

AUSTRALIAN COUNCIL OF FILM SOCIETIES

ACOFS BULLETIN

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DVDS FOR THE NATIONAL COLLECTION — Great news for film societies and all users

At the recent ACOFS AGM and Conference delegates were addressed by Graham Shirley who announced that DVD copies would be purchased for the Non-Theatrical Loans Collection (NTLC), which is the new name for the old NFVLS.

This means that societies will very soon be able to access those films which otherwise are never available to us in Australia because no Distributor buys the rights. The non-theatrical rights will be purchased by the NFSA and will be included in the handling charge, currently \$9.90 for a DVD.

Also the 57% of the collection currently on 16mm will have DVDs added as rights are renewed and the DVDs will be available instead of, or as well as, the 16mm copy, depending on the status of the title involved. Titles which are held on 16mm or DVD but which have no license will be re-licensed. There are about 200 of these titles.

16mm will not be ignored, but the reality is that very few films are transferred to 16mm in this digital age. However the NFSA holds a number of 16mm prints in its National Collection and these will be considered for licensing.

Finally the NFSA will add two DVD copies of Australian titles licensed for the NTLC of films which they currently hold 16mm or 35mm prints which were created by the Kodak/Atlab and Atlab/Kodak projects.

ACOFS will be providing a small part of the funding for these projects which we see as a positive step in co-operation between the two organizations and will be represented on a small consultative committee set up in order to direct acquisition policy.

SOCIETIES WILL BE INFORMED BOTH BY THE NTLC AND ACOFS AS NEW TITLES COME AVAILABLE BUT WE NEED YOUR SUGGESTIONS AND REQUIREMENTS. THESE SHOULD BE SENT TO BERIS BRADFORD WHO WILL COLLATE THE LISTS AND CIRCULATE THE COMPILATION TO ALL INTERESTED PARTIES. Email: beris_cinema@yahoo.com.au

IT HAS TAKEN THREE YEARS NEGOTIATION TO GET TO THIS STAGE. PLEASE LET US HAVE YOUR INPUT AND BOOK THE NEW TITLES AS THEY BECOME AVAILABLE. IF WE DON'T USE IT WE WILL MOST CERTAINLY LOSE IT, THE NTLC, THAT IS.

There will be other changes, as outlined in Graham's address. A new database combining the NTLC and the NFSA National Collection will eventually be set up.

Unique titles will be withdrawn from the NTLC for preservation purposes and subject to demand and availability of rights, may be copied and reinstated into the loan collection.

Graham's conclusion was "We want to both add to the number of licensed titles to the Non-Theatrical Loans Collection, and to make them available in formats that our clients will be able to use."

This is a huge leap forward from the positions stated since the old NFVLS collection moved to the NFSA and we should thank and applaud the current management and Board of the NFSA for making it possible.

ACOFS 2009 AGM and CONFERENCE

This year's event was held 3-5 April at Melbourne's ACMI.

The weekend was opened on the Friday evening by Tony Sweeney CEO of ACMI who welcomed delegates from every Federation. Delegates had been given a tour of *SETTING THE SCENE*, an exhibition of film design from *Metropolis to Australia*, and Tony outlined the co-operation with overseas bodies required to mount such an exhibition. Tony also spoke about the Public Programs and Creative Workshops held at ACMI and also about the Mediatheque and the permanent exhibition on the History of Cinema which is to be opened in August.

On the Saturday Gael McIndoe took us on a tour of these sites including the booths which will be used by Mediatheque customers to access the ACMI collection digitally. This project will be in co-operation with the NFSA. The new permanent exhibition will cover the entire ground floor and cover all forms of moving image from its earliest to the most up to date gaming technology, mainly from an Australian perspective and where possible interactive.

The other highlight of the weekend was the presentation from Graham Shirley, Senior Curator of the Moving Image at the NFSA who was accompanied by John Brady supervisor of the NFSA Loans Unit. Graham's address has been summarised above and caused a great deal of discussion.

The discussion surrounding the positive report from Graham centred on the areas in which ACOFS could co-operate with the NFSA in order to advance the development of the NTLC and ensure that the reinvigorated collection is fully used. To this end ACOFS decided to offer a sum of \$3000.00 for the specific purpose of purchasing licensed DVDs which would be of particular interest to film societies. In addition to this the WA Federation offered another \$2000.00 for the purchase of licensed DVDs of Australian films to be added to the collection.

THESE ARE TWO UNIQUE INITIATIVES BY ACOFS WHICH WILL BE OF SUPREME INTEREST TO MEMBER SOCIETIES IN THE FUTURE. The aim is

to have some of this money invested in new acquisitions in time for societies to plan their 2010 programmes.

The other initiatives of the NFSA with which it was felt ACOFS could assist were the education project and other aspects of the National Programs such as Big Screen and Black Screen. We can publicise these events through the film society network and will be following this up very shortly.

OTHER MATTERS

In my President's report I pointed out that we had spoken about the rejuvenation of ACOFS by extending our base to school, TAFE and university teachers of film and media. Also I feel that we should attempt to position ourselves at the centre of all 'not for profit' exhibitors. After a long discussion it was generally felt that these initiatives were the responsibilities of the individual federations rather than ACOFS.

The History of Film Societies which I am writing is going well and original research is now almost complete in Victoria and Tasmania and I am creating a draft in note form of the final book. Work in NSW, Queensland and WA will take the rest of this year after which I will be fully engaged in completing the draft.

State Federations all reported to the conference and with Victoria and Tasmania increasing its membership only NSW and Associated States had lost some ground but with a new executive in the Federation it was hoped to reverse this trend. WA was just holding its own. There was quite a discussion on the formats used by societies with a comprehensive report on Victoria given by Ian Davidson, and it was clear that DVD is gaining ground rapidly at the expense of 16mm.

The website will now be looked after by Ian Davidson who has done a tremendous job with the Victorian site. Ian will also supervise the complete transfer of relevant sections of the ACOFS Handbook to the ACOFS website.

The Yahoo Group is still underused and societies using the NTLC should post reports at: OzMovieBuffs@yahoo.com.au

Eric Dixon (Victoria) reported on the conference he had attended on Building Better Boards and the Our Community Website which was intended for voluntary organizations such as ACOFS and the Federations.

There was also a long discussion on the structure of ACOFS without any definite conclusions being reached. These can be summarised into the number of delegates to attend the conference and AGM, the responsibilities of the state federations versus ACOFS and the length of the annual meeting.

Next year's AGM and conference is scheduled for York WA after a very compelling proposal prepared by York Film Society and presented by David Smith, delegate for the Western Australian Federation. This will be the first time the event has been held in WA.

David Bruce-Steer retired as treasurer after many years of dedicated service and was thanked by everyone.

Following the election the 2009-2010 executive committee is:

President: John Turner, Federation of Victorian Film Societies Inc
Vice-President: Ian Davidson, Federation of Victorian Film Societies Inc
Secretary: Beris Bradford, Federation of NSW and Associated Film Societies Inc,
Treasurer: David Smith, Western Australian Federation of Film Societies

John Turner,
President
Australian Council of Film Societies

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1. For a complete version of Graham Shirley's address on the NTLC contact: JOHNTURNER10@bigpond.com
2. Additional information can be obtained by contacting Beris Bradford at: beris_cinema@yahoo.com.au