

‘The modern Elixir of Life’: Kinemacolor, royalty and the Delhi Durbar

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Crowned heads were crucial to the development and identity of the early actuality film. In Britain, in particular, they provided glamour, exclusivity and guaranteed audience appeal. They were a popular subject for export, and a means to mark the particular British-ness of the emergent film industry. This coincided with a policy of increased visibility for the British royal family. Public ceremonial was understood to have great value in binding together nation and empire in the late Victorian era. Ceremonials marking events in the lives of the monarchy had always existed, of course, but, as David Cannadine states, ‘in the late nineteenth century they were propelled onto a much higher plane of efficiency, self-consciousness and ostentation’, carried along further as the empire expanded.¹ Manufactured spectacles such as the Delhi Durbar of 1877, held to proclaim the new Queen Empress, and the Golden Jubilee of Queen Victoria’s reign in 1887, expressed an imperial feeling through pageantry, colour and extravagant display, with royalty as its focal point. Mass-produced and distributed visual media, including newspapers, photography, and film, played a central role in disseminating the imperial message. As early as 1897, Victoria’s Diamond Jubilee celebrations in London became a showcase for the emergent motion picture industry, as established film manufacturers secured positions along the procession route, and pride in the event transferred to pride in the young film industry that had come together to honor the occasion.²

Royalty nurtured the emerging British film industry, especially during the years 1910–1911, when a series of major royal events were enthusiastically covered by several topical and interest film businesses. The funeral of Edward VII, the coronation of George V, the investiture of the Prince of Wales and

the Coronation Durbar held in Delhi ostentatiously displayed the continuity of imperial power from one reign to the next. These rites of passage were recorded by one film manufacturer in particular, the Natural Color Kinematograph Company, whose identity, central product and fortune were to a substantial extent bound up in these royal events. The Natural Color Kinematograph Company had been formed in 1909 by the Anglo-American Charles Urban to exploit the Kinemacolor process for producing natural colour motion pictures.³ Kinemacolor was an additive colour process, employing a rotating filter with red and green sections on both camera and projector, and with a filming and projection speed of around thirty frames per second. It had been invented by George Albert Smith and patented in November 1906. Two years later, in May 1908, the first public demonstration of Smith’s invention took place in London at Urbanora House, Wardour Street. Within less than a year, Kinemacolor, as it was now officially named, was commercially released to the public at the Palace Theatre in London on 23 February 1909.⁴ Up to the First World War it was the only natural motion picture colour process most audiences could see.⁵

Kinemacolor’s reputation was built on the non-fiction film. The colour process was unsuited to stu-

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dio work because it absorbed too much available light, which limited the range and quality of its dramatic productions.⁶ Its strength was built on the actuality film, whose natural colours supported Kinemacolor's claims to depict reality to a degree that could not be matched by any rival – whether it be the monochrome newsreels or the artificial stencil-colour offerings of the world power in motion picture production, the French firm Pathé. The Natural Color Kinematograph Company's triumph was its colour records of the royal ceremonials of 1910–1911, where for producer and audience fidelity to nature through colour came to be equated with fidelity to the crown and the imperial idea. It also meant for the company, as for other purveyors of visual media at this time, very good business [Fig. 1].

Something more than a mere picture show

Royal favour was first shown towards Kinemacolor on 6 July 1909, when King Edward VII and Queen Alexandra saw a programme of Kinemacolor films at a house party held at Knowsley, Lancashire, at the invitation of the Earl of Derby. George Albert Smith presented the programme and was introduced to the King and Queen. The films included the King filmed at Kensington the previous month, and a film taken at Knowsley, 'which unfortunately was taken in a bad light'. 'Very good, very good', the King was reported to have said.⁷

Edward died less than a year later, and his funeral, which took place on 20 May 1910, provided the occasion for the first of the major Kinemacolor newsfilms of royal ceremonial. The event established a benchmark for such films through its creation of a surrogate experience, its marketing, exhibition and studied reception. The day of the funeral was overcast, problematic even for those filming in monochrome. Nevertheless, the Kinemacolor production, first shown at a charity matinee at the Palace Theatre on 27 May 1910 (where Anna Pavlova and a troupe of Russian dancers were also on the bill), generated much press interest and overwhelmingly warm praise for the colour effects, its realism being remarked upon repeatedly. *The Times* report noted that the film's verisimilitude gave a sense of experience that was perhaps greater than for those who were there:

[I]t is now possible for visitors to the Palace to look at pictures representing the late King's

funeral which give an extraordinarily good idea of what the procession was like, a far better view, indeed, than was probably enjoyed by many people in the huge crowds. As the public ... was entirely dressed in black on the two days of the processions the contrast in colour between the Kinemacolor pictures and the more familiar illusions produced by the Kinematograph is not as marked as would naturally be the case, and in some of the views the red of the soldiers' tunics is practically the only new note. But in others the greens and blues of some of the foreign uniforms, the red, white and blue of the Union Jack, the gold of the Royal Standard, and the green of the trees produce an extraordinarily faithful copy of the actual scenes.⁸

The Times' dissection of the projected images into the realistic reproductions of individual colours would become a familiar critical response to Kinemacolor, as audiences responded to open invitations from Kinemacolor publicity to analyse the films for their colour values. For the *Morning Advertiser*, 'Some clouds effects are reproduced with remarkable delicacy, whilst the colours of the flags fluttering at half-mast against that background were not more clearly distinguishable as the scenes themselves', while the *Morning Post* felt that the film was 'especially successful in reproducing the red uniforms of the soldiers'. *Sporting Life* called the film, 'something more than a mere picture show – it is a beautiful record of surely the most pathetic comparisons in vivid and sombre colours England has ever seen'. Delicacy of effect, vivid yet sombre, something more than a mere picture show: the tones of Kinemacolor had successfully captured the mood of the moment.⁹

The funeral of Edward VII was the first notable Kinemacolor production and a marked financial success, aided by the expansion of Kinemacolor exhibition across Britain. The first provincial Kinemacolor shows took place in Nottingham and Blackpool on 24 March 1910, and by the time of the release of the funeral film in May there were Kinemacolor shows in Blackpool, Burton-on-Trent, Derby, Glasgow and Nottingham; other towns soon followed.¹⁰ Urban had initiated a nationwide advertising campaign in support of five touring 'companies' that would take Kinemacolor programmes to the major towns and cities of the country (over 130 in all), where they took up residencies of one to four weeks. Kinemacolor pro-



Fig. 1. Kinemacolor advertisement from *Motion Picture News* (1 March 1913): 25. [Courtesy of David Pierce.]

grammes were also featured in up to forty theatres within the central London region over the next two years.¹¹ A system of exclusive exhibition rights saw all Kinemacolor exhibitions in Great Britain and Ireland (outside a ten mile radius from Charing Cross) granted to Provincial Palaces Ltd., while all London exhibitions within that ten mile radius were controlled by Kinemacolor (London District) Ltd., a subsidiary set up by Urban for the purpose. However, within this agreement there was an additional exclusive contract covering any theatre within a two mile radius from Cambridge Circus, the location of the Palace Theatre, which continued to be the premier location for Kinemacolor presentations.¹²

The film of Edward VII's funeral also set a pattern for the future successful Kinemacolor royal news stories in that it was no exclusive. Several other companies filmed the same subjects, in monochrome, and although Kinemacolor would come to value scoops when they came, there was a special piquancy in pointing to the colourless inadequacy of other news reports. The difference, the greater naturalism, the greater fidelity to patriotic values, were all understood to be those qualities that made Kinemacolor the only true purveyor of royal moving picture news. If the attainment of colour was equated with social attainment, then the Kinemacolor films of British royalty marked a peak of recognition for British film, and for the medium as a whole.

