



NEWSLETTER NO. 47 APRIL 2020

INFORMATION REGARDING CHANGES TO OUR SCHEDULED PROGRAMS

PRESIDENT RAY EDMONDSON'S MESSAGE:

This newsletter comes to you rather later than intended, because events moved very rapidly while the editor, Lindy Ross, was finalising the pages which normally advertise our coming public presentations in Canberra and Melbourne. The NFSA closed its doors, those presentations suddenly had to be postponed to become future aspirations, and we all found ourselves socially distancing as Covid-19 reshaped our lives for the coming months. NFSA staff are working from home, and your Committee is adjusting to meeting electronically rather than physically. So this issue has been rearranged accordingly.

Since we do not know when business as usual can be resumed, we have taken the step of extending all memberships by six months, and will revisit that decision later if it is necessary. Meanwhile we do plan to stay in touch with members electronically, and if you have suggestions about what we might be able to offer in the on-line world, please email them! While you are "distancing" at home, it's a golden opportunity to start exploring what is available on your laptop, phone or smart TV, and I would suggest there is no better place to begin than the huge array of possibilities on the NFSA website www.nfsa.gov.au

We have a new Committee member - Emeritus Professor Jill Matthews - and we have farewelled our long standing Vice President, Chris Harrison, who decided to step down at the end of 2019. Chris is a former NSA staff member, dating back to the 1970s and the institution's pre-history as part of the National Library, and his personal interest in the NFSA and the Friends will continue. The Committee felt it appropriate to recognise his service by the presentation of a Life Membership in the Friends.

Ray Edmondson

Our 2020 Friday with Friends program had a wonderful start with the booked out screening of Canberra's own 1970's feature film - **Demonstrator!**



DEMONSTRATOR - A DARK HORSE!

We weren't sure what to expect when we re-presented Canberra's one and only locally financed feature film, made in 1971. Would anyone remember it, we wondered? It was one of many hopeful productions at the time that aimed to re-start the moribund Australian feature film industry. Like most of them, it failed to excite either the critics or the box office. Although it had a successful run in Canberra, it did poorly elsewhere and soon disappeared from sight.



What we didn't expect was that the Friends' screening would be picked up so enthusiastically by the local press and radio. It attracted a full house at the NFSA theatrette - there wasn't a spare seat - and regrettably it meant that some who couldn't get in were disappointed. In the audience were Canberrans who saw the film back in 1971, and in some cases were actually IN the film - in the numerous crowd sequences.

This film is an extraordinary time capsule - both of life in the 1970s and of a smaller, simpler, now lost Canberra. Former NFSA staffer Chris Kennedy, writing in the Canberra Times on Feb 20th had his own particular memory of the film:

'The landscapes are what stuck in my mind. I recall a particular shot from the top level of the then Lakeside (now QT) Hotel, across a single lane Parkes Way towards the National Library of Australia, with barely a tree to be seen in our now established Commonwealth Park.

"Also memorable is an extended cocktail party scene in the foyer of the National Library. I had stood, waited and read in that foyer a hundred times, but seeing it in its youth I truly appreciated its beauty and it remains one of my favourite spots in our city since."

The film premiered at the Center Cinema on 5 April 1971. The opening night celebrations of a champagne supper on the roof of the new YWCA building in Alinga Street were fittingly interrupted by demonstrators waving placards protesting against the low pay they'd received as extras.

DUE TO DEMAND WE PLAN A REPEAT SCREENING OF 'DEMONSTRATOR' WHEN CONDITIONS PERMIT

3.



Congratulations Life Member of the Friends, Chris Harrison.

President Ray Edmondson presents retiring Vice President Chris with his Life Membership Award, *'In grateful recognition of his service to the Friends of the NFSA during his long tenure as Vice President and his commitment to the Archive and its predecessor during his professional career.'*

Our proposed program of CMAG Friday with Friends events . . . post COVID 19!

1950's TV NOSTALGIA Part 2

Television began in Australia in 1956, and early programming came mostly from America, which opened its doors to studio backlogs as well as made-for-television series. In this selection we will view an episode of MY LITTLE MARGIE, supported by a LITTLE RASCALS short and CUBBY BEAR cartoon from the 1930s, as well as an episode of the CRUSADER RABBIT cartoon serial.



FLASH GORDON

The STAR WARS universe is the 21st century descendant of the science fiction matinee serials of the 1930s, so grab a packet of Jaffas or Fantaes and re-live that Saturday arvo experience. The screening will feature a condensed presentation of the very first Flash Gordon serial from 1936.



THE MUSIC OF LAUREL AND HARDY

It may seem oddly familiar. The melodious background music of the Laurel and Hardy short films, and other 1930s productions of the Hal Roach Studios, was all the work of one man - composer LeRoy Shield. Never released separately from the films, this music is now being faithfully recreated in authentic "low fidelity" by Beau Hunks, a Netherlands-based orchestra that uses antique instruments and old-fashioned recording techniques. Ray Edmondson takes us on a journey through the films and the music and unpacks the extraordinary story behind the mission of this talented group.



MELBOURNE FRIENDS:

if you belong to (and perhaps can visit) the Melbourne Chapter of the Friends, check out what's happening here !

Due to the coronavirus pandemic, the Melbourne Friends group has cancelled its monthly Sundays With Friends events for the foreseeable future. We're planning to resume our program once things return to something resembling normal. In the meantime, our Melbourne members can look forward to receiving regular news and updates from the committee in Canberra, as well as suggestions for online viewing from the NFSA. Please contact Teresa Pitt at teresa.pitt@outlook.com for further information.

