on a Sunday evening with a mixture of entertainments in a hall warmed by fire in the company of 'Old Haggar'.

Cheetham's decision to abstain from Sunday openings, as depicted quite prominently within his Rhyl advertising, was perhaps less representative of his own personal morals but rather a calculated marketing move designed with that specific middle-class Rhyl audience in mind. Indeed, his Aberystwyth cinema, opened in 1910, is consistently advertised within local press as being open every day, including Sundays. This arguably suggests a difference in the cultural and social lives and expectations of audiences between North and South Wales, as well as British Wales and Welsh Wales, with Cheetham focussing on promoting a lack of vulgarity and not showing films on the Sabbath in Rhyl but not Aberystwyth, whilst Haggart highlighted the warmth and entertainment on show at his venue on Sundays. It would, following the 1909 Cinematograph Act, ultimately have been the council's responsibility to ban Sunday showings (Williams, D., 1997: 349). Prior to the act, and following it when bans were not enforced, the decision was in the hands of the proprietor. Stephen Ridgwell (1995) argues, in his work concerning Welsh cinemagoing in the 1930s, that Sunday openings were 'not established' in South Wales or elsewhere in the country during his period of study (p. 611). Even following the Sunday Entertainments Act of 1932, which specifically reaffirmed and regulated laws surrounding Sunday openings, Ridgwell notes that only 8% of Welsh cinemas opened their doors on a Sunday in 1953, compared to 97% in London and the South-East of England (ibid). The varying Sunday opening policies across Wales during the 1910s then point to a distinct period of Welsh cinema history, a decade where the shift from a wild-west frontier of touring cinema to regulation and fixed-location venues was played out.

Cheetham's decision to open on Sundays within Aberystwyth also conveys the importance of reflecting audiences' expectations within early rural Welsh exhibition during this period,

as well as Aberystwyth's relatively complex relationship with the Three Wales Model. Balsom's Three Wales Model is by no means a definitive representation of Wales' social, political and linguistic makeup prior to 1970. Chris Williams (2005: 14) has designated the approach as a 'museum piece', arguing that it is 'marginalizing' of Welsh identity within border communities. As discussed elsewhere in this thesis, its chief benefit is in encouraging researchers to not view Wales as one homogenous cultural area. Indeed, John Osmond (2002) notes that the model was instrumental in informing much political and cultural analysis of Wales during the 1980s and 1990s (p. 80). Aberystwyth, geographically located firmly within the Welsh 'heartland' (ibid), is a region associated with a high percentage of Welsh speakers, non-conformist religious observance and a traditional economy based on agriculture, mining and maritime. Yet, and as discussed in more detail in this thesis' methodology chapter, Aberystwyth also housed a prominent (Wales' first) university and, thanks to direct rail links to both Birmingham and South Wales, also maintained a vibrant tourist trade. As Kenneth Morgan (1982) has argued, a fledgling English middle-class was rapidly emerging within Aberystwyth at the turn of the twentieth century (p. 128). Yet, this growing middle-class existed alongside the native economy and culture and was, due to both university terms and holiday periods, somewhat seasonal in its prominence (ibid.) It is arguable then that Cheetham's decision to operate on a Sunday was a direct response to Aberystwyth's surviving working-class population and the seasonal nature of the middle-class influence. Moreover, due to the prominence of the university within the town, this seasonal middle-class would have included students. This younger demographic may have been more inclined to visit the cinema on a Sunday, with Mark Whalan (2010: 121) arguing, though primarily in relation to the US, that cinema was one of the forms of commercial entertainment that appealed as a social pursuit to middle-class youths of the late 1910s.

There is some evidence of engagement between the student population of this period and Cheetham, notably from one of the showman's surviving films *College "Rag"* (1923), which depicts the students marching through town in fancy-dress, with many costumes being informed by then topical world events, such as Tutankhamen (with his tomb having been opened in 1922) and, somewhat shockingly from a modern perspective, a number riding on horseback in full Ku Klux Klan attire. Many faces of the students are easily distinguished through Cheetham's framing, pointing to Caughie and McBain's (2018: 146) argument that Scottish showmen filmed local events and people so as to entice the subjects into the cinema and see themselves on screen.

Exhibition choices were, even during this early stage of fixed-location cinema history, clearly influenced by differing cultural expectations across Wales. In relation to Sunday opening, Cheetham approached the British Wales middle-class audiences of Rhyl differently than the complex cultural setting of Aberystwyth. William Haggar, as discussed, specifically promoted Sunday screenings at his Aberdare venue, again responding to and reflecting local audiences' demands or needs. At this time, Aberdare was a working-class mining community and was home to a particularly strong branch of the burgeoning labour movement (Morgan, 1981: 143). Compare this to Rhyl, a popular middle-class tourist town where Cheetham's marketing and exhibition practices have been described as being 'a sop-to' this demographic (Berry, 1994: 41). Conversely, Haggar likely recognised the value in appealing to the heavily working-class demographic of Aberdare, where Monday to Saturday physical labour would be commonplace. Indeed, a 1910 strike manifesto saw Aberdare's miners describe themselves as 'slaves of the lamp' (Barclay, 1978: 24). As such, he promoted warmth and comfort as a means of escapism from daily life. It also suggests

that the Aberdare community and council did not see the cinema as a competitor to churchgoing and were perhaps more predisposed to a change to tradition, especially as a form of escapism after a long week labouring in the mines.

This manner of promoting his venue to Aberdare's mining community seemingly did not harm Haggar's relationship with civic leaders such as the council or church. Indeed, their relationship seems to have been warm, with Haggar described as displaying his 'usual generosity' when hosting a benefit screening for a local church (*The Aberdare Leader*, 19th November 1910: 3) as well as entertaining Sunday school children with free films on rainy days (*The Aberdare Leader*, 7th August 1915: 8). Berry describes Haggar as being 'brimstone proof' by 1911 due to his charitable nature and Sunday entertainments (Berry, 1994: 61 – 62). His civic endorsement from within the community was such that when a fundamentalist complained that Haggar was showing films on Sundays, members of the local community wrote into the local paper to defend Haggar's actions on the basis of his frequent and large charitable donations to local concerns (ibid). Later, Haggar became a councillor, described by *The Aberdare Leader* (11th March 1916: 8) as 'our old friend, Councillor Haggar' as he maintained both a political career and his cinema ventures. Sharing Cheetham's popularity with the local press and audiences, Haggar's relationship with the council seems less tense than that of Cheetham's in Rhyl. It is notable that Cheetham was also an elected official, becoming a member of the Rhyl Urban District Council in April 1910 (*Rhyl Journal*, 9th April 1910: 5). Cinema management of the 1910s and 20s getting involved in local politics was not unique to rural Wales, with Caughie (2016: 30) noting that John Jeffrey, manager of a cinema in the rural Scottish area of Bo'ness, was also a local councillor. Cheetham, Haggar, Jeffrey and, as Caughie argues, cinema management who took part in other civic affairs such

as fund-raising, can be considered to be both ‘public and civic figures’ (ibid) who crafted their own respectability and stature, reducing the need for endorsement from others. In an open letter to the electorate, Cheetham claimed that he was to be a business candidate, independent of ‘politics, party, or creed’ (*Rhyl Journal*, 19th March 1910: 4) Of course, being a councillor also allowed Cheetham a vote in who would be granted licenses under the 1909 Cinematograph Act and what sections of the act the council should uphold, so there were potentially other motives beyond increased civic prominence in his decision to enter politics (*Rhyl Journal*, 16th July 1910: 4). As will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter, Cheetham seemingly enjoyed a more positive relationship with the local council in Aberystwyth than he had in Rhyl. It is important to note that his local celebrity image within Aberystwyth was essentially built from scratch following his initial visit in 1897 and was not informed by his previous career as a seafront phrenologist and electric healer, as was the case in Rhyl. These operations had infuriated the local council of Rhyl to the extent that one councillor suggested that they move Cheetham’s stall to an island in the nearby lake (*Rhyl Record and Advertiser*, 18th May 1901: 3). Perhaps somewhat ironically, nine years later Cheetham would be quoted within council minutes as proclaiming ‘keep politics off the sands’, in a vote to keep political lecturers – dubbed ‘controversial characters’ – from speaking to audiences on the town’s beach (*Rhyl Journal*, 18th June 1910: 2).

Fixed location cinemas and Aberystwyth

In the 1900s and early 1910s, cinema rapidly became an established and economically strong industry within the United Kingdom. In May 1907, the first *Kinematograph and Lantern Weekly* was published – a trade publication concerning Britain’s burgeoning film industry, born out of the 1889 established *Optical Magic Lantern and Photographic Enlarger*

paper – and in 1914 this organisation produced the first *Kinematograph Year Book*, a compendium detailing statistics and details about the previous year’s cinemas and films. Cinema was becoming more of an official business than it had been in the heyday of the Wild West-like environment of the touring trade, and it was arguably no longer suited to the improvised accommodations of the touring industry. To this end, the 1909 Cinematograph Act introduced safety regulations and limitations on touring showmen and the venues of film exhibition, and also gave local councils the remit to grant cinema licenses (Williams, D., 1997: 348). The by-product of this influx of regulatory power granted to councils was the greater scope for censorship and control over the moral content of films at the cinemas they granted licenses to, despite the act predominately being designed to enforce safety (Smith, 2005: 24). Regulations now imposed upon cinema exhibitors, particularly in relation to the storage of flammable film-stock, were better suited to a fixed location cinema than a touring trade. Doubtless many exhibitors such as Cheetham had begun to settle down for the reasons discussed here, however the 1909 Cinematograph Act led, as argued by Berry, to a sudden upturn in the number of permanent cinemas established around Wales and Britain as a whole. Indeed, the inaugural *Kinematograph Year Book* (1914) has six pages (pp. 49 – 54) dedicated just to listing the opening of new cinemas throughout 1913, as well as numerous listings of film rental companies, equipment providers and hundreds of listings for existing cinemas (pp. 285 – 382).

Cinema was now a definable industry within Britain, yet, by mid-1910, Aberystwyth did not have a dedicated cinema, prompting an article to be published in *The Aberystwyth Observer* (21st July 1910: 4) calling for someone to host ‘amusing’ cinematograph shows as an alternative to the ‘dull’ dramatic circles and theatre performances found within the town.

Similarly, a visitor to Aberystwyth from West Bromwich wrote to the newspaper in the June of that year to express his surprise that there is 'no cinematograph entertainment in the town' and that there is 'too great a similarity in the class of entertainment now given' (*The Aberystwyth Observer*, 16th June 1910: 5). For comparison, many other towns around Wales had established cinemas by this point in time, especially in resort and tourist areas such as Rhyl and Colwyn Bay, as demonstrated by Cheetham's activities, the working-class and industrial areas of the south, such as those opened by Haggard, as well as the larger cities of Cardiff and Swansea. However, on the 5th September 1910, Aberystwyth's first permanent fixed-location cinema was opened by Arthur Cheetham, first announced in *The Cambrian News*, a local paper, as an 'up-to-date Picture Palace and Electric Theatre' (26th August 1910: 8). Opened within the New Market Hall, *The Cambrian News* (9th September 1910: 8) stated that this cinema was 'superior entertainment' to any of its class shown to-date within the town. Harkening back to cinematograph advertisements of the 1890s, the newspaper's article continues to state that visitors from London who attended the inaugural screening noted that Cheetham's pictures were 'superior to anything they had seen in the Metropolis'. Cheetham signed an initial two-year lease with the local council to make use of the hall, at a rate of £110 per annum of which Cheetham offered to pay six months up-front (*The Cambrian News*, 19th August: 6). In the June of that year, John Codman had applied for use of the New Market Hall for exhibition purposes for the months of July and August. The local council agreed to this application on the condition that Codman payed £25 up front and provided the necessary stage and lighting accessories at his own expense (*The Aberystwyth Observer* 23rd June 1910: 5). This arrangement, however, was potentially not agreeable for Codman, as there is no mention in the local press of any such exhibitions, and his touring trade continued across Mid and North Wales during the period, before he opened his own

cinema – the Electric Picturedrome – in Newtown in September 1910 (*The Montgomeryshire Express & Radnor Times*, 20th September 1910: 2).

Cheetham's cinema proved popular and his name, partly due to the prominence of it within newspaper advertising for the cinema, became synonymous with the venue which was often dubbed 'Mr. Cheetham's Cinema' within the local press. Despite his touring days being far behind him, Cheetham still evoked the marketing and exhibition practices of those past years in highlighting his own name and role within the exhibition. This marketing practice perhaps benefitted from the lack of competition Cheetham's Aberystwyth cinema enjoyed for most of 1910 – 1920, with a brief period of a second cinema opening between 1913 and 1914.

Venue choice in Cardiff

When compared to advertising of cinemas in more populous areas of Wales, where there was a wider choice of cinema and entertainments available to audiences, differences and similarities in marketing approaches can be observed in comparison to Aberystwyth, Rhyl and Aberdare. The most notable difference in the advertising in more populous areas is the typical lack of a proprietor's name, suggesting a heightened impact of the showman as a local celebrity within smaller, rural communities than their urban counterparts. This resonates with Ferris' (2010) arguments of local celebrity status emerging where it is 'easier' for audiences to become familiar with the individual and 'gather information' about them, such as localised press coverage of Cheetham (pp. 393 – 394). When analysing a selection of cinema and entertainments adverts from a December copy of the *Evening Express* (12th December 1910: 1), which was distributed throughout Cardiff, Newport and Swansea, the

most prominent advertisement is for the 'New Cinema Theatre' (fig. 4.3), with a listing focusing on its opening day of 17th December. Like Cheetham's adverts for the Aberystwyth cinema, certainly for the period of 1910 – 1914, there is no description of the films on show, not even titles. Rather, the main goal of the advertisement is to highlight its daily and continuous showing of films from 2pm until 11pm, as well as the free tea provided in the afternoon, as well as other conveniences such as a free-to-use cloak room and bike storage, and selection of musical accompaniment. Though the promise of constant and varied entertainment is similar, yet arguably more impressive, to Cheetham's common practice of advertising three shows a day, the focus on the comfort available to the visitor is akin to Haggar's promise to the mining community of Aberdare. By highlighting a continual show time of 2pm until 11pm, this cinema eschews the norm of advertising specific show times in the manner of traditional live entertainment, such as theatres, as had been employed by Cheetham, Haggar, Codman et al. with their adoption of specific show times.

<p style="text-align: center;">PUBLIC AMUSEMENTS.</p> <p>NEW THEATRE, CARDIFF. Proprietor & Manager, ROBERT REYNOLD. WEDNESDAY, December 14th, at 7.30. AN AMATEUR PERFORMANCE will be given of LIBERTY HALL And the CONVICT ON THE HEARTH. (The ENTIRE PROCEEDS to be given to the CARDIFF INFIRMARY FUND.) DECEMBER 14th, at Two and 10A. Production of Pantomime A L A D D I N. For which Seats Can Now be Booked, at 500 Box Office at Theatre, 10 to 5. Sat. Dec. 23.</p> <p>CARDIFF EMPIRE QUEEN-STREET. Managing Director, OSWALD STOLL. 6.45—TWICE NIGHTLY—8. Seats may be Booked by Post or Telephone —Sat. 7th, 10. Booking Office Open Daily from Ten till 4.30. Saturdays, Ten till Two p.m.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">TO-NIGHT!</p> <p>SIGNORINA CARMEN TURIA, The Famous Spanish Prima Donna, Will Sing in Spanish and in English from her Repertoire. EDIE REYNOLDS And Her Violin. DU GROS TRIO, Comedy Gymnasts. DARE AUSTIN Presents his Original Comedy Dialogue, — His Wedding Morning — The Cozney Comedian, LAW LAKE, In an English, New and Original Comedy. — Lovers, "King Siskier," THE FRANCOLI TROUPE, In their Comedy Pantomime, Archlytic Sketch, "The Billposter." EDITH HERON-BROWN, As "Ella Ann," the Musical Star. NEW SERIES OF INTERESTING PICTURES on the AMERICAN BIOSCOPE. TED AND MAY HOPKINS, The Popular Welsh Humourists. SPECIAL NOTICE. BOXING DAY, DECEMBER 26th 1910, FOUR PERFORMANCES. Times: 1.30—4.45—8.15. Also, ONE MATINEE, DECEMBER 27th. For Time See Later Announcements.</p> <p>THEATRE ROYAL, CARDIFF. TO-NIGHT! TO-NIGHT! MR. STUART LOMATH'S COMPANY IN WHOM GOD HATH JOINED. A PLAY OF INTEREST TO ALL. Next Week: THE DRAMA OF LIFE.</p> <p>PANOPTICON, ST. MARY-STREET. TO-NIGHT, AT 7.15. Matinee—Wednesday and Saturday, at 2.30. Special Programmes of High-class Features, including— THE IRON FOUNDRY. A sensational story of Ancient History, with a strong plot, telling how an attempt is made to suppress a page results on the head of the villain making it, who himself perishes in the furnace for which he destined the boy. * LUNATIC EXPECTED. Sensationally Funny Feature. THE DUNSMAN. A Dramatic story of International Interest. SWIFT INTERFERED WIFE. Humorous Play by M. M. MONTAGNETTE, with the Archness in the leading parts. Special Engagement of Mr. HARRY COOPER, Baritone Vocalist, in New Illustrated songs. UNDER THE APPLE TREE. A Story of Heart Interest, in Seven tableaux, BY THE DOCTOR'S ORDER. Laughable Farce by Max London. THE POST EXPRESS RIDERS. Mr. BERT WILLIAMS. The Popular Showman. THE WOOING O' T. A Refined Comedy, with lots of Fun and quaint Tomfoolery, with a liberal sprinkling of musical vignettes. Just girls and boys who get a couple of old ones going along with the rest of them. Seats can be Booked in Advance. Box Office Open Daily, 10 a.m. till 10 p.m. Telephone 125.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">NEW P O H T E M P I T R E</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">No. 7.306.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">PUBLIC AMUSEMENTS.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">THE NEW CINEMA THEATRE (OPPOSITE PARK-PLACE). CARDIFF'S NEW PICTURE PLAYHOUSE THE MOST LUXURIOUS CINEMA THEATRE IN LONDON OR THE PROVINCES. OPENING DAY. SATURDAY, 17TH DECEMBER, AT TWO P.M., AND DAILY CONTINUOUS EXHIBITIONS THENCEFORWARD, FROM 2 p.m. to 11 p.m.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">THE LATEST AND BEST OF PICTURES. EXCELLENT MUSIC. EVERY COMFORT.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">AFTERNOON TEAS WILL BE SUPPLIED DAILY, FROM 3.30 p.m. to 5 p.m. TO ALL VISITORS WHO DESIRE IT FREE OF CHARGE.</p> <p>HERR RAUCHER'S Well-known and Excellent VIENNESE STRING BAND WILL PERFORM DURING EACH PERFORMANCE. UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF HERR RAUCHER (Soloist).</p> <p>BOOKING OF SEATS, CLOAK-ROOM, AND PARCEL OFFICE FREE OF CHARGE FREE STORAGE OF BICYCLES.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">POPULAR PRICES: 3D., 6D., AND 1/6. CHILDREN Under 14: 2d., 5d., and 6d.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">CONTINUOUS ENTERTAINMENT.</p>
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Fig. 4.3 – Advertisements for Cardiff's cinemas from the *Evening Express*, 12th December 1910: 1

In comparison to The New Cinema Theatre, the other animated pictures being advertised within this edition of the *Evening News* are either contained as part of a variety act, such as at Oswald Stoll's Empire music hall,ⁱⁱ which had performances twice nightly at 18:45 and 21:00, or the arguable middle-class focus of the Panopticon cinema. Amongst a variety of comedy, international singing acts and a gymnastic trio, the advertisement for the Empire promises a 'new series of interesting pictures on the American Bioscope'. The diverse

programming of this venue was part of Stoll's desire to make the Empire music hall chain a 'reputable' source of entertainment (Double, 2012: 40). As such, animated pictures simply become one of several acts, with those on show being described as 'interesting' by the advertisement, rather than a hyperbolic adjective for their quality, and with no description of the films on show. Visitors to the Empire would be well versed in the quality, class and moral content of the entertainment usually on show at the venue, as would those who frequented the New Cinema Theatre. A choice was available to Cardiff audiences, with the Empire attempting to offer a 'reputable' variety of entertainment, showing twice a night and surely aimed at adults due to type of performances and time of showing, whereas the New Cinema Theatre promised comfort, a continuous showing from 14:00 to 23:00 and openly stated its prices, including discounted rates for children. There was a third choice for the people of Cardiff in the December of 1910, with the Panopticon falling somewhere between the other two in terms of the presentation of their entertainment and its allure. Though giving away little about comfort or pricing, the Panopticon promises a 'special programme of high class pictures', showing once at 19:45 and with 14:30 matinees on a Wednesday and Saturday. The Panopticon's advertisement gives the title and description of the films on display, usually suggesting strong moral content, such as 'refined comedy' or 'story of heart interest'. This approach again mirrors Uricchio and Pearson's (1993) arguments about the early period of fixed-location cinema, which for them was focused on filmmakers and exhibitors pushing to capture the attention of middle-class audiences. With a focus on the reputable content of the entertainments, yet primarily showing films, the Panopticon is arguably a median between what the other two venues offered audiences. I am cautious, however, in presenting the New Cinema Theatre as – at this stage of its existence – being any less than the other two in terms of interior and exterior quality.

Peter Miskell, writing about the choices South Wales audiences had post-1930s, notes a distinction between first-run halls, second-run halls and flea-pit cinemas, where the physical quality of the cinema, its ticket pricing and the availability of films in proximity to their release date could be tied to the social class of those choosing to visit one cinema over the other (Miskell, 2006: 94). However, I would argue that, during this formative period of permanent cinemas, the importance of the cinema's aesthetic quality was likely a moot point, as they were either newly constructed or converted. As Miskell states, many flea-pits of the 1940s, 50s and 60s were 'survivors' of pre-World War Two venues, frequently being the downtrodden remains of purpose-built cinemas within working-class areas (ibid: 93). I would argue, however, that during this earlier period of cinemagoing, audiences' choice of cinema could be linked to the format of the entertainment on show and the particular type of comfort provided by the venue. The New Cinema Theatre had a continual showing of films, with a focus in its advertisements on the free conveniences and ad-hoc services they provided, surely preferential for families with discount for children, or those who wanted to relax, regardless of the films on show. In comparison, the Empire provided a mixture of entertainments, at two fixed showing times and with a promise of a certain high-class value to the films and other performances. Finally, the Panopticon provided a balance of the two, with matinees more appropriate for families or children but with a promise of reputable content, as well as a focus on the films on show (rather than a selection of entertainment types or an understanding that there would be a continual running of films at random over the course of a few hours). Different lifestyles and preferred consumption of entertainment would have shaped one's decision on venue, rather than social standing as would be the case later in the history of cinemagoing.

Social hierarchy within the cinema

It is also arguable that there existed a form of social hierarchy *within* the cinemas, which is visible in most Welsh venues, regardless of if they were the only venue in town or one of a selection. This internal hierarchy relates to the prices of tickets and their related sections of seating, a form of social separation that continues in Wales throughout the first half of the Twentieth Century, as argued by Miskell (ibid: 92). He argues that the first-run city centre cinemas of Cardiff had cheaper seats in the main auditorium that were accessible, in terms of price, for the average cinemagoer. However, these cinemas also had balcony seating to appeal to a more affluent section of the community, with ticket prices two and a half times that of the general admittance fee (ibid). This is also evident within the early period of dedicated cinemas with Wales, including rural venues. I have identified, by collecting advertisements for eighteen dedicated cinemas across Wales from late 1909 to the end of 1910, the most 'popular prices' – a phrase often used within cinema advertising – were three-pence, six-pence and one-shilling, with some having two-pence tickets and one, Pontypridd's Royal Clarence Theatre, offering two-shilling seating. Many would offer half price tickets for children or discounted rates for children's matinees. Cheetham's Aberystwyth cinema offered three and six pence seats, as well as a one shilling option during its early years. Though no detail is provided of what seating each price represents, it was likely similar to John Codman's Newtown cinema in providing three distinct tiers – physically and socially. Codman offered tickets at three-pence, six-pence and nine-pence, which allowed access to the body of the hall, side gallery and rear gallery, respectively (*The Montgomeryshire Express and Radnor Times*, 20th September 1910: 2). Though audiences in Aberystwyth – as well as Newtown – did not have a choice of cinema at this stage, unlike

their Cardiff counterparts who could choose between venues with differencing preferences of films, presentation and delivery, there was a choice in which level of seating you could purchase. As Brad Beaven argues, it was common across Britain for social distinction to be 'preserved' within the setting of a singular auditorium, with ticket prices and the quality of seating – location and comfort – being the dividers (Beaven, 2005: 194). However, it did prevent cinemagoing from becoming an activity that was exclusive to just one social class, important for a lone cinema in a less populated area, such as Cheetham's, in maximising its potential attendance.

Such price differences had existed during Cheetham's touring operation, with higher ticket prices for his 1906 visit to Aberystwyth's palatial Coliseum theatre (*The Cambrian News*, 16th March 1906: 4), a then newly built theatre with floor seating and two tiers of surrounding balconies. Indeed, Fred E. Young's 1899 exhibition in the town's Pier Pavilion had a more extensive array of ticket prices than the established 1910 Cheetham Cinema (*The Aberystwyth Observer*, 30th March 1910: 1). However, the touring trade represented special and infrequent visits, especially within Aberystwyth, including a variety of entertainment, whereas a permanent cinema's business goal is to promote habitual visitation from its audiences. Thus, ticket prices were lowered by necessity when the dedicated cinema was opened within Aberystwyth, as a means to facilitate a habitual cinemagoing audience. With a mixture of ticket prices, Cheetham was able to facilitate audiences from all social classes without having to directly integrate them. Furthermore, he altered his pricing model from the truncated nature of a touring trade, to acknowledge the reciprocal relationship between affordable prices and habitual cinemagoing. That is, prices would have to be lower across the range of tickets to promote and justify frequent attendance from audiences, with

habitual visiting of the cinema benefitting Cheetham in the long term despite the lower cost. Importantly, Cheetham's cinema prices were cheaper than the typical theatre and opera performances held at the Coliseum theatre. For example, a June 1914 performance of the Grand English and Italian Opera Company saw tickets range from two-shillings-and-six-pence at the most expensive to one-shilling at the cheapest (*The Cambrian News*, 5th June 1914: 12), a marked difference from Cheetham's price range of one-shilling to three-pence. There are obvious reasons for the difference in price between the two mediums, not least the overheads of procuring and paying for a live opera company. Yet, it perhaps highlights another reasoning for Cheetham's lowered pricing in comparison to his touring operations. In Rhyl he had directly competed against local theatres through newspaper advertising. Whilst this was not as overtly performed through his Aberystwyth advertising, these lower ticket prices do position cinemagoing as a more affordable option, a potentially habitual one, for Aberystwyth's more diverse class make-up.

