



WHAT'S THE NEWS? 5

MAY 2003

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

Here is the fifth issue of the Friends newsletter chock full of all the latest news.

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FRIENDS FAREWELL CENTER CINEMA—JOIN US WHEN THE CURTAINS CLOSE FOR THE LAST TIME

Center Cinema has operated in Canberra for over 36 years but on 1 June it will, in partnership with the Friends, host one final event before closing its curtains forever. On 4 October 1966, *Dr Zhivago* thrilled Center Cinema's opening night audience at a vice-regal affair with the Governor-General in attendance. Now, with a lovely sense of closure, David Lean's magnificent epic will screen again on the night that it closes. The final evening's entertainment starts at 6.30 pm with a few celebratory drinks and a few words and then a screening time of 7.15 pm.

To be a part of this historic occasion, just print out the first page of this newsletter and bring it with you to the cinema box-office on June 1. You (and one guest) will pay a Friends concession price of only \$11.50 instead of \$13.50 and, as

a portion of the proceeds will go to the Friends, you will be helping your organisation to raise some funds. Tickets will be on sale in advance at both Center Cinema and Electric Shadows from Friday 23 May. Come along and raise a glass to farewell one of our favourite cinemas.

THE BIG NEWS

SCREENSOUND AUSTRALIA, THE NATIONAL SCREEN AND SOUND ARCHIVE, AND THE AUSTRALIAN FILM COMMISSION (AFC) MERGE

The Federal Government has announced that ScreenSound Australia, the National Screen and Sound Archive, and the Australian Film Commission (AFC) will be integrated from 1 July 2003. The decision follows the Government's Review of Cultural Agencies. The AFC appears to be taking a consultative approach to its new task. Friend Andrew Pike has already been phoned by the AFC's Kim Dalton and asked for his input.

Here are the official media releases from the ministers responsible, the Archive and the Friends response.

NEW ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE AUSTRALIAN FILM COMMISSION AND SCREENSOUND AUSTRALIA

(A joint media release from Senator the Hon Richard Alston; Minister for Communications, Information Technology and the Arts and Senator the Hon Rod Kemp, Minister for the Arts and Sport)

The Minister for Communications, Information Technology and the Arts, Senator Richard Alston, and the Minister for the Arts and Sport, Senator Rod Kemp, announced today that ScreenSound Australia and the Australian Film Commission (AFC) will be integrated from 1 July 2003.

The AFC is the Commonwealth's primary agency for supporting the development of film, television and interactive media projects and their creators. One of the AFC's key objectives is to support activities and events that provide the wider Australian community, including regional Australia, with access to Australian audiovisual product.

ScreenSound Australia-The National Screen and Sound Archive is responsible for preserving, documenting and interpreting the Australian experience in audiovisual media.

The influence of audiovisual content on our culture is immense and growing. The synergies created by combining the resources of the AFC and ScreenSound Australia will improve their current educational and exhibition activities. It will also provide national leadership in enhancing access to, and understanding of, audiovisual culture.

Legislation will be introduced to facilitate the integration and, for the first time, give clear recognition in Commonwealth statute to the important work of collecting and preserving the nation's sound and visual heritage.

Combining ScreenSound Australia's extensive collection in both sound and screen material with the AFC's ability to support national exhibition programmes will enable the development of a national strategy for the delivery of audiovisual cultural activities, ensuring that more Australians than ever are able to enjoy and learn from ScreenSound's unique resource.

Media contacts: Simon Troeth, Senator Alston's office 02 6277 7480 or 0439 425 373 Website:

www.richardalston.dcita.gov.au

Richard Wise, Senator Kemp's office 02 6277 7350 or 0438 204 554 Website: www.dcita.gov.au/kemp

INTEGRATION OF SCREENSOUND AUSTRALIA AND AUSTRALIAN FILM COMMISSION

(A media release from the Archive)

The Federal Government has announced that ScreenSound Australia, the National Screen and Sound Archive, and the Australian Film Commission (AFC) will be integrated from 1 July 2003. The decision follows the Government's Review of Cultural Agencies.

