General editor's foreword

Challenging a view of British films of the 1940s as static and inert, Hollie Price sets out to examine how the treatment of domestic life in the films of that decade engaged with the interwar past and articulated a vision of the postwar future by achieving a dynamic merger of the traditional and the modern. In a carefully nuanced analysis, she argues that films were continually negotiating competing ideas such as privacy and community, past and future, romance and realism, consumerism and national identity. Inter-disciplinary and inter-textual, her study situates films in the broader cultural context by reference to women's magazines, advertisements, catalogues and middlebrow feminine fiction.

Essentially Price provides four sets of double case studies on different aspects of the domestic to advance her argument. She examines the industrial working-class home in social realist dramas *Love on the Dole* and *It Always Rains on Sunday* in the context of Mass-Observation surveys and *Picture Post* photo-essays, arguing that they are seen through the prism of middlebrow values. Looking at *This Happy Breed* and *The Captive Heart*, she explores the persistence of rural imagery in suburban homes and the domestication of a prisoner-of-war camp by the cultivation of gardens.

The escapist imagery of the postwar home, influenced by glamorous Hollywood visions of domesticity and modern consumer culture as expressed in the Ideal Home Exhibition is the focus of her discussion of *Spring in Park Lane* and *The Glass Mountain*. The symbiosis between the Ideal Home Exhibition and British cinema is underlined by the recreation of film set interiors at the Exhibition and illustrations of the homes of the stars. As Price points out, postwar film culture regularly promoted the idea of happily married film couples – Michael Denison and Dulcie Gray, Michael Redgrave and Rachel Kempson, Laurence Olivier and Vivien

Leigh, Jimmy Hanley and Dinah Sheridan – often depicted in circumstances of comfortable domesticity.

But there was a dark side to the idea of home with the recognition of the suburban discontent, psychological upset and anxiety about the future highlighted in *Brief Encounter* and *The Small Back Room*. Hollie Price's close reading of her chosen films in which she analyses camerawork, editing, set design and framing to demonstrate the practical realisation of her thesis confirms the book as a welcome re-evaluation of 1940s cinema and the excavation of its hidden depths.

Jeffrey Richards