

NEWSLETTER NO. 35 APRIL, 2016

A new era for the Friends of the NFSA:

Following our popular “Friday with Friends” series last year, the Friends will be working more closely with the NFSA’s own programming staff to develop what we hope will be an even more diversified menu of events of interest to Friends members.

There has been a slight hiatus in our program of events due to the discussions necessary to devise the new program. The NFSA, like other national institutions, has been hit hard by the continuing cuts in funding from government and it was necessary to ensure our Friends program did not create extra financial and staffing loads on an already stretched institution. (Note, later in this newsletter, Friends President Ray’s letter of support for the NFSA).

We have an exciting program of events coming up, with some excellent member benefits for Friends. In a difficult time for a national treasure such as the NFSA, we believe the Friends Association has a vital role in encouraging and maintaining public support for the Archive.



Andrew Pike in conversation with Helen Morse in February.

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What's been happening at Friends' events:

Our first event for the year was a highlight of our Friends program. Famous Australian film and stage actress **Helen Morse** took us on a fascinating journey through some of her cinematic past, in conversation with local film historian Andrew Pike.

In a program laced with film clips and stills from her movies and TV series Helen recounted behind the scenes anecdotes about her role in Australian cinema history from the 'golden age' of movie making in the 1970's and 80's to the present.

Helen was wonderfully generous with her time in preparing for this event and travelling from Melbourne to participate – thank you, Helen!



Lyn Mills, Andrew Pike and Helen Morse at the pre-function party. (Right) Helen and Chris Harrison, Friends' Vice-President and Helen. (Below) The bumper crowd at our first event for 2016.



OUR NEXT FRIDAY WITH FRIENDS EVENT:**Coming up 5.30 PM Friday May 27th:**

Film historian, critic and broadcaster Marilyn Dooley presents

The Gumleaf Girls: Women in Early Australian Cinema

They could ride, muster, brand, pioneer bush settlements, endure fire, flood and drought; and with it all be helpmate, mother and lover. Sometimes desperate, often defiant, and always brave, the girls of the bush were distinctive characters in early Australian cinema. Across four decades from 1910-1950 Australian film goers were treated to a succession of bush heroines in *The Romantic Story of Margaret Catchpole (1911)*, *A Girl of the Bush (1921)*, *The Squatter's Daughter (1933)* and *The Overlanders (1946)*. In these decades, too, the stalwart Rudd women took us onto their selection. This illustrated talk will saddle up with the actresses who rendered these memorable characters in scenes of action and adventure.



No bookings necessary for this: free to members and a gold coin donation for others. Drinks and nibbles at 5.30 for a 6.00 – 7.00 presentation.

4.

New to the Friends' Program - Events and benefits presented in association with the NFSA:

June: *Crackle and Grain* - From June to the end of the year, 2pm Sundays, there will be screenings of classic films in 35mm and 16mm – a season specifically about film as a medium.

And the best part? Friends of the NFSA will receive a 50% discount on the ticketed price of \$14.

The first film in the season will be the 1932 Joan Crawford movie 'Rain', a South Seas drama film also starring Walter Houston.



August: 'Caring for and preserving your Collection'

Thursday 18th August at 4.00. As part of National Science Week this lecture will provides insight and practical hints on keeping your audio/visual family archive updated and protected.

Special Friends DVD Offer until the end of June:

Friends are entitled to a 10% discount on DVDs produced by the NFSA. ***But until the end of June there is a SPECIAL OFFER of 25% off!*** Friends can purchase any title that is in stock on the Online Shop 'over the counter', but please allow time for material to be brought down to reception. Following is a review of the latest DVD releases by President Ray.

RAY'S CRITIC'S COMMENTS ON NEW DVD RELEASES:

Wearing my other hat as NFSA Curator Emeritus, can I enthuse about three new NFSA product releases on DVD?

MARCO POLO JUNIOR VERSUS THE RED DRAGON (1972) Despite its awkward title, this is a landmark in Australian film history: our first cartoon feature. It was made by the pioneering Eric Porter Studios in Sydney and it was a huge achievement in a country where animation has always struggled for its place in the sun. It has all the ingredients: an appealing hero and heroine, a truly nasty villain, and some offbeat animal characters that will engage you.

SMITHY (1946) Ken G Hall's last film is an epic biopic about the life of Sir Charles Kingsford Smith. It stars Ron Randell and Muriel Steinbeck, and features John Stannage, Captain P G Taylor and former Prime Minister W M 'Billy' Hughes playing themselves as their parts in Smithy's story unfolds. The epic first crossing of the Pacific Ocean in 1928, and the later crossing of the Tasman Sea in the failing Southern Cross, are grippingly recreated. The music score by Henry Krips and Alfred Hill, performed by the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, is memorable. To capture the aerial shots for the film, the Southern Cross was flown for the very last time, before becoming a museum exhibit.

