



WHAT'S THE NEWS? 12

APRIL 2005

*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**

Welcome to the twelfth issue of the Friends NFSA newsletter. This issue offers some recent Archive news, information about the broader context of our Friends group and a special offer. We hope you enjoy the update and look forward to, hopefully, seeing some of you very soon.

### **INVITATION TO CANBERRA MEMBERS**

Canberra Friends will have an opportunity on Monday 2 May to hear the Director of the National Film and Sound Archive, Dr Paolo Cherchi Usai, introduce a special screening of the 1957 American 'noir' classic, *THE SWEET SMELL OF SUCCESS*. The screening starts at 8.15 at Electric Shadows Cinema, City Walk, Canberra City. Friends can purchase tickets for a discounted price of \$8 each for themselves and a guest (instead of the usual \$14), simply by presenting a print-out of page 1 of this newsletter at the ticket-office.

Dr Cherchi Usai is placing great importance on broadening the role of the Archive beyond purely Australian heritage activities, and his kind agreement to introduce this screening can perhaps be seen as indicative of his desire to associate himself and the Archive with film cultural activities regardless of country of origin.

*SWEET SMELL OF SUCCESS* stars Burt Lancaster and Tony Curtis, and is renowned for the power of its dialogue written by left-wing playwright Clifford Odets—perhaps his finest writing for the cinema. The film was the first Hollywood film to be directed by the brilliant Scottish director, Alexander Mackendrick after he made some of the most famous and best loved of Ealing's comedies in the post-war years. *Time Out* (London) made the following comment on the film: 'A film noir from the Ealing funny man? But Mackendrick's involvement with cosy British humour was always less innocent than it looked: remember the anti-social wit of *THE MAN IN THE WHITE SUIT*, or the cruel cynicism of *THE LADYKILLERS*? *SWEET SMELL OF SUCCESS* is a rat trap of a film in which a vicious New York gossip hustler grovels for a monster newspaper columnist who is incestuously obsessed with destroying his kid sister's romance...The dark streets gleam with the sweat of fear. The screen was rarely so dark or cruel.'

A new 35mm print of the film will be screened.

### **ANDREW PIKE HONOURED**

The President of the Friends, Andrew Pike, has recently been honoured in an unusual way. He is one of several Canberra identities to be personally celebrated in the new 'Honour Walk' in Civic Square, City Centre, unveiled on April 12 by Chief Minister John Stanhope. Andrew is being recognised as the founder of Electric Shadows, Canberra's only art-house cinema, and of the Canberra based distribution and production company, Ronin Films. It also marks his achievement as a film historian and adviser to cultural institutions, including the National Film and Sound Archive, and the plaque mentions his connection to the Friends of the NFSA.

The 'Honour Walk' is most readily seen as the ACT's answer to the 'walk of stars' on Hollywood Boulevard in Los Angeles. But the idea of celebrating notable individuals, organisations and events by plaques set in the pavement or street frontages isn't confined to Hollywood. Other cities like Paris, New York and London do this extensively. So go looking for Andrew's plaque in Civic Square. The plaques are set in a low wall at 'bend over' height—good for the back muscles!

### **NEW POSITIONS AT NFSA**

Following the announcement by NFSA Director, Paolo Cherchi Usai, of the new curatorially-based structure, senior positions at the Archive are now beginning to be advertised. Among the recently advertised posts are Deputy Director, Head of Preservation, Head Programmer and Chief Projectionist. Other positions will follow in coming months as the new structure is fleshed out.

At the same time, an undertaking has been given that no existing permanent staff will be retrenched or moved out of the Archive. A number of temporary positions will be allowed to lapse as contracts expire, so that new permanent positions can take their place. It will take some time for these changes to be worked through.

### **EMINENT VISITOR GIVES ARCHIVE SEMINAR**

Professor David Bordwell recently presented a seminar entitled *The Tip of the Iceberg: Film Archives in the DVD Age* at the National Film and Sound Archive's theatre.

According to the Archive's publicity flyer, 'Professor David Bordwell holds the Jacques Ledoux chair in Film Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Madison and is the author of fifteen books, including *Classical Hollywood Cinema*, *Narration in the Fiction Film*, *Post-Theory*, and (with his wife, Kristin Thompson) *Film Art: An Introduction*, the most widely used introductory text in international cinema studies. Roger Ebert has called him "the most valuable and readable film scholar in America"'.

Professor Bordwell toured Australia from late February to mid March, in which time he appeared at the Adelaide Film Festival and visited universities in Sydney and Melbourne to share aspects of his work and ideas. He also made a special trip to Canberra as guest of the National Film and Sound Archive. As part of the visit, he delivered the seminar, which discussed and emphasised the importance of archives for those researching artistic traditions of filmmaking. Professor Bordwell illustrated his talk with examples from his own work and later, over refreshments, took the opportunity to meet members of Canberra's film community and special friends of the Archive.

### **SOUTH EAST ASIAN PACIFIC AUDIOVISUAL ARCHIVE ASSOCIATION**

The Friends is an associate institutional member of SEAPAVAA, the South East Asia/Pacific AudioVisual Archive Association (visit its website: [www.seapavaa.org](http://www.seapavaa.org))

This year's SEAPAVAA conference is being convened in Brunei from 2 to 6 May, with the theme 'The Digital Dawn: AV Archives in transition'. NFSA staff members Mick Newnham and David Boden will be among a large international roster of speakers at the symposium. Committee member Ray Edmondson will represent the Friends at the conference.

SEAPAVAA membership links the Friends to the global professional world of AV archiving, and its news releases and statements are also circulated on the listservs of other international federations like AMIA (Association of Moving Image Archivists) and IASA (International Association of Sound and Audiovisual Archives).

### **AUSTRALIAN FEDERATION OF FRIENDS OF MUSEUMS**

The Australian Federation of Friends of Museums, (AFFM) is a national, non-profit organisation representing museum supporters throughout Australia. Members include groups and individuals who support art galleries, museums, botanic gardens, libraries, zoos, archives and historic sites around the country. AFFM has one hundred

member groups representing nearly 200 000 individual supporters of museums in all states. The Friends of the National Film and Sound Archive is one of these member groups.

AFFM encourages and assists the formation of Friends associations and it supports existing groups by sharing news, providing advice and networking opportunities, presenting seminars and publishing guides to good practice. It is a founding member of the World Federation of Friends of Museums and is associated with Museums Australia and the International Council of Museums.

### **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; 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. 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.

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 6248 0851.

### **MANY GOOD WISHES FROM YOUR COMMITTEE,**

Lucy Battersby, Shelley Clarke, Travis Cragg, Adrian Cunningham, Ray Edmondson, Chris Harrison, Charles Higgins, Peter Hislop, Richard Keys, Andrew Pike, Cheryl Stevenson and Roger Westcombe.

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