

Institution: DE MONTFORT UNIVERSITY
Unit of Assessment: 36 Communication, Culture and Media Studies
Title of case study: British Film History
<p>1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)</p> <p>This case study describes positive impacts upon cultural life and cultural wellbeing through public broadcasts, lectures, exhibitions, interviews and film screenings, which led to enhanced appreciation of film texts and film history among a general audience. In addition, this case study documents further positive impacts upon regional identity, and on preservation, dissemination, and advocacy towards policy-making concerning screen heritage, and the economic benefits that have resulted from Chibnall's work with the charity The Cinema Museum, the small and medium-sized businesses Odeon Entertainment and elevenfiftyfive, and the multinational business Volkswagen.</p>
<p>2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)</p> <p>This research into popular British cinema 1927-72 was conducted over twelve years from 2000, while Chibnall was Principal Lecturer and later Professor of British Cinema at De Montfort University. It used the methodology and approaches associated with what has been termed the 'new film history': working with archival documents and emphasising production history, social and cultural context, and government policy, in addition to textual analysis. Building on Chibnall's previous work on British crime and horror films and 'neglected' directors, the research considered films that had previously received little academic attention, and was particularly interested in what they (and the critical discourses through which their reception was mediated) revealed about the industry and society that produced them. The research began with in-depth studies of individual films (with Chibnall as sole investigator), and continued with a two-volume study of an area of film production and exhibition (with Chibnall inviting Australian film professor, Brian McFarlane (Monash) to collaborate on the second volume). This study of the British 'supporting feature' was enabled by a Research Leave grant from the AHRC (2005). The on-going research project has recently encompassed the study of British film censorship 1945-1957 at the invitation of the British Board of Film Classification (BBFC) for inclusion in its official history published in 2012. The BBFC covered the research expenses for Chibnall to work in its archives during 2011. The research project has been broadly historically revisionist in tone, has revealed new knowledge from archival sources, and suggested fresh interpretive frameworks. It was principally disseminated in five books published by I.B. Tauris (in association with Turner Classic Movies) and the British Film Institute. The books were always intended to have 'impact' by making high quality research accessible to an educated, but not exclusively academic, readership without compromising rigour. All five books have captured the interest of the BBC and led to appearances on, or contributions to, television or radio programmes. In addition, Chibnall edited and contributed original research on 1930s film publicity to a book on the British film poster by independent researcher, Sim Branaghan.</p>
<p>3. References to the research</p> <p>*Steve Chibnall, <i>Get Carter</i>, London: I.B.Tauris, 2003 Steve Chibnall, <i>Brighton Rock</i>, London: I.B. Tauris, 2005 Sim Branaghan (ed. Steve Chibnall), <i>British Film Posters</i>, London: BFI, 2007. Steve Chibnall, <i>Quota Quickies: The Birth of the British B Film</i>, London: British Film Institute, 2007 *Steve Chibnall and Brian McFarlane, <i>The British B Film</i>, London: Palgrave/BFI, 2009 (BBF) *Steve Chibnall, 'From <i>The Snake Pit</i> to <i>The Garden of Eden: A time of temptation for the Board</i>', in Edward Lamberti (ed.), <i>Behind the Scenes at the BBFC: Film Classification from the Silver Screen to the Digital Age</i>, London: Palgrave/BFI, 2012, pp.29-49.</p> <p>All monographs have received highly favourable reviews in academic journals (including <i>Screen</i>, <i>Journal of British Cinema and Television</i>, <i>Screening the Past</i>, and <i>Historical Journal of Film</i>, etc.)</p>
<p>4. Details of the impact</p> <p><i>The British B Film</i> was given a book launch and accompanying film season at BFI Southbank in December 2009. Chibnall wrote programme notes for the screenings and introduced two of the films with co-author Brian McFarlane. The introductions were followed by book signing sessions outside the BFI bookshop, where the majority of purchasers were not academics. The <i>British B Film</i> book and film season were the subject of articles in <i>The Independent</i> (Geoffrey Macnab,</p>