'The change strengthens ScreenSound Australia's position and potential for the future', said ScreenSound Australia Director, Ron Brent.

'For the first time, the audiovisual archiving functions of collection, preservation and direct access will be recognised in legislation—giving ScreenSound Australia a statutory mandate for its functions. This new status also offers greater protection to the collection and objectives of ScreenSound Australia.

'There is potential for increased development of the collection and enhanced collection access, educational, exhibition and online content development activities', said Mr Brent.

'Combining the resources of the two organisations provides the opportunity to establish a unique national cultural institution, strongly positioned as a national leader in audiovisual cultural programs.

'ScreenSound Australia remains committed to collecting, preserving and providing access to Australia's historic and contemporary moving image and recorded sound collection', said Mr Brent.

For further information, contact: Cinden Lester Telephone: (02) 6248 2087 Email: cinden_lester@screensound.gov.au

THE FRIENDS' RESPONSE—FRIENDS OF THE ARCHIVE CALL FOR MERGER SAFEGUARDS

(A media release from the Friends of the National Film and Sound Archive, Inc)

'Strong credentials in film or sound culture are vital prerequisites for those representing the National Film and Sound Archive on the new AFC Board', said a Friends of the Archive spokesperson this week.

The national advocacy group, the Friends of the National Film and Sound Archive, was responding to the Federal Budget's announcement this month of a merger between the National Film and Sound Archive (ScreenSound Australia) and the AFC – the Australian Film Commission.

The Friends of the Archive have cautiously welcomed the surprise merger announcement.

'The Archive should have a long-term guarantee of a minimum of three dedicated expert positions on the AFC Board', say the Friends. 'It is essential that the Archive's needs and responsibilities be managed and monitored by people with appropriate credentials in the field, consistent with the management of the nation's other leading cultural institutions.'

The Friends warn however that 'Best practice worldwide has shown that such mergers of cultural institutions need to be more than skin deep', pointing to the dysfunctional relationship following the British Film Institute's merger with the National Film and Television Archive in 1998 – which was reversed after four years. In 1998 the separate identity of the NFTVA was discarded and it was merged organisationally and by name with the BFI proper, most of it becoming rearranged as 'BFI Collections'. It proved a disaster: key expert staff and corporate memory departed and donations of films and money declined because donors are less willing to support a faceless bureaucracy than an identifiable archive. The changes were reversed in 2002, following a turnover in top management which included the departure of those responsible for the 'rebranding'.

'Restoring the Archive's identity as an unambiguous, world class cultural institution after its ill-considered 'rebranding' as 'ScreenSound Australia' should be a top priority for the new entity', said the Friends. 'Restoration of its title to the National Film and Sound Archive will hopefully be an early positive outcome of the new merger.'

For more information contact: Richard Keys (02) 62475930 or Andrew Pike (02) 62480851.

NEW FRIENDS EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

Responsibility for running and directing the Friends will now be handled by an executive council. At the last meeting, the Friends committee elected Shelley Clarke, Roger Westcombe, Richard Keys and Andrew Pike to the new executive council, which will be the driving force behind the Friends with full power to make decisions.

THE ARCHIVE TALKS

Despite a lack of meetings over the summer period, some committee members have been active organising a trial three-month program of talks at the Archive in Canberra. The purpose of the program is to bring to a wider audience the work and activities of the Archive and its staff and to allow discussion of Archive policies and practices. 'The Archive Talks' program, which is currently in planning, will be jointly presented by the Friends and the Archive. A typical evening will start at 6.00 pm with an entertaining and informative talk and the opportunity for questions, followed by an informal break to stretch the legs and enjoy some wine supplied by our sponsor Orlando. Then around 7.00 pm a film chosen by the presenter to reflect or illustrate their presentation will screen. The talks will be open to the public and Friends will be eligible for a discount.

FAREWELL SHAUNA HICKS

Shauna Hicks has resigned from the Committee due to a recent move to Melbourne.

'I have accepted a new job at the Public Record Office in Melbourne. Therefore, it is with some sadness that I have to resign from the Friends committee. Please convey my thanks to everyone for welcoming me onto the Committee in the first place and let them know that I have enjoyed working with everyone over the last two years. I wish you all the best. Regards Shauna.'

