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The Elision of Women's Labour in Ciné Clubs: Crystal Productions

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*The Elision of Women's Labour in Ciné Clubs:
Crystal Productions*

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University of West London

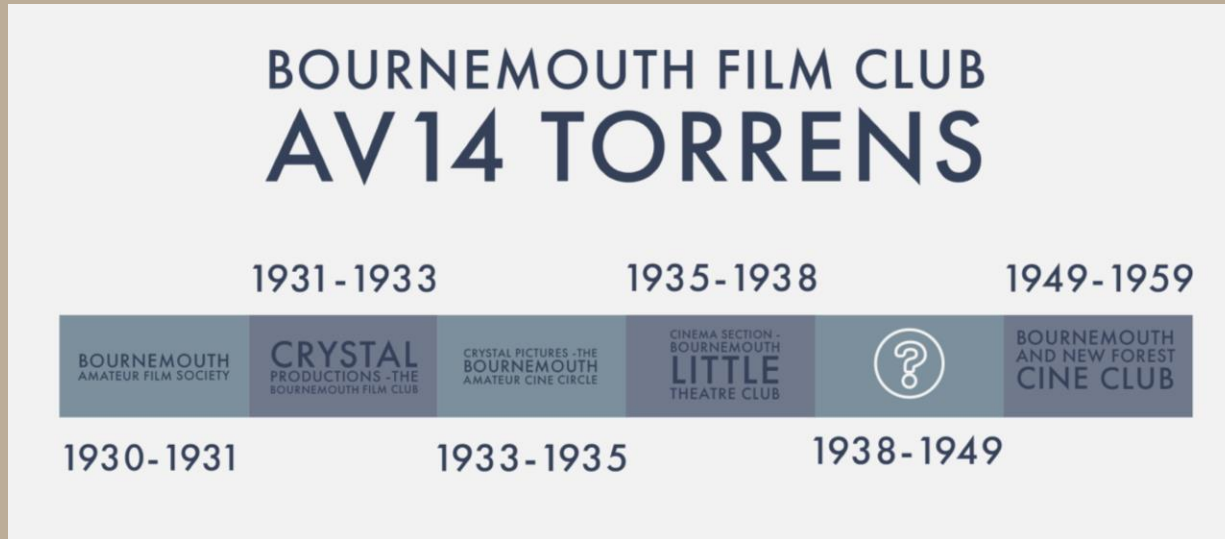
The Birth of the Ciné Club

- Cine clubs first appeared in the mid to late 1920s
- Boom period for amateur filmmaking really took hold during the early 1930s
- Cine marketing targeted women
- Perceived gender imbalance in cine clubs
- Women are less evident in archival records of cine clubs than their male counterparts.
- Gaines's (2018) idiom that women 'had the rug pulled from under them'.



Screen still from AV14/10, Crystal Productions. Courtesy Wessex Film & Sound Archive.

Who were Crystal Productions?



Collection Level Entry



Item Level Entry

Alt Ref No

AV14

Title

Torrens films

Date

1923-1966

Description

Cinefilm (16mm & 9.5mm): amateur films of Bournemouth area and family taken by R G Torrens, a member of Crystal Productions (Bournemouth Film Club)
Cinefilm (35mm; nitrate): Corpus Christi procession, Youghal, Eire, 1926; Pathe Gazette newsreel about wedding of Duke & Duchess of York, 1923.
Cinefilm (8mm): 'Perry on Front' (1936)
Scrapbook of press cuttings, programmes, etc. regarding Crystal Productions, 1930s-1960s.

AdminHistory

Mr Torrens lived at Forest Hill House, Rushall Lane, Corfe Mullan, Dorset.
Robert George Torrens (1903-1981) Torrens was a key member of the Bournemouth Amateur Film Society, which started in around January 1930.
Robert George Torrens BA, BDentSc. In the British Dental Journal, 7 July 1981 informs that: Torrens was born in Eire, he qualified [as a dentist] at Trinity College, Dublin in 1924. Not long after qualifying he and his family moved to Bournemouth and he practised in that town for the rest of his life.

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Bournemouth Amateur Film Society.

On Thursday last the Technical Committee held their first club meeting which was well attended by members. The evening was devoted to tuition in cinema technique and acting tests, under the direction of Mr. E. A. Guidotti, ably assisted by Mr. R. G. Torrens, who acted as cameraman and also arranged the lighting. Members will have an opportunity of seeing themselves on the screen at the next meeting of the series on Thursday, July 24th.

