

**FRIENDS OF THE NATIONAL FILM AND SOUND  
ARCHIVE INC**

# **NEWSLETTER**

**ISSUE 21**

**July 2009**

Founding Patrons: Gil Brealy, Bryan Brown, Anthony Buckley, Scott Hicks, Patricia Lovell, Chris Noonan, Michael Pate, Fred Schepisi, Albie Thoms

*Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world.  
Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has. Margaret Mead*

**DEAR FRIENDS,**

It is nearly a year since the NFSA achieved independent statutory status, on 1 July 2008. This was first recommended in the report of its initial Advisory Committee, *Time in our hands*, in 1985. You can read the Act at <http://tinyurl.com/kj7wzq>. With the implementation of the Act, the NFSA's former association with the Australian Film Commission (merged into Screen Australia as from the same date) has come to an end.

Under the Act the NFSA has a governing Board, which took office on the same date. It is chaired by Professor Chris Puplick AM and membership includes the founding president of the Friends of the NFSA, Andrew Pike OAM.

In November Dr Darryl McIntyre took up the position of inaugural Chief Executive.

For more information about Dr McIntyre, Professor Puplick and the new Board, you can go to the NFSA website: [http://www.nfsa.gov.au/about\\_us/corporate/ceo\\_profile.html](http://www.nfsa.gov.au/about_us/corporate/ceo_profile.html)

For more background, read on.....

**THE FRIENDS COMMITTEE**

At the AGM Friday 16 December 2008, the following committee members were elected: Ann Baylis (President), Sue Terry (Secretary), Chris Emery (Treasurer), Adrian Cunningham, Ray Edmondson, James Sandry, Chris Harrison.

Outgoing committee members Shelley Clarke, Peter Hislop, Andrew Pike and Simon Weaving were thanked for their many years of service to the Friends. Congratulations were extended to Andrew Pike on his appointment to the Board of the NFSA.

**THE FRIENDS' STORY SO FAR....**

The Friends was established in 2000 in response to the "re-branding" of the NFSA as ScreenSound Australia. Among other things it campaigned for a restoration of the original name (achieved in 2004), and - following the "integration" of the Archive with the Australian Film Commission in 2003 - for the creation of the NFSA as an independent statutory authority. Working in concert with other groups, such as Archive Forum, Australian Society of Archivists and the Australian Historical Association, it achieved this aim last year.

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A brief account of the complex story can be found in *Getting Ahead: Achieving an Effective Arts Advocacy* by Chris Puplick (*Platform Papers #18, October 2008, published by Currency House – pages 48 to 51*) which concludes with the following paragraph:

*This was an exercise in old-fashioned politics. A determined group of well-informed and dedicated individuals embarked on a campaign to reverse a significant government policy in the arts. By the traditional methods of lobbying the Opposition, seeking support within the Government's own ranks, mobilising external support groups and interests, using the parliamentary meetings such as estimates committees to raise questions and concerns, and planting or encouraging favourable media reporting, this complete reversal of policy was achieved. What is more, the poachers were then appointed as the gamekeepers and of course, now have to deliver on the claims they made about the benefits of their preferred course of action.*

## **NEW FRIENDS CHARTER**

With the achievement of Statutory Authority status, the time has come to modify the Friends' charter. The committee has revised it and the updated version can be found on the Friends website at: <http://www.archivefriends.org.au/index.php/charter>

As set out in the *Act*, the Archive is now an autonomous authority with its defined responsibilities for collecting, preserving and providing access to the National Collection of moving images, recorded sound and related materials. Accordingly, the Friends can now turn its focus to developing a program of membership activities.

## **MEMBERSHIP**

The Committee is exploring a fee-based membership program which will offer members a range of activities and benefits in return for a membership fee. A budget is being put together that will include an initial membership fee of \$25 based on a rolling 12 month membership. For this, members will receive a Newsletter three times a year, discounts at the Archive's Shop and Cinema, invitations to attend regional screenings and events, and other benefits as negotiated from time to time. You will also receive advance notification of Archive events through the Newsletter and email mailouts.

The Committee is now focusing on the content of a Members' program and developing an interactive website.

The Members' program could include:

- Celebrating the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the NFSA in October, possibly with a special event in collaboration with the Archive
- Lunchtime events featuring talks and demonstrations of the work of the Archive
- Possible CD launches/film premiere

Over the coming months, your Friends committee will be working out a program of activities for 2010. We will appreciate input from our members, either now or in the future, to assist in this process. For instance, we would like to hear what activities of the Archive are of interest and should be included in future Newsletters or as part of the lunchtime talks.

