



## **NEWSLETTER NO. 45 AUGUST 2019**

***We may be in the depths of winter but there's plenty happening with the Friends to warm you up! Check out our upcoming events!***

**Next in our Friday afternoon features at CMAG in the City.**

**Friday 16<sup>th</sup> August - 2.30**

**'ANIMAL FARM' – A SECRET CIA PROJECT**

Britain's first feature-length cartoon was based on the famed George Orwell novel, a classic satire on Communism. It is memorable for the dictum "all animals are equal, but some are more equal than others". The book is still banned in some countries.



Released in 1954 and created by London's Halas and Batchelor studio, ANIMAL FARM took 3 years to make and employed 80 animators. Its animation style has been described as "Disney-turned-serious". Reviews were good: one critic saluted it as a "fine piece of work" while others praised Matyas Seiber's score and Maurice Denham's vocal talent (Denham provided every voice and animal noise in the film).

But there was more to the film than met the eye. Officially the project was financed by Louis de Rochement Associates but the film was actually being bankrolled by America's Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), as part of the American cultural offensive during the Cold War when the Soviet Union was dominated by Josef Stalin. Evidently on CIA instructions the film deviates at various points from Orwell's story. And to put it in context, while the film was in production the McCarthy-era anti-communist purging of America's entertainment industries was in full swing.

This screening is unusual as the Friends will be showing an original Technicolor print - with all its vibrant colours undimmed by time. The presentation complements CMAG's current exhibition on Activism.

**Running time is 75 minutes. The presentation will commence at 2.30 and conclude around 4 pm. Free entry for Friends and CMAG members – gold coin donation for others.**

## **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE: WELCOME TO MELBOURNE FRIENDS:**

It's a great thrill to report the establishment of a Melbourne chapter of the Friends of the NFSA.

Chaired by Gwenda Davey AM with Teresa Pitt as Secretary, the new subcommittee is in the process of establishing its own program of public events and will announce details of an inaugural event soon (see separate news item). It has established a link with the Melbourne office of the NFSA as well as with the Thornbury Picture House, an independent cinema easily reached by a short tram or train ride from the city centre. Along with NFSA CEO Jan Muller, I attended the inaugural subcommittee meeting on 9 July, held in the atmospheric coffee lounge of the Thornbury Picture House, surrounded by its cinema memorabilia.

While most Friends members are, not surprisingly, located in Canberra, membership has always reached beyond the national capital and it is encouraging to see it now gaining a tangible focus in Melbourne. While this newsletter and the Friends website will carry information about Melbourne events, the subcommittee will also establish its own mechanisms for reaching out directly to the Melbourne community.

Historically, Melbourne was where the Australian film industry began. It was the home of the first professional film production unit - the Salvation Army's Limelight Department - and it was also where the world's first feature film, *The Story of the Kelly Gang*, was produced in 1906. The NFSA's Melbourne office was established almost simultaneously with the creation of the NFSA itself, in 1984.

On another matter, this is the first Friends newsletter since the recent Federal election. Now that the dust has settled and the make-up of the new Parliament is clear, the Friends' Advocacy Subcommittee will seek to renew old contacts and make new ones. The NFSA has a new minister, Paul Fletcher MP. It remains part of the Communications and Arts portfolio.

Ray Edmondson, President



### **Good news for Friends at the NFSA Box Office!**

**The NFSA regrets that it has had to increase ticket prices but Friends will still receive special discount pricing:**

**At regular events tickets will be available for \$10  
(usual adult price \$12)**

**At special events, Friends tickets will be \$20  
(regular price \$25)**

## Friends' Event: The Dressmaker Exhibition

As a special treat for our members, the Friends sponsored a free viewing of the stunning Dressmaker Exhibition. More than 15,000 visitors have seen this exhibition, as well as some lucky Friends! Our recent Friday with Friends also saw President Ray introducing Australia's first movie musical from 1931 - 'Showgirl's Luck' . Here are some of Sabine Friedrich's lovely photos from the night.



## OUR SPRING PROGRAM AT CMAG

**JOIN US IN THE COMFORTABLE, CONVENIENT THEATRE AT THE CANBERRA MUSEUM AND GALLERY FOR A FASCINATING SERIES OF EVENTS THIS SPRING. HAVE A COFFEE, OR LUNCH, AT THE CMAG CAFÉ BEFORE THE SHOW STARTS AT 2.30 FREE TO FRIENDS AND CMAG MEMBERS**

### ***Friday 13 Sept: HUGH WATSON: SONGS OF PEACE AND PROTEST***

For those who were enmeshed in the music of the 60s, 70s and 80s the consistent themes of peace and protest rang through, from Crosby, Stills, Nash and Young in the US to Midnight Oil in Australia. This session will provide a brief historical introduction to protest songs and play excerpts from the large catalogue of Songs of Peace and Protest; focussing on the US and Australia. Hugh Watson is a Canberra author and songwriter, and founding member of Canberra Band Willie and the Correspondents. He is currently co-presenting a course at U3A on 'Rock Music: The Seminal Years' with Alex Gosman and David Kilby.