The Committee is very grateful for all of Shauna's efforts whilst serving on the committee, especially her very valuable work on our strategic plan. We wish her well with her new job and new home.

CANBERRA FILM GROUPS PROVIDE FILM STUDIES RESOURCES

With its focus on local cultural activities, and boasting a fine multimedia theatre, Canberra Museum and Gallery (CMAG) is the home venue for several not-for-profit film groups. Now three of these, ACT Filmmakers Network, University of the Third Age's film appreciation course and the Big House Film Society have joined with CMAG to introduce a Film Studies shelf in their Resource Centre. Books, magazines and journals covering Australian, genres, biographies, directors, how-to production guides and media studies are being introduced. The material is non-lending, but with CMAG's central location and extended hours, the new Film Studies section is accessible to all.

Enquiries: Rani Austin (62072234) or Tina Mattei (62073966).

FAREWELL RON BRENT

Ron Brent, Director of Australia's National Screen and Sound Archive, recently announced his intention to take on a new challenge. From 2 June, he will take up the role of Deputy Commonwealth Ombudsman. In his farewell note to staff, Ron said, 'No job will come close to this one.' Good luck Ron.

Mary Durkin will act as Director when Ron departs and David Boden will act in Mary's position as Deputy Director.

SEAPAVAA

The Friends is an associate member of SEAPAVAA (South East Asia Pacific Audiovisual Archive Association): www.geocities.com/seapavaa. Because of the recent outbreak of SARS (Severe acute respiratory syndrome) SEAPAVAA has, like many other international organisations, reluctantly decided to postpone its annual conference, which was scheduled to be held in Brunei Darussalam from 19 to 23 May. The progress of SARS is being monitored and a new date will be advised as soon as possible. SEAPAVAA has both full and associate members: full members are archives within the South East Asia or Pacific regions, while associate members are individuals or organisations of any kind who are committed to SEAPAVAA's objectives. The newest Australian associate member is Screensound Pty Ltd, the Sydney-based post-production studio, which joined a few months ago.

NFSA NAME CHANGE: RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

In May 2002 the first detailed critique of the NFSA's 1999 name change appeared. It was published by the Australian Society of Archivists as a case study in the professional journal *Archives and Manuscripts* (Vol 30, No 1). Titled *A case of mistaken identity: governance, guardianship and the ScreenSound saga*, it was written by the Archive's former Deputy Director, Ray Edmondson, who now practices as an international consultant in AV archiving. Adaptations of the essay were subsequently published in *Metro* (No. 134, October 2002) and *Museum National* (November, 2002), while the full text has been published on line by *Brandchannel* (www.brandchannel.com/papers.asp) and *Screening the Past* (www.latrobe.edu.au/screeningthepast/firstrelease/fr0902/refr14c).

Edmondson told the Friends newsletter that he has received considerable supportive feedback, both at home and from overseas. Many correspondents expressed appreciation that someone had finally moved to fill the information vacuum about the puzzling name change. However, the NFSA itself has so far made no public response either to the original essay or its adaptations, nor has it engaged with the questions raised by the case study. He adds that the 'ScreenSound Saga' is now gaining international notoriety as a seminal case study on what can go wrong with an identity change, finding its way into academic curricula, professional forums and journals overseas. The latest newsletter (#59) of the North America-based AMIA (Association of Moving Image Archivists) carries an update article, *A tale of two screensounds*. Edmondson has accepted an invitation from the International Council on Archives (ICA) to present an updated version of the case study as a paper at ICA's four-yearly global congress next year in Vienna. Since publication of the case study a year ago, new information has been made public in the form of documents obtained under Freedom of Information, and answers to questions put on notice by a Senate Estimates Committee (see below). These tend to confirm doubts already expressed about the competence and integrity of the renaming process, concerns about the methods subsequently used to implant the name 'ScreenSound' by edict, and questions about the real intention behind the name change. There is now considerable evidence to suggest that it was changed for reasons other than those officially stated – whether change for its own sake, or to suppress the existing identity and the word 'archive', or otherwise – and that its imposition was determined by seizing a coincidental opportunity that limited the possibility of research, stakeholder consultation or effective protest.