On Sunday afternoon a party of acting members spent an enjoyable time at Sandbanks, when a short comedy was "shot."

A tennis club is being formed by the social committee, and members and friends are invited to get in touch with the hon. secretary, Miss G. De Coninck, Flandris, Uplands-road, Bournemouth, who will forward particulars to all interested. A court at Dean Park is being reserved for the use of members.

Mr. J. Grime, the hon. secretary, being unable to give the necessary time to the work, Mr. G. F. Mapp, 44, Portchester-road, Bournemouth, has consented to take over his duties.

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Swanage Times & Directory - Friday 18 July 1930 p.2)



Screen still from AV14/12, Crystal Productions. Courtesy Wessex Film & Sound Archive.

1930

*Bournemouth Amateur Film
Society 1930 – Tests, 1930
(AV14/9)*

*BAFS Screen Tests and
Dramas, 1930 (AV14/12)*



Screen stills from AV14/12

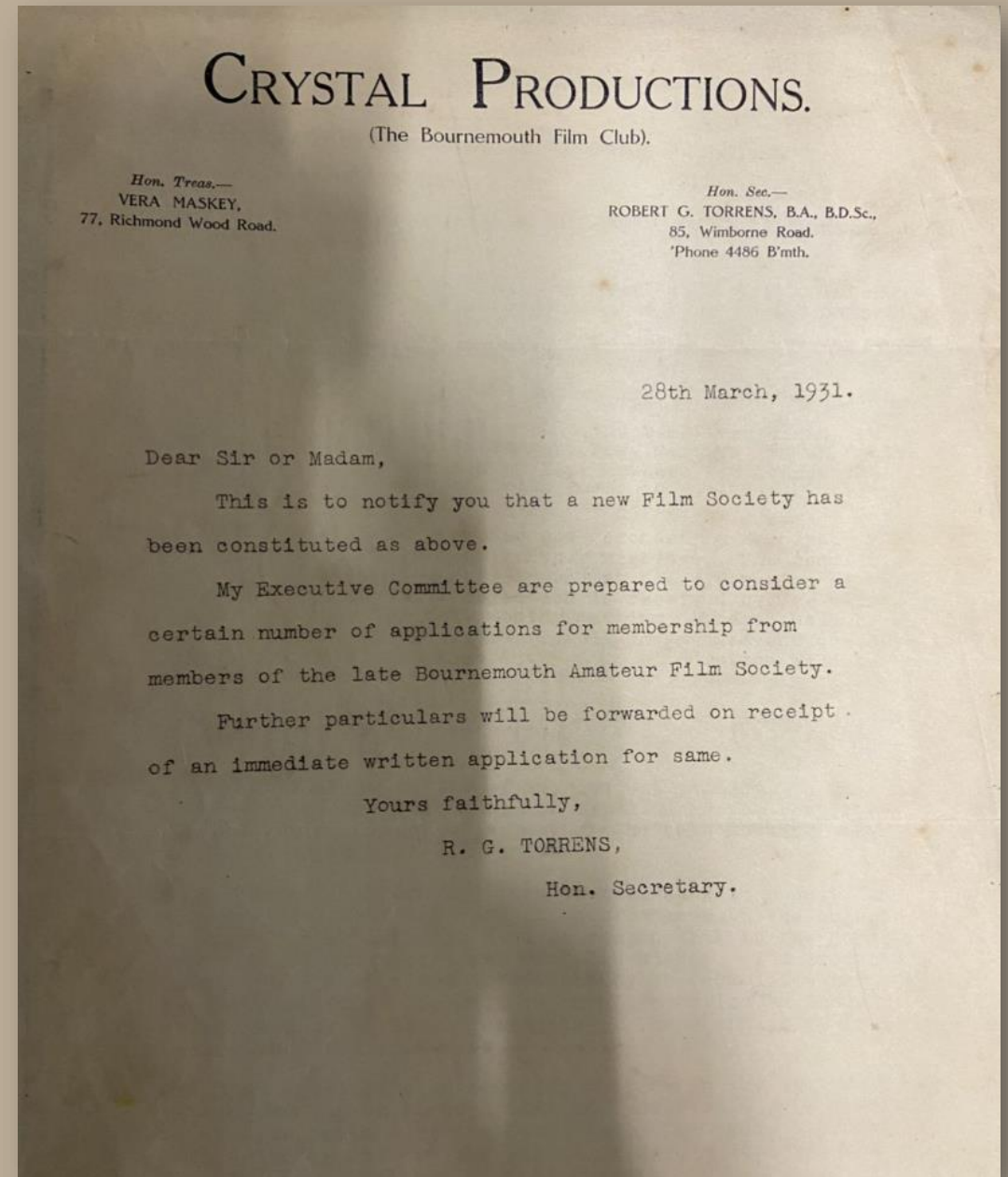
1931

Excerpts from the constitution:

'(a) To produce films, plays and other material for the screen and stage

(b) To arrange meetings for the private of public entertainment in accordance with the wishes of its members.'