### ***Friday 11 October: THE PENTAGON PAPERS: CONVERSATIONS WITH DANIEL ELLSBERG***

Daniel Ellsberg discusses his experiences in Vietnam and their influence on his decision to release the stolen Pentagon papers to the American public. **Plus** THE FRANKLIN RIVER BLOCKADE. The Tasmanian Wilderness Society's blockade of construction on a dam to flood the Franklin River attracted activists from all over Australia, 1440 of whom were arrested for non-violent protest. Their efforts fed into the 1983 federal election campaign.



### ***Friday 15 November: LOST AUSTRALIA: ORPHAN OF THE WILDERNESS***

Filmed in 1936 in the beautiful Burraborang Valley, now lost under the waters of Warragamba Dam, this is the heart-warming story of Chut, the orphan kangaroo. After being mistreated in the circus, his escape leads to a thrilling chase - and a happy ending. The opening bush idyll, filmed entirely in the studio, remains a cinematic tour de force. A smash hit in its day, ORPHAN stayed in release for the next 20 years. Director Ken G Hall recalled the film "was a joy to make".



**Friday with Friends at CMAG!**

# And looking ahead to our final Friday with Friends at the NFSA Theatrette on Friday 18<sup>th</sup> October @ 5.30-7.00

## Something VERY different!

### SCREENS, FILES AND VIDEO-GAMES

Meet virtual musician OhMy Kidd, warrior ranger Derangerous the Norn, and former Sound, Broadcast and New Media Curator Matthew Davies who are teaming up to take you on a trip into the virtual worlds. From Flight Sim to Second Life, Guild Wars, Dungeons and Dragons and beyond we'll consider the personal experience, archival significance and current status of Virtual Worlds in an Australian context.

**Nibbles and drinks from 5.30 for a 6m start**



### Tap and Donate at the NFSA!

If you've been to the NFSA in the last six months or so you may have seen a 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.

## News from the Library: Our Volunteer Indexers – four years and still going strong



For four years now a team of volunteers coordinated by the Friends of the NFSA has been indexing Australian film journals as the NFSA's contribution the International Federation of Film Archives'

(FIAF) *International Index to Film Periodicals*. Every week, for two hours, volunteers have been working in the NFSA's library, indexing two critical journals, *Metro* magazine and *Senses of Cinema*. Our band of six dedicated workers, working in loose rotation, is not only keeping up to date with these journals' current publication schedule, but is now making inroads into backlog issues of *Senses of Cinema*, which was added to the International Index's schedule many years after its establishment.

We have greatly enjoyed working in the NFSA's lovely heritage library space for our first four years. However, last month, the ground floor of the library was cleared to expand the NFSA's exhibition space and provide for a new public attraction, on which there will be more news shortly. To make way for this, the book collection has been moved up to the library mezzanine, keeping its original arrangement in subject order. The periodicals collection has been relocated to the NFSA's repository at Mitchell. This has also meant that the volunteers had to move! Luckily for us, we have been given another space in the heritage building: a light airy room overlooking the NFSA's beautiful courtyard. We have made the transition comfortably with excellent support from the NFSA's Facilities staff.

### Sue Terry

#### **SEAPAVAA AND THE POLITICS OF MEMORY** - Ray Edmondson

The Friends and the NFSA are both members of SEAPAVAA - South East Asia Pacific Audio-visual Archive Association. It's the regional professional forum and its annual conference, which debates current issues and developments in the field, attracts an international audience. This year the conference was held in Noumea, New Caledonia, from 25 to 30 June. Friends president Ray Edmondson and NFSA CEO Jan Muller both presented papers during the symposium. You can access Ray's paper via his PowerPoint on "The Politics of Memory" on the website at <http://www.archivefriends.org.au/index.php/events-news/seapavaa>

A special focus this year was audio-visual archiving in the Pacific, where in many small countries archives work under great difficulties. Without external assistance they cannot afford the cost of attending a conference or, in some cases, even the cost of SEAPAVAA's membership fees.