Archive management to date seem to have decided that 'no comment' is the best response to the issue; perhaps on the assumption that if something is ignored it will go away. While this is a tried and true bureaucratic tactic, that is all it is. As Edmondson comments in his essay:

While we await such expositions [articles, conference papers and so on] on the rationale of ScreenSound, inevitably the vacuum will be filled by myth, speculation, or, worst of all, discreet avoidance of discussion lest it be unwelcome. This is not the atmosphere in which the ethos of archiving—scholarship, intellectual rigour and the search for truth—can flourish.

By its nature, the Archive is a values-based professional institution, not a bureaucracy. In the absence of any intellectually cogent move by the Archive to engage with these questions at the heart of the institution, stakeholders and the public have been left to draw their own conclusions about the integrity, accountability and credibility of their National Film and Sound Archive, vulnerable for so long to bureaucratic whim and radical change without the protection of a charter or statute.

Whether the recently announced linkage with the Australian Film Commission (AFC), to take effect 1 July, means turning the page to a new chapter of accountability and transparency remains to be seen. It has been promised that the Archive will now have a statutory basis, to be achieved by amendment of the AFC Act. This raises the critical question—by what name will the Archive be identified in the amended Act?

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION DOCUMENTS

In recent months a number of documents relating to the NFSA's name change have been made public under FOI. These include:

- A confidential KPMG audit report on the 'rebranding' process, the existence of which had not previously been admitted in annual reports
- A 1999 PowerPoint presentation by consultants Keystone Corporate Positioning, constituting their report to NFSA management recommending the name change
- Several ministerial submissions proposing and (after the event) defending the name change
- Copies of complaints about the name change received by the Archive (censored to remove names)

Although heavily censored to remove names and figures, the text of the KPMG report makes it clear that the renaming process was poorly defined and managed, and that KPMG were unable to locate vital documents.

The quality of advice given in the Keystone report raises many questions in the light of experience. What is most interesting, however, is that it was proffered by DCITA (Department of Communications, Information Technology and the Arts, of which the Archive is a Division) as the *rationale* for the name change. It is an interesting comment on the intellectual state of the Archive that *input* from a 'positioning' consultant equals professional policy *output* by a national collecting institution.

DCITA, however, has seemed confused about what constitutes the rationale. On other occasions, the ministerial submissions from the NFSA's Director and various publicity statements were also represented by DCITA as comprising the rationale for the name change. The submissions contain unsupported assertions on which the Minister presumably relied in approving the change. These assertions do not necessarily withstand scrutiny in the light of events.

On 1 July, with the transfer of responsibility for the Archive to the Australian Film Commission, DCITA passes out of the picture as the reference point for FOI requests—and for explaining rationales.

Copies of these public documents are available on request from the Friends office.

SENATE QUESTIONS: WHAT IS THE ARCHIVE'S REAL NAME?

On 20 November 2002, Senator Kate Lundy tabled a series of 33 questions-on-notice during the Senate Estimates hearings. The questions concerned the NFSA's name change, the Archive's legal status and administrative matters. Senate Estimates hearings are a crucial avenue through which government bodies are kept accountable to Parliament and all Australians, and misleading Parliament is a serious matter.

The answers bear study as a whole for what they revealed about the Archive's insularity, and its resort to legalisms and ambiguity to answer what were presumably unwelcome questions. It was not always so. It was once the case that the Archive welcomed Senate questions as an opportunity to raise its profile and impart information, and it was sometimes rewarded with additional resources as a result.

Of particular interest were these questions and answers:

Q: What is the exact name of the organisation now?

A: The formal name of the organisation is the National Screen and Sound Archive and the shortened market brand is ScreenSound Australia.

Q: Why was the word 'archive' dropped altogether in June 1999?

A: The word 'archive' was dropped from the name on the basis of advice from consultants.

Q: Why has it not been restored to the public identity?

A: The word 'archive' is present in the name ScreenSound Australia, National Screen and Sound Archive.

