



**MARJORIE**  
**DAY**

# MARJORIE DAY

1887–1940

NOTES ON A  
NEW ZEALAND  
MOVIE STAR

by

Ian St George



Marjorie Day at 18, portrait by Rita Martin, 1905.

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**Cover:** Marjorie Day aged 20 in 1907  
—in *The Devil's Disciple*.

## Chapter 1: family

Marjorie Day was a New Zealand born actor. Her parents were William John Sydney Day and Madel (Jennings) Day.

Her great grandfather was William Day senior, lithographer to Queen Victoria: his wife was Caroline Bellenie. Their second son John Bellenie Day married Isabel Rose Rees (born in Argentina, the daughter of William Rees RN); they were cousins of Dr WG Grace, the great cricketer. Their eldest, WJS (“Sydney”) Day was born in 1855.<sup>1</sup>

William Day senior’s eldest son William Joseph Day took over the firm with John Bellenie Day as junior partner, but the partnership was dissolved in 1865.<sup>2</sup> From 1869 to 1877 John B Day ran an “artistic and commercial” lithography business from 3 Savoy St near the Strand— “John B Day & Son, chromolithographs and books”—so presumably his son WJS Day worked with him. Day & Son won a medal of merit at the 1873 Vienna World’s Fair<sup>3</sup> but in 1878 John B Day was declared bankrupt.<sup>4</sup>

(Nonetheless nine years later, in 1887 John Bellenie Day was secretary of the proposed New Zealand Antimony Co. In 1883 a small syndicate, headed by Houston Logan of Wellington, established the Endeavour Inlet Antimony Company but a fall in the price of antimony, low-grade ore and smelting problems forced the syndicate to seek English capital, and the NZ Antimony Company was registered in London in 1888. The company found no high-grade ore and was forced into voluntary liquidation in 1892. John Bellenie Day died in 1914).<sup>5</sup>

Madel Day was the elder daughter of William Earle Jennings and Mary Anne (Green) Jennings of Regent’s Park, London.

John Bellenie Day's son had come to New Zealand (his uncles WG and WL Rees were in Wellington and Auckland already).

On 11 October 1884 29 year old William John Sydney Day (known as Sydney) married Madel Jennings in Auckland.<sup>6</sup> Their son Earle Eric Bellenie Day was born on 13 July 1885<sup>7</sup> and their daughter Marjorie Day (of whom more, soon: I promise) on 17 July 1887.<sup>8</sup>

In 1887 Sydney Day played doubles tennis and played cricket in Auckland for the McArthur & Co (general merchants) team for the Warehouseman's Challenge Cup.<sup>9 10 11</sup>

In 1891 his occupation was "Printer's Manager" when he applied for a patent for "an invention for an improved blocking-press," later abandoned.<sup>12</sup> He was in fact manager of the *NZ Herald* jobbing Department.<sup>13</sup> In 1895 he was a judge at the annual picnic of the Auckland printers held at St. Helier's Bay, "a large number of members of the typographical trade and their friends going down to that Holiday resort in the ferry steamers Eagle and Britannia."<sup>14</sup>

In February 1896 Sydney Day resigned his position at the *Herald* and the staff presented him with a valuable mounted illuminated address, with a view of Auckland harbour, North Head and Rangitoto in the centre, executed by Mr R Ward of the artists' staff.<sup>15</sup>

The *Observer* noted,

Mr W. J. S. Day, who has for the last twelve years held the position of manager of the *Herald* jobbing department, left Auckland last week for the purpose of taking the business management of Professor Van Buskirk's horse training exhibition. Before his departure, Mr Day was made the subject of a flattering farewell presentation by the *Herald* staff, amongst whom he was very popular. During his connection with the

*Herald*, Mr Day thoroughly reorganised its jobbing department, and by his extreme knowledge of the trade, and his exceptional taste, raised the standard of its ornamental and colour work, and extended the business very considerably. He was in this position an admirable manager, and a man of great executive and administrative ability, and the *Herald* proprietary are bound to miss him very much. Mr Day, whose portrait appears on this page, is, by the way, the eldest son of Mr John B. Day, junior partner in the late firm of Day and Sons, lithographers to the Queen, London.<sup>16</sup>



William John Sydney Day, *Observer* 7 March 1896.

Before the end of the month he was at the Royal Hotel in Gisborne, seeking sawdust “for Professor Van Buskirk’s Horse Training Exhibition, in Theatre Royal”.<sup>17</sup>

Van Buskirk had arrived in New Zealand in 1895,

Professor Van Buskirk, the champion fairplay horse trainer and breaker, from Detroit, Michigan, U.S., gave an exhibition at Mr. Morley’s stables, Durham-street, yesterday, in the presence of several experts and others as to how, by the use of his invented gear, he could subdue or control the most fractious colt or horse however vicious; his system is void of any cruelty or use of chemicals, and so far as could be judged is a marked step in advance of the old system; and its extreme simplicity is undoubtedly its greatest recommendation. A baulky, kicking, shying, jibbing, bucking horse, or any other vice, being under immediate control by the Professor’s methods and gear. By his system it is just as easy to break or train a colt or horse in a road or paddock as in a shed. He is about to open a school of instruction, the date of which will be duly advertised. The Professor’s modus operandi created a most favourable impression.<sup>18</sup>

The *Poverty Bay Herald* carried this,

# HORSE TRAINING

EXTRAORDINARY!

THEATRE ROYAL,  
TUESDAY, MARCH 3RD, 1896,  
AT 8 O'CLOCK.

## PROFESSOR VAN BUSKIRK

CHAMPION HORSE TRAINER  
AND EDUCATOR,

Will give an EXHIBITION, showing his  
Methods—the most Wonderful of the Age –  
without tying up a leg or head and  
tail together.

MADAME MABEL,  
The only Lady Horse Subduer, will lay down  
a horse, without tying up a leg, by  
PROFESSOR VAN BUSKIRK'S  
"Fair-play Method."

ADMISSION, 3/- 2/- AND 1/-

A BAND WILL BE IN ATTENDANCE 19

What calamitous convulsion of commonsense led the 41 year old Sydney Day, married and father of two, to leave steady successful employment to follow an itinerant showman? and who was Madame Mabel?

There is every probability that the horse lovers of Poverty Bay will shortly have an opportunity of witnessing an exhibition by the celebrated horse breaker and educator, Professor Van Buskirk, who has lately astonished the inhabitants of Auckland by the success and simplicity of his methods of subduing the most intractable horses. He will be accompanied by Madame Mabel, an English lady, who he has educated to be almost as expert as himself.<sup>20</sup>

Van Buskirk then disappeared from the New Zealand newspapers, apart from brief mention of “the Van Buskirk Magic Bit” for racehorses in 1901 and an application to patent a bridle in 1902. A “Professor Van Buskirk” was a professional boxer in California for a while thereafter.

Sydney Day now had family in Gisborne. His uncle William Lee Rees (Sir George Grey’s biographer) had moved there in 1879 and Rees’s law firm partner was Sydney’s cousin Victor Grace Day. (The *Observer* noted in midmarch, “Mr Day, the skip of the Gisborne bowling team, is a relative of Dr. Grace, the celebrated cricketer.”)<sup>21</sup>

But Sydney Day must have departed from New Zealand later in 1896, for by September 1898 he had been back in England for more than two years, the *Herald’s* London correspondent reporting,

Mr. W.J. Sydney Day, formerly of Auckland, called on me this morning. It is more than two years since Mr. Day left New Zealand, but he appears to have made up his mind to stay in the Mother Country, as he is doing very well.<sup>22</sup>

... and in 1899,

Mr Sydney Day, once well-known in many New Zealand cities, has commenced business as a wholesale stationer.<sup>23</sup>

... and in 1900,

MR. W.J. SYDNEY DAY, late of Auckland, has joined the firm of Messrs. Ben George, of 47, Hatton Garden. Mr. Day is now located at their new works at 86, St Ann’s Road, North.<sup>24</sup>

Benjamin George George was a printer and lithographer.

The 1901 census had the Days at 46 Hewitt Rd Hornsey: Sydney 46, Manager Letterpress & Lithographic Printer; Madel 41, Manageress Registry for Servants, Eric a scholar, 15 and Marjorie, a 13 year old scholar.

The Registry for Servants was at 10 Hatton Garden, just down the street from Ben George's at no. 47.

In 1907,

Mr. W.J. Sydney Day, at one time of Auckland, has started business for himself in Hatton Garden. His daughter is at present appearing at the Lyceum Theatre, but shortly goes to the Savoy.<sup>25</sup>

The 1911 Census has 55 year old Sydney, Manager of Letterpress & Lithographic Printing & Manufactured Stationery; Madel 59, not working and Marjorie, a 21 year old single actress, all living at 7 South Villas, Camden Town. Eric Day a 25 year old married insurance clerk was living nearby at Muswell Hill with his wife Elizabeth aged 30; they had married in 1909; their one child had died.

The 1911 Register of Electors recorded Sydney Day living at 32 Loraine Mansions, (Widdenham Rd, Holloway). He died in 1912, aged 57, Wellington's *Evening Post* recording,

The death is announced this week of William John Sydney Day, a former resident of New Zealand. He passed away on 16<sup>th</sup> October at 7a, Southvillas, Camden-square, London; his age was fifty-seven years.<sup>26</sup>

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1 [rootschat.com/forum/index.php?topic=610018.0](http://rootschat.com/forum/index.php?topic=610018.0)

2 *Perry's Bankrupt Gazette* 19 August 1865.

3 [www.chessreference.com/Projects/LondonGrid\\_v15-0.xlsx](http://www.chessreference.com/Projects/LondonGrid_v15-0.xlsx)

4 [thegazette.co.uk/London/issue/24549/page/616/data.pdf](http://thegazette.co.uk/London/issue/24549/page/616/data.pdf).

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5 <http://www.theprow.org.nz/yourstory/endeavour-inlet-and-the-antimony-mine/#.XVomh-Mzapo>

6 *NZ Herald* 13 October 1884.

7 *NZ Herald* 20 July 1885.

8 *NZ Herald* 18 July 1887.

9 *NZ Herald* 25 January 1887.

10 *NZ Herald* 13 January 1887.

11 *NZ Herald* 21 April 1887.

12 New Zealand Patents, Designs, and Trade-Marks (Third annual report of the Registrar) 1892.

13 *Auckland Star* 7 February 1894.

14 *Auckland Star* 25 March 1895.

15 *NZ Herald* 15 & 21 February 1896.

16 *Observer* 7 March 1896.

17 *Poverty Bay Herald* 27 February 1896.

18 *NZ Herald* 4 October 1895.

19 *Poverty Bay Herald* 27 February 1896.

20 *Poverty Bay Herald* 6 February 1896.

21 *Observer* 14 March 1896.

22 *NZ Herald* 19 September 1898.

23 *Auckland Star* 2 August 1899.

24 *NZ Herald* 27 November 1900.

25 *NZ Herald* 28 October 1907.

26 *Evening Post* 3 December 1912.

## Chapter 2: Marjorie Day on stage

“Born at Auckland, Miss Day had her first stage appearance in the Dominion,” claimed the *Auckland Star*,<sup>1</sup> but I can find no report of it. In London,

Her first part was at the Shaftesbury Theatre in 1902, when she played in ‘The Little Unfair Princess,’ by Mrs Hodgson Burnett.<sup>2</sup>

Burnett’s *Little Lord Fauntleroy* had been revived at the Shaftesbury Theatre for its 1901 Christmas show, and *The Little Unfair Princess* opened on 22 December 1902. The *Scotsman*’s critic thought “the tone of the piece much too sombre to capture the fancy of young folks, who, when they go to the theatre, expect matter for laughter rather than tears.”<sup>3</sup> After a week the *Pall Mall Gazette* could report, “It is understood that some alterations have been made in ‘The Little Unfair Princess,’ the children’s play which is being given every afternoon at the Shaftesbury. These have the effect of heightening the comic relief, and eliminating altogether some of the scenes which were calculated to bring tears too readily into little eyes.”<sup>4</sup>

“Mrs Burnett is most fortunate in the succession of clever children who sustain the various parts,” said the *Tablet*<sup>5</sup>—but nowhere in the published reviews is Marjorie Day mentioned. Twelve year old Beatrice Terry was the star: the play was very successful and after the planned four weeks was transferred to Terry’s Theatre.

Marjorie Day was photographed in 1903 at age 16, her image one of a series published by Wills “ALWICS” cigarette cards of “Overseas Actresses,” so she must by now have been recognised as such.



Marjorie Day aged 16.

In 1905 she was 18,

Miss Marjorie Day, daughter of Mr. W.J. Sydney Day, late of Auckland, is now rehearsing at Drury Lane for a part in the coming production of "The Prodigal Son." Miss Day is considered to be very attractive, so much so, indeed, that Madame Lallie Charles, the artist-photographer, has twice given her sittings. Two portraits of the New Zealand young lady have been published in the London illustrated press.<sup>6</sup>

Lallie Charles Cowell (Charlotte Elizabeth Martin) and her sister Rita Martin were the most successful woman portrait photographers of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Lallie Charles's studio was at 1 Titchfield Road, Regent's Park in 1905—not far from where Marjorie lived.

