

Cultural and hobby-related activities recorded in the diaries of Tom Flinn, 1932-1935 (MSS. MSS.328/N90/1-4)

Includes quotations from the diaries.

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Films

Includes links to relevant British Film Institute database entries.

4 Jan 1932: [The Ghost Train](#) ("About the best British film I have seen and marvellous acting by Jack Hulbert, Cicely Courtneidge and Donald Calthrop to say nothing of the actress who took the part of Julia whose real name I do not know. A well-proportioned film, the only exaggeration being the free fight towards the end which was a little too prolonged. This talkie version was much nearer to the play as regards sequence and dialogue than the silent"); [Transatlantic](#) ("very good and well acted").

15 Feb 1932: "A really good all-round programme the star turn being [The Flying Fool](#)"; a Mickey Mouse film ("much mirth"); "a comedy featuring our old friend Ben Turpin, and a real short snappy masterpiece about the adventures of a taxicab driver at a mansion belonging to a boy-king of somewhere off the map".

23 May 1932: [Frankenstein](#) ("very good photography and make up (on the part of the monster) and well set out. I got palpitation over it, anyway"); [Tonight's the Night – Pass it on](#) ("very funny and well acted"); [Sidewalks of New York](#) ("funny but more suitable for Harold Lloyd" than Buster Keaton).

10 Jan 1933: [The Last Coupon](#) ("very funny"); "Buck Jones in a film that wasn't bad either".

22 Jan 1933: [Sky Devils](#) ("very funny"); [White Eagle](#) ("absurd").

28 Jan 1933: [Pack Up Your Troubles](#) ("screamingly funny"); [Jewel Robbery](#) ("perfectly absurd but contained no love-making or "sob-stuff").

15 and 18 Feb 1933: [Happy Ever After](#) ("Not at all bad though not nearly as good as *The Ghost Train*").

7 [Mar] 1933: [Movie Crazy](#) ("not at all bad").

19 Apr 1933: [Mr. Robinson Crusoe](#) ("rather ridiculous but very entertaining as was the other film, [Guilty as Charged](#)").

9 May 1933: [The Mummy](#) ("It wasn't a very good film and the tale was utter bilge"); [Beneath the Sea](#) documentary ("made up for [*The Mummy's*] discrepancies in every way . . . and not a bit faked. Plenty of thrills including a shark attack and a fight with a giant octopus who was, I should reckon about eighteen feet from the tip of one tentacle to the tip of the opposite one. The first part was taken in the West Indies and the second in deeper waters nearer home. The first part was about the varieties of fish and coral and weed existing in the depths whilst the other dealt with the salvaging of wrecks").

20 May 1933: [Cavalcade](#) (watched by Flinn's father).

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8 Aug 1933 ("All jolly, good, funny films – most suitable for holidays and for children"): [Letting in the Sunshine](#); [Mickey's Busy Day](#) featuring "Our Gang"; [Beneath the Sea](#).

26 Aug 1933: [The Crime of the Century](#) ("a very good film which had an innovation in the shape of a minute's interval being provided in the middle for the public to consider and guess who the perpetrator of the crime might be – I guessed wrong").

12 Sep 1933: [The King's Vacation](#) ("a very good film"); [Air Hostess](#) (an "absurd piece").

19 Sep 1933: [Falling for You](#) ("not bad although it wasn't up to the usual standard of Jack's films" [Jack Hulbert]).

28 Sep 1933: [King Kong](#) ("As I have previously remarked the story is bilge. But the photography was superb – I refer, of course, to the pictures of the prehistoric animals, of Kong himself, and in particular the fights between Kong and the other animals. There was a certain amount of jerkiness as was only to be expected when models were used but this was only apparent when the motion was slow. In this respect it was vastly superior to the film of [The Lost World](#)").

7 Oct 1933: [Radio Parade](#) ("not bad"); "The other picture was a bit of a mixup. A whole lot of people being murdered and killed and things".

12 Oct 1933: [Mystery of the Wax Museum](#) ("rather silly and very much overrated. The other picture, featuring Hoot Gibson [possibly [The Dude Bandit](#)], was much better"); [Fra Diavolo](#) ("They [Flinn's parents] say it was good").

14 Oct 1933: [Cavalcade](#) ("It wasn't half as good as the play"); [King Neptune](#) *Silly Symphony*.

16 Nov 1933: [Britannia of Billingsgate](#) ("a British one and, unusually, very good"); [King of the Jungle](#) ("an absurd tale but, nevertheless, entertaining"); unnamed Mickey Mouse film ("good").

30 Dec 1933: [A Cuckoo in the Nest](#) ("A jolly, good film with plenty of humour"); unnamed Mickey Mouse film ("which, like all others of his breed, was very funny").

3 Feb 1934: [Tugboat Annie](#) ("a very good film").

10 Mar 1934: [Aunt Sally](#); [Mickey's Gala Premier](#).

13 April 1934: [Turkey Time](#) ("It was very good though not so funny as I thought it would be").

7 May 1934: [The Invisible Man](#) ("a marvel of trick photography – miles ahead of the superimposing of *King Kong*"); film featuring Slim Summerville [possibly [Love Birds](#) or [Their Big Moment](#)] ("very good – and very funny").