## **REEL MCCOY FILM GROUP**

The Reel McCoy Film Group has been proudly presenting quality cinema to Canberra film-lovers since 1990. For most of those years, its screenings have taken place at the National Film and Sound Archive. It now screens every second Wednesday at 6pm in the theatre at the National Library of Australia.

The program of films is selected for the most part from the National Film and Sound Archive's National Film and Video Lending Service which is a cinematic treasure trove: classics, documentaries and shorts from all over the world, and stretching from the very early days of film-making to the present.

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The Reel McCoy is delighted to offer a special arrangement for the Friends of the NFSA. A member of the Friends of the NFSA is entitled to come to three free screenings of the Reel McCoy per year.

Season two in 2009, beginning on 8 July, will feature not only some classic cinema, but also some familiar faces. Ray Edmondson will introduce the 1938 Cinesound film *Mr Chedworth Steps Out*; Susan West will introduce the Preston Sturges film *Unfaithfully Yours*; Dr David Headon will introduce our tribute to Bud Tingwell, *King of the Coral Sea*; Marilyn Dooley will introduce *The Squatter's Daughter*; Canberra film-maker David Doepel will present Billy Wilder's *Some Like it Hot*; and publicist extraordinaire Coralie Woods will introduce *The Blue Angel* with Marlene Dietrich.

## ARCHIVE ACTIVITIES

All members of the Friends are invited to contribute to this part of the Newsletter. We kick the series off with two reports from members of the Committee, Sue Terry and Ray Edmondson. Sue has provided a personal response to the recent Voss Journey at the Archive event, while Ray talks about his archival activities.

### The VOSS JOURNEY at the Archive, Canberra May 14-17, 2009 – Sue Terry

The Voss Journey was a four-day event coordinated by the National Film and Sound Archive (NFSA) and the National Library of Australia (NLA) that rather comprehensively explored the fictional journeys of Johann Ulrich Voss and his historical counterpart Ludwig Leichhardt. Sessions were held at various locations around Canberra, and guests included many of the key literary and musical figures associated with Voss in its various manifestations, including stage and film director Jim Sharman, writers David Malouf and David Marr, composers Richard Meale and Peter Sculthorpe, singers Marilyn Richardson and Geoffrey Chard, and historian Barry Jones.

I managed to attend just one event: the live broadcast of ABC Radio National's Music Show at the National Film and Sound Archive. The show's first guest was the ubiquitous but always interesting Barry Jones talking about Ludwig Leichhardt and the inspirations behind the character of Voss. He suggested that Voss is an amalgam of three people - Leichhardt, another explorer with a somewhat tragic life, Edward John Eyre, and Patrick White himself. Jones said that White was attracted to the idea of doomed characters trying to find their place in the world (reflecting, he said, Leichhardt, who, in his journals, referred to Goethe's belief that Providence picks out someone for a task and then abandons them).

Andrew Ford, the *Music Show's* presenter, played an interview he'd recorded with David Malouf who wrote the libretto for the *Voss* opera. Malouf talked about the challenges of "converting" *Voss* to opera, describing the language as "very peculiar" and as belonging to the "high point of expressionist modernism". He suggested that the fact that much of *Voss* is told through the interior communication between Voss and Laura has made it hard to translate into film, whereas music, like text, can overcome the boundaries of space and more easily handle the interior communication.

The opera *Voss* was first performed at the Adelaide Festival in 1986, with baritone Geoffrey Chard as Voss and soprano Marilyn Richardson as Laura. Both were interviewed by Andrew Ford. Geoffrey Chard laughed that Patrick White was reported as saying that he gave Chard his "most hated character" and was "sure he'd do it very well". Chard wondered whether to take that as a compliment or not. Chard and Richardson also read an excerpt from one of the never-produced *Voss* screenplays (written by David Mercer for Joseph Losey), with actress Kate Fitzpatrick reading the screen directions. It was a treat to see and hear these professionals.

For the rest of the program Ford interviewed Australian Opera's Artistic Director at the time of the production, Moffat Oxenbould, the opera's director, Jim Sharman, and then *the Voss Journey* curators, Vincent Plush (NFSA) and Robyn Holmes (NLA). Sharman, essentially reiterated Malouf, in suggesting that trying to visualise *Voss* in a film "could be reductive". Plush and Holmes talked a little about Richard Meale, composer of the opera, and indicated that plans were afoot for more celebrations in 2012 - Patrick White's centenary and Richard Meale's 80th birthday.

