

Freddie Bartholomew

Titles: 0 Sources: 6 Stills: 75

Born: Frederick Llewellyn; London; 28th March 1924
Died: Sarasota, Florida; 23rd January 1992



Just the sort of boy to make a maiden aunt come over all unnecessary. He seemed to emblemise for American palates all that is quintessentially British. *Source: Classic Movie Kids website*



Left: and here is the maiden aunt in question, pictured centre, with Bartholomew's mother.

Source: Classic Movie Kids

Below left: Naughty Freddie tries to blow up child star hopeful Joanna Quigley...

Below right: Avoid so-called "colourised" prints of 1930s black & white classics. No film looks the better for it.





Left: "CAPTAINS COURAGEOUS" was certainly his best performance. Spencer Tracy gagged at the prospect of donning a curly wig to sing Portuguese sea shanties, but they gave him an Oscar for the role just the same.

Studio caption to promotional still right: "HE'S A BRITISH COWBOY: Freddie Bartholomew, who rocketed to fame with his portrayal of the child hero of "DAVID COPPERFIELD", returns to Hollywood from New York wearing chaps and a five-gallon hat, determined to become a silent man of the great open spaces. But first he's to go into Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer's forthcoming "ANNA KARENINA", starring Greta Garbo. He plays Garbo's son."

Halliwell's Filmgoer's Companion entry:

"Impeccably well-bred British child actor whose success in Hollywood films of the thirties delighted elderly aunts the world over. His somewhat toffee-nosed image fell from favour during the war and as an adult he moved out of show business into advertising."

Picturegoer Film Annual 1949 contemporary note:

"It used to be a maxim of the cynics that child stars retired at twelve or so and supported their parents in luxury for the rest of their lives. Of recent years the steady progression of such youngsters as Mickey Rooney, Judy Garland, Deanna Durbin and Shirley Temple makes nonsense of that quip... [Mickey Rooney] has always been a first-rate actor, and.. when he has put his somewhat protracted adolescence

behind him he will be a performer with a wide range and a sure dramatic touch.

The rivals of his youth, the sensitive Freddie Bartholomew and the forthright Jackie Cooper, are still working in pictures, although they have not progressed as smoothly to adult roles as Rooney nor are they as successful. Of the two I feel that Cooper, in his day the best of all the boy actors of Hollywood, has the better chance of future stardom. "

The Sunday Times "Milestones of the Cinema" entry:

"The child actor took Hollywood by storm with an immaculate, well-bred snootiness that was the envied joy of parents and the derided butt of their offspring. Bartholomew's wavy locks were tousled with malice by Basil Rathbone as Mr Murdstone in "DAVID COPPERFIELD (35) while Garbo fondled them with tender

loving care for "ANNA KARENINA" (35). He was a natural for "LITTLE LORD FAUNTLEROY" (36) and "THE DEVIL IS A Sissy" (36), in which he co-starred with the unruly Mickey Rooney.

He could act, as he proved in "CAPTAINS COURAGEOUS" (37) in which he was the spoiled-rotten kid learning about life and death from Spencer Tracy playing a fisherman marked for tragedy. Even Tracy admitted himself upstaged "at times". The vogue for little-gent films died with the second world war. Bartholomew joined the American Army airforce, made TV commercials and embarked on a career in advertising, making a significant impact on Madison Avenue."

Those Endearing Young Charms entry:

"Dark curly hair and wide blue eyes. Freddie Bartholomew, the son of a British soldier, made his first public appearance at a "tea" gathering in Warminster, England, reciting a poetic story about a London policeman. He did so well and made such an impression that from then on he was in great demand for recitations at various social functions. When he was very young Freddie was tutored by his Aunt Myllicent in diction, elocution and literature. At the age of twelve, Freddie was well-versed in practically every subject of cultural interest.

In 1934 Freddie came to the United States with his Aunt Myllicent and was spotted by a studio talent scout while on a holiday trip in New York City. The following year Freddie made his first appearance before a US audience in the film "DAVID COPPERFIELD", and the way it came to be was truly classic. One morning he entered David Selznick's office dressed as David Copperfield. "I am David Copperfield, sir" he said, doffing his beaver hat. "Right you are" Selznick replied, taking Freddie into his arms, "You are David Copperfield". So with that small exchange of dialogue, Freddie Bartholomew commenced his screen career.