1 Aug 1934: [Man of Aran](#) ("an exceedingly good film"); [Twin Husbands](#) ("silly, but good entertainment").

8 August 1934: [On the Air](#) ("a very good performance").

10 Aug 1934: [Oh, What a Duchess!](#) ("the inimitable George" [Lacey]); [Four Frightened People](#) ("another silly film").

22 Aug 1934: [Princess Charming](#) and [No More Women](#) ("both films were very good, the first one a silly tale but funny").

28 Sep 1934: [A Cup of Kindness](#) ("very good with the greatest amount of action I have seen put into a film of ordinary length"); [Cavalcade of the Movies](#) ("an essentially American show but very good – dealing with the progress the moving pictures made from the very beginning down to the invention of the "Talkies").

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13 Oct 1934: [Chin Chin Chow](#) (“didn’t think much of it – not that I expected anything of a very high standard”).

30 Nov 1934: [The Outcast](#) (“very good and very funny”).

5 Jan 1935: [The Camels are Coming](#) (“Jack Hulbert was screamingly funny”); [The Barretts of Wimpole Street](#) (“exceedingly well acted, especially by Charles Laughton”).

11 Jan 1935: [Treasure Island](#) (“a well got up and well acted piece. I should imagine that a genuine ship of the period had to be specially built for the film. Some of the scenes were remarkably good”).

29 Jan 1935: [The Cat’s Paw](#) (“was disappointed to find it not so good as his [Harold Lloyd’s] usual pictures”); [The Man with the Electric Voice](#) (“a mass of bilge”).

9 Feb 1935: [The Man Who Knew Too Much](#) (“a great film. It was so good that in one tense moment a good part of the audience clapped at the heroine, a thing I haven’t heard since the days of the silent films”); [Mrs Wiggs of the Cabbage Patch](#) (“excellent and extremely well acted. It made me pipe my eye once or twice”).

16 Feb 1935: [Student Tour](#) (“American and funny”); [Lost in the Legion](#) (“English and very funny”).

22 Feb 1935: Ralph Lynn, Gordon Harker and Robertson Hare in [Dirty Work](#) (“very funny though I did not think it up to their usual standard”); [The Flying Mouse](#) *Silly Symphony* (“very smooth in [its] action”); scenes in three villages on the Zuyder Zee; reference to earlier viewing of *Father Neptune* cartoon.

26 Feb 1935: [The Count of Monte Christo](#) (“was disappointed[.] Of course, I realised the tale would have to be abbreviated to an alarming degree to bring it down to ordinary film length but I was unprepared for such a cutting out as there was in this picture”).

5 Mar 1935: [Forgotten Men](#) (“an authentic film of incidents in the Great War the scenes of which were actual events taken on the spot. It was very interesting and horrible – something I should never take Mum or Dad to see but should be a great lesson in the deterrence from war”); [Mr. Cinders](#) (“an adaptation from the Musical Comedy of that name and quite good”); [Mickey Plays Papa](#) (“very funny”).

12 Mar 1935: [Are you a Mason?](#) (“very funny”).

27 April 1935: [Things are Looking Up](#) (“very good and very funny”); [Death at Broadcasting House](#) (“also good” - recorded in diary as *Murder at Broadcasting House*).

9 May 1935: [Oh, Daddy!](#) (“the funniest film I have seen for a long time”).

11 May 1935: [Radio Parade of 1935](#) (“It wasn’t bad but still it wasn’t good either”).

12 Jun 1935: [Strictly Illegal](#) and [The Live Ghost](#) (“both very good and extremely funny”); [Mills of the Gods](#) (“good though in a different vein”).

15 Jun 1935: [The Lives of a Bengal Lancer](#) (“a good film and well worth seeing though not so exceptionally good as some would have one believe”).

Radio broadcasts

Includes links to relevant entries in the BBC’s Genome database of *Radio Times* listings.

5 Jan 1932: L. du Garde Peach, [Love One Another](#) (“a very good play. . . about a scientist who discovers a ray which obliterates all hate throughout the world and the chaos which naturally followed. A very well thought out work”).

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11 Jan 1932: probably [Famous stars of American radio](#) ("Relay from New York on radio to-night nearly all groaning and yelling jazz. Listened to about two items before switching off").

18 Jan 1932: [Vaudeville](#) from London Region ("rotten"); **Patrick Hamilton**, [Rope](#) ("tripe").

21 Jan 1932: [Songs from the Shows VI - The History of the Theme song](#), "being a selection of Theme Songs from the talkies from the *Singing Fool* to the present time."

22 Jan 1932: [Vitamins as Necessities for Life](#), National Lecture by Sir F G Hopkins.

29 Jan 1932: **William Shakespeare**, [The Taming of the Shrew](#) ("very good acting").

1 Feb 1932: **Harold Brighouse**, [Hobson's Choice](#), "a very good Lancashire dialect play".

4 Feb 1932: **Julian Crane**, [Friday Morning](#), a play "dealing with a crash of an airliner on the way to Paris and the various passengers' thoughts. Not bad."

11 Feb 1932: **Dallas Bower**, [Catastrophe](#), "an effort on the part of the B.B.C. to show what the effects department could do if it tried. A great row supported by bilge."

