

# ACOFS Bulletin

## Australian Council of Film Societies

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NUMBER 62

May 2020

*This Bulletin has been compiled and edited by Ian Davidson, (ACOFS committee) [editor@acofs.org.au](mailto:editor@acofs.org.au)*

*This Issue contains information important to your office bearers and film society programmers. Please also pass it on to all your committee and other interested people - including those who are not on email.*

**And please ensure it does not get caught up in spam filters!**

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### 1. From the Editor

It is clear by now that all film societies are in recess because of the Coronavirus, and how long this situation will stay with us is still unclear. It is unlikely that societies will restart again before July. As most film societies have members in the older age brackets it is likely they will remain closed for longer, just to be on the safe side.

So what are the society committees doing in the meantime? Now is the time to get your files sorted, research all those film titles on your list, and write all those contributions to The ACOFS Bulletin that you have been thinking about. There might even be time to watch a film or two on your home movie setup!

Croydon Film Society (in item 10) has suggested a number of sources for getting your “fix” of movies while we are socially isolated.

Two of the items below discuss the impact of the Coronavirus, and make some suggestions that film societies might consider.

We would be interested in your comments or suggestions.

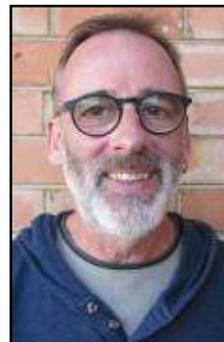


## 2. From the President - Mark Horner.

The ACOFS AGM for 2020 has been held with delegates from all Federations participating. The extraordinary thing about the meeting was that it was not the usual face to face meeting - it was an email meeting.

The current circumstances that we are living with as we follow Federal and State directives to deal with the Covid-19 pandemic, prohibited our usual face to face meeting for 2020 and so we convened the meeting by email from our lounge rooms.

My thanks to the delegates who participated in the meeting and also to the previous ACOFS committee members. The meeting did have some challenges. The main one for me being my capacity to send emails. I reached my capacity by Saturday afternoon and again Sunday morning. My thanks to Jim Mansbridge for taking the chair as Vice President and completing the meeting.



Welcome to the new ACOFS committee. Announcements of the new ACOFS committee are in this bulletin of which Ian Davidson continues on in the role of editor.

The recent AGM did not allow for a discussion about the responses from the sub-committee set up as an initiative of the ACOFS AGM in 2019 to discuss and explore “what will film look like in the future.” This will be an ongoing initiative for ACOFS and will be progressed further with the new committee. I hope to generate more discussion on this topic and I hope to see more Federations and film societies getting involved. Remember, no one can accurately guess or predict what format film screening will take in the future. We can, however, expect changes. Already, film societies are adapting to digital film screening and continued discussion will assist with preparing and adapting to more changes in the future.

It is unfortunate that film societies are unable to meet and screen films at the moment. The very fact that we cannot meet face to face as a committee and that film society members cannot attend and enjoy film screenings is nothing less than devastating. So many happy and vibrant film communities have been reduced to staying at home and as far as watching a film are now limited to the technology they have in their lounge rooms.

How ironic that this organisation at the last AGM in Melbourne commenced a sub-committee to explore “what film will look like in the future.” Will there indeed be film in the future? Of course there will be! What we don’t know is when. To say that I am missing being able to see a film is an understatement! The routine of attending a screened film is a joy and it is extremely sad that this experience has been and will be delayed for some time.

It will be interesting to see how this current climate affects film making.

Stay well, stay safe. This will pass.

Mark Horner  
President ACOFS

*[If you are interested in ACOFS developing any new ideas to help film societies, please email Mark with your suggestions and comments at [president@acofs.org.au](mailto:president@acofs.org.au)].*

### 3. ACOFS AGM Report

The ACOFS AGM was held over the weekend of 18th and 19th April as an email meeting. While it had its moments of difficulty when some participants went “off the air”, the final result was workable. On the plus side, representatives from all state federations were able to attend.

All film societies and film festivals from all state federations have suspended screenings for the foreseeable future due to the Coronavirus.

A total of 650 DVDs were reported as having been screened in Victorian societies in 2019, worth approximately \$33,700 in screening rights fees. The Australia-wide figures are estimated at about twice this.