Q: Despite the designation of the name 'National Screen and Sound Archive' as a formal title and the limiting of the title 'ScreenSound Australia' to a 'trading name', is it the case that for all practical purposes ScreenSound is used and promoted as the de facto institutional name?

A: No (refer annual reviews, website, logo, letterhead and other corporate documents)

How many people are actually aware that the Archive's formal institutional name since mid 2000 has been National Screen and Sound Archive—and that this is not just a descriptive tag line in small print added under the name ScreenSound Australia? Where in all of the Archive's public documents is its status made clear? Would you believe the assertion that ScreenSound is not promoted as the de facto institutional name?

Conundrum for time travellers: How can ScreenSound Australia (adopted June 1999) be an abbreviation of National Screen and Sound Archive (adopted mid 2000)?

A complete copy of Senator Lundy's questions and DCITA's answers is available in hard copy or electronic form from the Friends office. This is a public document.

BRITAIN'S NATIONAL FILM AND TELEVISION ARCHIVE NAME RESTORED

In an earlier case with striking parallels to the NFSA name change story, Britain's venerable National Film and Television Archive—a department of the British Film Institute—lost both its name and its organisational existence in

1998. In the course of a reorganisation by new top management, it was dismembered, most of its parts being subsumed into a division called *BFI Collections*.

Founded in 1935, the NFTVA had been the model and mother of archives worldwide, including Australia. Professional sources saw the change as a management drive to depersonalise well-known departments, and ensure government funds were given to the whole institute, not specifically NFTVA, which could no longer be separately identified.

Apparently, as key expert staff and corporate memory departed, donations of films and money declined, because donors are less willing to support a faceless bureaucracy than an identifiable archive. Stakeholder reaction was sufficiently negative to force a rethink, which last year saw a reversal of the 1998 changes. The NFTVA is back together again, its name restored.

The reinstatement occurred only after further changes in top management, involving the departure of those responsible for the name change.

LAUNCH OF ARCHIVE FORUM

NEW ADVOCACY GROUP PROMOTES FILM AND SOUND ARCHIVE'S FUTURE

(A media release announcing the Archive Forum)

Concern for the future of our National Film and Sound Archive (renamed ScreenSound Australia in 1999) has prompted a number of prominent supporters of the Archive [see list below] to form an independent advocacy group, Archive Forum. The group is chaired by Melbourne author and former academic, Merle Thornton, a member of the original government committee which developed the Archive's 1985 vision document, *Time in Our Hands*.

Announcing the formation of Archive Forum, Ms Thornton said, 'We believe that the nation's film, television and sound archive should have a secure legal status. It has achieved much through the hard professional work of its staff, but its legal status has long stayed in limbo as part of the Department of Communications, Technology and the Arts. The new initiative linking the Archive to the Australian Film Commission, announced in the Federal Budget on 13 May, offers the promise of strengthening the Archive's presence. With the approach of the Archive's 20th anniversary in 2004, Archive Forum's priority is the discussion and development of the potential offered through the new arrangement.'

Archive Forum sees its role as an independent advocacy group that can support the work of the Archive and promote and contribute to public debate and discussion on strategic issues concerning the Archive, including legislation, governance, corporate identity, scholarship, research and cultural presence.

The Forum also supports expanded development within the Archive of a rich intellectual and research environment and its increased participation in Australian cultural life. It looks forward to the development of an updated and visionary charter and mission for the Archive and ultimately to an enhanced role for the Archive as the custodian of the nation's film, television and sound heritage.

Archive Forum backs the original call by the *Friends of the National Film and Sound Archive* for the reinstatement of the Archive's original name as its primary public identity, which emphasises the words *national* and *archive*.

Archive Forum members are: Martha Ansara, Ina Bertrand, Peter Butt, Ray Edmondson, David Francis, Tom Jeffrey, Sue Murray, Christopher Puplick, Bill Routt, Graham Shirley, Merle Thornton, Deb Verhoeven, Mike Walsh, and John Weiley.

