

IT ALWAYS RAINS ON SUNDAY

- RIALTO PICTURES -

Robert Hamer's "Brit Noir" masterwork **IT ALWAYS RAINS ON SUNDAY**

New 35mm Print at Film Forum

March 7 - 13 One Week!

IT ALWAYS RAINS ON SUNDAY, Robert Hamer's rediscovered masterwork of post-war "Brit Noir," will run in a new 35mm print at **Film Forum from Friday, March 7 through Thursday, March 13 (one week)**.

It's another rainy Sunday in Bethnal Green, in London's East End — and another dull one for Googie Withers: rapping on the bedroom wall to summon good stepdaughter to start the tea; nagging her decent but dull hubby to fix a broken window; battling with late-night-partying-with-married-man stepdaughter; and then running through the rain to the backyard bomb shelter/tool shed to find... ex-lover John McCallum, fresh from his Dartmoor prison breakout.

With an atmosphere redolent of pre-war French "poetic realism," *IT ALWAYS RAINS ON SUNDAY* is a Brueghelian slice of post-war British life: amid a raucous street market, a feckless trio of thieves try to unload a truckload of hot roller skates; a music store owner/sax player chases one "shiksa" too many (Bethnal Green, to this day, has a thriving Jewish community); a fight fixer drops a thick roll in the youth center collection box; while comfortably pipe-smoking inspector Jack Warner plays Javert throughout a long day — climaxing with an excitingly photographed chase through railroad yards and puffing steam engines, two suicide attempts, and a murder. The screenplay is based on a novel by Paul La Bern, whose book *Goodbye Piccadilly, Farewell Leicester Square* was the basis for Hitchcock's penultimate movie, *Frenzy*.

Unusual fare for Ealing Studios, home to the archetypally cozy British comedy, *IT ALWAYS RAINS...* was in fact its first popular success and marks a kind of transition from the upper *clahss* pre-war cinema to the coming Angry Young Man/"kitchen sink" school of the 1950s and 60s. Studio head Michael Balcon, grandfather of Oscar-winner Daniel Day-Lewis, is generally considered the most important producer in British film history (among his scores of credits are some of Hitchcock's best 30s thrillers).

Ealing *auteur maudit* Robert Hamer would next make the icily brilliant comedy *Kind Hearts and Coronets*; cinematographer Douglas Slocombe would go on to shoot some of the most iconic Ealing comedies (*Kind Hearts...*, *The Lavender Hill Mob*, *The Ladykillers*, etc.) and still later all three Indiana Jones movies; composer Georges Auric would soon create the scores for Wyler's *Roman Holiday*, Preminger's *Bonjour Tristesse*, and Dassin's *Rififi*, among many others; and star Googie Withers, doyenne of "Brit Noir" (Hamer's sequence in *Dead of Night*, Dassin's *Night and the City*), would wed co-star McCallum the following year. Now living in Sidney, Australia, the McCallums recently celebrated their 60th anniversary.

IT ALWAYS RAINS ON SUNDAY

- RIALTO PICTURES -

PRODUCTION CREDITS

Director
Robert Hamer

Screenplay
Angus MacPhail
Robert Hamer
Henry Cornelius

Based on the novel by Arthur La Bern

Producer
Michael Balcon

Associate Producer
Henry Cornelius

Cinematography
Douglas Slocombe

Music
Georges Auric

Production Design
Duncan Sutherland

Editor
Michael Truman

Sound
Stephen Dalby

United Kingdom 1947 B&W Aspect ratio 1.33:1

Running time: 92 min.

