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The Battle of Billy's Pond

UK : 1975 : dir. Harley Cokliss : Children's Film Foundation : 56 min
prod: : scr: : dir.ph.:
Ben Buckton; Andrew Ashby
Talfryn Thomas; Ann Beach; Keith James; Geoff Hinsliff; Derek Ware; Linda Robson

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Source: NFT Bulletin

Speelfilm Encyclopedie review:

"Two young brothers are able to prove that pollution of their favourite fishing spot is being caused by illegal dumping by a local chemical factory. Exciting children's film, shot on location in Hertfordshire, England. ** "

NFT Bulletin - April '76 - review:

"No-one could accuse the C.F.F. of not being topical¹. This recent movie takes industrial pollution as its central theme - using this as the background to the adventure story. Two boys discover their favourite fishing area is being poisoned by industrial waste, and when the local authorities appear to be uninterested they deal with the matter themselves. Well, until trouble develops and the police are needed... "

[no listing in "Halliwell's Film Guide", "Leonard Maltin's Movie and Video Guide 1996", "The Critics' Film Guide", "The Good Film and Video Guide", "Movies on TV and Videocassette 1988-89", "Rating the Movies (1990)", "The Sunday Times Guide to Movies on Television", "The Time Out Film Guide", "TV Times Film & Video Guide 1995", "Variety Movie Guide 1993", "Video Movie Guide 1993" or "The Virgin Film Guide"]

¹ Oh yes I could!

No further information currently available. You'll note that a Dutch language film guide is the only one to bother listing it. My catalogue of the CFF's output was published in 1972 and so misses this one.

"Topical" environmental themes are no novelty in children's programming anymore, as long as pat and sanctimonious writers choose to portray children as our best hope for a shining future. To be fair, in 1975 this had not yet become the trendy thing for children's productions, although saving pit-ponies / nesting wild birds / local woodlands from the depredations of commerce has always been a trusty standby. It is in the innocuous nature of children's films (English ones at any rate) that less cosy protest statements are never heard.

Where are the children's films protesting against lead poisoning by traffic exhaust, which measurably impairs the brain performance of very young children? Too many mommies and daddies are fond of their cars, so we scrub that one. Where were the protest films against corporal punishment in state schools, when this was an everyday practice? One can easily think of other social issues with a very direct import to children's lives which are strenuously avoided by such anodyne bodies as the Children's Film Foundation. Polluted fishing ponds is about as much as they'd care to take on. That said, any film which sets out to promote due respect in children for their surroundings and fellow creatures is to be applauded.

Buckton was apparently 12, and appeared next year in the Foundation's "**GLITTERBALL**". Ashby was 13, and made "**ONE HOUR TO ZERO**", also for the Foundation, the same year.

See subject index under **BOATS & FISHING, CHILDREN'S FILM & TV FOUNDATION** and **ECOLOGY / ENVIRONMENTALISM**.