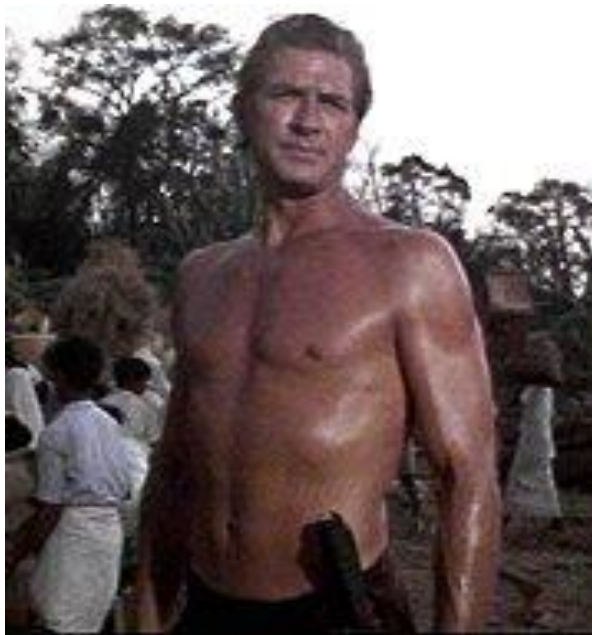


Tarzan Goes to India

US : 1962 : dir. John Guillermin : M-G-M : 86 min
 prod: : scr: : dir.ph.:
"Jai "
 Jock Mahoney; Mark Dana; Leo Gordon; Feroz Khan; Murad; Simi

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"Some deal ! Weismuller gets to wrassle crocodiles, nazi spies and jungle goddesses – just look what I got !"
 Source: indeterminate Tarzan website

Films & Filming – Sept 1962 – review:

"See Jock Mahoney, the latest of Tarzans! See Tarzan's leap from a plane *sans* parachute! See Tarzan's death-defying battle with a King Cobra! See 300 elephants on the rampage! See Tarzan and the elephant boy walk the river of death! See Tarzan's fight with a savage leopard! See the amazing battle of the bull elephants! [and speaking of bull...] See Tarzan shackled and left alone to face the creeping terror of the jungle! See the kidnapping of the elephant boy! See the ambush in the deserted city!

Alas, poor Ape Man. For after having appeared in some 28 feature films, 4 serials, 3 combination serials and 23 novels, Edgar Rice-Burroughs' splendid noble-savage creation, Tarzan, suffers the humiliation of being treated and played in this current offering as though he

were some form of wandering UNESCO executive. If you're going to do Tarzan, then bring back the old ingredients – Jane, Boy, Cheetah, that nice little tree house, that perilous climb on the Mutia escarpment, that smooth line of villains played by such as Tom Conway, Paul Kelly, Philip Dorn or Paul Cavanagh."

[no listing in "Variety Movie Guide 1993", "Video Movie Guide 1993" or "The Virgin Film Guide"]

[no listing in "Halliwell's Film Guide", "Leonard Maltin's Movie and Video Guide 2001", "Speelfilm Encyclopedie", "The Critics' Film Guide", "The Good Film and Video Guide", "Movies on TV and Videocassette 1988-89", "Radio Times Guide to Films", "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"]

Radio Times note:

"Tarzan tries to save 300 elephants which will die if a new dam comes into operation."

What's On TV note:

"The legend in a loincloth travels to India to save a herd of elephants."

"Jock Mahoney saves a herd of elephants from drowning. * "

Excerpt from **NAMBLA Bulletin** – vol. 5/5 – survey of Tarzan's boys:

"... In "**TARZAN GOES TO INDIA**" (1962), a Bombay street boy played Jai, the elephant boy who befriended and helped Tarzan. He wore a torn cloth and looked real macho."

Tien tien... Jungle man take busman's holiday. The average post-1930s **TARZAN** adventure contrives to make the world's wilder places look very ho-hum and dull. This one seems like a trial episode for the Ron Ely TV series (several of which also crept onto the big screen disguised as "movies"). As the *Films & Filming* review sarcastically indicates, it was the dawning of the post-colonialist Tarzan, where *Mysteries of the Untamed Jungle* made way for conservationist agendas, and the "Dark Continent" became the "Developing World". In place of the evil big white hunters and gold-seekers, we now have evil structural engineers.

The storyline in a nutshell – Tarzan bails out from a biplane into India to visit an ailing Maharajah, who is fretting that his wildlife protection project is about to be flooded by a new dam nearing completion. A large herd of elephants there, led by a rogue male, are terrorising their surroundings. Tarzan pledges to lead the herd to safety somehow, while the Maharajah's feisty modern-minded daughter organises the evacuation of the villagers from the flood-plain. No thought is given to the salvation of any wild species but the elephants – a jungle man has only one pair of hands, after all.

In the jungle Tarzan is snared by a runaway orphan boy, Jai, who is living in the wild with a trained elephant, and mysteriously gets his costume from the same tailors Tarzan uses in Africa. Tarzan calculates that if he can only kill the rogue male leading the elephant herd, this boy's elephant can take its place and lead the herd to safety before the dam is completed. The ruthless white engineer driving the dam project (Brice, in a mean Clark Gable kind of performance) nurtures a private quarrel with Tarzan, and does all he can to frustrate the rescue. Tarzan succeeds in killing the rogue herd-leader, but Brice then kidnaps Jai and lays an ambush. Tusk, tusk tusk. Need I say more?

Mahoney only makes for a so-so Tarzan. His performance is without energy or self-conviction. Athletic build and a healthy tan do not a leading player make, and Mahoney did only two more Tarzans before tiring of the role, or before the public tired of him: "**TARZAN'S THREE CHALLENGES**" (63), set in Thailand, with another token boy in the shape of Ricky Der as "Kashi", and "**TARZAN AND THE VALLEY OF GOLD**" (66).

The plain fact of the matter is that, from a late-twentieth century standpoint, Tarzan is completely passé, unless it is purposefully located in a much earlier period setting (as Hugh Hudson valiantly tried to do with "**GREYSTOKE: THE LEGEND OF TARZAN**"). Attempts to "update" the character are as futile as they are dull, yet still they keep on trying. Today, with as many Africans and Asians living in London or Paris as there are Londoners or Parisians,

the essential exotic appeal of this genre has evaporated for good. And cheap global tourism has snuffed out any lingering mystique about those far-away places.

But these films, in any case, show no interest whatever in the cultures or wildlife of other continents. The Indian or African peoples, like the token boy sidekicks themselves, remain idle bystanders in various disputes between “good” and “bad” white men, just as they were back in the days of Johnny Weissmuller. Nobody ever came away from a **TARZAN** film understanding more about darker-skinned people, and you can learn infinitely more about the fascinating diversity of rainforest species from a David Attenborough documentary than a dozen of these films end to end. All gestures in the scripts at a newfound respect notwithstanding, the local peoples remain colourful but useless extras in their own lands. And another self-defeating disparity lies between the films marketing themselves as tales of raw savagery and nature red in tooth and claw, while every one of them has been severely tamed down for a family audience. **TARZAN** films never produce the goods they actually offer. Patronising adult reviewers will shrug them off as diverting for the kids (translated as “dull”), but few kids will be fooled by this film’s attempts to eke high drama from, for example, fording a shallow river on the back of an elephant, or Tarzan wrestling with a tame cheetah.

See **TARZAN - GENERAL NOTE**, and subject index under **ANIMALS, ASIA, JUNGLES, LIANAS & LOINCLOTHS** and **KIDNAPPING**.