The Scala

Building on this success, Urban decided to establish a flagship programme that would show only Kinemacolor films. The programmes had hitherto been

mostly half-hour turns in an evening's variety programme. A continuous programme of only Kinemacolor film (predominantly non-fiction in character) in a London theatre was a risky venture. It was also difficult to set up, as no suitable London theatre seemed to be available. Eventually Urban selected the one theatre that was free, though it was far from the ideal choice.

The Scala Theatre stood between Charlotte Street and Tottenham Court Road. It seated only 920, and its isolated location to the north of London's main theatre-land made it an awkward proposition. However, its relatively small size suited the projection of Kinemacolor, whose picture brightness would be adversely affected by too long a throw.¹³ Urban leased the Scala originally for one year from 22 February 1911 on a basis of 20 per cent of box office receipts in lieu of a fixed rental. He immediately set about refurbishing the theatre at his own expense to suit the requirements of Kinemacolor. An extensive advertising campaign aimed at making London aware of the newest attraction at its most obscure central theatre.¹⁴ Somewhat cautiously, the opening Kinemacolor programme at the Scala on 11 April was featured alongside a two act operetta by Paul Lincke entitled *Castles in the Air*. The programme appears to have run for a month.¹⁵ Similar such combinations of stage productions with Kinemacolor programmes, either as a separate entity or occasionally forming part of the dramatic action, would feature throughout its residency at the Scala, but predominantly the Scala became a showcase for an evening's entertainment of Kinemacolor films alone. [Fig. 2]

For the first four months of the lease it seemed Urban had made a grievous mistake. The costs of refitting the theatre and advertising had been great, and the takings poor – the deficit was some £7,000.¹⁶ But it was at this point that the series of spectacular royal news stories started making Londoners look again at the map and seek out the Scala. It was important to the entire strategy of Kinemacolor that it would attract a monied and generally high class audience, many of whom would not think to go to moving pictures in a cinema, but who could more readily be persuaded to see films in a theatre setting. Other film producers were to pursue this policy of elevation through the production of films based on established theatrical properties – Famous Players ('famous players in famous plays') in America, the Film d'Art in France and Italy, films of Shakespeare by Will Barker, Cecil Hepworth and the Co-operative

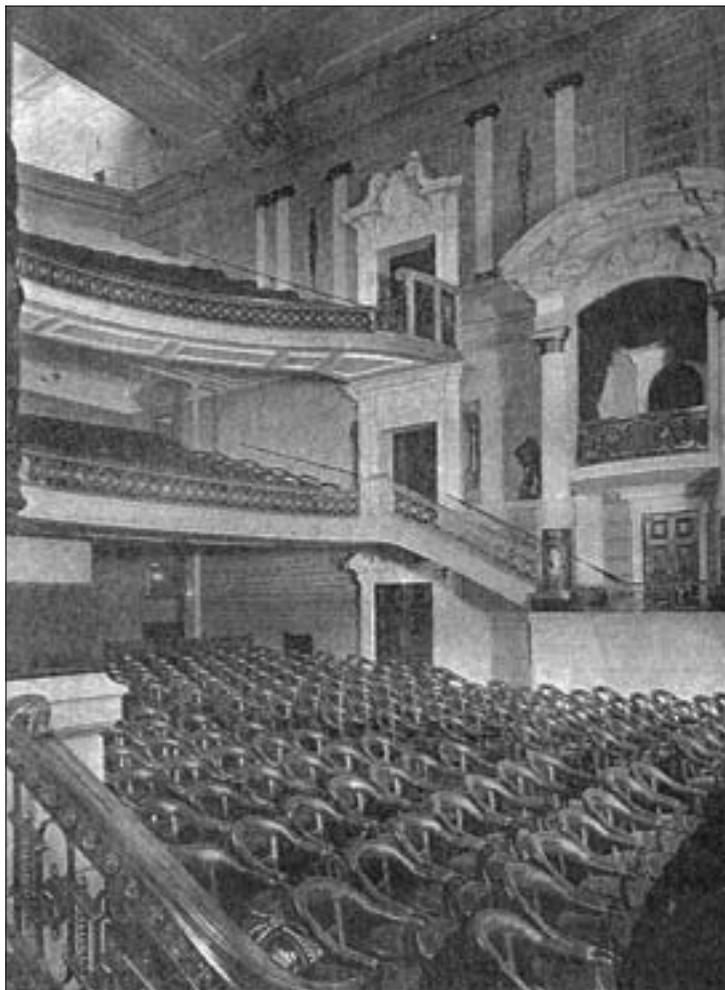
Cinematograph Company in Britain. Urban pursued the same audience (and their purses) through the avowedly superior qualities of natural colour cinematography, and its actuality subject matter, especially newsfilm of royalty. The reasoning was, that which was transparently natural was inherently superior. Many agreed with this, feeling (along with the *Sporting Life's* assessment of the film of Edward VII's funeral), that here indeed was 'something more than a mere picture show'. At this period cinemas had begun to proliferate wildly across British cities, causing alarmed comment in many quarters at the seemingly low quality of this cheap entertainment and the working class audiences who were frequenting it in their millions.¹⁷ Kinemacolor films of royalty presented in a theatrical milieu denoted something of a different order of things. This was 'cinema' not as a diversion, but as the intelligent encapsulation of a desirable social experience.

An unveiling, a coronation and an investiture

The first in the series of key royal films produced throughout 1911 was that of the unveiling of the Queen Victoria memorial on 16 May. Kinemacolor had a privileged position directly in front of the memorial, 'a concession only shared with the [German] Emperor's photographer', the Scala programme boasted. The Kinemacolor catalogue acclaimed it as the quintessence of motion pictures: 'It is not too much to say that the KINEMACOLOR record of this ceremony sets a new standard in motion photography. No one henceforth can regard monotone pictures of the glories of pageantry as anything but obsolete and unsatisfying – mere shadows of the real thing.'¹⁸

Commentators agreed. *The Times* found it 'probably the most complete record of the ceremony in existence. Their advantage over the ordinary biograph pictures is patent, for the black-and-white effects of the latter cannot convey the sense of pomp and pageantry which rely for their very success upon a blaze of colours.'¹⁹ The film trade press was ecstatic, and in the comments of the *Kinematograph and Lantern Weekly* one may infer once again a belief that colour fidelity could be equated with fidelity to the monarchy:

We have no hesitation in saying that the Queen Victoria Memorial Unveiling in Kinemacolor is the greatest piece of cinematograph work ever



accomplished in the history of the industry. As an absolutely life-like representation of an actual scene it is simply superb.... The sun flashes on the burnished breast-plates, every colour is true, and the whole thing is without blemish – magnificent, beautiful and inspiring.²⁰

The film captured a patriotic experience. An exhibition tactic was introduced that built on the surrogacy of experience by reproducing 'every choral, orchestral and realistic effect;' that is, producing as complete a visual and aural facsimile of the events as could be recreated on the Scala's stage, including where possible the music played on the day itself.²¹ The Kinemacolor catalogue pronounced, '[w]ith suitable music and effects the film is the most perfect resuscitation of an actual occurrence that it is possible to conceive'.²² Kinemacolor, in its exemplary form

Fig. 2. The Scala Theatre, London, showcase venue for Kinemacolor. [Author's collection.]

