

WATERSHIP DOWN

15th February 1978

Nepenthe Films Limited

Category: *U*

No cuts

Country of origin: UK

Footage: 9178 feet

Running time: 1 hour 42 minutes

The film of the book though, since neither examiners nor JF (who watched much of it with us) had read it, it's impossible to say how closely this follows the original. Anyway it's the socio/political tale of a group of rabbits, led by Hazel and Fiver, who break away from their warren, full of foreboding about some enormous but unspecified impending danger, to search for new territory in which to form a new community. Their encounters with a repressive rabbit regime, with humans in the shape of the farmer and his family, with tame rabbits in the farm hutch, with the farm cat, with a marvellous mad bird who guides them for a while and, finally for Hazel, with the great white rabbit in the sky, are detailed with reverent care in painstaking animation. Animation removes the realistic gory horror in the occasional scenes of violence and bloodshed, and we felt that, while the film may move children emotionally during the film's duration, it could not seriously trouble them once the spell of the story is broken, and that a *U* certificate was therefore quite appropriate.