It is interesting to note that the majority of registered film societies in Australia (53) have average attendances at screenings of between 20 and 49 members. 22% have fewer than 20 attending on average.

The working party on “New Technology Impacting Film Societies” has received several submissions, and plans to present a combined “position paper” in the near future.

The new executive of ACOFS for the 2020-2021 year is as follows:-

President: Mark Horner (Tas)

V President: Prodros Marinakis (Qld)

Secretary: David Harcombe (Tas)

Treasurer: John Turner (Vic)

Committee:

Jason Lockwood (NSW)

Kerry McKinnon (Qld)

Bill Biscoe (SA)

Ian Davidson (Vic)

Suzanne Nunn (Vic)

### 4. Reports From ACOFS MEMBERS

#### ***From the FVFS (Victoria) (Andrew Oldroyd)***

*It would be remiss of me not to acknowledge the sad loss of our former FVFS President John Arkins in February last year. John has been a strong and dedicated leader of our organisation with a particular passion for succession planning for both our member societies and the Federation itself. We all inherit the benefit of John's and the FVFS team's hard work and passion. Our collective thoughts have been with Gail and John's family for the past 12 months. I'd also like to acknowledge all the work Gail Arkins has put into our publication 'ReelNews' over the years; thank you! Gail decided to pass the baton on to Beverley Bloxham last year. Big thanks to Beverley for taking it on.*

*The Victorian Film Society movement is larger and stronger than it's been in its 71 year history. At the end of last year we had 84 member societies, film festivals and community cinemas who are affiliated with the FVFS. As a proud Regional Victorian, I'm excited that the majority of this growth has been in country Victoria. We will continue to support the growth of our movement across the state and hope to hold several more Regional Information Days to benefit our Regional Societies.*

*The big challenge for our movement remains the viability of our societies, committees and succession planning. While we have seen amazing growth in society numbers during the past ten years, there have also been several societies that have closed their doors. This is almost always attributable to a lack of committee members, ageing membership and the reliance on one or two individuals to hold things together. We must all think about renewal and succession if we are going to continue to thrive as a movement.*

*In April and May last year we were privileged to have our Patron, David Stratton AM visit Victoria. David made the time to visit three societies across the state - Prom Coast, Grampians and Macedon Ranges. I attended his visit in my home town of Fish Creek. He also met with the FVFS executive over an enjoyable lunch. We were all amazed by David's depth and breadth of film knowledge. I would like to thank David for his ongoing commitment to FVFS, the Film Society Movement more broadly and taking the time to visit*

us! David has also, very generously, supplied the FVFS with short video introductions to four of his favourite films from 2019 (which he plans to do annually), and listed his “best dozen” films for each issue of ReelNews.

Clearly the most significant thing to happen to our Federation in this past 12 months is the COVID-19 virus, which has put a stop to just about everything. As I write this report, the full impact of this crisis is unknown. When we do get back to something that resembles ‘normal’ our societies will be really important for communities to reconnect and rebuild the social fabric after what could be months of social isolation. As a Federation, we will continue to do everything we can in the background to provide guidance and advice during this difficult period.

Lastly, I wish to thank my fellow committee members for their hard work and dedication to our Federation these past twelve months. In particular I’d like to thank Susan and Ian for all the work that they do in keeping our movement going. Let’s hope that things will return to some kind of normality next year!

And in conclusion-

Thank you all for your participation in this “virtual” AGM. The FVFS committee are looking forward to the next twelve months, although 2020 will be challenging for everybody. Our societies, like many other community organisations will be essential for the community recovery from Coronavirus. I’d encouraged you all to stay connected with your members in any way you are able. A special thanks to Ian and Susan for pulling the AGM together under these trying circumstances. Stay safe, Andrew.

#### **Other items raised during the FVFS AGM were the following:-**

Beverley Bloxham (Chewton FS) commented that “It’s a pity we have to forego the community get-together and fruitful presentations and discussions this year. Hopefully by this time next year this pestilence will be done and dusted and we are all healthily continuing as normal.”

Rodney Browne (Ballan FS) commented “Thanks for all the good work you are doing and I now have a template for running my forthcoming AGM’s.”