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King's Coronation

First Time "World's History" Pictures in Natural Colors of Royalty in All the Pageantry of the Court.

TAKEN BY ROYAL COMMAND
The Only Company in the World Photographing the Royal Crown and Jewels Worn by King George V.
And All Scenes of the 40 Days' Festivities in Brilliant Natural Photographic Colors.

NOTICE TO INDEPENDENT EXCHANGES
But a Few States Remain Unlicensed. Apply at once. Quick Action Necessary if You Contemplate Securing a State Right.
Advance Shipments of Festivities Are Now on Exhibition at Office Exhibit Room from 12 to 1 Daily. You Have but to See Them to Become a Believer in the Fortunes to Be Made in Kinemacolor.

SPECIAL
Contrary to the General Impression the Coronation Festivities Last Forty Days—Not Two By Royal Command the Kinemacolor Company Will Make Moving Pictures in Natural Colors of All the Important Events During the Entire Period. The Only Pictures Taken in Black and White Will Be Sections of the Last Two Days' Parade.

THIS COMPANY WILL HAVE A RELEASE OF TWENTY REELS OF KINEMACOLOR AND THE BEST BLACK AND WHITE OF EUROPE AND AMERICA COMMENCING IN SEPTEMBER.

SIXTEEN VARIETIES OF LITHOGRAPHS FROM STROBEIDGE AND COURIER COMPANY.
Kinemacolor pictures will be exhibited in Chicago for the benefit of moving picture men during the entire week of June 26. Location will be announced next week. To see it is to be convinced.

Fig. 3. Advertisement for the Kinemacolor film of the coronation of King George V. *Moving Picture World* (1911): 1518. [Courtesy of David Pierce.]

of exhibition at the Scala, was achieving the fundamental goals of the non-fiction film producers of Urban's time: to make the film experience the equivalent of experience itself, to bring the past back to life. 'The spectator gets from the picture exactly the same impressions that he would if he occupied the best possible seat at the actual ceremony', the catalogue stated.²³ Urban may have been appealing to the snobbery in his select Scala audience, but effectively he was granting to anyone in the country with the price for a Kinemacolor show the most privileged seat at the highest of ceremonies. The spectator could be at one with the princes, dukes and emperors. Such an act of leveling was never in Urban's mind, but in placing his cameras in positions of privilege he unwittingly played his early part in the progressive undermining of the royal mystique which

film, and then television, exercised throughout the twentieth century.

Interest was inevitably all the greater in the next major royal event, the coronation of King George V on 22 June. As with previous ceremonial occasions celebrating the monarchy, the coronation became a significant showpiece for the native film industry. *The Bioscope* listed some seventeen companies that had secured camera positions along the route. Urban's other monochrome businesses, the Charles Urban Trading Company and Kineto were listed, but not the Natural Color Kinematograph Company.²⁴ Urban was setting the company aside from the rest, not only through its unique use of colour and select appeal, but because Kinemacolor was not openly available to exhibitors, only to those with the exclusive licenses and projection equipment. The boasts of the catalogue denigrated monochrome as failing to capture reality, while aligning Kinemacolor with both tradition and modernity: 'KINEMACOLOR showed the events of the Coronation as they really were – not as a succession of black-and-white shadows, but glowing with all the magnificence and wealth of color that is a feature of public ceremonial in these modern times'.²⁵

The coronation ceremony itself was not filmed (no motion picture cameras were permitted inside Westminster Abbey), but Kinemacolor captured the coronation procession from Buckingham Palace to the Abbey and the royal progress through London afterwards. The events surrounding the coronation provided a plethora of subjects which the Kinemacolor catalogue offered to exhibitors as individual short films, giving them the opportunity to construct their own sequence of events: the Trooping of the Colour, the coronation Derby, scenes in London three weeks before the coronation, the Royal Horse Show, the Investiture of the Prince of Wales with the Order of the Garter, the coronation illuminations, the royal naval review, and several more.²⁶ This multi-faceted, fundamentally theatrical, approach to a major subject would be repeated with the Delhi Durbar films that were to come. [Fig. 3]

Following the coronation, the picturesque ceremonial of the Investiture of the Prince of Wales took place at Carnarvon Castle on 10 July, the model example of an invented tradition.²⁷ The Kinemacolor record loyally obliged, and on 25 July 1911 the Prince of Wales visited the Scala to see the films of the coronation and his own investiture.²⁸ A member of the audience found imperfections through his own

analysis of the Kinemacolor record, while witnessing the peculiar dilemma the Prince faced in being both a spectacle in himself and on the screen:

A few hours in London I devoted to taking a nephew to see the Kinemacolor pictures of the Durbar and the Prince of Wales's investiture at Carnarvon. By some new contrivance the primary colours, only, were reproduced on the films, giving us the blue sky, the green grass and the scarlet uniforms, but everything else brownish-grey: the effect was perhaps more weird than beautiful or lifelike. The popular young Prince was in a box with his sister, looking at his own doings at Carnarvon; and it was curious to see the audience cheering alternately the filmed prince and the live one, who seemed rather embarrassed by the attention paid to him.²⁹

Such public confrontations with one's screen presence were, for the time being, generally kept at bay by the royal family. On 29 July 1911 Urban gave a private Kinemacolor show by command of Queen Alexandra at Sandringham, and on 14 and 15 September 1911 the films of the coronation and the investiture of the Prince of Wales were shown for King George V and Queen Mary at Balmoral.

By now, Kinemacolor was starting to have a marked influence on production and promotion. Demand for colour came from exhibitors, and hence by extension from audiences, as well as the trade press. *The Bioscope* noted the advances made by Kinemacolor throughout 1911 and the influence it was having:

Within the year – almost within the last six months – Mr. Charles Urban's Kinemacolor process has come right to the front, and has become a formative influence upon the future of the business, the importance of which cannot be over-estimated. 'Colour' has become the *sine qua non* of the picture theatre programme, and one cannot pass along the streets without seeing from the announcements of exhibitors that they are fully alive to this, and, if they have not a Kinemacolor license, they are making a special feature of tinted or coloured films in order to cope with public demand.³⁰

Monochrome was not enough. It was demonstrably an inferior reflection of reality, a point that

Kinemacolor's publicity had repeatedly stressed. However intricate the colour effects of the stencil colour work of the Gaumont and Pathé firms, they were damned as false to nature. There were attacks on artificial colour systems in advertisements, theatre programmes, and pamphlets. One of latter states:

Kinemacolor is the *only process in existence* reproducing actual scenes in living, vivid colours. The real tints and hues of an object are secured at the moment of photographing; in all other processes colours are applied afterwards by hand or machinery – a crude and laborious method, possible only with the simplest of subjects.³¹

Kinemacolor was a 'scientific system of colour-reproduction', and argument was therefore redundant. The tone becomes jeering:

A Kinemacolor expert ... set his camera against the setting sun near the famous Pyramids in Egypt The sun dips beneath the horizon, and lovely, translucent colours – reds, greens, yellows, blues and violets – glow and melt into one another before our very eyes? Could *that* be painted by hand upon film?³²

Gaumont and Pathé fought back, though in 1911 Pathé gave Urban the greatest compliment by renaming its stencil colour process Pathécolor, in imitation of Kinemacolor.³³ Yet Pathé's publicity reminded the film trade that Kinemacolor meant double the film length and double the price, arguing that its process was no less scientific while being demonstrably more artistic.³⁴

The Delhi Durbar

A great sigh of relief went up from the Nation last week upon receipt of a telegram from Mr. CHARLES URBAN, at Delhi, stating that satisfactory cinematographic films had been taken of the events there. It would have been too terrible if the trouble and expense devoted to the preparation of these ceremonies had been wasted.³⁵

Unquestionably, Kinemacolor's greatest triumph was the record of the royal tour of India over the course of December 1911 and January 1912, with the centre-piece attraction of the Coronation Durbar held at Delhi. It has acquired a legend over the years, being given at least a passing mention in most his-

stories of British film, and certainly in any historical account of colour cinematography. Generally referred to simply as the Delhi Durbar, there is often insufficient understanding of what the ceremony was or what exactly the contents of the 'film' were.

There were three Delhi Durbars in history. Durbar was a Mughal word (taken from the Persian) meaning a reception, a court, or body of officials at such a court. The term was appropriated by the British Raj and used to describe the formal ceremonies held in 1877 to acknowledge the proclamation of Queen Victoria as Empress of India. Delhi, the old Mughal capital, was selected as the location, and the Viceroy Lord Lytton devised a celebration that set the pattern for the Durbars that followed. A temporary city of tents was constructed, and an amphitheatre wherein the main ceremonies were staged. British rule in India, and the privileged but inferior position of the Indian princes within the ruling hierarchy, was illustrated through procession, pageantry and obeisance, in a richly colourful display.³⁶ Queen Victoria did not attend. When the second Delhi Durbar was held in 1902–03 (at the same location) to recognize Edward VII as the new Emperor of India, once again the King-Emperor did not go to India and was represented instead by the Viceroy of India, Lord Curzon. The ceremonies attracted several film companies, including Urban's Warwick Trading Company, which sent out the Reverend J. Gregory Mantle as its single film correspondent.³⁷

The significant difference for the Delhi Durbar of 1911 was that the King-Emperor himself attended. King George V believed profoundly in the solemnity and responsibility of his position, and he wished to see his anointment as Emperor of India properly sanctified, as well as wanting to do what he could to calm seditious tendencies by his presence. Preparations took over a year, organized by Sir John Hewett, the Lieutenant-Governor of the United Provinces. The ceremonies were to take place in the same location outside Delhi as in 1877 and 1902–03, and a giant 'city' of 40,000 tents was erected that was eventually to house some 300,000 inhabitants. On 11 November 1911 King George V and Queen Mary, with an entourage that included an official historian (Sir John Fortescue) and an official artist (Jacomb Hood), but no official photographer or cinematographer, left on the P&O ship *Medina* for the three-week voyage to Bombay.³⁸

The organizing committee received its first enquiry from a film company in April 1911. Five firms

were given official permission to film the ceremonies, to be represented by some thirty staff: Barker Motion Photography, Gaumont, Pathé, the Warwick Trading Company, and Urban.³⁹ Urban took a team of seven, of which probably five were Kinemacolor camera operators: Joseph De Frenes (who headed the team), De Frenes' nephew Albuin Mariner, Alfred Gosden, Hiram Horton, and another unidentified.⁴⁰ Urban's own account grossly exaggerates his personal importance ('Mr. Urban had been appointed by His Majesty King George to proceed to India and personally supervise the work of recording the proceedings and incidents connected with the ceremonies at Bombay, Delhi, and Calcutta'), but certainly he was able to obtain preferential treatment, not least in the allotment of camera positions and official protection. Again, Urban's imagination leads him to melodrama:

We were met in India by Sir John Hewitt [sic] who had charge of all arrangements re the Durbar etc, he gave me a half hour to tell him what we required but drove about with me the entire afternoon in order to select the positions I wanted ... We had the choicest of all possible positions; the officials afforded us the best of protection. They had heard rumors that rival film companies were bent on damaging or destroying our pictures and inasmuch as the King expected to see these pictures in London, it was up to the Army to see that we got them safely there. Each night we used to develop the negatives exposed during the day, and bury them in cases dug in the sand in my tent with a piece of linoleum and a rug on top – my bed on top of them, a pistol under my pillow and armed guards patrolling our camp.⁴¹

It is highly unlikely that any of Urban's rivals were planning sabotage, but not unlikely that Urban (a man of often explosive imagination) could have persuaded himself that they were, and the burial of the developed films and Urban sleeping with a gun under his pillow all seem quite in character. Developing the film was a considerable undertaking. The exposed negatives were developed each day, which entailed their precise panchromatisation, and the necessary plant and dark-rooms were all assembled and tested prior to any film being taken. The damp heat was the major problem, but copious supplies of ice were on hand to keep the solutions sufficiently cool.⁴² [Fig. 4]



Fig. 4. Charles Urban (centre) with the Kinemacolor camera team at the Coronation Durbar in Delhi, December 1911. Albuin Mariner is the camera operator front left, Joseph De Frenes front right. [Author's collection.]

The King and Queen arrived at Bombay on 2 December and the filming began. The royal party stayed in Bombay for four days before journeying to Delhi, where Urban's team filmed their arrival at the Selimgarh Bastion, followed by the formal state entry into the city. The King rode through the Kings' or Elephant Gate, and on film the results were spectacular, with the life-size stone elephants on either side of the gate offering perhaps a prefiguring of the Babylonian sequence in D.W. Griffith's *Intolerance*, four years away.

The day of the Coronation Durbar itself was 12 December. Up to 100,000 people filled the amphitheatre before the formal ceremonies began. At the head of the procession came veterans of past wars, including over a hundred survivors of the 1857 Mutiny, both Indian and British. Next came the Viceroy, Lord Hardinge (temporarily divested of his official power during the King-Emperor's visit) and Lady Hardinge in an open carriage. An escort and the sound of fanfares preceded the entry of the royal carriage, with its canopy of crimson and gold, the King-Emperor and Queen-Empress dressed in their purple Imperial robes and wearing crowns. The royal entourage proceeded down the central road, then round in a semi-circle past the central Royal Pavilion to the Shamiana (a pavilion at the far end of the arena in front of the guests' enclosure), where the Viceroy

led them to their thrones. Here the Indian princes were to do homage to their Emperor, and after the King had given a short address, the maharajahs and princes of India came one by one (in strict order of precedence) to express their loyalty to the crown. The Emperor and Empress then rose from their thrones and walked to the central Royal Pavilion. Fanfares sounded. The official proclamation of the King's coronation in June was made, in English and Urdu, and there were various announcements concerning beneficial funds and concessions made to the people of India. The royal couple returned to the Shamiana. A salute was fired and cheers were taken up by the thirty thousand troops, then the sixty thousand or more guests, then many thousands more outside the arena. At the Shamiana, the Emperor gave two last announcements concerning political changes, which had been kept in the greatest secrecy for months. These were the sensational information that the capital of India was to move to Delhi, and that the partition of Bengal (an unpopular decision from the Curzon era) was to be cancelled. The Durbar was declared formally closed, the royal couple returned to their carriage, and departed.⁴³