17 Feb 1932: [Mother Goose](#) starring George Lacey.

23 Feb 1932: "Was pleased to hear La-a-a-ary the La-a-a-amb & Co in a Toytown play, the [Conversion of Mr. Growser](#). First of the series I have heard and thoroughly enjoyed its absurdities"; [Vaudeville](#) ("rotten").

25 Feb 1932: [The Forsaken City](#) "dealing with the Plague of London, in which I was much interested having only recently read Defoe's Diary of the Plague. An hour is altogether too short to get any idea of this terrible pestilence though the arrangement of the readings was very good."

29 Feb 1932: [Vaudeville](#) ("rotten – bilge").

10 Mar 1932: **Charles Gounod**, [Faust](#) Acts III & IV performed by the Covent Garden Opera Company ("thoroughly enjoyed it").

26 Mar 1932: [Music Hall](#) ("Very good show – about the best all-round show the B.B.C. have put up for a long time").

27 Mar 1932: [Easter Morning service](#) from Liverpool Cathedral.

28 Mar 1932: **Giuseppe Verdi**, *La Traviata* on gramophone records from Radio Paris.

13 Apr 1932: **Carl Maria von Weber**, [Oberon](#).

30 Apr 1932: [From Tibet to Timbuctoo](#) Vaudeville programme ("Jolly good vaudeville on radio to-night. Leonard Henry as compère – always goes down well- and one or two other very good turns").

2 May 1932: **Alicia Ramsey and Rudolph de Cordova**, [Dr Abernethy – his book](#) ("this always goes down well").

7 May 1932: "Heard a very good relay from the Palladium of **Cicely Courtneidge and Company**. They did, among other things the play we had previously heard by wireless about the Laughing Gas at the reading of a will."

10 May 1932: "Jolly good wireless programmes on for a change to-night": **Carl Maria von Weber**, [Invitation to the Dance](#) and other pieces ("included several very good tunes and songs"); [Mostly Comedy](#) variety programme; [gramophone recital by Christopher Stone](#).

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14 May 1932: Lance Sieveking, [The End of Savoy Hill](#) (“The B.B.C. gave us a review of the past ten years of Broadcasting dealing with the early history of programmes from Writtle, Marconi House, Kingsway and Savoy Hill. Such voices as those of the King, the Prince of Wales, the Prime Minister, Mr. Snowden, Mr. Baldwin, Mr. Lloyd George, A.J. Allan, Gillie Potter, Tommy Handley, Leonard Henry, Arthur Burrows, J.C.W. Keith, Lord Gainford, etc., etc. were heard. Later came the closing down, one by one, of the Studios at Savoy Hill. This, I consider was a fake as the people taking part did not sound natural and I should imagine it was conducted from Broadcasting House”).

26 May 1932: [Celebrity Concert](#) in aid of the Musicians’ Benevolent Fund.

28 May 1932: G. W. T. Garrod, [Lost in the African Jungle](#), second in the *Hazard* series of talks. “We’ve had a very good selection of talks by radio this year. In addition to the usual weekly French and German lessons by Messrs. [E.M. Stephen](#) [Stéphan] and [Otto Siepmann](#) on Tuesdays and Thursdays respectively, we have had Mr S.P.B. Mais on Mondays on [The Unknown Island](#) (dealing with several walking tours through different parts of Britain) which ended about a month ago to be followed by a series [The Rungs of the Ladder](#) being the lives of famous men as told by themselves. Then on Wednesdays there began last week a series of talks on English Language and Fridays a collection of articles on how the wild and domestic life of this country has changed since the earliest times until the present day” [probably [The Changing Face of Nature](#)]. “This last series ended last week and is followed by [Biology in the Service of Man](#) being the lives of famous men connected with that science. Then, on Saturdays, previous to the “Hazards” were [Conversations in the Train](#) being self-explanatory. Lastly, on Sundays, several persons have spoken of the lives of the Saints” [probably [What is a saint?](#)].

30 May 1932: [Royal Command Performance](#) from the Palladium (mentioned on 31st) (“naturally, it needed the eye to aid the ear in comprehending all that took place”).

31 May 1932: Henry James, [The Turn of the Screw](#), (“very thrilling”) (link to 1 June listing given because it has more detail).

18 Jun 1932: [Hazard V - Weathering a Storm with Mr. Weston Martyr](#) (talk on sailing voyage from Nova Scotia to Massachusetts (“particularly good”).

20 Jun 1932: [Vaudeville](#) including Nellie Wallace (“wasn’t at all bad”).

12 Mar 1933: “fine yodling concert from the Beromünster station but too much yodling is apt to pall.”

21 Mar 1933: Franz Schubert, first movement of “Unfinished” Symphony; William Wallace, Overture to *Maritana* (“a fine symphony concert from Athlone . . . with two very good singers”).

4 Apr 1933: “It’s a treat to listen to the **Children’s Hours** during the week though they cannot compare with the ones we used to have ten years ago.”

15 Apr 1933: “Vaudeville” [[Music Hall](#)] with Clapham and Dwyer and Julian Rose; [speeches by Dame Sybil Thorndike from Saint Joan](#) by Bernard Shaw (“which I much enjoyed”); “50 years of songs” [[Fifty years of tunes](#)] (“with many of the old favourites right up to the trash of the present day – a sort of “Cavalcade” of songs).

