



WHAT'S THE NEWS? 4

SEPTEMBER 2002

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

**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**

### **HELLO FRIENDS**

#### **NOTICE OF OUR FIRST ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

All Friends are invited to attend the first Annual General Meeting of the Friends of the National Film and Sound Archive Inc. to be held at the Archive's Mitchell Store Facilities, 10-12 Bailleau Circuit Mitchell at 6.00 pm on Thursday 3 October 2002.

The meeting's purpose is for the Friends to receive from the committee a statement of activities, income, expenditure, assets and liabilities of the association and to elect office bearers of the association as well as ordinary members of the committee.

Nominations of candidates for election are now invited for the association's office-bearer positions of president, vice-president, treasurer and secretary and for three ordinary committee member positions. Please consider becoming more involved in your association. Its goals are important to the Australian community and the experience is likely to be most rewarding. You would be VERY welcome. Nomination forms are now available. You can ask for one by emailing your request to [friendsofarchive@hotmail.com](mailto:friendsofarchive@hotmail.com) or ringing Charlie on 6248 0851. If you are unable to attend the meeting and wish to vote by proxy, contact us and we will send you a proxy voting form.

#### **EXCLUSIVE FRIENDS BEHIND-THE-SCENES TOUR**

To celebrate our first AGM, we are offering the Friends a special opportunity. The Archive's Manager of Collection Management, Bob Pymm, has kindly agreed to take us on a tour of the Archive's Mitchell primary store facility.

The AGM will be followed by an introductory talk from Bob, who will then lead us on a behind-the-scenes tour and, to round off our evening, we invite you to linger for some nibbles and a drink (or two) of Trilogy sparkling wine courtesy of our sponsor, Orlando.

For catering purposes, please let us know by COB Friday 27 September if you will be attending and, so we can assist the security people, we ask that you assemble at the front of the Bailleau Circuit building by 5.50 pm. There is plenty of free parking.

## **THE ARCHIVE'S MITCHELL STORAGE FACILITY**

The Archive, along with a number of other Canberra cultural institutions, maintains its major storage facilities in Mitchell. These comprise a primary store where our preservation copies are held in controlled conditions ranging from 5 degrees C, 35% relative humidity (for colour film) to 16 degrees and 35% RH for b/w film and audio recordings. This is a secure facility with a high level of fit out and environmental control.

Around 400 metres away, a secondary storage facility, with basic conditions of 16 degrees and 40-45%RH is used to house our second or third copies of collection items. It is also used as a staging post for incoming material which is yet to be examined.

The other major Mitchell store is a purpose designed series of vaults used to hold our nitrate film. Twelve small, fire-proof vaults hold nitrate at 5 degrees C and 35%RH. Access is strictly limited and movement of nitrate carefully controlled. Virtually all of the Archive's collection is held in these storage facilities with very little held on-site at our headquarters in Acton.

## **HELLO WEBSITE**

Thanks to the generosity and talent of committee member, Cris Kennedy, we will soon have a presence on the Internet, it will be up and running as soon as we finalise details with our host site. He has done a terrific job with the site's design and its contents will include How to Join, Newsletter Back Issues, Discussion Papers, Mission Statement, Events and Contact information. CHIRP is the host of our site and the address is [www.archivefriends.org.au](http://www.archivefriends.org.au). Check it out shortly!

## **GOODBYE FLICKS**

As part of its efforts to deal with its financial problems, ScreenSound has taken the decision to cut back on its *Flicks* screenings in the beautiful art deco theatre in the Canberra building. These screenings have been held weekly and sometimes more frequently and have been very successful, often attracting full houses. They have provided a wider emphasis on screen culture, as well as showcasing the collection. One of the last programs screened, on five consecutive nights, were animated features from many countries, including Australia, presented as part of Science Week. The program will continue on a monthly basis, and screenings will be tied to current exhibitions and other special activities. The organisation is looking towards sponsorship to meet some of the costs of the screening program. The ScreenSound Club will continue to promote the role and functions of ScreenSound Australia.