AN EALING STUDIOS PRODUCTION

A RIALTO PICTURES RELEASE

IT ALWAYS RAINS ON SUNDAY

- RIALTO PICTURES -

CAST

Rose Sandigate
Googie Withers

Tommy Swann
John McCallum

Detective Sergeant Fothergill
Jack Warner

George Sandigate
Edward Chapman

Morry Hyams
Sydney Tafler

Dacey Perkins
Alfie Bass

Whitey
Jimmy Hanley

Freddie
John Carol

Lou Hyams, Morry's brother
John Slater

Vi Sandigate
Susan Shaw

Doris Sandigate
Patricia Plunkett

Alfie Sandigate
David Lines

Sadie Hyams
Betty Ann Davies

IT ALWAYS RAINS ON SUNDAY

- RIALTO PICTURES -

SYNOPSIS

Sunday in Bethnal Green, a borough of London's drab East End, shortly after World War II. Rain starts to fall. A young woman, Vi, is seen dashing from a car in the early hours. At a nearby coffee-stall, three low-life types, Whitey, Dicey, and Freddie, have just come back from a botched "job." As morning arrives, ex-barmaid Rose Sandigate wakes her stepdaughter Doris to fetch tea and the paper. Her humdrum life is disrupted by the news -- and soon the arrival -- of escaped convict Tommy Swann, her former fiancé, whom she'd met while working at the local pub. She remembers her time with Tommy, and the ring he gave her, shortly before his arrest.

Over breakfast the family relations are tense, and Rose goes to retrieve some old black-out material from the air-raid shelter, where she finds Tommy hiding. Promising to help, she returns to the kitchen on edge, and then has to suffer delays while the family run through the Sunday rituals (husband George bathing, son Alfie going out to play, Doris preparing for a day trip, and Vi off for an assignation with local rake Morry Hyams) before she finally succeeds in smuggling him into the house to feed him and dry his clothes, all the while risking discovery. She takes him food and he asks for money. When Rose offers him the ring, kept in her drawer, he is grateful, but fails to recall its significance to her.

Meanwhile, Vi visits Morry, a local bandleader/music-store owner who regularly cheats on his wife; she goes to his shop following up last night's invitation. Doris encounters Morry's brother Lou at his amusement arcade, but eventually rejects his advances, preferring her rather stolid boyfriend and a "safe" job, though not before she and her boyfriend row about it. Alfie gets drawn into blackmailing Morry for a free harmonica when he spots Vi and Morry embracing in the record booth.

The police have two cases to follow: looking out for Swann, and following up a robbery the night before. They encounter most of the colorful characters in the area, including a flophouse proprietor, the inept local villains Whitey, Dicey, and Freddie, a fence and Slopey Collins, the local reporter.

Rose sits anxiously through the family Sunday dinner, with Swann still upstairs. His presence is nearly revealed several times, particularly following a row involving Vi, Doris and Rose which takes place outside the locked bedroom where Swann is hiding. Evening finally arrives and, with George at a darts match and the girls out, Swann can make his get-away. Rose is wrestling with

IT ALWAYS RAINS ON SUNDAY

- RIALTO PICTURES -

the idea of resuming their former relationship, but local reporter Slopey Collins has worked out where Swann has been hiding and calls at the Sandigate's: Alfie opens the door and as Rose shoos him back to bed Swann rushes Slopey and his cover is blown.

A chase follows with Swann's path crossing the police as well as that of the murderous Whitey and his victim. Meanwhile, Rose attempts to gas herself in the kitchen. Swann is finally trapped in a railway yard and recaptured.

George visits Rose in the hospital and entreats her to get better quickly, before walking home down the wet streets. (*adapted from screenonline.org.uk*)

BETHNAL GREEN

In the 18th century, Bethnal Green was an area of large houses and gardens, but by about 1860 it was mainly full of tumbledown old buildings. By the end of the 19th century, it was one of the poorest slums in London. Jack the Ripper operated at the western end of Bethnal Green and in neighboring Whitechapel.

On March 3, 1943, the unopened Bethnal Green tube station was the site of a wartime disaster. In the wet, dark conditions of the station during an air raid alarm, a woman slipped on the entrance stairs and 173 people died in the resulting crush. Newspapers reported that there had been a direct hit by a German bomb, with official results not released until 1946. There is now a plaque at the entrance to the tube station, which commemorates it as the worst civilian disaster of World War II. It is estimated that during WWII, 80 tons of bombs fell on the Metropolitan Borough of Bethnal Green, affecting 21,700 houses, destroying 2,233 and making a further 893 uninhabitable. There were a total of 555 people killed and 400 seriously injured. To this day, many unexploded bombs remain in the area, and as recently as May 14, 2007, builders discovered a 1 meter long, 500 lb World War II bomb.

As late as the 1960s, the infamous gangsters the Kray twins lived in Bethnal Green, but by the beginning of the 21st century, the area, like much of the old East End, began to undergo a process of gentrification.