21 Apr 1933: Edgar Wallace, [The Ringer](#) (“enjoyed it very much”).

14 May 1933: [Pioneers of world exploration](#) talks (“a good series”).

22-23 May 1933: Giuseppe Verdi, [Aida](#) Act II; Giacomo Puccini, [La Bohème](#) Acts II and III (“some fine singers”).

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26 Jul 1933: [The road to Ireland](#) (description of a journey from London to Holyhead).

2 Aug 1933: Horace Annesley Vachell, [Quinney's](#) ("a good play").

21 Aug 1933: [Variety show](#) relayed from the Radio Exhibition at Olympia, including Clapham and Dwyer, Flotsam and Jetsam, Tommy Handley, and Julian Rose. ("The audience gave them a great reception. I think many people have been surprised at the popularity of the B.B.C. Dance Orchestra under Henry Hall which has made its first public appearances at this show").

29 Aug 1933: Charles-Francois Gounod, *Faust* (gramophone record relay from Radio Paris).

4 Sep 1933: John Galsworthy, [Strife](#) ("a very good piece though we've heard it before").

11 Sep 1933: Leslie Baily, [The Fantastic Battle](#) ("not bad, though I guess that if the late John Galsworthy had had a go at it he'd have made a better job").

18 Sep 1933: [The Charlot Hour](#) presented by André Charlot ("André Charlot broadcast again to-night after an absence from the microphone of five years – still the same old accent and still the same good show").

10 Nov 1933: Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, [The Marriage of Figaro](#) relayed from the Old Vic ("the same actors and actresses as we saw at the Wells a fortnight ago").

2 Dec 1933: "wondrously agitating dances that emanate from Athlone".

25 Dec 1933: ("There was good stuff to listen to"). *To Distant Friends* [[Absent Friends](#)] including king's speech; pantomime [[Sindbad](#)]; Gilbert and Sullivan, second act of [The Mikado](#).

27 Feb 1934: Mark Ambient et. al., [The Arcadians](#) ("Leonard Henry as "Simplicitus" – very good as usual").

1 Mar 1934: Felix Mendelssohn, *Fingal's Cave* from Budapest ("a very good rendering"); Charles-Francois Gounod, *Faust* from Turin.

5 March 1934: Terence Horsley, [The Egypt's Gold](#) ("a very good narrative play").

8 March 1934: Norman Edwards, [Quarrel Island](#) ("a good play").

9 Mar 1934: *Enquiry into the unknown*: Sir Oliver Lodge, [Do we survive?](#)

17 Mar 1934: Will Hay [in [Variety](#)] ("jolly funny as ever").

14 Apr 1934: [The first twelve years – radio variety 1922-1934](#) ("a good variety concert").

19 Apr 1934: [Between the river and the hill – vignettes from Clunbury village](#) ("it was really one of the best things I've heard for a long time. There were a discussion on poaching, another on gardening and farming, talks by many of the local folk on their conditions and ways of earning a living, followed by songs and it really did sound as though they were enjoying themselves").

26 Apr 1934: Talk in English on *Denmark, the Land of the Sea Kings* from Kalundborg relaying Copenhagen ("it developed into an advertisement to spend a holiday in that country instead of a brief history as I thought").

28 Apr 1934: [FA Cup Final](#) ("a very exciting game. Even the commentator so far forgot himself as to nearly short the mike by shouting so loud when one goal was scored").

14 Jul 1934: [Variety](#) including Will Hay and his scholars ("good").

11 Dec 1934: Arnold Bennett, [The Great Adventure](#) ("very good and very well acted").

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25 Dec 1934: [Empire Exchange](#); the Melhuish Brothers, [All At Sea](#); [A Christmas party!](#)

2 Apr 1935: [The microphone at large: Much Wenlock](#) (“very interesting . . . Several of the yokels spoke and I wish now I had at least touched the village”).

6 Apr 1935: Charles-Francois Gounod, *Faust* from La Scala, Milan relayed by Monte Ceneri (“a fine performance”).

Books

6 Jan 1932: John Jeffery Farnol, *Beltane the Smith* (bought for a friend).

14 Jan 1932: Mark Twain, *The Gilded Age*; Edmund Snell, *Kontrol* (“This is a very exciting tale with an impossible plot”).

16 Jan 1932 and 2 May 1933: Joseph Poole, *Practical Telephone Handbook* (“very interesting”).

16 Jan 1932; Jules Verne, *The Begum’s Millions*, *Tribulations of a Chinaman in China* and *The Giant Raft*, Part I.

20 and 30 Jan 1932: Edgar Allan Poe, *Tales* (“a thriller”).

2 and 17 Feb 1932: William Makepeace Thackeray, *The History of Henry Esmond* (“Not the sort of book I should read but that it was an exam. Too much of the love-stuff in it for my liking”).

13 Feb 1932: R Austin Freeman, a *Dr Thorndyke* story.

25 Feb 1932: Daniel Defoe, *A journal of the plague year*.

27-28 Feb 1932; Mark Twain, *The American Claimant* (“vastly superior in every way to its predecessor” [*Gilded Age*]).

7 Mar 1932: Wilhelm Waegner, *Asgard and the Gods* (“Very interesting and exciting in parts”).

10 Jun 1932: *Locomotives of the L.N.E.R Past and Present* (“nothing nearly as good as the corresponding G.W.R. publication”).

