

FILM NIGHT – 15TH NOVEMBER 2017

THEIR FINEST



2017 – 1hr 54 min – Cert 12A

Genres: Romantic comedy

Directed by: Lone Sherfig (*An Education*)

Stars: Gemma Arterton, Sam Claflin, Bill Nighy, Richard E Grant

Having initially expected to show Dunkirk but then hearing indifferent reports of it, our November showing is this lovely film based on the same event.

Their Finest is a romantic comedy (no, don't groan you chaps, even I very much enjoyed it!) about a wartime propaganda film set in 1939 mid-Blitz London and Devon, commissioned by the Ministry of Information not only to boost British morale which was at a very low ebb after Dunkirk, but also for consumption in the USA to encourage them to join in the war.

The government finds itself struggling to strike the right tone in its public information shorts, so the head of the Ministry's film division (Richard E Grant) hires a young Welsh woman called Catrin Cole (Gemma Arterton). Catrin thought she was interviewing for a secretarial job but found herself accepting an offer of a script-writing job to bring a much-needed feminine perspective to their scripts. "*Obviously we can't pay you as much as the chaps,*" Grant says in a matter-of-fact manner during her interview – one of countless swipes at Catrin's sex that pass without a flicker of dissent. Another comes on her first day in the office, when her tetchy but undeniably gifted new colleague Tom Buckley (Sam Claflin) chirpily informs her that the women's dialogue she's been hired to write is known around the office as '*the slop*'.

The film bristles with accurate depictions of the gender gap which eventually led to the Equality Act and is in current focus in many ways including BBC R4 Today issues. The film is interspersed with black and white archive clips which include the famous British words "*... feel better after a nice cup of tea*" as consolation to a factory worker who has just heard that her husband is missing in action.

Gemma Arterton is superb as the Catrin Cole, and Bill Nighy acts somewhat away from his usual typecast characters as the dilapidated and disillusioned matinee star of yore, who still sees romantic lead material in the mirror, but is cast, to his horror, as a boozy old coot. Catrin's shrewd but respectful handling of Nighy's character (aptly named Ambrose Hilliard), is one of the plot's funniest and most rewarding seams. The excellent period settings and wardrobes add important authenticity which enhance our sense of participating in the making of the film within the film.

This film is not fast-moving, but that is its virtue. The love story, with its wooden, stilted and frustrated emotions, is a reminder of the repressive sexual politics of its day – rather like, in a very different way, the serious religious divide illustrated in the below-stairs love story of *Viceroy's House* we showed in October. DG

Bookings: email filmnight@rockbournevillagehall.org.uk or
phone Lucy Matthews 01725 518695

Doors open 7:00pm, Film 7:30 £6, Supper 9:45 £6, wine £11/bottle
Pay at the door, last bookings 1200 Sunday 11th November

Next event: Rockbourne Christmas Party Fri 15th December, details later