A Rita Martin photograph of Marjorie Day has survived and a Lallie Charles photograph was published in the *Penny Illustrated Paper* in August 1905.

*The Prodigal Son* was adapted by Hall Caine from his own melodramatic novel of the same name. It opened at Drury Lane on 7 September 1905. It would have on stage a horse, dogs and a "specially trained" flock of sheep—but not Marjorie Day. The *Globe* critic was unimpressed,

It is unequal in workmanship, and is deficient in spontaneity, the Scriptural basis assigned the story proving more of a burden than a source of inspiration. As is the case with most modern drama, it begins better than it ends, and is like a river which, starting in full stream along a deep channel, finds ultimately its way through obscure shallows to the sea.<sup>7</sup>



Photo, Lallie Charles.

**MISS MARJORIE DAY**, who will probably be in the cast of  
"The Prodigal Son" at Drury Lane this autumn.

Portrait of Marjorie Day at 18 by Lallie Charles,  
from *Penny Illustrated Paper* 5 August 1905

Nonetheless audiences loved it and the production was a great success. She had a small part in *If I were King* at an event at His Majesty's in aid of St Bartholemew's Hospital in December.<sup>8</sup>

The *New Zealand Herald* followed her career,

Miss Marjorie Day, formerly of Auckland, seems to be making steady progress in her stage career. Since the conclusion of the Drury Lane pantomime last Easter, she has been playing in the piece "Castles of Spain." Now she has had a small part allotted to her in the big drama for the Drury Lane autumn season, namely. "The Bondsman," founded on Hall Caine's book. Miss Marjorie Day is "billed" to milk a real live cow, which will have a place on the stage in one of the acts; the New Zealand young lady is to be one of several dairymaids, but the milking has been entrusted to her; she has had some experience in New Zealand of milking cows.<sup>9</sup>

Marjorie was indeed cast in a minor role in the next Hall Caine play, *The Bondman*,

The sheep that caused a mild sensation last autumn's production will this year be rivalled by some prize Alderney cows, which will be milked on the stage. The milkmaid will be Miss Marjorie Day, a seventeen-year-old maiden, who was brought up in New Zealand. Miss Day milked a cow on a colonial farm when she was no more than eight years old, but she has yet never performed the operation in public, and the hope she expresses that the animal will be thoroughly domesticated is quite natural under the circumstances.<sup>10</sup>

The *New Zealand Times's* London correspondent was cynical,

Miss Marjorie Day... is billed to milk on the Drury Lane stage "a real live cow" in "full view of the audience" in

Hall Caine's "The Bondsman," which is now under rehearsal. Miss Day, it is said, will sit upon an "old-fashioned three-legged wooden stool" during her operation upon the cow. Truly a triumph of cheap realism! But will it appeal to the public particularly? Methinks not. Now, if Miss Day sat upon a wooden cow and milked a threelegged stool, or if a three-legged cow sat upon Miss Day and milked a real live stool, or even if Miss Day sat upon the audience and milked a three-legged cow, the attraction might prove irresistible. As it is, I'm ashamed of Hall Caine's lack of originality.<sup>11</sup>

"The milkmaid is Miss Marjorie Day, a 17 year old maiden who was born in Auckland, New Zealand.... Miss Day has milked cows on colonial farms since she was eight years of age," claimed the *London Daily Mail*,<sup>12</sup> but actually she had left New Zealand when she was eight, was now 19 and is unlikely to have milked a cow in Auckland.

London was so befuddled by the bucolic that all the posters had to be withdrawn when somebody suggested Marjorie was milking on the wrong side of the cow.<sup>13</sup> Even the Australians noticed, Sydney's *Daily Telegraph* correspondent from England, "Rose de Boheme," telling its readers,

The milking stool, beside the meek moo... happens at this moment to be a subject of fierce controversy, the question being not whether the stool should support a maid, but whether it ought to stand to right or left of the lady chiefly concerned—I refer to the cow. The case—or is it the cow, I feel a little mixed—stands thus: Mr. Hall Caine's "Bond man" is to be produced this month at Drury Lane, realistically produced with a real cow, a real milkmaid, stool and pail complete. The milkmaid is pretty Miss Marjorie Day, who started life on a New Zealand farm, and learned to milk as naturally as she learned to read. In the usual course of advertisement,

Miss Day, her cow, her pail, and her stool were photographed in respective position; straightway a howl of derision arose from such of the farming population as takes an interest in stage performance. They might do things topsy-turvy on the other side if they liked, but it wouldn't do here. Miss Day was milking her cow on the near side! Of course there was corrective response; people came forward to assert that you might milk on the off side, on both sides at once an' it pleased you, without protest. But the consensus of opinion is against Miss Day and her "near side," and there is a general impression that folks on the underside mismanage their dairy work. Now what can you say on the subject? Some of you may be authorities, deeply versed, thanks to bush experiences, in the peculiarities of the cow. Does she kick the pail over—to say nothing of the milker—when milked on the near side, or is this a characteristic of British bovine temper? I once in my life tried to milk a cow—that was in Australia—and we neither of us liked it.<sup>14</sup>

Not the least remarkable feature about the setting of "The Bondman" is its amazing realism, not alone in great scenes like the sulphur mines, where sulphur is exuded but in comparative trivialities. The farmyard pump produces real water; real cows produce real milk; live birds trill naturally, and everything is done to make the play a real living thing, one connected series of living pictures sparkling with actuality, gorgeous in their dressing.<sup>15</sup>



MASCOT, ONE OF THE THREE COWS THAT ARRIVED IN TOWN THE OTHER DAY  
FROM LORD ROTHSCHILD'S FARM AT TRING

Miss Marjorie Day, who is to milk this cow on the stage at Drury Lane in Mr. Hall Caine's play, has just made her first acquaintance with Mascot. During the next ten days a great deal of hard work is to be gone through in training the cows to answer to the call of the milkmaid, to walk properly and circumspectly about the stage, and to stand still to be milked.

The *Tatler* 5 September 1906. Wrong side of the cow?



Marjorie Day on a postcard: photographed by Bassano in 1906. Alexander Bassano 1829–1913 was a leading royal and high society portrait photographer in London.



An early photograph of Marjorie Day, photographer unknown.



“Preparing ‘The Bondman’ for his stage debut: Miss Marjorie Day (who is to milk the ‘real cows’), and Mr. Bruce-Smith, the scenic artist.”  
The *Sketch* 5 September 1906.

Marjorie would appear in minor role in a revival of *The Prodigal Son* at the Adelphi Theatre in 1907;<sup>16</sup> she was “efficient” and “most excellent” said the *Era*. In July 1907 the *Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News* featured her prominently among a group of actors,



In September 1907 she played Jennie in *The Christian*, another Hall Caine play: “Miss Marjorie Day was a clinging and scared little Jennie,” said the *Stage*.



Marjorie Day as a clinging and scared Jennie in *The Christian*:  
*The Bystander* 18 September 1907.



“Miss Marjorie Day, as Essie in Mr. Bernard Shaw’s play, ‘The Devil’s Disciple,’ at the Savoy Theatre.—Essie is about to be rudely aroused and scolded for daring to fall asleep the day after a death in the family.”

*Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News* 23 November 1907.

Her big chance came in October 1907 in George Bernard Shaw's *The Devil's Disciple* at the Savoy Theatre; the *Otago Daily Times* cooed proudly,

The London dramatic critics speak in complimentary terms of Miss Marjorie Day (late of Auckland) in the part of "Essie" in Bernard Shaw's play, "The Devil's Disciple," which was produced this week at the Savoy Theatre. The *Morning Post*, for instance, refers to the young actress from New Zealand as follows: "Miss Marjorie Day is very sweet and touching as Essie, the natural child of Dick's uncle, hanged the day before for treason." Another critic observes: "Miss Marjorie Day played the poor waif with a touch of real emotion, and Dick's little scene with her set quite the right chord of tenderness thrilling in my heart."<sup>17</sup>

The *Western Morning News* reviewed the play on opening night,

Mr. Bernard Shaw is settling down to write stirring melodramas. There is nothing shocking to the proprieties except the title, "The Devil's Disciple," produced to-night at the Savoy Theatre. Those who went with the idea of hearing further developments of the author's peculiar philosophy must have been rather disappointed. But as a pregnant dramatic story of New Zealand life, with two or three splendidly-drawn characters, the new play leaves nothing to be desired, and it received an enthusiastic reception.... The sweet pathos and beauty of Miss Wynne's acting adds largely to the success of the piece. Her prejudices, her struggles, her passions, are splendidly portrayed. The cynical, good-hearted Dick finds an admirable exponent in Mr. Matheson Lang, who gives a fine piece of character work. Mr. Kennedy is the minister, and Miss Marjorie Day as Essie, the Cinderella

of the farmhouse, are also quite in the spirit of the piece.<sup>18</sup>

The *London Evening Standard*:

But the success of the evening was that of Miss Marjorie Day as Essie, the young girl. This was the real thing—admirable, real, entirely true.<sup>19</sup>

The *Manchester Courier and Lancashire General Advertiser*:

Miss Marjorie Day is deserving of a special word of praise for her pathetic, unexaggerated impersonation of the unfortunate child Essie.<sup>20</sup>

The *Referee*:

A notable bit of acting is contributed by Miss Marjorie Day, a young actress with a natural aptitude for the stage and the invaluable gift of temperament. Her performance of Essie, the poor little bastard who is befriended by the hero, is quite touching in its mute expression of gratitude. As the *Skibbereen Eagle* once remarked, "we have our eye on Lord Palmerston." so I shall keep a sharp look-out for Miss Marjorie Day, for the management of the Savoy, I believe, has discovered a new talent of some worth.<sup>21</sup>

The play outran its season at the Savoy and moved to the Queens Theatre in November, where "Miss Marjorie Day once more shows highly promising intelligence as poor little Essie".<sup>22</sup>



The *Bystander* 11 December 1907.  
 Frank Foulsham 1873–1930 & Arthur Clive Banfield 1875–1965 ran a  
 London photographic studio, active 1900–1920.



Same day, same photographers, similar pose....



“With pleasure, Marjorie Day”—another Foulsham & Banfield publicity shot for *The Devil's Disciple* (same room, same clothes).



Same day, same room, same photographers, similar pose....  
from *Black & White* magazine, 7 December 1907.

She next “charmingly impersonated” Olga in *The Woman of Kronstadt* at the Garrick Theatre in February 1908, Olga’s twin sister Vera played by Winifred Bateman.<sup>23</sup>

I never saw a couple of more delightfully natural schoolgirls than those embodied to the life by Miss Winifred Bateman and Miss Marjorie Day.<sup>24</sup>

In March she played Connie in *A Game of Adverbs* and Olga in *Kronstadt* at the Royal Court, Liverpool,<sup>25</sup> Nottingham,<sup>26</sup> Eastbourne, Fulham (“Miss Marjorie Day and Miss Francis Titheradge make a delightful pair as the twin daughters of General Stefanoff, and are full of life and spirit.”),<sup>27</sup> and Notting Hill.



Marjorie as Olga in *Kronstadt*.

*Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News* 22 February 1908



*Hits & Hoary*

THE GOVERNOR OF KRONSTADT'S TWIN DAUGHTERS

Vera and Olga Stefanoff, cleverly played by Miss Marjorie Day  
and Miss Winifred Bateman

The *Sphere* 22 February 1908



"Vera & Olga, Misses Bateman & Day"  
drawn by Thomas Downey, English artist, illustrator and cartoonist.  
*Illustrated Sporting & Dramatic News* 28 February 1908.

In September 1908 she was Mary Bandeleur in the cast of *The Marriages of Mayfair* at Drury Lane,<sup>28</sup> in September 1909 Miss Fordyce in *The Whip* (“A first night triumph”)<sup>29</sup> and in December she was Maysie in *One Summer’s Day* at the Rehearsal Theatre.<sup>30</sup>

In January 1910 Marjorie Day was selected in “an able and interesting cast” for *The Strong People*,<sup>31</sup> in which “A charmingly fresh and sweet impersonation of Conrad’s daughter Meda was given by Miss Marjorie Day”<sup>32</sup> at the Lyric Theatre.

In July at the Queen’s Theatre she played an African boy in *Peace* (“A good word should also be given to Miss Marjorie Day, who played a Negro boy cleverly”);<sup>33</sup> in October in *The Man from Blankley’s* at the Marlborough “Miss Marjorie Day does very well in the part of Gwendoline Tidmarsh”;<sup>34</sup> thence to *Mount Pleasant* (as Gladys Harris— “Miss Marjorie Day was good”<sup>35</sup>) a new one-act play to preface *Vice Versa* at Eastbourne<sup>36</sup> and later at the Comedy Theatre (“Miss Marjorie Day as Gladys was perhaps too refined for charity school polish, but she quite realised the emotion of the situation”).<sup>37</sup>

Until now she had played child or adolescent roles, but in 1911 (at age 24) she was cast in an adult part as Nellie, who “makes a successful appeal for applause” in a playlet named *Dandy Charlie* at the Palladium.<sup>38</sup> “Miss Marjorie Day, who plays Nellie... may be singled out for special praise in a cast of general excellence”.<sup>39</sup>

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1 *Auckland Star* 11 January 1913.