The Delhi Durbar of 1911 is frequently seen as being the very apex of the British Empire, and in terms of ceremony, display and sentimental symbolism it probably was. It laid out in purely visual terms

the pomp and precedence of the imperial system, appealing to what was understood as being an Indian love of the ceremonial, but which struck an equal chord in the British. Its sensory impact underlined the almost religious impact of the Durbar, something which King George certainly believed in, and which journalist Philip Gibbs expressed in terms of sound and colour harmony:

Sound and colour combined to form a panorama of beauty and grandeur such as one might suppose could have its being only in a dream. Uniforms, robes, turbans of every shade and tone produced an effect which, though infinitely varied in its contrasts, was blended into one flawless harmony by the orderliness of the entire scheme. There seemed a mystic bond that welded the tremendous music of the bands, the clear notes of the bugles, and the *tramp-tramp-tramp* of marching hosts, into one vast paean of triumphant praise to the King-Emperor, and that found its more material counterpart in the riot of colour displayed so lavishly on every side.

However, something of the ineffable experience had been preserved, for as Gibbs noted:

Words are inadequate to describe that which the brush and the camera alone can depict . . . Happily, some measure of its sheer magnificence still remained even when the ceremony had ended and the mighty gathering had dispersed, for a cinematograph record of the superb programme was taken, in natural colours.⁴⁴

The king himself, temperamentally uneffusive, did however record something of his feelings in an otherwise plain diary entry, confessing that the Durbar had been 'the most beautiful and wonderful sight I ever saw'.⁴⁵

Urban had cameras at two positions in the amphitheatre. Stephen Bottomore has shown, through an analysis of existing films and published frame stills, that there were Kinemacolor cameras alongside those of the Gaumont team in the inner circle to the right of the Royal Pavilion, and probably a further cameraman on the roof of the spectators' enclosure, close to the Shamiana. There, in an arc, were camera operators from Gaumont (at ground and roof level), Barker, Pathé, Warwick and Urban. Bottomore suggests, however, that this Urban cam-

eraman may have been filming in monochrome, and certainly there was a monochrome film of the Durbar issued by Kineto and the Charles Urban Trading Company.⁴⁶

The royal progress continued in the following days, but those filming in monochrome left (but for a single cameraman), whereas Charles Urban had far greater ambitions for documenting the royal visit to India. On 14 December the Kinemacolor cameras filmed the Royal Review of 50,000 imperial troops at the Badli-ki-Sarai review ground, followed by the State Departure from Delhi on the 16th, The King then left for two weeks of hunting tigers and bears in Nepal, away from the Kinemacolor cameras, which instead filmed the Viceroy's Cup horse race in Calcutta. The King and Queen returned from their break on 30 December for an official entry into Calcutta at the Prinsep's Ghat landing stage, an event also filmed by the Kinemacolor team; they departed the city on 8 January 1912.⁴⁷

Exhibiting the Durbar films

At the same time as the royal party was entering Calcutta, the first films of the Delhi Durbar were being shown in London. In the fashion typical of topical producers, those who had filmed in monochrome made frantic journeys back to Britain and thereafter rushed to their printing houses to be the first to have film of the Delhi Durbar on British screens. It was practically the only way that the topical film companies knew how to excel, through speed. The nonchalant Urban had a different strategy:

When I arrived in London one month after our competitors had hurried after the Delhi ceremonies . . . I was met on every side with cries of derision. 'Your stuff is old; everybody has seen the Durbar and is tired of it.' But they had seen it only in the monotone and I had no fear of the reception of the pictures in Natural color.⁴⁸

Urban's strategy was to present the living history as theatre, to recreate the experience and the emotion of the Delhi Durbar as much as might be possible on a London stage. It was not that people were tired of the Durbar; they had not seen it as it had been seen, and as it could now be presented. Urban organised the Kinemacolor footage into a two and a half hour programme (16,000 feet), a previously unheard of length for a single film show. With introductions and intervals it stretched to three hours in full,

and this at a time when few cinema programmes ran longer than ninety minutes, the longest films were three-reelers (sixty minutes), and *Cabiria* and *The Birth of a Nation* (first shown in Britain at the Scala) were two and three years away.

However, in what was both a clever marketing ploy and a genuine wish to exhibit as much of the footage as possible, Urban arranged the material into two different programmes, to be shown at 2:30 and 8:00 p.m., though the core material remained the same for each show. It is erroneous to think of the major Kinemacolor non-fiction productions as single film entities. They were protean conceptions whose component parts could be altered, added to or subtracted as desired. The full programme was called *With Our King and Queen Through India*; the centre-piece was entitled *The Coronation Durbar at Delhi*, but the programme covered the whole tour. The Scala stage was turned into a mock-up of the Taj Mahal. Music was specially composed and scored for forty-eight pieces, a chorus of twenty-four, a twenty-piece fife and drum corps, and three bagpipes. As in previous Kinemacolor films of royal ceremony, the music from the original event was used wherever possible. An accompanying lecture, obeisant and grandiloquent, was written by the Scala's stage manager St. John Hamund. There were special lighting effects devised, elaborate programmes produced, and much advance publicity, as Urban patiently bided his time until all was ready and fault-free. *With Our King and Queen Through India* finally opened at the Scala on 2 February 1912.⁴⁹ [Plate 1]

The profound impact of the show is best judged from a review in *The Bioscope*:

Last Friday evening, at the Scala Theatre, was an occasion in many respects as significant and memorable as it was wonderful. It may be left for future generations to realise the full extent of its importance – men and women yet unborn who, by the magic of a little box and a roll of film, will be enabled to witness the marvels of a hundred years before their age, in all the colour and movement of life. Perverse old grandfathers will no longer be able to indulge disdainfully in reminiscences of the superiority of the times 'when they were boys'; the past will be an open book for all to read in, and, if the grandfathers exaggerate, they may be convicted by the camera's living record. Man has conquered most things; now he has van-

quished Time. With the cinematograph and the gramophone he can 'pot' the centuries as they roll past him, letting them loose at will, as he would a tame animal, to exhibit themselves for his edification and delight. The cinematograph, in short, is the modern Elixir of Life – at any rate, that part of life which is visible to the eye. It will preserve our bodies against the ravages of age, and the beauty, which was once for but a day, will now be for all time.⁵⁰

This review, which Urban had reprinted to be distributed as a testimonial, shows that the Delhi Durbar film engendered in cinema's devotees that most fond belief in film as a time machine. Though the writer acknowledges that the cinematograph can only preserve life's outward show, the colour, movement and patriotic spectacle persuaded many that here was the ultimate beauty, something that somehow by that very beauty could not die. The value of the show's effect on the social status of cinema was also noted:

Mr. Charles Urban may be dubbed the 'Official Recording Angel to the State'. How much more effective his visual report is than the efforts of the most eloquent descriptive journalist or the most assiduous note-taker, all who visit the Scala can bear witness. There is, however, another side to Mr. Urban's activities, which is of even greater importance to the members of the cinematograph industry – as distinct from the public at large – and that is the enormously elevating influence of his work as regards the dignity and prestige of the Trade as a whole. Few people, for instance, would have been able, ten years ago, to credit the fact that a performance of mere animated photographs could possibly have drawn together a fashionable, even a brilliant, audience, in a large West-End theatre, and evoked three hours' wild and untiring enthusiasm. But such was undoubtedly the case on Friday. It was not simply a 'scratch audience' brought there out of idle curiosity, but a representative gathering, largely composed of the people who really matter in the social world. And this sort of thing has been going on for the past six months.⁵¹

Elsewhere, and awestruck, *The Bioscope* recorded the sort of society names to be seen at the early screenings of the Delhi Durbar films.⁵² Those

who had seen the ceremonies in India (or wished that they had been there) came to see the experience recreated at the Scala. Royalty would soon follow.