For further information, foundation statement, or first discussion paper, www.afiresearch.rmit.edu.au/archiveforum/ or contact: Sydney: Tom Jeffrey Phone 02 8353 2600 Mobile 0408 260 274 tom@samsonprod.com.au

Melbourne: Bill Routt Phone 03 9817 1516 bill@routt.net

Archive Forum Secretary: Ray Edmondson, 100 Learmonth Drive, Kambah ACT 2902

Phone 02 6231 6849 Fax 02 6231 6699 ray@archival.com.au

THE 21ST PORDENONE SILENT FILM FESTIVAL—LE GIORNATE DEL CINEMA MUTO

This year's festival was dedicated to the memory of Jonathon Dennis, the founder of the New Zealand Film Archive 'Guardian of the Treasures of Light'. Jonathon's mother & sister attended the festival. The festival ran for eight days in the delightful village of Sacile, as the Cinema-Teatro VERDI, the previous venue in Pordenone, has been pulled down and got off to a great start with Clarence Badger's 'IT', starring Clara Bow, with a score composed and conducted by the great Carl Davis in person with a small orchestra. The closing night film was 'Exit Smiling', with Beatrice Lillie. Neil Brand & Gunter Buckwald prepared a special musical accompaniment. There were seven brilliant pianists (including Neil Brand) who shared the task of accompaniment. Usually it was a single piano but in one case we had a violin as well. They did a magnificent job since they mostly improvised for each program. A translation service was available either into English or into Italian for those films requiring it. Small battery powered boxes with earphones were available which could be tuned to the appropriate language. The translators were in a booth at the back of the theatre and did a superb job as they translated directly from the intertitles. While most films had English intertitles there were a number of Italian, German, Dutch, Danish and Hungarian films. Around 250 films, long and short, were shown; only one had a soundtrack (The Vagabond Queen). Most of them were from the USA but others came from the UK, Switzerland,

Denmark and there was one German/British coproduction. We attended as many as our eyes and constitution could take.

The main themes were: Funny Ladies, many delightful films showcasing the talents of the brilliant female silent stars; Saving the Silents, an ambitious project to save 67 rare American silent films; The Griffith Project, fourteen programs from DW Griffith's extraordinarily prolific output from the year 1912; Italian Avant-Garde, the development of 'unwitting' avant-garde in the Italian silent Cinema in relation to the other contemporary arts; Swiss Cinema, the Swiss Archive has recently emphasised the preservation of Swiss films, as distinct from French, German and Italian productions; and Transilvanica, newly discovered films of the Hungarian director Jenő Janovics, from the Budapest Archive.

Special events included: The Film Fair, a market for books, posters, stills, & memorabilia with specialist presentations given each day; The Great Nickelodeon Show, a highly entertaining recreation of the Golden Age of the American Nickelodeon theatre prior to WW1, with a mixture of film, slides, live presentations, songs and a magic act; London by Midnight, a video re-construction of this lost silent classic directed by Tod Browning and starring Lon Chaney. It was made entirely from stills but had a full musical sound track. A sense of movement of the actors was created by using camera movement on the stills together with different musical instruments; the Mitchell and Kenyon Program, a restoration project of rare actualities filmed in Sheffield and Manchester by fairground impresarios, made in the UK in the early years of the 20th century; the inaugural Jonathan Dennis Memorial Lecture, given by Neil Brand, whose informative and entertaining presentation focused on improvising music for silent films; and the Collegium Sacilium, a festival initiative of three years, which encourages younger people to enjoy and participate in the preservation of silent films. Each year a number of young people with a strong interest in silent films are guests of the festival. They are expected to write a paper on their field of interest which is then published in the Collegium Papers. Every day of the Festival a session is organised where these young people (as well as other delegates) can meet with experts to talk on various topics.