The Association was established in 1996. It was the outcome of a regional archive management training seminar held at the NFSA in Canberra in 1995, which was funded by ASEAN (Association of South East Asian Nations), DFAT (Australian Department of Foreign Affairs) and corporate sponsor Kodak. SEAPAVAA has overseen the steady growth of audio-visual archiving across the region, and has given it a profile in a global profession traditionally dominated by European and American-based federations.



**You may be interested to read a little more about our exciting news – Friends of the NFSA set up a Melbourne chapter!**

**From Chair Gwenda Davey:**

FNFSa is expanding its activities outside Canberra, and to that end we've recently established a Melbourne chapter of the Friends.

The Melbourne Subcommittee members are:

Gwenda Beed Davey, AM, folklorist and children's historian (Chair)

Teresa Pitt, U3A Film Studies tutor (Secretary)

Gus Berger, proprietor and manager of the Thornbury Picture House

Daryl Dellora, documentary filmmaker

Graham Dodsworth, oral historian and folklorist

Kim Hodgman, Librarian, Swinburne University

The Subcommittee held its first meeting at the wonderful Thornbury Picture House (a new indie cinema) on Tuesday 9 July. Jan Muller and Ray Edmondson attended to offer their support and assistance.

With the generous support of Gus Berger, we're also planning to hold our launch at the Thornbury Picture House. We hope to screen the newly restored version of *The Sentimental Bloke* at this event. It will take place on a Sunday afternoon as close as possible to 4 October, the centenary of the *Bloke's* original release. Gus is kindly offering a discount to all Friends members.

We plan to host monthly 'Sundays with Friends' events, all of them on Sunday afternoons. There will be three-monthly film screenings at the Thornbury Picture House. In between these we will have talks and/or presentations by people involved in the NFSA's activities, or by local film, television, music and radio historians and others involved in these industries in Australia. We're still searching for a suitable venue or venues for these non-film events.

**For further information, or to put yourself on the Melbourne Friends mailing list, please contact Gwenda Davey at [gwendadavey@bigpond.com](mailto:gwendadavey@bigpond.com), or Teresa Pitt at [teresa.pitt@outlook.com](mailto:teresa.pitt@outlook.com).**

**Stay tuned for further news from Melbourne!**



## Another important volunteering aspect of the work of the NFSA

### **NFSA ORAL HISTORIES AND AMOHG**

The Australian Media Oral History Group (AMOHG) is a long-standing community of volunteers who play a fundamental role in the development of the NFSA's Oral History collection. To quote from its website:

**AMOHG** is an independent, voluntary association of professional media practitioners, oral historians, academics, archivists, journalists, critics, reviewers and others. The Group's foremost aim is to encourage and conduct oral histories of practitioners in audio-visual media and those with a significant memory or knowledge of the social histories, operations, cultures and sub-cultures of audio-visual media production and reception. The Group also aims to encourage the wide availability and use of the interviews that it records and otherwise facilitates for the National Film and Sound Archive of Australia (NFSA) and other organisations.

Members are recruited by invitation, recommendation and group consensus. While most of AMOHG members are professional media practitioners, the membership also includes non-practitioners. AMOHG members volunteer their time to attend AMOHG meetings and to contribute to the operation of the group. A current priority is to develop group membership drawn from a broad and diverse spectrum of age, experience and cultural backgrounds.

*AMOHG's website <https://amohg.wordpress.com> is a pathway into the world of oral histories held by the NFSA, accumulated over several decades. It offers some fascinating journeys.*

## **Another interesting read - especially for members (like us!) of Friends groups.**

**Amy Walters originally posted this on the ACT Writers' Centre blog as part of an initiative of the NLA, Canberra Writers Festival and the Street Theatre. Participants were mentored by the Friends Committee member Sue Terry. Amy is an aspiring critic and writer who has been living in Canberra for four years**

*New Territory blogger, Amy, reflects on the impact of 'Friends' societies and organisations in supporting our arts institutions, and the significant role they have already played in shaping Canberra's civic 'artscape'.*

When I was leaving school and professed my intention to study a Bachelor of Arts, my teachers and some extended family members told me I was wasting my time. Do something concrete, they said. Something that will actually get you a job and an income. But that's not the point of a university education, I argued back. I want to study subjects that enrich my existence and engagement with the world around me.

Cultural institutions face a similar dilemma. How do they communicate the value of their work, when their primary value is intangible?



It's great that scientists at the CSIRO patent technological inventions. It's great that government-funded research institutions are also striving to cure cancer. But isn't it wonderful to preserve and reflect on our cultural heritage, so that both we and future generations can understand our place in national and world history?