The Bioscope emphasised that the motion picture record had far exceeded what the pen could achieve, in imparting not only the spectacle but perhaps its final meaning. When it came to describing the physical experience of watching the show, the writer, in common with others' reaction to Kinemacolor, highlighted the memorable effect of individual colours, thereby underlining Kinemacolor's super-real as well as its naturalistic effect, and giving the impression of a sensory over-load:

If one were questioned as to the main impression made on one's mind by the entertainment, one would say that it was an impression of vivid light and moving colours. Pageant after pageant unrolls itself before one's dazzled eyes, scintillating with a thousand tones of scarlet and blue and gold and purple. Some of the scenes are like the slow unfolding of a jeweled banner, so wonderful is their magnificence. We have often heard tales of the barbaric splendours of the Orient, but never before, perhaps, have we been given an equal opportunity of realising them in their full gorgeousness. Even the sky, which throughout serves as a frame for the human spectacle, is a thing to wonder at; it is one pure sheet of palpitating light, blue with a blueness of which one can only dream here in grey England, deep, intense, unruffled, like one gigantic sapphire.⁵³

The modern elixir of life, in this sad case, has been poured away. *With Our King and Queen Through India* is a lost film (or set of films). In common with the great majority of Kinemacolor productions, no complete copy is known to survive in any of the world's film archives. Fortunately, in 2000 a ten minute section showing part of the review of troops at Badli-ki-Sarai that took place after the main ceremony was discovered in the Russian State Archive for Film and Photo-documents at Krasnagorsk.⁵⁴ The survival of a fragment from the edges of a much greater and spectacular work only makes the loss of the main films that much more regrettable. The rediscovery of the complete Kinemacolor Delhi Durbar remains a film archivist's dream. [Plate 2]

Urban's critics were proved wrong. The public was not tired of the Durbar; it was in fact thirsting for the experience, and the Scala show offered a patri-

otic and sentimental display of colour, sound, pageantry and exoticism that accurately reflected the picture-book understanding that many had of the British Empire. This, to many minds, was what India meant. For David Cannadine, the 'image of India protected and projected by the Raj – glittering and ceremonial, layered and traditional, princely and rural, Gothic and Indo-Saracenic – reached what has rightly been called its "elaborative zenith" at the Coronation Durbar of 1911'.⁵⁵ That image was literally projected by Urban on the Scala screen, a meticulous reflection of the surface, an uncomplicated marvel.

The success of the film was immediate. It made a fortune, Urban calculating that through a combination of the Scala programme and five touring road shows in England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales, the film grossed more than £150,000 (though this figure is more likely for all Kinemacolor exhibited in the UK). Over the two years that Kinemacolor had its residency at the Scala, gross receipts (from a theatre that seated just 920) were £64,000.⁵⁶ The Delhi Durbar film became an essential sight for the discriminating Londoner. American newspapers recommended a visit to the Scala as a necessary part of the itinerary for any American visiting London.⁵⁷ For many visitors it was their first visit to a film show, both exotic and socially acceptable, and children were taken to a show whose worthiness greatly commended it to those suspicious of moving pictures and their usual audiences. Among such visitors were the young John Grierson, Ivor Montagu and Paul Rotha, future lions of British documentary and politicized filmmaking.⁵⁸ Urban averred: 'the superior character of the film subjects, as well as the beauties of the process, have been the means of attracting tens of thousands of the public who had never previously visited a picture theatre, but who have since become ardent supporters of the new art'.⁵⁹ The films were exhibited worldwide, enjoying particular success in America where the programme attracted a middle-class audience drawn for a time to Kinemacolor film shows presented in legitimate theatres and opera houses.⁶⁰

Such interest was accentuated by the attendance of royalty itself. King George V and Queen Mary went to the Scala on 11 May 1912, accompanied by Queen Alexandra, the Empress Marie Féodorovna of Russia, Princess Christian, Princess Victoria, Princess Henry of Battenburg, the Grand Duchess Olga, and Prince and Princess Alexander

of Teck.⁶¹ The Empress wrote enthusiastically to her son Tsar Nikolai, noting the show's propensity for recreating the illusion of 'being there':

We are lunching today with Georgie and May at Buckingham Palace. They both send you greetings. Last night we saw their journey to India. Kinemacolor is wonderfully interesting and very beautiful and gives one the impression of having seen it all in reality.⁶²

The Duke and Duchess of Teck visited the Scala on 14 March, while Princess Mary and three of her younger brothers attended on 24 April.⁶³ Georgie and May had not tired of Kinemacolor, because they requested a further showing of the Indian films at Buckingham Palace on 12 December, ending an extraordinary year of royal patronage for Kinemacolor.⁶⁴ The lowly British film trade now saw its most prestigious product mentioned regularly in *The Times*' Court Circular. Kinemacolor's triumph was a triumph for the industry overall. It had managed, through its richly coloured parades and obeisant *mise en scène*, to reflect royalty's image of itself. It brought royalty to royalty. While no written evidence exists of any royal figure at this time reflecting upon the curious phenomena of witnessing one's own public display, unquestionably the Kinemacolor films, in their content and quality, were the starting point of a conscious realisation of screen presence in the members of the British royal family.

Kinemacolor's demise

Kinemacolor enjoyed only a brief time in the sun. A court case brought by a rival colour system, Biocolour, in 1913, led eventually to the revocation of the Kinemacolor patent, a fact which destroyed its exclusivity, though this did not of itself have to mean the end of Kinemacolor as a business.⁶⁵ Many reasons have been put forward for Kinemacolor's demise after 1914: the limitations of the two-colour, additive system, with its inherent fringing of colours; accusations of eye-strain among audiences; the restrictive business practice of the Kinemacolor licensing schemes; the excessive reliance on non-fiction.⁶⁶ One can respond that six years' successful international exhibition, in a form that helped break the mould of film length and presentation, and which undoubtedly helped to change class attitudes towards cinema, was nothing but a success at so early and so formative a period in cinema history. But another reason specific to the theme of this essay is

given by Karl Brown, future D.W. Griffith cameraman. Brown started his film career working for the Kinemacolor Company of America around 1913, when it was starting to fail as a business, 'a forlorn victim of box-office malnutrition'.

