

Birdsnesting

UK : 1898 : dir. : R.W. Paul Silent : 60 sec
 prod: R. W. Paul : scr: : dir.ph.:

.....
 Cast unknown

Ref:	Pages	Sources	Stills	Words	Ω	8	€	M	⌘	Copy on VHS	Last Viewed
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The British Film Catalogue 1895-1985 listing:

“Comedy. Boy climbs tree, falls on farmer and is chased.”

[no listing in "Classics of the Silent Screen", "A Pictorial History of the Silent Screen", "Silent Movies: A Picture Quiz Book", "Halliwell's Film Guide", "Leonard Maltin's Movie and Video Guide 2001", "Bloomsbury Foreign Film Guide", "The Critics' Film Guide", "The Good Film and Video Guide", "Movies on TV and Videocassette 1988-89", "Rating the Movies (1990)", "Speelfilm Encyclopedie", "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"]

No further information currently available. The first instance of the kamikaze pilot in British cinema. Pitching out of trees onto unsuspecting farmers is of course a gross effrontery, for which offenders must be *spanked*. Bird-nesting is yet another of those traditional boyhood hobbies which has been obliterated in the space of one generation. Whatever the naturalist arguments against it, it was perhaps a more inoffensive pastime than car-theft, dope-smoking, daubing the neighbourhood with aerosol paint, or some of the hobbies that have replaced it.

Naughty boy films came thick and fast from 1898, which saw director James Williamson go to work with his sons on titles like “**TWO NAUGHTY BOYS UPSETTING THE SPOONS**”, while R.S. Paul replied with “**WHEN THE CAT’S AWAY**” and others. Kids’ pranks made ideal “storylines” for these one-reelers of a minute or less, being cheap, simple, and universally recognisable. They were visual one-liners, requiring no caption cards or establishment of character, and were also a little cheeky, disrespectful of authority, which would have been in tune with the end-of-pier type venues where these early film performances were seen.

Denis Gifford's *British Film Catalogue* is a staggering work of research, listing virtually every live action film shot in the UK over the first ninety years of the cinema, but uniquely valuable for information on these earliest silent pieces, the great majority of which we must assume to be lost.

See subject index under **COMEDY, HOBBIES / COLLECTING, RASCALS & SCALAWAGS** and [SILENT CINEMA](#).