'Friends organisations' are one way that cultural institutions can keep the public and their funders on side. Some Friends bodies, such as those run by the National Museum of Australia and the National Portrait Gallery, are run internally, but others are external and incorporated, such as the Friends of the National Library of Australia Inc. Externally run bodies are able to speak publicly in support of their institutions or to raise awareness of the impact of budget cuts, which museum staff as public servants are unable to do. Having a network of supporters in the community is also a convenient way for cultural institutions to highlight their value to government.

Friends of the NLA is a vibrant body of passionate individuals and is a good example of how Friends organisations can nurture a sense of community. In addition to getting discounted tickets to official Library events, they also hold their own events and gain privileged behind the scenes access. For the Library, it is beneficial to have a strong supporter base in the community who can advocate for the Library's interests. Friends have also helped to fund some of the Library's work, including sponsoring travelling and creative arts fellowships, and supporting the digitisation of The Canberra Times

In a happy coincidence that made researching this article less time-consuming, my mentor Sue Terry happens to be the Secretary of Friends of the National Film and Sound Archive (NFSA). She advised that recently the Friends of the NFSA wrote a letter to the Editor of the Canberra Times to raise concerns about the stark disparity between the funding received by the Australian War Memorial and the amounts received by other cultural institutions. Friends of the NFSA also contributed to the parliamentary inquiry into Canberra's cultural institutions that has been running throughout the year. (The Friends of the ABC are another group not afraid of making their views on the broadcaster's purpose and future known to the government).

Sue also passed on to me a handy volume called *Not Without A Fight: The story of the Friends of the National Museum of Australia*. The development of the National Museum of Australia has a long and chequered history and its Friends body has been instrumental in advocating for both its establishment and direction. Plans for a national museum date back to before Federation, but it wasn't until 1974 that Gough Whitlam got the ball rolling. He asked Peter Piggott to conduct a review of Australia's existing museums, culminating in the release of the Piggott Report in November 1975, which identified a site at Yarramundi Reach. A few days later, Gough Whitlam was sacked in the infamous dismissal. After falling in and out of favour with various governments over the following decades, the museum finally opened at the former site of the old Canberra Hospital on the shores of Lake Burley Griffin in 2001.

The museum's Friends — a group established in 1989 with the involvement of Australian actor Jack Thompson — was formally incorporated in 1990, and played a critical role in its establishment. When progress instituting the museum stalled under the Hawke Government, the Friends established a National Circle of eminent people, including Margaret Whitlam and Quentin Bryce, who advocated publicly for the museum. Over a number of years the Friends held Open Days at the Yarramundi site, and organised events in Sydney and Canberra to raise awareness of the need for a fully-fledged national museum.

The museum drew controversy upon its opening in 2001, and the tenure of its Director, Dawn Casey, was short-lived. In 2003 a major review of its exhibitions was announced, which culminated in the release of the **Carroll Report**. Friends mobilised to provide submissions and engage with the review. Then in 2008, the federal Parliament's Joint Committee on Public

Accounts and Audit held an inquiry into the effect of budget cuts on “smaller agencies.” As the Museum had a budget of less than \$150 million, it was included in the review. Again, Friends provided submissions and gave evidence which was reflected strongly in the committee’s report. In 2012-13, cultural institutions were exempted from a further efficiency dividend of 2.5 per cent.

In 2013, the direction of the museum changed which led to the absorption of the group back into the museum’s internal structure. Following their dissolution, the Friends gave \$80 000 to the museum for new acquisitions.

It is possible that the National Museum we know today would never have come to fruition without the work of its Friends. It drew ire from some quarters during the height of the culture wars, and has weathered budget cuts and efficiency dividends. Throughout all of these times, its Friends body provided the necessary advocacy and public mobilisation, and today remains a valued institution, architectural landmark, keeping place, and repository of research and cultural outreach. Just like my arts degree, the museum pushes me to consider my place in both Australia and the world, and my existence is richer for it.

### **Acknowledgements**

Thank you to Kathryn Favelle and Melanie Olde at the National Library of Australia for assisting me with research. And of course to Sue Terry, helpful as always.

<https://www.actwriters.org.au/2018/12/18/the-art-of-friendship/>

#### **Friends of the National Film and Sound Archive Committee 2019**

**President:** Ray Edmondson

**Vice President:** Chris Harrison

**Secretary:** Sue Terry

**Treasurer:** Chris Emery

**Committee Members:** David Kilby

Lindy Ross

Tony Briscoe

**Public Officer:** Jude Briscoe

### ***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](mailto: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.**

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>



*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.com/NFSAFriends](http://www.facebook.com/NFSAFriends)

or on our website

[www.archivefriends.org.au](http://www.archivefriends.org.au)



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

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