



WHAT'S THE NEWS? 6

SEPTEMBER 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 sixth issue of the Friends NFSA newsletter with the latest news to bring you up to date.

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SYDNEY FRIENDS TO MEET

6.00 pm Friday 5 September 2003

AFC Theatre, Ground Floor, 150 William Street, Woolloomooloo New South Wales

The Friends has organised a meeting in Sydney and would like to invite you to this important discussion about the Archive. Following the Archive's merger with Australian Film Commission, the Friends hold an important part to play in the future direction and role of the Archive. We would love to see a large turnout so please come along and invite any interested friends and family to the meeting. It will be a largely informal discussion hosted by the Friends Executive: Shelley Clarke, Andrew Pike, Richard Keys and Roger Westcombe. Please register your interest by contacting Charles Higgins on (02) 6248 0851. We strongly encourage you to come along, support and participate in the activities of the Friends.

NOTICE OF OUR SECOND ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

All Friends are invited to attend the second Annual General Meeting of the Friends of the National Film and Sound Archive Inc. to be held at the Archive's Theatre, McCoy Circuit, Acton, Canberra at 6.30 pm on Friday 24 October 2003.

The meeting's purpose is for the Friends to receive from the committee a statement of activities, income, expenditure, assets and liabilities of the association and to elect office bearers of the association as well as ordinary members of the committee.

Nominations of candidates for election are now invited for the association's office-bearer positions of president, vice-president, treasurer and secretary and for three ordinary committee member positions. Please consider becoming more involved in your association. Its goals are important to the Australian community and the experience is likely to be most rewarding. You would be VERY welcome. Nomination forms are now available. You can ask for one by emailing your request to friendsofarchive@hotmail.com or ringing Charlie on 6248 0851. If you are unable to attend the meeting and wish to vote by proxy, contact us and we will send you a proxy voting form.

PATRICIA LOVELL—GUEST SPEAKER FOR OUR ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Patricia Lovell is currently Head of Producing at the Australian Film Television and Radio School. She has more than twenty-five years experience as a producer, producing Peter Weir's *Picnic at Hanging Rock* and *Gallipoli*, Ken Cameron's *Monkey Grip*, the prize-winning telemovie based on David Williamson's script, *The Perfectionist* and Trevor Graham's documentary *Tosca* for Film Australia. She is also famous for being 'Miss Pat', the friend of Mr Squiggle for fifteen years, and 'Pat' in the *Argonauts*, for her performances in TV series such as *Skippy* and *Homicide* and her work as a reporter for the current affairs program, *Today*. Her contribution to the film and television industry was recognised with an MBE and an AM.

UPCOMING FRIENDS' EVENTS

We will hold our new series of public lectures with films at the Archive Theatre in McCoy Circuit, Acton. Please join us for these entertaining and informative sessions and bring your friends.

Jan Thurling

The Collection and Preservation of Explicit or Offensive Audiovisual Material

Film: The True Story of the Kelly Gang (1922)

'The collection and preservation of explicit or offensive audiovisual material poses a wide range of problems for audiovisual archives and their staff. Taking into account the changes to classification and social perceptions during the development of the audiovisual industries, there is already a high likelihood that substantial amounts of explicit and offensive material are already contained in any

audiovisual archives' collection. How the archive chooses to deal with this material, and also deal with incoming material of this kind is extremely important.'

6.30-8.30 pm on Wednesday 8 October

Richard Keys

'The Renaissance—the development of Government support for the film industry'

Film title?

Discussing the early efforts, the establishment of the Australian Film Development Corporation under Prime Minister Gorton, and the formation of the Australian Film Commission, The AFTRS and other funding bodies under the Whitlam government. It will be entertaining!

5.00-9.00 pm on Monday 3 November

Carey Garvie

Why does film decay? And how do we recover it?

5.00-9.00 pm on Tuesday 2 December

THE AUSTRALIAN FILM COMMISSION'S ROLE

The Australian Film Commission (AFC) is the primary development agency for the Australian film, television and interactive content production industries. The AFC resources and facilitates the industry to play a central role in the cultural life of Australia, and to deliver diverse and creatively ambitious programs that compete successfully for audiences around the world. It is expected that bringing together the functions of the Archive and the Australian Film Commission will enable expansion of current screen culture activities, enhance co-ordination of such activities and provide leadership with a national focus. The 'core' archive activities of acquisition, preservation and cataloguing of Australia's film and sound heritage should be strengthened by the link to the Commission. The AFC's objectives include the career development of writers, directors and producers, encouragement of Indigenous Australians to participate in the film industry, and enhancement of the exposure of Australian productions in the global marketplace.

