

ACOFS Bulletin

Australian Council of Film Societies

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ACOFS Annual General Meeting and Conference

This year's Annual General Meeting was held as part of the Annual Conference, which took place on Saturday 17 April and was hosted by the Launceston Film Society, who organised venue, catering, and billeting, as well as taking care of all the other arrangements involved in such an event.

The President of ACOFS, Bryan Putt, reported on the past year's activities at ACOFS, among others the meeting with Dr Paolo Minuto, the President of the International Federation of Film Societies, and work on improving distribution arrangements for films. The meeting with Dr Minuto, which took place in the Italian Cultural Institute in Sydney, resulted in an invitation to be involved in next year's Italian Film Festival, and access (via DVD) to the festival films by any interested film society (a list of the films can be found below).

Additional DVDs for film societies to screen were arranged through a partnership with Newtown Flicks, an independent distributor of Australian

films, and the re-establishment of relations with two distributors, Potential and Umbrella, as well as continuing to develop less restrictive screening agreements.

The President concluded by thanking the ACOFS Executive for their commitment and hard work, in particular Michael Lines-Kelly, and Secretary Eric Dixon.

One of the important matters considered at the meeting was the proposed change to the ACOFS constitution, which would involve it changing its name to Community Cinema Australia (CCA) and adopting a new organisational structure. Two of the proponents of the proposals, Bryan Putt and Michael Lines-Kelly, urged the meeting to adopt the change, while other delegates expressed concerns about the proposals, in particular the shortcomings and confusing nature of the proposal and doubtful legality of the way in which the proposals were circulated (Ian Davidson) and the lack of explanation and detail for the proposals, in particular the new system for appointing delegates to ACOFS (Andrew Watkins). After considerable discussion the Council voted overwhelmingly to reject the proposals. The Council did however direct the incoming executive to take the necessary steps to incorporate ACOFS.

At the AGM the various State Federations reported on their activities during the year, including Western Australia (Paul Sofilas), NSW & Qld (Michael O'Rourke), Victoria (Ian Davidson) and Tasmania (Mark Horner).

One of the high points of the AGM was Michael O'Rourke's report on the IFFS General Assembly at Recife, Brazil in December last year which he attended as the delegate from ACOFS. One topic which attracted considerable interest was the success of Children's Cine Clubs in many countries, with Denmark, for example, now having 70 such clubs catering to young children. This could well point the way for countries such as Australia to stimulate interest in film as an art-form rather than as a medium of mass entertainment. Michael also reported on the formation of a new Australasian group, made up of Australia, New Zealand and Malaysia; it hopes to attract progressively more members in years to come. Other groupings in the IFFS are the African, Nordic (which includes Ireland and the UK), Asian, Latin-American and Mediterranean. Reflecting this ethnic diversity, the new President of the IFFS (Antonio Claudino de Jesus) comes from Brazil, and the new Deputy President (Golam Rabbany Biplob) comes from Bangladesh. Another development was the formation of CineSud, a distribution network set up by the Federation of Catalan Film Societies for the distribution of independent movies to film societies. Similar ventures have also occurred in Italy (Cineclub Internazionale) and Ireland (access CINEMA). Ryan Reynolds, the Secretary of the Australasian group, has also stated his interest in having the group become involved in joint ventures which would make available otherwise inaccessible films.

Election of office bearers took place at the conclusion of the Council Meeting. The new office bearers are Ian Davidson (President) Mark Horner (Vice-President), Prodos Marinakis (Secretary), John Turner (Treasurer), assisted

by a committee made up of Tom Busby, Susan Davidson, Barboo Marinakis, Suzanne Nunn, and Andrew Watkins.

Apart from the AGM, the ACOFS Conference took in a number of activities, and was well attended. After the Conference was opened by Bryan Putt (President, Crowlands Film Society), Dorothy Jenkins (Monash University) gave a talk on the educational role of film societies and Michael O'Rourke gave a further account of his experiences at the International Film Federation's General Assembly in Brazil last year.