2 *Star* 9 January 1913.

3 *The Scotsman* 22 December 1902.

4 *Pall Mall Gazette* 29 December 1902.

5 *Tablet* 17 January 1903.

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- 6 *NZ Herald* 21 September 1905.
  - 7 *Globe* 8 September 1905.
  - 8 *Era* 16 December 1905.
  - 9 *NZ Herald* 2 October 1906.
  - 10 *Era* 1 September 1906.
  - 11 *NZ Times* 6 October 1906.
  - 12 As reported in the *Opunake Times* 9 October 1906.
  - 13 *NZ Herald* 20 October 1906.
  - 14 *Daily Telegraph* (Sydney) 10 October 1906.
  - 15 *Dundee Evening Telegraph* 21 September 1906.
  - 16 *Stage* 28 February 1907
  - 17 *Otago Daily Times* 29 November 1907.
  - 18 *Western Morning News* 15 October 1907.
  - 19 *London Evening Standard* 15 October 1907.
  - 20 *Manchester Courier and Lancashire General Advertiser* 15 October 1907.
  - 21 *Referee* 20 October 1907.
  - 22 *Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News* 30 November 1907.
  - 23 *Referee* 9 February 1908.
  - 24 *Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News* 15 February 1908.
  - 25 *Stage* 12 March 1908.
  - 26 *Stage* 19 March 1908.
  - 27 *Era* 4 April 1908.
  - 28 *Morning Post* 22 September 1908.
  - 29 *Sporting Life* 10 September 1909.
  - 30 *Era* 27 November 1909.
  - 31 *Era* 22 January 1910.
  - 32 *Era* 5 February 1910.
  - 33 *Era* 30 July 1910.
  - 34 *Stage* 6 October 1910.
  - 35 *Globe* 28 November 1910.
  - 36 *Stage* 24 November 1910.
  - 37 *Queen* 3 December 1910.
  - 38 *Music Hall and Theatre Review* 20 July 1911.
  - 39 *Stage* 20 July 1911.

### Chapter 3: George Desmond

In March 1912 Madame Pavlova and the Russian ballet troupe performed in Leeds,

As an exposition of the possibilities of the arts of pantomime and dancing in their highest aspect, it was a revelation to all who had not before witnessed the performances of these consummate artists. The expression "the poetry of motion" is often on our lips.... Mdm. Pavlova's mimetic art reveals the full meaning of the expression. She acts with every muscle of her body, her whole being seems to vibrate in accord with every pulse of the music. And it not mere response to the rhythmical beats dance measure, though this, of course, is present, but a response to its whole mood.... Most charming all, perhaps, was Rubinstein's brilliant Valse Caprice, on which a dance was based which displayed to the fullest advantage Madame Pavlova's willowy figure and lithe grace. It was the most delightful fantasy in music and movement that could well be imagined, and roused the audience to tremendous enthusiasm....

The remainder of the programme consisted of a harmless and agreeable little curtain-raiser, pleasantly acted by Miss Marjorie Day and Mr. G. Desmond....<sup>1</sup>

George Thomas Murphy aka George Desmond was born in Limehouse, London in 1881, the son of George Murphy, wine merchant. He attended the Neville Dramatic Studio and as an advanced student in July 1898 played Victor Dubois in *Ici on parle Français*, when he was "completely successful by a careful adherence to the mannerisms and accent of the Gallic nation."<sup>2</sup> He played "fairly well" at the drama school again in January 1899,<sup>3</sup> "acquitted himself well" in April<sup>4</sup> and "was good" in July<sup>5</sup> when he "grappled, not unsuccessfully, with the

many difficulties of the rather old fashioned comedy part of Stephen Poppincourt” (in *The Little Rebel*).<sup>6</sup>

His first role after training was in *A Night Out* at the Royal in Gloucester in September 1899.

George Desmond continued on the London and provincial stages in various roles thereafter. He played in *The Captain of the School* at Bournemouth’s Theatre Royal in February 1911, when,

The life and soul of the play is Mr. George Desmond, who gives a fine portrayal of the lighthearted and popular “Captain”.<sup>7</sup>

The first press notice of his appearing with Marjorie Day was in a “harmless and agreeable little curtain-raiser” to the Russian ballet in March. Then this,

Mr. George Desmond, who is looking after Mme. Pavlova's interests on tour this autumn for Mr. Daniel Mayer, was married on Monday to Miss Marjorie Day. Miss Day will be remembered for her Essie in *The Devil's Disciple*.<sup>8</sup>

The *New Zealand Herald* reported,

On September 9 the marriage is to take place of Miss Marjorie Day (Auckland) and Mr. George Desmond. Miss Day came to London about ten years ago to study for the stage. She still follows the theatrical profession, and she has no intention of giving it up, for immediately after the marriage she will go on tour.<sup>9</sup>

He was 30, she 25 and they were living at 7a South Villas NW London. They were married in the St Paul’s church, St Pancras, where her grandfather William Earle Jennings had married Mary Anne Green in 1848.

At the Pavlova concert in Hull in December,

“The House that Jack Built” is a slight but charming one-act play in which Miss Marie (*sic*) Day and Mr. Geo. Desmond appear.<sup>10</sup>

The couple went on tour with Mme Pavlova and the company, to Liverpool, Bristol, Glasgow and Newcastle.

In October 1912 Marjorie Day took the lead role at the Criterion Theatre in a new three-act comedy by Sir Frank Stayton called *Tantrums*. It was a modern take on *The Taming of the Shrew* and for the most part the critics greeted it with bored disdain. The *Tatler* almost damned with its faint praise,

THERE is always a demand for a light "nine-o'clock" play, and in Mr. Frank Stayton's new farce, *Tantrums*, there are intimate possibilities. On the first night the pit and gallery laughed uproariously, and even the stalls tittered. There is no subtleness in the humour; most of it concerns a kind of absurd modern Katherine being tamed by an equally ridiculous modern Petruchio, and among their various encounters are scattered jokes concerning omelettes made with bad eggs and bay rum, beefsteaks like leather, soup made anyhow of everything, and so forth and so on. We have heard it all before, but to some people even the stalest jokes manage to appear fresh. Therefore because *Tantrums* is amusing on the whole, admirably acted, and full of a ridiculous, obvious, but thoroughly good-natured and harmless humour, it should be a success. Miss Marjorie Day as the girl who was the terror of her family, who bit her *fiancé* and nearly killed him with her cooking when she married him, was deliciously irritating in her tantrums and bright and taking in her quieter moments. As her husband, the absurd American who married her and tried to tame her, Mr. Charles Maude gave the *rôle* a semblance of reality which added enormously to the success of the farce. Mr. O. B. Clarence as the father of the hoyden disappeared

all too quickly. His clever sketch of the girl's weak and genial old father was excellent. Admirable, too, was Miss Christine Silver as the girl's sister. The reception was very favourable, and providing you do not look for much originality or wit *Tantrums* will provide you with a really jolly evening at this comfortable little playhouse.<sup>11</sup>

William Haselden, whose gentle, conservative social caricatures reflected middle-class fashions and manners, drew them for *Punch*,



MR. CHARLES MAUDE (*Vansittart*) to MISS MAJORIE DAY (*Virginia*). "Isn't it just bully the way the author scores off the other fellow who wrote *The Taming of the Shrew*? Shakespeare's *Petruchio* never thought of disconnecting the telephone!"

The *Pall Mall Gazette* showed the gowns,



Gowns worn by Miss Marjorie Day and Miss Christine Silver in Act II. and III. of "Tantrums," at the Criterion. (See Fashion Article.)

*Pall Mall Gazette* 23 October 1912.

## A Modern Katharina <sup>and</sup> her Tame Petruchio



Miss Marjorie Day and Mr. Charles Munde in "Tarrance," the new wife-taming play at the Criterion. (We offer no prize to the glib reader for guessing which of the two is the tamer and which the tamed.)

The *Bystander* 6 November 1912.





TEARS AT THE CRI

Our photograph depicts Miss Marjorie Day and Mr. Charles Maude, who are taking the parts of Virginia Vansittart and Charles Vansittart respectively in that successful play, "Tantrums," at the Criterion

The *Tatler* 6 November 1912.

**CRITERION.** Tel. Ger. 3844  
 TO-NIGHT at 8  
**TANTRUMS.** By Frank Scayton.  
 MARJORIE DAY.  
 CHRISTINE SILVER. G. E. CLARENCE.  
 CHARLES MAUDE.  
 At 5.30. "The Fortune Tellers."  
 MATINEE WEDNESDAYS and SATURDAYS at 2.30.

Marjorie Day was now a successful leading lady in the West End: it was time for some serious photographs. There are two sets of whole plate glass negatives dated 1913 in the National Portrait Gallery in London, taken by the photographer Alexander Bassano who had photographed her in 1906.





Portraits by Alexander Bassano, 1906. National Portrait Gallery, London.





Marjorie next appeared as Jenny Blashford in Rudyard Kipling's play *Harbour Watch* at the Royalty Theatre in September 1913. The *Tatler* summed it up,

*The Harbour Watch...* might have been written by anybody who looked upon human passions in a simple direct way and whose humour was broad and removed from anything subtle.<sup>12</sup>

Her next was *Peter's Reputation* at Tunbridge Wells in February 1914.

**A NEW PRODUCTION**

**Tunbridge Wells Opera House.**

*SPECIAL MATINEE*

**SATURDAY, FEB. 28, 1914, at 2.30 p.m.,**

**PETER'S REPUTATION.**

A Comedy in Four Acts, by **CYRIL COX.**

**MR. RICHARD NEVILLE as Clare Warrington,  
MISS MARJORIE DAY as Stella Coryden.**



“MISS MARJORY DAY who plays the part of Stella Corydon on “Peter’s Reputation.” (Photo “Daily Mirror’ Studio.”

*Kent & Sussex Courier*  
20 February 1914

The *Kent & Sussex Courier* was looking forward to the play,

Mr. Cyril Cox's play, which to form the staple entertainment, is a comedy in four acts, called "Peter's Reputation." We hear that the plot introduces two militant Suffragettes, whose manoeuvres place the reputation of the unfortunate Peter in serious jeopardy, and place Peter himself in some screamingly funny situations. A more serious interest is provided by the mental conflict in the mind of the heroine between the rival claims of the "Cause" and the man she loves. Which of the two prevails we shall learn hereafter.<sup>13</sup>

The *Era* critic enjoyed it,

Miss Marjorie Day as Stella made the most of many humorous passages as well as of dramatic moments which the comedy contains. Her acting throughout was of a high order of merit.<sup>14</sup>

She was one of "a number of ladies will sell programmes and chocolates in aid of the Royal Matinee Fund" when the King and Queen visited the Palladium on the afternoon of Tuesday, March 17, for the variety performance in aid of the Chelsea Hospital for Women.<sup>15</sup>

These were successful years but they must have been a difficult time for Marjorie. Her brother Eric had married in 1909 and he and Elizabeth had had a child who died in infancy; she herself married in September 1912; her father died five weeks later; and her grandfather John Bellenie Day died in June 1914.

George Desmond had been appearing at various West End theatres over the last few years and in 1914 both he and Marjorie were named in the cast of *The Story of the Rosary* which would open in New York at the Manhattan Opera House in September.<sup>16</sup>

They left Tilbury on 15 August on the Atlantic Transport Line's s.s. *Minnewaska* and opened on 8 September. The *New York Times* review was masterly,

If ye have tears, prepare to shed them now. If ye have laughter prepare to laugh, and if ye have hisses, prepare to hiss to your heart's content. For "The Story of the Rosary," the most romantic melodrama which has been seen in New York since the days of "The Lights of London" and "The Ticket of Leave Man"—the old days when you, Mr. Tired Business Man, sat in the theatre, so high above the stage that the shadow of your nose was on your forehead—has come to town.

"The Story of the Rosary" began its engagement, which is sure to last many months, at the Manhattan Opera House last night under the direction of Comstock and Gest, who gave us "The Whip." There is more laughter and more tears and more places to hiss the villain than in the former success at the Manhattan, and at the end of the second act last night, when Virtue was down on its luck and Vice was sailing along in the clouds with little chance of coming a cropper before 11:30 P.M. there wasn't a dry eye anywhere in the theatre.

A moment later when Vice, in the person of the dashing, red-coated but villainous Captain, took his curtain call there were hisses enough to fairly shake the walls of the big theatre. And then, when one of the heroes—there were two of 'em, which, in the end, made it doubly hard for Vice—came out the nails or the spikes, or whatever they are that hold down the roof of the Manhattan, got an awful strain trying to do their duty despite the applause.

