



The Secret Life of Ealing Studios

Robert Sellers

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A behind-the-scenes account of life at Ealing Studios – one of the great cinematic success stories of post-war Britain, and a byword for a particular strain of comic filmmaking that continues to inspire imitators over half a century on.

This will be the first full narrative history of the studio, focusing on its output in the 1940s and '50s, when the movies made there were in astonishing (and revealing) synchronicity with the national mood. Told through the memories of the people who worked and performed there, *The Secret Life of Ealing Studios* will explore how a small group of maverick filmmakers, some of Britain's most fondly remembered movie stars, and a lot of unsung backroom boys and girls created pictures that presented a unique and enduring view of British identity, and which have since become classics. Particular emphasis will be placed on the filming of *Hue and Cry* (1947), *Passport to Pimlico* (1949), *Kind Hearts and Coronets* (1949), *Whisky Galore* (1949), *The Lavender Hill Mob* (1951), *The Man in the White Suit* (1951) and *The Ladykillers* (1955), along with war films such as *The Cruel Sea* (1953). At the heart of the story will be the figure of Michael Balcon - perhaps the closest Britain has ever come to producing a movie mogul in the Hollywood mould - and iconic actors such as Peter Sellers, Alec Guinness, Margaret Rutherford and Sid James.

The author is one of Britain's leading entertainment biographers and has a number of successful and critically lauded titles under his belt (his recent book on Oliver Reed, *What Fresh Lunacy Is This?*, was selected for Books of the Year round-ups in both the *Sunday Times* and *Mail on Sunday*). Robert has a track record of securing original testimony from first-hand witnesses and has already begun interviewing people who worked at Ealing.

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