Why? Because Kinemacolor required the expert care of specially trained technicians to make its glories come to life. It had begun with royalty no less, having recorded in full faithful color the great Durbar staged in India to commemorate the accession of George the Fifth. Every true Briton throughout the empire felt bound to see this picture, if it took his last farthing.... The profits were so huge that the Kinemacolor Company [in America] decided to go into commercial production. In that decision lay the cause of its eventual downfall, for Kinemacolor was expensive. There were not enough theaters equipped with the Kinemacolor projectors, or enough projectors, or enough free grand spectacles to be filmed. What Kinemacolor really wanted was another Durbar, but George the Fifth was in remarkably good health.⁶⁷

Brown neatly sums up both the appeal and the limitations that spelled the end of Kinemacolor, not only in America but worldwide. Its immediate appeal was considerable, bred of a period where motion pictures were in the ascendant and were ready to capture a wealthier market than had hitherto been available to them. That market wanted quality to be an integral part of its entertainments, and it found this in the theatre settings, exclusive presentations and emphasis on royal pageantry that characterised the most successful Kinemacolor shows. It was a period when fascination with ceremonial display was at a peak, for its luxurious qualities, for its visual expression of the apparent solidity of empire, and because it provided a reassuring curtain to hide the darker undercurrents that were manifested in the dock and railwaymen's strikes that Britain faced at this time.

Kinemacolor's immediate, urgent appeal brought about huge revenue in Britain, and a pattern of elaborately presented trade shows and screenings overseas before such august personages as the Pope and the Emperor of Japan led to hurried speculation. Exhibition and patent licenses were snapped up and the investors sat back and waited for the profits to come pouring in. But Kinemacolor was a complex process, both technically and in exhibition

terms. It required special projectors and special talents to maintain them; the system suffered badly if it was not expertly controlled. It could only survive as an exclusive. Lastly, it was dependent on those 'free grand spectacles' that had created its reputation. It

failed completely with the dramatic film. It needed royal ceremonial to parade itself, the super-reality of another Delhi Durbar. But King George V was in remarkably good health.

Notes

1. David Cannadine, *Ornamentalism: How the British Saw Their Empire* (London: Allen Lane/The Penguin Press, 2001), 106.
2. Stephen Bottomore, "'She's just like my granny! Where's her crown?': Monarchs and Movies, 1896–1916", in John Fullerton (ed.), *Celebrating 1895: The Centenary of Cinema* (Sydney: John Libbey, 1998), 172–181; John Barnes, *The Rise of the Cinema in Gt. Britain* (London: Bishopsgate Press, 1983), 178–198.
3. The Natural Color Kinematograph Company was formed on 16 March 1909, with nominal capital of £30,000. The registered directors were Charles Urban, John Avery, and Ada Aline Jones (later Mrs. Charles Urban). The National Archives (TNA), BT 31/18763 file 102030. Urban was born in Cincinnati, Ohio in 1867, moved to Britain in 1897, and became a naturalized Briton in 1907. See <http://www.charlesurban.com/chrono.htm>
4. Kinemacolor was first shown in France in Paris on 8 July 1908 to members of the Institute of Civil Engineers; a three month engagement began at the Folies Bergère in September 1909. A five month engagement started at the Berlin Wintergarten in June 1909. Kinemacolor was first shown in America on 11 December 1909 at Madison Square Garden in New York, and the Kinemacolor Company of America was established in April 1910. Luke McKernan, "'Something More than a Mere Picture Show": Charles Urban and the Early Non-Fiction Film in Great Britain and America, 1897–1925', PhD thesis, Birkbeck, University of London, 2004, Chapter 3.
5. Other pre-war natural colour processes were William Friese-Greene's Biocolour (1911), which had minimal public exposure, and Gaumont's Chronochrome (introduced 1912), a three-colour process that could achieve exceptional effects but was not shown widely. Other experiments remained experiments. The first additive Technicolor film appeared in 1917, its first subtractive film (the model for the future) in 1922. Brian Coe, *The History of Movie Photography* (London: Ash & Grant, 1981), 118–132.
6. The first Kinemacolor drama, *By the Order of Napoleon*, 1,240 feet, was issued in November 1910.
7. Booklet, *Kinemacolor: The World in the Tints of Nature* (1909), Charles Urban papers, National Media Museum, Bradford (hereafter cited as URB), volume 3/1: 3; 'Animated Pictures in Natural Colours: King Edward Honours the Inventor', *The Bioscope* (15 July 1909): 4; *Moving Picture World* (31 July 1909): 1.
8. 'Palace Theatre', *The Times* (28 May 1910): 12.
9. Quotations from newspaper reviews written on 28 May 1910, URB 3/1: 14.
10. D.B. Thomas, *The First Colour Motion Pictures* (London: HMSO, 1969), 22.
11. Charles Urban, *Terse History of Natural Colour Kinematography* (New York, 1922), URB 9/1-1: 7. Reprinted in *Living Pictures: The Journal of the Popular and Projected Image Before 1914, Special Issue: Colour*, II, 2 (2003): 59–68 with introduction and notes by Luke McKernan.
12. Colin Bennett, *On Operating Kinemacolor* (London: The Kinematograph and Lantern Weekly, 1910), 25.
13. The Scala was managed by Dr. Edmund Distin Maddick. He had been a surgeon in the Royal Navy, rising to become Admiral Surgeon of the Fleet. He enjoyed an active place in high society, and had counted among his friends King Edward VII himself. He took the unusual step of turning theatrical impresario, purchasing and improving the abandoned Prince of Wales's theatre, which opened as the Scala with Johnston Forbes-Robertson appearing in *The Conqueror* on 23 September 1905. Chris Byng-Maddick, 'Edmund Distin Maddick CBE FRCS FRSM (1857–1939)', *Friends of West Norwood Cemetery Newsletter*, May 1999: 6–10.
14. Urban, *Terse History of Natural Colour Kinematography*: 8.
15. J.P. Wearing, *The London Stage, 1910–1919: A Catalogue of Plays and Players – Volume I: 1910–1916* (Metuchen, NJ/London: The Scarecrow Press, 1982), catalogue number 11–82.
16. Urban, *Terse History of Natural Colour Kinematography*: 8.
17. Luke McKernan, 'Diverting Time: London's cinemas and their audiences, 1906–1914', *The London Journal*, XXXII, 2 (July 2007): 124–144.
18. *Catalogue of Kinemacolor Film Subjects: Animated Subjects in Their Actual Colors* (London: Natural Color Kinematograph Company, [1913]), 148.

