

Dickens' London

UK documentary : 19 : dir. Silent : ? min
 prod: : scr: : dir.ph.:

Ref:	Pages	Sources	Stills	Words	Ω □ € Z ♀	Copy on VHS	Last Viewed
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NFT bulletin – Nov/Dec 94 – comment on a compilation of early silent Dickensian material:

“A rare chance to see some early films relating to Charles Dickens and his work, including the earliest surviving British interpretation, **"SCROOGE; or MARLEY'S GHOST"** (UK 1901, dir W.R. Booth), an un-acknowledged 1909 version of "Great Expectations", **"THE BOY AND THE CONVICT"** (dir Dave Aylott), a classic 1912 French entry **"LITTLE NELL"**, a fascinating travelogue featuring places and characters from Dickens' novels, **"DICKENS' LONDON"** and more. This is a rare opportunity to see some gems from the silent era.”

[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", "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, but then you'd scarcely expect any. Although no precise date is given, this is still the earliest documentary piece known to the archive. Documentary material from the silent era is rarely touched upon in the literature. In one sense, of course, the earliest films of all were little fragments of documentary footage – a street scene, holidaymakers at a beach, workers leaving a factory, a train arriving at a station – and children were always among the figures we see bustling past the static camera. Even the penny-pocket dramas which soon began to appear – first among them, **"L'ARROSEUR ARROSÉ"**, featuring a naughty boy and a gardener – hold great fascination for us as glimpses of the way people dressed and moved a long century ago, the paraphernalia of daily life has immediate historical interest. But I'm not aware of a single specific instance where children, or school, were the subject of a silent documentary piece, though these certainly existed – showing the children of Dr Barnardo's homes, for example.

See subject index under **CHARLES DICKENS ADAPTATIONS, DOCUMENTARIES, HISTORY** and **SILENT CINEMA**.