

Ideal Cinemagazine – History

Ideal's Cinemagazine was first trade shown on 15th January 1926, at the New Gallery Kinema, Regent Street. Thirteen issues were advertised at first and the series was originally limited to 26 single reels, to be released fortnightly. The series was launched as part of Ideals Laughter Festival, and immediately established a motto, 'Learn a Little, Laugh a Lot'.¹ Thus it is obvious that Ideal Cinemagazine was very different from the other films in this genre.

Ideal were the only company to publicly define the term 'cinemagazine', saying, 'It's an arresting series of one-reel pictures devoted to everyday things, viewed from strange and unconventional angles'. This wide variety of subjects were arranged around a title, frequently a pun (for example, issue 2, 'New Vamps for Old') which often surprised the critics in its unusual nature.

Despite this unconventional beginning, by January 1927, the content of Ideal Cinemagazine was much more recognizable as cinemagazine fare. The programme then provided sport, through bought-in Grantland Rice "Sportlights" footage²; music, in the guise of Ideal's own "Singsong" films³, travel from Ideal's "Hodge Podge" series⁴; and, of course, a cartoon. FELIX STUFF

In common with Eve and Everybody's Film Review and Gaumont Mirror, Ideal Cinemagazine also attempted to attract a female audience, in their case, through the inclusion of an illustrated household hint. It was at this point, 1927, that Ideal Cinemagazine began to be advertised as 'The Champagne of Shorts', though Ideal were careful to maintain that it contained 'something to attract, amuse and enchant every class of patron'.⁵ By May 1927, Ideal Cinemagazine was released '2 a week'⁶, though still only one reel in length.

Ideal embraced sound cinemagazine production in August 1931, producing the Ideal Cinemagazine with Sound on Film technology, provided by Peerless Pictures Ltd.⁷, released weekly. In July of that year, they boasted that it was already booked in 550 theatres.⁸ It was also around this time that Ideal began to advertise the fact that the series was edited by Andrew Buchanan (although he had, in fact, been editor from the beginning). In 1932, he moved production to Gainsborough Studios, presumably to facilitate sound recording to a greater degree.⁹ At this point they also changed their

¹ Bioscope 7/1/1926

² From Issue number 14, Kinematograph Weekly, 6/1/1927 p.76

³ From January 1927. Bioscope 13/1/1927 p.52

⁴ Bioscope 28/10/1926

⁵ Kinematograph Weekly, 24/2/1927

⁶ Bioscope 26/5/1927

⁷ Bioscope 29/4/1931 p.22

⁸ Bioscope 15/7/1931 p.6-7

⁹ Bioscope 6/1/1932

slogan to 'Cinemazine – the "Punch" of the Screen' – like other cinemazines, drawing a direct comparison with print media.¹⁰

Many of the short pieces from Ideal Cinemazine became seires in their own right.

The last issue that we have record of is sound issue 297, released on 9th May 1932, and entitled "Bath of a Nation".

¹⁰ Bioscope 9/3/1932 p.11