It Always Rains on Sunday, with extensive filming in the area, provides an excellent insight on post-war East London, showing bombsites and slums before most were swept away during redevelopment in the 60s and later. Apparently, though, residents of the time protested at their portrayal, and there were censorship problems. The *Cinematograph Exhibitors Association's* reviewer declared it "an unsavoury film... with appeal only to those with very broad minds."

-- adapted from *Wikipedia*

IT ALWAYS RAINS ON SUNDAY

- RIALTO PICTURES -

WHAT CRITICS HAVE SAID ABOUT “IT ALWAYS RAINS ON SUNDAY”

“Like a British counterpart to Carné’s *Port of Shadows*, another tale of doomed lovers and petty criminals adrift on rain swept streets. But the director is also alert to the gossiping and backbiting of the Bethnal Green neighbourhood.”
– *The Independent* (London)

“Googie Withers’s unsentimental performance balanced with the constant fear of being discovered make *It Always Rains on Sunday* tick along like a bomb that could blow at any minute... Unlike the ruthlessly linear plots of Hollywood films, *Sunday*’s circular story encompasses Withers’s feuding family, including her lovely stepdaughter’s romantic transactions with boyfriends and married men. In keeping with the tradition of Hitchcock’s great *Shadow of a Doubt* (1943), these characters absorb the criminal into their daily lives. Hamer’s picture gracefully combines the desperation of a hunted man, the pent-up silence of a woman still in love with a brutalized convict and the great lap of warmth of postwar, working class Britain.” --Stephen Talty, *Time Out New York*

“In some ways typical of Ealing films that preceded it, *It Always Rains on Sunday* is far more a foreshadowing of other Ealing films – and characters – that would follow... One of [its] more interesting aspects is its more than casual relationship to Ealing’s *Dead of Night*. Robert Hamer also directed that film’s framing story and its best single story, the mirror episode (which also starred Googie Withers) and which likewise used George Auric’s Wagnerian music. Although a totally different kind of film, *Sunday* presents Withers with a remarkably similar role, and the film as a whole with a similar structure. The mirror motif is established early in *Sunday*; the remembered former life seems to take over from the mirror (not literally, as in *Dead of Night*), and the film’s ambiguous life-goes-on climax also recalls *Dead of Night*’s ending. There are other intriguing beneath-the-surface subtleties in *Sunday*, too: Googie Withers is a blonde in the flashback pre-marriage sequences, a brunette in the contemporary post-marriage sequences. Her two daughters, who in a sense are a kind of rebirth of her own two natures, are likewise blonde (the sexy, slightly wild one) and the brunette (the serious, homebody sister)... *It Always Rains on Sunday* was part of a very prevalent film-making fashion in the late 40s, and in a historical-social sense it is an invaluable record of and reflection of the times, and attitudes of those times – almost the definitive post-war British film, just as *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*, was to be the definitive British film of the early 60s. Incidentally, it’s an incredibly faithful adaptation of a rather dull book, but so cinematic that it suggests that the book may in fact be much better than it is! And it is excellently photographed, particularly in its tense and underplayed sidestreet and railroad yard chase climax.” -- William K. Everson, *New School Notes* (March, 1980)

IT ALWAYS RAINS ON SUNDAY

- RIALTO PICTURES -

GEORGE PERRY ON “IT ALWAYS RAINS ON SUNDAY”

Googie Withers' last Ealing film was *It Always Rains on Sunday*... The woman played by Googie Withers is a prisoner of her situation, and even her attempt to escape through suicide is doomed to fail. It is a difficult part for, in spite of her bad temper and at one point a violent assault on the elder, more sluttish of the two stepdaughters (Susan Shaw), in which she literally tears the girl's dress off in her rage, we are expected to feel sympathy for her. The ex-lover, played by John McCallum, is not a heroic figure, and it becomes plain that he is only interested in her to save his own skin. The amiable husband, played by Edward Chapman, a shuffling, contented, dart-playing working man of the old school, is perhaps the only character, apart from the professional-mannered police inspector (Jack Warner), who is sound and sympathetic in character, and at the end of the film in a touching hospital scene he quietly forgives his wife for what has happened.