2 Jan 1933: Charles Dickens, *Christmas tales* (“very morbid and indifferent”); biography of Francis Drake.

4 Feb 1933: Jules Verne, *A Journey to the Centre of the Earth* and *The Adventures of Captain Hatteras, Part I – the English at the North Pole*; Sir Alan Cobham, *Twenty Thousand Miles in a Flying-Boat*; Herbert Strang, *Swift and Sure. The story of a hydroplane*; “a book on enigmas by an author whose name I cannot remember and which wasn’t up to much” [possibly R.T. Gould, *Enigmas: another book of unexplained facts*].

16 Feb 1933: Samuel Smiles, *Lives of the Engineers: The locomotive; George and Robert Stephenson* (“very interesting and instructive”).

20 Feb and 10 Mar 1933: Mark Twain, *A Tramp Abroad* (“a jolly, fine book but owing to my having so many books to read lately I haven’t given it much attention before”).

20 Feb 1933: Ellison Hawks, *Marvels of Engineering*.

24 Feb 1933: R.H. Gibson and Maurice Prendergast, *The German Submarine War, 1914-1918*.

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1 Apr 1933: Fridtjof Nansen, *Farthest North* (“very good book which I enjoyed very much indeed, wading through the eight hundred odd pages of both volumes”); **Ellison Hawks, *The Book of Remarkable Machinery*.**

6 May 1933: Mark Twain, *More Tramps Abroad*.

12 May 1933: Jules Verne, *Cinq Semaines en Ballon* in the original French (“I had his [Une] “Ville Flottante” some time ago but it was rather too full of technical description for me to make much headway with it”).

18 and 30 May 1933: George McLeod Winsor, *Once Bitten, and what ensued* (“very silly”).

30 May 1933: Robert Louis Stevenson, *Island Nights’ Entertainments* (“cannot say I am particularly struck by it”).

28 Jun and 8 Jul 1933: J. Eric Haswell, *Horology. The science of time measurement and the construction of clocks, watches and chronometers* (“a fine book . . . For the first time I’m beginning to understand why a clock strikes twelve at twelve o’clock and why at one o’clock it doesn’t strike twelve, thirteen or eleven”).

8 Jul 1933: Sir Thomas Malory, *La Morte D’Arthur; Death in the Air: the war diary and photographs of a flying corps pilot* (“The book is so interesting, largely on account of the action photographs which it contains, that so many people have borrowed it that I haven’t had time to peruse it myself”); **Mark Twain, *Autobiography Volume 1***; **H.G. Wells, *The Wheels of Chance***; **George Gibbard Jackson, *The Romance of the Sea*** (“a spanking book”).

26 Jul 1933: *Modern boys* [possibly *The Modern Boys Annual*].

10 Aug 1933: Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, *The Sign of Four*; “*100 years of Locomotives by Mr. Aarons*” (read earlier; possibly Ernest Leopold Ahrons, *The British steam railway locomotive, 1825-1925*).

10 and 17 Aug 1933: “Book on Railway Signalling (Mechanical)” [probably **Francis Raynar Wilson, *Railway-Signalling, Mechanical, etc.*** (“a jolly good book . . . The author knows how to explain such things as block telegraph and interlocking, etc.”).

19 and 23 Aug 1933: Edward Terence MacDermot, *The History of the Great Western Railway Volume I*.

19 Aug 1933: J. Ambrose Fleming, *50 years of electricity: the memories of an electrical engineer*; **Fred Roe, *Essex Survivals with special attention to Essex smugglers*.**

30 Aug and 21 Sep 1933: Victor Lougheed, *Vehicles of the air: a popular exposition of modern aeronautics with working drawings* (“jolly interesting – so much so that I renewed it last Saturday week”); **Thomas Ingoldsby, *The Ingoldsby Legends*.**

21 Sep 1933: Edward Terence MacDermot, *History of the Great Western Railway Volume I Part 2*.

22 Sep 1933: George Bernard Shaw, *Pygmalion* and *Androcles and the Lion*; **Walter George Bell, *The great fire of London in 1666* or *The story of London’s great fire*.**

19 Oct 1933: Mr. Alison’s “Locomotives 1825-1925” [possibly Ernest Leopold Ahrons, *The British steam railway locomotive, 1825-1925*].

20 Oct 1933: H.G. Wells, *Twelve Stories and a Dream*.

30 Oct 1933: E. Keble Chatterton, *Q-ships and their Story* (“a jolly fine book”); **Thomas Marvin Johnson, *Secret War: espionage and counter espionage*** (“– a rather disappointing story of the American Secret

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Service during the war – boosts the Americans too much for my liking"); "some further short stories by **H. G. Wells**".

23 Nov 1933: "100 years of London's Buses published by the London Transport Board" [probably **Vernon Sommerfield, London's Buses. The story of a hundred years**] ("seems a very interesting book"); **R.T. Gould, Oddities: a book of unexplained facts** ("not bad but rather dry"); **R. Austin Freeman, The Golden Pool: a story of a forgotten mine** ("Freeman's first novel and reads like it too").