Competition in Aberystwyth

From the opening of Cheetham's cinema in 1910 to March 1913, audiences in Aberystwyth had only one choice in relation to their cinemagoing habits: how much they would pay for a ticket, which decided the quality of their view and the seat itself, as well as potentially making a statement about – or reflecting on – their social class. In terms of the quality or style of the venue and films available to them, this was at the mercy of Cheetham and his procurement. Throughout this period, Cheetham also consistently ran the same advertisement weekly on page four of *The Cambrian News*, only changing when screenings fell from three to two times a day and a new eight-penny ticket was introduced. Indeed, the advert was still emblazoned with 'NOW OPEN', nearly four years after it had first opened.

Short articles published in the newspaper over this period of monopoly frequently praised Cheetham personally for the entertainment he hosted, with his name also having a prominent place within his weekly advertisements. Although, as demonstrated with his Rhyl cinema, Cheetham's relationship had long been warm with the press, likely aided by his purchasing of weekly advertisements.

Cheetham would soon, however, face a similar issue to the picture halls of Cardiff in the form of competition. Ultimately, the introduction of such competition resulted in Cheetham having to choose an identity for his cinema and the way that it was marketed, to ensure that it had a unique selling point over its rivals. Simply being the 'enormous success' 'picture palace and electric theatre' was not enough to differentiate it from opposition that had a similar aesthetic quality combined with a focus on exhibiting films that appealed to a particular audience and their tastes. This is an issue that many formative cinemas around Wales, especially rural communities that initially had one picture hall, faced as cinema moved into its golden era in the inter-war period. Indeed, Cheetham himself had experienced this in Rhyl – with the opening of the Queen's Picture Theatre in June 1910 (*Rhyl Journal*, 25th June 1910: 4) – and even small communities, such as Tywyn, would have two or three dedicated cinemas during World War Two. Cheetham's first engagement with legitimate competition in Aberystwyth came from the venue which had previously hosted his touring trade, the Coliseum theatre. On the 7th March 1913, *The Cambrian News* (p. 4) advertised – on the same page as Cheetham's weekly advertisement – Aberystwyth native Charles Fear as showing films at the Coliseum on three days over Easter (fig. 4.4). This included matinees at three in the afternoon and a main showing at eight in the evening, the latter of which clashed with Cheetham's half past eight showing. Prices also mirrored

Cheetham's – three-pence, six-pence, eight-pence and one-shilling – with animated pictures being half price for children. An article published in the same edition of *The Cambrian News* notes that 'local support' has been given to Fear's 'local enterprise', which, whilst not overtly stated, is clearly in stark contrast to Cheetham's position as the self-acclaimed famed showman from Rhyl.

MEETINGS, ENTERTAINMENTS

ENORMOUS SUCCESS.

NOW OPEN

THE
NEW MARKET HALL, ABERYSTWYTH
as an up-to-date
**PICTURE PALACE AND
ELECTRIC THEATRE**
By A. CHEETHAM,
Proprietor of the famous Silvograph Pictures.

Aberystwyth Visitors from London state that
these Pictures are superior to any in London.

TWICE DAILY, 6-30 and 8-30.
3d., 6d., 8d., and 1s.

COLISEUM, ABERYSTWYTH,
COMMENCING MONDAY, MARCH 10th.
A Series of Animated Pictures
will be given at the above place, illustrating
The Late CAPT. SCOTT, R.N.:
Conquest of the South Pole.

ALSO
**THE MEMORIAL SERVICE AT ST. PAUL'S
CATHEDRAL.**

FOR ONE WEEK ONLY. ONE SHOW NIGHTLY.
Doors open 7-30 Commence at 8
Admission 3d., 6d., 8d. & 1s. Children half-price to
all seats except 3l.
Children's Matinee, Saturday, at 2 30.
One Penny each w161

Fig. 4.4 – Advertisements for Cheetham's Aberystwyth cinema and Charles Fear's first film screening at the Coliseum (*The Cambrian News*, 7th March 1913: 4)

From March to May of that year, Fear continued to host regular film screenings at the Coliseum, with adverts for these events that referred to the venue as the 'Coliseum Cinema' (*The Cambrian News*, 18th April 1913: 4), though its operations as a traditional theatre were still ongoing. Indeed, at points during this period the advertising for the Coliseum Cinema was more prominent in size than that of Cheetham's within the local press (ibid). These advertisements promised a 'gigantic' programme that was 'specially selected' and 'presented' by Fear and frequently highlighted the artistic qualities of the films on display.

The end of the Cinema of Attractions

Notably, during the first-half of 1913, Cheetham's advertisements were the same ones used for the previous three years – which treated the very existence of a cinema as being enough of a draw for audiences – whilst articles in the local press focussed on the thrill and length of the Cheetham cinema's films (*The Cambrian News*, 11th April 1913: 4, 8). In contrast, those for the Coliseum cinema considered the fame and talent of the actors within them, as well as the source text, usually a novel or play, that the films were adapted from (ibid). The Coliseum was clearly forming its own identity as a cinema, one which Fear was tying to the venue's reputation and marketing style as a theatre, with advertising focussing on the artistic quality and pedigree of its films and the stars within them. This, perhaps, evokes a larger issue relating to cinema as both a business and an art form at the time. The cinema of attractions period was coming to an end (Gunning, 1990), though Cheetham – having been a formative filmmaker and showman – was still representing this era through his advertising and operations. Arguably, by treating its advertising more like that of its usual theatre performances – use of star image, highlighting the source text's reputation, replacing the focus on spectacle with artistic quality – the Coliseum Cinema better represented the

burgeoning new era of cinema. This new era moved away from the novelty or spectacle of actualities and trick films, instead bringing narrative to the forefront of the industry.

This evolution in filmmaking, where narrative and plot are dominant above sheer spectacle, is dubbed by Gunning (2003: 43) as the 'classical cinema' era. Whilst elements of the cinema of attractions – particularly from trick and chase films – remained in early classical cinema, they served as part of a wider narrative rather than the film's chief draw for audiences.

Though writing about the United States of America, Paul Moore (2011: 275) notes that this shift from a cinema of attractions to classical narrative cinema can be located within newspaper advertising from the period, evoking the 'mass market' that cinema was rapidly developing into, as discussed here earlier. This mass market saw the birth of film stars (Dixon, 2017: 32), name directors, and the feature film – as well as industries of production, distribution and exhibition – a system that is more recognisable today in comparison to the formative years that Cheetham had found popularity and success within. Formally an attraction based around thrills and the satisfaction and novelty of real-life scenes – often locally filmed, within the context of Wales and Cheetham – film now appealed to audiences through a combination of subjective artistic quality, genre, and the fledgling star image of the first generation of film stars. Film had come of age, many filmmakers, Parkinson (1995: 24) argues using D. W. Griffith as an example, produced hundreds of films during the attractions period and, in doing so, were becoming increasingly more proficient with film 'grammar and rhetoric'. Advancements in editing facilitated longer and more complex films, as well as artistic and narrative possibilities. Particularly, Bryony Dixon (2017: 33) argues, British audiences took to the increasingly more complex and sophisticated narratives of Hollywood comedies by the end of World War One. Whilst Cheetham was still advertising

his cinema with the now three-year old quote from London visitors – noting the superiority of his attractions-era films over those shown in the English capital – D. W. Griffith had begun production of the \$18,000 four-reel feature film *Judith of Bethulia* (1914) (Parkinson, 1995: 24).

Cinema had already developed as an economic institution, marked by the rapid adoption of fixed-location cinemas. Yet it was now facing an artistic transition, one that was better represented through the theatre-like principles of the Coliseum's advertising; simply put, cinema was now more similar to theatre than its origins in the machines of spectacle, such as the magic lantern, zoetrope and early photography. As Jack C. Ellis (1995: 22) discusses, the increasing length of films and technical proficiency of filmmakers provided further parallels with theatre, with companies such as Film d' Art taking advantage of these developments to produce cinematic adaptations of successful plays utilising well-known actors. Such a practice of film reflecting theatre – or reputable art forms more generally – can be noted in the Coliseum's highlighting of the starring roles of two European actresses, Madame Sarah Bernhardt (*An Actress's Romance*) and Henny Porten (*Spectre of the Sea*), within their respective films. In doing so, the Coliseum utilised their value as respected theatre actresses to transform them into symbols of legitimacy for film as an art form, beyond visual spectacle or novelty. Again, this represents the push within the film industry at the time for productions and exhibition that presented 'high culture respectability', as a means of promoting cinema to the middle classes (Uricchio and Pearson, 1993: 196 – 197).

The identities and unique selling points of Aberystwyth's cinemas

Ultimately, this practice crafted the Coliseum's early cinematic identity as a venue that exhibited films suited to its traditional theatre aesthetics and clientele. This is highlighted by *The Cambrian News* (4th April 1913: 8), praising Fear and the Coliseum's films as being 'artistic and expensive'. This not to say, however, that Cheetham was not showing films of similar narrative advancement. The same issue of *The Cambrian News* that praised the artistic value and expense of the Coliseum's films also reports that Cheetham's cinema was screening the ambitious, and critically acclaimed (Wlaschin, 2009: 222), crime film *Tigris* (1913). Yet, the article emphasises the 'thrilling and exciting situations' and length – 3,900 feet – of the film, evoking the marketing practices of Cheetham's touring trade, rather than the artistic or narrative qualities of the film. One would be mistaken for assuming the promised thrill and excitement comes from qualities associated with the cinema of attractions, rather than the narrative development of the film. Whilst the respective articles are seemingly written by journalists of *The Cambrian News*, it's noticeable that their weekly comments, especially for Cheetham's cinema over its three years of existence at this stage, feature recurring themes and phrases.

The Coliseum, for both its theatre and cinema exploits, was often praised for its grandeur and the artistic qualities of its films, as discussed, whilst articles on Cheetham's cinema often described the films – as well as audience attendance – with superlatives such as 'capital' and 'thrilling'. These articles are then offset by the ones produced by *The Cambrian News* that carry the clear opinions of the journalist, which have a markedly different tone and often relate to an actual news item about the cinema rather than discussing the films that have been shown. For example, an article from April 28th, 1911 (p. 8) primarily criticises the lack of British scenes in the films purchased, claiming continental vistas are more

frequently on show, and also takes the opportunity to mention the lack of variety of films in recent weeks at Cheetham's cinema. Whilst it is possible that the authors of these articles were simply responding to the advertising and identity of these cinemas in their reports, it is conceivable that the weeks where the articles simply report the films that have shown are editorials provided by the cinemas themselves, whereas the weeks with a marked change in tone or criticism of the venues are typically responding to news stories or notable events at the cinema. The same can be observed for William Haggar's Aberdare cinema, where there are frequent lengthy articles within *The Aberdare Leader* that essentially act as long form or supplement advertising, providing detail of the current and following week's showings, as well as prices.

A change in advertising approach

After April 25th, 1913, there are no further mentions in the local press of Fear showing films at the Coliseum, with the Coliseum reverting back to primarily operating as a theatre.

However, Fear would continue to provide competition for Cheetham. An article in *The Cambrian News* from June 6th, 1913 (p. 8) announces that Fear is now showing films twice a night at the old skating rink – primarily used as an auction house. Arguably this was Aberystwyth's second dedicated cinema, with films being a secondary trade to the Coliseum's theatre performances. The legitimacy of this new venture as a dedicated and permanent cinema is furthered by its announcement coinciding with Cheetham, after three years and on page four of the very same issue, changing his weekly newspaper advertisement (fig. 4.5). This fresh weekly advertisement marks a new era for Cheetham's Aberystwyth business, and represents the evolution of cinema exhibition from a formative touring trade to that of dedicated cinemas within a vast and competitive industry. Primarily,

this advertisement has two main changes that signal this shift, and better represent the classical era of cinema. The most prominent text of this revised advertisement is the word 'cinema', for the first time in Aberystwyth's exhibition history the phrase is here officially used as part of a venue's advertising. The previous advertisement had dubbed it both a 'picture palace' and 'electric theatre', the latter especially evoking the days of touring and a less formalised era of cinema exhibition, as well as the cinema of attractions' overall lack of an artistic identity and need to employ allusions to previous technologies – magic lantern, zoetrope, photography – and theatre to contextualise its premise as a form of entertainment. 'Picture palace', which would later become a descriptor for the most lavish of venues during the Golden Age of cinema, is still used within this new advertisement. However, it is now part of the unique selling point of the advertisement: 'Aberystwyth's Original Picture Palace', which is at the top of the piece, followed by a brief description of the cinema's history and role as the 'first and only entertainment' in the town to run all year round. The advert twice mentions the location of the cinema as being Market Street – presumably to avoid any confusion from the location of Fear's cinema – and the cinema is dubbed 'the home of the perfect pictures'. Of course, Arthur Cheetham's own name is prominent, located just above 'cinema' to emphasise his ownership of it – 'Arthur Cheetham's Cinema'. Notably, the Silvograph brand name is entirely missing, perhaps too representative of the success of the now antiquated touring trade. The advertisement also seeks to establish Cheetham's professionalism and experience as cinema operator, though it achieves this not by referring to his own fame as previous examples had done. Rather, the advertisement acknowledges his cinemas in Rhyl, Colwyn Bay (the successor to the one discussed earlier), and Manchester, where he had opened a venue in the appropriately

named Cheetham Hill area of the city, potentially in response to Fear's strong association with the local Aberystwyth area.

MEETINGS, ENTERTAINMENTS

Aberystwyth's Original Picture Palace
Established Sept. 1910, and continued Daily ever since.
The First and Only Entertainment in Aberystwyth
ever run all the year round.

ARTHUR CHEETHAM'S
CINEMA

Market Street & Little Darkgate Street
(100 yards from Pier St. and Great Darkgate St.).
Also at MANCHESTER, RHYL, and COLWYN BAY

TWICE DAILY
at 6-30 & 8-30. Mon. & Sat. at 3.
(Also WET AFTERNOONS at 3).

The Home of the **PERFECT PICTURES.**

NOTE
SPECIALLY— **MARKET STREET**
3d., 6d., 8d. 1/-

Head Office—160, Cheetham Hill-road, Manchester.
Tel. No. 2683 City.

Fig. 4.5 – Cheetham's first major change of Aberystwyth advertising (*The Cambrian News*, 6th June 1913: 4)

As such, this new advert is primarily performing two interlocking operations to cement the cinema's identity and perceived quality over its rival. The first is reaffirming that this is the first cinema of Aberystwyth, the original, implying that others are imitations, which also ties into a narrative within the local press surrounding Cheetham himself. In November 1913, when Cheetham hosted a benefit screening for the Senghenydd colliery disaster, *The Cambrian News* (7th November 1913: 8) reported that the town mayor urged the people of Aberystwyth to 'support Mr. Cheetham as he has supported the fund' and that Cheetham

had always 'given them the very best', which was a 'great attraction to visitors'. Cheetham was the man who answered the call of the town's need for a cinema – as identified through letters written to the press earlier in this chapter – the importance of which this advert and the mayor's speech allude to. Cheetham had long enjoyed such political civic endorsement within Aberystwyth. Indeed, an early advertisement announcing the opening of the cinema highlights that the event was to be 'under the patronage of HIS WORSHIP THE MAYOR and Members of Corporation' [emphasis from original source] (*The Cambrian News*, 26th August 1910: 8). A similar use of such civic endorsement is evident within Caughie's (2016) study of small-town Scottish cinema history between 1897 and 1927. Here he argues that cinema proprietors incorporated attendance by 'prestigious' public figures into their marketing to aid the respectability of both their venue and cinemagoing as a leisure pursuit (p. 30).

The persona and value of Cheetham's name is linked to the second operation of professionalism and quality, which is first achieved by defining the venue as 'Mr. Cheetham's Cinema'. Dropping the Silvograph branding allows for the Cheetham name – with the professionalism, quality and charisma that it is associated with – to make the cinema more personable, much like that of William Haggar's Aberdare cinema and its use of 'Old Haggar' in advertising. Yet, this professionalism is furthered by the listing of Cheetham's chain of venues and the citing of his head office as being in Manchester, including its phone number. It is unlikely, should anyone from Aberystwyth need to contact the cinema, that they would use the still far from common telephone to ring Manchester when the cinema itself was open twice a day in Aberystwyth, and in the afternoon on wet days. However, its inclusion – and that of his other cinemas – suggests a degree of professionalism and success in the way Cheetham's cinemas operated.

By comparison, the Rink Picture Theatre's first advertisement in *The Cambrian News* comes on 12th December 1913 (p. 1) and evokes Fear's Coliseum advertisements. It highlights the main film of the week, *Lady Audley's Secret*, which it notes is 'Miss Braddon's world-famous novel translated into pictures', with two showings a night that match Cheetham's six-thirty and eight-thirty show times, with the same pricing scale, excluding Cheetham's eight-pence option. Fear is positioning himself here as a direct competitor to Cheetham with his pricing and show times, as well as continuing the practice of underlining the artistic values of his films, thus presenting a defined choice to audiences of Aberystwyth. During the first half of 1914, the Rink Picture Theatre continued to publish newspaper advertisements that followed this trend and, interestingly, this is a period which sees Cheetham change advertising again. This time, he almost mirrors the visual design and content of the Rink's. Rather than being a catch-all piece that could be published any week, the new advertisements explicitly highlight the main film showing that week. An example comes from *The Cambrian News* on the 6th February 1914 (fig. 4) (p. 4), in which both venues' advertisements feature just one film a piece: *The House of Temperley* (1913) at The Rink and *When the Earth Trembled* (1913) at Cheetham's cinema, which are both listed as playing for three days that week. Neither advertisement overtly provides a cost of admission, although The Rink states 'prices as usual', acknowledging habitual attendance patterns and the familiarity of local audiences. However, the Cheetham advertisement still promotes the 'exciting' value of its film, whereas the Rink notes that *The House of Temperley* is an adaptation of a Sir Arthur Conan Doyle work. By utilising a changing weekly advertisement to sell one chief attraction film, rather than relying on one set weekly advertisement to convey the general quality or identity of the cinema itself, Cheetham, it seems, had finally

fully acknowledged the classic period's emphasis on narrative within feature length films. For the first time since his touring days, the film is the centre of attention within his Aberystwyth marketing and it signals a shift, one which Fear had long been representing with his advertising, towards the role of the narrative feature film as a chief draw for audiences.

CINEMA
MARKET STREET.

—

NEXT MONDAY, FEB 8th
FOR 3 DAYS.

—

An exciting and wonderful Earthquake
film entitled

**“WHEN THE EARTH
TREMBLED”**

A 3 reel Lubin feature.

—

DON'T MISS IT !!

RINK
Picture Theatre,
PORTLAND STREET,
ABERYSTWYTH.

—

THREE DAYS ONLY:
THURSDAY, FRIDAY, & SATURDAY.
FEB. 5th, 6th, and 7th.

—

**THE HOUSE
OF
TEMPERLEY**

(RODNEY STONE),
By Sir ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE.

—

Times and Prices
as usual.

Fig. 4.4 – *The Cambrian News*, 6th February 1914: 4

By 1914 the exhibition landscape of rural Aberystwyth – now altered by competition and the impact of the economic and artistic evolution of cinema – quite similarly represented marketing techniques and exhibition practices found within the urban British Welsh city of Cardiff. Furthermore, the exhibition of films seems vastly less impacted by religion compared to the touring operations of Young or Cheetham within the region, with both cinemas opening over religious periods akin to their Southern Welsh Wales and urban counterparts; though the North Wales British Welsh middle-class town of Rhyl quite clearly convinced Cheetham to appeal to a devout clientele and their morals surrounding Sunday opening and the types of films he procured.

However, Cheetham did not have to worry about competition from Fear for much longer. Although articles and advertising would suggest the Rink Picture Theatre was successful in attracting audiences, it is no longer listed as showing films after 28th August 1914, with the venue remaining an auction house, community space and place of wartime fund-raising activities, as suggested by articles within *The Cambrian News* for the month of September. Other competitors would emerge, with The Coliseum showing the occasional film (*The Cambrian News*, 11th December 1914: 8), though not to the extent of Fear's tenancy, and it would later become a cinema itself in 1932, during the Golden Age of the medium. The Rink itself would re-open as a cinema after the close of World War One, with Mr. W. J. Evans agreeing a lease with the local council. Perhaps fearing resurgence of competition, Cheetham wrote to the council to complain about the situation, to which an Alderman is noted as stating that 'competition is good' and that the previous season was the 'best he [Cheetham] has had' (*The Cambrian News*, 15th November 1918: 5). Cheetham's civic standing in Aberystwyth, though strong, had its limits after all. Importantly, though,

Cheetham had once again changed and adapted to the rapidly evolving industry that formed the first quarter century of cinema's history. For the rest of the classical cinema period, up to around 1927, Cheetham operated within Aberystwyth against varied competition. The 1927 *Kinematograph Year Book* lists Cheetham's cinema – now primarily managed by his son, Gus, and named The Palladium – as well as The Imperial (opened by W. J. Evans after his version of the Rink Picture Theatre was short lived), and the Pier Pavilion. This same yearbook lists some 260 cinemas operating within Wales, with doubtless further theatres and improvised spaces having informal or infrequent showings around the country. Amongst this number many smaller rural communities, with populations given as being below 2,000, throughout Mid, North and West Wales are listed as having at least one cinema. These include Talgarth (with a population listed as 1,761), Pontyates (1,500), Llangefni (1,688), Llandyssul (902), and Builth Wells (1,776). Clearly, cinemagoing had, by the end of the classical silent period, permeated the lives and lifestyles of many Welsh people, even within extremely rural communities.

Conclusion

This chapter, and the one preceding it, have sought to explore and establish how such a spread of cinemas across the varying population densities of Wales was possible within such a relatively short space of time, as well as the challenges faced by pioneering rural exhibitors. Since the Kinetoscope made its Cardiff debut in December 1894, the landscape of cinema exhibition in Wales had rapidly evolved. By 1918, rural communities such as Aberystwyth could facilitate habitual patronage of an industry that had not existed a quarter of a century before. Earlier rural pioneers, such as Cheetham, had to adapt to ever developing cinematic technology and increasingly films that were advancing from

attractions of a few seconds to narrative driven feature length epics, as well as the expectations of audiences who had quickly become accustomed to each development. Specific challenges facing rural exhibitors such as Cheetham came in the form of a vast geographic region to cover, with inconsistent train coverage and before motor vehicles became an affordable option. As discussed in relation to Cheetham, visitation of areas far from his base, such as Fishguard and Aberystwyth, were likely litmus tests for his fledgling trade and the impact travelling such distances would have on the ability to host regular screenings in the northern region. Of course, because Cheetham did not regularly visit Aberystwyth, competitors such as Fred E. Young were able to introduce their own touring exhibition trade to the area.

However, with audiences' greater familiarity with cinema – as well as a proliferation in the number of films being produced – some touring tradesmen, including Cheetham, Haggart and Codman, recognised the opportunity to reverse their roles and have the audiences come to them through the establishment of fixed-location cinemas. As cinema in Britain and internationally became a substantial industry, films themselves developed from attractions to the narrative driven products of the classical silent era. A move from spectacle to narrative filmmaking was reflected in the marketing of both rural and metropolitan exhibitors, though some, such as Cheetham, seemed initially hesitant to respond to yet another development in cinema history. Yet some, such as Charles Fear, took inspiration from theatre marketing and applied it to advertising this new generation of films and the burgeoning star system, ultimately crafting an identity for their cinema that differed from those whose marketing focussed on spectacle. As such, rural exhibitors were faced with direct competition for the first time. As discussed, exhibitors in cities such as Cardiff had

long been adjusting their marketing strategies and cinema identities to stand out to audiences, especially with prices being largely standardised across the country. Ultimately, long standing rural exhibitors such as Cheetham adjusted to these changes and appropriated the marketing techniques of their rivals.

Cheetham and Aberystwyth have served as examples of the challenges – for example, the issues and debates surrounding Sunday opening – cinema exhibition development and distribution faced across rural Wales. Indeed, beyond providing new perspectives on early rural Welsh cinema exhibition history, this chapter has particularly sought to explore the cinema showman’s role and impact as a subcultural or local celebrity figure. As discussed previously in this chapter, there has been a recent emergence of discussion of, though rarely a sustained focus on, the touring cinema showman or cinema proprietor’s role within rural cinema history on an international level (Caddoo, 2014; Caughie, 2016; Klenotic, 2018; Moore, 2018; Pryluck, 2008; Waller, 2008). This chapter, and the one preceding it, have provided further contexts for the study of rural cinema showmen. In doing so it has built a case for further showman-focussed work to be undertaken, with the revealing nature of both their important role in the establishment of rural Welsh cinema cultures and the issues they faced across differing social, political and economic areas considered in detail here.

ⁱ Oddly, this article was published on Saturday, May 26th, 1906, yet refers to that date as being ‘next Saturday’.

ⁱⁱ Oswald Stoll, a prominent music hall proprietor of many venues in Britain, is a rarity here for the mention of his name (where he is listed as managing director of the chain) in an advertisement.