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Being the ABC's Music Show, the interviews were interspersed with some live and recorded music - including music from the opera and music contemporaneous with Leichhardt's time. The live music was performed by the RMC Duntroon Band, Jaina Kruege (harp), and Louise Page (vocals) and Marie-Cecile Darne (harp). It was, overall, an entertaining and enlightening two hours. I hope there will be many more such events in the NFSA's future, collaboratively organised or otherwise.

## **WANDERING THOUGHTS – Ray Edmondson**

I have been asked by the editor to describe my somewhat itinerant life as a consultant in audiovisual archiving, which - among other things - entails a considerable amount of local and international travel.

I'll start with education. There are several regular postgraduate courses around the world which are now the principal formal training ground for tomorrow's (and sometimes today's) audiovisual archivists. They include the Selznick School at George Eastman House, Rochester NY (USA); the MA course in Film Archiving at University of East Anglia, Norwich, UK; the MIAP course at New York University and, of course, the Graduate Certificate in Audiovisual Archiving at Charles Sturt University, here in Australia. I'm a regular or guest lecturer in several such courses, and I focus on the theoretical and administrative aspects of our profession: such as philosophy, ethics, politics, publicity, leadership and advocacy. For an example of the latter, check "Australia" at <http://soima.iccrom.org> – and you'll see that the NFSA figures heavily in my presentations as a model. Much can be learned by others from its unique history.

Workshops are more diverse, both geographically and in content. Topics range over the whole gamut of our profession. For example, philosophy at the Cinemateca Brasileira, Sao Paulo; broadcast archiving at the South African Broadcasting Corporation, Johannesburg; a staff training workshop at the Hong Kong Film Archive; a general introduction to audiovisual archiving for librarians and archivists in Caracas, Venezuela. And then there are the more traditional consultancy tasks of examining, assessing, advising and report writing which have taken me to archives and institutions in every continent and region. In my diary this year, for example, are projects in Papua New Guinea, Barbados, Palestine and Iran.

In our field there are several professional associations, including IASA (International Association of Sound and Audiovisual Archives), SEAPAVAA (South East Asia Pacific Audio Visual Archive Association) and FIAF (International Federation of Film Archives). These and other bodies are grouped in the CCAAA (Coordinating Council of Audiovisual Archives Associations – [www.ccaaa.org](http://www.ccaaa.org)) which meets under the auspices of UNESCO. Archives like NFSA, as well as individuals like me, are involved in the conferences, events and committees which operate under this umbrella ... and in activities generated by UNESCO itself, which is a vital player in the archive, library and museum fields. (In a future newsletter, I'll say something about UNESCO's "Memory of the World" program and how it impinges on the NFSA and other Australian institutions.)

But wait, there's one more thing. For those who think that international consulting is glamorous, lucrative and exotic, let me say that hotel rooms, meeting rooms and seminar halls look pretty much the same in any country. Cattle class travel in crowded planes is rather less than glamorous, and much of my time is donated to clients who have no means of paying for it. What I really think of, when I pack for each trip (my suitcase was a retirement present from NFSA staff in 2001), is the people I'll encounter and the hope that I'll be able to meet a genuine need wherever I'm going. That makes it worthwhile.

[www.archival.com.au](http://www.archival.com.au)

## **SEAPAVAA CONFERENCE IN JAKARTA**

The South East Asia Pacific Audiovisual Archive Association (SEAPAVAA) held its latest annual conference in Jakarta and Bandung, Indonesia, over 15 to 20 May 2009.

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Keynote speaker at the conference was NFSA Chairman, Professor Chris Puplick. Other symposium speakers from Australia were Ross Gibbs, Director General of the National Archives of Australia, Mick Newnham from the NFSA, and Ray Edmondson, representing the Friends of the NFSA. (You can read all the papers and other documents, and get a visual overview of the conference, on the website at <http://www.pia.gov.ph/seapavaa>)

Like the NFSA, the Friends is a long time affiliate of SEAPAVAA, which has an eclectic membership: as well as audiovisual archives, there are national archives, national libraries, broadcasters, individual practitioners – and other Friends' groups, such as the Society of Film Archivists of the Philippines (SOFIA) and the Friends of the Sinematek Indonesia.

SEAPAVAA was actually born at the NFSA. At the conclusion of the first ASEAN-Australia Training Seminar for Audiovisual Archivists in 1995, hosted in Canberra by the NFSA, a steering committee was established which led to an inaugural conference in Manila in 1996. SEAPAVAA celebrated its tenth anniversary by convening in Canberra in 2006, at a conference hosted jointly by NFSA and the New Zealand Film Archive. On that occasion a symbolic tree was planted in the NFSA grounds.

The NFSA has always served as a technical, training and general resource for archives in the region and that commitment was renewed at this recent conference.