'Any group members may form themselves into a unit for the production of material in accordance with the objects of the Club.;[...]



Screen stills from *Retribution* (AV14/10), 1930



Screen stills from *Where Bournemouth Dances* (AV14/6), 1930



1932



Screen stills from *The Broken Swastika* (AV14/4), 1932

1933

- *Words (1933) (AV14/1) (top right)*
- *Through the Guidebook (1933) (AV14/1) (below)*
- *The Hand of Fate, 1933 (AV14/2) (bottom right)*

'That we, as members of this Club repudiate the vile and slanderous rumours at present being circulated by malicious persons, which are absolutely unfounded, and that an open invitation be given through the Press to any interested members of the public to attend any of our meetings, which have been open at all times.'
particulars of meetings of the club may be attained from RG Torrens'

(Bournemouth Daily Echo, Saturday 13 May 1933)



Why and how have women's contribution to cine clubs been hidden?

- How they are catalogued – levels of record and cataloguing standards
- Reliance on depositor oral histories –where male club members have been custodians of a collection
- Patriarchal governance structures – automatically putting women in subsistence and below the line roles
- Reliance on documentary sources which prejudicial towards women -

YOU ARE WELCOME HERE = COME IN
[OH BY NOT THERE, IN THE CORNER; THAT'S NOT YOUR ROLE]
WOMEN? THERE WERENT ANY WOMEN, MOSTLY MEN



Dora Phillips filming *Hand of Fate*, AV14/D1

Attribution and its problems for women filmmakers

- Essentially - looking at parts of the catalogue, you just couldn't see women's labour – it was hidden.
- Pictured right Carol Hyde. As her appearance on screen implies, roles within club environments were fluid.



Screen stills from AV14/4 *The Broken Swastika* (1932).
Courtesy of Wessex Film & Sound Archive

Women in Crystal Productions

- **Dora A (née Cox) Phillips** (Camera for *Hand of Fate*, actor *The Broken Swastika*, Secretary 1936). Married mother, worked in the home – long standing member.
- **Carol (née Hyde) Bedington** (Story and titles on both *The Broken Swastika*, and *Retribution*. Director and producer on *The Broken Swastika*. Actor in *Retribution*. Unpaid domestic duties. Scenarios for lost film *Dramatics*.
- **Vera Dorothy Lyons (née Maskey)** Actor in (*The Broken Swastika* and *Retribution*. Scenario for *The Broken Swastika*. Worked as travelling beauty specialist.
- **Georgina (née De Coninck) Grey** (Hons Secretary, 1930) Music teacher who lived at home with her parents, later married Edwin C Grey (July 1941).
- **Rachael Terry** (Actor in *Retribution* and *The Broken Swastika*)
- **Kay Magger** (Actor in *The Broken Swastika*)
- **Muriel Beatrice M (née Cull) Farrow** (Honorary treasurer from around 1933)
- **Phyllis Baker** Actor *Hand of Fate*
- **Mrs Brazier**
- **Mallaam-Williams** (Secretary 1935)



Right: Dora Phillips pictured behind the camera on *The Hand of Fate*, with Robert Torrens

CRYSTAL PRODUCTIONS. =
Bournemouth Film Club.
First Annual Dance 115
AT
ALEXANDRA HALL, St. Peter's Road,
ON
SATURDAY, 2nd April, 1932,
TO
REX COYSH'S BAND
FROM
8-11-45 p.m.
TICKETS 2/6 (to include Refreshments).



Dora Phillips as Ann, in *The Broken Swastika*



Images from AV14/D1 scrapbook



Kay Magger in *The Broken Swastika*

KING'S HALL
*PHONE: Bournemouth 5555. Ext. 5.
**NEXT SATURDAY
IS FILM NIGHT**
A film of the Dancing will be taken
during the evening by the Bournemouth
Film Club. The film will be shown in a
Special Cinema Programme in the Lounge
during the week commencing Nov. 16th.
COME AND BE FILMED ON SATURDAY

