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Nowhere Else To Go: The death of the travelogue

The travelogue - a short documentary presenting the beauties, customs and history of a chosen part of the world via moving images, a spoken commentary and an appropriate musical score was a familiar part of the full supporting programme of British cinemas from the 1940s to the 1970s. It had its origin in printed travel journalism of the previous century, and in the attempt of documentarists in the twentieth century to record the work and culture of different social groups in their regional and national contexts. The post-war travelogue was an attempt to harness these ethnographic concerns to the needs of mass entertainment through the dominant codes and aesthetics of the commercial cinema. By the 1970s this project had reached a decadent terminal stage.

This session will sketch the history of the commercial travelogue, concentrating on the most successful British practitioner of the form, Harold Baim, recently the subject of a BBC Radio 4 programme *Telly Savalas and the Quota Quickies*. It will include rare extracts from some of his films (including some directed by Michael Winner) and will conclude with a full screening of the unforgettable *Telly Savalas Looks at Portsmouth*, one of the very last of an endangered species.