The Conference then heard from Mark Horner talking about the Tasmanian film society scene, Owen Tilbury introduced his Breath of Fresh Air Festival and Peter Gillard described the activities of the Launceston Film Society.

After afternoon tea, Bryan Putt introduced Margaret Pomeranz and David Stratton, who outlined their lives reviewing film and led a question and answer session, followed by a screening of a film from David's personal collection. He selected "Love Affair: or The Case of the Missing Telephone Operator"



At the Launceston Conference: Margaret Pomeranz chats with Ian Davidson, while David Stratton and Susan Davidson discuss David's choice of film.

From the President

For the first time in many years we have had a plethora of nominations for ACOFS executive positions – some from long-time delegates but many from newcomers to the organisation. Anyone concerned about succession planning should be pleased at the involvement of delegates from some of our newest film societies. Despite the new blood, the direction of ACOFS will be stabilised by the years of experience embedded in the executive. A list of members of the new Executive, together with something about their backgrounds, can be found below.

This is a much larger executive committee than in previous years and reflects the high level of interest in the work of ACOFS. Hopefully this will translate into more exciting initiatives from the committee and elicit greater involvement from the federations.

Regrettably, there were no nominations received from NSW or WA, so these federations are not represented on the executive committee. We do however plan to set up liaison officers to maintain communication to, and feedback from, these federations.

At ACOFS AGMs since 2006 it has been generally accepted by the ACOFS delegates that ACOFS needed to review and update its aims and activities to better support film societies in Australia, and to expand to include community cinemas and community film festivals as valid affiliated organisations. This needs to be done from the grassroots upwards and consider all aspects of film culture.

Film Societies generally set the pace while ACOFS and the Federations have a “wait and see” role. Once a clear need has been identified Federation and ACOFS volunteers get on with the job, most often investing their own personal time and energy towards improving the resources and opportunities available to all film societies across the country.

Individual film societies are continually experimenting and testing leading edge technologies, screening formats, types of venues, themes, methods of promotion, and so on.

Happily, it turns out that with no changes whatsoever to the existing constitution or structure of ACOFS and with some simple re-tuning of its aims, ACOFS can make itself more relevant to non-profit, volunteer-run film societies, community cinemas and community film festivals as they move into new ventures.

During 2010 ACOFS and the federations were distracted by a radical proposal to change the structure of the Australian film society movement into a new top-down, two-tier structure, but these proposals were consigned to history at the 2011 ACOFS AGM. That means the new ACOFS executive can now get on with its objectives of supporting film societies and federations.

At the 2011 AGM the new Executive was charged with the job of incorporating ACOFS. ACOFS has recommended for years that federations and societies become incorporated but for some reason has never followed its own advice. So a working party of three has set out to make this happen. This will necessitate a change in the constitution to include the clauses and safeguards required by Business Affairs, but the aims, structure and “feel” of ACOFS will not change.

We also plan to make the ACOFS Bulletin more relevant to federations and film societies. We intend to introduce new segments of interest to all readers.

The website has already been updated and made more relevant. New functions will be added and the structure changed to make updating easier and faster.

We hope to generate more enthusiasm at film society “grass roots” and attract new people to the work of ACOFS and the federations.

We always welcome your involvement and feedback.

Please let us know what “hits the mark”, what you enjoy and areas we need to develop.

Ian Davidson
President ACOFS

The New Executive – who they are!

President: Ian Davidson (Victoria) is an ex Telstra Engineer, retired in 1997 after 30 years with the company, where he worked mainly on data, fax and business communication services and international standards. His main interests include computing, photography, travel and of course, films. He has 4 adult children, living in London, Gold Coast, Prahran and Japan. There are 2 grand children. Ian has been on the Whitehorse film society committee since 1975, seven years as President, and on the FVFS executive since 1978 - as president from 1991 to 1997 and treasurer 1995 to 2010. He has been an ACOFS delegate for about 15 years.

Vice President: Mark Horner (Tasmania)
Delegate from the Launceston Film Society – the largest in Australia. Other interests include stage production and travel.