"The Story of the Rosary" is melodrama of the old, old school. "Curse you, Philip Romain!" occurs more than once during the four acts and twelve scenes which make up the play, and "Rags are royal raiment when

worn for virtue's sake" is paraphrased in half a dozen different but unmistakable forms. In the end, a trifle late it was last night, the hero and his assistant get in their work, and Paul Romain, the poor but honest officer of the Red Dragoons, runs his sword into the red coat of his villainous cousin Philip and then finds his way into the arms of his sweetheart, who happened also to be his wife.

In the play Paul and Philip are brother officers in the Red Dragoons, and war has just been declared. Philip gets first chance to ask for the hand of the Princess Venetia Sabran. Being the villain, he receives the mitten in no unmistakable terms, but he tells his cousin that he has won, and Cousin Paul determines to go away without telling the Princess good-bye. The young woman, whose father is in the power of the wicked Captain, having gambled away his fortune, finds out that she has been misrepresented just before the Dragoons start for the front and she acts promptly, with the result that she is hurriedly led to the altar by Paul, who immediately afterward dashes away to join his company, and, incidentally, to get shot and be buried, supposedly with the unknown dead. Of course he never was dead, and, not being dead, was never buried, but he remains away for an act and a half, and then comes back a year later, just as his fellow officers are drinking to his memory in a splendidly staged mess hall scene. After that the rest is easy.

The play gets its name because "The Rosary" makes splendid trembly music for the big orchestra to play all during the sad scenes, and because the Princess gave her Captain-husband a rosary to wear before he left her at the church door and dashed away to fight for the country. It might easily have been called anything else, which would not have mattered in the least.

# STORY OF THE ROSARY' A GOOD MELODRAMA

In Spite of Its Title It Is Not  
Very Religious, but Has  
Thrills Aplenty.

WAR AND ROMANCE IN IT.

Also a Princess, a Hero and a Villain,  
All Very Well  
Acted.

"THE STORY OF THE ROSARY," by Walter  
Howard, at Manhattan Opera House.

Paul Romain.....	Alfred Faunier
Philip Romain.....	James Barry
Colonel Hildebrand.....	Ernest Leicester
Major Hellenbro.....	Arthur Walton
Major Ullric.....	Ernest C. Davis
Surgeon-Captain Helgar.....	Norman Fitzgerald
Captain Gezeler.....	Frank Hewitt
Captain Esterhazy.....	C. Melville-Hastings
Captain Lindorf.....	Leonard Spencer
Captain Othmar.....	Douglas Stephens
Captain Klan.....	Sydney Wilson
Lieutenant Peterkin.....	George Desmond
Lieutenant Hillstein.....	A. Hinton
Lieutenant Sarona.....	Edward Seymour
Lieutenant Reinhardt.....	T. A. Chappell
Lieutenant Wellenberg.....	Ernest Blythe
Lieutenant Kursburg.....	Roy T. Lockwood
Trumpeter Swartz.....	Philip Russell
Prooper Smutz.....	Thomas Hinton
Karl Larose.....	Walter Howard
Prince Sabran.....	J. E. Martin
Winkelstein.....	Philip Gordon
Father Theodore.....	Chris Walker
Wilhelmina.....	Marjorie Day
The Mother Superior.....	Laura Hansen
Una Hillstein.....	Ethelfreda Taaffe
Venella Sebran.....	Annie Baker

Walter Howard, who wrote the play, appeared in it as Karl Larose, the assistant hero, who sometimes was as much in the glare of the spot light as Alfred Paumier, the chief hero in the role of Capt. Paul Romain. Both men were excellent, as was James Berry, the villain, who had to go it alone against the other two. Annie Baker, as the wife who waited for her soldier-husband to come home a whole year, and who almost lost him by preparing to become a nun late in the fourth act, did good work, and Marjorie Day was a charming and delightful daughter of the Colonel of the regiment. The comedy was furnished by George Desmond, who played a young sprig of a Lieutenant in love with that young lady.

The entire company is English. The play has been elaborately staged and averages about a thrill a minute, with several thrown in for good measure in the battle scene, which is very realistic. As has been remarked before, "The Story of the Rosary" runs until 1130, and you can figure out for yourself that there are quite a number of thrills.

"The Story of the Rosary" is well worth seeing—but don't forget to take along two or three extra handkerchiefs when you go. You'll need them.<sup>17</sup>

George Desmond and Marjory Day played "a pair of comic, youthful lovers."<sup>18</sup>

George Desmond, as a young lieutenant who was madly in love with his commanding officer's pretty daughter, scored a real comedy hit, and the audience was quick to follow his example and capitulate to Mena, who, as played by Miss Margery Day, was not graceful but exceedingly piquant.<sup>19</sup>

They played at the Lyric Theater in Philadelphia and the Belasco Theater in Washington:

Incidental to the major theme there runs a lighter thread telling the less complicated tale of the courtship of Lieut. Peterkin, of Mina, the colonel's daughter, a thread of small consequence to the ruling passion of the piece and worthy of comment only because, aside from the principals, the roles of the Lieutenant and Mena, played, respectively, by George Desmond and Marjorie Day, furnish the comedy relief of the tense drama and are excellently portrayed. Mr. Desmond is a comedian of no mean ability and Miss Day a winsome ingénue.<sup>20</sup>

They played in Buffalo, Detroit, Cincinnati, Pittsburgh, Baltimore; in April 1915 they were in Montreal, and by August Desmond was playing in *Ready Money* back in London.<sup>21</sup>

In November 1915 Desmond deputised for James Welch in the comedy *A Little Bit of Fluff* at the Criterion. One critic wrote,

In some mysterious way it seemed to get hold of nearly everybody present while I sat and wondered. When the audience were not unaccountably roaring with delight over what was happening on the stage, they were roaring, more accountably, over the strange, wild joy of one particular gentleman whose laughter was so uncontrollable that it was impossible not to join in it. And so, with a good start and the assistance of this most valuable member of the audience (who should be sought out and given free tickets by every manager) everybody was worked up into such a condition that you had but to say "Pass the mustard" and they roared their ribs out. And I just wondered why, but it was no use wondering. After all, a farce is there to make people laugh, and if they laugh, there's no need to ask why. Mr. Welch could perhaps have made something of his own part had he been there. It was played by a gentleman Mr. George Desmond who was vigorous and straightforward, but entirely lacking in subtlety or any comic spirit but this

did not seem to matter in the least. He lied to his wife about an evening out and a pearl necklace, and from the sounds heard on all sides you would have thought that the funniest things were happening that the world had ever seen. He brought in a meek and virtuous friend to help him in his lies, and life had apparently nothing more gloriously witty to offer.<sup>22</sup>



Thomas Downey's caricature of George Desmond, *Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News* 20 November 1915.

#### ACTOR JOINS UP.



Mr. George Desmond, who leaves the cast of "A Little Bit of Fluff" tonight and joins the Motor-Machine Gun Company.

From the *Daily Mirror* 1 July 1916.

Perhaps there was no connection but six months later George Desmond left the cast of *A Little Bit of Fluff* to join the army.



George Desmond in *A Little Bit of Fluff*

Meanwhile Marjorie had been cast in *What a Bargain* at the Coliseum,



*Sunday Pictorial* 27 February 1916.

**'WHAT A BARGAIN.'**



*Daily Mirror* 2 February 1916

Miss Marjorie Day, who will play in Mr. James Webb's new sketch, "What a Bargain," at the Coliseum on Monday.—(Claude Harris.)



The *People's* review was typical of several others,

There seems a tendency among some members the “legitimate” to think that a trifle the slighter it is makes a special appeal to variety audiences. In our opinion this view does not evince the soundest judgment. The effect is but a passing one with the audience and soon fades from their memory. This is the fault of James Welch’s new playlet, “The Bargain Hunter.” The idea of a wife buying up any amount of second-hand furniture in order to secure a coveted prize is not too original, but Mr. Welch and Marjorie Day made the best of bricks without straw, with the result that laughter prevailed.<sup>23</sup>

She and James Welch went on to the Palladium in another sketch, *The Man in the Street*.<sup>24</sup>

But since February 1916 Marjorie Day had been advertising her “professional card” in the film journal the *Bioscope*, named after the reliable projector produced by one Charles Urban.

		SCENARIO
<b>BRYANT,</b> Sweet Lavender A ROAD, N.W.	<b>MISS KATE PHILLIPS,</b> c/o H. BYRON WEBBER, 12, STRICKLAND STREET, W.	<b>MR. T. GIDE</b> Plays and Novels at Box 579, c/o 83, SHAFESBU
<b>G. PAXTON</b> 10 <b>PAXTON,</b> 10 ROAD, ILL. S.W.	<b>MISS MARJORIE DAY,</b> 16, LONG ACRE, W.C. Gerrard 4004	<b>MR. ARTHUR</b> (Author of "My Old Wife," "Tom YUEN, TE
<b>E. TULLY,</b> 111, W.C.	<b>MISS BESSIE FREEMAN,</b> 4, ELM ROAD, WIMBORNE, MIDDLESEX.	<b>MR. R. BYRON</b> (Scenario) 12, GERRARD "Phone: Gerrard 2901.

She had more than the “legitimate” stage in mind and was looking towards the movies.

There is no further mention of her and George Desmond's names together on stage after 1916, though in January 1928, when the Globe staged *Sexes and Sevens* ("rather a naughty play") in aid of the Green Room Club's Fund,

... the programme sellers included such well-known players as Miss Cicely Courtneige, Evelyn Dene, Marjorie Day, Gertrude Laurence.... and the stewards— Messrs. George Desmond, Arthur Eldred....<sup>25</sup>

In 1929 Marjorie Murphy petitioned for divorce from George Thomas Murphy.<sup>26</sup> In 1930 George Desmond married the actress Billie Hill, born in Lambeth in 1895. He died in 1969, she in 1984.

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1 *Yorkshire Post and Leeds Intelligencer* 5 March 1912.

2 *Era* 9 July 1898.

3 *Stage* 12 January 1899.

4 *Era* 22 April 1899.

5 *Stage* 13 July 1899.

6 *Era* 15 July 1899.

7 *Bournemouth Graphic* 17 February 1911.

8 *Stage* 12 September 1912.

9 *NZ Herald* 7 October 1912.

10 *Hull Daily Mail* 1 October 1912.

11 *Tatler* 30 October 1912.

12 *Tatler* 30 April 1913.

13 *Kent & Sussex Courier* 13 February 1914.

14 *Era* 4 March 1914

15 *Pall Mall Gazette* 4 March 1914.

16 *Era* 15 July 1914.

17 *New York Times* 8 September 1914.

18 *Evening Public Ledger* (Philadelphia) 7 November 1914.

19 *New York Tribune* 9 September 1914.

20 *Washington Herald* 24 Nov 1914.

21 *Observer* 1 August 1915.

22 *Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News* 6 November 1915.

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23 *People* 13 February 1916.

24 *Era* 15 March 1916.

25 *Stage* 19 January 1928.

26 Divorce Court File: 3873. Appellant: Marjorie Murphy. Respondent:  
George Thomas Murphy. Type: Wife's petition for divorce [WD]. UK  
National Archives Catalogue reference: J 77/2701/3873

## Chapter 4: in the movies

Marjorie Day was a redhead with “big hair” and she was looking for work in monochrome black and white; her acting talent had been proved.

Her *Bioscope* card of 11 May 1916 now stated her association with the London Film Company.



The company was a major film producer during the First World War. It constructed the Twickenham Studios, the biggest in Britain, but after 1916 they were rented to other companies as film making slowed to a halt.

Marjorie Day played Alice in one London Film Company movie, *When Knights Were Bold*, released in May 1916, in which a commoner inherits a title and wins a lady after dreaming of medieval days.



The *Bioscope* 11 May 1916.