Alex Kuebler (Barwon Heads FS) asked “Are there any further developments on the John Arkins Scholarship? We provide \$200 annually to a local community group in memory of Jan Testro (10 years since she passed away!). We discuss this at a committee meeting and decide which local group will be the recipient of the Jan Testro Community Group. It is very informal really.

My suggestion to committees is that while we are unable to meet for films for a while, it may be a perfect opportunity for committee members to put together a manual for their respective film societies if they have not already done so.”

Graham Pitts (Maldon FS) responded to the suggestion of the FVFS putting together a manual about how to start and run a Film Society. If memory serves me right, you’ve done sterling work in this regard yourself. But I think it’s a very good idea.”

Suzanne Nunn (Executive Committee member) gave an update on the Scholarship: “The Federation of Victorian Film Societies has created a new film prize offered to Deakin University for the most outstanding 3<sup>rd</sup> year student from the School of Communication and Creative Arts. The recipient will receive \$3,000 towards supporting their 4<sup>th</sup> year Honours production project. The criteria for successful application will be based on project originality, methodology and the impact of their project on the visual arts. The successful applicant will present their completed production at the annual FVFS AGM and discuss their project with the delegates. The 1<sup>st</sup> Award was due to be presented at the start of 2020. The last I heard (4 weeks ago) was that it was to go ahead this year, but as you can imagine, everything has come to a grinding halt in the university system. I will make some inquiries this week.”

We (The FVFS) will continue to publish ReelNews to keep societies up to date, the next being due in May.

The latest issue of ReelNews (#124, February 2020) includes a wide range of topics of interest to film societies, namely:

- David Stratton's pick of 16 recent films.
- David Stratton's film Introduction for five films now available.
- IVAN THE TERRIBLE unpacked.
- The many forms of tension.
- It's all an illusion
- Plus regular features – "StarBox score results" and "What's being seen at film societies across Victoria".

### **From TFOFS (Tasmania)**

TFOFS currently has 17 affiliated members but the membership has changed. The UTAS Film Society has gone into abeyance while the Dodges Ferry Film Society has joined. TFOFS is still the second largest federation affiliated with ACOFS.

The most important news of the last few months is that two of our longstanding committee members have passed away. Tom Busby was a long time president and committee member of the Break O'Day Film Society. He represented the Society at TFOFS meetings for many years and he was TFOFS president for five years. He also represented TFOFS at a number of ACOFS meetings. Tom was always friendly, kind and helpful.

Dave Moser belonged to the Eaglehawk Neck Hall Film Society which he was instrumental in setting up. He was also a very enthusiastic vice-president of TFOFS. During his years in the film society movement (and in his many other community activities) he was unfailingly good-natured, competent and altruistic.

They will both be missed very much.

The TFOFS website at <https://sites.google.com/view/tfofs> seems to be working fine. This site will continue to be developed for the purpose of providing useful and helpful information for film societies, particularly those film societies that do not have or regularly maintain their own website. So far member societies have not contributed much to it and it remains rather basic.

This year has been free of major problems and the only obvious one on the horizon is the COVID-19 virus.

Jim Mansbridge President, TFOFS.

### **From FQFS (Queensland)**

FQFS has had a steady 2019.

We currently have 13 members which is one less than last year. That's because one of our film societies isn't paid up and emails sent to them have been "bouncing".

There have been 3 enquiries from individuals considering starting a film society. Our membership officer, Prodos, has handled these with his usual energy and enthusiasm. Two of the enquiries were from organisations that wanted to run film nights as fund-raisers which is nice but not really suited to the QLD federation's mission.

As notified in our recent email to the ACOFS president and the ACOFS secretary, a couple of days ago Prodos accepted our invitation to be a full-fledged voting committee member and has also replaced Robin Craig as an ACOFS delegate.

We've been forwarding the ACOFS bulletin to our members within 24 hours of receiving it and I think we've been letting Ian Davidson know about that. I hope so.

Our website is very well maintained by Prodos.

Last year I placed a purchase link on my online textbook shop - WildfireTextbooks.com.au -- for John Turner's book, The History of Australian Film Societies. Regrettably, there have been no sales as yet. We have one copy in stock.

Of course, with the current ban on gatherings, all Queensland film societies are currently inactive.