### **SAMSON AND DELILAH – Ann Baylis**

This film has received a large amount of well-deserved positive publicity. It was screened at the Archive together with a Q&A session with the director, Warwick Thornton. It's a powerful vision of life in a Central Australian Indigenous community and focuses on a pair of young people in love. All the current issues of family, work, substance abuse and violence are handled with honesty, humour and gentleness. **Samson and Delilah** has had a positive response from both critics and the public. The film won the Cannes Film Festival prize for a first time feature film director.

### **ABOUT THE FRIENDS**

The Friends is a group of advocates, working to further the aims of the Archive and to encourage links between the Archive, the film and sound communities and the general community. In essence, the Friends want to promote excellence in film and sound culture, including: best practice in preservation, public programs and access; promoting high level appreciation of film and sound heritage and contemporary culture; creativity in the use of our Archive; and a broad, outward looking focus that locates Australia in the South East Asia-Pacific region and globally.

To achieve our ends, we rely on Friends to contribute energy and enthusiasm, and to participate in events that will provide the resources. You can never have too many friends. Please encourage your friends and colleagues to join us. And if you feel you would like to contribute by joining our committee, don't hesitate to contact us.

### **There are many ways that you can help:**

- Helping with the newsletter
- Becoming a committee member
- Writing letters
- Signing up your family members and friends as new Friends
- Helping with fundraising
- Attending events.

Please don't hesitate to put up your hand for any of these activities. All offers of assistance will be greatly appreciated.

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We hope you have enjoyed this newsletter and we would love to hear from you on any Friends topic. You can contact us at: [archivefriends@gmail.com](mailto:archivefriends@gmail.com) or write to us at PO Box 9618, Deakin, ACT, 2600.

### **WITH BEST WISHES FROM YOUR COMMITTEE**

ANN BAYLIS – President

Ann worked at the NFSA managing the collection building, cataloguing and public programs, including the exhibition, outreach and education programs. Ann helped establish the regional touring film and sound programs, and the Kodak/Atlab Feature Film Collection. She was project manager of the new building. Ann was chair of the Cataloguing and Documentation Committee of the International Federation of Film Archives. She has a long held interest in Australian films and recording artists.

ADRIAN CUNNINGHAM

Adrian has worked at the National Archives of Australia (NAA) since 1998, where he is currently Director, Strategic Relations and Personal Records. Adrian was Secretary of the International Council on Archives (ICA) Committee on Descriptive Standards (2002-2004), and is Treasurer of the Pacific Regional Branch of the ICA, Convenor of the Australian Society of Archivists Descriptive Standards Committee and a member of Standards Australia's Committee IT/21, Records Management. Adrian was President of the Australian Society of Archivists, 1998-2000 and was inducted as a Fellow of that Society in 2007.

RAY EDMONDSON

Former Deputy Director and current Curator Emeritus of NFSA, Ray is principal of the consultancy company Archive Associates. He teaches and consults internationally and his principal writings, which include the UNESCO monograph "Audiovisual Archiving: Philosophy and Principles" (2004), have been translated into nine languages. Among his current roles, Ray is chairman of MOWCAP – the UNESCO "Memory of the World" Committee for Asia Pacific. [www.archival.com.au](http://www.archival.com.au)

CHRIS EMERY – Treasurer

Retired, Professional Communications Engineer. Chris worked for 32 years in the Australian Government Department of Civil Aviation – in Melbourne, Sydney, Brisbane, Port Moresby and Canberra. Since retiring, Chris has been working as a volunteer for a number of non-profit organisations. Chris is an enthusiastic attendee at the National Folk Festival and the Sydney Film Festival.

CHRIS HARRISON

Chris has worked in the National Library's Film Section, and started cataloguing films from the National Film Archive collection. He also worked in the Rare Books Section of the National Library and became equally passionate about historical bibliography and all aspects of printing, book design and publishing. Chris has a continuing interest in films, and was on the committee of the first Canberra Film Festival, in the 1970s to early 1980s. Chris has written scripts for television, radio and stage.

JAMES SANDRY

President of the Reel McCoy Film Society, James also works as a policy officer in the Australian Government Dept of Broadband, Communications and Digital Media. James worked for seven years at the National Archive of Australia where he developed an interest in Australia's archival heritage. While interested in films for as long as he can remember, James became interested in film culture through the great films the Reel McCoy shows every fortnight.

SUE TERRY – Secretary

Former staff member of the NFSA who managed such areas as the National Film Lending Collection, Documentation and Cataloguing, Sue is now retired. In addition to doing some casual research and writing

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work, primarily in the areas of film and librarianship, Sue is enjoying finding time to catch up on her interests in books, films, music and travel.