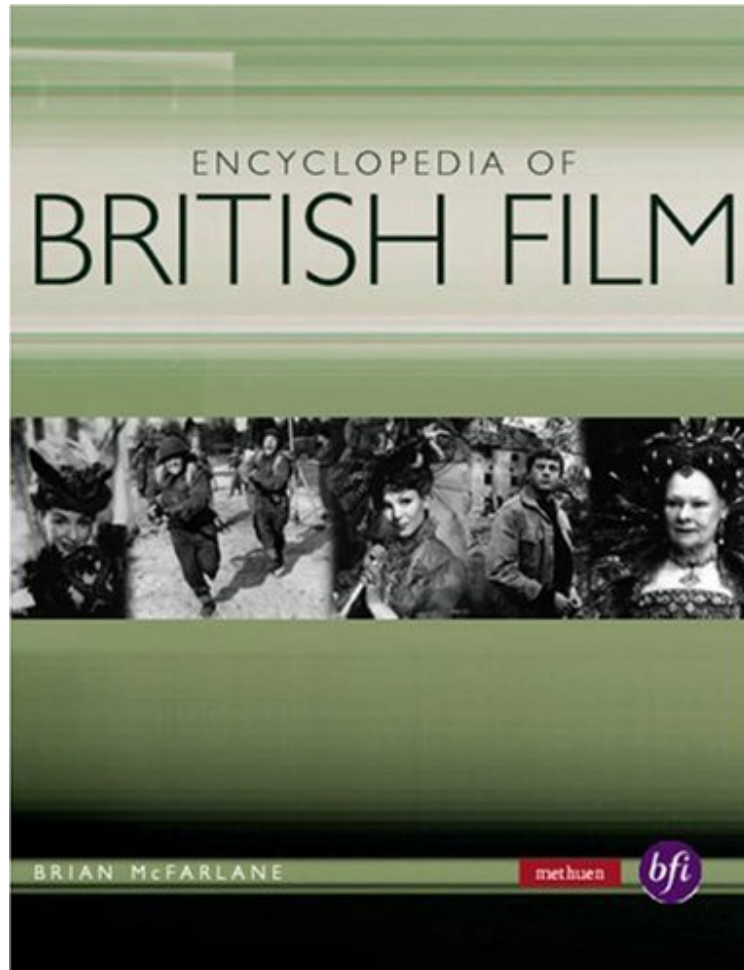


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## Encyclopedia of British Film (Methuen Film)

*Brian McFarlane, Anthony Slide*  
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**Brian McFarlane, Anthony Slide : Encyclopedia of British Film (Methuen Film)** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Encyclopedia of British Film (Methuen Film):

12 of 12 people found the following review helpful. Essential Reference book for British film fans !By A CustomerUntil now, British film fans have always had to make do with rather slim pickings in the big international reference books on cinema, the likes of Halliwell and Thomson, where British performers and filmmakers are often given short shrift, and that is when they are granted inclusion: more often than not they are completely ignored. But here, with Brian McFarlane's impressively weighty Encyclopedia, we have the very first major reference text devoted entirely to a national cinema that may be frequently maligned (and no more so than on its home territory) but which has actually made a significant contribution to world cinema. Aided by an impressive list of contributors McFarlane has drawn up a staggeringly large list of all the movers and shakers in British cinema from its nineteenth century origins to the present day, giving equal attention to those behind the scenes as to those in front of the camera. There's

clearly an attempt to avoid auteurist bias by giving equal room to writers, composers, casting directors, cinematographers, producers, costume designers, continuity personnel and editors alongside the directors. This desire to give credit to those often neglected in film history continues in the entries on actors. Searching for stars, we can find neat summaries of the careers and personas of all the best-known British ones, from Betty Balfour and Ivor Novello to Kate Winslet and Ewan McGregor; but perhaps more importantly, there's a wealth of material on the unsung heroes of British cinema, the battalions of obscure character actors who have helped to give British films their specific dramatic texture. One of the delights of the material on the half-forgotten faces that populate British films is how it frequently goes beyond the strictly biographical and sparks into life with a few beautifully chosen adjectives, a telling little anecdote or a quotation of one of the actor's typical lines of dialogue. Like all good reference books, you go to it to look up one thing and find yourself still browsing through it an hour later. One gets the sense of a real person with a distinctive voice behind the monumental enterprise, and that voice is undoubtedly McFarlane's. One of the most useful aspects of the book, alongside the entries on important individuals and organizations, is the inclusion of short essays on general topics such as (to pick a few at random) sex and sexuality, rural life, Europeans in British film, crime films, black representation, and travel and transport. These provide an ideal springboard for further study and they also act as a powerful reminder of the diversity of a film culture too often labelled dull, over-literary and emotionally frozen. There's ample evidence here that there's much more to British cinema than its buttoned-up reputation might suggest.

A comprehensive history of the British film industry from its inception to the present day, with minute listings of the producers, directors, actors, and studios behind a century of great British cinema. Brian McFarlane's meticulously researched guide is the most authoritative book yet produced on the people involved in British Film. Published in association with the British Film Institute, this unparalleled volume is fully illustrated with numerous rare black and white photos of film stars and filmmakers from the 1920s to the present day. The end result is an invaluable addition to the reference shelf of anyone with an interest in British cinema. Brian McFarlane is professor of film history at Monash University in Australia.

A comprehensive history of the British film industry from its inception to the present day, with minute listings of the producers, directors, actors and studios behind a century of great British cinema. Brian McFarlane's meticulously researched guide is the most authoritative book yet produced on the people involved in British film. With so many pointless film books on the shelves, it's refreshing to be reminded of the real thing; published in association with the British Film Institute, it is lavishly illustrated with over 140 black and white photos from their incomparable film archive, many of which are published here for the first time. The end result is an invaluable addition to the reference shelf of anyone with an interest in British cinema. McFarlane reminds us what a proud filmic heritage we have on these shores. About the Author Brian McFarlane is Professor of film history at Monash University in Australia. He has written extensively on film, including books for the BFI and an Autobiography of British Film published by Methuen.