

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

NEWSLETTER

ISSUE 22

June 2010

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 almost two years since the NFSA became a separate Statutory Authority and some 10 years since the Friends was established. We have now formalised the position of the Friends in relation to the NFSA with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between our two organisations. The MOU sets out how we will support each other and our roles. The Friends have skills and knowledge to share. For example, we can provide hands-on assistance in the storage and identification of the Collection.

FRIENDS MOU WITH THE NFSA – some aspects

As part of the MOU, the Friends have agreed to take part in two public events to be held at the NFSA in 2010. This may include providing various forms of assistance with the annual NFSA Open Day and making a presentation prior to film screenings at the Arc Cinema on Thursday evenings or on Saturday afternoons. Friends are invited to volunteer their help in tasks related to identifying the film, sound and documents collection at the NFSA. Volunteers will be given a parking space while working on the collection. Interstate Friends are welcome to participate in the regional touring programs, perhaps to introduce an event. The Friends' website and the NFSA website are to be linked; and the NFSA has agreed to provide a room for Friends' Committee meetings with a place to store our records. On presentation of a membership card, Friends will receive a 10% discount on purchases in the shop and the café.

The NFSA shop has the usual branded items such as mugs, magnets, pens and postcards. It has expanded the range of indigenous DVD releases to include titles that are not available through other outlets. These include such titles as *Milli Milli*, *The Last of the Nomads*, the *Women of the Sun* series and *The Last Tasmanian*. *Wake in Fright* has been released on regular DVD plus a special Blu-ray edition. In conjunction with the Elastic Reality exhibition many related DVD titles are available including *Harvie Krumpet*, *Mary & Max*, The Bruce Petty Collection, Leunig Animated and The Mysterious Geographic Explorations of Jasper Morello.

BRIEFING FROM THE CEO, DR DARRYL MCINTYRE

Recently, the Friends Committee was briefed on current NFSA plans and activities by the CEO of the NFSA Dr Darryl McIntyre. Very good news is that the funding of the NFSA has not been reduced in the 2010 Budget, although the NFSA will have to incorporate the Efficiency Dividend.

Digitisation projects are continuing, plus work on a tripartite plan with the National Library of Australia and the National Archives of Australia. One ongoing issue is the lack of format standards for the digitisation of film and video, as there is for sound. The NFSA hopes to interest the international film and TV archiving organisations in developing these standards. An MOU has been established with the British Library Sound Archive to cover staff exchange between the two organisations.

The NFSA continues to develop various partnerships, including with the National Film Preservation Foundation (USA), which results in support for the preservation of early films. Dr McIntyre would like to see the NFSA engage in more conferences as a way of opening up the collection.

The NFSA currently has four ARC linkage grants with tertiary institutions: including one with the ANU on Indigenous Australians and National Parks, and another on Regional Cinemas in New South Wales. Dr McIntyre will supervise any PhD students.

The NFSA is producing a strategic directions booklet, and is looking to establish a Foundation to encourage patronage, with one of its aims to upgrade the main exhibition. The Film Australia library is soon to become the responsibility of the NFSA. It will remain in Sydney where it is easily accessible to industry. The NFSA is also providing awards to encourage people in industry, such as one presented at the Australian Cinematographers Society to recognise the work of a new cinematographer.

MEMBERSHIP FEES

At the Friends AGM on Tuesday 24 November 2009 the Friends approved the introduction of a fee-based membership program, with fees of \$25 p.a. The fees will be used to support the work of the Friends in developing and managing the website, and in mailing information to members not online. Members will receive a newsletter three times a year, 10% discounts at the NFSA's shop and cafe, and invitations to attend regional screenings and events organised by the NFSA, such as the Big Screen touring program. Members will also receive advance notification of NFSA events through the newsletter and email mailouts. Membership cards will be required to take advantage of the discounts.