In his private life Freddie was a Boy Scout. He enjoyed swimming and horseback riding. Besides being privately tutored by his aunt, he was a student at the London Weymouth School in Warminster, Wiltshire

County, England, and at the 20th Century Fox studio school. His real name was Frederick Llewellyn.

In 1949 Freddie accepted a job with New York television station WPIX as the host of an afternoon movie programme. He then drifted to producing commercials. In 1954 he joined one of the largest advertising agencies in the world, Benton & Bowles, and 11 years later became its Vice-President."

The Moving Picture Boy entry:

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[On "CAPTAINS COURAGEOUS":]

"...It is also Kipling's story of Spencer Tracy with a Portuguese accent teaching the spoiled brat Freddie Bartholomew (perfectly suited for the part) what it means to be a Man..."

[The Sunday Times Guide to Movies on Television]

"...Young Bartholomew plays the spoiled kid, only son of wealthy father, who falls off a liner bound for Europe and is picked up by Tracy, the fisherman to whom the recalcitrant boy finally becomes deeply attached. Bartholomew's transition from a brat to a lovable child is done with convincing strokes. His performance is matched by Tracy..."

[Variety Movie Guide 1993]

"Bobby Breen, the eight-year old singing sensation of the Eddie Cantor broadcasts, visits with his friend, Freddy Bartholomew, on the set where Bobby was making his screen debut in "LET'S SING AGAIN", produced by Sol Lesser and released by RKO Radio. "[caption to studio promotional still]

Reading a little between the lines, it seems Bartholomew was bundled into a suitcase and whisked off on "extended vacation" to Hollywood by his aunt when British child labour laws prevented him accepting the proffered lead in "DAVID COPPERFIELD". His aunt knew a hot property when she saw one, had perhaps even been grooming him with a film career in mind, and he did not return to the UK for some years. A timid, lip-biting, fretful sort of boy, he was born to play pampered darlings such as Sergei in "ANNA KARENINA", David Copperfield or Little Lord Fauntleroy. In truth, Bartholomew could not act for toffee, and while the rôle of Harvey opposite Spencer Tracy did stretch his range somewhat in "CAPTAINS COURAGEOUS", most of his performances are embarrassing to watch today.

FILMOGRAPHY

Year	Age	Title	Role
deb 31	7	FASCINATION	
32	8	LILY CHRISTINE	
32		STRIP, STRIP, HOORAY! with <i>Eric Pavett</i>	
33	9	DAVID COPPERFIELD 	title role as a boy
33		ANNA KARENINA	as Sergei
33		PROFESSIONAL SOLDIER	
36	12	THE DEVIL IS A SISSY with <i>Mickey Rooney</i>	
36		LITTLE LORD FAUNTLEROY with <i>Mickey Rooney</i>	in title role, Ceddie
36		LLOYDS OF LONDON † with <i>Douglas Scott</i>	title role as a boy, Jonathan Blake, 12
37	13	CAPTAINS COURAGEOUS with <i>Mickey Rooney</i>	in central role, Harvey
38	14	LORD JEFF / THE BOY FROM BARNARDO'S	
38		KIDNAPPED	as David Balfour
38		LISTEN, DARLING with <i>Scotty Beckett, Judy Garland</i>	
38		SPIRIT OF CULVER with <i>Jackie Cooper, Gene Reynolds</i>	
39	15	TWO BRIGHT BOYS	
40	16	THE SWISS FAMILY ROBINSON with <i>Terry Kilburn</i>	
40		TOM BROWN'S SCHOOL DAYS with <i>Jimmy Lydon, Billy Halop</i>	as East
41	17	NAVAL ACADEMY	
42	18	CADETS ON PARADE	
42		A YANK AT ETON	
44	20	THE TOWN WENT WILD	

[† he had top billing – over Tyrone Power – although he only appears in the first 25 minutes]