Secretary: Prodos Marinakis (Victoria) in addition to running a film society (PRODOS Film Study Group) and providing web-site expertise to film societies, Prodos has been songwriter and lead singer of a fringe synth/punk band, has experience in street theatre and theatre management, and has worked as a community radio presenter and (later) pod-caster with the **SOLID VOX** network. He is currently working with his wife Barboo on a series of musical fairy tales.

Treasurer: John Turner (Victoria), one of the veterans of Australia’s film society scene, came to Australia in 1968 after being involved in film societies in England since 1954, and starting one in Epsom. He migrated to WA and almost immediately became treasurer of the International Film Theatre, which at that time had 1300 members and up to a hundred door sales each week. In 1972, after being moved to Melbourne by IBM, he started the IBM Film Society which later became International Film Group of which John is now President, and in 1976 he joined the Executive of the Federation of Victorian Film Societies. In 1974 John became Treasurer of the Australian Council of Film Societies, and was active in this post for the next 25 years, after which he was President for the next ten years. John is currently working on a history of the film society movement in Australia.

Committee:

Tom Busby (Tasmania) Tom’s experience of movies goes back a long way, having been school projectionist in his early years, and then assistant projectionist at Point Cook, Victoria, where he did his national service. Then

he went to New Zealand in 1954 to study at the Massey Agricultural College, where he set up the College Film Society, which went very well (those were the days before television!). After returning to Tasmania he became projectionist for the Burnie Film Society, and worked in various projection jobs, including lecturing on Projection Techniques for adult education. He has been involved with the Break O'Day Film Society since its inception (about 1995), mainly as a projectionist. Originally screenings took place in four venues, but as a result of poor availability and low attendances screenings now take place only at St.Helens. Break O'Day Film Society has now switched to DVDs which, according to Tom, are a "projectionist's bliss"!

Susan Davidson (Victoria) Susan is a retired Librarian, who spent the last 18 years of her working life managing the library service for the Shire of Campaspe (Echuca). Her main interests are reading, films and family history. Susan first became involved in film societies in the late 1970s, serving in turn on committees at the Beaumaris Film Society (as Secretary), Echuca Film Society and now Whitehorse Film Society (as Treasurer). Susan served on the FVFS executive briefly in the early 1980s (before moving to Echuca), and again from 2005 until now. She has been Secretary of the FVFS since 2006. She has been attending ACOFS meetings for about 7 years.

Barboo Marinakis (Victoria) is founder and President of Smart Girls Film Club, and is probably our most multifaceted talent in the ACOFS Committee, being a published novelist, a researcher in child development, an experienced actor, a designer and fabricator of jewelry and costumes, and to cap it all is a gold-level ballroom dancer! Barboo will be the international liaison officer for ACOFS.

Suzanne Nunn (Victoria) Sue Nunn has been the projectionist and film selector for the Ballarat Film Society for the past 18 years and a member of the Buninyong Film Festival team for 19 years. She gained her interest in screening film after doing her Honours in Ethnographic film and the Audience. She has been a past committee member of the Victorian Federation of Film Societies and has edited ReelNews for a number of years. Sue lectures at Deakin University in Geelong in the area of environmental management and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage protection. Sue will be managing the ACOFS DVD library.

Andrew Watkins (Victoria) Andrew is an economist with the State Government, having earlier pursued a career in science. He has been active in the film society movement for many years, and has been on the Committee of the Croydon Film Society since the early 1980s and Secretary there for more than 10 years. His love of cinema began in his student days, when he was a regular attendee at the Melbourne Film Festival, and when he can (which isn't often!) he gets to the odd art-house film on the Melbourne circuit, in addition to the regular CFS screenings in Chirnside Park. Andrew will be looking after the ACOFS Bulletin.

Do You Know Your Delegates?

