



PROJECTING THE ARCHIVE

Forbidden

Forbidden (aka Scarlet Heaven)

Director: George King
Production Company: Pennant Picture Productions
Producer: George King
Production Manager: Harold S. Richmond
Assistant Director: Stanley Couzins
Continuity: Shirley Barnes
Screenplay: Katherine Strueby
From a Story by: Val Valentine
Director of Photography: Hone Glendinning
Camera Operator: Bob Day
Editor: Douglas Myers
Art Director: Bernard Robinson
Dresses: Strassner
Cottons: Horrocks Ltd.
Wardrobe Mistress: A.E. Binney
Hairdresser: Jean Bear
Music: George Melachrino
Sound Supervisor: George Burgess
Sound Mixer: Cecil Mason
Cast:
Douglass Montgomery (*Jim Harding*)
Hazel Court (*Jeannie Thompson*)
Patricia Burke (*Diana Harding*)
Garry Marsh (*Jerry Burns*)
Ronald Shiner (*Dan Collins*)
Kenneth Griffiths (*Johnny*)
Eliot Makeham (*Pop Thompson*)
Frederick Leister (*Dr John Franklin*)
Richard Bird (*Jennings*)
Michael Medwin (*cabby*)
Andrew Cruickshank (*Inspector Baxter*)
Peggy Ann Clifford (*Millie*)
William Douglas (*Lawson*)
Dennis Harkin (*Bert*)
Peter Jones (*Pete*)
Dora Stevning (*Mrs Franklin*)
Erik Chitty (*Schofield*)
Audrey Teesdale (*Ethel*)
Mark Stone (*critic*)
Sam Kydd (*Joe*)
Eric Whittle (*Alec*)
UK 1949
93 mins
35mm

BECOME A BFI MEMBER

Enjoy a great package of film benefits including priority booking at BFI Southbank and BFI Festivals. Join today at bfi.org.uk/join

SIGHT AND SOUND

Never miss an issue with **Sight and Sound**, the BFI's internationally renowned film magazine. Subscribe from just £25*

* Price based on a 6-month print subscription (UK only). More info: sightandsoundsubs.bfi.org.uk

SIGHT AND SOUND

+ intro by film critic *Phuong Le*

Producer/director George King is a figure who has been unjustly neglected by British cinema historians. Often described as 'King of the Quota Quickies', he is generally written off as a hack who churned out cheap films of little merit. It is perhaps true that King was an astute businessman more than an 'artist' but out of the large filmography he built up during the 1930s and 1940s there are several titles worth a second look.

King began working in the industry in the early 1920s after dropping out of medical school and he was employed by various film distributors to provide exhibitors with ideas for the promotion of their films. His directorial debut was the 1930 film *Too Many Crooks* which was also the screen debut of actor Laurence Olivier. Always an artisan, King managed to shoot the film for Fox in three days. Those who worked with King concur on the fact that he was one of the most dapper directors around and would never appear on set without a suit and tie. No doubt he could afford this sartorial elegance due to his technique of making quota quickies, described thus by Derek Threadgall in *Shepperton Studios: An Independent View*: 'Other producers made this type of film for 15s a foot and sold them for one pound a foot. King managed to make them for 14s 6d a foot, which gave him a Rolls Royce car and a riverside house in Halliford.'

By the late 1940s, George King's filmmaking activity had slowed almost to a halt and *Forbidden* was the last film he directed. The film's nine-week shoot began on 19 July 1948 at Riverside Studios under the working title *A Lady Was to Die*. King surrounded himself with technicians and creative personnel with whom he had worked on previous projects; Harold Richmond had been his production manager on and off for 17 years and art director Bernard Robinson had worked on *Crimes at the Dark House* and *The Case of the Frightened Lady* (both 1940). Katherine Strueby wrote the King-produced films *The First of the Few* (1942) and *Candlelight in Algeria* (1943) (the latter of which he also directed), both made under the banner of British Aviation Pictures, the company King set up with Leslie Howard.