11/12/09) and *Sight & Sound* (Andrew Roberts, 'Playing to the Stalls', Jan 2010, pp10-11). The book was reviewed by the *TLS*, 15 January 2010 by Jonathan Barnes, who wrote: 'Both an invocation and a loving catalogue, the book is rich in detail drawn from the history of the Bs before changing taste, alterations in the law and the irresistible rise of television rendered the species extinct.' British B Film seasons inspired by the book also took place at Phoenix Square, Leicester (Jan 2010) and The Duke of York's, Brighton (Mar 2010). Chibnall was an invited speaker at both of these events (19/1/10 and 7/3/10). He was also interviewed for the BBC Four television documentary on the British 'B' Film, *Truly, Madly, Cheaply: The British B Film*, (21/06/08, d. Hans Petch), and for two BBC radio programmes on small British film studios (Radio 4, 29/03/10) and the work of short-film producer, Harold Baim (Radio 4, 26/04/08).

The publication *The British B Film* was the subject of an internet forum on the premiere British cinema fan site www.britmovie.co.uk, receiving 95 posts (the second highest of 436 threads in its 'publications' strand) and 6,973 views (accessed 13/06/13). It was the best-selling book on British Cinema on www.amazon.co.uk in December 2009, and Chibnall received a number of emails and phone calls from members of the public saying how much they have enjoyed reading it and asking further questions. He received a personal letter from veteran film producer/distributor Richard Gordon (now deceased) in New York, congratulating him on the research. The book sold out its first print run inside a year and a revised version has been re-printed. Sales from November 2009 to June 2013 were 1,392.

Both *The British B Film* and the earlier monograph *Quota Quickies: The Birth of the British B Film* included accounts of the censorship of B films (researched from primary sources) and Chibnall was consequently approached (2011) by the BBFC to write part of the Board's centennial history, published by BFI/Palgrave in 2012. The period chosen was that covered in *The British B Film* (1945-57). Chibnall's discoveries concerning the relations between the BBFC and local censorship bodies were included in the BBC Radio 4 documentary *The Naughty Films Committees* (12/11/12), commissioned by the Square Dog production company, for which Chibnall was a consultant and interviewee. He also gave an invited public talk on the topic at The Cinema Museum, London, to a full house (40 approx, 18/5/13).

The impact of Chibnall's monograph on *Get Carter* has built steadily since its publication in 2003. It was initially described in a review in *The Times* as 'a model of the genre' (monographs on single films), 'brilliant' and 'illuminating' (25/03/04); and in the *Veteran* (the magazine for British cinema and Television Veterans) as an 'enthraling monograph' which 'gives this British crime masterpiece the critical attention it has always deserved' (Winter 2003, p18). Chibnall's *Get Carter* was quoted in the UK Film Council's *Stories We Tell Ourselves: The Cultural Impact of UK Film* (2009, p.35), which features *Get Carter* as one of its three cover images and as a case study. *Quota Quickies* is also cited in the report, and features prominently on the Wikipedia site about the film.

In October 2010 Chibnall was contacted by a marketing company, elevenfiftyfive, organizers of one-off cinema events to promote Volkswagen cars, to act as a consultant on their 'See Film Differently' screening of *Get Carter* at Newcastle Racecourse (02/12/10). Chibnall curated a 100-piece exhibition (largely drawn from his own archive) at the Racecourse, introduced the screening, gave an interview to BBC Radio Newcastle (02/12/10), and did a book signing. Audience members responded enthusiastically to Chibnall's contribution to the event, and he was retained as consultant for subsequent Volkswagen screenings of *Trainspotting* (1996) in Edinburgh in February 2011, *A Clockwork Orange* at Brunel University, Uxbridge in June 2011, and the world premiere of the restored version of *Kind Hearts and Coronets* at Henley-on-Thames in August 2011, supplying educational captions for the accompanying exhibitions. More than 23,000 people applied on-line for tickets to these screenings. At Henley, Chibnall joined director Terence Davies for a post-screening discussion. The event was covered in BBC Radio 4's news & current affairs coverage.