*We're very pleased to support Mark Horner as ACOFS president and hope he can come up with a COVID-19 vaccine very soon so we can get things rolling again.*

*In all seriousness, however, the Federation of Queensland Film Societies is very pleased to be a part of this great artistic/cultural institution we call "the film society movement" - at least the ACOFS version of it -- which is the only version that makes sense.*

*Wishing everyone good times ahead.*

*Kerry McKinnon FQFS president*

## **From NSWFFS**

*The New South Wales Federation of Film Societies currently has 17 members.*

*Last year, we did almost get one interesting new member whom our membership officer, Prodos, helped out quite a bit. They filled out all their paperwork, provided a constitution, and so on, but then never paid their joining fee despite several reminders. It was an interesting project: A film society for people with mental health issues.*

*Last year we had four or five enquiries about starting a new film society and, prior to group activities being curtailed, were still talking with two of them.*

*The ACOFS Bulletin has been reliably getting forwarded to all our members. Thank you to Ian Davidson for all his work on the bulletin and for so many of the other things he does for film societies.*

*Our website continues to be well maintained.*

*Both our secretary, David Prichard, and I have very busy careers that, until recently, involved a fair bit of travel. Nevertheless, we have regular communication and remain committed to the well-being and advancement of the NSW federation and its members.*

*In preparing this report, we had a brief chat with our previous & most excellent president, Leth Maitland, who says he is in good health and good spirits and, along with Simbad, his 15 year old Maltese terrier, sitting on his lap during the phone call, wanted to wish all ACOFS delegates well.*

*Before the pandemic restrictions kicked in, Leth was attending "Australia's Silent Film Festival" featuring silent films accompanied by live music. Leth's current favourite film is the live action animation comedy, PADDINGTON 2, which he says is "a fascinating film with top notch voices and special FX, made by people who really know how to make movies."*

*The NSW Federation supports the nomination of Prodos as ACOFS vice president.*

*If you don't know Prodos, you don't know what you're missing.*

*Jason Lockwood NSW Federation of Film Societies*

## **From Screen & Study Institute (SASI)**

*SASI is a full organisational member of Adult Learning Australia and an associate (non-voting) member of ACOFS.*

*Our website services for the Film Society Movement continues to run smoothly. Server speed and server security has been continually upgraded and improved with hardly any noticeable disruption to service. Website content update requests are being done fairly quickly and reliably.*

*Throughout 2019, nearly 1,000 theme and plugin updates have been performed almost seamlessly.*

*The TYSPOM Film Library added very few new film items to its collection during 2019 and remains at around 3,000.*

*The number of SASI-affiliated film societies remains unchanged at 14.*

*SASI reaffirms its commitment to the decentralised, "bottom-up", democratic model for the Film Society Movement as represented by ACOFS and opposes any changes to this and any -- even slight -- shifts away from this model. Especially actions that ask Federations to dance to the tune of ACOFS.*

*It is not clear to SASI why ACOFS is asking Federations to provide their financials. ACOFS is obliged to provide its financials to the Federations, but the Federations are not obliged to provide their financials to ACOFS. Nor can such a requirement be imposed on any Federation -- even if it is voted upon by delegates. [See note\*]*

*SASI is optimistic about the future of the Australian Film Society Movement.*

*We express our great appreciation to all the outstanding individuals who keep the Movement moving & marvellous.*

*We are very happy to have Mark Homer as ACOFS president and we look forward to continuing to be of service to the best of our ability.*

*Wishing you all good health & creative success.*

*PRODOS, SASI president*

*[\*Note from the editor. It is not an ACOFS requirement that Federations supply financial statements to ACOFS, and ACOFS has not requested that they do so. Some have chosen to do so, but that was entirely their decision.]*

### **From SAFFS (South Australia)**

*Australia's smallest Federation report, presented by Australia's smallest Federation.  
(Prepared by Prodos at Bill Biscoe's request)*

*SAFFS (South Australian Federation of Film Societies) has 5 members.*

*Most of the work of the federation is done by Bill, its president, with a little help from me.*

*All ACOFS bulletins and ReelNews issues are immediately forwarded to members. Thank you to Ian and to the FVFS for that.*

*In addition, from time to time, various items that may be of interest to members are emailed to them which, at the very least, lets them know we're here and we care.*

