

Geordie

(US = "Wee Geordie")

UK : 1955 : dir. Frank Launder : British Lion / Argonaut : 99 min

prod: Frank Launder & Sidney Gilliat : scr: Launder & Gilliat : dir.ph.: Wilkie Cooper

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Bill Travers; Alastair Sim; Norah Gersen; Raymond Huntley; Brian Reece; Miles Malleson;
Duncan Macrae; Stanley Baxter; Molly Urquhart; Francis de Wolff

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Leonard Maltin's Movie and Video Guide 2001 review:

"Flavourful romp with Travers a Scottish hammer-thrower who goes to the Olympics. Despite predictable sight gags and romance, film makes one relish each situation. ***½ "

Speelfilm Encyclopedie review – identical to above

Halliwel's Film Guide review

"A weakly Scottish boy takes a physical culture course and becomes an Olympic hammer-thrower. Slight comic fable, good to look at but without the necessary style to follow it through. From a novel by David Walker. * "

Movies on TV and Videocassette 1988-89 review:

"Charming comedy about a skinny Scottish boy who grows up into a big, brawny man after sending for a "British Charles Atlas" bodybuilding correspondence course. ***½ "

The Sunday Times Guide to Movies on Television review:

"Frank Launder's awful 1955 yarn about puny youth who takes a bodybuilding course to stop the world kicking porridge in his face and heads for Olympics via Highland Games. Dull, depressing stuff. With Bill Travers, Alastair Sim. 777 "

[no listing in "The Critics' Film Guide", "The Good Film and Video Guide", "The Moving Picture Boy", "Rating the Movies (1990)", "The Time Out Film Guide", "TV Times Film & Video Guide 1995", "Variety Movie Guide 1993", "Video Movie Guide 1993" or "The Virgin Film Guide"]

Radio Times review:

"Scripted by Frank Launder and Sidney Gilliat, this is a pleasing picture that never really develops into anything substantial. The story of a Scottish gamekeeper's son (Bill Travers) who body-builds his way to the Olympics is too whimsical to rank among the best British comedies. Luckily, Alastair Sim is on hand to pep up the humour. *** "

"Drama starring Alastair Sim and Bill Travers. In the highlands of Scotland, 12-year old Geordie feels so inferior about his frail physique that he enrolls on a body-building course. *** "

One of those films which, from the archive's standpoint, you can safely switch off after 16 minutes. Those sixteen minutes are consumed with 12-year old Geordie McTaggart's yearning to escape his diminutive stature. Teased by the boys at school and mocked by the master (Duncan Macrae, dour grandfather of **"THE KIDNAPPERS"**) his only friend is Jean, with whom he tracks an eagle to its nest, but even she persists in calling him "wee Geordie". At the supper table he spots a "Mr Universe" style ad in his dad's paper and secretly posts off his ten shillings for "Henry Samson's Road to Strength". The correspondence course duly arrives (delivered by a young Stanley Baxter) and he sets to work religiously in his bedroom. Cue a brief montage of physical jerks during which Geordie effortlessly ages seven years into a hulking Bill Travers, and then it's time to find more important things to do.

Launder and Gilliat were the brains behind the **St TRINIAN'S** farces, which is a fair indicator of the quality of wit here. It's pure roaming in the gloaming hokum, with the distant sound of bagpipes breaking out across the glens in the outdoor scenes, and characters who doggedly address one another by name every other utterance: "Such and such Jean?", "This and that, Geordie", "Hat and coat dad?", "Ferret and turnip Geordie". Like most of the Ealing Comedies, it requires an indulgent, nostalgic frame of mind to transmute its parochial simplicity into charm. Without, it is only a back-of-a-beermat doodle for **"CHARIOTS OF FIRE"**. The young Geordie and Jean were not recognisable players, and unidentified on the cast list.

See subject index under **BOY MEETS GIRL, CHILDHOOD PROLOGUES** and **SPORT**.