The drab early post-war atmosphere is carefully established — the black street surfaces coated with a film of wet grease, the regulars hanging around a coffee stall scanning the sports pages of *The News the World*, the Sunday morning street market with its yelling hawkers. The flat-fronted little terrace house at 26 Coronet Grove, where most of the action takes place, is a few yards from a grimy railway bridge which always seems to have a line of goods trucks or a smoke belching engine crossing it. There is a rich assortment of secondary characters — small-time crooks, a flashy Jewish “spiv,” a womanizing record shop owner, a sanctimonious “fence,” a snide local reporter. When the film was released there were protests from the real inhabitants of Bethnal Green that it painted too black a picture of life there but, as an example of Ealing's pursuit of the slice-of-life technique, *It Always Rains on Sunday* is a skilful work, and one of the best films by the most talented of the directors to emerge from Balcon's stable.

-- excerpted from *Forever Ealing* (Pavilion Books, 1981)

DILYS POWELL ON “IT ALWAYS RAINS ON SUNDAY”

Now an affectionately and ironically observed adventure in the East End of London a mosaic of emotion and action. *It Always Rains on Sunday*.

The new film, no doubt of it, is melodrama again, a matter of crime, fugitives, the chase. The dialogue has so much point, the characters are outlined with so much firmness, that I find myself accepting the whole piece without demur. Let me pay it the simplest of compliments and say that it has the persuasiveness of an exciting story professionally told.

IT ALWAYS RAINS ON SUNDAY

- RIALTO PICTURES -

It is pleasant to be able to point once more to good writing for the English screen... The story is many-stranded: an escaped convict, the married woman who shelters him, the love-affair of her step-daughter, the intrigues of the local dance-band leader, the dealings of the local fence and the local pin-table proprietor, and, threading and re-threading through the plot, the stratagems of three scrubby crooks, fighting a losing battle against the law, the price of drink and the difficulty of selling a lorry-load of stolen roller-skates. It cannot have been easy to unite all these elements in a coherent film. Yet the joins are rarely noticeable, and for the most part *It Always Rains on Sunday* seems to move with fluency.

I believe this is the result, not merely of the skilful linking of episodes, the articulation as it were of the plot's skeleton, but also of the solid background detail. The grey streets, the music-shop, the pub, the market-stalls-these, indeed, are drawn in with assurance. But there is something more: an amused, a devoted attention to the tiny decorations of the everyday, to the chattering neighbour, the darts game and the black cat brushed with an exasperated gesture off the sofa-head. These trifles mark the difference between the studio set and the room lived in: and an audience convinced of the realism of the scene it watches becomes submissive to the movement of the story.

The realism I mean is a different thing from documentary realism. Here and there in this film you can see a shot of a London street; the cinema of fiction has learned from the cinema of fact the value of the recognizably genuine. But the genuine is apt to sprawl. Artifice can concentrate in a single moment what the lazy eye and mind take hours to see and comprehend; and such concentration, after all, is half the art of narrative. *It Always Rains on Sunday*, by its dialogue, by its sets and camerawork, and by its choice of significant action (which does not exclude an excellent chase across what in the war we learned to call a marshalling yard), sets a high standard of concentration. The playing, in leading parts, of Googie Withers and John McCallum, and in minor parts of Sydney Tafler, Betty Ann Davies, Edward Chapman and John Slater, makes its proper contribution: a contribution, I should add, increased by the sensibility of Robert Hamer's direction, which has made of the trio of crooks (played by Jimmy Hanley, John Carol and Alfie Bass) a constant delight.

-- *The Sunday Times* [London], November 1947

IT ALWAYS RAINS ON SUNDAY

- RIALTO PICTURES -

ROBERT HAMER (Director)

Born 1911 in Kidderminster, the son of actor Gerald Hamer. He graduated from Cambridge in economics and dabbled in poetry. Perhaps surprisingly with that background, he began in films in 1934 at the bottom as a number boy (the board for scene and take number was not yet attached to the synchronizing clapper on British sets), eventually being promoted to editor, cutting among others, Hitchcock's *Jamaica Inn*.

He first directed "The Haunted Mirror," one of the two best episodes in *Dead of Night* (1945), then the Victorian melodrama *Pink String and Sealing Wax* (1945), and *It Always Rains on Sunday* in 1947 – all of which featured actress Googie Withers. Two years later he made his most famous film, the comedy of murders *Kind Hearts and Coronets* (1949). In the first of four films with Hamer, Alec Guinness played all eight of Dennis Price's victims.