Chapter Five – Memories of Silver Age Cinemagoing in Rural Wales

Introduction

The two preceding chapters of this thesis explored the development of cinema exhibition within rural Wales, from the Kinetoscope and early touring operations to the establishment of permanent cinemas. Amongst the findings and arguments of those chapters, I discussed the development of and improvements within filmmaking that mirrored those of exhibition. As developing cinematic technologies enabled filmmakers to move beyond the limitations of the cinema of attractions era, narrative filmmaking, later followed by the addition of synchronised sound, allowed for the rise of classical narrative conventions and the name director (Bordwell, 1997). In turn, audiences began to develop preferences of taste which, as discussed in the preceding chapter, spurred cinemas themselves to develop identities and unique selling points, formed through their marketing and film procurement choices, to appeal to audiences and stand apart from their competition. However, the previous chapters have been reliant on archival sources or existing scholarship to aid the formation of their arguments concerning rural Welsh exhibition history. These sources, whilst appropriate for the core subject of exhibition history and similar to those used within equivalent studies, limit analysis of audience experience and opinion. Of course, this was largely imposed by the period under consideration – 1894 until the late 1920s – and the limitations of human mortality. It has remained the desire of this research, however, to utilise ethnographic methodologies not only in relation to the call for a *histoire totale*, but also as a means of addressing the New Cinema History's increasing aim to approach 'history from below' (Maltby, 2011: 32).

Historical cinemagoing experiences have received increasing academic attention since Allen and Gomery's (1985) call for film historians to both move beyond an aesthetic focus on film and to cease viewing films as mirrors of society at their time of production. The methods of these works range from analysis of archival sources to the ethnographic eliciting of memories, as well as combinations of the two. Possibly due to the period in which such studies began to emerge, a large number of these works largely consider audience experiences from the Golden Age of British cinemagoing, roughly the 1930s and 40s. Sarah Stubbings (2003), in her work concerning memories of Golden Age cinemagoing in Nottingham, notes a trend during the 1980s and 90s of Nottingham's local press encouraging readers to submit written memories about everyday life in the 1930s and 40s.ⁱ Common amongst these Nottingham based recollections are discussions of the cinema, with Stubbings arguing that this is due to cinemagoing being at its habitual peak during this period. Indeed, it is undeniable that British cinema attendances of the 1930s and 40s were at their zenith. The per-annum British cinema attendance record was set in 1946 with 1,635 million (Stacey, 1994: 83), with this figure steadily declining to 915 million in 1956 and subsequent decades seeing dramatic falls, culminating in just 54 million for 1984 (UK Cinema Association, 2018). Whilst the past thirty years have seen a slight upturn in these figures – attendances haven't dropped below the 100 million mark since 1989, with 2017 seeing 170 million tickets sold (ibid) – the attendances of the 1930s and 40s remain unparalleled.

It is arguable then, that the prominence of this period within existing scholarship is due to a combination of high audience figures and the habitual nature of cinemagoing, the shifting foci of film historians towards cinema experience during the 1990s, and the age of Golden

Age cinemagoers during this 1990s shift. It was almost a perfect storm for film historians who wanted to meet Allen and Gomery's call: the largest cinemagoing generation had retired, with nostalgia and reminiscence of the period having, as indicated by the newspapers analysed by Stubbings, entered some form of vogue. In terms of Wales, the majority of works concerning Welsh cinemagoing history have focussed on this Golden Age period. As discussed in the literature review of this thesis, there is little work published on Welsh cinema history. So, for the reasons discussed here, it is logical that the existing works concerning Welsh cinemagoing history have focussed on this period. However, this was also a period characterised by prominent social and cultural issues for certain regions of the country, issues that have arguably also been attractive to film historians. Primarily, the late 1920s saw the rise of the Labour Movement within the South Wales mining communities. The combination of the region being more populous and also its notably vibrant political climate perhaps explains the prominence of southern mining communities – especially during the Golden Age period – within existing Welsh cinema history scholarship. Simply put, the urban is more visible than the rural within this scholarship. Bert Hogenkamp (1985), Stephen Ridgwell (1995; 1997), Helen Richards (2003; 2005), Robert James (2007) and Steffan Moitra (2011) have all specifically considered the role of cinema within these mining communities, whilst David Berry's (1994) largest discussion of Welsh exhibition history is of William Hagggar's Aberdare cinema.

The Silver Age of cinema history

Recent film historical scholarship has seen an increased interest in post-Golden Age cinemagoing, both within British and global contexts. Audiences of the 1950s and 60s have received fresh attention in the last decade (Jones, M., 2016; Česálková, 2018; Treveri

Gennari and Culhane, 2019), potentially due to those who experienced cinemagoing in this period having begun to reach retirement age, as had happened with Golden Age audiences in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Annette Kuhn, in her study of 1930s audiences, refers to the memories of older generations as a 'treasure', pointing to both their cultural value and potential rarity (2002: 239). There are also unique issues of exhibition and cinemagoing, as well as wider cultural factors, tied to this post-Golden Age period that are of interest to film historians who aim to meet Allen and Gomery's call for revision and build upon the Golden Age focussed first-wave of studies born out of the New Film History tradition. For example, the move from inner-city 'dream palaces' to outskirt multiplexes, found within Britain, American and other Western countries (Hanson, 2007), the rise – and then fall – of the uniquely American drive-in cinema (Barefoot, 2019) as well as the role of the summer blockbuster (Hall & Neale, 2010), have all been considerations of recent cinema history scholarship. Perhaps it is fair to say then, that the new vogue within cinema exhibition histories is to look away from the Golden Age of cinemagoing.

Indeed, the vast majority of the respondents of this project – asked to consider their cinemagoing pre-1970 – recall the 1950s and 60s, with only a handful discussing earlier decades.ⁱⁱ With the bulk of this data being gathered in 2017, clearly there are natural limitations on the periods of memory accessible within my research, and Golden Age memories are becoming increasingly harder to encounter. Yet, my ethnographic research indicates that rural Welsh audiences who attended the cinema during this period, especially those who were children or young adults at the time, still regarded cinemagoing as a habitual activity. Indeed, we could consider the 1950s and 60s to represent a Silver Age of British cinemagoing. Whilst overall British attendances declined during this era, particularly

in the late 1950s where there was a sharp drop from 1,100 million in 1956 to 500 million in 1960, even the lowest figure for these decades, 214 million in 1969, remains higher than any year since. Earlier in this chapter I discussed the ethnographic work of Kuhn and Stacey, carried out in the late 1980s and early 1990s, as being part of a 'perfect storm' in regards to shifting academic foci, the age of respondents and the cultural popularity of reminiscence. Here I propose that, for the researcher interested in a Silver Age of British cinemagoing, the rise in prominence of social media has ushered in a new perfect storm. As those who were children or young adults during the 1950s and 60s reach retirement age, the use of social media and ownership of smart devices amongst their age groups has risen, as discussed in chapter two. Thus, the path to engaging with older generations – those who potentially have memories of this Silver Age of cinemagoing in rural Wales – has been rendered potentially easier through this uptake in internet use.

Utilising social-media

Indeed, the ethnographic work of this project has greatly benefitted from the current engagement over-50s have with social media platforms, particularly Facebook. As discussed in the methodology chapter of this thesis, the ethnographic data collection tools used for this work are primarily a questionnaire and follow-up interviews. It was expected, when initially planning the project, that physical questionnaire responses would greatly outnumber those collected online. This assumption was based on previous research I had carried out on a similar age group between 2013 and 2014, as well as the assertions of academics who have previously considered the limitations of online questionnaires in reaching a demographic other than 'young wealthy males', typically living in Western countries (Hoggart et al, 2002: 177). Even relatively recent studies of rural audiences, such

as Karina Aveyard's (2015) exploration and comparison of contemporary rural Australian and English cinemagoing experiences, utilised physical questionnaires distributed through the postal system (p. 105). Yet, it became apparent that there exist a number of Facebook groups dedicated to various Welsh communities that would be ideal for the distribution of this project's research questionnaire. These groups varied in topic and size, for example some specifically ask members to discuss the history of a town, whilst others allow for more general discussions about their area of interest. However, local history and memory sharing are frequent points of discussion within these groups, even those that are not primarily historically-focused. For example, the group *You Know You're From Aberystwyth When You...* has over 12,000 members, and describes itself as being a space to 'share photos, memories and local news' (Facebook, 2018), with the sharing of historical photographs representing a large number of the posts made by users. Often, these photographs seemingly act as memory spurs, with such posts prompting other members to share memories as comments, often resulting in discourse rich memory reclamation dialogues between commenters. Not only do these posts demonstrate Kuhn's (2007: 285) assertion that photographs have the power to prompt 'verbal performances of memory', the collation of shared personal photographs within a post's comment section – usually focussed around the parent post's topic – are equivalent to Kuhn's discussion of family photograph albums and their construction of an 'oral structure' (ibid). The qualities of these groups to a researcher interested in exploring local memories are clear, not just in sharing a hyperlink to one's research questionnaire, but also in observing memory discourses surrounding a range of topics, with cinemagoing memories featuring prominently.

After some research, I posted a hyperlink to an online version of the questionnaire to thirty-one Facebook groups concerned with rural Wales. Ultimately, at the end of the questionnaire's data collection phase, 252 questionnaires were completed. Of these, 236 (94%) were digital, whilst only 16 (6%) physical copies were returned. The low number of physical questionnaires was not for the lack of trying, however it proved difficult to find those who met the project's requirements of having remembered attending the cinema in rural Wales prior to 1970, and many had already completed the digital copy through Facebook. Whilst writing the first draft of this chapter, frequent points of discussion emerged that were not anticipated and became important elements in considering the unique experiences of rural Welsh cinemagoing and the main coding separation of ENV and FILM within the responses.ⁱⁱⁱ As the initial questionnaire had not directly prompted or considered these topics, they were frequently fragments of discussions within the broader discourse prompted by the question being answered. As such, a short set of follow-up questions was emailed to respondents who had provided contact details. Twenty-one respondents replied to this email with further information. It will be indicated where this data is drawn upon throughout the chapter.

Quantifying the qualitative

Questionnaire respondents were encouraged to focus their memories on cinemagoing activities prior to 1970 and in areas that they considered to be rural Wales. Aberystwyth was the area most discussed by respondents, with 23% of respondents indicating that they had visited a cinema in the town during this period. After Aberystwyth, the most prominently discussed areas were Llandrindod-Wells (13%), Bangor (11%) and Pwllheli (9%). Whilst the other areas discussed by respondents do not feature as frequently as these four,

they do represent a wide and dispersed geography of rural Wales, in physical terms. Importantly, beyond a good geographic spread, the areas considered by respondents represent from the differing socio-political regions that make up Balsom's (1985) Three Wales Model.

The questionnaire contained a range of quantitative and qualitative questions, with such a quali-quant approach not only allowing for the focussed collection of demographic information and eliciting of discourse-rich memories, but also in providing greater scope for comparison between both forms of collected data. After the collection of questionnaires had ceased, it became prudent to explore the dataset and begin to find patterns within the responses. To do so, embracing the intersection of the qualitative and quantitative data, as called for by Barker (2012), once again became useful. As discussed in the methodology chapter of this thesis, the qualitative responses to question nine of the questionnaire – “when you remember going to the cinema in rural Wales, what are the most striking memories that come to your mind?” – have been quantified as descriptive codes. This, in turn, allows for the easier exploration of patterns linking discursive memories and quantitative demographic (age, class, gender) and cinemagoing related questions (visits per week, who the respondent attended with). Similar approaches have been used in a wealth of audience studies; for example, Barker, Arthurs and Harindranath (2001) converted qualitative audience responses to the controversial film *Crash* (1996) into codes representing positive, neutral or negative responses. Whilst this approach almost entirely stripped responses of their discursive qualities, beyond a general opinion of the film, it allowed for reception of the film to be visually mapped against other factors – such as gender or nationality – in a nine-cell structure (ibid: 161). Of course, Barker and his

colleagues were carrying out a reception study with a primary goal of exploring taste and critical opinion, whereas this project's qualitative data is more wide-ranging and subject to interpretation. Due to the wide-ranging content found in the memories given in response to question nine, the project coding is results driven and their designation fluid. Rather than having pre-determined codes, as seen in the work of Barker, Arthurs and Harindranath, the responses themselves dictate the codes produced.

For example, if a respondent discussed the smell, sights or general quality of a cinema then it was coded as "ENV" for environment. I initially included any mention of usherettes or attendants into this coding, however the frequency of discussions specifically concerning the auditorium worker indicated its own code – "ATT" – was warranted. Furthermore, it became clear, after reading a number of responses, that whilst some respondents associated the attendant with the environment of the cinema in their memories, most discussed them separately, presenting the attendant or usherette as a standalone narrative within the memory. Despite this continual reassessing and regrouping of codes requiring a great deal of time, it ultimately benefitted their role as descriptive quantified snapshots of qualitative data. The retention of discursive detail is further maintained by not limiting one response to one code. The open-ended nature of the questionnaire's qualitative questions resulted in numerous responses covering a wide range of topics. As such, part of the coding process became a matter of locating borders in the memories provided. For the most part, the responses provided were clearly defined and easily coded as separated topics. However, there were a few memories that contained a situation or a certain mode of discourse that prompted it to be designated as a "momentous event" or "MOME", even if the core memory could be firmly located within another code. For example, there is a code for responses

concerning dating – “DAT” – on occasion, however, the memory indicated that they had met their future spouse through dating at the cinema. As such, that memory would be coded as both DAT and MOME. Of course, some momentous events were standalone, such as cinema fires or the sound of planes flying over during World War Two and were coded as such.

CODE	ENV	FILM	FORM	MOME	FOOD
Times used	60	53	39	33	29

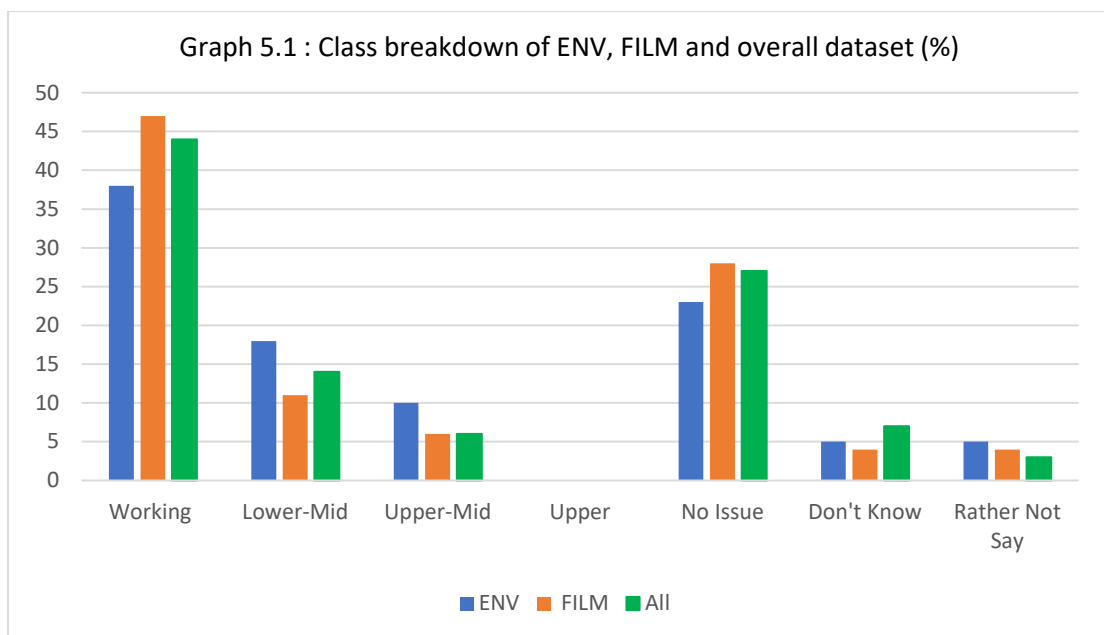
Table 5.1 – top five most frequently used codes for question nine

Overall, question nine prompted the creation of fifty-four unique codes, with the codes ENV (mentions of the cinema’s environment) and FILM (mentions of films) occurring the most frequently at sixty and fifty-three times respectively. This finding challenges some arguments of the New Cinema History tradition, which, as Daniela Treveri Gennari and Sarah Culhane (2019) argue, have actively positioned films as peripheral to the study of cinema history and memory (p. 796). Treveri Gennari and Culhane’s article reflects, they argue, a recent call for a more ‘film-centric’ analysis within the tradition, achieved through their collection and analysis of film specific artefacts concerning film exhibition, distribution and ‘local consumption’ in 1950s Italy (pp. 796 – 797). Due to the prominence of film-focused memories present in this thesis’ questionnaire data-set, this chapter also answers the call for a more ‘film-centric’ analysis, carried out alongside exploration of cinema as a social-space of consumption.

As Table 5.1 illustrates, ENV and FILM occurred most frequently, with FORM (format of screenings, B movies, news reels), MOME, and FOOD (mentions of food) representing the

three other most frequently used codes. Perhaps this is not very surprising, as these codes largely represent quite broad topics and elements one would associate with cinemagoing. What is notable, however, is the lack of crossover between the responses categorised as ENV or FILM. Of the 113 respondents who responded with either code, only seven (6%) discussed both a cinema’s environment and film within their memories. A stark trend in responses had occurred; ENV and FILM codes are dominant but as separate responses, suggesting a dichotomy of auditorium-based memory narratives where either the physical qualities of the cinema or films themselves are remembered. What needs to be considered here, from the qualitative and quantitative data collected through this research, is what can be observed as informing these divisions. Furthermore, for the purpose of this research, there also needs to be exploration of the extent to which these codes and their division are unique to rural Welsh cinemagoing and, if so, in what ways.

Social Class



When analysing the demographic and quantitative data of respondents, however, there are few clear indicators as to what could be informing this split between ENV and FILM. As indicated by Graph 5.1, self-identification as working-class is somewhat higher amongst FILM respondents than their ENV counterparts, with ENV respondents also representing higher percentages of the two middle-class options. This is similarly discussed in Robert James' (2010) work on 1930s working-class tastes, with the author noting it was the films, not the venue, that primarily attracted working-class audiences (p. 17). Indeed, even when compared to the overall dataset, there are notably fewer working-class and notably more middle-class ENV respondents. This class dynamic perhaps echoes the previous chapter's discussions of cinemas aimed at the Welsh working-class focussing on cinema as a functional and comfortable space for escapism over material grandeur or opulence. For example, working-class identifying respondent 152 recalls the cinemas of Pontedawe as being 'small intimate buildings' that primarily housed 'a wide variety of films'. For those in the lower-middle and upper classes, the discussions of smells - such as cigarette smoke (respondents 17, 62, 79 and 103) or even wafts from the toilets (respondent 154) - are far more frequent. Of course, those identifying as working classes also discuss the environment of the cinema, largely seating quality, though the discussion of smell and a type of remembering focused around senses and feelings is almost unique to the middle-class respondents.

Worth discussing here are those who selected "class wasn't an issue in rural Wales" in response to the class representation question. The options of class were precomposed for the questionnaire, with respondents able to select one that best represented them during their pre-1970 cinemagoing. The option to state that class was not an issue during this

period was informed by my own observations of growing up and living in rural Wales and also by theories of Welsh national identity, particularly Balsom’s (1985) Three Wales Model. For Balsom, national identity, Welsh language ability and political leaning have an interrelationship that impact on the designation of Welsh identity. Indeed, reflecting upon a 1921 lecture delivered by Alfred Zimmern (whose own model for Welsh identity influenced Balsom’s), Daryl Perrins discusses ‘English Wales’ as constituting an upper class (Perrins, 2015: 38-39).^{iv} Building upon the respective work of Balsom, Zimmern and Perrins, I argue that, for the more rural and agricultural areas of Mid, North and West Wales, social class was a less prominent factor of everyday life and identity compared to the more urban and industrial area of Wales, or at least operates differently. This is reflected within Graph 5.1, with “no issue” representing just over 25% of all respondents’ class identification, the second largest class classification after working-class.

Region	Ceredigion	Gwynedd	Powys	Monmouthshire	Carmarthenshire	Caerphilly	Rhondda	Shropshire
% of “No Issue”	30%	30%	28%	4%	3%	1%	1%	1%

Table 5.2: location breakdown of ‘no-issue’ class respondents

Region	Gwynedd	Ceredigion	Powys	Carmarthenshire	Monmouthshire	Pembrokeshire	Swansea	Neath Port Talbot	Caerphilly	Denbighshire	Conwy	Anglesey	Unclear
% of working class	26%	24%	21%	6%	5%	5%	4%	3%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%

Table 5.3: location breakdown of working-class respondents

As indicated by Table 5.2, 92% of 'no-issue' respondents identified themselves as primarily visiting cinemas in Ceredigion, Gwynedd, Powys and Monmouthshire, four largely rural, agricultural areas.^v Whereas, only a small proportion (4%) went to the cinema in the more industrial or urban southern counties.^{vi} By comparison, and visualised in Table 5.3, the county spread of working-class respondents is far wider and includes a larger representation of industrial and semi-urban counties such as Swansea, Neath, Port Talbot and Carmarthenshire. Robert James (2007) has noted that South Wales' mining communities of the 1930s identified as a very 'specific' form of the working-class, one that was 'unique' to the region (p. 27). It is arguable then, that the other regions of Wales would potentially have their own unique relationship with class, which could go some way in explaining the frequency of 'no-issue' responses from those living in rural Mid and North Wales.

With more nuanced analysis of responses from individual locations, the evidence for the perceived lesser impact of class on day-to-day life in rural regions becomes clearer. For example, Gwynedd – though largely rural – includes the somewhat industrial north-coast city of Bangor. Indeed, 9% (six respondents) of all 'no-issue' respondents were from or primarily visited Bangor, which rises to 15% (sixteen respondents) for the working class. Similarly, if we were to omit Bangor respondents from the working-class tally, the number of Gwynedd responses would drop from 26% to just 12%. In comparison, if 'no-issue' Bangor respondents are omitted the figure drops from 30% to 21%.

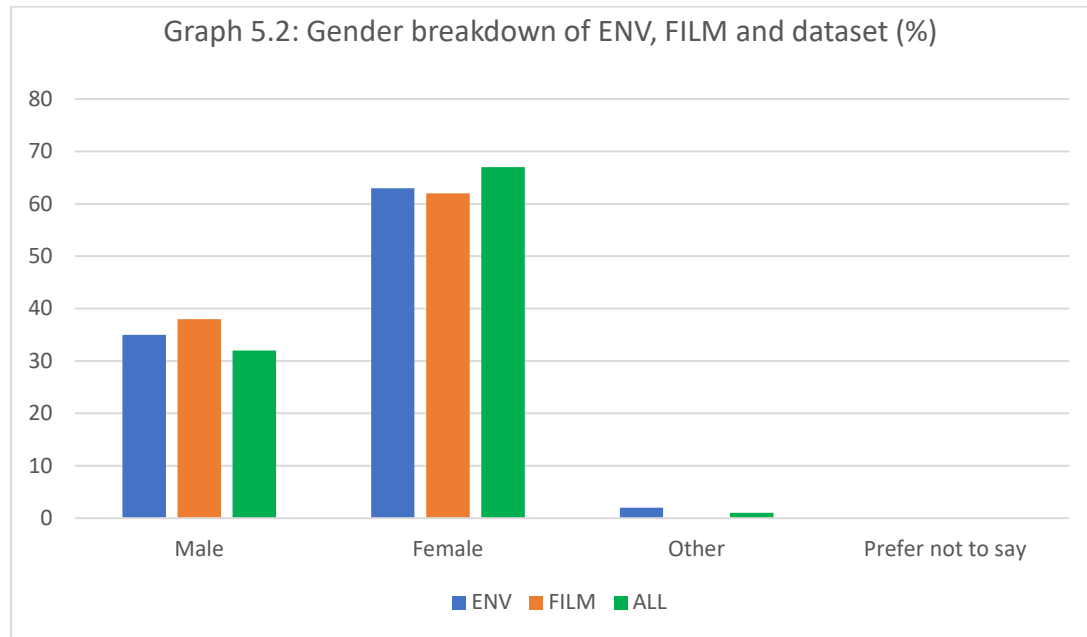
Of course, the 'no-issue' classification prompts the question of where these respondents would have placed themselves if the questionnaire had not provided this option. Perhaps the design of the questionnaire and inclusion of 'no-issue' as a choice has drawn

respondents away from selecting another class option. It is of particular note that there are no upper-class respondents across the entire dataset. Perhaps those who would traditionally belong to this class selected 'no-issue' as, from their perspective, class – and all that comes with it – may not have been an issue for *them* at least from the perspective of the present. Equally, it's conceivable that self-awareness and some form of stigma against the upper-class has encouraged upper-class respondents to choose 'no-issue' or another class answer. Wales is, after all, closely associated with the left-leaning political movements of the Labour party and Plaid Cymru, agricultural and mining economies, and historical oppression from the English. However, as Graph 5.1 indicates, the spread of 'no-issue' striking memory responses is similar to those of the working class, with a higher percentage recalling films than the environment of the cinema. It could be argued then, that those responding as 'no-issue' in Ceredigion, Gwynedd, Powys and Monmouthshire would be considered – or would consider themselves – working-class were they living in the more industrial south. Regardless, this debate reinforces this thesis' suggestion that class played a lesser role in everyday rural Welsh life prior to 1970.

Ultimately, the link between class and Welshness hints at a potentially unique facet in studying Welsh cinemagoing history and rural Welsh cinemagoing memories. Indeed, it seems that class identification has a connection with the separation between ENV and FILM memories. Those who identify as working-class, and attended cinemas across a wider, more industrial or urban spread of Wales, represent the slightly larger number of FILM respondents, whilst those identifying within the middle classes had a tendency to focus on the environment of the cinema. Issues of social class therefore go some way in informing the stark separation of ENV and FILM responses. Indeed, class may be the defining factor in

exploring these differences, at least in terms of the demographic data collected through this research.