We appreciate input from our members, either now or in the future. For instance, we would like to hear what NFSA activities are of interest to be included in future newsletters or as part of our public events. Membership forms can be accessed via the Friends' website. <http://www.archivefriends.org.au>

ARGONAUTS REGISTER PROJECT

The Friends launched the Argonauts Register Project on World Audio Visual Heritage Day, the 27th October 2009. The Argonauts' Register was conceived as part of celebrating the 25th anniversary of the NFSA and we are grateful for the support of the NFSA and the ABC in the launch. The ABC and the NFSA have so little documentation of the Argonauts Club, and the Friends hope the publicity will result in finding some audio material and memorabilia.

The Argonauts Club was a highly successful afternoon children's program that ran on ABC Radio from 1941 to 1972. The Club introduced young people to art, music, literature and science, and was particularly popular in the bush and with isolated children.

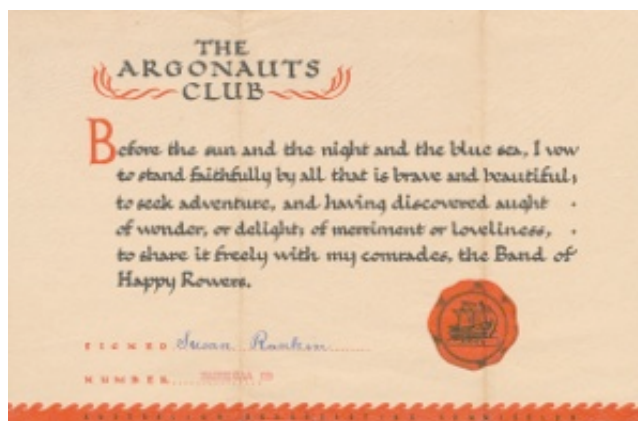
The Club sparked a life long interest in the media, science and the arts in many young people. At its most popular, there were around 100,000 Argonauts in the Club. The cast of well-known actors could be

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seen in broadcast performances each year, eg, at the Ekka in Brisbane and the Royal Easter Show in Sydney.

The program employed high quality writers such as Lloyd Rees, A.D. Hope and Ruth Park, well known composers and performers such as Lindley Evans, and artists of the calibre of Jeffrey Smart. The Club attracted young people such as Judith Clingan, Robert Dessaix, Hilary McPhee, Peter Sculthorpe and Thomas Shapcott among others. The history of the Argonauts is celebrated in Rob Johnson's wonderful book "The Golden Age of the Argonauts" Hodder & Stoughton, 1997.



There is no complete list of Argonauts and their Ship Names and Numbers.

In many ways this project is similar to the search for recordings of the ABC Radio serial Blue Hills. Appropriately, the Project was launched with a song by Professor Jeff Brownrigg from the University of Canberra who was himself an Argonaut. The Friends appreciate the publicity given by local ABC Radio to the project and its launch. We are now seeking to publicise the project nationally through the ABC.



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You can find the Registry of members of the Argonauts Club linked to reminiscences, plus any surviving audio recordings, on the Friends of the NFSA website. The entry point is by Ship name, and personal names are optional. There are now some 86 Argonauts who have registered their Ship Name and Number on the website, with many also supplying reminiscences of their time as Argonauts.

The anecdotes below are from the website -----
www.archivefriends.org.au

Equestor 3 In the 1960s, I lived in the countryside of New Zealand, and came across the ABC Children's Hour on shortwave and medium wave broadcasts. I joined the Argonauts Club and it gave me a sense of connectedness, and a stimulus to contribute with writing, art competitions etc. I loved the stories and serials. When I was 16 I visited the ABC studios in Sydney and met the team who presented the Children's Hour and the Argonauts - it was a big thrill. I have lived in the UK for over 30 years, and several years ago I discovered that a friend of mine in Nottingham had been an Argonaut, too, which also was a delight.

