

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

# **NEWSLETTER**

**ISSUE 23**

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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,**

Another year has passed and we are now looking at closer co-operation with the NFSA and seeing how we can assist with the identification of the collections.

Contributions to this Newsletter on topics that relate to Australia's screen and sound communities are most welcome. Later in this Newsletter we have contributions from two Friends Committee members.

**NEW DIRECTOR OF THE NFSA**

After a long national and international search process, Michael Loebenstein, film historian and curator from the Austrian Film Archive has been announced as the incoming Director of the NFSA. The Friends look forward to meeting with the new Director and establishing a good working relationship with him, when he takes up his position at the NFSA later in the year. Our thanks go to the Deputy Director Ann Landrigan who has held the fort for the last nine months. A press release was issued by the Minister on 23 June. The original press release can be found by looking at the Minister's website: New appointments for arts archive body, 23 June, SC085/2011: [www.minister.regional.gov.au/sc/releases/2011/june](http://www.minister.regional.gov.au/sc/releases/2011/june):

The National Film and Sound Archive (NFSA) will be led by a new chief executive officer and a reinvigorated board following the latest appointments to the popular cultural institution.

Arts Minister Simon Crean today announced Chris Puplick AM has been reappointed as Chair of the NFSA board and Catherine Robinson as Deputy Chair.

Dr Andrew Pike AM has been reappointed as a member of the board and Patricia Amphlett AM, will join as a new member. Michael Loebenstein has been appointed as the new chief executive officer of the NFSA.

Mr Crean said the board appointments ensured continuity in the board's operations and corporate knowledge and strengthened the leadership of the National Film and Sound Archive.

"The industry expertise of Mr Puplick and Ms Robinson has been an asset to the NFSA's important work of collecting, preserving and sharing our rich audiovisual heritage with all Australians," Mr Crean said.

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"Similarly Dr Pike AM is a film producer and distributor, and co-founder of Ronin Films and Ms Amphlett has been a professional performer since 1963 and in 2009 was inducted into the ARIA Hall of Fame.

"I'd also like to thank the outgoing board members, Dr Deb Verhoeven, Professor Jill Matthews, Grace Koch and Phillip Mortlock for their valuable contributions to the NFSA since the organisation was established as a statutory authority three years ago."

Mr Crean congratulated Mr Loebenstein on his appointment as chief executive officer. Mr Loebenstein has been project manager and researcher at the Ludwig Boltzmann Institut für Geschichte und Gesellschaft, Vienna and the Curator for Special Programs at the Austrian Film Museum.

Chris Puplick AM, Chair of the NFSA Board said Mr Loebenstein was a young and dynamic leader who has a special expertise and interest in all things digital.

"This makes him uniquely qualified to lead the NFSA into the next chapter of its history as the opportunities of the National Broadband Network and the national curriculum open up before us," Mr Puplick said.

"At the same time he is a distinguished film historian and archivist who equally values the tradition, history and scholarship of the film and sound archive world."

Further appointments to the NFSA board will be made shortly.

### **THE NATIONAL FOLK FESTIVAL AND THE NFSA – Chris Emery**

This last Easter my wife and I (and about 55,000 others) attended *'The National'* at Exhibition Park in Canberra and, as always, had a most wonderful time. We camped onsite, along with 5,000 others from all over Australia, and tried to attend a wide selection of the 200 gigs, in 21 venues, over the four days. Stamina is a pre-requisite.

Easter was late this year, so we had some cold nights but there was plenty of warming food available from the 30 food stalls, while another 60 stalls sold Australian-made wares.

This was the 45<sup>th</sup> National Festival. In 1992 the National stopped wandering around Australia and has since remained in Canberra. The logistics of moving every year had become impossible to manage, and the need for (now about 1,500) trained volunteers, required some stability.



The NFSA has been a long-time supporter of the National Folk Festival. This year they had three special presentations:

**The Carter Brown Mystery Theatre.** This was a live presentation of an episode from the famous 1950s radio serial. Real-life actors on stage and live sound effects were produced just as they were done in the Golden Age of radio.

**Real Folk and more.** Encore screenings of Real Folk on Film, the film treasures of John Meredith. Made for the NFSA between 1988 and 1990, these films are full of images and sound of the last generation of old-time bush musicians.

**The NFSA National Folk Recording Award.** Each year since 2001, the NFSA has presented an Award for the best recording made by an artist appearing at the Festival. The Award was established to encourage and reward excellence in Australian folk music recording. Award entrants are selected from recordings submitted each year to the Festival in Canberra. The 2011 recipient was a Festival favourite, Kavisha Mazzella for her CD 'Love and Sorrow'. This was Kavisha's second major award for 2011 because in the 2011 Australia Day Awards, she was made a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) for singing, song-writing and reflecting the experiences of Multicultural, Indigenous and Refugee Communities through her performances.