Maurice Elvey directed the film and Gerald Ames, Marjorie Day and Gwynne Herbert starred. It was based on the 1906 play *When Knights Were Bold* by Harriett Jay. The *Bioscope* was enthusiastic,

There is no more popular comedian than Mr. James Welch, and his delightful humour has never been seen to greater advantage than in Charles Marlowe's whimsical farce, which for quite a considerable number of years has enjoyed a popularity which shows no signs of abatement. "When Knights Were Bold," with its lively bustling comedy and great scope for pictorial setting, is an excellent subject for the film, and the version produced by Mr. Maurice Elvey for the London Film Company, and shown by Messrs. Jury's Imperial Pictures was received at the West End Cinema with unqualified

approval. The producer was fortunate in securing the privilege of making use of Warwick and Kenilworth Castles in the setting of his comedy, and so has obtained scenes of great beauty and historic interest which also add immensely to the congruity and humour of the farce. The first view of these magnificent relics of mediaeval times creates an impression which at once excites keen interest in what is to follow. The grand view of Warwick Castle should, we think, come first; as the picture of Kenilworth seems a somewhat cheerless habitation for a shooting party, we thought it might account for the cold in the head which was the cause of Sir Guy's tribulations. The walls and terraces of this glorious building are employed with splendid effect, and the beautiful surrounding country has been used to great advantage. The story of the play has been followed closely, and the humour of its situations and much of its dialogue skilfully preserved, while the more spacious setting provides opportunities for many effective scenes which add greatly to its interest. Sir Guy's reception by his mediaeval retainers, the flight of the Lady Rowena and the onslaught of Sir Brian with his mailclad warriors, form striking pictures, and the terrific combat between the two knights, on their unwieldy battlehorses is admirable in its burlesque. So also is the chase of Sir Brian over the battlements and towers of the castle, though its continuation after the craven knight's descent from the chimney seems a little long-drawn-out. Mr. Welch invests the part with all that quaint humour which distinguished his original performance and again succeeds in securing a sympathetic affection from his audience which is not always accorded to the inglorious hero of farce. He is supported by a strong company in which Mr. Gerald Ames as Sir Brian, Mr. Douglas Munro as Isaacson, and Miss Marjorie Day as the pretty

maid servant, are particularly effective. The film version of "When Knights Were Bold " promises to be even more widely popular than the stage version.<sup>1</sup>

In 1917 she went to Mirror Films, a British company formed by Adrian Brunel and the screenwriter H. Fowler Mear. They made only one film, *The Cost of a Kiss* which Brunel directed and in which Bertram Wallis, Marjorie Day and the recently married Edward Cooper and Ethel Griffies starred. It was Brunel's first feature film and he became a leading British director of the 1920s. In the film, mostly set in Madrid, a Lord atones for the misdeeds of his dissolute father.

The Mirror Film Co.'s production, "The Cost of a Kiss," in which Mr. Bertram Wallis and Miss Marjorie Day play the leading parts, is a five-reel romantic drama of the Vendetta. This is Mr. Wallis's first appearance on the screen—the only branch of dramatic art in which he has not hitherto appeared. After playing in Shakespeare, comedy, light opera, musical comedy, pantomime, revue, on the halls and concert platform, this artiste has now followed in the footsteps of so many of his colleagues, and will soon make his bow to the public from the screen. Miss Day requires no introduction to the Picture public, and her performance in this production should considerably enhance her already great reputation.<sup>2</sup>

"I hear," whispered the *Bioscope* columnist "Dangle" in May, "of another British production which is well under way, if not actually completed, with such popular players as Madge Titherage, Lilian Braithwaite, Marjorie Day, and George Tully in the cast. The scenario is based upon a work of a very well-known writer, and the name of the producer is a household word with all lovers of British films."

Indeed, Marjorie Day's third film was the 1917 *The woman who was nothing* directed by Maurice Elvey for the British production company Butchers Film Service and based on a novel by Tom Gallon. Lilian Braithwaite, Madge Titheradge, George Tully and Leon M Lion starred, with Marjorie Day as Hope Dacre. An ex-convict takes the identity of a dying heiress and is loved by a fortune hunter, who reforms and thwarts a blackmailer.

... A powerful cast indeed.... The Camera man deserves special mention. This is melodrama of the "popular" kind. All the characters are, or have been bad lots, excepting the heiress, who, killed in a railway accident, insists on the "Innocent One" impersonating her and claiming a vast fortune. This wealth is non-existent, the heiress's trustee having misappropriated all her inheritance. It is remarkable how much interest is felt in a set of people who are really anything but virtuous. This is due to good acting mainly.<sup>3</sup>



From *The Woman who was Nothing*: *The Bioscope* 28 January 1917.

Marjorie toured the provinces with the stage play *Damaged goods*, a translation of the play *Les Aviaires* by Eugène Brieux, throughout 1918 and 1919. The “hero,” George, catches a sexually transmitted disease from a prostitute. He is engaged to Henrietta, and though his doctor warns him not to marry, he does so and the baby is born affected by the disease, causing unsurprising marital discord. The baby recovers after being sent to the country and the couple end up happy—romantic optimism but medical nonsense of course.

The *Bognor Regis Observer* approved of the play’s moral lesson,

There will be an especially great attraction at the Pier Theatre next Monday Tuesday, and Wednesday, with a matinee on Wednesday, when that enormously successful and educational play “Damaged Goods,” by Eugene Brieux, will be presented. It is certainly a play that every thinking man and woman should see, and it may open the eyes of a very considerable number people to the incredible ignorance which prevails in this country about a horrible scourge which does so much to sap the life blood of nations. Therefore, in common with most of the medical faculty, and almost all the leading scientists and ecclesiastics, we welcome the production of Brieux’s famous and powerful play, which deals faithfully and effectually with this hidden plague in our midst. Here is a play which is as fine a sermon as any in the world; poignant and dramatic, but its message is one of sympathy and hope. It will terrify no one; it will at least help to prevent some of those tragedies that lie behind “I didn’t know.” The cast is a specially selected one, including Frank E. Petley, Gervaise Hardy. Misses Minnie Terry, Marjorie Day, and Amy Ravenscroft.<sup>4</sup>

The *Worthing Gazette*, deluded, perhaps, into thinking adolescents don’t have sex, announced, “Admission will be

conceded to adults only at the Theatre on the last three nights of the present week. The occasion is the presentation of that remarkable propaganda play, *Damaged Goods*....”<sup>5</sup>

The *Acton Gazette* preached thundrously,

No sermon, literary work, or lecture could do so much to bring home to an ignorant or indifferent public the terrible consequences of a great social evil as does Brieux's much-discussed play, "Damaged Goods," which is due at the King's Theatre next week. The subject with which it deals caused the play for a period to be placed under the ban of the Censor, and no right thinking members of the community will regret, in the interests of the nation generally, that the ban was subsequently removed, and that there was pointed from the footlights the finger of warning against the grave and awful danger which is sapping the life-blood of our manhood. Bare as are laid the terrible consequences of the great hidden Plague, there is not a line in the piece that can offend, and the audience is always obviously impressed by the great moral purpose of the play. "Damaged Goods" has succeeded more than anything else in removing from the eyes the scales of ignorance which have been so largely responsible for the cankerous growth of the secret disease. The pathetic figure of the patient, as he learns the terrible truth in the doctor's consulting-room, arouses an intense interest at the very outset, and as the consequences of his folly are later seen in the fulfilment of the Divine decree that the sins of the father shall be visited upon the child, the immediate effect of the evil is revealed.<sup>6</sup>

The *Rochdale Observer* brought in the 1916 Royal Commission on Venereal Diseases,

A compelling lesson in moral pathology, it has won its way through the obstacles of old time prudery and false shame to public performance in this country at the most momentous public period of the world's history. None the less, only infinite tact and the keenest artistic perception, combined with observation of the essential unities of expression, could ever have achieved popular success with such a play and on such a subject. That this success has already been achieved in this country by the genius of the author and the merit of the actor, the huge nightly audiences in every town already visited bear eloquent witness. "Damaged Goods" is a powerful sermon. It touches with urgency and good sense all the points which have come under discussion before the Royal Commission. The sincerity of treatment removes all occasion of offence, and gives the message of the play a driving force which it could never otherwise have had. It is poignant and dramatic, but full of sympathy and of hope. The company is a particularly strong, one, under the direction Mr. J Bernard Fagan, who first produced the play in England, and includes Frank E. Petley, Noel Dainton, J. A. Bentham, Misses Minnie Terry, Marjorie Day, and Amy Ravenscroft. There will be a matinee next week on Saturday.<sup>7</sup>

Moral indignation from the *Northern Whig*, however,

French authors and French audiences have a different convention from ours as to what is or is not suitable for the stage. Hence M. Brioux's famous play was less startling to a French than a British audience. The author was obviously fired with all the zeal of a propagandist who believed he could only gain and hold the attention of the public by startling it. But, however true the details may be, and however necessary the moral, it must still be held that certain subjects are not fitted for portrayal

on the stage—or the British stage at any rate....

Miss Marjorie Day was very dainty and charming as the wife first so happy and then so bitterly disillusioned.<sup>8</sup>

“Miss Marjorie Day was sweet and girlish as the wife,” said the *Dundee Evening Telegraph*.<sup>9</sup> “An actress of undeniable talent,” wrote the *Derbyshire Advertiser and Journal*.<sup>10</sup>

The *Yarmouth Independent* seemed unaware of the paradox in its euphemism: “This play was evidently... written by Brieux... as a denunciation of pretence and of the cloaking of a subject which is rendered infinitely more serious and dangerous by being neglected through lack of courage.... Bare as are laid the terrible consequences of the great hidden plague....<sup>11</sup>

The great hidden plague. The love that shall have no name, indeed. Still hidden.

*Damaged Goods* was made into a film in late 1919, directed by Alexander Butler for the Samuelson Film Manufacturing Company, and starring Campbell Gullan, Marjorie Day (as Henrietta Louches) and J. Fisher White. It was of course a controversial film, faced censorship, but was also assessed as a masterpiece.



In the forthcoming film version of Brieux’s striking play “*Damaged Goods*,” Miss Marjorie Day, who has had a long association with this play, has been secured for the part of the Wife. Miss Day has made several successful appearances on the screen, and has proved that her very charming personality is perfectly suited to the medium of the camera....<sup>12</sup>



Marjorie Day and Bassett Roe in *Damaged Goods*:  
The *Bioscope* 18 December 1919.



From *Damaged Goods*: “Miss Marjorie Day gives a charming picture of the young wife, emphasising the fresh, youthful beauty of the part.”

The *Bioscope* 25 December 1919.

THE BIOSCOPE

**Nearing**  
Samuelson  
**Completion**  
Production

**DAMAGED GOODS**

The Great Play on the Social Evil  
by **BRIEUX**

FISHER WHITE, CAMPBELL GILLAN, MARJORIE DAY, BASSETT ROE, RITA BICARDDO, ANNIE ESTWOOD, HELEN STAINTON.



Fisher White  
as the Doctor



Marjorie Day  
as the Wife




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**THE ROYAL FILM AGENCY,**  
28, DENMARK, STREET,  
LONDON, W. C. 2.

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Two page advertisement for *Damaged Goods*:  
The Bioscope 16 October 1919.

In January 1920 the film version of *The Story of the Rosary* was released, Percy Nash director, Harry B Parkinson producer for the British Master Film Company. Marjory Day played Princess Venetia.

The *Bioscope* of 5 February 1920 panned it.

... this picture is chiefly notable as a record of missed opportunities.... The film version is but a grey ghost of its original—meagre as a spectacle, tepid in feeling, disjointed in development and monotonously long.

The poor results obtained are the more surprising when one considers the possibilities of the material. To a producer of imagination, Ruritania is the happiest of settings. As a story, Mr. Howard's play is full of effective situations and boldly-drawn, human characters. The plot is comparatively free from the wilder improbabilities and exaggerations of ordinary melodrama, and is intrinsically singularly well suited for sympathetic treatment on the screen.

Instead of giving us a stirring, gaily coloured drama of dashing heroism and passionate romance, however, Mr. Nash presents a stilted, unreal novelette which drags itself painfully across the screen without

life or inspiration. He makes virtually no effort to create a distinctive, foreign atmosphere in his Strelisian scenes, most of which seem to have been taken, as will be fairly obvious to Londoners, in the neighbourhood of Box Hill. The terrors of revolution are represented by the rush of a handful of supers up a palpably English back street. Although Mr. Rowden appears to have written a fairly skilful, if slightly disjointed scenario, the situations it provides have been handled in so lifeless a manner that their potential thrills are for the most part dissipated.

The fact that one can feel little interest in either the story or the characters is not the fault of the players who, so far as they are permitted, make the most of the small opportunities accorded them. Charles Vane's strong personality lends dignity to the figure of Prince Sabran. Marjorie Day gives an unusually excellent performance as the murdered Princess in the few glimpses we have of her. Malvina Longfellow is not very happily cast as the youthful, romantic Venetia, but she acts with grace if without much feeling. Dick Webb and Cameron Carr play with spirit as Venetia's lover and his friend, whilst Frank Tennant plays the vaguely villainous Phillip with energy on conventional melodramatic lines.