OUR POSTPONED PROGRAM

NEWSFRONT (1978)

Directed by Phillip Noyce and produced by David Elfick, *Newsfront* represents a seminal moment in the emergence of Australian cinema on the world stage. Highly acclaimed at the 1978 Cannes Film Festival, and the winner of 18 international awards, it garnered rave reviews from critics around the world and became a major box office success at home.



THE MAN, THE WOMAN AND THE EDISON PHONOGRAPH: RACE, HISTORY, TECHNOLOGY AND SONG

This will be a presentation by Bruce Watson about Fanny Cochrane Smith, the last fluent speaker of an Indigenous Tasmanian language. Wax cylinder recordings were made of Fanny in 1899 and 1903, and they have been pivotal in reconstructing *palawa kani*, a revived language used by Aboriginal Tasmanians today.



2020 Committee:

President: Ray Edmondson **Vice-President:** David Kilby
Secretary: Sue Terry **Treasurer:** Chris Emery
Committee Members: Jill Matthews, Tony Briscoe, and Lindy Ross
Public Officer: Jude Briscoe

ATTENTION ALL MEMBERS

At its last meeting, your committee decided to extend the membership expiry dates, by at least six months, for all members who were financial as at 1 March 2020. We will reassess and, if necessary, extend that time period as the COVID-19 situation runs its course.

We also decided to delay commencing the memberships of all new members whose applications had not yet been processed until we are free to offer programs to members again. These new members, however, have been added to our newsletter and email mailing list.

If you have any questions, please contact us as archivefriends@gmail.com

NFSA Restores is an exciting program to digitise, restore and preserve, at the highest archival standards, classic and cult Australian films so they can be seen on the big screen in today's digital cinemas.

The collection belongs to all Australians but it is fragile. Films, tapes, recordings, photographs and costumes can all deteriorate over time and need constant care.

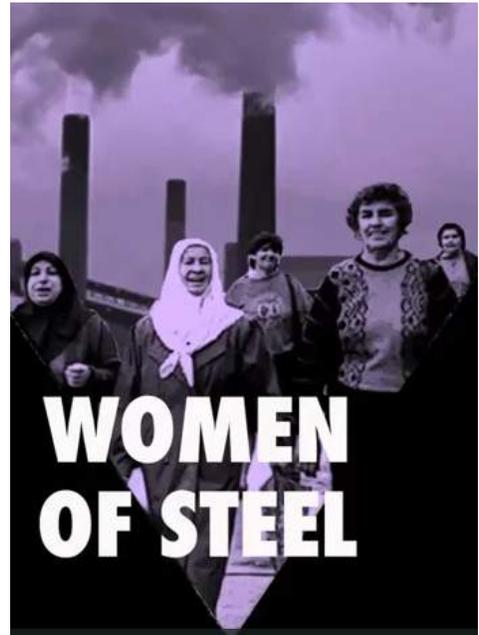
The NFSA is always working to preserve Australia's audio-visual collection and make it available to as many people as possible. The Committee decided it would be appropriate for the Friends of the NFSA to support this important venture with a \$1000 donation, our second donation of this amount.

Individuals may also wish to donate – and can do so at the

NFSA: <https://www.nfsa.gov.au/about/our-mission/support-us/nfsa-restores-campaign>

WOMEN OF STEEL

From time to time we receive requests for support and donations, but hesitate to send them all on to our members. However, this time the request is for a documentary drawing extensively on archive footage, and is produced by a long-time supporter of the NFSA, so we have decided to share it with you for your information and consideration. The subject is a significant new documentary about a piece of hidden history: Wollongong's 1980-1994 Jobs for Women Campaign. Consulting producer, Martha Ansara calls it "a multicultural – and exemplary -- tale about women who really made a difference and it's told with directness and humour by memorable, engaging characters."



Check out the

trailer: <https://vimeo.com/344035067> and check out the film's information

Production of the film - which draws on archival footage and has original music by Jan Preston - is in its final stages. However, they just need a little more money to cover their final post production costs.

Director Robynne Murphy says that "with nearly 400 supporters so far, all we'd need is a \$10 or \$20 donation (or more!!) from everyone and we'd definitely be there! We know that not everyone can do this, and some of you have already given substantial donations, so we don't want to harangue you too much (but just a bit is OK)! If you know friends who'd like to be on our Wall of Struggle (and thus in our end credits) and they're not already on our website, ask them to donate to the completion of our film! Details below.

You can:

- make a Tax deductible donation of any amount over \$2 via the Documentary Australia Website (<https://documentaryaustralia.com.au/project/jobs-for-women-film-project>)
- donate directly into their (non tax-deductible) account: Bank details: Jobs for Women Film Producers Group; BSB: 633000; Account No: 153873245

Tap and Donate at the NFSA!

You may noticed the little device on the reception counter **called Tap and Donate** - a little terminal that enables people to make a small pre-set donation to the work of the NFSA.

HOW DOES IT WORK? Simply tap your credit card on the screen, and the standard (pre-set) donation amount (currently \$4) is automatically deducted from your account.

IS IT TAX DEDUCTIBLE? Yes, but you do not get a receipt. Your bank statement suffices as evidence for your claim on your tax return.

CALLING for VOLUNTEERS!

Are you interested in film culture?

If you would like to help the committee in some way - perhaps with our events or publicity, for example - we are also interested to hear from you. You may wish to man the desk on NFSA Film Nights, or give introductions to the films shown on these occasions.

To offer your services or to find out more about any of these, please email Sue Terry at archivefriends@gmail.com



The Friends would like to acknowledge the support of the IT firm, Blue Packets, in hosting our website.

Find the Friends on Facebook [www.facebook.comNFSAFriends](https://www.facebook.com/NFSAFriends)

or on our website www.archivefriends.org.au



Check the Friends' website and Facebook page to keep up with what's happening!

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