Of all the acts, I particularly enjoyed **Derek Warfield & the Young Wolfe Tones** presenting traditional Irish music the way it's meant to be. Derek Warfield has had a lifetime of success as a founding member and leader (for 38 years) of the legendary Wolfe Tones (1963-2001). He is an outstanding singer, stage personality, composer, storyteller and historian. Based in County Kildare, this band has toured extensively throughout Europe, the USA and Australia in the last few years.

Hope to see you there next year.

### **RARECOLLECTIONS – David Kilby**

Jordie Kilby and I have long been fascinated with the diversity of what was released on vinyl recordings over the years. As a consequence, we have assiduously collected an appreciable number of discs that fellow browsers in charity and bric-a-brac shops ignore.....mostly for very good reasons! The Australian section of these form the major component of a series of ABC podcasts that we have put together called Rarecollections...a pun that implies a combination of relative scarcity with a sense of looking back (it's all in the pronunciation!)

Each fortnight the dynamic duo tackles a theme that we explore using conversation, interviews and musical examples. The aim is for it to be informative, but light hearted. Occasionally we tap into the mainstream, but more often than not it's the esoteric that beckons.

Some of the topics that have been investigated are:

- What was the first Australian Rock and Roll Record?
- Australian Cities and Towns In Song
- Australounge
- 1963 ...the year we Caught The Surfing Wave
- Hopping On The Kangaroo Songwagon

At this early stage the possibilities for future study are only limited by our collective imagination!

Listen to the podcast on 666 ABC's Canberra's website at <http://www.abc.net.au/local/podcasts/rarecollections.xml>

Or better still, subscribe to podcast through iTunes at <http://itunes.apple.com/WebObjects/MZStore.woa/wa/viewPodcast?id=428852199>.

## **BILL HUNTER AND “THE AUSTRALIAN IMAGE” - Ray Edmondson, former Deputy Director of the NFSA and Curator Emeritus:**

Iconic actor Bill Hunter recently lost his battle with cancer, and a powerful presence has disappeared from the Australian screen. The news media celebrated his best known feature films roles, of course, but Bill's prolific career also included television drama as well as one unique documentary series. He was the narrator and presenter of “The Australian Image”, a 12-episode exploration of Australia's film, radio, television and sound recording history, which also highlighted the mission and the behind-the-scenes work of the National Film and Sound Archive. A joint project between Australian Capital Television and the NFSA, it first aired nationally in the bicentenary year: 1988. As co-producer and script editor of the series for the NFSA, I oversaw (and sometimes wrote) Bill's lines, and travelled with him and the production crew to a variety of exotic locales around Australia.

As narrator, Bill was an inspired choice: he was neither a historian nor an academic, yet his very accessibility on the screen as an ordinary, somewhat knockabout bloke gave the series warmth and credibility. The screen persona and the real Bill were one and the same, for he had no airs and graces. It mattered not at all to him that he stayed in the same budget motels as the crew, shared the chores and certainly enjoyed a beer at the end of a day's shoot. On one occasion, we did a “magic hour” set up on Queensland's Lamington Plateau, where Charles Chauvel shot his epic “Sons of Matthew” in 1948. Bill had to deliver a lengthy speech while the camera tracked him taking a walk along the cliff edge, catching the special quality of the light just before sunset. Timing was critical: he had to get it right on the first take before the light changed. And he did – word and action perfect. It was the mark of a professional.

After two national network screenings, the series had a very long life on video, not least because the half-hour length of each episode made it ideal for classroom use. So far as I know, it remains a unique collaboration between a national audiovisual archive and a television network. For me, it was Bill's special contribution to the mission of the NFSA.

**BRIEFING NOTES FROM THE NFSA** – more information can be found at the NFSA website [www.nfsa.gov.au](http://www.nfsa.gov.au) and you can sign up to receive the NFSA e-Newsletter. [enews@nfsa.gov.au](mailto:enews@nfsa.gov.au)

### **NFSA SHOP**

The NFSA shop continues to stock the latest DVD releases of Australian films including the long awaited release of *Caddie*, as well as *Eliza Fraser* and *Shame*. Also, two of the most popular titles for sale in the shop continue to be the magnificent 8 disc, 800 minute *A Time to Remember* DVD Box Set of Australian Cinesound and Movietone newsreels from 1930 to 1975 and the fascinating *History of Australian Cinema* DVD that traces the film industry from its beginnings in 1896 up until 1940. For something a little different you can remember those classic days of Australian TV from the 1960s with the release of the complete *Skippy* series in one Box Set running for 2273 minutes over 14 discs. The shop has also recently added a range of unique gift items made from original vinyl records including LP and single clocks, notebooks and record label coasters.

And remember: You receive 10% discount on shop purchases if you present your membership card.

### **A WORD FROM THE ACTING CEO, ANN LANDRIGAN**

The end of this month sees the NFSA successfully complete its first three years as a statutory authority in its own right. Staff, management and the Board have worked very hard to ensure we have an extremely robust and effective Governance framework in place.