From the exhibitor's point of view, the strongest feature of "The Story of the Rosary" is the great reputation of Mr. Howard's original. We fear, however, that the most tolerant audience will find this production but a poor substitute for the stage version.<sup>13</sup>

Marjorie's professional "card" was filling out,



In March she was in a revival of Kipling's *Harbour Watch* at the Hippodrome in Manchester<sup>14</sup> and in May a revival of *Within the Law* at the Kingsway, then at the Aldwych.<sup>15</sup> The *Scotsman* thought it "full of strong situations, ingenious in its complications, and agreeably satirical,"

The other players deserving mention were Miss Marjorie Day as a pert young "crook" attempting to become a

"lydy," and Mr Harold Anstruther as a scheming and quickwitted solicitor. May we suggest to the gentleman who played the part of a Chief Inspector of Scotland Yard that Chief Inspectors do not keep their hats on in a lady's drawing room, even when they are thinking of arresting her. Why hurt the feelings of the Yard by this baseless slander upon its good manners?<sup>16</sup>

The *Pall Mall Gazette* "felt that the time for this 'crook' play stuff is over," but

There is some very hopeful work in the company, particularly from Miss Marjorie Day, who does her best to replace Miss Mabel Russell as Agnes, the blackmailing demi-lady. If she does not quite succeed, she makes, at any rate, very good try....<sup>17</sup>

Others were less kind,

The role of Agnes Lynch was played by Miss Marjorie Day, who, however, attempted little more than an emphatic underscoring of that vulgar person's slang. Some of that slang was tolerable once or twice, but pallid by repetition. Such drama, however, with its unbalanced satire of law in general, is hardly suitable for the present time.<sup>18</sup>

And yet others more kind,

In addition to the thrilling study of the heroine by Miss Goodall, there were two notably fine pieces of acting by Dennis Wyndham as a sympathetic crook and Miss Marjorie Day as his prepossessing accomplice, who essayed with disastrous results to pass off as a fine lady.<sup>19</sup>

One of the successes of the performance is that made by Miss Marjorie Day in the role of Agnes Lynch, in which the Cockneyisms of Miss Mabel Russell used to be so irresistible. Miss Day, too, takes full advantage of the

opportunity afforded by a capitably-written part especially in the saucy young blackmailer's scenes....<sup>20</sup>

The *Bioscope* was all love,

I am glad to see that Miss Marjorie Day has scored a conspicuous success in Miss Edith Goodall's revival of "Within the Law," at the Kingsway Theatre. This will be no surprise to those who are familiar with Miss Day's varied and distinctive work on the stage, but her appearances on the screen have been chiefly in leading emotional parts very different from the type of cockney crook in which she has just made such a hit. Miss Day's sympathetic and charming performance of the young wife in "Damaged Goods" places her in the front rank of British screen stars.<sup>21</sup>

Furthermore,

Miss Marjorie Day looks altogether charming in her rose-pink taffetas dress. The tight-fitting bodice is finished with a narrow-drawn lace *modestie*. The skirt is arranged with an enormous bow at the back and *poufs* at the sides; pink silk stockings and black patent-leather shoes complete her toilette.<sup>22</sup>

Her next appearance was on stage in *The Right to Strike* in September 1920,

Miss Marjorie Day, whose charming performance as the young wife in the film version of "Damaged Goods" has recently attracted a host of admirers all over the country, scored a great personal success on the stage in the leading part in "The Right to Strike," at the Garrick Theatre Tuesday last. Miss Day has amply proved her right to strike successes both on screen and stage.<sup>23</sup>

The play came at a critical period of postwar industrial unrest in Britain: JT Grein in the *Illustrated London News*,

I for one came away elevated into that indefinable mood which the theatre can create when your whole being has been in action. It had affected me like Greek tragedy, with the difference of a happy ending. It is noble indeed: Strike! The old doctor's son killed by the strikers; there will be a tooth for a tooth—the doctors will strike too! The law may forbid it—but nature is stronger than law. The leader's wife is in labour. Shall she suffer for the cause of her man? "Yes," say the younger doctors. "No," says the stricken father, "I will tend her." But he is old; he dare not perform the supreme operation which may save the woman's life. There is only one who can do it—the young doctor who proclaimed his right to strike, and who was threatened to be struck off the register for his disobedience. But in the end, when the strike is over with compromise on both sides, he too relents. The call of humanity is greater than the cause of man. The play began a little slowly—one felt the novice's hand in the exposition; but thenceforward it unfolded with great power, with a delicate sense of balance. When the doctors declared a strike there was noise in the gallery—cries of dissent and assent. Towards the end of the play there reigned perfect harmony. The human chord had been struck, and vibrated in unison. We had heard both sides of the question, and the touch of nature had welded them into accord. The acting, too, was true, in the best sense of the word. We saw pictures from life. The agitator of Mr. Leon M. Lion; the young doctor of Mr. Charles Kenyon (terribly touching in his agony when he learned of his friend's death); the iron-cast striker of Mr. Lauderdale Maitland; the dry-as-dust yet humorous lawyer of Mr. F. B. J. Sharp; the magnificent company director of Mr. Bassett Roe; the tender father of Mr. Holman Clark; the sweet, bereaved bride of Miss Marjorie Day; yet others and others—they all went to

prove what our artists can do under producers who understand life. "The Right to Strike" will rank among the strike-plays of our time; it reaches the power of Octave Mirbeau's famous "Mauvais Bergers" without touching its inherent acerbity and desolation.<sup>24</sup>



Scenes from *The Right to Strike*.  
*Illustrated London News* 13 November 1920.





*Illustrated London News* 4 December 1920.

On 5 October 1920 Alexander Bassano took another set of photographic portraits... now of the mature 33 year old woman... the big hair (almost) contained in her floppy velvet hat... and Bette Davis eyes....



Marjorie Day, photograph by Alexander Bassano, 5 October 1920.  
National Portrait Gallery, London.



Marjorie Day, photograph by Alexander Bassano, 5 October 1920.  
National Portrait Gallery, London.



Marjorie Day, photograph by Alexander Bassano, 5 October 1920.  
National Portrait Gallery, London.

In July she was playing in the sketch *Taking the Liberty* at the Alhambra in Glasgow (“Miss Marjorie Day is excellent in the role of the artful female who sees that the gods provide the solution she desires”).<sup>25</sup>



The *Bioscope* of 30 June had announced that Marjorie would be in the cast of the forthcoming film, *The Glorious Adventure* and Scotland's *Sunday Post* carried her photograph on 10 July. It would be a star studded group, the leading role taken by Lady Diana Duff Cooper, known as "Lady Di".

The *Bioscope*'s "Dangle" wrote in the 25 August issue,

Marjorie Day, whose picture we are privileged to reproduce in her part of the Gypsy girl in J. Stuart Blackton's production, "A Glorious Adventure," has a part entirely to her liking, and therefore one in which she is likely to achieve a success equal to anything that she has yet done on the screen. Miss Day is not only one of our most beautiful actresses, but one whose personal charm carries over on the screen, and therefore her work in the future will be looked forward to with eager anticipation.

It must have been a happy troupe, for in November the principal members of the cast gave Mr and Mrs Blackton a silver teapot and ornamented testimonial "of their appreciation of the direction of Mr Blackman and the assistance of Mrs Blackman."<sup>26</sup>



**Miss Marjorie Day.**

In gypsy garb for her role in *The Glorious Adventure*.  
*Bioscope* 25 August 1921.

NOVEMBER 22, 1911.  THE BIOSCOPE

A NOTABLE CAST OF DRAMATIC ARTISTES  
IN A SUPERB COLOUR PICTURE.

The beauty of colour and the splendour of scenic effects are not the only outstanding qualities of the year's most important screen offering. Never has there been a more distinguished assembly of players than appear in

**J. STUART BLACKTON'S**  
Lavish and Beautiful Film Production

**The Glorious Adventure**  
The First Screen Play to be made in Natural Colours

STANDING AT THE FOREFRONT OF THE CAST IS

**LADY DIANA MANNERS**

The world's most intel. beauty, who has inspired more famous painters than any other woman of this generation. Lady Diana has demonstrated her ability as an actress often before the most critical London audiences, and in her first film reveals a ripened dramatic talent.

OTHER LEADING ARTISTES IN "THE GLORIOUS ADVENTURE" ARE:

Miss Alice Crawford	Miss Haider Wright
Mr. Cecil Humphreys	Mr. Lennox Pawle
Miss Flora Le Britton	Miss Lois Starr
Mr. Gerald Lawrence	Mr. William Luff
Miss Marjorie Day	Miss Elizabeth Beerlachs
Mr. Victor McLaglan	Mr. Fred Wright
Mr. Tom Henswood	Miss Rosalie Heath
	Mr. Rudolph de Coriôva
	Miss Gertrude Sierrall
	Mr. Lanford Davidson

Many other players in this picture have achieved distinction on screen and stage.

 **The Stoll Film Company, Ltd.**  
DISTRIBUTORS OF "THE GLORIOUS ADVENTURE" IN  
THE UNITED KINGDOM

The film was released on 1 January 1922 and opened at the Royal Opera House in Covent Garden “in pursuance of the policy of the present management to show only the world’s finest film masterpieces;”<sup>27</sup> it was an important milestone: the first British colour film ever made.

The process used was Prizma, and colour was such a novelty that audiences were amazed despite its obvious shortcomings. In the time of Charles II and the great fire of London, Lady Beatrice Fair loves her childhood sweetheart, but gambles away her fortune and agrees to marry a murderer who would accept her debts before his execution. But with the London fire he is released and comes to claim her. She of course wants to reunite with her sweetheart, whom the killer tries to despatch, but then has a change of heart and saves the young couple who are together once more; the murderer's real wife finds him.<sup>28</sup>

It was a good year for innovations in film, as the *Bioscope* related,

The perennial problem of natural colour cinematography continued during the year to fascinate inventors, by whom several new processes were announced. These included the Gorsky, Herault, Harold Speer and Donnisthorpe systems. Meanwhile, J. Stuart Blackton carried the practical solution of the problem a definite stage forward by producing "The Glorious Adventure" in natural colours by the Prizma process. Two new systems of synchronising the cinematograph and the gramophone were introduced in 1921 in Webb Singing Films and Verity Talking Pictures. A similar system, not yet seen in England, was Sven Berghen's Talking Film. The Spoor-Berggren stereoscopic cine camera, the Kinereflex paper film projector and the Searchlight projector were other inventors' novelties of the year.

Opening night was a glorious occasion,

An almost unbroken procession of crest-bearing motor-cars and a wonderful display of beautiful dresses imparted to Covent Garden Theatre an atmosphere of an opera first night at the first screening of "The Glorious Adventure," the natural colour film, in which Lady Diana Manners plays the heroine. Many dinner and supper parties were given specially for the occasion.<sup>29</sup>

The *Scotsman* was tepid,

Considerable interest centred around this evening's production at Covent Garden of "The Glorious Adventure," the first picture film to be made and exhibited under the new self-colour process. Judging from the reality of the colouring of flowers, dresses, and scenery, this new phase of cinema photography promises to effect a great step forward in moving pictures, especially if it be applied to nature subjects. From that point of view the exhibition was highly satisfactory. The subject of the picture itself is melodrama of a somewhat crude character, and the only excuse for showing such a length of film lay in the "effects" which such themes as the Great Fire of London, the Court of Charles II, and garden gatherings afforded. The attendance in the Opera House represented almost as much a social function as an audience of picture-playgoers, the reason being that this was the first appearance of Lady Diana Duff-Cooper in the "silent drama." She was given the role of a rather insipid heroine, and filled it successfully, without much call on a wide range of emotions....<sup>30</sup>

Others were impressed,

I was very much Impressed by "The Glorious Adventure," the natural colour film which was shown for the first time yesterday at Covent Garden. Lady Diana Manners is revealed as a cinema actress of remarkable

power and charm. The theatre is suitably decorated, and the pains to get "atmosphere" have not been wasted. So many costume plays fall flat for lack of conviction. The colour revolution promises big things for the cinema. It is safe to predict a new type of artistic photography, with scenarios to suit, which may foreshadow a "romantic" movement in the cinema. The film just shown has excited wide interest in England and America, and is a real attempt to give the public something superior to sentimental drama or lurid melodrama.<sup>31</sup>

The *Daily Herald's* "H.H." summed up,

### **"LADY DI" AS FILM HEROINE**

#### **A Glorious Adventure in Kinema Colour**

Glorious is, perhaps, hardly the word. At least one cannot imagine Lady Diana applying it in character as Lady Beatrice Fair, the heroine of last night's premiere at Covent Garden.

She begins the adventure financially ruined, suffers excruciatingly both on that and her ill-fated lover's account, permitted by the plot and "a custom of the times" to marry a Newgate felon on the eve of his execution, and is subsequently abducted by him in the dead of night after his escape from prison during the Great Fife of London.

Altogether she suffers more than any heroine ought to before she finally wins through.

The trouble is that history, probability and the producers have not seen eye to eye. The clothes, furniture and effects are of the 17th century, but the psychology and the plot are those of the contemporary film studio at its most ruthless. Even Pepys, poor fellow, is dragged in solely to act as pander to a very doubtful Merry Monarch.

The colour effects, which share with Lady Diana the advertising honours, are uneven, but now and again happy results are obtained. The Great Fire itself, though realistic at times, is rather hole-and-corner affair, even if it does provide for some touching little rescues of cats and babies.

The whole thing is too jerky in progress and exposition and too crowded with details. Few of the principals get a chance to do much more than to display the cut and colour of their clothes and the robustness of their complexions; but the patrician debutante puts on a very good show both as a picture and as an artist. H. H.

A copy of the film has survived and is available on YouTube and commercially.

*Sinister Street* was also released in January

John is an idealist, who is so busy dreaming of a girl who does not care for him that he is blind to real love and passes it by.

Although there is much that might have depressed one in this story of disappointed people, it is not the seamy side of life that is insisted upon. That is relegated to a sinister menacing background, while the spotlight is played upon a vein of romantic idealism which lifts us for a while out of the rut of the commonplace. It is true that there is a sad ending. Instead of John realising that a fine woman loves him he passes by, head in air. But it is this very touch of destiny which makes life and Compton Mackenzie real to us. Of course, the sequel is another story.

