

The Main Feature



Season 35 - Issue 1 (screening 11.9.14)

USA Cert PG 125 minutes

UK release 29 November 2013

Director: John Lee Hancock
Writers: Kelly Marcel and Sue Smith
Costume Designer: Daniel Orlandi
Music: Thomas Newman
Director of Photography: John Schwartzman

Starring

Tom Hanks	Walt Disney
Emma Thompson	P L Travers
Colin Farrell	Robert Goff Travers
Annie Rose Buckley	Ginty
Bradley Whitford	Don DaGradi
Paul Giamatti	Ralph
Ruth Wilson	Margaret Goff
B J Novak	Robert Sherman
Rachel GRIFFITHS	Aunt Ellie
Kathy Baker	Tommie
Jason Schwartzman	
Richard Morton Sherm	

The title "Saving Mr Banks" is a reference to the Disney scriptwriters' attempts to write the character out of the Mary Poppins story as they drifted from Travers's original plot.

"Saving Mr. Banks" is the extraordinary, untold story of how Disney's classic "Mary Poppins" made it to the screen-and the testy relationship that the legendary Walt Disney had with author P.L. Travers that almost derailed it.

When Walt Disney's daughters begged him to make a movie of their favourite book, P.L. Travers' Mary Poppins (1964), he made them a promise - one that he didn't realise would take 20 years to keep. There is a post credits dedication of the movie to Diane Marie Disney, Walt Disney's oldest daughter, who passed away in November 2013.

John Lee Hancock's *Saving Mr. Banks* is a tenderly affectionate tale featuring one of the year's finest ensembles. Beautifully ambitious and eagerly constructed, the success of Walt Disney Studios' homage to its heritage is anchored magnificently by the crowning work of **Emma Thompson's** career. She does have the best lines and delivers them with a clipped finesse. The audio excerpts from the real Travers' Disney meetings that play over the film's closing credits shows how accurate her portrayal of the writer actually is.

There's further subtlety in Hanks' turn as Disney. He uses his immense likability to play the showman and television star that the studio head was at this point, but has the gravitas and depth to show that jolly old Uncle Walt could also be ruthless. He encourages his employees to call him by his first name, but they also whisper warnings that, "Man is in the forest!"





The score by Thomas Newman received the film's sole Oscar nomination. The director of photography John Schwartzman is the half brother of Jason Schwartzman (Richard Morton Sherm).

Yes, "Saving Mr. Banks" is Disney doing Disney with great care taken to preserve the Disney brand with this film, which at times goes overboard with its reverence but never stoops to the point of being cheesy. Even in the movie, it's clear that working at the Disney studios in the 1950s was not necessarily the happiest place on Earth, but it was a job that had a focal point and a goal. Incidentally the film is a co-production between the BBC and Disney.

An example of the control exerted by the studio is shown by the knowledge that Walt Disney hid his smoking habit from the public, especially children, fearing it would harm his and his studio's family friendly image. Tom Hanks wanted his portrayal to be accurate, so he lobbied to show Disney smoking. Disney, however, still insisted that smoking was not appropriate for a family film. Hanks got one concession from the company: a shot in which Disney is seen stubbing out a cigarette. Early references in this movie to Walt being a smoker is hearing his cough before meeting Pamela Travers. Tom Hanks has said that Robert Sherman told him that Walt used to smoke up to 2 packs a day and you always knew when he was coming because you could hear his cough in the background of where ever he was. Walt Disney died of lung cancer in 1966.

The screenplay is also alleged to have played fast and loose with some of the true events, but one has to remember that it is a drama and not a dramatisation of her life. Nevertheless when she agreed to a Mary Poppins stage musical by Sir Cameron Mackintosh she made a proviso that "no Americans" be involved in its creation.

Tonight's film is not a simple story of an uptight English woman induced to loosen up by those freedom-lovin' Yanks, but a delicate and brilliantly acted story of overcoming the past to embrace an uncertain future. Emma Thompson, in particular, is magic.

Perhaps we should have Mary Poppins next season?! I confess I've not see it!

Iain McGlashan

The printing of the notes by Repropoint is undertaken free of charge

Repropoint

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In memoriam

In August we heard with sadness of the death of Alan Willmott. WNCC had a long association with Alan who presented along with Andrew Youdell, the Big Screen Steam events for 25 years. This started in 1988 as a joint production with Woking Borough Council to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the railway coming to Woking

Alan worked for British Transport Films before starting Windjammer Films and producing numerous films about narrowgauge and heritage railways, which formed the backbone of the annual event.



Alan at front, at the 25th and final Big Screen Steam screening in 2013

Further photos are on our website

Membership of WNCC allows you to attend the films shown by Chertsey Film Society for £3

Their season starts tomorrow (Friday 12 September) with "Before the Devil Knows You're Dead", director Sidney Lumet's final critically acclaimed film is a thriller about two brothers who hatch a plan to rob their parents' jewellery store. When the job goes awry, the entire family is set on a collision course with tragedy. The title comes from the Irish saying: "May you be in heaven a full half-hour before the devil knows you're dead."

The other films in their new season are:

Wadjda (3 October) ; Untouchable (17 October); No (14 November); The Grand Budapest Hotel (12 December); The Lunchbox (9 January 2015); Inside Llewyn Davis (30 January); The Invisible Woman (13 February); Locke (6 March); Of Horses and Men (27 March); A Thousand Times Good Night (17 April); Couscous (1 May)

Their films begin at 7.45pm and are shown at Chertsey Hall, Heriot Road, Chertsey, KT16 9DR, with free parking opposite the hall.

Reactions on 8.5.14 to: **In Love With Alma Cogan**

Score **0** **1** **2** **3** **4** **5** **6** **7** **8** **9** **10**
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Total received – 28

Average Score – 7.68

Your Comments

Light entertainment with realistic touches

A lovely old fashioned film – love Cromer, love the film

My type of film - I smiled through it

Enjoyable way to end the season

Light hearted, entertaining; good film to end the season

Some great character acting in this gentle tale

A really great feel good film, where little things mean a lot.

What an enjoyable way to end the season

Great British movie - brilliant one-liners which made you chuckle and a happy ending

A very, very enjoyable film

Slight but enjoyable

Great end to the season

Brilliant! My sort of film.

Position	Film	Average Score for season = 6.6
1 st	West Side Story	8.78
2 nd	Intouchable	8.29
3 rd	Argo	8.07
4 th	All About Eve	7.79
5 th	In Love With Alma Cogan	7.68
6 th	Even the Rain	7.38
7 th	The Hunt	7.13
8 th	Delicacy	6.83
9 th	Not One Less	6.55
10 th	Never Let Me Go	6.53
11 th	Amour	6.46
12 th	No	6.44
13 th	Le gamin au vélo (The Kid with a Bike)	6.42
14 th	The First Movie	6.04
15 th	Rare Exports	5.71
16 th	Ivan's Childhood	5.22
17 th	Sightseers	4.56
18 th	A Useful Life	2.89

Our next film:

Thursday 25 September

A Royal Affair (En kongelig affære)

Denmark's Oscar nominee is a fact-inspired historical costume drama and a splendid demonstration of the old adage that political films are really not about the time they are set in, but the time in which they are made.

