

Reconstructing the 1938 International Amateur Movie Show  
Filmography

Films from the 1938 programme screened as part of the Higher Learning event

***To the Ships of Sydney***, Dir. James A. Sherlock, 1936, Australia, 15 mins. Colour, silent.

Preserved by National Film and Sound Archive of Australia.

Synopsis: Winner of the Grand Prize in *American Cinematographer's* 1937 International Amateur Movie Contest. Sherlock was a prominent member of the Australian Amateur Cine Society and frequent winner of international amateur movie contests during the 1930s, presenting his films widely in Australia, the United States, and Japan. The film was praised for its outstanding Kodachrome photography, handling of challenging exposure conditions, and excellence of composition.

***Mount Zao*** Dir. Khoji Tsukamoto, 1937, Japan, 15 mins. B&W, silent

Preserved by East Anglian Film Archive.

Synopsis: Tsukamoto was a director of the Sakura Kogata Eiga Kyokai (Cherry Amateur Film Society) of Tokyo and he had received accolades in *Photoplay* and *American Cinematographer* for his previous films. *Mount Zao* was winner of several international prizes and was praised for its photography, use of filters, and uniformity of exposure. Received the Photography Prize in *American Cinematographer's* 1937 International Amateur Movie Contest.

***Fourth in Hand: A Fantasy of the Card Table***, Dir. unknown, 1936, Scotland, 20 minutes. Production Co.: Meteor Film Producing Society. B&W, silent.

Preserved by National Library of Scotland Moving Image Archive.

Synopsis: The Meteor Film Society was established in Glasgow in 1932. In addition to organizing a well-equipped studio and producing many well-crafted films, the group also organized the Scottish Amateur Film Festival starting in 1933. *Fourth in Hand* was one of the winners in the 1937 edition of this festival, which was adjudicated by Anthony Asquith.

***Příbeh vojáka / A Soldier's Story***, Dir. Cenek Zahradníček and Vladimír Šmejkal, 1935, Czechoslovakia, 8 mins. B&W, silent.

Preserved by Czech National Film Archive.

Synopsis: An avant-garde anti-war film, and winner of a major prize at the UNICA amateur film competition in 1937. Čeněk Zahradníček was a prominent member of a Prague amateur movie club in the 1930s when he produced several avant-garde works. He later worked as a newsreel cameraman in the 1940s. Duncan MacD. Little wrote, "Strangely enough we viewed it first on the same day that the German troops entered Austria, and the impression (in conjunction with that news), was tremendous."

***Gloire à l'eau***, Dir. Albert Tessier, 1935, Canada, 10 mins. Colour, silent.

Preserved by Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec .

Synopsis: Albert Tessier was a priest and amateur filmmaker based in the St. Maurice River area north of Trois-Rivières, Quebec. Tessier made about seventy short films from 1927 through the 1940s, using film to record his canoe trips, and to support the work he did for the St. Maurice Forest Protective

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Association and, later, the Catholic church's program in family education. His films captured the region's nature, as well the rural life and customs of its inhabitants, often through a poetic and sacred lens. Tessier filmed *Gloire à l'eau* in the mid-1930s, supplementing and re-editing it often over the next decade and a half. Though the film was typically presented with music or spoken commentary, the version that survives is silent. After 1941, some of Tessier's films (including *Gloire à l'eau*) were distributed by Quebec's government cinema service. Today, Tessier is best remembered as the namesake for the Prix Albert-Tessier, awarded each year to an individual for their outstanding career in Quebec cinema.

***Bommerli***, Dir. Richard Groschopp, 1936, Germany, 15 mins. B&W, with sound track.

Preserved by the Bundesarchiv-Filmarchiv (Berlin)

Synopsis: *Bommerli* features Groschopp's daughter, Renate, and was a huge success at international competitions. The film was first produced independently in 1935 and then a second "professional" version with a soundtrack was commercially distributed in 1937 (it is unclear if the film was re-shot, or if a soundtrack was just added). We don't know which version of the film screened in New York in 1938; only the sound version is known to be extant. Originally trained a pastry chef, Groschopp parlayed his success as an amateur filmmaker into work as a professional. He worked as a cameraman on Leni Riefenstahl's *Olympia* (1938), made industrial and instructional films during World War Two, and directed feature films for DEFA in the 1950s and 60s. The Filmmuseum Potsdam houses additional items in the Groschopp collection.

Films from the 1938 programme but were unavailable to screen during the Higher Learning event

***Driftwood***, Dir. unknown, 1933, England, 40 minutes, Production Co.: Ace Movies. B&W, silent.

Accessible via East Anglian Film Archive: <http://www.eafa.org.uk/catalogue/2672>

***Prize Winner***, Dir. J. Kinney Moore, 1937, U.S.A.

Not known to be extant

***A Province of Poland***, Dir. Tadeusz Jankowski, 1937, Poland.

Not known to be extant; some of Jankowski's other films are held by the State Ethnographic Museum in Warsaw.

***Hell UnLtd***, Dir. Norman McLaren and Helen Biggar, 1936, Scotland, 19 mins. B&W, silent.

Available *Norman McLaren – The Master's Edition* DVD set (NFB).