



1949

Mill Hill Preservation Society

... *making change worthwhile*

A Quiet Morning in Mill Hill 1955

Recently MHPS were sent a link to a movie that was about teaching foreigners English in 1955. It is a simple movie with a slow commentary – just right for folk trying to learn English. The interesting point about the movie – it lasts about 7 minutes – is that it shows pictures of central London from the period, but then switches to the suburbs, and the suburb it switches to is Mill Hill. There are some great pictures of the Broadway and we think the house in question may be in Goodwyn Avenue. So if you wish to be reminded of everyday life in suburban London circa 1955 then you will relish this.

The movie is from the British Film Institute archive and it will not cost you anything to view. Here's what they have to say about it...

“A typical day in the life of a typical family in a typical North London suburb? That's the implication of this film by director Kay Mander. An English language teaching aid for the Linguaphone Institute, it was presumably distributed abroad and for screenings here in schools and in 'English as a Second Language' classes. Director Kay Mander is celebrated as a successful female filmmaker in the world of British documentary. A few years earlier she'd made several French-language teaching films which is presumably why the Linguaphone Institute hired her to make this film.

It's fascinating on all counts, but can you help us identify all the locations? A shot of Finchley Road station introduces the suburb inhabited by the Black family, but are their road and the shopping area in the same vicinity? In fact, the film is mostly set indoors, where Mr Black's attempts to spend the morning reading his paper and smoking his pipe are continually thwarted. With its deliberate pace (carefully matching images on the screen to the vocab on the soundtrack), the film feels a bit like a Ladybird 'Peter and Jane' book in film form - albeit with a sense of humour, largely at the hapless Mr Black's expense. This somewhat stereotyped family portrait (amiable but useless males kept afloat by pragmatic domesticated females) is familiar from a billion TV sitcoms made since. Mr Brown is played by Russell Waters, familiar to British viewers for character roles including regular appearances in public information films.”

Click on this link and enjoy...

<http://player.bfi.org.uk/film/watch-quiet-morning-1955/>

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