

Obituary: Gerard Curzon

down

house near Thonon, looking north over Lac Leman, Gerard would knowledgeably gossip over crops or stock with his farming neighbours. He once recalled to me one of them who had commented sagely on a local matron, wife of a successful dairy farmer: "Ah, she did well for herself: she married the largest muckheap in the village!" Best of all, he enjoyed working at practical things like building a fish tank or renovating ruined buildings by combining imaginative design with the economical use of local materials. To his students, to his friends in Britain, to his friends in Europe, and in America, and to his highly elastic extended family to all of whom he was a much-loved dada, Gerard will be remembered as a shining example of hard work, warm feelings, unpretentious scholarship and honest common sense.

usan Strange

Gerard Curzon born in Berlin, March 17, 1921; died Geneva, September 13, 1989.

ulist

e vote. Jarvis handled public and coordinated radio and television coverage.

After their overwhelming clot victory, the two fell out, the Gann accusing Jarvis (who died in 1986) of trying to claim all the credit for the success of Prop. 13. They patched the quarrel but Prop. 13 was struck out alone on the initiative path. Prop. 4, placing institutional limits on government spending in the state, was passed by 3-1 majority in the November 1979 state election.

When in 1980, proclaiming the need to balance the federal budget and limit the power of government, the grassroots activist defeated six other Republican challengers to become the paracandidate for the U.S. Senate. But in running against the incumbent Democratic Senator in Cranston, Gann was characterised as a one-issue candi-



Catherine Deneuve and Patrick Wymark in Roman Polanski's *Repulsion*, produced by Michael Klinger, who died last week

Michael Klinger

# Always his own man

**M**ICHAEL Klinger, the son of an immigrant Polish tailor who became a prominent independent film producer at a time when the species was thought to be extinct in Britain, started life as a hot dog and ice cream salesman in Soho. And he never quite lost that image, even as a stereotype cigar-chewing movie mogul.

But if it was sometimes difficult to treat him seriously as a latter-day Louis B. Meyer, his record spoke for him. He made more than forty movies, including two of the best Roman Polanski ever made — *Repulsion* and *Cul-de-Sac*. Another was Mike Hodges' *Get Carter*, one of the most formidable British thrillers of its time. *Cul-de-Sac* won a top prize at the Berlin Festival and Klinger was wont to say thereafter that he was the only producer who could successfully control the spending habits of the Polish director. In fact, it cost only £150,000 and *Repulsion* even less.

"I think I'm good with young directors", he said. "Once we've sorted out the budget, I leave them alone unless they start doing something bloody ridiculous — like exceeding it. Then I'm down on them like a ton of bricks". The mere thought of that must have been fairly horrifying.

But he was right. He gave Peter Collinson and Mike Hodges a start as well as Polanski (outside Poland), and he launched blockbuster movies like *Gold* and *Shout At The Devil* with the kind of bravado they needed to succeed. You couldn't help liking the man, even when he was bragging. He also knew more about the cinema than you would, from meeting him in the Pickwickian flesh, suppose.

In the end, however, he got a little too big for his financial boots and the last decade of his life was singularly unproductive. In part, this was the fault of a craven British film industry, unused to taking risks and a bit scared of his bigger and bigger plans. But there is no doubt that his huckstering style was on the debit side too.

He first surfaced in the film world, after running a boys club where Benny Green and director Lewis Gilbert were among the kids (as well as two notable criminals), when he built, with Tony Tenser, the Compton Cinema in London and a couple of Superamas in Birmingham and Derby.

At that time he showed films, and generally not very good ones. But then he thought he might as well make them too and share in the profit. The first was *Naked As Nature In-*

tended, a classic nudie which delivered bosoms and bottoms galore, mostly photographed from a respectful distance, but not much in the way of cinematic art.

There followed *London In The Raw* and *Saturday Night Out* which may have seemed daring in the early sixties but are now shown as family viewing on the telly. There were other adventures in the skin trade but respectability was to arrive in the shape of a small Pole with a few yards of film in his hand who landed up in his office.

It might have all come to nothing. But Klinger, unlike your average British producer in Wardour Street at that time, had actually seen Polanski's *Knife In The Water* and gave him a chance. *Repulsion* was the result, and Klinger became respectable at last. "Polanski?", he said after his two films with him, "Lovely guy. Talented monster. Doesn't understand money. Won't work with him again".

Klinger used to say that he would rather have shares in himself than in British Leyland, and was certainly proved right on that score. He also said that he smiled because he was his own man. A fitting epitaph.

Derek Malcolm

Another day

Some peo  
Cor  
his

W.J. Weatherby

**T**HE next day in Heaton, a suburb of Stockport, an old man called Banks. His stepson had scared grown-up kids.

When I was a child in the Stockport area, I was summoned to my father's home to form me he was shortly and therefore dictate his obituary three weeks later. I secret I learned of my wife, who devoted her wonderful garden.

As a young survivor had been friendly with Conrad when Conrad decided to give up the literature. Their correspondence shows Conrad to be quite off-hand about his decision to see the land and try to earn that riskiest of professions writing novels in what was a foreign language.

In a letter to Banks dated October 29, 1894, he referred to the publication of *Alma* as his first novel and him one of the most successful occasions in his career: "... Since I wrote a novel — which I wrote soon I think more wonderful I got too".

Conrad first met Banks when he was a mate on the ship and Banks was going to Australia for his first job (also to do a little for gold). Even in his early days Conrad was never make merely literary like so many authors of the time, who also made board the *Torrens* in 1893, found him keen about life rather than literature.

Banks himself was a man with a wide experience and a sharp irony which Conrad's early letter from Alma dated, refers to their interest in chess: "I leave this place on and intend to come down on the 11.58 train arriving at about 1 o'clock p.m. If you have no

Today - 15<sup>th</sup> September

## **MOVIE MOGUL DIES**

TOP British film producer Michael Klinger has died aged 68.

He made more than 40 movies including the 60s thriller *Repulsion*, *Get Carter*, starring Michael Caine, *Gold with Roger Moore* and *Shout at the Devil*. Caine said last night: "He was a very good friend of mine and his death is a sad loss."

Klinger suffered a stroke and collapsed at his Hertfordshire home. The funeral will take place today.