At this point, Hamer left Ealing after studio head Michael Balcon vetoed a long planned project, and as a freelancer made *The Spider and the Fly* (1949) a World War I crime and espionage drama set in France, with a bitterly ironic conclusion; the stage adaptation *His Excellency* (1952); and *The Long Memory* (1952), with John Mills as an innocent man hunting down his framers after 12 years in prison. As G.K. Chesterton's *Father Brown* (1954), Alec Guinness relentlessly pursued suave criminal Peter Finch, and then appeared again for Hamer in two comedies: *To Paris with Love* (1955) and *The Scapegoat* (1959), the latter apparently reedited by MGM into incoherence.

By now, Hamer was in poor health, aggravated by his long history of heavy drinking. Balcon has commented on his "brilliant but mordant wit" but also his inability to come to terms with himself and his seeming urge to self-destruction. His final work was *School for Scoundrels*, based on Stephen Potter's books on 'one-upmanship'.

He died in 1963 at age 52.

SIR MICHAEL BALCON (Producer)

Born 1896 in Birmingham, of Jewish Eastern Europe immigrants, so poor that he had to leave school to work, despite winning a scholarship. In the early 1920s he made the leap from rubber production to film, leaving a high position at Dunlop to form a distribution company with his friend Victor Saville. Under the name of Gainsborough Pictures, Balcon produced their first feature in 1923, gave Alfred

IT ALWAYS RAINS ON SUNDAY

- RIALTO PICTURES -

Hitchcock his first break in the 1920s and produced some of his most famous 30s thriller classics (including *The 39 Steps* and *The Man Who Knew Too Much*), as well as Flaherty's *Man of Aran*, while personally intervening to help actor Conrad Veidt to emigrate from Hitler's Germany.

From 1936 to 1938, Balcon ran MGM British, at one point getting loudly berated by Louis B. Mayer before a carefully-opened window so the entire studio could hear (Balcon referred to him as "the unspeakable Mayer"). In 1938 he was invited to head Ealing Studios and over the next 20 years made it the most famous British studio, with an identity as distinctive as MGM or Warner Brothers in the Golden Years; made Ealing Comedy a worldwide brand name; was a committed vocal spokesman for the British film industry in general; and was knighted in 1948. After Ealing, he did some independent producing (*Sammy Going South* with Edward G. Robinson), executive produced *Tom Jones*, unhappily chaired British Lion, and headed the BFI Experimental Film Fund. Balcon died in 1977, the most important and influential producer in British film history. His daughter, Jill, became a successful actress and married Poet Laureate-to-be C. Day Lewis. His grandson is Oscar-winner Daniel Day-Lewis.

DOUGLAS SLOCOMBE (Cinematographer)

Born 1913 in London, Slocombe began as a photojournalist, then as a newsreel photographer during the war. Beginning with *Dead of Night*, he became Ealing's top cameraman, shooting *Hue and Cry*, *Kind Hearts and Coronets*, *The Lavender Hill Mob*, *The Man in the White Suit*, among others. In the course of an ensuing international career, he also shot *Freud*, *The L-Shaped Room*, *The Fearless Vampire Killers*, *The Lion in Winter*, *The Music Lovers*, *Jesus Christ Superstar*, and *Never Say Never Again*, garnering 10 British Oscar nominations—winning for *The Servant*, *The Great Gatsby*, and *Julia*.

For Steven Spielberg, Slocombe shot the India sequence in *Close Encounters*, and the entire *Indiana Jones* trilogy (notoriously never using a light meter on the set). He was Oscar-nominated for *Travels with My Aunt*, *Julia*, and *Raiders of the Lost Ark* and made an OBE in the Queen's 2008 New Year's Honours List.

GEORGES AURIC (Composer)

Born in 1899 in the Languedoc area of France, Auric was a musical child prodigy whose work was first published at age 15 and scored ballets and stage productions before he was 20. One of a group mentored by the older Erik Satie (later dubbed Les Six by others, it included Darius Milhaud, Francis Poulenc, and Artur Honegger), he also worked with Jean Cocteau, for whom he did his first score *Le Sang d'un poète* in 1930, eventually scoring all of Cocteau's films, up to

IT ALWAYS RAINS ON SUNDAY

- RIALTO PICTURES -

Le Testament d'Orphée in 1958. In 1945 he crossed the Channel to score *Dead of Night* for Ealing Studios, eventually becoming identified with Ealing Comedy via *Passport to Pimlico*, *The Lavender Hill Mob*, and *The Titfield Thunderbolt*, as well as *Hue and Cry* and *It Always Rains on Sunday*. Other notable scores include those for René Clair's *A nous la liberté*, Wyler's *Roman Holiday*, Dassin's *Rififi*, Ophuls' *Lola Montès*, Preminger's *Bonjour Tristesse*, Clouzot's *The Wages of Fear*, and John Huston's *Moulin Rouge* (with its Auric-penned theme song "Where is Your Heart?" cracking the Hit Parade).