## **STRATEGIC PLAN**

Thanks to the professional assistance of committee member, Shauna Hicks, the Friends now has a well-developed draft Strategic Plan and Mission Statement.

We are including it in this newsletter so that all Friends now have the opportunity to read it and perhaps comment. We would love to hear your views.

## **PREAMBLE**

The Friends of the National Film and Sound Archive is an independent non-profit association with a national membership base. The aims and objectives of the Friends of the National Film and Sound Archive outlined below add up to one clear goal - as Friends we support and promote the best present and future interests of the Archive, and hence the values, activities, obligations and potential it represents.

The name of the association is professionally normative, and links the corporate heritage of the Archive with its long-term future as a permanent and legislatively based national custodial institution.

### **MISSION STATEMENT**

The Friends of the National Film and Sound Archive supports the ongoing preservation, development and promotion of Australia's archival heritage and contemporary film and sound culture.

### **OBJECTIVES**

- Seek ongoing public assessment and affirmation of the core responsibilities and functions of the Archive and, to that end, ensure that the word 'archive' is always used in the formal name of the institution
- Seek the reinstatement of the title 'National Film and Sound Archive' as the primary public identity of the institution
- Seek the establishment of the Archive as a statutory authority or similar legislatively enabled autonomous body, of equivalent status, mandate and powers to the other national custodial institutions, and with its name conforming to their normative pattern
- Promote the optimum flow of information and ideas between the Archive, the film and sound communities and the community at large
- Promote principles of best practice in archival management, preservation and public access programs
- Promote principles of academic and professional excellence in work using or based on archival resources
- Encourage public awareness of the Archive's work and its resources
- Promote and assist the Archive in its proactive engagement with the current film and sound communities and the community at large
- Promote creative initiatives involving archival resources
- Promote and support the international work of the Archive
- Stimulate and assist in the creation of, and support the work of, a professional association of film and sound archivists in Australia and in the South East Asia and Pacific regions
- Build a broad base of Friends who will organise, support and participate in forums, conferences, screenings, lectures and special events to promote Friends objectives
- Raise, or assist in raising, funds to support specific Archive programs.

### **STRATEGIC PRIORITIES 2002/03**

- Pursue effective lobbying initiatives in support of the objectives of the Friends
- Pursue the urgent need for enabling legislation
- Foster an appreciation of archival film and sound heritage within the Australian community
- Pursue beneficial alliances with cognate Australian and international organisations such as the ASA (Australian Society of Archivists), ATOM (Australian Teachers of Media, Museums Australia, SEAPAVAA (South East Asia Pacific Audio Visual Archive Association), IASA (International Association of Sound and Audiovisual Archives), AMIA (Association of Moving Image Archivists and UNESCO.
- Produce discussion/position papers on statutory authority status and nomenclature

### **ONGOING ACTIVITIES**

- Produce a quarterly newsletter
- Organise irregular activities such as film viewings, tours of repositories etc
- Ensure efficient and accountable management and administration of the governance of the Friends

- Organise an AGM together with an event to allow members to meet each other and discuss relevant issues
- Establish and maintain branches of the Friends in capital cities outside Canberra
- Pursue activities and initiatives that will increase the membership of the Friends and encourage existing members to retain their membership
- Maintain an informative presence on the WWW
- Prepare submissions on, and lobby for, the future development of the Archive
- Pursue fundraising activities and initiatives to further promote the objectives of the Friends

## **FILM AND BROADCAST INDUSTRIES ORAL HISTORY GROUP (FBIOHG)**

### **An Historical Outline**

The Film and Broadcast Industries Oral History Group (FBIOHG) first met, as the Film-makers Oral History Group (FOHG) in Sydney on 16 April 1991. Chaired by Martha Ansara, the meeting was attended by Judy Adamson, Joan Long, James McCarthy (for the then National Film and Sound Archive) and Graham Shirley. This group of filmmakers and oral historians had a shared interest in recording interviews on the history of the Australian cinema, television and radio.