1 Feb 1934 ("I've had a very interesting selection of library books of late"): **S.A. Andree, The Andree Diaries**; "History of the C.T.C." [probably **James T. Lightwood, The Cyclists' Touring Club: being the romance of fifty years' cycling**]; **Daniel Defoe, New Voyage Round the World** and "Life of Duncan Campbell" [**The History of the Life and Adventures of Mr. Duncan Campbell**].

16 Mar 1934: **Sir Walter Besant, East London** ("very interesting"); **H.A. Jones, The War in the Air: Being the story of the part played in the Great War by the Royal Air Force Volumes II and III**; **J.B. Priestley, The Good Companions**.

12 and 26 Jul 1934: **H.G. Wells, Tono Bungay** (borrowed for father); **William Caxton, Reynard the Fox** ("I liked . . . very much"); **Henry Greenly, Model Steam Railway Locomotives**.

26 Jul 1934: **Henry Greenly, Model Railways: their design, details and practical construction**; possibly **James Patrick Muirhead, Life of James Watt** ("not so interesting as that contained in the "Lives of the Engineers" (Smiles)"); **James Hilton, A Knight without Armour** ("seems a very good novel").

25 Nov 1934: **Jules Verne, Robur the Conqueror** and **The Master of the World**; **Edgar Allan Poe, [A Strange Discovery]** ("a sequel to Edgar Allan Poe's remarkable "The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym").

1 Mar 1935: **E.G. Martin and others, Cruising and ocean racing** ("I have had this book constantly renewed since just after Christmas – it is so interesting").

Sheet music

20 Feb 1933: **M.W. Balfe, The Bohemian Girl** arranged for pianoforte.

24 Feb and 4 March 1933: **Gioacchino Rossini, La Boutique Fantastique** ("quite good as many of the tunes I was able to recognize and to put expression with accordingly").

4 Mar 1933: **Edvard Grieg, Peer Gynt Suites 1 & 2**.

10 and 13 Mar 1933: **Felix Mendelssohn, Complete Overtures** ("a bit too hard for my liking").

13 and 15 Mar 1933: **Carl Maria von Weber, Oberon** ("apart from the Overture I wasn't keen on it").

17 Mar 1933: **Samuel Coleridge-Taylor, various suites**.

4 Apr 1933: **Johann Strauss, Die Fledermaus** ("getting a good doing though of Chopin's second volume I only know about a couple of preludes and the rest are too hard for my liking").

6 May 1933: "Vol. 1 of a selection of classical pianoforte solos."

10 Aug 1933: **Carl Maria von Weber, pieces for piano including L'Invitation à la Valse**.

30 Aug 1933, 16 Mar, 20 and 23 Nov 1934: **Johann Strauss, Die Fledermaus**.

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19 Oct 1933: Johannes Brahms, *Hungarian Dances*.

1 Feb and 16 Mar 1934; Charles Gounod, *Faust* (piano version).

Opera and other live music

5 Mar 1932: weekly concert at Central Hall, East Ham (“A very good concert with the Scots Guards band and two comedians. The Contralto was rotten and sang as though she had a plum in her throat”).

2 Apr 1932: Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, *The Magic Flute* at Sadler’s Wells (“The overture was about the best part but the cast was poor so that none of us enjoyed the opera very much”).

9 Apr 1932: Giacomo Puccini, *La Bohème* at Sadler’s Wells (“Very good performance, the cast was vastly superior to that in the Magic Flute last week both in acting and singing. Tudor Davies took the part of Rudolph whilst that of Mimi was taken be a guest artiste whose name I forget for the moment. Certainly one of the best pieces I have seen and heard”).

28 Oct 1933: Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, *The Marriage of Figaro* at Sadler’s Wells (“we enjoyed it very much it was much better than the “Magic Flute” by the same composer we saw last year”).

11 Nov 1933, Georges Bizet, *Carmen* at the Old Vic (“A jolly fine performance of “Carmen” it was though I shall not fret if I do not see that particular opera again”).

17 Nov 1934: Johann Strauss, *Die Fledermaus* at Sadler’s Wells (“There was an immense crowd waiting to go in the Wells but I attached myself to the rear of the Pit queue and, after waiting about an hour, got in. I had to stand and was among the last five to be admitted. 1/6 I had to pay and was inside by seven o’clock. The performance was worth the trouble it was excellent. Tudor Davies took the part of Eisenstein and he and [blank] who took the part of the Governor of the prison romped about like a couple of schoolboys. Powell Lloyd was also in it but had very little to do”),

2 Jan and 30 May 1935: *Die Fledermaus* at the Old Vic (“It had the same cast as I saw in November so I will say little regarding the performance except that it was every bit as good as before” – 2 Jan. “We had good seats but somehow couldn’t hear very well. There is something about the build of that theatre that one cannot hear anything like one can at Sadlers Wells. The performance was good and with one exception the cast was the same as before (Sumner Austin played the part of Dr. Falke) But I’m beginning to be a little tired of “Die Fledermaus” – 30 May).

16 Mar 1935: Gioachino Rossini, *The Barber of Seville* at Sadler’s Wells (“to-night at twenty minutes before seven o’clock we reached the Wells and lined up for the Pit and at a quarter past got inside and had a good seat for 1/3 We had a good performance and even Sumner Austin as Figaro went up in my opinion. I glanced at Bill during the playing of the overture and there was no question as to whether or not he was enjoying himself. I’m very glad he did as it would have spoilt my evening too if it had been otherwise”).