The family Fane are all slightly queer. Mrs. Fane nurses a secret sorrow which makes her unsociable. Stella Fane is an artist who abandons herself to every whim. Michael has the mysticism that inclines to priesthood, but it is allied, in his case, with a curiosity to

know a little more about the world first. The trouble with Michael is that he cannot accept people as they are. All his pent-up love rushes out to the fair but weak Lily, and, because she looks like it, he cannot conceive that she is not really the woman of his dreams. Lily is incapable of refusing any love that is offered her, and Michael, brokenhearted, allows her to pass out of his life. Then a dreadful thing happens. He learns that his mother was never a wife, and that he is branded as "illegitimate." After the first shock, Michael's first impulse is to find Lily, whom he learns has lost all pretence to respectability, and to offer her marriage. After much seeking he discovers the girl living with the strong-minded Sylvia Scarlett, who alone has power to protect the weaker Lily from harm. Once more Michael learns that Lily is incapable of fidelity, and, in a terrible outburst of agony, he breaks up the home he had prepared as a background for her delicate beauty. Then, quite unaware of the understanding passion he has awakened in the strong-minded Sylvia, he returns Lily to her keeping and passes out of their lives.

We are held. We follow the plot with breathless anxiety. Here are no conventional hero-heroine puppets, but flesh and blood, and human suffering relieved from the sordid background of vice and debauchery by a passionate desire to achieve only the best. John Stuart, as Michael, is restrained and real in his fencing with life. Amy Verity is gay and temperamental as his sister, Stella. Kate Carew has a brief appearance as their tragic parent. Wilfred Fletcher and John Reid are convincing as college chums, and Kathleen Blake, Roger Treville and A. G. Poulton make a gay Bohemian crowd. Excellent studies of lowly life are offered by Charles West, Eileen Moore, Peter Daniell and Marjorie Day, while Molly Adair, as Sylvia Scarlett, and Maudie Dunham, as the

weak Lily, offer two very different types of girl with admirable contrast.

The settings are particularly good, providing by their simplicity a dignity which helps to symbolise the characters, as in the case of one large candlestick beside the ecclesiastical chair of the visionary Michael. The photography is also good. George Beranger is to be congratulated on having produced a sound, interesting story which will appeal to all thinking people.<sup>32</sup>

In March the *Bioscope's* "Dangle" announced Howard Gaye would play Lord Byron in the coming British Screencraft version of the poet's life. Marjorie Day would play Byron's sister, lover and mother of his child, Augusta Leigh.<sup>33</sup> *A Prince of Lovers* was directed by Charles Calvert and was based on Alicia Ramsey's 1908 play *Byron*. The *Bioscope* liked it,

Lord Byron is first shown at Newstead Abbey, giving a freak dinner, which is interrupted by the arrival of Mrs. Byron, the poet's mother, who dies after the appearance of the ghost of the Black Friar. He achieves fame as a poet, and is lionised by London Society. At a ball given by Madame de Staël, Byron meets Isabella Millbanke, whom he marries with most unhappy results. They separate, and Lady Caroline Lamb, out of revenge for Byron's indifference, bribes a journalist to circulate reports which raise such a storm against the poet that he leaves England for ever. The last scene shows Byron on his deathbed at Missolonghi, where his friend, Hobhouse brings a message from Lady Byron, and the news of his rehabilitation in popular esteem.

A very large audience assembled at the West End Cinema to witness the first presentation of "A Prince of Lovers," adapted by Alicia Ramsey from her own play "Byron," and produced by G. C. Calvert for the Gaumont

Company, which was received in a manner indicating the most cordial approval.

In adapting the story of Byron's life to the screen, Mrs. Ramsey has succeeded beyond expectation in investing it with a great amount of dramatic interest while still departing very little from actual facts as far as they are known. This in itself is no little achievement, for though it is said that a strictly accurate record of the life even of the most commonplace individual would make a book of absorbing interest, it is by no means easy to make a dramatic play from the true story of the life even of so sensational a figure as Lord Byron. It cannot be said that Mrs. Ramsey has done much to condone or reconcile Byron's eccentricities beyond the suggestion that the scandals which eventually drove him from England were the malicious inventions of a woman scorned, and not the poet's own defiance of convention and wilful exaggeration of actions quite sufficiently reprehensible. The title of the film is hardly justified by Byron's behaviour either to Lady Caroline Lamb or to his wife, due to the fact, we imagine, that neither the authoress, nor the leading actor quite succeed in showing that Byron had a genuine affection for his wife and an irresponsible and perverted sense of humour which Lady Byron entirely failed to understand. Regarded as a record of the principal events in the life of a figure of more than ordinary interest it must be admitted that Mrs. Ramsey has succeeded to admiration.

The production is masterly, and Captain Calvert has given us an excellent picture of English social life in the early years of the nineteenth century. The scenes in Newstead Abbey, commencing with a Bacchanalian dinner and ending with the sudden death of Mrs. Byron, make a very effective opening and cleverly indicate the character of the poet. The reception by Madame de Staël,

attended by the Prince Regent, is another fine scene, and a strong dramatic effect is obtained by the isolated figure of Byron when his friends, with the exception of Lady Jersey, desert him at the instigation of the same fickle Prince. The final scene at Missolonghi is deeply impressive, and Byron's last moments are full of genuine pathos.

Howard Gaye as Byron may be sincerely congratulated on the success he has achieved in a part of great difficulty. The question of the limp has been approached in a somewhat half-hearted fashion, and one cannot help thinking that in a film of this romantic nature all reference to it might have been omitted, its only purpose being to further emphasise the disagreeable character of Mrs. Byron. This, however, is a very trifling detail in a performance full of personal charm in which the reckless high spirits, the deep feeling, and at last the genuine pathos of the part are admirably portrayed. Miss Marjorie Hume as Lady Byron is also excellently cast, and while giving a faithful picture of the narrow-minded puritanical egoist gains a certain amount of sympathy by her great beauty and charm and her obvious sincerity.

In a long and exceptionally fine cast special mention should be made of Miss Marjory Day's Augusta Leigh, a beautiful study of tender devotion and sisterly affection. The scandal connecting Mrs. Leigh's name with that of Byron are wisely omitted, and the part as played by Miss Day becomes one of the most sympathetic in the film. Other notably good performances are those of David Hawthorne as Hobhouse, H. R. Hignett as Fletcher, and Miss Mary Clare in the particularly difficult part of Lady Caroline Lamb.

Beautifully and sumptuously mounted, admirably photographed and played to perfection, "A Prince of

Lovers” is a production which compares favourably with the best British work.<sup>34</sup>

It would be Marjorie Day’s last silent film.

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- 1 *Bioscope* 10 August 1916
  - 2 *Bioscope* 22 February 1917.
  - 3 *Bioscope* 5 July 1917.
  - 4 *Bognor Regis Observer* 25 July 1917.
  - 5 *Worthing Gazette* 1 August 1917.
  - 6 *Acton Gazette* 21 September 1917.
  - 7 *Rochdale Observer* 6 October 1917.
  - 8 *Northern Whig* 19 February 1918.
  - 9 16 April 1918.
  - 10 28 September 1918.
  - 11 *Yarmouth Independent* 4 January 1919.
  - 12 *Bioscope* 11 September 1919.
  - 13 *Bioscope* 5 February 1920.
  - 14 *Manchester Evening News* 13 March 1920.
  - 15 *Stage* 13 May 1920.
  - 16 *Scotsman* 20 May 1920.
  - 17 *Pall Mall Gazette* 20 May 1920.
  - 18 *Aberdeen Press and Journal* 20 May 1920.
  - 19 *Western Mail* 21 May 1920.
  - 20 *Stage* 27 May 1920.
  - 21 *Bioscope* 27 May 1920.
  - 22 *Sphere* 12 June 1920.
  - 23 *Bioscope* 30 September 1920.
  - 24 *Illustrated London News* 9 October 1920.
  - 25 *Era* 6 July 1921.
  - 26 *Bioscope* 24 November 1921.
  - 27 *Pall Mall Gazette* 14 January 1922.
  - 28 <https://www.allmovie.com/movie/v93318>
  - 29 *Leeds Mercury* 18 January 1922.
  - 30 *Scotsman* 17 January 1922.
  - 31 *Northampton Chronicle and Echo* 17 January 1922.
  - 32 *Bioscope* 26 January 1922.
  - 33 *Bioscope* 2 March 1922.
  - 34 *Bioscope* 29 June 1922.

## Chapter 5: back on the legitimate stage

In August the *Era* announced Marjorie would appear on stage again, in Baroness Orczy and Major Fiennes' new romantic drama *Leatherface*, to open in Portsmouth before moving to Golders Green and then coming to the West End in October.<sup>1</sup>

The *Stage* reviewed it at length and remarked, "the tavern wench (and afterwards servant) of Miss Marjorie Day (was) in many ways one of the best acting performances in the piece."<sup>2</sup> "Excellent performance," said the *Era*.<sup>3</sup>

In July,

"Bluebeard's Eighth Wife," which reached its anniversary performance at the Queen's Theatre just recently, continues to draw crowded houses, and three touring companies of the play are shortly going on the road. In the principal one the leading parts will be played by Miss Marjorie Day, Mr. J. Farren Soutar and Mr. Ivan Sampson.<sup>4</sup>

They played at the Sheffield Lyceum, when "Monna de Monferrat is played by clever Marjorie Day".<sup>5</sup>

The reason for the success Bluebeard's 8th Wife," is not far to seek. In its translation all the superb dialogue of the original has been retained, and the result is a running fire of wit as finely drawn as a rapier point. It is a battle of will and wit—woman's wit against a man's blundering will—and last night the

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**MISS MARJORIE DAY**  
**MISS MAUD RIVERS**  
AND MISS  
**LOUISE FREDERICKS.**

The Play Produced  
by Franklin Dyall.

**THEATRE ROYAL.**

two parts that make the play were played to perfection. As John Brown, the American millionaire, who bends everything to his will—wives in particular—Farren Soutar gave an interpretation that filled one’s conception of the part to the life; and the way in which Miss Marjorie Day exploited all the intricacies of Monna, who married John Brown, then got divorced, and became his eighth wife, stamped her as an actress of outstanding merit.... A feature of the production is the gorgeous dresses and the scenery used in the three acts.<sup>6</sup>

“Hers was a delightful rendering, calm, witty, resourceful, and charming,” wrote the *Sheffield Daily Telegraph’s* dramatic critic.<sup>7</sup>

“Marjorie Day scores a great success as the cool and resourceful heroine; her manner is perfectly adapted to the part, and she acts without exaggeration and with sustained distinction,” wrote the *Stage* correspondent.<sup>8</sup>

The company played at the Princes Theatre in Manchester (“Miss Marjorie Day... makes Monna quite a likeable, though strong-minded, young lady”<sup>9</sup>); the Royal Court in Liverpool (“Marjorie Day scored throughout with her finished acting in the part of the heroine, Monna, and soon got on good terms with her audience.”<sup>10</sup> “Marjorie Day, as the eighth wife, could hardly be bettered”<sup>11</sup>); the Gaiety Theatre in Dublin (“Miss Marjorie Day is an actress of far more than average ability. Her versatility and keen sense of humour, serve her well, and, as a consequence, she makes the character of ‘Monna,’ the eighth wife, stand out in somewhat bold relief.”<sup>12</sup>

After Dublin came the Grand Opera House in Belfast (“Miss Marjorie Day made a determined and altogether charming wife. Every word she uttered was clear cut, and reached all parts of the theatre, and she acted with grace and artistry.”<sup>13</sup> “... fascinating in the extreme. She was beautiful and clever,

playful and pleasant, matchless in her scheme, glorious in her triumph"<sup>14</sup>).

**"BLUEBEARD'S EIGHTH WIFE"**



Marjorie Day and Ivan Samson in *Bluebeard's Eighth Wife*.  
*Freeman's Journal* (Dublin) 13 September 1923.

They played the Grand Theatre in Blackpool in October, the Prince of Wales Theatre in Birmingham, the Grand in Leeds, the Prince's in Bradford; in November the King's in Hammersmith, the Royal in Brighton, the Wimbledon, the Theatre Royal in Nottingham; December at the Grand in Hull.



Marjorie Day as "Monna" and Ivan Samson as "Hubert" in *Bluebeard's 8th Wife*.

**ALFRED BUTT & ANTHONY PRINSEP**  
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*Bluebeard's Eighth Wife*

The most successful and  
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It must have been a relief to be home again.