Eleusis 5 I never missed a day! However, I also never sent in any contributions, much as I enjoyed drawing and painting. My first job after leaving school was as a scientific illustrator in the Zoology Department at Sydney University and there was Tom Colefax on the staff. He was Tom the Naturalist. I knew the voice, and made myself known to him. When I sailed for England on the Castel Felice, leaving Sydney on Christmas day, 1963, I heard a very familiar voice on the deck, and said, "Phidias!" He asked who I had been and I had to admit that he would not have come across me, but he might remember my sister, Judith Clingan. He immediately said, "Hylas 41!" She had had a painting used in "The Gold Smugglers", and he remembered her talent. It was Jeffrey Smart, of course, and I played chess with him and Bruce Beresford on the poop deck during the voyage. Jeffrey was on his way to Italy.

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Tagus 46 From 1959 to 1963 (age 9-13), living on a remote cattle station with no mail service, no phone and seeing no children often for months at a time..... being beside the big dry battery radio at 5PM was a window to another world. Times change, but for that time there could have been nothing better to excite, entertain and educate.

Ampycus 36 I was such an avid listener to the Argonauts Club that even my strict grandmother allowed me to eat my meal in front of the radio in the sitting room instead of at the table with the rest of the family. When I was 7 and a half years old, in 1940, my grandmother patiently taught me to knit and she watched over me while I knitted 6x6 inch squares and sent them in to the Argonauts for their Blankets for Britain drive. I was thrilled when they sent me a purple certificate and a book prize - The Tale of the Little White Fox - a very well written children's story. I cherished and looked after this book until years later my older sister persuaded me to let her take it to a school holiday play centre, where a naughty little boy scribbled on every page and broke its binding. I was heartbroken, but I still treasure it to this day.

Praxiteles 22 Joined 1962 or 63 - remained active till about 1970; was really unhappy when Aunty cut the program. Mac, Little Jimmy "What happened to the Argonauts?" Hawkins, Sue - Mouse, Aunty Bun & the Muddle Headed Wombat; Apelles, Icarus, serials - fantastic fun for an isolated boy in PNG! Earning the Dragons Tooth badge, book prizes, and (to Mum's dismay!) insisting on stopping everything every afternoon to hear the program.

NFSA at the Sydney International Film Festival (SIFF) June 2010

The NFSA will be screening two beautiful new film prints from the Deluxe Atlab Project: The Last Days of Chez Nous (Gillian Armstrong, 1992) and Love Serenade (Shirley Barrett, 1996). The NFSA will also be



holding a special session to launch Australia's Lost Films: Search and Rescue including the search for Captain Thunderbolt. Entry to the Lost Films session is free. The following information comes from the NFSA website where you can find out all about this exciting new project.

Officially announced at the [2010 Sydney Film Festival](#), **Australia's Lost Films: Search & Rescue** is looking for lost feature-length Australian films (60 minutes or more) made since 1951. The search will also inevitably turn up earlier Australian films – produced on fragile, highly perishable nitrate film stock until that format was replaced by safety film in 1951.

The NFSA is searching for the original, uncut version of the feature film *Captain Thunderbolt* (Cecil Holmes, Australia 1953) as the focus for a broader search for Australia's lost films, called **Australia's Lost Films: Search & Rescue**.

If you know of the whereabouts of any of Australia's [lost films](#) listed on the NFSA web pages, you can contact the NFSA's Acquisitions staff via [email](#) or call +61 2 6248 2253.

FRIENDS 2009 Lunchtime talks

During 2009 the Friends introduced a series of lunchtime presentations by NFSA staff about aspects of their work. The talks were held in the Arc Cinema at the NFSA and were followed by a Q&A session. Committee members introduced each speaker and used the occasion to talk about the Friends. We would have liked to

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attract more members of the Friends to the talks. It is possible that the lunchtime slot did not suit and parking near the NFSA can be a problem at that time.

CCAAA

No, it's not a computer error: that's the acronym of the Coordinating Council of Audiovisual Archive Associations, the peak body for the AV archiving profession. It comprises eight professional associations, and the NFSA is a member of four of them: FIAF (International Federation of Film Archives), IASA (International Association of Sound and Audiovisual Archives), AMIA (Association of Moving Image Archivists) and SEAPAVAA (South East Asia Pacific Audiovisual Archive Association). NFSA staff have long been visible in all of them, both as office holders and conference participants.