The 40th anniversary of *Get Carter* in 2011 aroused considerable media interest, and Chibnall was at the heart of the film's commemoration. He gave interviews about the film to Radio 4's *The PM Programme*, *BBC Radio Scotland*, and two newspaper journalists. He was a guest of honour at the Newcastle celebrations of the film in March, supplying an exhibition and conducting a *Get Carter* master class with the film's director Mike Hodges for 100 'A' Level Film Studies students at the Tyneside Cinema (11/3/11), signing books and contributing commentary to the special VIP locations bus tour. At the reception, the film's director declared publicly that *Get Carter* would not

have generated so much attention without Chibnall's book, which showed why the film should be taken seriously. The film has become part of the folklore and cultural heritage of Tyneside.

Chibnall's expertise on low-budget British films in particular and British cinema more generally, has also been in considerable demand from DVD releasing companies since 2008. He supplied sleeve notes to the best-selling release on the BFI's 'Flipside' label, *Here We Go Round the Mulberry Bush* (released 2010), as well as over 20 releases by Odeon Entertainment in its 'Best of British' series. He also supplied images from his archive for sleeve art and stills galleries for these releases and others in the 'Flipside' and 'Best of British' series, and moderated cast and crew commentaries for three DVD and Blu-Ray releases from Odeon Entertainment. The work drew on research carried out over the previous decade, as well as necessitating fresh investigation of primary sources, and added value to commercial products that made elements of British screen heritage available to a wide public. Odeon's 'Best of British' discs typically sell 3,750 copies.

Further invited public lectures and broadcasts drawing on Chibnall's research on British cinema include an introduction to *Miracle in Soho* (1957) at BFI Southbank (14/11/12), talks at two public libraries – Gateshead (15/3/13) and Bedford (20/3/13). As part of the Cine Sisters and Hammer Films research and dissemination projects, Chibnall has also conducted on-stage career retrospective interviews at London's The Cinema Museum (unless otherwise indicated) with the following actresses: Carol Cleveland (31/3/12 and 1/3/13, Derby Quad Cinema), Vera Day (28/4/12 and 13/7/12, Leicester Phoenix), Madeline Smith (13/7/12, Leicester Phoenix), Martine Beswick and Virginia Wetherell (13/12/12), Francoise Pascal (7/3/13), Margaret Nolan and Caron Gardner (28/3/13), Angela Douglas (11/5/13). Average ticket sales for these events were c75, and thus they all directly benefited the charities and small businesses involved.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

all links accessed 30/09/13

For Geoffrey Macnab's review of the British B Film book and season at the BFI in Southbank please see: <http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/films/features/british-bmovies--cheap-thrills-from-the-past-1837814.html>. *Sight and Sound* and the *TLS* are subscription-only publications.

The British B Film book gathered several enthusiastic reviews on amazon, which can be accessed via this link: http://www.amazon.co.uk/British-B-Film-Stephen-Chibnall/dp/1844573192/ref=la_B001H9TF68_1_2?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1380216591&sr=1-2 These reviews included comments such as "As a fan of the British 'B' film this book is exactly what I'd hoped for, providing an insight into the production, success and eventual demise of the second feature" or "In all one of my best books of 2011" or "the narrative is excellent and the breakdown of actors, writers, directors, studios etc. has been well researched".

More information about BBC4's 'Truly Madly Cheaply' can be seen at this link; <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b00c7y7b> and more information about Harold Baim, including more details about the BBC Radio 4 programme can be seen at <http://www.baimfilms.com/telly-savalas-quota-quickies.asp>

Chibnall received a personal letter from veteran film producer/distributor Richard Gordon (now deceased) in New York, congratulating him on the research for *The British B Film*. This letter can be made available on request.

More information about the BBFC centenary project, and for confirmation that Chibnall was a contributor see <http://www.bbfc.co.uk/about-bbfc/bbfc-centenary/centenary-book> which includes the statement: "*Behind the Scenes at the BBFC...* marks an unparalleled collaboration between the BBFC and leading film critics, historians and cultural commentators. These writers, given unprecedented access to the BBFC's archives, chart the organisation's history alongside the cultural, social and political forces that have helped shape it."

According to Amazon, *Behind the Scenes at the BBFC* is currently the 9th best seller in the "computers and film" section, see <http://www.amazon.co.uk/Behind-Scenes-BBFC-Classification-Digital/dp/1844574768>. This site includes the following reviews from members of the public: "This book is edited by the BBFC so is factually accurate - unlike other books about the BBFC. Ideal for students of film and film regulation and also fascinating for anyone interested in the history of film in the UK." and "Complete, official history of the BBFC. Helped me a lot in completing my

dissertation (...) In fact, I may even read this again, for pleasure.”