For a film composer with this incredible range, his reputation is remarkably low-profile, perhaps because of his subtlety and general lightness of tone. But he could also unleash the thunderousness of *The Mystery of Picasso*, and the low-key creepiness of *The Innocents*.

In 1962 Auric semi-retired from film scoring to become director of the Paris Opera and later the chairman of SACEM, the French ASCAP. He died in 1983.

GOOGIE WITHERS (Rose Sandigate)

Born 1917 in Karachi, now Pakistan, she was sent to boarding school in England at age 7. (Her distinctive first name was either an Indian nurse's affectionate nickname for her—it means 'pigeon' in Hindi—or was a childish mispronunciation of her actual given name "Georgette.") She began as a dancer on stage, then as a film extra, recruited for her first speaking role when she arrived on the set just as Michael Powell was firing his second lead on *The Girl in the Crowd* (1935). In the course of thirty "quota quickies" between 1934 and 1941, the then-blonde—as she is in the flashback in *It Always Rains on Sunday* -- appeared for Powell two more times and briefly in Hitchcock's *The Lady Vanishes*, but received her real break starring in the two-year stage run of *They Came to a City*. (Historian William K. Everson once wrote of her, "She could have been a British Carole Lombard had Britain made enough wacky and sophisticated comedies.")

Powell gave Withers her first important dramatic film role as a Dutch resistance fighter (her mother was Dutch) in *One of Our Aircraft is Missing* in 1942. In *On Approval*, opposite legends Clive Brook and Beatrice Lillie, she was "utterly charming even when parodying romantic charm" (Pauline Kael). She first appeared for Robert Hamer in his episode "The Haunted Mirror" in *Dead of Night*, then starred for him as a Victorian femme fatale in *Pink String and Sealing Wax* and in *It Always Rains on Sunday*.

The next year she married her *It Always Rains...* co-star John McCallum, a marriage that produced three children and endures to the present. After being

IT ALWAYS RAINS ON SUNDAY

- RIALTO PICTURES -

memorably sinister in Jules Dassin's *Night and the City*, she moved with her husband to Australia and often appeared with him on stage and on television, as well as returning to the London stage and appearing on Broadway in the 60s. She played the novelist Katharine Pritchard in *Shine* in 1996 and appeared in London in 2002 in Wilde's *Lady Windermere's Fan* opposite Vanessa Redgrave. Withers was made a Commander of the British Empire (CBE) in 2002.

JOHN McCALLUM (Tommy Swann)

Born 1917 in Brisbane, Australia, McCallum trained for the stage in England at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art. After two years in repertory he appeared at Stratford-on-Avon and the Old Vic. On his return to the stage after the war, he played in Australian musicals before going to England, where he played leading parts in many films. He met his wife, Googie Withers, on the film *The Loves of Joanna Godden* (1947) and married a year later (the McCallums recently celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary).

In 1958, the McCallums returned to his native Australia, where they often appeared on stage together (notably in Maugham's *The Circle*, which they brought back to the UK) and he wrote, directed, and produced for television and the stage, eventually becoming a director of the dominant Australia theater chain, J.C. Williamson. In 1971, he was made a Commander of the Order of the British Empire and, in 1992, an Officer of the Order of Australia. He published a biography of his wife, *Life with Googie*, in 1979.

EDWARD CHAPMAN (George Sandigate)

Born 1901 in Harrogate, he began his stage career in 1924. In his first film he starred as Captain Boyle in Hitchcock's adaptation of O'Casey's *Juno and the Paycock* and appeared in two more early Hitchcock talkies. After appearances in *Rembrandt*, *Things to Come* and *The Citadel* he took a multi-year break from acting by joining the RAF during the war, then returned to a seemingly endless succession of character parts in British films, most memorably for native audiences in five films as the officious foil to comic Norman Wisdom.