CCAAA is responsible, in cooperation with UNESCO, for the organisation of the annual World Day for Audiovisual Heritage. This global event is held on 27 October, and in just the four years since it was officially inaugurated by UNESCO, it has grown rapidly. Archives all over the world organise events on this day to celebrate the heritage in their collections and – just as importantly – to draw attention to the continuing challenge of preservation. If you are interested in exploring the wider world of the profession, the CCAAA website www.ccaaa.org is a gateway to the sites of its eight members – and it is worth a close look. Anyone can, for example, join the listservs of AMIA and IASA for free, and be in constant touch with the activities, needs and achievements of archives the world over.

The Friends – like the NFSA – is a member of SEAPAVAA and sends a delegate to its annual conference. This year's conference was scheduled for early June in Bangkok, but has now been postponed until August because of the political situation there. SEAPAVAA keeps us in touch with similar friends groups in neighbouring countries....notably the Friends of the Sinematek Indonesia, and the Philippine Society of Film Archivists.

PHILOSOPHY AND ETHICS – SOUNDS AWFULLY HIGHBROW

Audiovisual archiving, like other professions, has a philosophical, theoretical and ethical basis – something that is often taken for granted, but of which those who handle irreplaceable collection materials need to be fully aware. And unless archives function ethically, they are unlikely to be credible institutions and to merit public trust. Far from being highbrow, these are very practical and grass-roots issues – especially as archives move further into the digital domain.

Recently, Friends' Committee member and NFSA Curator Emeritus Ray Edmondson gave a presentation to NFSA staff on this topic. It's an area of particular interest to Ray, whose book "Audiovisual Archiving: Philosophy and Principles" (UNESCO, 2004) is by now available in eight languages and serves as the standard text on the topic. It can be downloaded – free – from the UNESCO website <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0013/001364/136477e.pdf>

The NFSA is a signatory to the FIAF Code of Ethics. It's a succinct document which sets out what archives may – and may not – do. You can read it yourself if you go to www.ccaaa.org and navigate to the FIAF button.

ABOUT THE FRIENDS

The Friends of the NFSA was established in 2000 and is a group of advocates, working to further the aims of the NFSA and to encourage links between the NFSA, 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 to the collection; promoting high level appreciation of film and sound heritage and contemporary culture; creativity in the use of the NFSA; 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.

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 or write to us at PO Box 9618, Deakin, ACT, 2600.

WITH BEST WISHES FROM YOUR COMMITTEE

At the AGM on Tuesday 24 November 2009, the following committee members were elected: Ann Baylis (President), Sue Terry (Secretary), Chris Emery (Treasurer), Chris Harrison (Vice President), Ray Edmondson, James Sandry and David Kilby.

Outgoing committee member Adrian Cunningham was thanked for his many years of service to the Friends.

ANN BAYLIS – President

Ann worked at the NFSA managing the collection building, cataloguing and public programs, including exhibition, outreach and education; and the regional touring film and sound programs. She was project manager of the new building and facilities. Ann was chair of the Cataloguing and Documentation Committee of the International Federation of Film Archives. She has a long held interest in films, books, recording artists, orienteering and cycling.

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

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,

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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 worked in the National Library where at various times he catalogued films from the National Film Archive and worked in the Rare Books Section. He is passionate about historical bibliography and all aspects of printing, book design and publishing. Chris has a continuing interest in films. He was on the committee of the first Canberra Film Festival, in the 1970s to early 1980s. Chris has written scripts for television, radio and the stage.

DAVID KILBY

For many years David was a teacher in country NSW and ACT schools. Via a circuitous and luck filled route, his lifelong passion for collecting vinyl records resulted in a second career with the ABC. On local radio 666 he co presented the breakfast show with Chris Uhlmann as well as hosting weekend and afternoon programs. Although retiring in 2008 he refuses to let his eclectic collection rest and, as a regular guest on various ABC stations, he continues to entertain the listeners. In real life he, and his wife Jenny, run a bed and breakfast business in their renovated vintage train carriages.

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 classic films shown by the Reel McCoy.

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 some casual research and writing 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.