REVIEW OF THE ARCHIVE

The Australian Film Commission is currently undertaking a review of the programs undertaken by the Archive as part of the integration process. Working with the Archive's Kate McLoughlin, Sabina Wynn heads up this review and hopes to report to the Commission by November.

This review of Programs is especially focused on policy and the public programs and access areas and does not encompass the name issue. As part of the consultation process with stakeholders, Friends of the Archive will meet with Sabina to discuss our views on the Archive's programs.

We want to hear your opinions on issues of collection priorities, such as the collection and preservation of international material, or digitisation priorities, and the role of the web for providing access to the collection. Please do not hesitate in contacting the Friends to ensure your views are expressed during this crucial consultation phase of the review. Our contact details are at the end of this newsletter.

A separate review into the areas of corporate services is being led by the Australian Film Commission's Finance and Administration Manager, Greg Brown.

NEW AFC WEBSITE

At the new Australian Film Commission website, www.afc.gov.au, you can find out about AFC funding, news and events, Australian films and awards, industry research and policy, filming in Australia, festivals, markets and distribution and the answers to Frequently Asked Questions. There are also links to over 600 screen-related sites. Check it out!

THE NAME ISSUE—FRIENDS' RECOMMENDATION ON THE NAME OF THE ARCHIVE

Kim Dalton
Chief Executive
Australian Film Commission

Dear Kim,

Sabina Wynn has asked us to send you our thoughts about the name of the Archive. The Friends welcomes the AFC addressing of the issue of the name of the Archive.

The Friends Committee unanimously supports the name 'National Film and Sound Archive'. We acknowledge that the argument for "National Screen and Sound Archive" has some validity, however, believe the word 'Film' is more appropriate, especially now within the context of the Australian 'Film' Commission. We are happy to provide further clarification if and when required. We appreciated the opportunity to have a long and positive discussion with Sabina last week, and we look forward to further involvement in discussions as your management of the Archive evolves.

Kind regards,
Andrew Pike
(President, on behalf of the Committee)
Friends of the National Film and Sound Archive Inc.

FRIENDS' VOICE HEARD IN CRUCIAL PARLIAMENTARY DEBATE

The recent merger of the Archive and the Australian Film Commission depended on the approval of the Senate, where the government does not have a majority in its own right. This prompted highly interested debate on the merger proposal from a wide range of Senators from all parties. The influence of the Friends of the Archive was felt as the Friends' recent media release on the merger and our previously published papers were all widely referred to and quoted. Their citing was reflected in consultation around the debate between the Friends of the Archives' Executive and interested Senators and staff of various parties and interests.

In the end the Friends of the Archive welcomed the outcome, in which the merger passed with a proviso allowing for separate annual reporting for the Archive. The Friends found its stated position on the merger of 'cautious optimism'—welcoming the merger's statutory recognition but concerned that the Archive maintains its autonomy and is strengthened, not weakened, by the merger—remained the most fitting and hopeful stance to take in this unfolding new chapter in the life of the Archive.

BRISBANE FRIENDS MEET

As the first of a projected series of meetings with Friends in other capital cities, two members of the Canberra-based Executive, Andrew Pike and Richard Keys, took advantage of their presence at the Brisbane International Film Festival to meet with Brisbane Friends on 7 August 2003. The meeting was arranged through the goodwill of Peter Goedes, a Friend who has had a long association with Richard during his time working at the Archive. Peter kindly offered his Redcliffe Picture Palace as a venue for the meeting—a fascinating museum space filled with memorabilia

and vintage equipment. Redcliffe turned out to be further away from the city centre than Andrew and Richard had realised, and they arrived half an hour late for the meeting. Peter, in the meantime, had entertained the Friends and, thankfully, no one had felt inclined to leave before the meeting could start.

Richard and Andrew gave a brief summary of the Friends' activities to date and then had a lively discussion with the Brisbane members on a range of issues. Subjects raised included: the name of the Archive (with a preference clearly expressed for the National Film and Sound Archive) and the nature of the merger with the Australian Film Commission. Concern was expressed that the Archive should be free, within the AFC, to negotiate in its own right with collectors and donors of material; that the Archive would have adequate representation on the Board of the AFC; that acquisition and disposal policies should be transparent and open for public discussion; and that cooperation with regional archives, for example in Papua New Guinea and Pacific island nations, should be reviewed, publicly discussed and upgraded. Peter Goedes has kindly agreed to coordinate the next meeting of the Brisbane Friends.