Hazel Court had also worked with King before, on the 1946 film *Gaiety George*, a biopic of Irish stage producer George Edwardes. Although she was only 22 when she made *Forbidden*, she already had a large filmography under her belt, having debuted on the screen at the age of 18 in the 1944 Ealing film *Champagne Charlie*. Kenneth Griffith had appeared two years earlier in King's *The Shop at Sly Corner* in which he played a similarly nasty character; from the very brief mention of *Forbidden* in his autobiography, it seems he was fed up with this typecasting and was ready to move on.

Canadian-born Douglass Montgomery had begun his film career in America in the early 30s, appearing opposite Katharine Hepburn in *Little Women* (1933) and starring in *Waterloo Bridge* (1931) billed as Kent Douglass to avoid confusion with fellow MGM star Robert Montgomery. When war broke out, he took a break from the screen to join the Canadian army; his comeback was announced in *Picturegoer* in 1945, when he was in Britain to make Anthony Asquith's *The Way to the Stars* (1945).

REGULAR PROGRAMME

African Odysseys Double Bill:

Who in da Mornin + Sugar Cane Malice

Sat 24 Aug 14:00

Woman with a Movie Camera:

D.E.B.S. 20th Anniversary + panel discussion

Sat 24 Aug 20:00

IN PERSON & PREVIEWS

Preview: Kneecap + Q&A with director

Rich Peppiatt and actors Mo Chara,

Móglai Bap and DJ Próvai

Thu 22 Aug 20:20

Preview: Starve Acre + Q&A with director

Daniel Kokotajlo and further guests TBA

Wed 28 Aug 18:10

S.O.U.L Fest Opening Night: Sing Sing + Q&A

with guests TBA

Fri 30 Aug 18:00

Doctor Who: The Happiness Patrol + Q&A with

actors Sylvester McCoy, Sophie Aldred, script

editor Andrew Cartmel and director Chris

Clough

Sat 31 Aug 11:30

S.O.U.L. Fest Shorts and Awards

Sat 31 Aug 15:20

S.O.U.L Fest Preview: Mr Loverman + Q&A with

actors Lennie James and Ariyon Bakare, author

Bernardine Evaristo and producer Irma Inniss

Sat 31 Aug 18:30

S.O.U.L Fest UK Premiere: The Lost Holliday +

Q&A with writer-director Jussie Smollett, actor

Vivica A. Fox and executive producer Tressa

Smallwood

Sat 31 Aug 20:45

BFI PLAYER

We are always open online on BFI Player where you can watch the best new, cult & classic cinema on demand. Showcasing hand-picked landmark British and independent titles, films are available to watch in three distinct ways: Subscription, Rentals & Free to view.

See something different today on player.bfi.org.uk

Join the **BFI mailing list** for regular programme updates. Not yet registered? Create a new account at www.bfi.org.uk/signup

Forbidden is set on Blackpool's Golden Mile where Jim Harding and his assistant Dan Collins set up shop selling Jim's own recipe hair restorer. Despite the Blackpool setting the film was made entirely in the studio with stock footage used for establishing shots and some back projection.

Post-war British cinema produced a great many crime dramas, which some have argued constitute a British film noir. *Forbidden* falls into the sub-category described by Raymond Durgnat in *All Our Yesterdays* as 'Close pent-up guilt', in which a normally mild middle-class character is driven to murder. In this type of film, Durgnat explains, the murders are usually by some slow method, in contrast to American noirs in which less subtle techniques are employed. In addition, he states, 'most such films involve us so closely with their murderers as to induce an involuntary identification with them, often coupled with a certain sympathy for their motives and an antipathy towards their victims.'

Critics found much to praise in the film. *Monthly Film Bulletin* considered that 'Douglass Montgomery is at his best as the overwrought Jim and Patricia Burke is convincing as his selfish ambitious wife' but noted that Hazel Court's accent lapses too often to make her portrayal of a cockney entirely credible. (Perhaps the bout of tooth trouble, which kept her away from the set for several days, accounts for her lack of vocal dexterity.) *Today's Cinema* regarded the film as having 'all the qualities of drama, suspense and thrill which go to the making of tingling melodrama.'

Josephine Botting, Curator, BFI National Archive, May 2001