The federation delegates to the ACOFS AGM in April 2011 were the following:

Representing Victoria:

Ian Davidson (Whitehorse Film Society)
Susan Davidson (Whitehorse Film Society)
Barboo Marinakis (Smart Girls Film Club)
Prodos Marinakis (PRODOS Film Study Group)
Suzanne Nunn (Ballarat Film Society and Buninyong Film Festival)
John Turner (International Film Group)
Anna Blainey Warner (PRODOS Film Study Group)
Andrew Watkins (Croydon Film Society)

Representing NSW & Queensland:

Eric Dixon (Black Flat Community Film Society, Victoria)
Michael Lines-Kelly (Left Bank Film Society)
Michael O'Rourke (Workshop Film Group)
Brett Powell (Crowlands Film Society, Victoria)
Bryan Putt (Crowlands Film Society, Victoria)

Representing Tasmania:

Tom Busby (Break O'Day Film Society)
Mark Horner (Launceston Film Society)
Jim Mansbridge (Hobart Film Society)

Representing WA:

Paul Sofilas (Augusta Film Society)

It should be remembered that ACOFS delegates have a life apart from their appearance at the AGM. They will continue to be the main contact for their federation and will be empowered to represent the federations at ACOFS, either at face-to-face meetings and at any vote taken there or by mail or email. So make sure the ACOFS secretary is aware of your current ACOFS delegates at all times.

Delegates will also be expected to pass on any information from ACOFS or IFFS to all societies in the federations.

According to ACOFS rules, delegates may be changed at any time to suit the federation they represent. It is just a matter of writing to the secretary of ACOFS.

How to select the delegates is up to the individual federation, but ACOFS expects they will be chosen from the societies within the state to represent the interests of the relevant state.

Films Celebrating 150 Years of Italian Unification

These films in DVD format are made available by the Italian Cultural Institute for Australian film societies free of charge, until April 2012.

- *La Presa di Roma* (1905), historical drama, dir. Filoteo Alberini
- *Il Piccolo Garibaldino* (1909), drama, dir. Filoteo Alberini
- *San Michele Aveva un Gallo* (1972), drama, dir. Paolo and Vittorio Taviani
- *Quanto é Bello Murire Acciso* (1975) historical drama, dir. Ennio Lorenzini
- *Bronte, Cronaca di un Massacro* (1972) historical drama, dir. Florestano Vancini
- *Allonsanfan* (1974) historical drama, dir. Paolo and Vittorio Taviani
- *Viva L'Italia!* (1961) historical drama, dir. Roberto Rossellini
- *Arrivano i Bersaglieri* (1980) comedy, dir. Luigi Magni
- *Piccolo Mondo Antico* (1941) drama, dir. Mario Soldati
- *Ma che Storia* (2010) documentary, dir. Gianfranco Pannone

Societies interested in screening these films should contact Suzanne Nunn (at ACOFS), Ph: 03 5341 2266. Email: sjnunn@ncable.net.au

Equipment For Sale.

We have been contacted by Fenix Huang of the Megaplex Entertainment & Cinema Australia (MECA) regarding some projection equipment they wish to dispose of. It consists of an extensive collection of 44 x IMAX Audio Speakers/PowerSubs and a Cinemeccanica VIC#8 35mm/70mm projector with platter and cooling unit. Fenix is willing to let his projector collection go for \$6,000 including its tower, platter, cooling unit, x60 and extra forklift to lift 70mm film reels. If you are interested, Fenix can be contacted on 0430 621 618 or cinema@megaplex.net.au .

Stop Press!

The NFSA has just announced an increase in the borrowing fees for NTLC material to take effect as from 1 July 2011 as follows:-

16mm feature films \$38.50
16mm short films \$27.50
16mm short film packages (up to 6 shorts) \$77
DVD, VHS or BluRay \$16.50

However, the NFSA will honour the existing fees for any bookings made and confirmed prior to 1 July 2011 for screenings up to 23 December 2011. So be quick and get your orders in by this date. This is apparently the first fee increase since well before 2004.

For further information check their website at <http://www.nfsa.gov.au/collection/screening-loans/fees-new/>