NEW AWARD FOR FRIENDS' PATRON

One of Australia's pre-eminent producers and a founding patron of the Friends, Tony Buckley was awarded this year's Chauvel Award at the Brisbane International Film Festival. This award gives Tony a rare hat trick—the Ken G. Hall Award from the Archive, the Raymond Longford Award from the Australian Film Institute, and now the Charles and Elsa Chauvel Award.

One of the highlights of the Brisbane Festival was a well-attended evening presentation in which David Stratton engaged Tony in conversation on stage, accompanied by clips from many of his films. At the official Awards Ceremony and Press Conference earlier in the day, Tony spoke out strongly against regressive censorship practices, especially the banning of KEN PARK.

FRIENDS FAREWELL RON BRENT

After more than ten years as Director of the Archive, Ron Brent has departed to pursue new opportunities. During his term he brought the Archive into maturity as one of the major collecting institutions in the country. With considerable personal enthusiasm and dedication to detail, he achieved an enormous amount in the areas of governance and financial administration. One of Ron's great successes was arranging the finance for, and overseeing the construction of, the Archive's extension building—a major construction project. His concerns with collection growth and management were reflected in ten years of powerful expansion by the Archive. He was also very supportive of the Friends and was instrumental in granting us funds to get started.

SCREENSOUND AUSTRALIA PAYS TRIBUTE TO OUTGOING DIRECTOR, RON BRENT (SCREENSOUND MEDIA RELEASE of 30 MAY 2003)

Council members of ScreenSound Australia, the National Screen and Sound Archive, today honoured the contribution of Director, Ron Brent, who is leaving after 10 years of heading the organisation.

'Ron has consolidated ScreenSound Australia as one of Australia's major cultural institutions and secured our national memory of the great and creative contributions Australians have made and will continue to make to film, music, television, radio and recorded sound', said Council Chair, Susan Oliver.

'At one time, Australia stood to lose our record of audiovisual culture, but through Ron's professionalism and dedication, ScreenSound Australia is now firmly established as an icon for world's best practice in archiving these media', said Ms Oliver.

Some highlights during the past 10 years include:

- developing first-class technical facilities and cutting-edge preservation practices, and consolidating the collection into one secure repository
- building a thriving product development program and increasing public program and outreach activities to enhance access to the collection for all Australians
- creating a leading-edge collection management database, which has been sold to large archives overseas such as the Library of Congress
- seeing two items from ScreenSound Australia's collection—the Cinesound Movietone Australian Newsreels and the film of the 1901 Inauguration of the Commonwealth—added to the *Australian Memory of the World* register as part of UNESCO's *Memory of the World* program.

'Ron's departure coincides with the end of one era, as ScreenSound Australia grew in its professionalism and position, and the start of a new era where it will become a statutory authority through amalgamation with the Australian Film Commission. On behalf of the Council, staff, stakeholders and clients of ScreenSound Australia, I'd like to take this opportunity to thank Ron for his leadership and wish him well for the future', said Ms Oliver. (Reprinted with permission)

From A FOND FAREWELL in the July edition of the Archive's 'On the Wire'

ScreenSound Australia has bid a fond farewell to former Director, Ron Brent, who has left after more than 10 years of heading the Archive.

Speaking about his decision to leave, Mr Brent said: 'I have done so because I feel it is important that an institution such as the Archive has renewal in leadership. I leave with very mixed feelings, looking forward to my next challenge, but also sad to leave a great organisation with a terrific and professional team, and so many friends, both on the staff and in the Archive's constituency.'

Some highlights during the 10 years while Ron Brent was 'at the helm' include:

- constructing purpose-built accommodation for the Archive's Canberra headquarters
- developing first-class technical facilities and cutting-edge preservation practices, and consolidating the collection under secure control
- building a thriving product development program and increasing public program and outreach activities to enhance access to the collection for all Australians
- enhancing a leading-edge collection management database (MAVIS), which has been sold to large archives overseas such as the Library of Congress
- forging significant business and cultural innovative partnerships that substantially increase the exposure of the national collection.

Ron Brent took on his new role as Deputy Commonwealth Ombudsman on 2 June 2003. ScreenSound Australia Deputy Director, Mary Durkin is Acting Director until the position is filled permanently. (Reprinted with permission)

AUSTRALIAN FEDERATION OF FRIENDS OF MUSEUMS NEWS

AFFM now has its own website which you can visit for all the latest news, including a summary of the most recent *Friends Review*, the July 2003 edition. It is also the place to go for information on coming events, publications and membership information. The address is www.affm.org.au. The Friends of the National Film and Sound archive Inc. is a member of the Federation.

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 includes 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.

CONTACT DETAILS

I think we need ALL our contact details together in one place-probably here-PO Box, web and email addresses and telephone and fax numbers

Many thanks to our sponsor Orlando Trilogy