Gender



As illustrated in Graph 5.2, there is little difference between the number of male and female responders of ENV and FILM. Male respondents of both codes represent a slight increase over the dataset average, whilst females are slightly lower than the average. There are differences to be found, however, in the discourse used by men and women for both response codes. Whilst both male and female ENV responses contain a mixture of positive and negative descriptions of rural Welsh cinemas, the focus of these comments and the discourse used is markedly different. For example, male respondents focus more on the size and temperature of the venue, whilst females discuss the seating, smells and cigarette smoke. Interestingly, men tend to be quite discursively limited in their responses, typically utilising fewer personal pronouns. Indeed, only two ENV male respondents use any form of

personal pronoun, both of which forms part of longer and highly descriptive personal event memories.^{vii} Instead, ENV male memories are largely short, fragmented sentences or, when longer, evoke elements of Kuhn's 'impersonal' discursive register (2002: 10). For example, male respondent 179's complete answer to question nine is 'chips after', whilst 206 simply states 'fun'. Whilst impersonal register respondents place themselves as 'expert witnesses', Kuhn identifies the use of the personal pronoun 'we' as a component of this third-person narrative approach (ibid). The lack of such pronouns within these male respondents suggests that rather than being *impersonal*, these memories are *detached*, reading more like statements based on tertiary sources, rather than their own lived experiences. This is further enforced by the lack of discussion within male ENV responses of other members of the audience. Only a handful of respondents overtly discuss the presence or actions of the audience, including the two highly descriptive momentous event memories previously mentioned. Interestingly, there is as much discussion of figures of authority – usherettes, cinema management, local politicians – within these memories as there is of other audience members.

By comparison, the memories of female ENV respondents convey a far more social experience, where mention of other audience members or shared audience experiences are frequent. Amongst overt discussions of attending the cinema with friends, there are a number of mentions of social rules and conventions, as well as acknowledgement of the cinema's role within emergent sexual maturity that are not present within the memories of their male counterparts. The lack of discussions of courtship amongst Male ENV respondents is not unique to this study, indeed a similar observation is made by Kuhn (2002). Within her study of 1930s British cinemagoing memories, she notes that men 'rarely'

raise such points of discussion, whilst a number of women provided detailed accounts of their own courtship (ibid: 138). Within this research, and particularly between male and female ENV respondents, such a differential is clear. For example, respondent 18 recalls couples 'snogging on the back row', which she admits to finding 'shocking at the time', whilst another (respondent 127) discusses 'embarrassing dates' including 'boys arranging to meet you inside so they didn't have to pay for you', with respondent 168 noting the 'smell of Denim aftershave' and 'lots and lots of snogging'. It would seem then that, potentially, the role of cinema in terms of burgeoning sexuality and early dating experiences is more prominent in the memories of female respondents than their male counterparts. This is possibly a consequence of the detached discourse found in male responses. As discussed, they are placing themselves away from a first-hand narrative experience and giving a more general history of cinemagoing, whereas, female respondents provide more personal detail about their experiences, including the role of dating. It could also be argued that male respondents perhaps simply felt an inhibition about providing sexual experiences for this questionnaire; or that, for them, striking memories of dating occur somewhere else, and that such memories are not tied to the cinema auditorium.

The social aspects of cinemagoing found within female ENV responses extend to an acknowledgement of the auditorium's cultural or societal rules and behaviour. No male ENV respondents discussed the differences in seating price and quality, though the presence of this social hierarchy is well documented in some of the female memories. The front row of seating is referred to as 'the cheap seats' or 'the bug run' by respondent 85, who also recalls that 'your neck used to hurt from looking up at the screen'. Similarly, there is an evident aspiration to move up, literally and metaphorically, to sit in the more expensive sections.

Respondent 58 recalls 'wanting to sit in the fourth rows, as they were more expensive, more comfortable, as the first three rows were 3 old pence', notably she here discusses the price of the seat as primary, with their quality being a secondary concern. This suggests that the desire to elevate oneself to a higher class of seating was not purely for the comfort or field of view benefits, also it was an opportunity to separate the viewer from the 'cheap seats' and be seen sitting amongst those known to be more expensive. Respondent 85, discussing her memories of cinemagoing in Rhayader, specifically mentions that there 'was only one cinema'. This relates to discussions found in the previous chapter of this thesis, where social hierarchies were played out within one auditorium, in lieu of a selection of cinemas being available that would cater to certain tastes or budgets. Peter Miskell's study of pre-1950s Welsh cinemagoing history and audience tastes suggests that Wales largely consisted of three different types of venue: first-run dream palaces, the cheaper second-run cinemas, and the flea-pits, with the flea-pit being 'as much a part of cinema's social history as the 'dream palace'' (2006: 93). However, Miskell's work does not do much for discussion and consideration of single venue audiences. It would seem, based on these reminiscences, that a social hierarchy and differences in seating quality could exist *within* a venue, resulting in a singular cinema being simultaneously remembered as both a dream palace and flea-pit within the memories of some female ENV respondents.

As well as rules of social hierarchy and the role of emergent sexuality, female ENV respondents particularly note the behaviour and etiquette of youthful cinemagoing, as well as the seating choices made for dating. Respondent 18 recalls 'lots of noise, shouting' and 'boys throwing stuff around', whilst respondent 165 remembers 'everyone stamping their feet and shouting' in response to the projector breaking down. The discourse utilised by

those who remember matters of behaviour notably evoke a mixture of Kuhn's registers. The memory of respondent 18 displays elements of the impersonal by not placing herself in the memory and sweepingly stating 'boys' were throwing objects. However, this same respondent uses the personal pronoun "I" when remembering her response to watching Cliff Richard and Elvis films, 'I remember being very embarrassed by the gyrating hips...I just couldn't look...'. A similarly impersonal stance is struck by respondent 165, despite stating 'everyone' was involved, she does not explicitly position herself as the narrative protagonist. Rather, it evokes 'everyone' stamping their feet and shouting whilst she was an observant. Conversely, respondent 125 distinctly remembers 'being told off for being noisy', not only stating a personal involvement but of this also being routine, evoking Kuhn's repetitive discursive register.

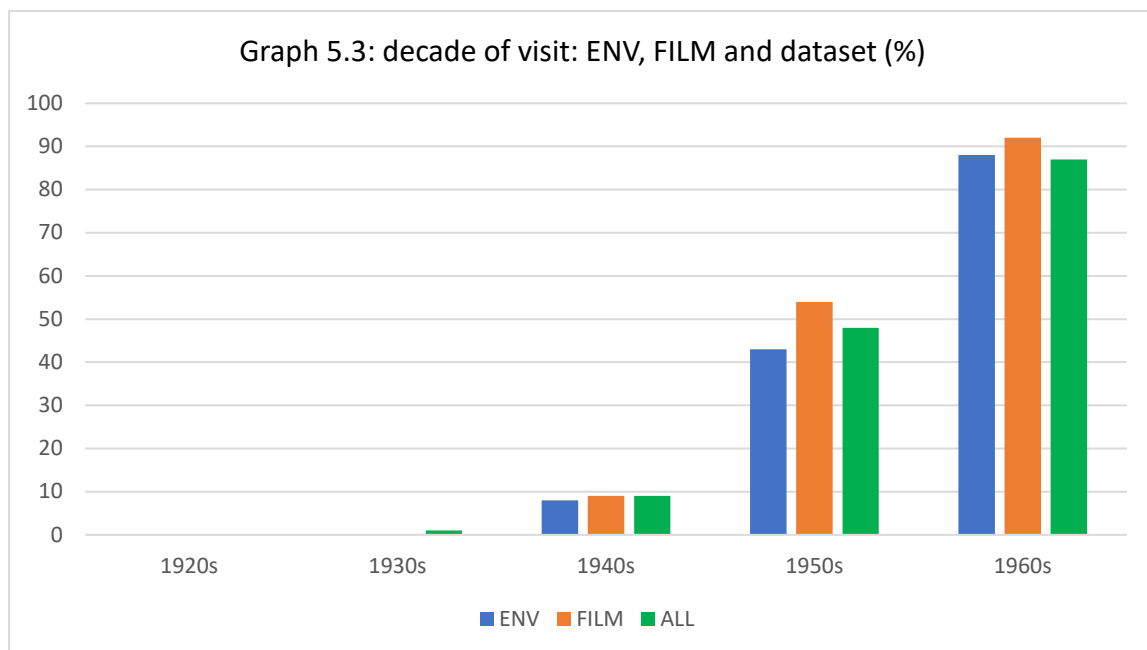
Overall, differences can be observed in both the discourse and content of Male and Female ENV memories. Women within this grouping are more likely to place themselves within a collective and reflect upon rural Welsh cinemagoing as being a shared experience, whilst male ENV respondents present quite an insular and detached view of their cinemagoing memories. A similar pattern can be seen within male and female FILM respondents, with far fewer male respondents discussing their film watching memories as part of a collective or shared experience. There are, however, some distinctive differences between the narratives of male and female FILM memories. Notably, a small group of male FILM respondents discuss integrating and imitating what they had seen on screen as part of their play, with such performance typically being informed by the western genre. For example, respondent 155 recalls 'watching westerns and pretending to shoot each other on the way home', whilst 194 remembers 'images of the USA. Walking out and being one of the actors.'

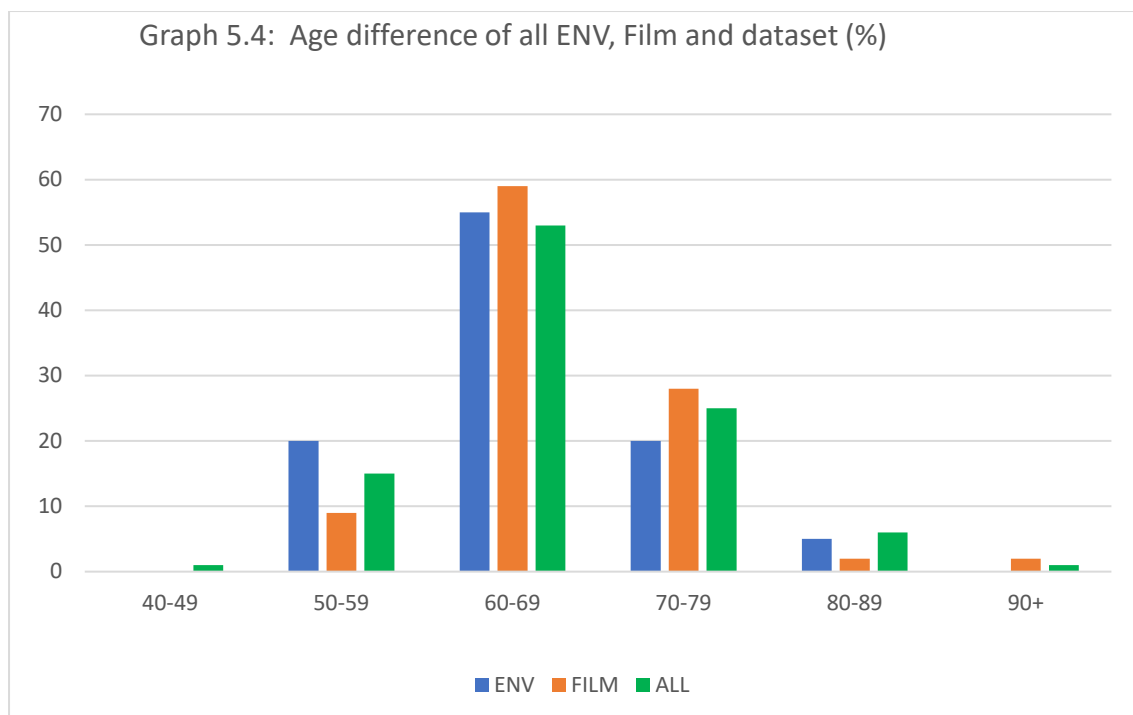
Westerns and the great outdoors'. Sarah Neely (2019) notes a similar habit of recreation within the memories of rural Scottish audiences arguing that the cinema created an 'imaginative space' (p. 784). For Neely, this 'imaginative space' allowed the cinemagoer to 'reimagine themselves and their world around them in different ways' and bridged the gap between them and the 'disparate' cultures, identities, times and spaces presented through film (p. 786). As with recreation and play, discussions of the Western genre are disproportionately high within male FILM responses when compared to their female counterparts. Kuhn has identified a similar trend within her 1930s audience responses, arguing that male respondents have a tendency to reflect more on their childhood cinemagoing, and are particularly inspired by the western, whereas women had 'relatively little to say' about their preadolescent cinemagoing (Kuhn, 2002: 100 – 101). Indeed, film recreation for young women, Jackie Stacey (1994) argues, revolves around the female film star and her image, particularly in copying their favourite star's hairstyle (p. 168). Whilst no female FILM respondents discuss such imitation, the discussion of specific stars is more prominent than within the memories of their male counterparts, with Marilyn Monroe and Elizabeth Taylor being frequently mentioned. However, what's notable is the presence of the male pop-star within these female FILM memories, with them being mentioned more frequently than actresses. Films and recorded concerts starring Elvis Presley, The Beatles and Cliff Richard are clearly significant within the cinemagoing memories of female FILM respondents. For those who were younger during the 1950s and early 1960s, this mania is experienced from a third-hand perspective, arguably as they had not reached the stage of adolescence that is discussed by Kuhn and Stacey as relating to such behaviour and attraction (sexually or otherwise) to film stars. For example, respondent 235 recalls 'my dad taking me to see some of the Beatles films and not being able to hear anything because the

older girls were screaming so much!' Whilst those in adolescence became actively involved, with respondent 98 remembering 'queuing outside to see Elvis films, and going back to nick the poster from outside'.

This fascination with the pop-star within the memories of respondents, who largely recall the 1950s and 60s, is a logical cultural continuation of the interest in the glamorous actresses of the 1930s and 40s, the decades which Kuhn and Stacey's respondents recall. This argument is explored by Stephanie Fremaux (2018), who contends that the escapism and identification sought by the wartime and post-war female audiences of Stacey's study culturally evolved into a fascination with pop-stars during the 1950s and 60s (p. 17). Though mostly writing about USA audiences, Thomas Doherty (2002) argues that by the 1950s teenagers had become a distinct subculture, defined by their relative wealth and consumer power compared to previous generations, the heightened population of that age group due to the post World War Two baby-boom, and their awareness of themselves as teenagers (p. 34).^{viii} Indeed, the phenomenon of 'Beatlemania' of the 1960s is particularly linked to teenage girls and is argued by Ehrenreich, Hess and Jacobs (1992) to be 'the first and most dramatic uprising of *women's* sexual revolution' (p. 85). The manifestation of female fan activity has changed too, with the imitation of Kuhn and Stacey's 1930s audiences having shifted to an association with infatuation and screaming, as indicated by respondent 235. This evolution correlates with my dataset, as indicated by Graphs 5.3 and 5.4, 87% of respondents attended a rural Welsh cinema during the 1960s, with over 53% being between the age of 60 and 69 at the time of completing the questionnaire, with this last statistic rising to 59% for FILM respondents. Those who mentioned either Elvis Presley, The Beatles or Cliff Richard were all female, with the majority being within the 60-69 age range and

having attended the cinema during the 1960s. So, where female FILM respondents shift the paradigm found within Stacey and Kuhn's work of young women imitating their favoured actresses, their male counterparts reflect Kuhn's arguments about pre-adolescent memories of incorporating the screen's action into their play, largely surrounding cowboys and their actors.





National identity

As argued by Heba and Murphy (2010: 309), the western remained a popular genre from the 1930s to the 1960s within Hollywood cinema, attesting to why the male respondents of this project and Kuhn's project share similar childhood affection for playing cowboys and Indians. Perhaps, if this study had polled audiences of a later period after the Western's decline in popularity, the male respondents would have provided insights about other figures of onscreen ideal masculinity as informing their childhood play.

This fondness for westerns and pop stars, however, may relate to more than just typical adolescent and pre-adolescent infatuations, rather it could also suggest an appeal of cinemagoing that is potentially heightened within a rural or rural Welsh setting. A number of FILM respondents overtly discuss the cinema as being their opportunity to view the wider world, whilst frequent mentions of roleplaying westerns and infatuation with pop stars

suggest a particular impact of films that represented a very different lifestyle to that of rural Wales. As Stacey (1994) notes, the 'pleasures of escapism' to be found in the British cinema auditorium are amplified by the 'national' differences between Britain and the United States (p. 118). For her respondents, the feeling of 'losing oneself' was rendered more intense by the 'unfamiliarity' of American culture (ibid). Those within this project's dataset who overtly discussed the cinema as an opportunity to view a non-Welsh culture all identified themselves as having lived in the rural Mid or North West regions of Wales. The notion of cinema providing escapism through its films is clearly expressed by respondent 171, who not only utilises question nine to address this topic, but also question six. This question asked respondents to state if they went to the cinema for the film, social activity or both, with respondent 171 replying 'the whole experience of the world outside Porthmadog'. For this respondent, the value of the cinema as a chance to view other cultures was so palpable that it transcended my question. That is, they did not see their escapism as an act of film spectatorship, rather it was the chief experience sought by their cinemagoing, beyond simply watching a film. However, this desire for a Hollywood or American-led escapism is clearly not, as indicated by Stacey's findings, unique to this project's dataset of Welsh audiences, though, as noted previously, all those who overtly stated their specific joy in viewing the wider world were living away from the more industrial areas of Wales. Indeed, there are potential issues associated with the relationship between Wales and other nations or cultures that are unique to the study of Welsh cinemagoing. However, these issues are not in relation to America, Hollywood, or any particular films, but to England. Whilst English products such as The Beatles and Cliff Richard have been indicated as being popular with Welsh audiences – particularly women – and no English films have been discussed

negatively due to their country of origin, the ritual playing of the national anthem after a film proved to be a divisive issue amongst a number of ENV respondents.

Playing 'God Save the Queen' was a typical aspect of British cinemagoing during the period, though the sentiment of this ritualistic act of patriotism was not always shared by audiences, even in England, as argued by Tony Shaw (2006: 196). It's notable that political factors of Welshness have previously been discussed as unique elements of Welsh cinemagoing history within the studies of Hogenkamp (1985), Ridgwell (1995; 1997), Robert James (2007) and Steffan Moitra (2011), with all these authors considering the impact of the labour movement on South Wales mining community exhibition management and cinemagoing. Welsh nationalism and patriotism had been on the increase across the country since the turn of the century, especially in the Welsh Wales and Y Fro Gymraeg regions. The 1960s were no exception, with Plaid Cymru, a political party dedicated to Wales and Welsh independence, winning its first parliamentary seat (Elias, 2011: 59) as well as the emergence of more controversial groups such as the MAC and Free Wales Army. The preservation and celebration of the Welsh language was also boosted in this decade, with the establishment of the Welsh Language Society in 1962. The emergence of agencies dedicated to individual facets of Welsh identity, such as the Welsh Language Society, is seen by Alistair Cole (2006: 51) to have allowed Plaid Cymru to shift its image as a somewhat conservative and 'reactionary' movement that was focussed on the rural, to a party dedicated to the 'distinctive social, economic, political and cultural development' of Wales as a whole. As such, Welsh nationalism and pride was on the rise during this period, so it's perhaps unsurprising that the playing of 'God Save the Queen', rather than the Welsh national anthem 'Hen Wlad Fy Nhadau', remains a distinctive memory of cinemagoing for

some respondents. Respondent 102, who lived in Machynlleth, recalled that ‘nobody hung around for the National Anthem even then, although I do recall being curious as to why they played the same tune at the end of every film’. This points to the cultural indifference towards the national anthem for audiences in this area of Welsh Wales, to the extent that the respondent suggests they were not aware of the song’s identity.^{ix}

Similar confusion is present in the memory of respondent 243, from Pwllheli, who recalls ‘having’ to stand for ‘God Save the Queen’, despite their cinema being located in ‘deepest rural Wales’. Interestingly, it seems that in at least one of the Pwllheli cinemas, both the English and Welsh national anthems were played. Two respondents – 145 and 209 – discuss this, and the introduction of ‘Hen Wlad Fy Nhadau’ to proceedings does not indicate any additional respect for it over ‘God Save the Queen’ within their memories. Respondent 145 notes that ‘you had to get out’ before the anthems started if you wanted to catch a bus home, whilst 209 evokes 243 in recalling ‘having’ to stay to the end of both anthems. These three Y Fro Gymraeg Pwllheli responses acknowledge the social etiquette of remaining for the national anthems, though with an indication of reluctance, or willingness to skip them. The responses discussed thus far have all been drawn from Welsh Wales rural communities. However, respondent 162, who visited the cinemas of the more urban Bangor, recalls that they ‘always stood at the end for God Save the Queen’. Similarly, respondent 159, also from Bangor, simply states that they remember ‘the national anthem being played’, with no indication of opinion about the matter.

In the follow-up email sent to respondents, discussed earlier in this chapter, one question specifically asked about the playing of national anthems and what their response was to

this. For the most part, the responses echo what has previously been discussed. Five of the twenty-one follow up respondents had no memory of a national anthem being part of the cinemagoing experience, whilst eleven specifically state that only 'God Save the Queen' was played. Only one, respondent 126, who attended cinema in the heavily Welsh speaking village of Ystalyfera specifically recalls 'Hen Wlad Fy Nhadau' being played, albeit following the playing of 'God Save the Queen'. One follow-up respondent explored how their view of 'God Save the Queen' has changed over time. Respondent 109, who attended the Y Fro Gymraeg region cinema of Menai Bridge, recalls that she 'loved' standing and singing along to 'God Save the Queen' with others in the audience, but 'railed' against it as a young adult during the 1960s and 70s. However, she also states that she now 'stands for both' anthems, indicating not only the joy found in shared communal experience during childhood and the later impact of adolescence on those views, but potentially also the changing attitudes and relations between Wales and England. As discussed, Welsh nationalism – particularly a more extreme form of it – was at its peak during her teenage years. Yet, tensions have simmered during her adulthood, especially since Wales gained devolved powers and its own government following the 1997 Welsh devolution referendum (Johnes, 2012: 426).

It is of note, then, that a mixture of apathy and rejection occurs towards 'God Save the Queen', and to 'Hen Wlad Fy Nhadau' to a lesser extent, within a more rural setting. Perhaps this is evocative of Shaw's arguments that, even within England, the venue's playing of the national anthem during the 1950s and 60s was not necessarily evocative of its audiences' opinions or nationalism. This would account for the youthful indifference towards 'Hen Wlad Fy Nhadau' present within the memories of respondents 145 and 209. Yet, suggestions of a particular confusion or disdain for the use of 'God Save the Queen' are

also apparent within these more rural memories. Similar to issues of class, the relationship between England and the differing areas of Wales is a cultural element unique to the study of Welsh cinemagoing history. Yet, there are other facets of Welshness found within the dataset that provide another potential avenue of investigation that, if not unique to Wales, certainly highlight the value in studying smaller nations' audiences.

For the purposes of coding, I've considered mentions of the national anthem to fall under ENV. Yet, it is of interest that only one anthem-containing memory also discusses films. Of course, this correlates with the dataset's low crossover rate for these two codes. Away from national anthems, a modest number of respondents *do* discuss the role of Welsh identity in relation to film, though with no discussion of fully Welsh-language productions. However, in relation to films that discuss Wales or the language, there is a sense that respondents consider themselves to have been part of a cultural in-joke, one shared by the rest of the audience. Respondent 36 mentions 'ironic cheers' when Welsh was used in *Barbarella* (1968), with a similar shared audience experience noted by respondent 147, who recalls a throwaway joke in *A Hard Day's Night* (1964), regarding a producer being demoted to Welsh radio, as having 'brought the house down' and that 'it was probably not that funny anywhere else but in Aber at that time seemed hilarious!' For these two respondents, references to Wales and or the Welsh language within non-Welsh productions constitutes a positive experience, one remembered fondly within their memories and as part of a shared audience collective experience.

A more emotional experience is shared by respondent 185, who recalls that the only film she ever left during the opening was *How Green Was my Valley* (1941) due to the traditional

Welsh song 'Myfanwy' reducing her to tears. These respondents suggest a cultural pride about their Welshness, even when Wales is the butt of a joke, the country's acknowledgement – even within such an English production – elicited humour, as if it were designed as an in-joke *for* them, rather than *about* them. The relationship between a native language or heritage within a largely English language distribution area is explored by José Lozano (2017) in relation to American-born respondents of Mexican descent who grew up in a Texas city that bordered their cultural homeland. For Lozano's respondents, Spanish language and Mexican produced films were more widely available than Welsh productions screening in Wales. However, some similarities are shared, I argue, between these bilingual audiences. Lozano considers his respondents as balancing their new cultural identity as American 'without losing contact with their core Mexican cultural background' (p. 40). English language films were dominant throughout Welsh cinemas, regardless of their placement within the Three Wales Model or the degree to which the area was Welsh speaking. As such, these respondents have constituted such rare mentions or references to Welsh identity as their 'striking' memories of rural Welsh cinemagoing.

Indeed, the follow-up email asked respondents if they recalled seeing films in the Welsh language, set in Wales or featuring Welsh actors. No email respondents recalled seeing a film in Welsh, whilst Richard Burton and *How Green Was My Valley* (1941) are the most commonly cited actor and film, with four and nine mentions, respectively. The fact that *How Green Was My Valley* is the most commonly cited *Welsh* film is indicative of the state of genuinely Welsh-produced and focused films prior to 1970, not least as it was filmed in California and featured mostly Irish actors. This did not deter respondent 109 who, in response to this question, states 'no, but loved Maureen O'Hara in *How Green Was My*

Valley'. Respondent 153 quite astutely notes that the most prominent depiction of Welsh people on screen was the 'typical Welsh person' who would be comedic in nature. The impact of fleeting depictions of Wales on screen are clearly important to rural Welsh respondents, as illustrated by those who highlight such instances as part of their striking memory recollection or who identify a Hollywood reproduction of Wales with Irish actors as a *Welsh* film.