In February 1924 the Phoenix company revived Wycherley's comedy *The Country Wife* at the Regent, with Marjorie in the cast.<sup>15</sup>

She understudied for Madge Titheradge in *Grounds for Divorce* at the St James's Theatre in London and for two weeks in February 1925 played the part when Ms Titheradge was ill with bronchitis.<sup>16</sup>

She was in the supporting cast of *The Man in Dress Clothes* at the Grand in Blackpool in July.<sup>17</sup> They went on to Dublin's Gaiety Theatre and Belfast's Grand Opera House in August with *The Price of Silence*.<sup>18</sup>

*Lullaby*, a play by Edward Knoblock, was produced by Anthony Prinsep at the Globe in London in October, with Marjorie Day in a supporting role. They took the play to the Golders Green Hippodrome in February 1926 after a successful season in London. Thence to Glasgow.

In April the company played *By-Ways* at the Globe, Marjorie Day again in a minor role. The *Stage* took the trouble to review it,

On Tuesday, April 6, 1926. Mr. Anthony Prinsep presented here a play, in three acts by H. C. M. Hardinge (founded on his novel, "A Bowl of Red Roses"), entitled "By Ways."

Beginning with a useless scene of society chatter with the reiteration of such banal phrases as divine, too priceless, and the poor darling, H. C. M. Hardinge's dramatisation of his novel "A Bowl of Red Roses" seemed to develop into an attempt to extol maternity quand même. A young married woman whose husband had been so imprudent as to leave her for two years whilst he was wandering round the world in search of his mistress Adventure, as she says, is afraid of his return at the end of the first act when she has compromised herself

with a rising politician, also married. The end of the second act (is) devoted to a long scene of special pleading on behalf of an unborn child by Mr. Hardinge's certainly not spotless heroine, who had been in love with love, to use another of her phrases. Indeed, here Claire Bathurst seemed to ask for a double divorce; for her husband, the traveller Jim, to divorce her, and for Evelyn Meynell to do the same with regard to the co-respondent, Stephen Meynell, already in the Ministry. Yet, at the end, when an indiscreet doctor had blurted out the truth to the rather obtuse Bathurst, Claire refused her husband's magnanimous offer to accept the paternity of a child that perhaps might never arrive, and declared that she must go out alone to her motherhood. Some of these phrases, and perhaps also the doctor episode, apparently moved some in the gallery to mirth, though there were certain emotional passages here and there. At any rate, the curtain fell finally upon the scantiest of applause, there were no calls, even for the principals, and the evening ended in gloom.

This was a pity, at any rate for the band of brilliant artists engaged by Mr. Anthony Prinsep, notably for Miss Margaret Bannerman, who tried zealously to give some show of plausibility to the character of Claire, whose bringing of a bowl of red roses to Evelyn was due to Stephen saying that they reminded him of her. Clearly, young Mrs. Bathurst was a woman of passion, as contrasted with the colder nature of Mrs. Meynell, who, having lost one child and being debarred from having any more, had been devoting herself to child-welfare, hospitals, crèches, and so forth. This woman, whose changes in manner and attitude were not made quite clear, was played, up to a point, with sympathetic gentleness, and with the employment of quiet and deliberate tones, by Miss Marjorie Day. Stephen,

admitting that his feelings towards the frankly alluring Claire had been those of excitement, passion, infatuation, pity, rather than actual love, had his better nature emphasised by Mr. Francis Lister. In like manner Mr. Herbert Marshall, apart from his scenes of volcanic fury and crying out "His name" in the last act laid stress upon Bathurst's David-and-Jonathan sort of affection for his old chum Meynell. Jim's sister Elinor, who did her best to avert the catastrophe or hush the scandal up, was represented with most effective calmness by Miss Grace Lane. Mr. Ernest Mainwaring was excellent as usual as a formerly naughty Peer, and Lady Tree caused considerable entertainment with her pointed performance of old Lady Tintagil, with a peculiar taste in hats and dresses, and with an extensive stock of wigs. She was described as having the eyes of a lynx and the mind of a serpent, an example of some of the more or less telling phrases with which Mr. Hardinge brightened the lighter scenes. Some of the best passages fell to Mr. Algernon West, amusingly florid as Seymour Wilcox, a society flâneur: and two foolish young persons of the period were impersonated suitably by Mr. Cyril Cunningham and Miss Constance Burleigh.<sup>19</sup>

There is one pitfall which inexperienced dramatists seldom avoid. They seem to think that because they are writing for the stage they must make their characters act and talk as stagily as possible. This is the error into which Mr. Hardinge has fallen. The speech and actions of his puppets bear little or no relation to real life....<sup>20</sup>

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1 *Era* 16 August 1922.

2 *Stage* 5 October 1922.

3 *Era* 5 October 1922.

4 *Ealing Gazette and West Middlesex Observer* 14 July 1923.

5 *Sheffield Daily Telegraph* 24 August 1923.

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- 6 *Sheffield Independent* 28 August 1923.
  - 7 *Sheffield Daily Telegraph* 28 August 1923.
  - 8 30 August 1923.
  - 9 *Era* 5 September 1923.
  - 10 *Era* 12 September 1923.
  - 11 *Stage* 13 September 1923.
  - 12 *Freeman's Journal* 18 September 1923.
  - 13 *Belfast News-Letter* 25 September 1923.
  - 14 *Belfast Telegraph* 25 September 1923.
  - 15 *Stage* 31 January 1924.
  - 16 *Stage* 26 February 1925.
  - 17 *Stage* 30 July 1925.
  - 18 *Stage* 13 August 1925.
  - 19 *Stage* 8 April 1926.
  - 20 *Sporting Times* 10 April 1926.

## Chapter 6: endgame

In 1926 Marjorie Day was in her 40<sup>th</sup> year. In 1923 she had stopped inserting her professional card in the *Bioscope's* lists. In 1929 she divorced George Desmond. She now all but disappeared from the drama pages of the press.

When one searches old newspapers there are many Marjorie Days—a child performer, a novelist, a not very successful racehorse, a paediatrician and Mayor of Maidstone, a doctor's cook, brides, bridesmaids at various weddings, clever children at school prizegivings—usually distinguishable from the real thing by their context. There was a character called Marjorie Day (played by Jane Wyman) in the 1938 play *Mr Dodd Takes the Air*,<sup>1</sup> and Doris Day played a character called Marjorie in a film—her character referred to in one review as “Marjorie (Day)”.

Less easily distinguishable from *our* Marjorie Day are the Marjorie Days who appeared in *Rookery Nook* at Colwyn Bay's Pier Pavilion in July 1932,<sup>2</sup> going on to the Royal and Empire theatre in Peterborough in August<sup>3</sup> and the Connaught theatre in Worthing in September.<sup>4</sup> A Marjory Day played in *Baa, baa, Black Sheep* with the Zodiac Amateur Players at Streatham in December 1932.<sup>5</sup> A Marjorie Day produced the play *London's Wall* at Dulwich Village in December 1936<sup>6</sup> and *Bluebell in Fairyland* in December 1937.<sup>7</sup>

More likely to be ours is the Miss Marjorie Day who played Simon in *Love Tokens* in an evening of sixteenth century Spanish plays at the Players Theatre Club in February 1933.<sup>8</sup> A Marjorie Day was one of several who accepted an invitation to join the Actors' Day Society at its reunion in the Florence restaurant in April 1936.<sup>9</sup>

None of these is certain—and most are unlikely—to have been *our* Marjorie Day. On the other hand it is quite possible an interior decorator columnist was she—the timing is right at least and it seems somehow in character. She began in the magazine *Brittania and Eve* on 5 October 1928 with advice on decorating a bedroom and continued regularly till March 1929. In June 1930 she wrote a column in a section of the *Sphere* called “The World of Women”; she wrote more from March to December 1931 and her columns appeared regularly in the *Sunday Referee*. She wrote nothing of herself in these pieces so gives no clue as to her identity. Pencil drawings of sculptural objects have been attributed to her.



“Drawings for statues” by a Marjorie Day.

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**MARJORIE DAY**

*Art in the Home*

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**2<sup>D</sup>**

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In 1939 Marjorie Murphy born 17 July 1887, a divorced “actress (retired)” was living in Flat III at 31 Long Acre WC2. Her flatmates were Charles F Hawthorne, a married actor born 22 May 1888 and William Ward, a widowed general labourer born in 1872.



Charles Hawthorne in 1922.

Her brief biography at IMDb includes the British comedy *Facing the Music*, a Butchers’ film directed by Maclean Rogers

and starring Bunny Doyle, Betty Driver, Chili Bouchier and HF Maltby. It was released in August 1941 and her name is recorded well down in the cast list. If she did appear in this, it was her only talkie and she did not live to see it.

She died late in 1940 aged 53, her death registered (as Marjorie Day *and* Marjorie Murphy) in Marylebone, London. She had no descendants.

Nor did her brother Eric Earle Bellenie Day, who had married Elizabeth Maud Skellorn in Islington in 1909; their first child had died in infancy by 1911 when he was an insurance clerk and they were living at Forkis Green Rd in Muswell Hill N. In 1939 he (now an insurance inspector) and Elizabeth (unpaid D.D.) were living at 21 Meadway, Romford with their 18 year old son Harry born 6 December 1921, an agricultural student. Harry Michael Day died in Exeter on 30 April 1947 at age 26: he left everything to his father. Eric died in Chatham, Kent in October 1961. He had no descendants.

Nobody is left to treasure her memory or her achievements, and so she is forgotten. But she is one of a remarkable group of young men and women who were born in New Zealand but left—or were taken by their parents—to seek success abroad when they showed talent and promise of great achievement.

Marjory Day was one such and she lived up to her promise.

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1 *Acton Gazette* 15 April 1938.

2 *Stage* 14 July 1932.

3 *Stage* 11 August 1932.

4 *Worthing Herald* 17 September 1932.

5 *Norwood News* 16 December 1932.

6 *Norwood News* 18 December 1936.

7 *Norwood News* 31 December 1937.

8 *Stage* 2 February 1933.

9 *Stage* 30 April 1936.

## Chapter 7: Marjorie Day's films and plays

### *Films*

- 1916 *When Knights Were Bold*  
 1917 *The Cost of a Kiss*  
 1917 *The Woman who was Nothing*  
 1919 *Damaged Goods*  
 1920 *The Story of the Rosary*  
 1922 *The Glorious Adventure*  
 1922 *Sinister Street*  
 1922 *A Prince of Lovers*  
 1941 *Facing the Music*

### *Plays*

- 1902 *The Little Unfair Princess*  
 1905 *The Prodigal Son; If I were King*  
 1906 *Castles of Spain; The Bondman*  
 1907 *The Christian; The Devil's Disciple; The Prodigal Son*  
 (revived)  
 1908 *The Woman of Kronstadt; A Game of Adverbs;*  
*The Marriages of Mayfair*  
 1909 *The Whip; One Summer's Day*  
 1910 *The Strong People; Peace; The Man from Blankley's;*  
*Mount Pleasant; Vice Versa*  
 1911 *Dandy Charlie*  
 1912 *The House that Jack Built; Tantrums*  
 1913 *Harbour Watch*  
 1914 *Peter's Reputation; The Story of the Rosary*  
 1916 *What a Bargain; The Man in the Street*  
 1918 *Damaged Goods*  
 1920 *Within the Law; Harbour Watch* (revived);  
*The Right to Strike*  
 1921 *Taking the Liberty*  
 1922 *Leatherface*

1923 *Bluebeard's Eighth Wife*

1924 *The Country Wife*

1925 *Grounds for Divorce; The Man in Dress Clothes;*  
*The Price of Silence; Lullaby*

1926 *By-Ways*

In some accounts of or advertisements for films Marjorie Day has been mistaken for Marjorie Daw or for Marjory Gay, both of whom were American actors in American films. Marjorie Day made only British films.

For instance the *Derry Journal* of 14 March 1923 has Marjorie Day in George Fitzmaurice's Paramount production *Experience* when it was Marjorie Daw who acted in that 1921 American film. The *Nottingham Evening Post* of 9 November 1923 has Day instead of Daw in the 1921 American film *A Motion to Adjourn*. Furthermore *Human Desires* is a 1924 British silent romance film directed by Burton George and starring Marjorie Daw, not Marjorie Day as depicted in the *Bioscope* of 1 January 1925 and the *Lancashire Evening Post* of 13 July 1925. *Redheads preferred* likewise is Daw not Day (*Derbyshire Times and Chesterfield Herald* 21 April 1928). Nor is Marjorie Day in *Why Girls Say No* as the *Dundee Evening Telegraph* of 20 June 1929 has it: again it is Marjorie Daw—who was also in the 1922 American film *The Long Chance*: not Marjorie Day as the *Mansfield Reporter* reported on 13 July 1923.

Similarly a number of websites have Marjorie Day in the 1926 American film starring the boxer Gene Tunney, *The Fighting Marine*—but that was Marjorie Gay.

Marjorie Daw was born in Colorado Springs in 1902 and began acting as a teenager after her parents died; she was in 76 silent films. Marjorie Gay aka Marjorie Whiteis was born in Missouri in 1899 and acted in over a dozen silent films in the 1920s.



Song sheet cover for *Facing the Music*, 1941.



MISS MARJORY DAY

Y. 752

Postcard, posted in 1909 but clearly taken in 1907 with the cover photo,  
for *The Devil's Disciple*.