Theatrical performances

18 Feb 1932: *Cinderella* at the Lyceum (“The performance was very good and laughs were plentiful. George Jackley in particular and Naughton & Gold were excellent in their humour. I was glad they did not do their conjuring scene and the crockery breaking fiasco as they have repeatedly done in previous years. The dancing was really great”).

4 Jan 1933: *Mother Goose* at Daly’s (“our old friend George Lacy was in the title role – that is why we went. He is still as good as ever and is supported by a very good company”).

Cultural and hobby-related activities recorded in the diaries of Tom Flinn, 1932-1935 (MSS. MSS.328/N90/1-4)

Includes quotations from the diaries.

1 Apr 1933: Arnold Ridley, *Ghost Train* performed by the Selfridge Players at the New Scala (“the performance was very disappointing. Very good for amateurs, I suppose, but very poor compared with the style at the “Garrick”).

16 Nov 1933: “stage turn” as part of film showing at Premier (“good”).

23 Feb 1934: pantomime at the Lyceum (“The show was very good though not so good as it has been. George Jackley, Naughton and Gold, and Dick Tubb were all very good”).

9 Feb 1935: “a man with some performing pigeons which did some marvellous tricks” at the Premier Cinema.

Exhibitions and museums

9 and 23 Jan 1932: telephone exhibition at Victoria and Albert Museum (“A very good exhib whereat I learnt much”).

20 Feb 1932: Wallace Collection (“There is a multitude of paintings, sculptures, tapestries, arms and armour, pieces of furniture and the like though I cannot say I’m much interested in such things. However, Mum enjoyed it very much and would like to go again sometime”).

2 Apr 1932 and 22 Apr 1933: Model Railway Exhibition at the Central Hall, Westminster (“It seems lost there after such a small place as the Horticultural Hall at Vincent Square. There were several long tracks of 1,0 & 00 gauge laid down and some very pretty working. Of course, the steam passenger-drawing train and locos were there with the usual staff” – 2 Apr 1932. “[It] was much bigger this year and had several good-size[d] tracks laid out. I did not stay long – only about 1½ hours then took the train to South Kens. I was disappointed to find it shut at six o’clock and only had time to look at the photo-electric exhibition and the railway accessories, all in one room, before that time” – 22 Apr 1933).

11 February 1933: Tower of London (“I wasn’t overstruck with the place and shouldn’t want to go again. In fact the best part of it is the part that’s free. They have some magnificent armour there but similar stuff can be seen at the Wallace Collection in Manchester Square”).

12 Aug 1933: Victoria and Albert Museum (film in India Section) and Science Museum (“There are several new things in the Science since I last went. They’ve a full-size Pteradactyl [Pterodactyl] plane, Amy Johnson’s original plane “Jason” (the one she went to Australia in in 1930) several new gears in the turbine section, a lot more change gears in the motor-car section (including an epicycle, self-changing gearbox) and a host of others. Anyway the boys didn’t seem to get tired of it and the limited time we had there passed all too quickly”).

2 Sep 1933: Model Engineer Exhibition, Vincent Square (“About the same quality as usual. All sorts and sizes of models[.] George bought a fine catalogue of electrical gear ranging from the parts of telephones to electric motors and all sorts of accessories”).

9 Sep 1933: photographic exhibition at 35, Russell Square (“There was nothing of an extraordinary nature but the stereoscopic views, etc. were particularly good”).

16 Sep 1933: Shipping and Engineering Exhibition, Olympia (“a very good show it was. Among other very interesting things there were a Blattner-phone, full size section of a water tube boiler, plenty of diesel engines, very few, if any, petrol engines, a diesel-electric 40-ton railway locomotive, ?heats of magnetic and a few gyro-compasses, plenty of machine-tools including screw-cutting automatic turret lathes capable of turning out ½” bolts from brass rod in less than two seconds each without attention, - anyway I didn’t see all of the stands although I was there more than four hours”).

**Cultural and hobby-related activities recorded in the diaries of Tom Flinn, 1932-1935 (MSS.
MSS.328/N90/1-4)**

Includes quotations from the diaries.

18 Nov 1933: Public Works Exhibition at the Royal Agricultural Hall (“A very good and interesting exhibition it was too. Among the exhibits were many models of automatic and vehicle-actuated traffic signals and I only noticed one steam road roller – the rest were either diesel or petrol driven”).

25 Nov 1933 and 10 Nov 1934: Cycle Show at Olympia (“I was, naturally, very interested though I didn’t take so much notice of the motorcycle part as I have previously[.] I collected plenty of literature and found most interest in the accessories” – 25 Nov 1933. “I spoke to Brook’s about my quick release gear’s not working satisfactorily and they are going to write to me about it. I picked up several lists of accessories in which I am interested, notably a catalogue of the parts and methods of assembly and dismantling of Sturmey Archer gear and brake hubs which will come in very useful” – 10 Nov 1934).

6 Jan 1934: Schoolboys Exhibition at the White City (“It was a very disappointing show. The floor space was very small and the stands were so few as to leave great open spaces between. The most interesting exhibits were very few”).

