

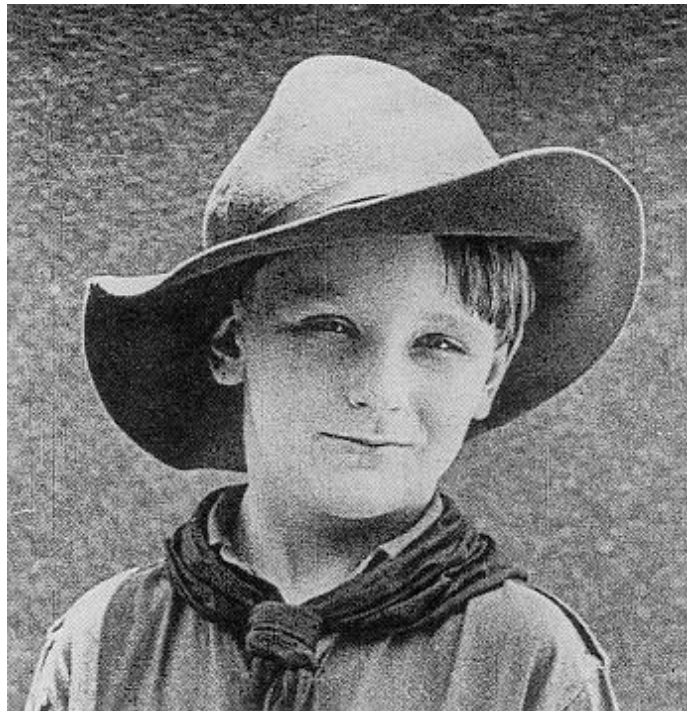
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The Kid Stakes

Australia : 1927 : dir. Tal Ordell
prod: : scr: : dir.ph.:
[Robin Ordell](#)
Adult cast unknown

Silent : ? min

Ref:	Pages	Sources	Stills	Words	Ω	8	€	M	⚡	Copy on VHS	Last Viewed
3826a	1.5	2	1	587	-	-	-	-	-	No	<i>unseen</i>



A salty-looking dingo –no worries

Source: The Moving Picture Boy

Australian Cinema 1970-1985 note:

“Tal Ordell, in his humorous and charming adaptation of the "Fatty Finn" comic strip, **"THE KID STAKES"** (1927), made one of the major Australian silent films. Although set in inner-city Sydney and ostensibly a tale of rival childrens' gangs and a runaway goat, it draws on various themes (mateship, competitiveness) that figure largely in many Australian films; and, in John Tulloch's words, "a dream of authentic urban living is fused with the mythical structures of the bush". Largely dismissed as a children's film at the time, its reputation now stands deservedly high.”

The Moving Picture Boy entry on Ordell:

“Robin ("Pop") Ordell was the son of the popular writer and comedian Athol Dowe, who worked under the name of Tal Ordell. He was born Robert Dowe, and was later known as Robert Athol Buntine. His sole, but considerable, claim to cinematic fame was for having starred in **"THE KID STAKES"**, Australia's first kid film (his father directing), which was based on one of Australia's best-loved comic strips, the creation of Syd Phillips. (It ran from 1923 to 1977.)

Robin, though no more than plump, incarnated the strip's hero, "Fatty Finn", in this admirably grubby story of a donkey race, surrounded by

familiars like "Bruiser Murphy", "Seasy", "Headlights Hogan", "Shooey Shugg" and "Master Algie Snoops". (An unsuccessful remake appeared in 1980, with Ben Oxenbould as Fatty.)

In adult life Robert Buntine became a radio announcer. In August 1942, serving as a Flight Sergeant with the Royal Australian Air Force, he was shot down over the Mediterranean. His name is on the war memorial at Valetta in Malta."

[no listing in "Classics of the Silent Screen", "A Pictorial History of the Silent Screen", "Silent Movies: A Picture Quiz Book", "Halliwell's Film Guide", "Leonard Maltin's Movie and Video Guide 2001", "Speelfilm Encyclopedie", "The Critics' Film Guide", "The Good Film and Video Guide", "Movies on TV and Videocassette 1988-89", "Rating the Movies (1990)", "The Sunday Times Guide to Movies on Television", "The Time Out Film Guide", "TV Times Film & Video Guide 1995", "Variety Movie Guide 1993", "Video Movie Guide 1993" or "The Virgin Film Guide"]

No further information currently available. Robin Ordell (1918-1942) was 9. This is the earliest known instance of an Australian film focussed on children, although there must certainly have been others, and one of the earliest films from *any* country that can be identified as being made with a child audience in view. The absence of information on them is scarcely surprising, given the haughty attitude of critics like Brian McFarlane. The phrase "largely dismissed as a children's film" speaks volumes, does it not?

Why was it only *ostensibly* "a tale of rival childrens' gangs and a runaway goat" ? Because it had a context of "*mateship*" and competitiveness (the word "friendship" being too dodgy for males, apparently)? Are these so alien to children's lives then? Well, thank heavens it has been rescued from the category of children's film, and may now be taken seriously by connoisseurs. Eh, diggers?

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