This meeting recognised the importance of completing the transcription of the 35 interviews recorded under the late 1970s AFC-funded Film-makers Oral History Project held by the Archive. Since the project had not been fully transcribed, it was regarded in 1991 as being incomplete. As many privately recorded interviews were held in the collections of individual historians, the meeting also felt that efforts should be made to have these interviews sent to the Archive.

The next meeting of FOHG (at the Archive's Crows Nest office) was held on 9 May 1994. Since then, FOHG, and more recently FBIOHG, have met monthly, sometimes bi-monthly at the Archive's Sydney office, which is now located at Fox Studios Australia. Many notable oral historians and representatives of the film, television and radio industries have attended these meetings. Since the first meeting, the Archive has been represented by staff from the Sydney and Canberra offices.

The aims of the Film and Broadcast Industries Oral History Group are:

1. To record oral history with practitioners across a broad spectrum of the film and broadcast industries.
2. To ensure that these interviews are transcribed so that their content can be preserved and therefore useful to historians, filmmakers and the general public in the future. One pressing reason for this is that every means of recording such interviews is known to deteriorate over time. The other, and just as important, is the need for these interviews to be publicly available. The best books on Australian film, radio and television have made use of oral history.
3. To pool knowledge of what has already been recorded—to create an easily accessible central register. The Archive will progressively provide listings and indexes of these oral histories on its website.
4. To lobby for more institutional support to ensure that film and broadcast industry oral history continues to be recorded.
5. To offer advice and support to the Archive from a film and broadcast industry practitioner's point of view.
6. To raise the awareness of the value of these interviews.

In January 1995, Martha Ansara and Graham Shirley appealed over ABC radio for voluntary transcribers to come forward and transcribe the Archive's as-yet untranscribed film and broadcast-related oral histories. As a result of this appeal, several volunteers contacted the Archive's Sydney and Canberra offices. Since that time, a large number of the Archive's interviews have been typed by these and other transcribers.

The Film and Broadcast Industries Oral History Group has continued to productively interact with the Archive. The group has advised the Archive on interview subject, transcript, cataloguing and access priorities, while the Archive has funded group members to record ongoing interviews. One of the group's most prolific interviewers has been Stuart Glover, who since 1998 has recorded over 60 interviews. An initiative between the Film and Broadcast Industries Oral History Group and the Archive to record a number of the interviews on video began in 2001 with an 8-hour video interview with actor and filmmaker Michael Pate. In January 2002, the Film and Broadcast Industries Oral History Group and the Archive released a publication, *Oral History Program Guidelines*, which are available to interviewers and other interested people.

One project encouraged by the group was the Film Interview Search, funded in 1997-98 by a \$5000 grant from the NSW Film and TV Office. The Search aimed to centralise Australian cinema-related interviews for future use by historians as well as documentary and program-makers. While the Archive already held a substantial number of film-related interviews, Film and Broadcast Industries Oral History Group member Graham Shirley had learned that many others—especially those relating to the industry's renaissance since 1970—had remained in private hands. Under the auspices of the Search, Graham arranged to send five such collections to the Archive, delivering 175 interviews. The Film and Broadcast Industries Oral History Group is currently planning an ambitious oral history called *The Illuminators*, which intends to record 400 interviews with veterans of the film, television and radio industries. **Graham Shirley**

#### **ABOUT THE FRIENDS**

The Friends are 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; a broad, outward looking focus that locates Australia in the South East Asia-Pacific region and globally; and restoration of the correct name for the Archive. 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. We are always looking for new Friends—you can sign up one or two of your friends now! Just send us their details.

We hope you have enjoyed this newsletter and would love to hear from you on any Friends topic. You can contact us at [friendsofarchive@hotmail.com](mailto:friendsofarchive@hotmail.com) or ring Charlie on 6248 0851.

**Regards from your Committee,**

**Wendy Brazil, Shelley Clarke, Adrian Cunningham, Ray Edmondson, Chris Harrison, Shauna Hicks, Charles Higgins, Cris Kennedy, Richard Keys, Roger Noel, Andrew Pike, Cheryl Stevenson, Roger Westcombe.**

**Many thanks to our sponsor Orlando Trilogy**