Notably, self-identification as specifically Welsh is evident in the follow-up email sent to respondents, where one question asked respondents to choose 'nationality and ethnicity' from: white, mixed/multiple ethnic groups, Asian/Asian British, black/African/Caribbean/black British, Chinese, Arab or other ethnic group. Seven of the twenty-one simply deleted the other options in their responses leaving 'white' as their answer. Notably, however, ten modified the answer, writing 'white-Welsh' or something to that effect, whilst two stated that they are 'white-British' and a further two declined to comment. Interestingly, the spread of geographical location, and in relation to the Three Wales Model, is similarly varied for those who simply chose white or specified Welsh, with a comparable mixture of Y Fro Gymraeg, English Wales and Welsh Wales from either category. It is in the class background, however, that differences can be found, with those who selected just white more commonly – five respondents – identifying as one of the middle-class options, whilst only two identified as working class. In contrast, those who specifically identified as Welsh represent only two middle-class respondents, three who said class was not an issue in rural Wales, three working class and two who preferred not to say. Again, the role of class in relation to Welsh identity is evident, as is the value for respondents in identifying as Welsh, regardless of language ability. This is echoed by the

email response of respondent 161 whose ethnicity answer reads 'I am proud to be a white Welsh lady, however I do not speak Welsh'.

Whilst this discussion of national identity does not prove *why* there is such a separation between ENV and FILM responses, it has facilitated the exploration of what Caughie (2016) dubs the 'particularity of place' (Caughie, 2016) in relation to these memories. Through his study of small-town Scottish cinema exhibition history, Caughie notes that the 'standard' historiography of cinema has struggled to 'capture the diversity of experience' of cinemagoing in the region (p. 35). Wales clearly had distinct social, cultural and political factors in relation to national identity which, for a few respondents, bled into the experiences of cinemagoing and have subsequently been recalled through differing perspectives and forms (ENV or FILM) of memory.

Thoughts on discourse analysis in a post-social media age

What may not be unique to rural Welsh audiences, but perhaps evokes a change in the way ethnographic data is collected, is the general discourse and writing style of this project's respondents. Earlier in this chapter the use of personal pronouns was discussed, with male respondents having tended to use fewer personal pronouns and formed sentences in a more fragmented style than in comparison to women. However, moving away from focussing on ENV and FILM respondents and exploring the dataset as a whole, it is noticeable how many respondents of both genders write in an arguably detached and fragmented style. Such a discursive style is notably almost exclusive to the digital questionnaire responses. Though only sixteen physical questionnaires were collected, all but two provide vastly richer discourse in their qualitative responses than their digital

counterparts. This does not just include the amount written, but also in the way sentences are structured and use of personal pronouns. Somewhat conversely, it is paper questionnaires that contained a physical limitation in terms of how much the respondent could write, whilst the digital copy was open-ended. Consequently, I would argue that these differences are present due to online respondents carrying their social media discourse into the questionnaire. Indeed, by comparing responses to the writing styles found within the Facebook pages utilised to share the questionnaire, there are notable similarities, particularly in the use of ellipsis. David Crystal (2001), in his study of internet-based language use, discusses a heightened use of ellipsis within digital writing to signify a pause, thus emulating the cadences of spoken language (p. 95). Indeed, responses to the digital questionnaire have a far more informal feel, with punctuation often used to create verbal effects rather than for grammatical accuracy, whereas the responses within the physical copies largely contain complete sentences, with correct grammar usage and a far more formal tone. As discussed in this work's methodology chapter, Booth-Kewley et al (2007) discuss online questionnaires as creating a 'sense of disinhibition' for respondents (p. 463). Though their arguments refer to the content of responses, rather than the language used, it's arguable that the physical questionnaire elicits a more formal process, whereas the digital represents an extension of social media usage.

Whilst content disinhibition is preferable, especially when researching memories, such informal language presents a problem in applying the influential discourse analysis methods of Kuhn. Of course, some of Kuhn's respondents were interview-based and responded with the tropes and informality associated with such spoken language. However, the extra-truncated and fragmented writing style of many digital responses presents an uncommon

lack of personal pronouns. As such, and as employed earlier in this chapter, greater care must be taken to explore how Kuhn's registers can be applied to this uniquely twenty-first century form of discourse. A focus on personal pronouns may be relegated in importance, as well as searching for descriptive adjectives that would traditionally suggest a repetitive register. In the case of the latter, more time and attention should be spent in locating the repetitive and habitual. Even a response as simple as 'Saturday morning pictures' – which is Respondent 163's total response to question nine – suggests a habitual attendance at the Saturday matinee, which, when further investigated through other responses and interview data, is in keeping with the popularity of Saturday morning matinees aimed at children, a topic that will be further discussed in the next chapter. Whilst I am not suggesting some grandiose reform in our approaches to memory discourse analysis, the distinctiveness of digital responses and their relatively modern social media influence poses a challenge to some of the tenets of previous written and spoken discourse analysis methodologies.

Conclusion

This chapter has explored findings that emerged from analysis of the distinct separation of ENV and FILM coded memories. Ultimately, there is no clear statistical indication of what informs this separation of remembering, with numerical breakdowns of class, gender, decade of visitation and age all producing similar results across ENV and FILM groupings and the data-set as a whole. Yet, closer analysis of the responses identified notable nuances of rural Welsh cinemagoing memory within the code brackets themselves. That is, the content and discursive construction of both ENV and FILM memories have been observed to vary depending on social, economic, political, cultural and personal factors. A number of these factors relate to the 'particularity of place' (Caughie, 2006) not only in relation to a

specifically Welsh cinemagoing history but also small-town or village contexts, as demonstrated through female ENV respondent memories of single-venue areas and the visibility of class and quality hierarchies within them.

What has been quite clearly evidenced through this chapter is the importance of films within memories of rural Welsh cinemagoing for a number of respondents. In many ways, the separation of ENV and FILM memories represents the schism found between the New Cinema History and New Film History traditions, each with their specific focus and, as Treveri Gennari and Culhane (2019) have argued, previously little overlap. Sue Harper (2019: 690) has recently sought to remind film and cinema historians that films carry out 'vital' functions for audiences and their memories, with such functions, I would argue, having been evidenced through this chapter. Indeed, the discussion of films within many FILM respondents' memories to some extent reflect both personal and culturally informed parts of their lives. Moreover, these memories also present factors of cinema history that are potentially specific to the Silver Age period. If, as Caughie argues, there is a 'particularity of place' to be considered within cinema history, then I would contend that a *particularity of period* is equally as important and has been notably presented here through film memories. Whilst a number of male FILM respondents discussed the pre-adolescent role of Westerns as their striking memory of cinemagoing, thus echoing debates relating to the viewing habits of young boys during the Golden Age, most female FILM memories were not concerned with teenage fandom of female Hollywood stars, as had been the case within the Golden Age audience studies of Stacey (1994) and Kuhn (2002), but rather an infatuation with the young male pop-stars who were prominent cultural figures of the Silver Age period. Whilst Maltby (2011: 4) has argued that 'placing film into a wider historical context' has proven to

be 'problematic', the prominence of the pop-star film and its importance to young Welsh female audience represents a global cultural shift, particularly for teenagers (Geraghty, 2000: 11), that occurred post-World War Two.

Finally, I offer a slight shift in perspective. For the majority of this chapter I have considered the *separation* of ENV and FILM, two differing trends of memory that have been analysed accordingly. Yet, I have also discussed the call for the New Cinema History and the New Film History to reconcile, and for the former to re-evaluate the importance of film within the study of social cinema history. Such an importance has been witnessed in this chapter in relation to Welsh national identity and cinemagoing memory. Here, both ENV and FILM memories have offered insights into factors relating to Welshness during the 1950s and 60s, a period which saw a notable rise in Welsh nationalism, particularly in North Wales. ENV memories of national anthems were perhaps more explicit in their reflection of this increased nationalism, exemplified through Y Fro Gymraeg region respondents having a particular aversion to singing 'God Save the Queen'. FILM memories, meanwhile, convey the period's lack of filmic cultural representation, with depictions of Wales or Welsh people presented as a rarity. Indeed, scarce glimpses of on-screen Welsh representation are discussed as being met with emotional responses, from crying to the song 'Myfanwy' in *How Green Was My Valley*, to cheers at the use of Welsh language in *Barbarella*. Again, both a particular period and place are reflected through these ENV and FILM memories, important not only to cinema history, but also broader contexts of Welsh national identity and Welsh culture during the twentieth century.

ⁱ This, she argues, is part of a larger national trend within the study of media memory, which saw 'the memory or heritage imperative in British cultural life' become 'acute' (Stubbings, 2003: 66).

ⁱⁱ Indicated by Graph 5.3

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- ⁱⁱⁱ These include: the prominence of stardom and differences present from existing scholarship on the Golden Era and the role of national anthems being performed at the end of screenings.
- ^{iv} For Perrins and Zimmern, English Wales geographically constitutes the areas surrounding the England/Wales border and Pembrokeshire.
- ^v Counties based on cinema locations visited and area lived in by respondents.
- ^{vi} One respondent indicated that they visited the cinema in Oswestry, England.
- ^{vii} Respondents 40 and 68
- ^{viii} Twelve respondents specifically refer to themselves as being teenagers within a memory, typically as a means of identifying a period of their cinema attendance, in lieu of using a decade or estimated year.
- ^{ix} Machynlleth is the western most point of Powys, firmly within Y Fro Gymraeg territory, and is a historical capital of the country.

Chapter Six – Differing Perspectives of Rural Welsh Cinemagoing: a Local Case

Study.

The previous chapter explored both potentially unique factors of rural Welsh cinemagoing and observable differences between audience memories of the Golden and Silver ages of British cinemagoing, with the former having received a great deal more academic attention at the time of writing. The ethnographic data used in the writing of the chapter was drawn from responses to this project's research questionnaire, disseminated across the whole of rural Wales. As discussed in detail already in this thesis, Wales, though a comparatively small nation, contains a complex structure of socio-political identities, defined by Balsom as the Three Wales Model. Thankfully, the questionnaire drew a spread of responses that represent Wales' complexities, both culturally and geographically.

This chapter, however, seeks to explore an ethnographic micro-history of rural Welsh cinemagoing, prior to 1970. Such a micro-history approach has been similarly employed by Daniel Biltereyst et al. (2011), in their research on Ghent's post-war cinemagoing, as means of accessing a specifically 'local' history (p. 101). To explore a micro-history in this thesis, a series of hour-long interviews were conducted with respondents who specifically attended the cinema in the Aberystwyth area during the period under study. Also established by the previous chapter was the separation of ENV and FILM memory respondents within the questionnaire dataset. This separation was noticeable from initial quantitative data analysis. As such, the initial purpose of carrying out interviews was to provide further and more detailed data relating to the ENV and FILM divide and what might inform this separation.

However, what became apparent, during the interview process, was the degree to which differing experiences of and perspectives on rural Welsh cinemagoing were prominent factors within interviewee discourse. Accordingly, I revisited the questionnaire data and noticed similar trends were apparent, though in less qualitative depth, that the coding process and a more quantitatively focused form of analysis had obscured. Largely, this was due to these differing perspectives and experiences manifesting themselves through a wide range of discussions, from Saturday morning matinee-going to relationships with cinema staff members, from having to catch a bus home to going to a certain pub afterwards, and in the discourse used to create these memory narratives. Whilst this chapter continues this thesis' goal to explore issues of Welsh cinemagoing that are particular to the rural, it also argues that rural Wales and its audiences are not a homogenous group. With rural regions, as Peter Schaeffer and Scott Loveridge (2000: xiii) note, often being treated as culturally, economically, politically and socially homogeneous, it is the goal of this chapter to also explore the differing experiences of rural Welsh cinemagoers and what impact differing perspectives of the rural had within the memories of this project's interviewees, as well as its questionnaire respondents. This goal chimes with Aveyard's (2015) approach of comparing the rural to the rural, rather than to the urban, as a means of identifying the diversity of rural cinemagoing trends and perceptions. Indeed, I would argue that rejecting the arguments of a homogeneous rural Wales as presented by the works of Frankenberg (1957), Rees (1950) and others, truly meets the New Film History tradition's call for cinema-historians to approach history 'from below' (Maltby, 2011: 32) and challenge previously dominant viewpoints of institutionally-focussed histories of film.

This history from below approach, and the unexpected turn in the data gathered, was aided by implementing a semi-structured interview question scheme, one that does not fully rely on pre-defined questions and encourages spontaneous avenues of investigation based on the interviewees' responses. Influenced by oral history and other cinema audience memory studies, employing a semi-structured interview format allowed for a more conversational form of interviewing. Indeed, Biltereyst, Meers and Van de Vijver (2011), who employed semi-structured interviews for their study of post-war Ghent audiences, note that this approach encourages the elicitation of 'spontaneous' memories and the respondent's 'own stories' (p. 111). Furthermore, this more personal and informal methodology has a marked difference to the more formal academic history approach found within the sociological studies of rural Welsh life published during the mid-twentieth century.

Location, Barker and Brooks (1998: 22) argue, can be vitally important to the interview process. The location must be convenient for the respondent and conducive in keeping them comfortable, ensuring they are relaxed and more likely to be forthcoming in their responses. However, a location, as Barker and Brooks note, needs to work for the researcher too. They recall an incident where the Bristol Science Fiction Club requested to meet in a pub after their usual group meeting. However, the researchers found the recording of the interview to be inaudible over the ambient sounds of the public house (ibid). A compromise has to be made, therefore; the location must not distract the respondent or make them feel uncomfortable, nor should it negatively impact the researcher's goal of obtaining clear and useable data. In an effort to ensure respondents felt comfortable, and to reduce the sense of being part of a laboratory or behavioural study, I offered interviewees the chance to choose where the interview would take place. This was a

risk, on my behalf, as environments outside of the researcher's control present risks of unwanted noise and unexpected interruption. However, the benefits are akin to those found in the utilisation of online questionnaires compared to hardcopies, as discussed in detail in the preceding chapter. Schrøder et al. (2003) argue that being in a familiar or 'home turf' environment can create a sense of disinhibition (p. 150), with the authors noting that such a sense of ease can help to ensure that relevant interview discourse will 'pour freely' (p.129). Conversely, the choice of a typical university lecture hall or meeting room can create a formality or even a sense of inferiority for the interviewee (ibid: 150), which would be detrimental in eliciting what Assmann (1995) defines as 'everyday memories' (p. 129). For Assman, such recollections are defined by the informal nature of their narratives and 'limited temporal horizon' (life-span of the memory) due to their typically oral delivery (ibid: 127). Obviously, this was not the case for all respondents. Sheila, an administrator within the university, requested that our interview take place in her office. For her, this typical university office represented a familiar and convenient space. A couple of interviewees, Declan and Liana, requested that I selected the interview space, noting that they were often on campus as frequent patrons of the Aberystwyth Arts Centre. To match this request and also my desire for a more informal interview setting, I located the most atypical university space available, with two large comfortable sofas and a good amount of natural light. I further decorated the room with cushions, a coffee table and a selection of drinks, all with the aim of making the interviewees feel as comfortable as possible.

In total, five one-hour interviews were conducted, with two interviewees (Declan and Liana) representing the ENV coding, two from FILM (Marvin and Sheila) and one who straddled both (Joyce), as per the initial research goal of the interview process. All interviewees had

lived in the Aberystwyth area for extended periods of their lives and had attended a number of the town's cinemas over the years. Interviewees' responses largely related to the 1960s, with some crossover into the late 1950s and early 1970s. However, over the course of the five interviews this period is reflected upon through a range of differing age, social and cultural perspectives. Importantly, there were largely different experiences and perspectives of rurality evident across the interviews. For example, Declan and Liana, a husband and wife who were interviewed separately, met during their time as students at Aberystwyth University in the mid-to-late 1960s, having both moved to the area from urban South Wales. In contrast, the other three interviewees – Sheila, Marvin and Joyce – were all born and raised in the Aberystwyth area, with the late 1950s and 60s representing their adolescent and teenage cinemagoing experiences. Amongst these three there are further differences, with Joyce having lived in Talybont – a small village eight miles east of Aberystwyth – whilst Marvin and Sheila had been raised within the town itself, accentuating the nature of their cinemagoing as habitual, particularly in pre-adolescence.

The role of the Saturday morning matinee

These differences in rural perspectives notably present themselves through discussions of attending the Saturday morning matinee during the late 1950s and 1960s. These matinees were predominately aimed at children, and would feature a mixture of serial films, cartoons and classic slapstick comedies. A Saturday morning matinee targeted at children was by no means unique to Aberystwyth, or indeed Wales. Although writing about the 1930s, Sarah Smith (2005) identifies attendance at a matinee as being the 'typical' main form of British children's cinemagoing (p 142), which was certainly true for Marvin and Sheila, who both grew up within walking distance of Aberystwyth's cinemas and were the only interviewees

to discuss matinees as a weekly and prominent event. Though drawing on primarily urban (and English) responses from the Golden Age of British cinemagoing, Smith's assertion that memories of matinees are often recalled in 'very vivid colour and detail' (p. 144) correlates with Marvin and Sheila's interviews. Indeed, the discourse present within matinee-going memories is notably different to that of the childhood cinemagoing memories of Joyce, Declan or Liana. The vivid and detailed memories relating to the Saturday morning matinee in Aberystwyth highlight the significance of this weekly event to their childhood. Indeed, as a primary social event for Aberystwyth youth, it transcended film or cinema's primary status as an entertainment or leisure pursuit. Attending the matinee was a ritual associated with fitting in with one's peers, with Marvin describing his Saturday attendance as a 'rite of passage' and part of wanting to 'fit in', whilst Sheila specifically notes the 'social aspect' as being a 'big thing'. Both respondents provide far more detail about the audience experience and social 'rituals', to quote Sheila, found within these matinees than the films shown. These audience experiences and rituals are markedly similar, despite their matinee memories coming from different cinemas.

During the 1950s and 60s, Aberystwyth had three primary cinemas, The Coliseum – converted from the once palatial music hall discussed in previous chapters – and the sister Conway and Celtic cinemas on Bath Street. This latter pair were situated next door to each other, having been converted from the town's former female and male bath houses, and shared management under the Cambrian Cinemas name, as evidenced from their newspaper advertising from the period. As such, it is common for interviewees and questionnaire respondents to either refer to the Conway and Celtic as being one entity, or to struggle to specifically identify which cinema their memories refer to. Furthermore, until

the late 1950s the Pier Pavilion would also show films, including a Saturday matinee. Marvin recalls attending matinees at both the Pier and Celtic cinemas, whilst Sheila exclusively discusses matinee-going in the Coliseum.

When discussing the atmosphere of the matinees, Sheila became notably more excited recalling these memories than in comparison to others during the interview. Her voice grew louder, and the pace of speech increased, recreating the excitement she had once felt as a child. Annette Kuhn (2002) observes a similar use of one's 'child voice' in relation to her participant's memories of horror films and the sensation of fear (p. 67). Sheila's child voice is used within recollections of joviality and the importance of a shared audience experience. Indeed, she overtly compares the experience of the matinee to that of pantomime, where audience 'rituals' would occur in relation to events on screen. Equally, her memories of matinees frequently feature examples of repetitive discourse, typically through use of 'you'd', suggesting not only repeated rituals but also a collective practice.

Somebody would come on [screen] and you'd all boo for that particular person.

When somebody came on you'd all cheer, cos something else was coming up. Then, you know, you'd bang your feet or you'd be clapping at this. I don't know, there was a kind of, ritual about it somehow.

The visceral and somewhat onomatopoeic nature of this recollection chimes with Smith's argument of childhood matinee attendance being recalled in vivid detail (2005: 144).

Similarly, Kuhn (2002) discusses the prominence of collective audience behaviour within matinee memories, with such recollections often being 'vividly' or 'gleefully' recalled (p. 60).

Sheila initially describes her involvement in these shared audience experiences as ‘fun’, further explaining that she knew these rituals didn’t ‘vary from week-to-week’, which resulted in the matinees as being ‘quite a comfortable thing to go to’. Helen Richards (2003), in her work concerning 1930s – 60s cinemagoing in Bridgend, notes similar ritualistic behaviour within the memories of her South Wales audiences, with one respondent recalling a specific song that would be sung by matinee-goers before the start of the film (p. 350). It is clear that the ‘comfort’ of Sheila’s matinee-going memories does not refer to physical comfort, as she lambasts the quality of seating numerous times during the interview. Rather, much like pantomime, school, or childhood play, the combination of repetitive weekly attendance and shared audience performance – an audience which consisted of her social peers – provided a comforting familiarity. Furthermore, this repetition has rendered the general matinee experience as a vivid memory for Sheila. It is evident, from the discourses drawn upon in the previous quotation, that whilst these vivid, but quite generalised, recollections do not fully match Kuhn’s arguments about the anecdotal register, they are representative of a repetitive, but no less important, shared or communal frequent experience. This habitual experience ultimately creates memories that lose their temporal specificity but maintain vivid detail drawn from the repetition, creating a hybrid of Kuhn’s anecdotal and repetitive registers. Such atemporal memories seem to relate to elements of Stacey’s (1994) ‘iconic memory’, which she argues consists of ‘frozen’ moments that are removed from temporal contexts (p. 67). Though she makes these arguments in relation to women’s memories of female film stars, the atemporal memories – though kinetic in their detail of cheering and clapping – of matinee-going presented by Marvin and Sheila contain ‘frozen’ moments that are not placed within a specific time or

event and are potentially composites of many repeated moments that they experienced during this period.

Notably, Sheila, Marvin and the other interviewees often provide specific memories, in relation to their non-matinee pre-1970s cinemagoing, which are recalled in precise detail from a singular occasion. Pillemer (1998) refers to such recollections as 'personal event memories', memory narratives that focus on a 'specific event' rather than general events or an 'extended series' of related 'happenings' (pp. 50-51). The latter I argue is true of matinee-going memories, as evoked by the lack of specificity in related recollections. For Sheila and Marvin, the matinee is framed as a collective, in terms of both the content of the memory and the discourse used to form its narrative, and lacking in specific details in favour of the habitual or generalised. This is in opposition to memories of other filmgoing experiences for the pair, even from within the same periods of their lives. For example, when recalling seeing films starring her teenage idols Elvis Presley or The Beatles, or favourite films such as *The Sound of Music* (1965), Sheila revisits and explores her exact responses from the time. Memories, such as the jubilation of seeing her idols on screen and wanting to become a nun, come from a similar period of her life as matinee attendance, but receive far more specific attention to detail in her recollections and are clearly personal event memories. The same is true of Marvin, who explains that it was the 'communal experience' and desire to fit in that maintained his attendance at the Saturday matinee, whereas his later cinemagoing was driven by a passion for specific films and genres. However, Janet Staiger (2005), reflecting upon Pillemer's work, argues that personal event memories are the ones we use in 'creating our autobiographies', that they can be 'casual' or not necessarily 'stunning' in content and, as I've discussed in relation to the matinee

memory, 'delimited' in temporality (p. 189). The matinee memory then is somewhat of a personal event memory, as its formative importance (e.g. its status as a rite of passage) and certain vivid aspects of recollect are key to the narratives. Whilst individual specific occasions are typically omitted or lost to memory, the collective grouping of the matinee memory as a homogeneous event highlights its importance to Marvin and Sheila akin to an individual or specific momentous personal event and, as will be discussed here, provides insight in to the unique experiences of cinemagoing for certain areas of rural Wales.

There are further evident discursive differences between memories of the matinee and other, less habitual and ritualistic, cinemagoing activities present in the oral testimony of Marvin and Sheila. These potentially go some way in suggesting a differing experience of childhood cinemagoing in the rural Welsh town when compared to other areas of the country. As discussed in the previous chapter, Kuhn (2002) has established discursive registers – particularly linked to pronoun use – to aid the exploration of how memory narratives are discursively formed. When reflecting upon the matinee experience, both Sheila and Marvin most commonly use the collective 'we', commonly followed by tropes that Kuhn argues form a 'repetitive' discursive register, one which she states is commonly employed in memories of childhood cinemagoing (p. 40). For example, when discussing the sharing of sweets amongst fellow members of the matinee audience, Sheila recalls 'we always had to share with the Evans'. The lack of specificity of a particular film or occasion, and the use of 'always' infers the repetitive frequency of this memory. In relation to childhood memories of cinemagoing, Kuhn argues that the repetitive register is most frequently employed, with occasional use of the autobiographical and first-person 'anecdotal' register (p. 40).

Kuhn (2002) notes that memories of early cinemagoing behaviour are often recalled in a distanced manner, arguably using discursive registers that position oneself away from the common misbehaviour of the audience (58 – 59). Whilst Marvin and Sheila rarely utilise the personal pronoun 'I' in their matinee-going memories, typically using a more collective 'we' or 'you'd', I would not consider either of them to be using an impersonal register to actively separate themselves from these memories, rather, the more frequent use of collective and repetitive registers originate from such a habitual act that they lack the anecdotal or autobiographical qualities of recalling specific events. That is, they are a series of frequent events that have lost specificity in the memory. Rather, the habitual act of matinee attending has in many ways become one composite memory, one that is vivid and fondly remembered – as discussed by Smith – but, due to the lack of occasion specificity, often recalled through less anecdotal or autobiographical discourse. Equally, these are memories that surround a frequently attended event and one that began early in the respondent's life, with attendance at the matinee often beginning in early pre-adolescence. Kuhn (2002) argues that it was common for children as young as four or five to make their first cognisant visit to the cinema, whilst a true first attendance as 'babes in arms' would be retold to them by relatives (pp. 38 – 39). Such retelling of memories, Kuhn argues, leads to the creation of both cultural and personal 'mythic' and 'timeless' memories, which perhaps accounts for the detachment and lack of specificity found in matinee memories (p. 11). Similarly, she argues that particularly early memories of cinemagoing contain 'few and far between' examples of anecdotal discourse, with respondents 'constructing themselves' as not yet experienced in the 'proper' ways of reading films (p. 58). As such, specifics of films themselves are limited, with even discussions of the frequent cliff-hanger endings found

within serials typically 'lack[ing] detail', particularly in comparison to the recounting of more visceral experiences found in the auditorium, such as the behaviour and noise of others, as discussed earlier (pp. 58-59).

