

I was a member of the Sciences Committee of the SFA, and when it was suggested that a Conference should be organised on the subject of *The Film in Scientific Research* I took a great interest in this proposal and spent much time and effort in its organisation. I was fortunate and could persuade Sir Robert Watson-Watt FRS (1892-1973) to take the chair and thus got the support of other speakers for the conference. It was held at the Royal Institution, 21 Albemarle Street, London W 1, in October 1948.

Sir Robert became famous for the first practical radar system in the world which was vital for Britain's air defence in 1940, when attacked by the German Luftwaffe. He had started with his 'radiolocation' research in 1935 when he became Head of the Radio Department at the National Physical Laboratory in Teddington near London and before the outbreak of the war in 1939, he could locate planes at a distance of 110 km. No doubt great use was made of cinematography in his research to record the pictures on the cathode ray screen which showed the time delay between outgoing and returning radio pulse, and thus the distance and speed of the approaching plane.

In 1948 radar was still top-secret and Sir Robert did not even mention the subject during our conference. Most of the other speakers—I regret I cannot remember their names after 60 years—praised the value of cinematography in their respective fields of research, but all had one regret which they suggested the SFA could remedy. There was no book on this subject, except a few widely dispersed research reports in the scientific literature. The last review in English had been written by Donaldson in 1912 and a fairly popular digest by Thévenard and Tassel in French had appeared just after the conference.

It was there and then that I decided to write this review. My book was published in 1955 by Academic Press of New York, under the title "*Research Films*". I defined these as: "Research films are motion pictures made in the laboratory, or during the course of field work, which aid directly in the discovery of new knowledge. The necessary techniques for their production, analysis and usage, I have called scientific cinematography." [*Preface page ix of my book Research Films*]

I shall say more about the writing of this book in Australia below, [see Titles 56 to 58] but suffice it here to mention that I could quote in my combined Author and Reference Index more than 1490 entries. I received 35 highly positive reviews of the book in the scientific and cinematographic literature—it was a labour of love, but not a lost labour. I calculated that the royalties I received could not have paid for the cigarettes I smoked while writing it.