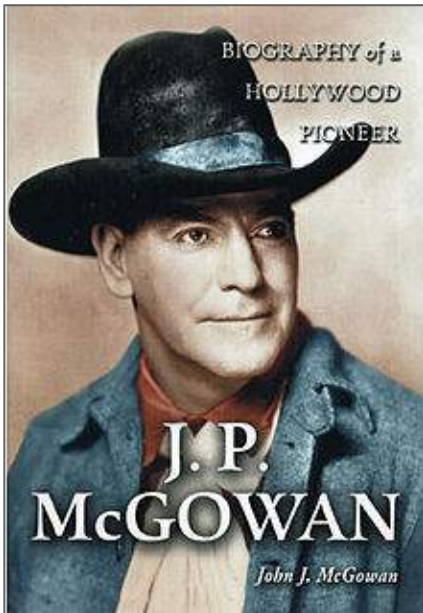
RANGLE RIVER (1936) Based on a story by Zane Grey and starring Victor Jory, this is a kind of Australian western. It's interesting as an element in the continuing interaction between Australia and Hollywood which has always been a feature of our film industry. The plot includes a fierce duel with stockwhips, which led to the film being cleverly retitled for its American release as MEN WITH WHIPS.

More news from President Ray Edmondson: This newsletter includes a copy of the letter from the Friends, published in the Canberra Times in February protesting the latest round of budget cuts, of which the NFSA's share was \$3m. It's heartening that the NFSA is gradually reinstating its line of audio and video products, now available to Friends at a significant discount.

CALLING FOR VOLUNTEERS: We are looking for people to join our friendly volunteer crew at the NFSA. If you like indexing, or working with databases, or reading film journals, this might be for you as our job is to index film journal articles for an international database. Training will be provided!

WHEN: Wednesdays, 2.30-4.30pm (you can offer weekly, fortnightly, monthly, ad hoc, as suits your schedule)

WHERE: NFSA Library. If you would like to take part or would like to find out more first, please email Sue Terry at archivefriends@gmail.com



Who was JP McGowan?

Friends who were able to attend film historian David Donaldson's morning presentation in the Arc Cinema on 24 February had a memorable glimpse into the life of the first Australian to make the "big time" in Hollywood. McGowan was a prolific maker of film serials during the silent era, and was active in various areas of the American film industry almost until his death in 1952. The entire first episode of McGowan's early sound serial, THE HURRICANE EXPRESS (1932) – featuring a very youthful John Wayne – was posted on the Friends' Facebook page, and the number of "views" reached well into four figures.

The little known story of the interplay between the Australian film industry and Hollywood before the second World War is a fascinating one, and it is tracked in the NFSA collection. Did you know that Hollywood fixtures Errol Flynn, Cecil Kellaway, Constance Worth and Ann Richards were Australians, and made their first films in Sydney? Or that Hollywood stars Lloyd Hughes, Charles Farrell and Helen Twelvetrees were imported to star in Australian films in the 1930s?

'Little Pattie' becomes a Patron of the Friends:

Patricia Amphlett OAM is the Friends' newest patron. Under the stage name of "Little Pattie", Patricia was one of Australia's best-known singing stars in the 1960s and 1970s. She later moved on to adult contemporary music, and with other entertainers she sang in the famous "It's Time" television commercial for the 1972 Federal election campaign. She has served as the National President of the Media, Entertainment and Arts Alliance, as Vice President of Actors Equity, on the Council of the Australian War Memorial (1995-1998) and on the Board of the NFSA (2011 to 2014). Patricia was inducted into the Australian Recording Industry Association (ARIA) Hall of Fame in 2009. We are delighted that she has accepted the position of Patron of the FNFA.



On behalf of the friends of the NFSA:

Published under the headline **'Efficiency dividends' ignore government duty of care** - letters, Canberra Times, 13 February

I have lost count of the number of "efficiency dividend" cuts imposed on our national memory institutions by both Liberal and Labor governments, but they have long ceased to have anything to do with either efficiency or dividends ("Capital cops it as more jobs go", February 11, p1). Our stressed institutions are losing hard-won expertise as staff numbers and budgets decline. They can cope only by closing functions, reducing access and failing to acquire what should be preserved. As their communities rally to help, volunteers and corporate sponsors can assist. But this cannot, and should not, relieve government of its fundamental duty of care for the national memory and national treasures.

As Lloyd George once said, "national culture and identity is too important to leave to the politicians". The Prime Minister's dream of an innovation nation is hardly compatible with a mindset, which regards cultural institutions as an expense instead of an investment. Compared with the untaxed profits being offshored by multinationals, harming our institutions contributes next to nothing in the budget balance sheet

Dr Ray Edmondson

President, Friends of the National Film and Sound Archive Inc.

Don't forget these important dates:

**Friday with Friends: 5.30 pm Friday May 27th
'Gumleaf Girls'**

June - December Sunday Classics at 2.00pm ARC

Thursday 18th August - 'Caring for your Collection'.

MORE INFORMATION SNIPPETS

It's worth regularly checking the Friends' website and Facebook page to keep up with what's happening. These will soon be complemented by a new Friends' membership brochure, and a leaflet setting out a potted history of the NFSA



Like to keep in touch a new way?



Find the Friends on Facebook!

www.facebook.com/NFSAFriends

Friends of the National Film and Sound Archive

Sign up to the NFSA's online newsletter to receive advance notification of NFSA events!

<http://www.nfsa.gov.au/community/newsletters/>

The 2016 Friends of the NFSA Committee:

President: Ray Edmondson, Vice President: Chris Harrison, Secretary: Sue Terry, Treasurer: Chris Emery, Committee: David Kilby, Lindy Ross, Michael Pejovic, Public Officer: Sue Terry, Newsletter Editor : Lindy Ross

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