Beyond Sheila and Marvin's discussions, this project's questionnaire responses included frequent reference to Saturday morning matinee attendance across rural Wales, particularly in smaller towns. As found within the interviews of Marvin and Sheila, and also discussed by Kuhn, the matinee is often not a striking or momentous event within the memories of questionnaire respondents. Rather, it was a highly habitual, familiar and comforting staple of childhood-life for many. Notably, questionnaire responses relating to the matinee are not exclusive to question nine, which asks for striking memories of rural Welsh cinemagoing and is more commonly filled by the autobiographical and highly specific recollections. Rather, they occur in relation to a number of questions, particularly questions three and six, pointing towards the habituality and importance of matinee-going, but not its specificity as an event memory.^{i ii} For example, respondent 204 answers question three's prompt to outline if they would visit different cinemas and why with:

Had Saturday kids' matinee in County. Bit of a fleapit, showed old films like Marx Brothers, Three Stooges and Roy Rogers, also serials like Batman. Kids could shout their heads off and chuck stuff about! Toilets were horrendous! Such fun – four-pence downstairs and seven-pence upstairs.

Respondent 204 here exhibits both repetitive and impersonal discourse, particularly in reference to children being able to shout 'their' heads off, with the use of the impersonal

'their' suggesting a common experience but one they were not always necessarily part of. In doing so, they distance themselves from being part of such bad behaviour, as similarly noted by Kuhn (2002: 58-59). Also, though writing about Bangor – officially a city, but with a population comparable to that of Aberystwyth's – in North Wales, not only is the discourse similar to that of Marvin and Sheila, but also the content of the memory and the role of the matinee as a site of ritualistic acts of collective playing and misbehaviour.

This repetitive and somewhat impersonal discursive style is distinct amongst matinee attending interviewees and questionnaire respondents when describing childhood cinemagoing. Those who did not attend a matinee typically *do* use the anecdotal register in their recollections of childhood cinemagoing, as attending the cinema was far less habitual for them at this stage of their lives. For example, Joyce grew up in the small village of Talybont. Though situated only seven miles from Aberystwyth, the impact of this distance and extra-rural living was enough to put Joyce's childhood cinemagoing at the mercy of her parents. It was not until her teenage years that she was able to begin a more habitual form of cinemagoing, as her parents allowed her to begin taking the bus unattended. As such, her memories of childhood cinemagoing represent very specific special occasions, such as birthday parties.

Erm, so, because I lived seven miles out, when I was a child it was a rare treat to come to the cinema. And, erm, my first memories are coming to see Snow White, erm, as a birthday treat, and that was in the Coliseum.

Well, Snow White, I can vividly remember sitting on the balcony in the Coliseum, seeing Snow White. I can't remember the year, but I was born in 1956 so it would've been early 60s. And erm I can remember my parents taking me and there was a row of us, there was probably half a dozen girls going to see this film erm, and it was really exciting to me.

The increased autobiographical nature of this memory, through both anecdotal discourse and recollection of specific details about the event, highlights the importance and prominence of this single occasion of childhood cinemagoing from Joyce's memories, as does recounting how 'exciting' the trip was.

Despite the work of Helen Richards arguing that matinee-going was a popular event within urban South Wales, and a number of Kuhn's matinee respondents originating from urban England and Scotland, the role of the matinee is presented amongst my respondents as being more prominent within the rural-Welsh small-town rather than either urban or extra-rural areas. Liana, whose childhood cinemagoing memories are from Cardiff, does mention attending the matinee in passing: 'we started quite young, as kids. We would go to the cinema. I can remember going really quite often to Cardiff. But it would be Saturday afternoons.' However, this discussion goes no further, and instead she begins a more detailed discussion of individual and anecdotal occasions of visiting the cinema with her older sister for feature films. Particularly, she recalls watching *Dr. No* (1962) and sharing her pre-adolescent opinions on Sean Connery with her sister:

I know she took me to see the first James Bond one. Dr. No. And erm, I must have only been about 13, 14. And Sean Connery came on my sister said "hwaahhh" and I said "is that him? He's horrible". I didn't like Sean Connery at all, until I was a lot older. She went "shut up, shut up".

Akin to Marvin, Sheila and Joyce, Liana portrays childhood cinemagoing as a shared experience, with her sister featuring prominently in this discussion. Yet, distinct from Marvin and Sheila's dominant childhood cinemagoing discussions, Liana provides an autobiographical narrative with a heavy use of personal pronouns, similar to Joyce's recollections of special occasion childhood cinemagoing, particularly reinserting herself back into the memory through the use of dialogue – 'it that him? He's horrible'. Despite fleeting mentions of attending matinees in Cardiff, it is specific occasions of feature film viewing that she volunteers and details in relation to questions about childhood. Unlike Joyce, who was limited by geography and extra-rural living, the reasons for this are not overtly clear. Yet, similarities are present within Declan's discussions of urban upbringing. Declan, who was raised in Barry, a large town near Cardiff, barely mentions childhood cinemagoing other than fleeting mentions of having attended the cinemas in both Barry and Cardiff, and there are no indications of matinee-going. Declan's only substantial discussion of attending the cinema as a child comes as part of a larger anecdotal event memory about attending the Cardiff debut of *Lawrence of Arabia* (1962)

This is what it was like, it was in the cinema, it was erm maybe, they really pulled out all the stops, you know, early 60s I was 11 or 12 my aunt took me to see it, that's the sort of thing she would do. And erm, it was just fantastic, it's something that will

stick in my memory for the rest of my life because it was really a special occasion. It was, you know, it wasn't the world premiere, but it was the premiere...it was the first time it was being shown in Cardiff and it was a big event.

Again, even during this rare mention of childhood from Declan, attendance with family is a key factor in the narrative of the memory, as is the anecdotal nature of the memory's discourse. Conversely to those who lived in Aberystwyth, interviewees who lived in more urban or extra-rural areas during childhood seem to highlight cinemagoing as a special event or as part of a wider experience, often linked to family. Liana even indicates that she would attend matinees, yet chooses to instead focus on a specific non-matinee event. Indeed, the anecdotal and autobiographical discursive style used by Liana, Declan and Joyce in their childhood recollections is shared by both Marvin and Sheila in their post-matinee attending years, when cinemagoing became far less habitual for them both, respectively. This suggests a unique quality to the matinee within cinemagoing memories and their discourse as discussed earlier. Furthermore, it also conveys that this prevalent matinee experience is perhaps unique to certain areas of Wales, villages and towns large enough to contain cinemas but small enough to capture a community and constitute a key formative experience.

The matinee was clearly an important aspect of childhood sociality for both Marvin and Sheila, growing up in the small-town of Aberystwyth. Yet, this importance and popularity is also evident across Wales. Whilst Helen Richards' discussions of Bridgend matinee-going have already been touched upon here, Miskell (2006) has also highlighted the weekly tradition of matinees within South Wales' mining community 'flea-pit' cinemas (pp. 98;

113). These mining communities, whilst typically larger than Aberystwyth in population size and most definitely in closer proximity to major urban centres like Cardiff, as well as each other, potentially present a similar form of community in relation to matinee cinemagoing as found in small rural towns such as Aberystwyth. Though writing about the Swansea metropolitan area, itself a collection of medium-to-large mining towns, Nickie Charles and Charlotte Davis (2005: 676-677) note that Rosser and Harris' 1965 sociological study of these 'distinct' and 'dispersed communities' produces similar notions of community to that of Frankenberg's rural study. These 'urban villages' (ibid) then ultimately take the form of smaller, close-knit communities such as Aberystwyth, whilst their larger number of available cinemas, including the budget and working-class 'flea-pits' provided the perfect venue for formative and communal matinee-going experiences. Those who lived extra-rurally, such as Joyce, simply did not have the ease of access to the cinema as their small-town counterparts and were objectively outsiders to that community and experience, hence her radically different childhood cinemagoing memories. Whilst Cardiff clearly had Saturday matinees, it is notable that neither Declan nor Liana dwell on them, instead focussing on very specific anecdotal events of childhood cinemagoing. This project does not have enough data to consider further answers to why this might be, largely due to the data gathering process being focused on the rural areas of Wales. However, the high population density, which would negate the concept of 'dispersed communities' discussed by Charles and Davis perhaps minimised the sense of community found within the matinee auditorium, which is of clear importance to Sheila, Marvin and others, ultimately lessening its role within the memories of Declan and Liana's childhood cinemagoing.

Localness and the rural Welsh community

Though popular across the country, the matinee was not unique to Wales. However, the role of the small-town and concept of the local do potentially highlight unique functions and factors of the matinee and wider cinemagoing experiences within rural Wales, particularly in relation to a sense of community or formative childhood experiences, experiences that are potentially differing depending on one's perspective or experiences of rurality. It is important to note that sweeping discussions of local rural Welsh communities as close-knit, homogenous zones of language, culture and politics, as presented in the mid-twentieth century sociological studies of Frankenberg (1957) and Rees (1950), are largely rejected within modern scholarship concerning Welsh sociology (Jones, N., 1997: 136). However, there are indications within the ethnographic data of this project that an appreciation or acknowledgement of localness and community is key to the rural Welsh cinemagoing experience. Within the questionnaire, akin to mentions of matinee attendance, discussions of localness are commonly found away from question nine and discussions of striking memories. Rather, specific mentions of localness or community are more commonly made in relation to questions three, six and seven.^{iii iv v} For some questionnaire respondents, discussion of the local is often made in reference to proximity and geography, commonly cited as a positive by those who lived within walking distance of a cinema. For example, respondent 184 notes that an advantage of attending the local rural cinema in Menai Bridge was 'not having to catch a bus for the local one, so didn't get home late', as experienced when travelling to Bangor. For others, localness embodied a sense of freedom as a youth, with respondent 188 noting that she could attend with local friends and that 'no adults needed to come with us'. A similar sentiment is evident within the matinee-going memories of Sheila, who argues that the matinee 'sticks out' in her memories due to attending them 'on our own, no parents were with us and so we felt very grown up'.

This concept of the local cinema as enabling childhood freedom or operating within a close-knit community has already been evidenced in relation to the matinee experiences of both Marvin and Sheila, who both grew up in the rural town of Aberystwyth. As discussed, for Marvin the matinee was an opportunity to fit in with his school friends, whilst Sheila positioned the familiarity of audience participation as a comforting experience and further recalled the communal sharing of one's sweets with those who went without. For Sheila, however, this sense of community was heightened by her personal relationship with the Coliseum's Manager, a friend of her grandmother who she fondly called Uncle Lenny.

Erm, and of course, as it happened where my Gran lived, the chap who ran the Coliseum – Lenny – Uncle Lenny as we used to call him, lived across the way. So, I used to be able to get in for nothing on a lot of the films as well.

Sheila spoke warmly of Uncle Lenny on a number of occasions throughout the interview, as a connection between her, her family and the cinema as well as in terms of the benefits such a friendship presented to her. This ranged from free entry, to assistance in sitting in the best possible seats, and ensuring her safety from the more uncouth behaviours of others in the audience. A sense of community was not necessarily always a positive experience, with Sheila recalling the typical behaviour of some children as being luckily negated through her relationship with Uncle Lenny.

You know, so there was always a battle as to where to sit. Erm, for those that knew, you know, the ones innocent coming in might be splattered, even sort of spat on

sometimes, you know what kids are like. Awful. So that mattered a great deal, so I used to go up and sit in the back, again courtesy of Uncle Lenny.

As discussed in the previous chapter, the rural Welsh cinema would potentially aim to accommodate audiences from every class, due to the limited choice of venue in the smaller towns and villages. Such a social hierarchy within the auditorium also existed within Aberystwyth's matinee screenings, maintained not only by finances, but also by age, childhood social prominence or, in the case of Sheila, with a helping hand from Uncle Lenny. She also notes that Lenny would not usually provide free access to the matinee, as she would also be with her four siblings. Rather, his matinee benefit came in the ability to provide access to preferential areas of seating and the important social prominence, and safety from spit, that it represented.

The discussion of cinema staff is not confined to Sheila's discussion of Uncle Lenny. Rather, these staff members have become local or 'subcultural' celebrities within the context of these respondents' memories. For Chin and Hills (2008) 'subcultural celebrities' are those that are 'restricted rather than general', being recognised by specific audiences rather than being 'culturally ubiquitous' (p. 253). Ferris (2010) more overtly discusses the notion of a 'local' celebrity, which she argues is a specific type of subcultural celebrity (p.393). As discussed in relation to early cinema showmen in chapters three and four, Ferris states that this grouping can include local 'people who are seen, recognized, and followed by more people than they can keep track of' which includes 'the lifeguard at the pool, the cashier at the market, and the waitress at the diner' (ibid). I argue that the cinema staff member, especially the ever-present usherette, easily fits within Ferris' definition, given the

prominence and popularity of the rural Welsh cinema within a small population. Moreover, Rebecca Williams (2016) argues that the local celebrity, or 'localebrity', which she positions as being a prominent form of celebrity within 'smaller nations', can include 'local characters' as well as nationally recognised media figures (pp. 163; 166).

The notion of the cinema staff member as a local celebrity is not only potentially particular to the smaller town or rural setting, but also provides further insight into the impact differing experiences and perspectives of the rural can have on cinemagoing memories. Most often, discussion of cinema staff is in relation to the usherette, who frequently appears as a figure of authority in memories of misbehaving and childhood cinema attendance. Yet, some specifically note the importance of knowing and being familiar with employees of the cinema in relation to localness. Respondent 133, who attended the cinema in and lives in the small rural town of Crickhowell, recalled that one 'advantage' of attending a rural cinema over an urban venue was that 'you knew everyone in there. The projectionist and the ushers were locals.' Similar sentiments are further vocalised across the interviews too, with the managers, usherettes and projectionists providing a familiar and human link between respondents and cinema. It is arguable, that in a small community such as Aberystwyth, cinema employees become local celebrities. As Hipkins et al (2018) note in relation to rural Italian audiences of the 1950s, such frequent interaction and familiarity with cinema employees results in a prominence of anecdotal memories surrounding them (p. 122). Such anecdotes have already been recalled in relation to Sheila's "Uncle" Lenny and are also evident within the recollections of other interviewees. Recollections of staff reflect the age of the respondent when they were at their most habitual period of Aberystwyth cinemagoing. For Sheila, this was her childhood, where she has fond memories

of Uncle Lenny turning a blind eye, the Coliseum's resident ice cream vendor, who she recalls calling aunty, as the seller of 'half time' treats, and the strict usherette, who would flash a torch in the direction of any misbehaviour or noise. Marvin's employee stories mostly revolve around the usherettes of both the Coliseum and Celtic cinemas, who he also refers to as being strict enforcers of good behaviour:

I remember being erm the lady, the usherette in the Coliseum, erm, who if you were talking she'd come and flash the light on you and threatened to evict you unless you stopped talking [laughs] because you were distracting people.

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, discussions of misbehaviour are rarely provided in a first-person narrative, with both Marvin and Sheila positioning themselves as witnesses not participants (notable here through the repeated use of 'you'), of the usherettes' discipline. It is notable, however, that their childhood memories focus on the disciplinarian role of the town's usherettes. Whilst a sense of fondness for the memory is suggested by Marvin's laughter, perhaps due to reflecting upon childish behaviour through his current perspective as an adult, other cinema staff members are recalled by both as being more positively received at the time. Whilst Sheila has fond memories of 'Uncle' Lenny and 'Aunty' ice cream vendor, Marvin details the lasting impression of the Celtic and Conway manager's sharp dressing style of a tuxedo and dark, slicked-back hair. Indeed, this recollection is so vivid that it becomes an iconic memory, with Marvin admitting that 'I don't know if he dressed like that all the time or if that was just one particular image stuck in my mind'. The usherette then takes the form of the school teacher or mother in the cinema, the ever-present prowler of the auditorium, seeking out noise and misbehaviour. Whilst

management, such as Lenny or the sharp dressed manager of the Bath Street cinemas, would almost certainly have the same response to noise and misbehaviour as the usherettes if faced by it, these less prominent figures represent a warmer association with the cinema.

Conversely, Declan, who was a university student during this same period, does not mention Lenny or the ice cream vendor. Rather, he primarily recalls a drunken projectionist, who would leave the cinema mid-film for the pub across the road.

Because the thing about the Coliseum was that the films frequently broke down, and somebody had to go running across the road to get the projectionist out of the pub. It was called The Bluebell in those days. He was always in there, he'd just set the film up and go there.

Declan mentioned the projectionist a few times over our hour together and always did so with a humorous tone. Not once did he portray the projectionist's drunkenness or disappearance to the pub as an overtly negative experience, instead indicating, by saying that this was 'the thing about the Coliseum', that it was simply part of the cinemagoing experience at the Coliseum, akin to the expectation of matinee rituals or being disciplined by the usherette was for Sheila and Marvin. Indeed, the same projectionist is recalled by a small number of questionnaire respondents of a similar age to Declan, with questionnaire respondent 1 recollecting that Coliseum audiences 'often' had to wait for the inebriated projectionist to repair the film. At no point is the projectionist reflected upon as being unprofessional. Rather, his drunkenness has become part of the lore surrounding the

experience of Aberystwyth cinemagoing in the 1960s and the 'pot luck', as described by Declan, experience of attending the Coliseum and wondering whether the projector would breakdown and the projectionist would have to be retrieved from the pub or not.

Whilst Sheila and Marvin recall the town's usherettes as strict disciplinarians of childhood misbehaviour, both Declan and Liana have a more sympathetic viewpoint from their days as student cinemagoers. The couple separately reflected upon the difficulty of the job the usherettes of the town faced, particularly in relation to the physicality of the role faced by the usherette of one of the Bath street cinemas. Liana describes how the usherette 'had to go under the barrier to get into the sweetie place' and that 'as she got older and older' the task clearly became more difficult.

Declan describes the Bath Street usherette as a 'fantastic lady', who he would 'always have a chat with' when purchasing confectionary. Though discussing local news anchors, Kerry Ferris (2016) argues that the recognisability of local celebrities 'opens the door' for unsolicited approaches and interactions from members of the public (p. 231). Declan and Liana, perhaps due to their first engagements with the town's usherettes coming as adults, as opposed to through childhood, view the usherette as more of the type of local celebrity discussed by Ferris than the disciplinarian presented by others. Indeed, Declan also shares in Liana's sympathy for the physical nature of her work:

I always felt very sorry for her because, unlike now, where she had her booth ... she has a booth to go into, erm, the ... there's a door, the top part of which becomes the

counter ... It was two halves, and she had to crawl underneath the bottom one to get at the counter and then open the top.

Two very different sets of memories of Aberystwyth's usherettes have emerged from this project's interviews, evoking different age and cultural perspectives of the same period and venues. Moreover, both of these representations of the town's usherettes are arguably departures from the work of Eva Balogh (2017), whose study of urban British and American usherettes during the 1930s to 1950s positions these employees as mostly younger women who were often sexualised (by both their employers and audience members) in the same manner as on-screen starlets. However, Balogh's discussions of these usherettes as finding 'empowerment' (p. 44) through their work is perhaps signalled by both the disciplinarian type figure, who upheld behavioural standards in the cinema, and the dignified older employee who continued to work and perform her duties, as recalled by Declan. As discussed by Hipkins et al., usherettes and other staff members are prominently remembered through personal anecdotes, but also enter into cultural memory as local celebrities. These cinema staff members, both management and usherettes, are prominent and recognisable figures within such small communities, a tradition of rural Welsh cinemagoing that can be traced back to the touring showmen such as Cheetham, Haggart and Codman. Breda Luthar (2006) argues that local celebrities or well-known citizens act as representations of 'possible communities' (p. 143). For Luthar, this is not a matter of identification, rather one of 'recognition' whereby local celebrities, through their role within the community, 'promote a specific structure' of the notion of citizenship (ibid: 143-144). Though largely considering local politicians and community leaders, Luthar's arguments are applicable to rural cinema staff, especially usherettes due to their prominence within the

auditorium and disciplinarian role. Much like a local politician, teacher or police officer, for younger cinemagoers the usherette represents and enforces the local communities' behavioural values and rules. For older cinemagoers, however, she is representative of the 'Gwerin', a stereotype of the manual working rural Welsh figure that was popularised amongst the British middle classes through the poetry of W. J. Gruffydd (Brown, B. and Baker, 2011: 9).

Notably, Joyce, who was an adolescent during this period and also the only interviewee to not have lived in the town of Aberystwyth itself, barely mentions cinema staff. She is explicit throughout the interview regarding cinemagoing as being part of a social connection to a larger night out with her friends.

We used to go and do our clothes shopping in Neville's boutique then go to the cinema afterwards and later on to the White Horse, obviously [laughter] that was the place to go.

As discussed earlier, Joyce's more habitual cinemagoing didn't begin until adolescence, when she was allowed to take the bus to and from Aberystwyth, a fourteen-mile round-trip, unaccompanied. For her, attendance at the cinema formed part of a larger Saturday with her friends, who were making their first steps into young adulthood. Whilst cinema was part of this weekly ritual, it's clear that shopping and socialising were as integral to this as seeing a film. This evokes Karina Aveyard's (2018) arguments of the rural cinema being 'a place to go' for teenage audiences in areas with 'few social alternatives', whilst also providing a form of 'urban cosmopolitanism' that can mitigate the feeling of 'rural isolation' (p. 172). Again,

the discourse of 'fitting in' is prevalent, with Joyce referring to the cinema as being 'the place to go', indicating a particular form of rural youth community that was also present within the matinee-going memories of Marvin and Sheila. Perhaps this combination of distance, burgeoning freedom and a focus on cinema as part of a wider social event explains why Joyce, when asked directly if she recalls anything particular about cinema staff, gives quite a broad description of usherettes.

Oh yes, I don't remember them by name or anything, but I do remember them with the ice cream things....But I do remember in the Coliseum they used to come around with the ice cream. And I was telling you about the triple coloured ice cream, that was really exotic for Aberystwyth. You know, having three coloured ice cream. Erm, apart from that I don't really know of anybody at the moment.

For Joyce, the usherette was simply the seller of ice-cream. Indeed, the conversation becomes more focussed on Neapolitan ice-cream than discussion of staff members. The 'exotic' treat becomes representative of both the cinema and the collective Saturday day-out as an escape from her day-to-day life, as, in contrast to the other interviewees, the cinemas of Aberystwyth were not local, in both a geographic and cultural sense, for her. As such, attendance at the cinema remained a treat. For example, she states early into the interview that her attendance at cinema was not habitual, yet later argues that it was 'the place to be on a Saturday night' where they 'just went to see whatever was on'. This later statement indicates that a weekly ritual or habit dictated cinema attendance, not a desire to see a particular film. Indeed, Saturday cinemagoing was so normalised for her, and part of the wider social event, that she does not recognise it as a specific habitual act.

Local geography and the Rural Cinema

Differing perspectives and experiences of rural Wales and rural Welsh cinemagoing are further indicated through discussion of the physical and social geography of Aberystwyth and the surrounding area, particularly through memories of journeys to and from the cinema and in visiting the surrounding local businesses before or after a film. Writing about rural Belgian cinemagoing in the mid-twentieth century, Philippe Meers and Daniel Biltreyst (2018) state that the small-town and village cinema had a role as a community event and socialising space. In comparison to Belgium's city cinemagoers, the authors argue that rural audiences saw the interval as a chance to venture to the inhouse bar and for class barriers to drop and the 'local elite' to mingle and socialise with the working classes (pp. 147 – 148).^{vi} In the case of Aberystwyth, this evening cinema mingling seems to occur in the surrounding local businesses before or after the film, with the pub being the most frequently cited example within the interviews. This is perhaps somewhat unsurprising, as Aberystwyth had a relatively large number of pubs in comparison to its population, with many within extremely close proximity to the town's cinemas. Indeed, Joyce describes The White Horse, Bluebell and Central pubs as being laid out in a 'triangle' around the Coliseum, each within a thirty second walk of the venue. For those old enough, and some not, attending the pub after a film was a key element of the cinemagoing ritual, with Declan explaining that 'after the cinema we'd normally go to the pub' as part of the 'social event' of cinemagoing. For Marvin, visiting a pub before or after the film provided an opportunity to discuss the contents of the film, which he positions as being particularly important when dating.

Pubs were always part of the ritual when I was a student. Perhaps going for a drink before or after, sometimes both, especially if there was a date. Would be important. You know, so, and part of that was to talk about the film. Both before and after with whoever you're going with to see it.

The pub proves to be an important element of the Aberystwyth cinemagoing experience for respondents, part of the ritual as an opportunity to digest and discuss what had been seen with friends or with dates. Indeed, the cinema as a social space of courtship is another prominent theme that runs throughout the interviews. Whilst the cinema as a dating venue is not unique to rural cinemagoing, its pre-eminence as the setting of Aberystwyth's dating scene chimes with Aveyard's arguments about rural teenagers having few other social alternatives (2018: 172). The notion of a lack of social options for Aberystwyth's young adults is expressed, for instance, by both Liana and Sheila:

Yes, we did all our courting in the cinema. You'd go to the cinema. That was part of courtship and there wasn't a huge amount else to do in Aberystwyth in '68, '69, erm. There was a music club we used to go to. Sort of, folk music. Erm, but the cinema was what you did, basically. - Liana

If you were meeting a boy, inevitably you'd probably go to the cinema on...some of the dates with him, because there's nowhere else to go really, you know. – Sheila

Whilst Kuhn's study of 1930s cinemagoers identifies a similar viewpoint of the cinema as being 'the best place for courtship' (p. 164), even amongst urban audiences, there is a sense

of inevitability (e.g. 'the cinema is what you did', 'inevitably you'd probably go the cinema') in both Liana and Sheila's talk about the cinema being where dates would occur. Liana continues to bemoan the lack of options available to young adults within Aberystwyth, even as university students, noting that, even with the available student societies, 'there wasn't a huge amount to do in the evenings'. Dating, to a certain extent, was intrinsically linked to the cinema for these rural Welsh cinemagoers. Yet, it's important for both Liana and Marvin that the cinema attendance itself was driven by dating. Marvin attended Aberystwyth University and explains that his cinema attendance during this period became far less frequent than in his childhood and that dating was one of a few occasions that was a lure to the auditorium.