We attended the following sessions: 'Changing Strategies of Conservation/Restoration', a panel consisting of FIAF Technical Commission members discussed issues related to modern film stocks and their potential for long term preservation and the uncertainty surrounding the preservation of current and future technologies such as DVD and video; 'Politics, PC and Film History', a session concentrating on the work of little known or unfashionable film makers such as the Nazi filmmaker Hans Steinhoff. Enno Patatas of Munich Film Archive, who was on the panel, announced the completion of his 20 year project to restore 'Metropolis'. He had located a small amount of footage, found nowhere else, in a print from the Harry Davidson collection held at ScreenSound Australia; and 'Digital Restoration', Giovanna Fossati & Paul Read presenting the latest ideas in digital restoration contrasted with traditional chemical restoration processes. Before and after clips were shown on video. David Bruce-Steer and Richard Keys

INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL OF FILM SOCIETIES—FESTIVAL INTERNAZIONALE DEI CIRCOLI DEL CINEMA

I had the honour to represent ACOFS at this festival, held in Reggio di Calabria in the south of Italy, as the first Australian to attend an International Federation meeting since Barrie King more than fifteen years ago.

This was not the Annual General Meeting of the International Federation, but a festival where delegates could meet and see films. The festival is both a film market and meeting point: as a film market the festival promotes films which are worth consideration by film societies and non-profit cinemas. As a meeting point it offers various possibilities to exchange ideas and develop co-operation, facilitated by the Symposium on the final day. The festival's logo was 'Don Quixote' carrying a spool of film, presumably to suggest film societies tilting at windmills of the big distributors! It was accompanied by an obscure quotation from Cervantes' 'Don Quixote' about heroic cavaliers and mad dreams.

The range of countries represented was extra-ordinary; Mexico, Argentina, Thailand, the Philippines, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Norway, Switzerland, France, Vietnam, Iran, Britain, Ireland and a healthy contingent from Sardinia. I made many useful contacts all around the world. It was a special pleasure to meet Peter Cargin, the chairman of the British Federation, and Maretta Dillon, Director of the Irish 'Access Cinema'.

The festival Director, Paulo Minuto, did a superb job. The Festival was held entirely at the modest but suitable Cine-Aurora cinema. The success of the festival was due in no small measure to the translators, who had apparently come straight from the Venice Film Festival and provided simultaneous translation through headphones in English, French, German and Italian.

Films were screened under various headings: 'Don Quijote' Special Awards, International Showcase, Films for Children and Sebastiano di Marco, films focussing on the identity of the south of Italy. A special guest of the Festival was Kamran Shirdel, an Iranian film-maker who had managed to make socially critical films despite the repressive regimes of both the Shah and the Islamic revolution.

The Symposium, entitled 'The Cultural Activities of the Film Societies Movement in the World' was held on the final day of the Festival. I was seated between the Argentinean and the Bangladeshi delegates! Discussion centred on the eternal problems of film societies: availability of modern and older films from exhibitors; preservation of films; and whether the International Federation should distribute films. There was some disagreement on the last point with countries like Sri Lanka and Bangladesh who have limited access to any films were very much in favour, while

delegates from countries with easier access to films (such as Australia) thought that the Federation should put its limited resources into improving access to all films.

The general thrust of film society exhibition was definitely towards 35mm and DVD, and there was surprise at our extensive availability of 16mm. However, the film trade is still wary of the non-commercial use of DVD. I pointed out that one reason why we still had extensive 16mm availability is that the film trade seems to be more comfortable with the use of 16mm for non-commercial purposes. This does not seem to have happened in other countries. Even the concept of the film society itself was questioned – for example Ireland now refers to ‘Regional Cultural Cinema Exhibition’. There was some debate on what (if anything) the International Federation could do for National Federations, other than helping delegates to attend international festivals and meetings.

The Festival concluded with a noisy dinner, with lots of Italian songs! Richard Keys

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. We are always looking for new Friends—you can sign up one or two of your friends now! Just send us their details. 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 or ring Charlie on 6248 0851.

FRIENDS WEBSITE

Our website's contents include How to Join, Newsletter Back Issues, Discussion Papers, Mission Statement, Events and Contact information. The address is www.archivefriends.org.au. Check it out!

Regards from your Committee,

Shelley Clarke, Adrian Cunningham, Ray Edmondson, Chris Harrison, Charles Higgins, Cris Kennedy, Richard Keys, Andrew Pike, Kyle Rollinson, Cheryl Stevenson and Roger Westcombe.

Many thanks to our sponsor Orlando Trilogy

ORLANDO

TRILOGY