Further information on the BBC's *The Naughty Pictures Committees* is available here:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/mediacentre/proginfo/2012/46/week-46-naughty-pictures.html> and a fuller description can be found on the Square Dog Production company's website; <http://www.squaredogmedia.co.uk/index.php/2013-01-24-17-59-37/2012>

The UK Film Council's *Stories We Tell Ourselves: The Cultural Impact of UK Film* report can be seen at: <http://industry.bfi.org.uk/publications?page=1&step=10&viewby=category&value=17065> *Get Carter's* Wikipedia entry can be accessed via this link: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Get_Carter and Chibnalls monograph is mentioned in the “home media” and “critical response” sections.

Evidence of Chibnall's involvement in the ‘See Film Differently’ *Get Carter* screening can be found at this link: <http://elevenfiftyfive.org/2011/03/02/volkswagen-see-film-differently/>. Elevenfiftyfive's promotional film of the Newcastle *Get Carter* screening shows part of Chibnall's introduction to the film, the exhibition he staged, his book signing session, and the comments of audience members, which indicate that their pleasure in viewing the film had been significantly enhanced by Chibnall's contribution to the evening. This film is available on You Tube via the following link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y86gKh8ghcQ>. Chibnall's contributions to the other elevenfiftyfive's films (the *Trainspotting* event in Edinburgh and *The A Clockwork Orange* event at Brunel) also show the exhibitions Chibnall captioned, and contains end credits to his work. These are also available on You Tube: *Trainspotting* can be accessed via this link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fzHmDhlRP2g> and *A Clockwork Orange* via this link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MmJms4OhSdw>. Chibnall's contribution to the world premiere of the restored *Kind Hearts and Coronets* at Henley-on-Thames is documented here <http://www.bleedingcool.com/2011/09/05/terence-davies-and-steve-chibnall-on-ealings-wickedlyblack-kind-hearts-and-coronets/>.

In personal correspondence, *Get Carter's* director, Mike Hodges, stated that "Steve Chibnall's closely researched book on *Get Carter* was largely responsible for the film finally being taken seriously. Written in 2003, some thirty years after I made the film, this book almost single-handedly pulled it out of the cultural vault into which it was banished shortly after its initial release. So effective was its deep analysis of the work that a later a survey of British film critics in the *Total Film* magazine voted it 'the greatest British film of all time.'" Copies of this correspondence can be made available upon request. This statement confirms and re-iterates what Hodges said during the 40th anniversary celebrations for the film. Evidence for the claims about the importance of *Get Carter* to the Tyneside cultural identity and heritage industry can be found in these two substantial reports from BBC's Look North dealing with the 40th anniversary of *Get Carter* and its importance to the North East. It is notable that in both these news reports the 40th anniversary is the first item: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eFwK-0uyaAE> <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qfq2N86OuoA>.

Odeon Entertainment's ‘Best of British’ series is responding to an audience desire for old British films that are no longer shown on mainstream media: <http://www.odeonent.co.uk/>. DVDs tend to start at ca. £10.00, meaning a typical release generates at least £37,500 revenue for the company. The accompanying booklets are promoted as adding value to the viewing experience. In personal correspondence (which can be made available upon request) Odeon's MD said “Dear Steve, As you have been working with us on promoting our releases of classic British films from studio archives with booklet notes and archive materials for the past five years, I wanted to confirm how helpful that has been for us. [text removed for publication]

we have also gained a loyal following of 11,000 film buyers who write to us or engage on social media to discuss releases and some of the supporting information such as booklets and photographs. Extra information on films through booklets and commentaries is a key part of our product release strategy and a way for us to engage with our audience above and beyond the DVD. Your knowledge and research on films fulfils a very useful commercial and informative role, which helps us to promote our DVDs beyond just the film community”.

The Director of The Cinema Museum, has confirmed in an email to Chibnall that “Over the past three years Steve Chibnall has been an invaluable asset to fundraising activity here at The Cinema Museum by organising events which have drawn on his expertise in British cinema history”.