If I had a girlfriend I'd go with the girlfriend, something to do with the girlfriend.

Rather than going with mates. No, you could ask a girl out, ermm you know, to go to the cinema, it was almost. It was a bit more attractive...I felt it was more attractive to the woman than just asking her out for a drink.

Notably, Marvin considers asking a date to the cinema as being a more 'attractive' option than the pub, pointing to the auditorium as a culturally acknowledged location for courtship. For Liana, it seems that her Aberystwyth cinemagoing almost entirely revolved around dating Declan.

In my third year, Declan was abroad err for his French degree. So, I didn't go so much, then. Because, we were "studying", in inverted commas. And also, as I say my girlfriends weren't that interested in particular films. So, erm, if I did want to go

I...maybe I'd find somebody to go with? But I was, I was, "he's abroad, I can't go, I can't go by myself he's abroad!"

The link between the cinema and courtship within Aberystwyth is clear, one which was arguably a reciprocal relationship. Whilst there were few other social options for teenagers in the local area, with the cinema providing somewhere to be and something to do, the auditorium proved to be a socially preferable space for courtship, attracting those who may not have otherwise attended.

The social geography contained within memories of Aberystwyth's Silver Age cinemagoing is not limited to pubs, with sweet shops, fish and chip shops and even local traditions featuring within the landscape of their memories. Sheila's memories of the typical Saturday morning walk to the cinema during childhood present other nuances of rural localness:

Well, we walked. Yeah. 'Cos we only lived in Trefechan, just over the bridge. So it was very easy to walk. You just knew you'd get up, get dressed and mum would hand me the money, "look after your brothers and sisters" and then we'd just sort of toddle our way over the bridge. You'd stop at the Bon Bon on the way, depending on how much money mam had given you sometimes we used to call and see, my grandmother lived in town, so sometimes we'd call on her first...in the hope that she might give us a bit of extra money [laughs] to go in with.

The perceived safety of the local rural community is demonstrated here, with Sheila and her siblings being allowed to walk unattended – toddling their way over the bridge - from a

relatively young age from their home, to the cinema and back again. Hipkins et al. (2018) note a similar sense of safety within rural Italian communities, where even 'newcomers' to a town would feel safe in allowing their children to visit the cinema unattended (p. 128). Also depicted here is the multi-generational nature of rural communities. Sheila, Marvin and Joyce all indicate that their grandparents lived locally to them growing up in the Aberystwyth area. For both Marvin and Sheila, the connection to the local cinemas is intertwined with their grandparents, with Marvin's grandfather having at one time been a commissionaire at the Coliseum and Sheila's grandmother having worked at the Pier Pavilion cinema. Growing up, Sheila referred to this grandmother as 'Nana Pier', to differentiate her from 'Nana Parcau', who was named after the area of Aberystwyth she lived in.

In relation to travelling to and from the cinema, Joyce presents an issue of rural Welsh cinemagoing that is potentially unique to those who lived more remotely, in the villages, hamlets and extra-rural areas of Wales. Whilst Marvin, Sheila, Liana and Declan were all within walking distance of the cinema during their time in Aberystwyth, Joyce and a number of questionnaire respondents faced issues of transport, including having to commonly miss the end of films to catch the last bus back to their village.

So, I always had to catch the quarter to nine bus, and inevitably you'd have to miss half the second film, which was usually the one, the big one on the bill you know, you'd have the B film first then the A film. Erm and I can remember sort of having to rush, to run for the bus [laughs] and be really annoyed with my parents all the way home, huffing and puffing really annoyed with them.

Similarly, questionnaire respondent 119, who travelled to Abergavenny from the small hamlet of Llanvair Cross to attend the cinema, has a sole striking memory response of ‘missing last half hour of film so not to miss last bus home!’ The bus was not entirely recalled as a negative experience, however. Whilst walking to the cinema offered Sheila the opportunity to visit her grandmother and engage with her siblings, public transport offered those who lived more rurally the opportunity to forge new relationships. Indeed, Respondent 168, who lived in the village of Brynamman, argues in response to question seven – which asked respondents if they considered there to be advantages or disadvantages of rural cinemagoing compared to living in an urban environment – that ‘no, it was an adventure. Friendships were formed just waiting for the bus to go home again’. This discourse of the cinema trip as an adventure, like Joyce’s discussions of the cinema being part of a wider day out with friends, is distinct from that presented by those who lived locally to a cinema. Those who grew up in local proximity were part of a pre-existing collective, whereas those who moved to the area later, such as Liana and Declan, integrated frequent cinemagoing as a convenient part of their social lifestyle. Issues of distance and, often infrequent, public transport present experiences of cinemagoing unique to the extra-rural when compared to not just the urban, but also the rural town or village that had its own venue.

Memories of stopping at the local sweet shop on the walk to the cinema are common when discussing the journey to and from the cinema, with the Bon Bon, as mentioned by Sheila, being the outlet of choice. Located on Terrace Road, it was in close proximity to the Coliseum and Bath Street cinemas, as with the triangle of pubs mentioned earlier, and this

convenience and superior selection of products to the cinemas likely explains its popularity with respondents over other vendors.

There was a shop in [pause] Terrace Road called the Bon Bon...We used to call in there to get some [pause] some sweets. They had a far better selection than in the cinema. – Declan

The Bon Bon yes, yeah. As I said you used to have, you used to have pop in bottles, glass bottles. So there wasn't this...popcorn and big buckets of coke and stuff in those days. You took your coconut ice in your pocket and that was it basically, you didn't have drinks and hot dogs and stuff like that [laughs]. – Joyce

It was Bon Bon and it was a very old-fashioned sweet shop that had sweeties in jars, so we'd always go to Bon Bon and get a quarter of something. – Liana

Memories of stopping at the sweet shop chime with Kuhn's (2002) arguments concerning 'memory maps', the *mise en scene* of a memory narrative constructed to geographically frame the recollection (p.18). The Bon Bon then acts as a cultural example of such *mise en scene*, due to its prominence as part of the cinemagoing landscape within the interviewees' memories. Marvin is the only interviewee to not directly name the Bon Bon, sweets or ice cream at all, instead discussing post-matinee visits to a fish and chip shop. Much like the earlier discussion of pubs, visiting a sweet shop is by no means unique to rural Welsh cinemagoing. However, the specificity and frequency in mentions of the Bon Bon go some way in illustrating the prominence of a singular shop within rural cultural memory.

Within the recollections of respondents there are memories that are potentially more unique to Aberystwyth, as they are linked to the local geography and landscape of the town. Aberystwyth has a long promenade in close proximity to the Coliseum and Bath Street cinemas, the views and walks associated with Aberystwyth's seafront prompt quite visceral memories amongst interviewees. Declan directly compared the experience to his hometown of Barry in South Wales, noting how this type of experience would not be possible in that urban environment.

In the summer what we used to like to do was to come out of the cinema and find it was still light and go for a walk up and down the prom. Err, that is a really strong memory for me. You know, coming out of to the cinema at quarter past 10 and stepping outside, going about three minutes and it was still – not sunshine – sunset had passed but you could still see the fantastic view up to North Wales. That was something worthwhile. You didn't get to see that in Barry or Cardiff, in the middle of that built up area, the town. The sun setting was absolutely worth seeing. You used to look forward to just that month.

Sheila, who unlike Declan was born and raised in Aberystwyth, discusses the promenade as a place for her and her matinee-going friends to 'hang out' after the cinema, particularly during periods of warm weather. The promenade is also home to one of Aberystwyth's unique local traditions, 'kicking the bar'. This is the practise of physically kicking a section of the promenade's end railing, located just outside the university's seafront residences. Various theories surround why this is done, ranging from fending off the spirits of hanged

men to copying the actions of Prince Edward who, during a visit to the town, reportedly placed his foot on the bar to tie his shoelace. A plaque attached to the bar itself hypothesises that the tradition began as a means for male students to grab the attention of the occupants of the then all female halls of residence. Regardless of its origins, it is ingrained within the cultural knowledge of local population of Aberystwyth, and is a tradition orally passed on to every incoming year of undergraduate students. Michael Woods (2011) argues that local traditions within rural areas 'reinforce community coherence' and are a valuable element in the celebration of rural identity (p. 211). For Liana, kicking the bar became part of the summer cinemagoing ritual, 'If it was summer we'd go for a walk on the prom afterwards, because everybody goes for a walk on the prom afterwards, kick the bar.' The practise of the summertime post-cinema promenade walk and bar-kicking as a cultural event is indicated by Liana's reference to 'everybody' doing so. For her, this was a common act for cinemagoers during the summer months, further signified by a collective discourse use of 'we'd' and 'everybody'. Although an Aberystwyth specific memory, one uniquely linked to the town's geography and social history, the incorporation of a local tradition into cinemagoing memories and activities highlight the unique elements of cinema culture that can be uncovered through the study of the rural.

Conclusion

This chapter has employed a 'history from below' approach to reject any notion of rural Wales as a homogeneous set of experiences and identities. In terms of rural Welsh cinemagoing it is clear, from the memories gathered and analysed here, that differing cinemagoing experiences were informed by rurality. This has been particularly evidenced through memories of matinee-going, cinema staff and engagement with local geography

and traditions. Saturday morning matinee attendance is presented by Marvin and Sheila as a rite of passage, an experience shared with their peers that, as children living within a close-knit small-town, was of great social importance to them. Ultimately, their weekly attendance at the matinee and taking part in repeated audience rituals has rendered these memories as discursively atemporal, moulding together Kuhn's conceptions of anecdotal and repetitive discourse tropes as well as Stacey's arguments concerning iconic memory. Yet, Joyce, who grew-up some eight miles outside of Aberystwyth in the village of Talybont (which had no cinema), positions childhood cinemagoing as an infrequent and special experience, one which was recalled prominently through the use of Kuhn's anecdotal register and with a high degree of temporal specificity. Cinema, for Joyce, became more prevalent as a habitual social event during her teenage years, where it became an integral aspect of weekly trips to Aberystwyth with her friends and represented the increased freedom she was afforded during this period of her life.

Memories of cinema staff members not only present differing perspectives based on rurality and age, but also contain differences from findings within scholarship on the subject that is more focussed on the urban. Eva Balogh has presented the usherette in urban Britain and America as a typically younger woman, who was sexualised by her employers and audiences, but also empowered through her authority within the auditorium. Such authority is presented through Sheila and Marvin's matinee-going memories of the usherette, though with little lasting impact due to the repetitive memories of misbehaviour amongst the audience, and Marvin having memories of the Coliseum's usherette 'being easily wound up by us children when we were there'. However, this disciplinarian was remembered as an older woman, who Marvin and Sheila both recall as being related to the cinema's

management, notably different to the young corporately hired employees that Balogh's research discusses. In contrast, Declan, a university student during this period who had grown up in urban Cardiff, recalls the town's usherettes in a sympathetic manner due to the physical nature of their work and advanced age. Joyce only briefly mentions usherettes as providers of food, having not been a matinee-goer in her youth and her teenage memories being focussed on the social aspects of cinemagoing and – again, unique in comparison to the other, less rural interviewees – issues of transportation.

This is just one example of rurality and local geography informing the cinemagoing experience, with Joyce standing alone in her reliance on the bus or catching lifts with friends. In contrast, those who lived more rurally whilst growing up (Marvin and Sheila) or during their time in Aberystwyth as students (Declan and Liana) were able to easily walk to and from the cinema. Indeed, Marvin and Sheila particularly place the cinema within their own personal local geography, orally mapping the physical location of where relatives lived in relation to the cinemas, as well as discussing grandparents who had worked at the venues, such as Sheila's 'Nana Pier'. As such, the *localness* of the town's cinemas is not just a matter of geography or proximity for Marvin and Sheila, as it arguably is for the other interviewees, rather it is tied to their own heritage as members of multi-generation local families.

The exploration of cultural geography, Jeffrey Klenotic (2011) has argued, is a vital function of the New Cinema History following the 'spatial turn it has taken', one which has prompted cinema historians to consider the 'psychogeography of place and space' (p. 61). Indeed, beyond the cinemas themselves, certain fixtures of Aberystwyth's local geography were

mentioned across the interviewees, regardless of their experience and perspective of rurality. These include the Bon Bon sweet shop, the 'triangle' of pubs (as described by Joyce) located near the town's cinemas, and the promenade. Equally, as was notably identified in relation to dating, the cinemas of Aberystwyth were presented by respondents as one of the few social options for younger people in the town. Whilst not suggesting a homogeneous rural experience – due to nuances such as Liana's recollections of 'kicking the bar' – the collective memories of these locations do highlight Aberystwyth's 'particularity of place' (Caughie, 2016) in relation to the social contexts of cinemagoing within the area.

Ultimately this chapter, through the analysis of interviews and complementary questionnaire data, has illustrated that rural Welsh cinemagoing was not a homogeneous set of experiences. Rather, this study has presented nuances and variances of localised cinemagoing memories informed by differing perspectives of rurality, and indicated the value of applying such a micro-history approach to the study of both rural and local cinemagoing.

ⁱ Question three: 'Did you go to the cinema primarily for the film, the social activity or both? Do you think this changed at any point during your life and, if so, can you say when and why?'

ⁱⁱ Question six: 'If you would visit more than one cinema, can you say why?'

ⁱⁱⁱ Question three: If you would visit more than one cinema, can you say why? (E.g. Did they show different films? Were they nicer or cheaper than each other?)

^{iv} Question six: Did you go to the cinema primarily for the film, the social activity or both? Do you think this changed at any point during your life and, if so, can you say when and why?

^v Question seven: Do you think there were any advantages or downsides of going to a rural cinema as opposed to one in a big town or city? If so, could you say what they were?

^{vi} I would argue that there is some equivalency here to matinee-going in Aberystwyth and Sheila's memories of sweets being shared amongst the young audience, even to those who could not afford to bring any.

Conclusion

This research project has sought to use archival and ethnographic methodologies to explore rural Welsh cinemagoing and exhibition histories, having been born out of a desire to fill the void within existing cinema history scholarship concerning rural Wales. To achieve this, three central research questions were posed in chapter one:

- What was the evolution of exhibition in rural Wales, how does this compare to research findings on South Wales, England and other rural areas of the world, and what factors shaped or hindered the development of dedicated cinemas in rural Wales?
- What social, religious and cultural factors, issues of national identity or other aspects impacted on cinemagoing habits, perceptions (including modes of memory reclamation) and exhibition practices in differing areas of rural Wales?
- How did (and do) the cinemagoing audiences of rural Wales consider themselves in relation to definitions of the rural, and what differences or similarities are there between the cinemagoing habits, perceptions and exhibition practices of those communities that class themselves as more rural compared with those close to metropolitan areas?

This conclusion critically assesses how successfully these questions have been answered, through a discussion of my overall findings and analysis.

Methodology

Whilst the methodological approaches of this project have been detailed elsewhere in this thesis, I will here address some limitations that became evident during the data gathering and analysis stages of this research. As outlined in chapter five, 252 questionnaires were completed in either physical or digital form. Whilst this number of responses was not disappointing, especially given the niche requirement of having memory of attending rural Welsh cinemas prior to 1970, with more time and resources I believe an even higher number of responses could have been garnered. As the questionnaire was designed, for comparative purposes, to elicit responses from across rural Wales, and not just the case-study town of Aberystwyth, this limited the potential for attending physical locations to distribute a physical copy of the questionnaire. During my master's research, which focussed on just one cinema, I was able to make several visits to the venue to distribute my research questionnaire; in doing so, I also became a relatively visible figure, resulting in both myself and my research becoming known amongst local audiences. It took several visits to the cinema during that research period for the completion frequency of questionnaires to rise beyond just two or three per attendance. I would argue that this was due to a building of trust between myself and these audiences, as well as the growth of my own confidence as a researcher. A trial run of distributing physical questionnaires for this PhD project was made at Pwllheli's Neuadd Dwyfor cinema, which resulted in a single questionnaire completion, yet required a 140-mile round trip and an overnight stay. Unlike my previous research, which considered historical and current perceptions and uses of the cinema, this doctoral study specifically required respondents to recall their cinemagoing prior to 1970. This resulted in a much more difficult experience in identifying and approaching potential

respondents. Most of those I spoke to were too young and a couple even took mild offence in my approaching them and assuming they were old enough to have memories of pre-1970s cinemagoing. Ultimately, and as discussed in more detail in chapter five, the utilisation of social media to distribute a digital version of the questionnaire (as well as my website providing more detail about the project) to an extent alleviated the need for costly – both in terms of time and finance – trips across Wales. However, this did largely limit responses to those with access to social media or internet enabled devices. As demonstrated in chapter five, whilst such internet and social media access is considerably higher at the time of writing even compared to a few years ago for the over 50s, a larger version of this project, with more researchers involved or greater financial resources, may have been able to garner further responses via non-online dissemination.

I would also like to note here the relative lack of archival data drawn upon in the fifth and sixth chapter in comparison to the two preceding them. Chapters three and four are heavily informed by archival data, partly enforced by the lack of existing ethnographic sources relating to that period that I have been able to locate, and the period under investigation being outside what is now possible in terms of eliciting recollection through original ethnographic data collection. My initial intention was to interweave the ethnographic findings and analysis of chapters five and six with relevant archival data relating to the period of discussion – largely the 1950s and 60s. Some valuable archival sources were uncovered, including a relatively complete ledger for Aberystwyth's Coliseum cinema, as well as various local and national newspaper articles and advertisements. However, as these chapters and their content developed, the value of such sources in contributing to the presented arguments diminished. Indeed, it is my belief that their integration could have

seemed forced or unnecessary. For example, in chapter five I discuss a group of male respondents who overtly recall integrating tropes taken from the Western genre into their childhood play activity. Whilst I have archival proof of Westerns playing in the Coliseum cinema from both ledgers and newspaper advertising, the integration of this into the chapter does not further the quality or validity of the discussion, not least due to respondents commonly framing these memories as a repetitive occurrence, rather than in relation to one specific film or instance of attendance. These archival sources were not uncovered at a loss, however, as they proved to be valuable as prompts or through informing questions and discussion during the interview process. Furthermore, the archival data gathered for this period will be of use for future research and outputs, where perhaps the ethnographic and the archival will have more value when used in direct synergy.

A final consideration relates to asking respondents about their ethnicity and national identity. In the initial questionnaire, I omitted such a question, instead focussing on age, class and gender as the personal information requested for each respondent. However, as the project developed and the importance of – particularly Welsh – national identity to some discussions and arguments became apparent, I decided to add a question regarding ethnicity and national identity to the set of follow-up questions I sent to questionnaire respondents, as discussed in chapters two and five. This included the option to select either Welsh or British, the results of which are again discussed in chapter five. However, not all questionnaire respondents provided contact details and of those who did, only twenty-one replied to the follow-up questions. Whilst the data gathered from these follow-up responses was valuable and useable in providing further detail about findings that were emergent during analysis of the original dataset, I would include the question on the original

questionnaire if I were to repeat the project. By doing so, this would have provided further data for analysis in relation to the link between national identity and cinemagoing within rural Wales during the Silver Age. For example, this would have created opportunities to cross-check respondents' given national identity against their placement within the Three Wales model, and to further test the validity and relevance of the model as a way of understanding cultural identities evident within cinemagoing memories of this period.

Main findings

With these cautions taken into account, I here present the following main conclusions:

Evolution of exhibition in rural Wales

I have explored the evolution of exhibition throughout rural Wales during this thesis, with a particular focus on the development of the medium during the 1890s and early 1900s. This period saw new exhibition technologies spread from the USA and France via England to urban then rural Wales, and discussion of this evolution has previously been missing from existing scholarship concerning Welsh cinema history. Whilst David Berry (1994) had covered similar ground in relation to the early appearances of the Kinetoscope and cinematograph in Cardiff, this thesis has provided new perspectives on early Welsh cinema history by considering the spread of these technologies to more rural areas. A number of factors that shaped the emergence of cinemagoing as a familiar part of rural Welsh social life have been discussed here, including the importance of bazaars and later touring showmen to introducing rural regions to the cinema technology directly and physically, whilst local and national newspapers provided articles and advertisements that introduced, to potential audiences, the concepts associated with these new technologies.

A key finding of this thesis, when considering the history and evolution of rural Welsh cinema exhibition, relates to the showman as a local celebrity figure and their often-complex relationship with civic endorsement, with both Cheetham and Haggar being well known local figures by the height of their exhibition careers. Indeed, the touring showman and their role in introducing cinema to rural or remote areas, on a global scale, is receiving increasing attention (Klenotic 2018; Moore, 2018; Vélez-Serna, 2018a). This thesis, however, differs from the majority of these works in positioning rural touring Welsh cinema showmen as building a deep familiarity with the communities they visited, aiding later settlement through fixed-location venues. This is in contrast to the works of Klenotic and Moore, who have studied touring showmen who covered areas much more vast than rural Wales and who faced more competition. By operating within a smaller nation, Cheetham and his contemporaries such as Haggar were able to remain somewhat local figures across multiple areas, becoming known to both audiences and civic bodies.

Indeed, John Caughie (2016: 28) argues that touring showmen within Scotland's rural small-towns benefitted from the endorsement of local political and religious institutions and would often make note of it in their advertisements. However, it could be argued that civic endorsement, from local government figures, was not quite as impactful within Wales as compared to Caughie's findings on rural Scotland. Rather, what was crucial in the rural Welsh context was how the showman managed a number of relationships, of which the local council was but just one. For example, Cheetham had a negative relationship with the local council in Rhyl, but an objectively positive one with both the town's press (arguably biased due to Cheetham's purchasing of advertising space) and audiences, as evidenced by

the issues relating to his cinema signage. Cheetham's local celebrity image pre-dated his cinema career in Rhyl, and the local council had disapproved of his previous career as a seafront phrenologist and electric healer. However, in other areas such as Aberystwyth, this image was freshly built around Cheetham's touring and fixed-location cinema operations and was much warmer as a result. Cheetham utilised marketing techniques that prominently highlighted his name and hyperbole surrounding the qualities of his projection technology, films, and auditoria. Ultimately, this rendered his name as synonymous with a quality experience, one that was arguably tailored to the specific region of Wales he was operating within and its unique cultural demands.

Social, religious and cultural factors and their impact on rural Welsh cinemagoing history and memory

This thesis has identified a number of social, religious and cultural factors that impacted on both practices and memories of rural Welsh exhibition and cinemagoing. Moreover, these factors are not homogenous, rather rural Welsh exhibition and cinemagoing histories are shaped by the differing contexts found across the region. In addition, this thesis' timeline of investigation roughly spans from 1894 to the start of the 1970s, a vast period of time that not only saw cinema evolve from technological show-piece to a key part of everyday social life within Wales (and globally), but Wales itself witness a great deal of social, religious, cultural and economic change. The works of Bert Hogenkamp (1985), Stephen Ridgwell (1995; 1997) and Robert James (2007) have specifically considered the role of the South Wales mining institute cinema in relation to the labour movement of the 1930s; whilst Steffan Moitra's (2012) work explores post-war issues relating to these venues, including the national decline of cinema attendances and resulting closure of independent cinemas,

as well as the impact of this on the tension, as similarly considered by James, between the educational agenda of mining institutes and the financial benefit to screening popular films. In focusing away from both this time period and the South Wales region, I have been able to uncover new findings that further indicate cinema's importance within the social and cultural evolution Wales experienced during the twentieth and late nineteenth centuries.

I argued in chapter one that considering films to be a reflection of society at their time of production is at odds with the type of revisionist film historiography with which this thesis engages. Accordingly, I am cautious in using the term 'reflect' to refer to the ways in which cinemagoing and exhibition interact with such social, cultural, religious and economic matters and their evolution. Yet, it is clear that the cinema provides some level of indication of local and national social changes. This is exemplified by the differing Sunday opening practices present across Wales during the early periods of fixed-location exhibition. In some areas, the closure of the cinema on a Sunday echoed the hosting of sacred concerts during the touring era, whilst, in towns such as Aberystwyth, Sunday opening related to audience demands informed by their social and cultural demographics. Issues of national identity and engagement with national anthems represent another indication of rural Welsh cinema as reflective of social change. The 1950s and 60s saw a rise in Welsh nationalism, particularly in North Wales. As discussed in chapter five, some respondents who identified as Welsh and lived in areas associated with nationalism would reject the playing of 'God Save the Queen' at the end of performances by either leaving earlier or refusing to sing. This rise of nationalism and rejection of a symbol of English rule is in stark contrast to cinema's beginnings in Wales, where scenes shot of the royal family were marketed as a chief attraction (Berry, 1994: 24) and London (or the opinions of those from London) was

frequently used within Welsh newspaper advertising by Cheetham and others, in both touring and fixed-location ventures, as a marker of quality.

Films have been observed within this thesis as having a cultural impact on modes of reclamation, chiming with Sue Harper's (2019: 690) recent argument concerning the 'vital' functions of film within cinema history, as well as Daniela Treveri Gennari and Sarah Culhane's arguments concerning the benefit of reincorporating the analysis of films and their histories back into the approaches of the New Cinema History. Elsewhere, my colleagues and I have argued that the employment of a more film-focused enquiry can uncover 'productive and illuminating insights' in response to the questions at the heart of the New Cinema History, particularly in relation to local variations of cinema history (Egan, Smith and Terrill, 2019: 682). Chapter five identified a prominent separation between those who discussed films in their reminiscence and those who recalled the social environment of cinemas, suggesting a validity in continuing to consider specific films to be an important component of cinema historiography. Whilst it was difficult to identify an indicative reason for this separation, some notable findings emerged from the exploration of it. For example, I identified middle-class respondents as placing a stronger emphasis on cinema environments in their memories, whilst working-class respondents more typically recalled films. This distinctive finding constitutes a modification to existing scholarship concerning class and audiences' focus on films, which, as indicated within Melanie Selfe's (2008) work on British regional cinema societies, has typically been considered to be a distinctly middle class preoccupation, particularly in the post-war period. Furthermore, the identification of the separation between ENV and FILM in my project responses prompted a closer analysis of audience memories concerning film, a focus that would have otherwise likely been

discarded in favour of social cinemagoing contexts, as influenced by the New Cinema History. Within this thesis, notable examples of films having a cultural impact on modes of memory reclamation include women's memories of watching films starring their favourite popstars, with such popstars being a cultural staple of the Silver Age on a global scale (Fowler, 2008: xiv – xv). This was observed as modifying the findings of Stacey (1994) and Kuhn (2002) who both presented women of the 1930s and 40s as typically recalling and discussing female film stars. Whilst my male respondents' memories of watching Westerns during adolescence is similarly observed by Kuhn in relation to her Golden Age audiences – due to the retained popularity of that genre within filmmaking and Saturday morning matinees during the Silver Age – the emergence of the popstar during the 1950s and 60s clearly informed this cultural difference in recollection amongst my female respondents.