Over the last year we published a range of new strategies and policies to help guide our work in building and preserving the collection. We work with our stakeholders to increase access to and understanding

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of the collection; to develop knowledge and understanding of the collection and screen and sound culture; and to develop our people. You can access most of these documents on our website: the latest to be published include our revised Collection Development Policy and a new Collection Development Strategy. We have successfully met the targets we set over the last three years in relation to collection development and acquisition, preservation and access.

We have been working behind the scenes to make it easier for you to access our services and collection. To this end we have streamlined access fees, launched a new corporate website, and replaced our collection management database, so that it can better meet the demands of a growing digital collection. Many of our staff participated in a number of new initiatives aimed at improving their learning and development. We are also working closely with staff to ensure constructive feedback is used in improving our programs, processes and workplaces.

Over the last 12 months some fabulous projects have come to fruition, showcasing the collection and the work of the NFSA. Examples, all involving our partnering with other arts organisations, include:

- the continued restoration of the Corrick Collection and its presentation in a wonderful theatre piece by Sydney based collective Legs on the Wall;
- the Heath Ledger Young Artists Oral History Project in partnership with Australia's leading arts institutions;
- profiling the work of early French cameraman Marius Sestier, who shot the earliest surviving movie footage in Australia, copies of which were donated by the French national film archive;
- the opening of the first access centre in the Northern Territory in partnership with the NT Library in Darwin;
- the celebration of the first anniversary of the Australian Mediatheque, a partnership with the Australian Centre of Moving Image (ACMI)
- Big Screen regional touring film program of early and recent classics, celebrating its 10 year anniversary; and
- Touring our Sounds of Australia initiative through Cooee Cabaret, a live presentation of early Australian songs.

You can read much more about our achievements through the e-newsletter (to subscribe email [enews@nfsa.gov.au](mailto:enews@nfsa.gov.au)) or through our website [www.nfsa.gov.au](http://www.nfsa.gov.au). You will also find a much better summary of this year's activities when our annual report is published in October.

We are planning for the incoming Film Australia Collection and the transfer of associated staff from Screen Australia to our Sydney Office in Pyrmont. Earlier this year, the Government announced that it was transferring responsibility for Film Australia's wonderful treasure trove of Government film to the NFSA. Please see the latest e-newsletter for news on this exciting development.

We have recently signed a lease to fit out an extra warehouse in Canberra to ensure safekeeping of our ever-expanding national audiovisual collection. We look forward to contributing to the development of a National Cultural Policy with other Australian collecting organisations, such as the National Library, the National Museum and the War Memorial.

We look forward to keeping in touch with the Friends through our online presence and welcome your feedback about our work.



## **FRIENDS HAVE A BLOG**

We have now included a blog on our website to encourage more immediate sharing of information and ideas. We would love members to engage in discussion with us, and each other, there. Here is the link: <http://www.archivefriends.org.au/index.php/view-all-published-blog-posts>

Blogs can take a little while to gain momentum – but the best way to do it is to start contributing. Are there things you would like the Friends to be doing? Do you know of relevant events coming up where you live that might interest Friends who live where you do, or who might be travelling there? Have you found an article or website or news item or review that you'd like to share with other Friends? Do you want to talk about government policy regarding cultural institutions? All of these would be great subjects for the blog.

Please note that while the blog form asks for your email address, the address is not published. You must also give a name, but you can use a pseudonym if you prefer. Mad Max anyone? So, start thinking and get those fingers typing. You could dip your toes in the water by responding to the question currently posed about what Friends would like. Click on this link and fire away:

<http://www.archivefriends.org.au/index.php/view-all-published-blog-posts/view/3-welcome-to-our-new-blog>

## **MEMBERSHIP FEES**

The annual Friends membership fees continue at \$25. The fees are being used to support the work of the Friends and in developing and managing the website. Members receive a 10% discount 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 are encouraged to sign up to the NFSA online newsletter to receive advance notification of NFSA events. 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 Argonauts' Register was conceived as part of the celebrations of the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the NFSA and we are grateful for the support of the NFSA and the ABC. The ABC and the NFSA have so little documentation of the Argonauts Club, and the Friends hope that 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. At its most popular, there were around 100,000 Argonauts in the Club.

The program employed high quality writers such as Lloyd Rees, A.D. Hope, John Gunn (Icarus) and Ruth Park, well known composers and performers such as Lindley Evans, and artists of the calibre of Jeffrey Smart. The Club attracted talented 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 and this Register aims to fill the gap

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You can find the Registry of members of the Argonauts Club linked to their 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.

## **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](mailto: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 2010, the following committee members were re-elected: Ann Baylis (President), Sue Terry (Secretary), Chris Emery (Treasurer), Chris Harrison (Vice President), Ray Edmondson, and David Kilby.

New members are always welcome to join the Committee. We need your ideas and enthusiasm for the future of the Friends to be assured.