19. 'Royal Ceremony in "Kinemacolor"', *The Times* (22 May 1911): 12.
20. Quoted in *Catalogue of Kinemacolor Film Subjects*, 152.
21. Scala Theatre programme for 11 September 1911, BFI Special Collections, Cinema Ephemera: London: The Scala.
22. *Catalogue of Kinemacolor Film Subjects*, 148.
23. Ibid.
24. *The Bioscope* (22 June 1911): 605.
25. *Catalogue of Kinemacolor Film Subjects*, 146.
26. Ibid., 153–173.
27. Though there have been many Princes of Wales since 1301, there had been no need to commemorate their investiture in Wales until the twentieth century. It was David Lloyd George, the Welsh Chancellor of the Exchequer, who encouraged the mock medievalism of the event for his own political ends, acutely aware of its symbolic resonance and the facility of the visual media in transmitting such ideas through images. Robert Lacey, *Royal: Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II* (London: Little, Brown, 2002), 224.
28. 'Court Circular', *The Times* (26 July 1911): 11.
29. Sir David Hunter-Blair, *A New Medley of Memories* (London: Edward Arnold, 1922), 212.
30. 'The Triumph of Colour', *The Bioscope* (26 October 1911): 283.
31. *Kinemacolor versus 'Colour' Cinematography* [1911], Barnes collection, Hove Museum.
32. Ibid.
33. Maurice Gianati, 'Les couleurs et les sons se répondent ...', 1895: *L'année 1913 en France* (1993): 284.
34. Bregtje Lameris, 'Pathécolor: "l'absolu rendement des couleurs de la nature"', *Living Pictures: The Journal of the Popular and Projected Image Before 1914, Special Issue: Colour*, II, 2 (2003): 46–58.
35. *Punch* (20 December 1911): 447.
36. Cannadine, *Ornamentalism*, 46.
37. Stephen Bottomore, "'An Amazing Quarter Mile of Moving Gold, Gems and Genealogy": Filming India's 1902/03 Delhi Durbar', *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television*, XV, 4 (1995).
38. Kenneth Rose, *King George V* (London: George Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1983), 131–136; Stanley Reed, *The King and Queen in India: A Record of the Visit of Their Imperial Majesties the King Emperor and Queen Empress to India, from December 2nd, 1911, to January 10th, 1912* (Bombay: Bennett, Coleman & Co., 1912), 9.
39. Stephen Bottomore, "'Have You Seen the Gaekwar Bob?": Filming the 1911 Delhi Durbar', *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television*, XVII, 3 (1997): 313–314.
40. 'The Durbar in "Kinemacolor"', *The Times* (16 November 1911): 11; Urban, *Terse History of Natural Colour Kinematography*, 9; Arthur Edwin Krows, 'Motion Pictures – Not for Theatres, Part 14', *The Educational Screen* (December 1939): 363; and 'Part 18' (June 1940): 235; Henry E. White, *The Pageant of the Century* (London: Odhams Press, 1934), 200; *Oceana* passenger list, 31 October 1911 and *Maloja* passenger list, 6 November 1911, The National Archives BT 27/727.
41. Urban, *Terse History of Natural Colour Kinematography*, 8–9.
42. Robert Humfrey, *Careers in the Films* (London: Sir Isaac Pitman & Sons, 1938), 92.
43. R.E. Frykenburg, 'The Coronation Durbar of 1911: Some Implications', in *Delhi Through the Ages: Essays in Urban History, Culture and Society* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1986), 369–390; St. John Hamund (comp. and arr.), 'Explanatory Lecture on the Pageants, Processions and Ceremonies Connected with the Imperial Durbar at Delhi as Reproduced by Kinemacolor for Use at the Scala Theatre' (1912), URB 12/2-2.
44. Sir Philip Gibbs (ed.), *George the Faithful: The Life and Times of George 'The People's King' 1865–1936* (London: Hutchinson, [1936]), 214–217.
45. Rose, *King George V*, 135.
46. Bottomore, 'Have You Seen the Gaekwar Bob?': 319–321.
47. *Ibid.*, 323; Hamund, 'Explanatory Lecture on the Pageants, Processions and Ceremonies Connected with the Imperial Durbar at Delhi'.
48. Urban, *Terse History of Natural Colour Kinematography*, 9.
49. Thomas, *The First Colour Motion Pictures*, 26; Urban, *Terse History of Natural Colour Kinematography*, 9; numerous papers in URB 3, including programme for *With Our King and Queen Through India*, URB 3/1, p. 16; 'The Durbar in Natural Colours', *The Times* (3 February 1912): 10.
50. 'The Durbar in Kinemacolor', *The Bioscope* (8 February 1912): 363, 365.
51. Ibid.
52. The Duke and Duchess of Devonshire, Dom Manoel of Portugal, the Marquis of Soveral, the Marchioness of Ripon and Ely, the Marquis of Tullibardine, the Duke of Atholl, the Dowager Countess of Dudley, the Ladies Granard, Nina Balfour, Reay, Petre, Legard, Albu and Neumann, Lord Iveagh, Lord Boston, the Hon. Cecil Cadogan, the Hon. A.E. Guinness, Sir Berkeley Milne, Sir Sidney Greville, and Sir E. Sassoon had all seen the program before the first month

- was out. 'Items of Interest', *The Bioscope* (29 February 1912): 571.
53. 'The Durbar in Kinemacolor', 365.
54. York Membery, 'Film of British Raj in Living Colour Found in Russian Archive', *The Sunday Telegraph* (11 March 2001): 7.
55. Cannadine, *Ornamentalism*, 51. Cannadine's study of how the British Empire displayed itself regrettably ignores the role of cinema.
56. Urban, *Terse History of Natural Colour Kinematography*, 8, 10. For roughly equivalent costs today, multiply such figures by one hundred.
57. Undated *New York Review* clipping, URB 3/1: 17.
58. Forsyth Hardy (ed.), *Grierson on Documentary* (London: Collins, 1946), 134; Ivor Montagu, *Film World* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1964), 75–76; Paul Rotha, *Documentary Diary: An Informal History of the British Documentary Movement, 1928–1939* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1973), 3.
59. Urban, *Terse History of Natural Colour Kinematography*, 10–11.
60. Eileen Bowser, *The Transformation of Cinema 1907–1915* [*The History of American Cinema*, volume 2] (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1990), 228, 230; Richard Abel, *Americanizing the Movies and 'Movie-Mad' Audiences, 1910–1914* (Berkeley/Los Angeles/London: University of California Press, 2006), 178.
61. 'A Visit to the Scala Theatre', *The Times* (13 May 1912): 8.
62. Letter quoted in Jay Leyda, *Kino: A History of the Russian and Soviet Film* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1960), 47.
63. 'Court Circular', *The Times* (14 March 1912): 11 and (25 April 1912): 9.
64. Urban, *Terse History of Natural Colour Kinematography*, 10; Kinemacolor programme, 12 December 1912, URB 3/1: 15 verso.
65. McKernan, 'Something More than a Mere Picture Show', 186–189.
66. A summation of such arguments is given in Gorham Kindem, 'The Demise of Kinemacolor: Technological, Legal, Economic, and Aesthetic Problems in Early Color Cinema History', *Cinema Journal* 20, 2 (Spring 1981): 3–14.
67. Karl Brown (ed. Kevin Brownlow), *Adventures with D.W. Griffith* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1973), 3.

Abstract: 'The modern Elixir of Life': Kinemacolor, royalty and the Delhi Durbar, by Luke McKernan

Kinemacolor, the first successful natural colour motion picture system, had a pronounced social effect as well as a marked importance for the film industry during the years 1908–1914. Kinemacolor's theatrical-style presentation, the advanced ticket prices it attracted, the 'high class' audiences that it drew, its licensing schemes, and its innovative technology, were unique in the fledgling film industry. It became particularly associated with British royalty and the display of colourful pageantry. Kinemacolor's invention coincided with a succession of spectacular royal events, including the coronation of King George V, the investiture of the Prince of Wales, and especially the Delhi Durbar, held to mark the enthronement of the new King-Emperor of India. The resulting Kinemacolor spectacular, *With Our King and Queen Through India*, became one of the most memorable films of the era. The essay discusses the earlier Kinemacolor royal films and analyzes the production and exhibition of the Durbar film, its reception, and its lasting resonance.

Key words: Kinemacolor, Charles Urban, Delhi Durbar (1911), King George V, *With Our King and Queen Through India* (1912)

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