The impact of rurality

The impact of rurality on the history of rural Welsh cinemagoing and exhibition has already been touched on during this conclusion. There are, however, key findings within this thesis directly related to the rural, either in comparison to urban cinema histories or to differing experiences of rurality, that provide new perspectives for both Welsh and rural cinema scholarship.

Social class has been an important point of discussion and analysis throughout this thesis, from the previously discussed variations in early exhibition practices informed by exhibitors targeting differing class demographics, to a significantly higher percentage of rural Mid and North Wales questionnaire respondents choosing the 'class wasn't an issue in rural Wales' option in comparison to respondents from the more industrial southern areas. A

consideration of class in relation to rural Welsh cinemagoing and exhibition allows for a more complete understanding of Welsh cinema history as a whole. As previously discussed, works concerning the working-classes of the southern mining communities have made great strides in exploring the influence of class on a specifically southern Welsh cinema history. This thesis then has sought to provide fresh contexts, uncovering the differing and often complex concepts of class that relate to rural Welsh exhibition and cinemagoing history. A key finding here is the role of the singular auditorium commonly found within rural Welsh villages or smaller towns, in comparison to experiences of urban centres such as Cardiff. Whilst cities such as Cardiff housed multiple venues targeted at a range of classes, and mining communities had a more defined working-class populous that suffered from mass long-term unemployment more than any other area of Britain during the 1930s (Ridgwell, 1995: 593), rural Welsh towns and villages often had one cinema auditorium that aimed to accommodate the region's more diverse and complex class structure; a feature of rural Welsh cinemagoing that continues to be evident across the period of study.

As argued by Brad Beaven (2005: 194), in relation to British cinemagoing history more generally, areas that were more 'socially mixed' would maintain the preservation of 'social distinction' within the auditorium through differing admission price and quality tiers. This is evident within rural Welsh cinema both through the popular advertising phrase of 'popular prices' during the first quarter of the century of the twentieth century – typically ranging between one-shilling to three-pence – and within some questionnaire respondents' memories of wanting to literally and socially move upwards in seating quality. As such, varying levels of rurality present differing experiences of rural Welsh cinemagoing. This was further evidenced through discussion of children's matinee attendance, more commonly

experienced within the rural Welsh small-town, where respondents positioned the weekly ritual as a formative childhood experience, one that was shared predominately with their peers. For small-town matinee respondents, childhood cinemagoing memories lack discursive temporal specificity, with the frequency of attendance and the repetitive traditions within the auditorium having stripped the memories of specific dates and occasions. Yet, these memories are not presented by interviewee respondents as detached from them, rather they contain combined hallmarks of Annette Kuhn's (2002) anecdotal discourse and repetitive registers, treating the combined memories of matinee-going as almost an atemporal experience through their reminiscence. Meanwhile, those who lived more rurally, in an area with no cinema or one that did not host a matinee, recall childhood cinemagoing as a striking and highly anecdotal event, one that, even if not a necessarily rare event, involved greater levels of planning and transport. Joyce, an interviewee who lived in a village with no venue, presents childhood cinemagoing as a treat, often experienced with family or with friends as part of a birthday party or similar event. As she grew older, and public transport and then cars became available to her, the cinema became part of this new-found freedom and a key aspect of her teenage social life, whereas small-town respondents frequently discuss their freedom to walk to the cinema from a young age. What these findings indicate is not only the need to consider rural cinema history in comparison to the urban and indeed to other globalised rural contexts, but also the absolute importance of approaching rurality not as a narrow label for a singular experience but as a flexible term covering a range of rural contexts, informed by varying social, cultural and geographical factors.

What next?

This doctoral study has explored new ground in the study of Welsh cinema history by considering the rural and moving away from the dominant study of the industrial south. There is, however, more work to be done in the study of rural Welsh cinemagoing and exhibition history on a micro level. There a number of findings from this thesis that warrant further investigation, whilst there are certainly factors of rural Welsh cinema history that have yet to be uncovered and could prove valuable in further exploring the important functions of cinema as part of rural Welsh social life. Indeed, as discussed elsewhere in this thesis, the tenets of the New Film History and New Cinema History traditions have pushed scholars to explore micro-histories, with global examples of such micro-histories emerging in relation to both urban and rural cinema histories (Biltereyst and Van de Vijver, 2016; Lozano, 2017; Erdoğan, 2019). Arguably, the existing work concerning South Wales' mining communities during the first half of the twentieth century has begun to approach this, with multiple scholars providing differing contexts and approaches to the study of cinemagoing in this specific geographic and social area.

More specifically, I call upon scholars to explore factors such as the relationship between Welsh nationalism, Welsh language films and cinema history. This topic is touched upon in chapter five of this thesis, though most respondents state they have not seen a Welsh language film and the questionnaire had no specific question relating to nationalism. Yet, a topic as important to modern Welsh social history as this warrants attention, particularly as the Welsh nationalist movement has such strong ties to the arts (Leese, 2006: 76). Such a project would benefit from a fluent Welsh speaking researcher and the topic deserves a specific focus, building on the relatively brief discussions of it present here. The labour movement was a pivotal element of South Wales' social history during the twentieth

century, and work concerning Welsh nationalism and how it is represented through cinemagoing and exhibition history could prove to be of similar importance for West and North Wales.

Elsewhere I have explained the reasoning for the relative lack of research findings focused on the 1930s and 40s in this thesis, which were enforced by the limitations of accessible data from an ethnographic standpoint and a decision to focus more on the early history of rural Welsh cinema from an archival one. Yet, this period has received relatively large amounts of attention by film historians concerning Britain more generally, and within the small number of studies concerning a more urban Welsh cinema history. It would be foolish then to argue that this Golden Age of British cinema does not warrant further investigation *specifically* in relation to rural Wales. Indeed, this is not least due to the impact of World War Two, where many rural areas of the country were used to house evacuees from England's cities (Field, 2011: 20). This is a research topic that I have been considering since 2013 when, during my master's study, a respondent mentioned that she had initially moved to the Tywyn area as an evacuee and experienced a culture shock due to the area's lack of venues and the delay in film release dates compared to her experiences in England. This master's research also indicated that touring cinema was still somewhat active during the 1930s and 40s in rural Wales, a matter which was further indicated by various posters I uncovered advertising film screenings in various satellite communities of Aberystwyth, all on different days, typically located in village halls and seemingly hosted by the same exhibitor. A further study of such factors, and their impact on rural cinemagoing, would then bolster existing scholarship concerning this period within British cinema history, adding Welsh contexts to a topic that has largely concerned England. As stated elsewhere in this

thesis, accessing memories from 1930s and 40s is becoming increasingly difficult, so this research could potentially utilise pre-existing reminiscence documents such as letters, poems, essays, as similarly used by Sarah Neely (2019) in her research on rural Scottish cinemagoing,

Finally, a topic that has emerged from this research that I would like to explore not just in rural contexts, or indeed just in Britain, is the role of the usherette. This thesis has explored the role of the usherette in rural Wales, primarily during the 1950s and 60s, as a local celebrity figure: a person who is 'seen, recognized, and followed by more people than they can keep track of' and is typical to smaller communities (Ferris, 2010: 393). The questionnaire and interview data concerning usherettes from this project typically present this individual as an older woman, with Aberystwyth interviewees suggesting that many were part of the family who managed the venue. As chapter six explored, cinemagoers who attended the matinee typically recalled the usherette as a disciplinarian, whilst those who were older during the period had sympathy for them and the quite physical nature of their work. The role of the usherette has typically been considered from the point of view of those who had been usherettes, with Kuhn's (2002) work touching on the memories of British usherettes and Douglas Gomery (1992) briefly considering the experiences and working conditions of US ushers and usherettes. Richard Farmer (2016), in his chapter concerning World War Two cinema staff experiences, has similarly observed a lack of work focused on cinema staff members, arguing that cinema historiography's focus on audiences and texts has marginalised the role of cinema staff (p. 127). Eva Balogh (2017) has gathered and explored memories of being an usherette, in combination with archival materials, and positions both British and US urban usherettes of the 1930s through 50s as having a

‘cultural status that corresponded to that of the female starlet’ which created ‘an image that was loaded with fantasy and sexual appeal’, yet was a job that her respondents reflected on with pride and as empowering (pp. 44 – 45). Balogh’s findings present a stark difference to the rural memories of the usherette as depicted by my rural Welsh respondents, of whom none had actually been an usherette. This thesis has presented cinema staff members, particularly usherettes, as mediators between the screen and the audience. That is, they are part of the experience that, like audience memories of cinema environment or text, is decoded and experienced differently depending on personal, social and cultural perspectives. This understanding is an important contribution to the existing limited amount of work focussed on usherettes, and one that I will build upon in future research. As such, I plan on considering the role of the usherette within differing social and geographic contexts across Britain, not just from their own viewpoints and experiences but also from the perspective of audiences. If, as Balogh suggests, the usherette is viewed with the ‘cultural status’ of an on-screen star, then these prominent figures of the auditorium should be analysed accordingly, as (local) celebrities who were known and observed by audiences.

Principal Original Contributions

With the findings, limitations and potential for future research of this thesis discussed, I here conclude by underlining the principal original contributions that my research has made to existing scholarship. In terms of film and cinema history, this thesis has given further validity to the importance of studying both smaller nations and rural areas, through its exploration of rural Welsh cinema history. As mentioned elsewhere in this thesis, work concerning a ‘British’ cinema history often ignores the smaller nations of Britain, in favour of

the study of typically urban England. Both rural and urban Scotland have received a recent rise in attention, with notable works being published during the research stages of this PhD study (Caughie, 2016; Caughie, Griffiths and Velez-Serna, 2018; Neely, 2019). Equally, my research sits amongst a growing field of global rural cinema history studies, with recent publications emerging over the past half-decade offering notable findings that are useful for globalised contexts and comparisons of rural cinema history (Aveyard, 2015; Treveri Gennari, Hipkins and O’Rawe, 2018). This thesis then makes a number of contributions to the current ongoing spatial turn within cinema history studies. Indeed, it is one of only a handful of works that explores Wales’ cinema history and, amongst those works, stands alone in its dedicated focus on rural Wales.

This PhD has made a particularly prominent contribution to British, Welsh and rural cinema history studies through its active rejection of the notion of smaller nations or rural areas as being culturally or socially homogeneous. Where Wales has been mentioned in previous works, it is typically aggregated as part of an ‘England and Wales’ statistic, removing any form of Welsh specificity due to the disparity between their respective population sizes. Yet, findings of this research have pointed to elements of British exhibition practices and cinemagoing experience that are arguably unique to Wales. Existing Welsh cinema history studies have provided building blocks for a broader study of the country, yet, as discussed throughout this thesis, they have largely focussed on the South Wales mining communities of the 1920s until the early 1950s. My study’s rejection of a homogeneous conception of Wales has been aided by a macro approach to the study of rural Wales, as well as through comparison to the urban south, allowing for the consideration of differing areas of rural Wales and the distinctions in cinemagoing experiences across the region. The use of the

Three Wales Model supported this process, as did the use of the case study town of Aberystwyth as a complication of the model, in uncovering the nuances of rural Welsh cinemagoing history depending on location and social or cultural influences. Key findings extracted from both the archival and ethnographic research have pointed to issues of exhibition, audience experience, and cinema's relationship with existing civic bodies and institutions that have variations depending on the geographic, social and cultural nuances of the country's differing rural regions.

Beyond fresh geographic contexts, this thesis has also provided significant contributions to the temporal foci of both rural Wales and British cinema historiography. As already mentioned, existing works concerning Wales' cinema history have largely focused on one region, but also on the 1920s through to the early 1950s, a period which largely coincides with the Golden Age of British cinema attendance. As such, this thesis has greatly built upon the work of David Berry (1994), previously standing alone in his brief exploration of early Welsh cinema, by presenting new evidence of the evolution of early cinemagoing and exhibition practices within rural Wales between the 1890s and 1920s. On the other side of this dominant temporal focus, this thesis has explored what I have termed as the Silver Age of British cinemagoing, a period of study which has arguably been underexplored not only in Wales, but within British cinemagoing history more generally. Through an ethnographic focus on the Silver Age, I have explored the *particularity* of this period from which cinemagoing experiences reflected social and cultural influences that are specific to that era. These findings, including female teenage memories of popstars and the influence of Welsh nationalism's rising prominence, position the Silver Age as being a useful platform for challenging any view that there was a sudden disappearance of British cinemagoing culture

post the Golden Age. Indeed, it is evidenced within this thesis that the cinema remained an important facet of rural Welsh social life during the Silver Age. Whilst cinema attendances undoubtedly began to decline post the 1940s, as indicated by Stacey (1994), the lack of work specifically concerning the Silver Age has belied the cinemagoing nuances, perceptions and experiences potentially unique to the period. Again, there are issues relating to a spatial turn at play here, with these attendance statistics typically referring to Britain as a whole, resulting in England's relatively vast population negating any nuances of Wales specific attendances for the period. The memories collected during this thesis indicate that cinema remained a popular activity within Silver Age rural Wales, certainly for young audiences as reflected by matinee memories. Uncovering further rural Welsh cinema ledgers, such as that of Aberystwyth's Coliseum, would provide further evidence Wales' specific cinema-economy during the twentieth century.

Finally, this doctoral study has assessed and tested current approaches to film historiography, notably tracing the evolution of the field post Allen and Gomery's (1985) call for revision through to the divergences within the New Film History and New Cinema History traditions. Somewhat contrary to the approaches of the New Cinema History, the ethnographic work of this thesis has indicated the importance of films not only to audiences, but also as a point of exploration for researchers interested in a more thorough investigation of cinema's past. As such, this doctoral study provides substantial support to arguments for a realignment of the New Film and New Cinema historiography traditions, with the consideration of films in this thesis clearly aiding my discussion and analysis of localised social and cultural influence on cinemagoing experience and memory. Ultimately, this thesis has made fresh contributions to a number of areas within film and cultural

history, with the exploration of rural Wales' cinemagoing and exhibition past providing new findings and points of comparison for both a Wales-specific cinema history and British cinema history more broadly.

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Appendix One: Questionnaire Questions (English and Welsh)

Memories of Rural Welsh Cinemagoing (pre-1970)

ALL QUESTIONS RELATE TO YOUR CINEMAGOING ACTIVITIES PRIOR TO 1970 WITHIN RURAL WALES.

1. When were you going to the cinema in rural-Wales? Select as many that apply
 - a. 1920s
 - b. 1930s
 - c. 1940s
 - d. 1950s
 - e. 1960s

2. Which cinema(s) did you visit? (please include town/village and where you were living at this time)

3. If you would visit more than one cinema, can you say why? (E.g. Did they show different films? Were they nicer or cheaper than each other?)

4. At your peak, how many times would you say you visited the cinema a week on average?
 - a. Occasionally/no habit
 - b. Once a week
 - c. Twice a week
 - d. Three – Five times a week
 - e. Every day

5.
 - a. Do you remember watching films in a building that wasn't a cinema? For example, a town hall or assembly room? What type of building was it?

 - b. If so, was this regular or for special occasions?

6. Did you go to the cinema primarily for the film, the social activity or both? Do you think this changed at any point during your life and, if so, can you say when and why?

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7. Do you think there were any advantages or downsides of going to a rural cinema as opposed to one in a big town or city? If so, could you say what they were?
8. Who did you commonly go to the cinema with (tick as many as apply)?
- a. Friends
 - b. Family
 - c. For dating
 - d. With partners/spouse
 - e. As part of an organised social group (Scouts, W.I, film society etc.)
 - f. On your own
9. When you remember going to the cinema in rural Wales, what are the most striking memories that come to your mind?
10. When you were going to the cinema prior to 1970, what social class would you say you belonged to?
- a. Working Class
 - b. Lower-Middle Class
 - c. Upper-Middle Class
 - d. Upper Class
 - e. Class wasn't an issue in rural Wales
 - f. I don't know where I'd place myself
 - g. Prefer not to specify
11. What is your age now?
- a. 40-49
 - b. 50-59
 - c. 60-69
 - d. 70-79
 - e. 80-89
 - f. 90+
12. Sex?
- a. Male
 - b. Female
 - c. Other
 - d. Prefer not to specify
13. Would you like to take part in an interview regarding going to the cinema in rural Wales prior to 1970? If so, please provide your name and email address or phone number below (names will be changed in final thesis).

Please return to: Jamie Terrill, TFTS, Aberystwyth University, Parry-Williams Building, Aberystwyth, SY23 3AJ or email jrt6@aber.ac.uk

Atgofion am fynd i'r sinema yng nghefn gwlad Cymru (cyn 1970)

**MAE POB UN O'R CWESTIYNAU'N YMWNEUD Â'CH YMWELIADAU Â'R SINEMA CYN 1970 YNG
NGHEFN GWLAD CYMRU.**

1. Pryd oeddech chi'n mynd i'r sinema yng nghefn gwlad Cymru? Dewiswch bob un sy'n berthnasol
 - a. 1920au
 - b. 1930au
 - c. 1940au
 - d. 1950au
 - e. 1960au

2. I ba sinema/sinemâu oeddech chi'n mynd? (nodwch enw'r dref/pentref a ble roeddech yn byw ar y pryd)

3. Os oeddech chi'n arfer mynd i fwy nag un sinema, allwch chi ddweud pam? (E.e. Oedden nhw'n dangos ffilmiau gwahanol? Oedd rhai'n brafiach neu'n rhatach na'i gilydd?)

4. Ar eich anterth, sawl gwaith yr wythnos ar gyfartaledd fydddech chi'n mynd i'r sinema?
 - a. Yn achlysurol/dim patrwm
 - b. Unwaith yr wythnos
 - c. Dwywaith yr wythnos
 - d. 3–5 gwaith yr wythnos
 - e. Bob dydd

5.
 - a. Ydych chi'n cofio gwyllo ffilmiau mewn adeilad heblaw sinema? Er enghraifft, neuadd y dref neu ystafell gynnull? Pa fath o adeilad oedd e?

 - b. Os felly, oedd hyn yn rhywbeth rheolaidd neu ddim ond yn digwydd ar achlysuron arbennig?

6. Oeddech chi'n mynd i'r sinema'n bennaf i weld y ffilm, ar gyfer yr elfen gymdeithasol, neu'r ddau? Ydych chi'n meddwl bod hynny wedi newid rywbryd yn ystod eich bywyd ac os felly, allwch chi ddweud pryd a pham?
7. Ydych chi'n meddwl bod manteision neu anfantaision i fynd i sinema wledig yn hytrach na sinema mewn tref fawr neu mewn dinas? Os felly, allwch chi ddweud beth oedden nhw?
8. Gyda phwy oeddech chi'n arfer mynd i'r sinema (ticiwch bob un sy'n berthnasol)?
- a. Ffrindiau
 - b. Teuluc. Ar ddê
 - c. Gyda phartner/gŵr neu wraig
 - d. Yn rhan o grŵp cymdeithasol wedi'i drefnu (y Sgowtiaid, Sefydliad y Merched, cymdeithas ffilmiau ac yn y blaen)
 - e. Ar eich pen eich hun
 - f. Ar eich pen eich hun
9. O'r hyn rydych chi'n ei gofio am fynd i'r sinema yng nghefn gwlad Cymru, beth yw'r atgofion mwyaf trawiadol sy'n dod i'r cof?
10. Pan oeddech chi'n mynd i'r sinema cyn 1970, pa ddsbarth cymdeithasol oeddech chi'n perthyn iddo?
- a. Dosbarth gweithiol
 - b. Dosbarth canol is
 - c. Dosbarth canol uwch
 - d. Dosbarth uwch
 - e. Doedd dosbarth ddim yn bwysig yng nghefn gwlad Cymru
 - f. Dwi ddim yn gwybod ym mha ddsbarth y byddwn yn rhoi fy hun
 - g. Byddai'n well gen i beidio â dweud
11. Beth yw eich oedran nawr?
- a. 40-49
 - b. 50-59
 - c. 60-69
 - d. 70-79
 - e. 80-89
 - f. 90+
12. Rhyw?
- a. Dyn
 - b. Menyw
 - c. Arall
 - d. Byddai'n well gen i beidio â dweud
13. Fyddech chi'n hoffi gwneud cyfweiliad am fynd i'r sinema yng nghefn gwlad Cymru cyn 1970? Os felly, nodwch eich enw a'ch cyfeiriad ebost neu rif ffôn isod (caiff yr enwau eu newid yn y traethawd terfynol).

Dychwelwch i: Jamie Terrill, Astudiaethau Theatr, Ffilm a Theledu, Prifysgol Aberystwyth, Adeilad Parry-Williams, Aberystwyth, SY23 3AJ neu anfonwch ebost i jrt6@aber.ac.uk

Appendix Two: Follow-Up Questions Emailed to Respondents

Hello,

Last year you completed a questionnaire concerning my PhD research into the history of rural Welsh cinemagoing. Thank you for doing so, as it has been really beneficial to read about the role of the cinema within everyday rural Welsh life.

On the back of the fascinating responses received, I have a few follow-up questions. If you have a spare five minutes to reply to this email with answers, that would be really helpful.

For your ease, feel free to send your response back within a reply email – don't worry about sending as a Word document or anything.

If you would like to re-receive this email and questions in Welsh, then please let me know.

Questions (relating to your cinemagoing experiences prior to 1970):

1. Did you have any favourite film stars? If so, what do you remember about them?

2. What films do you remember being particularly excited to see?

3. Do you recall national anthems being played at the cinema? If so, what do you remember about the times when this happened (e.g. which ones were played, how you responded, etc.)?

4. Do you recall seeing any films that were in the Welsh language, set in Wales, or featured Welsh actors?

5. How would you describe your nationality and ethnicity? Delete as appropriate (you are under no obligation to answer this question).
 - White
 - Mixed/Multiple ethnic groups
 - Asian/Asian British
 - Black/African/Caribbean/Black British
 - Chinese
 - Arab
 - Other ethnic group

All the best and many thanks,

Jamie Terrill
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Institute of Arts and Humanities
Aberystwyth University, UK

<https://www.aber.ac.uk/en/tfts/study-with-us/postgrad/phd/phd-students/jamie-terrill/>

Appendix Three: Example of Social Media Questionnaire Marketing and Questionnaire Web Page



Jamie Terrill ▸ **Welsh History** ⋮

19 February 2017 · 🌐

Hi everyone, I'm a PhD student at Aberystwyth University researching the history of cinema and cinemagoing in rural Wales. As such, I'm looking for people with memories of going to the cinema in rural Wales to fill out my short research questionnaire.

Did you go to the cinema in rural Wales prior to 1970?

If so, please take a second to fill out my PhD research questionnaire (available in Welsh and English) about your memories and experiences of rural Welsh cinemagoing.

Links to the questionnaire and more info about my research available at: www.jamieterrill.com/research

Please feel free to share this with anyone else who may have memories of rural Welsh cinemagoing - it would be a great help!

Diolch yn fawr - Jamie



JAMIETERRILL.COM

Research | Jamie Terrill

Did you go to the cinema in rural Wales prior to 1970? If so, please spare a few minutes to complete a questionnaire about your memories and experiences of watching movies in rural

 3 6 comments 7 shares

 Like  Comment

Memories of Cinemagoing in Rural Wales

Atgofion am Fynd i'r Sinema yng Nghefn Gwlad Cymru

Did you go to the cinema in rural Wales prior to 1970? If so, please spare a few minutes to complete a questionnaire about your memories and experiences of watching movies in rural Wales.

Oeddech chi'n arfer mynd i'r sinema yng nghefn gwlad Cymru cyn 1970? Os felly, a fydddech cystal â chymryd ychydig funudau i lenwi holiadur am eich atgofion a'ch profiadau o wylio ffilmiau yng nghefn gwlad Cymru.

Links:

[CLICK HERE FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE QUESTIONNAIRE](#)

[CLICIWCH YMA AM HOLIADUR CYMRAEG](#)

About me and my research:

I'm Jamie Terrill, a PhD student at Aberystwyth University. My PhD project investigates the history of rural Welsh cinemas, as well memories of rural Welsh cinemagoing. This PhD project is funded and supported by the South, West and Wales Doctoral Training Partnership.

All names given will be changed in the final thesis. All questionnaires will be kept protected behind a password that only I have access to.

Contact jrt6@aber.ac.uk for more information.

Twitter: [@WelshCinemaProj](https://twitter.com/WelshCinemaProj)

Amdanaf i a fy ymchwil:

Jamie Terrill ydw i, ac rwy'n fyfyrwr PhD ym Mhrifysgol Aberystwyth. Mae fy mhrosiect PhD yn ymchwilio i hanes sinemâu yng nghefn gwlad Cymru, ynghyd ag atgofion am fynd i'r sinema yng nghefn gwlad Cymru. Mae'r prosiect PhD yn cael ei ariannu gan Bartneriaeth Hyfforddiant Doethurol Cymru, De a Gorllewin Lloegr.

Califf pob enw ei newid yn y traethawd terfynol. Bydd yr holl holiaduron wedi eu diogelu â chyfrinair nad oes neb ond fi yn ei wybod.

Cysylltwch â jrt6@aber.ac.uk i gael gwybod mwy.

Twitter: [@WelshCinemaProj](https://twitter.com/WelshCinemaProj)