

ACOFS BULLETIN

July 2005

NUMBER 8

NATIONAL FILM AND VIDEO LENDING COLLECTION

This edition of the ACOFS Bulletin is usually published after the AGM in March/April. This has been delayed until I had more idea of the future directions being developed by the National Film and Sound Archive regarding the future of the collection.

THE FOLLOWING ARTICLE IS VERY CURRENT. PLEASE READ IT CAREFULLY AND LET ME HAVE YOUR INPUT AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

As noted elsewhere in the report on this year's AGM, the National Film and Sound Archive, now a Division of Australian Film Commission has now had twelve months experience in managing the NFVLS. The transition from ACMI was managed very smoothly, and loans have proceeded in the months following, without a hitch. However of great concern to the Film Society movement is the lack of an acquisitions policy.

In March the NFSA was reorganized and the overall responsibility for the collection was placed within the Access and Outreach Branch whose head is David Boden. The NFVLS will continue to be managed as a specialized service as part of the NFSA's overall Client Access Services. This area is managed by Rodney Butler at the NFSA's Canberra Headquarters.

At the same time it was revealed that, while the management responsibility of the collection now lies with the NFSA, the ownership of the collection remains with the National Library. This appears to be more of an administrative problem rather than a policy of the government.

I have had several discussions with David over the past few months, and although future policy is only at the planning stage, the outlook is becoming far more positive. The really good news for us all is that there is now an acquisitions budget for this financial year. This will allow for rights renewals to existing titles and the purchase of new material. It is not yet clear how this new acquisitions policy will be generated but it is up to member societies to speak up and have an influence on future directions.

I expect to be in further close discussions with David in August and will publish another edition of the Bulletin to order to bring members up to date with information from these discussions.

While the future looks to be quite optimistic, it also gives all film societies a wonderful opportunity to influence future directions. Titles could be purchased on 35mm, 16mm, or DVD. **WHAT IS YOUR PREFERRED OPTION?**

What are the films you see yourself screening over the coming years? Features? If so Fiction or Documentary, English Language or Subtitled, Recent releases or retrospectives? Short? What should be the Australian content?

ALL OF THESE QUESTIONS ARE PERTINENT TO THE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT PLANS. IT IS UP TO YOU TO LET ME KNOW.

Email to president@fvfs.org.au or ring (03) 9876 1128

ACMI

ACMI are also beginning to consider their future policies regarding their film collections. They currently have a very large collection of shorts and small collection of feature films on 16mm. They also have an excellent collection of Feature Films on Video and DVD but do not hold commercial rights for Film Society Screenings. They also currently manage the French and Chinese Embassy Collections and although not available yet for loans they have collections acquired from **Roadshow, Buena Vista and Queensland University** all of these on 35mm and 16mm.

The current problem being tackled by management is to formulate a charging policy. Pay as you use or an annual membership. Both are being considered.

A Collections Management team has been set up and this will be managed from mid-August by Trish Stokes who is returning to ACMI after eight or so years with the Melbourne Museum. Trish is also a member of the FVFS Executive.

ACOFS AGM 2005

The ACOFS AGM and Conference was held this year at the premises of the National Screen and Sound Archive in Canberra.

Friday saw a very interesting and informative tour of the War Memorial archives during the afternoon and the conference was opened in the evening by David Boden (Acting Deputy Director).

The highlight of the weekend was the presentations on Saturday afternoon by Dr Paolo Cherchi Usai, the new director of the Archive, Tony Sweeney, the recently appointed CEO of ACMI in Melbourne and Sabina Wynn, manager of the Cultural Development Branch of the AFC.

Dr Usai outlined the new structure of the Archive including introductions to the new curators of the four main sectors.

More importantly he outlined his philosophy of Screen Culture and his vision of the NFSA strategies in dealing with these aspects. He saw several challenges facing the NFSA and multiple choices for users of the Archive.

It was very clear in Dr Usai's presentation that he is passionately wedded to the concept of the 'cinematic experience' and although he could see all the problems facing the users of film he was adamant digital projection should only be considered as a last resort. To this end he proposed setting up a 'Golden Screen' policy that would name and promote every establishment in Australia still using traditional film projection facilities in well maintained venues.

Tony Sweeney spoke about the other side of the coin, and whilst agreeing with Dr Usai, he presented the advantages of the digital system. He shared with us his extensive knowledge of screening facilities in the UK and some of his early thoughts about ACMI.

Sabina Wynn spoke about AFC policy generally and the Cultural Development Branch in particular and urged societies to make the most of AFC funded initiatives such as Big Screen and the Travelling Film Festivals.

The main topics for discussion during the rest of the meeting were the Web Site, DVD Screening Rights, the Projectionist Manual and the Handbook. Other matters for discussion were the History of Film Societies, a NFVLS Advisory Service and the IFFS.

Each of the Federations represented gave a full report and one was tabled from WA. Whilst the movement isn't booming it is holding its own and in several areas expanding. One of the areas of expansion is Queensland who do not have their own Federation and this is probably the biggest single problem faced by ACOFS. There are some very large societies around Australia and those who are looking to the future and to the requirements of their clientele are growing quite considerably.

The weekend as a whole was a great success and the elected executive for 2005 are John Turner (Vic) President, Richard Keys (ACT) Vice President, Richard Purdy (Vic) Secretary, David Bruce-Steer (NSW)

Treasurer. Next years meeting will be held in Hobart Tasmania during the first weekend in April. A full transcript of the Minutes of this years meeting including presentations by the three guest speakers may be obtained from the secretary at secretary@fvfs.org.au

FINALLY.

The National Collection still remains the property of the National Library and it may well be that users will need to lobby their local members in order to see that ownership is transferred to the National Screen and Sound Archive.

Please be ready to become active in this matter if it becomes clear that such lobbying is necessary. I will let you know of future developments.

John Turner
President.