25 Aug 1934 and 17 Aug 1935: Radio Exhibition at Olympia (“I cannot say I was particularly impressed with the exhibition – perhaps I am getting tired of radio. The show was very good however though as far as I was concerned I couldn’t see the artistes distinctly owing to the fact that I had the wrong glasses on. We heard Clapham & Dwyer, Stainless Stephen, John Rorke, and Stanelli to mention only a few” – 25 Aug 1934. “I wasn’t so much interested in the show as the theatre at which we attended the eight o’clock performance (which was, incidentally, broadcast)” – 17 Aug 1935).

14 Jul and 15 Sep 1934: Science Museum (did not move much further than the entrance hall. I was studying locomotive drawings most of the time – they have a fine one of the L.N.E.R. 10,000 which carries a water tube boiler” – 14 Jul. “There are many interesting additional exhibits and, in the transport section at least, the exhibits have been more up –to-date. There are several gear boxes in the motor section which are very interesting” – 15 Sep).

Railways and aviation (outdoors and excursions)

31 March 1932: visit to Great Western Railway works at Swindon (“On arrival at Swindon we were conducted to the works where we were split up into parties of from 15 to 20 with an official guide to each party and started our tour. We began with the rolling stock repair works and passed on to the coaching stock erecting shops and finishing shops where the carriage doors and internal and external furniture are made, finished, polished and painted. Then we went through the iron casting shops and saw cylinders and other locomotive accessories, wheel boxes, chairs, etc. being cast. This is the first time I have seen iron in its molten state and I was much impressed. We our tour. We began with the rolling stock repair works and passed on to the coaching stock erecting shops and finishing shops where the carriage doors and internal and external furniture are made, finished, polished and painted. Then we went through the iron casting shops and saw cylinders and other locomotive accessories, wheel boxes, chairs, etc. being cast. This is the first time I have seen iron in its molten state and I was much impressed. We passed from here to the boiler house and saw the men at work riveting boiler plates together and boilers to firebox casings etc. The din of hydraulic and pneumatic riveters was almost overpowering. We then went to what was perhaps the most interesting shop of all – “A” shop – where locomotives are erected, dismantled and repaired. Here we saw a Castle being run under its own power at about 30 m.p.h. on a sort of glorified testing bench where statistics are obtained of draw-bar pull, fuel consumption and the like. Here also where locos consisting of partly assembled frames, frames with wheels and motions complete but no superstructure, cabs, fireboxes and boilers on frames, engines without wheels, and many other interesting spectacles. One of the overhead travelling cranes held in suspension a 2-6-0 tank engine freshly painted but minus its leading wheels. Wheels were also being made and tested in this shop and ranged in size from the 6’8½” diameter

Cultural and hobby-related activities recorded in the diaries of Tom Flinn, 1932-1935 (MSS. MSS.328/N90/1-4)

Includes quotations from the diaries.

driving wheels of the "King" Class locomotives down to the smallest tender wheels. Finally we came to the latest King – "King Stephen" – and were able to go over its footplate and thoroughly inspect its inner workings").

25 Jun 1932: RAF display at London Aerodrome, Hendon ("The whole show was very well organized although the timing lagged now and then. There were no disturbances although the papers had previously been full of proposed riots by the peace parties and communists. Stainforth, one of the Schneider Trophy crew who actually carried off the Cup in 1929, was pilot of the latest thing in pterodactyls and popped off balloons with a pistol. It's the first time I've seen a pterodactyl "loop-the-loop". There was a good fighting scene between three Siskin fighters and a big bomber wherein at the end the bomber gave forth such clouds of smoke as to appear really in flames. There was an interceptor fighter equipped with six machine guns and which, at one time, reached a speed of well over 300 m.p.h. There was Well, there were many other things there too numerous to mention in this brief description. It all ended rather early – about 5.30 p.m. and then began the crush – such a crowd. It is about a quarter of a mile between the exit and Colindale Underground Station and it took nearly three quarters of an hour to traverse that distance!").

2 Jun 1934: rolling stock exhibition at Ilford Goods Station ("It was a very good show. They had the latest types of passenger coaches, including a rail motor, a Pullman, a third-class tourist coach, the Flying Scotsman" dining and sleeping cars and others. Among the locomotives were the L.N.E.R's latest, the "Cock-of-the-North" which has 1,000lbs. greater tractive effort than the G.W.R. "King" class; also the "Flying Scotsman", "Claude Hamilton", and some others. The "Cock-of-the-North" was only there for today (the exhib. is open to-morrow, too) and judging by the dust that had accumulated everywhere, I should say he'll want some cleaning up to-night before he departs. Among the other interesting exhibits were a couple of long bogie wagons, a refrigerator and meat van and milk tank, a transformer trolley truck and a girder truck (which two last I should say took some getting round the narrow curves of the Great Eastern). I was very interested in the signalling demonstration van and asked a lot of questions about interlocking so much so, indeed, that one of the chaps asked me if I was really interested in interlocking apparatus and, when I replied "yes", took my name and address and said he would look up some books on the subject and let me have them for which I was truly thankful. He also threw out a hint about an introduction if possible to a man at Ilford who was an authority on mechanical signalling and who might be able to take me over the east and west signal boxes at Liverpool Street Station").