In the wake of Sir John Gielgud's morals arrest in the 50s, Chapman circulated a petition to force him to resign from Equity. Laurence Olivier reportedly kicked him out of his dressing room when Chapman asked for a signature.

Perhaps ironically, he was cast opposite Robert Morley in *Oscar Wilde* as the Marquis of Queensbury, the man who outed the playwright. He died in 1977.

IT ALWAYS RAINS ON SUNDAY

- RIALTO PICTURES -

JACK WARNER (Detective Sergeant Fothergill)

Born Horace John Walters in 1895, in East London. During WWI, Warner served in the RAF, flying the legendary Sopwith Camel. His first stage success came as half of a double act in musical comedy in the 20s. From the 1940s on, he became the embodiment of the solid working and lower-middle class British citizen, first as the father of the Huggetts in a series of films starting with *Holiday Camp* in 1947; then as the benevolent bobbie P.C. George Dixon in *The Blue Lamp* in 1950 – in which he was murdered by Dirk Bogarde.

Resurrected in 1955 for *Dixon of Dock Green*, Warner's character became a Saturday night institution on British television for the next twenty-one years. He was awarded the OBE in 1965 and died in 1981.

ALFIE BASS (Dicey Perkins)

Born Abraham Basalinsky in 1921 in the Bethnal Green district of London, the location for *It Always Rains on Sunday*. Beginning on stage in 1939 he appeared in Shaw and Shakespeare and directed at Unity Theatre, but on screen and TV he became practically the archetypical 'cloth cap' Cockney/Jewish East Ender, notably in *The Lavender Hill Mob*; as one of the gang in *The Ladykillers*, as Jerry Cruncher in *A Tale Of Two Cities*; and in a number of popular television series, including a season on *Are You Being Served?* He also starred in Jack Clayton's acclaimed short *The Bespoke Overcoat* and, as the innkeeper father of Sharon Tate in Roman Polanski's *The Fearless Vampire Killers*, became the movies' very first Jewish vampire in film, waving off a brandished crucifix with "Boy, have you got the wrong vampire!" He died of a heart attack in London in 1987.

ARTHUR LA BERN (Author of Original Novel)

Born in 1909 in London of French parents, La Bern claimed to be a Gallic Cockney. Journalist and war correspondent, a number of his novels have been adapted to films, most notably *Goodbye Piccadilly*, *Farewell Leicester Square*, the basis for Hitchcock's penultimate film, *Frenzy*. La Bern died in 1990.

IT ALWAYS RAINS ON SUNDAY

- RIALTO PICTURES -

EALING STUDIOS

In the beginning, Ealing Studios were *just* the studios at Ealing, a London suburb. Built in 1931 as a home for Basil Dean's Associated Talking Pictures, the studios were a subsidiary of ATP until Dean left in 1938 and Michael Balcon, after a stint at MGM British, came in to head the operation; emblematic of a fresh start, the production company was renamed Ealing Studios.

In addition to holdovers from ATP, Balcon brought in Alberto Cavalcanti and other documentarists, feeling that "some cross-fertilization, something different, would emerge"—and then kept most of the team together throughout, taking pride in promoting from within. (The Ealing slogan, posted on the walls, was The Studio with the Team Spirit.) Over its twenty years, six directors (Charles Crichton, Basil Dearden, Charles Frend, Robert Hamer, Alexander Mackendrick, and Harry Watt) directed 60 % of the total output (the studio averaged only 5 to 7 films a year) and the producers, writers, and directors met at a weekly Round Table to consult freely. Balcon ultimately had to okay every project, but he practiced an Open Door policy: T.E.B. Clarke, assigned a dramatic script, came up with a comedy; after an initial blowup, Balcon greenlighted *The Lavender Hill Mob*.

Balcon also avoided aiming for an international market, as the British industry had tried for in the 30s, keeping budgets modest enough to enable costs to be recouped from the home market. Ealing then went on to become Britain's most successful studio internationally, making Ealing Comedy in particular a brand name (although less than a third of its titles were comedies).

In 1945, Balcon wrote, "Clearly the need is great for a projection of the true Briton to the rest of the world." In the wake of the Angry Young Men, and the British New Wave—which came in soon after the end of Ealing – there was clearly another side, but as the plaque Balcon placed on the studio wall at the end states, "Here during a quarter of a century were made many films projecting Britain and the British character."