*There were no problems or major issues to report throughout 2019.*

*In contrast, in 2020 we're living in more "interesting times" than anyone would ever wish for. That's more than just an old Chinese proverb. It's a Chinese virus.*

*Thank you.*

### **From WAFFS (Western Australia)**

*The Western Australian Federation of Film Societies currently has 6 long term member societies. This has been our core number base for many years.*

*WAFFS remain strong advocates for the National Film and Sound Archive. The number of films our member societies are able to source through the non-theatrical lending collection from the NFSA remains high however, our film societies have commented that they are noticing more and more titles are only available for screening as educational only especially films with high ratings on IMDb or Rotten Tomatoes. Some of our societies are moving away from using the NFSA as the primary source of films. For instance Chidlow Film Society has a policy of showing films with high IMDb and Rotten Tomatoes ratings (IMDb >6/10 and Rotten Tomatoes > 70%) and now include some privately sourced films as part of their program and pay screening rights to the distributor as the quality of films are not available through the NFSA.*

*The NFSA has been approached to determine if an affiliation with the University of the Third Age would enable our member societies to screen some of the educational only titles held by the NFSA, however, a response has as yet not been received.*

*The demographic of our member societies is aging. Our member film societies are trying to advertise and get more people interested in joining but have indicated that their members are attracted if the movies screened are of a high quality and inaccessible on other platforms. The Chidlow Film Soc has had great success by including a themed "bring a plate" dinner before the film (i.e. French film = French theme food) every second*

month for the past 2 years. They usually double their attendance on the dinner nights (25 goes to 50). These dinner nights also attract a younger audience. They also email a film flyer to all members twice in the lead up to dinner film nights, the second email provides a provisional list of food ideas people are bringing as a prompter.

Our film societies are finding that libraries are now offering the video streaming service Kanopy. It is free to download the movies and according to the terms and conditions appear to have non-theatrical screening rights if admission is not charged. Our member societies are not as yet using this service mainly due to the requirement of an uninterrupted internet connection.

Svet Micic, Secretary, WAFFS

## 5. News From the DVD Distributors

These titles have been provided by the respective distributors as being either new acquisitions or titles of interest to film societies. It is an indication of who holds the screening rights for the films, but these distributors can not necessarily supply the DVDs. For the latest distributor contact details and websites see ACOFS Fact Sheet 3B on [www.acofs.org.au/resources](http://www.acofs.org.au/resources) (Updated regularly). The contact is included below only where it has changed recently.

### Amalgamated Movies

(Currently closed until at least mid-May, and website is being rebuilt).

(Amalgamated also handles Lime Light Distribution titles)

Biggest Little Farm

Jumanji: The Next Level

Little Women

Little Woods

Lost in Paris

Older than Ireland

Olive Tree, The

Parasite

Passion d'Augustine, La

Pavarotti

Zombieland Double Tap



### Antidote Films

Antidote charge just \$35+ GST for screening rights for most of their DVD titles.

Dosed. See trailer at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B9-k8OcHNVY>

### Filminkpresents

Dov Komits 0411 559 519 [dov@filminkpresents.com](mailto:dov@filminkpresents.com)

Their website is still under construction – but watch this space.

Burning Kiss, 76 Mins, Australia, MA.

Wrinkles the Clown, 76 Mins, USA, M

Hot Mess, 76 Mins, Australia, Comedy, MA.

Use Me, Thriller, R?

Upcoming releases are:-

Talking About Trees, 2019, Doco

Unsound, MA

Swallows of Kabul, The, 2019, 82 mins.

Romance on the Menu,

Sweet River,

Lion Returns, A

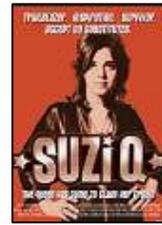


### Hi Gloss

Dan O'Malley has left Hi Gloss. Simon Killen remains as the main contact.

**Label Distribution**

SUZI Q - A Feature Documentary by Liam Firmager  
Defend Conserve Protect, Doco about Antarctica.



**Limelight Distribution**

See their catalogue at [www.limelightdistribution.co.nz](http://www.limelightdistribution.co.nz)

**Madman**

Rights available through Amalgamated  
Honeyland



**Roadshow**

**Ronin Films**

For member prices refer to the "private purchase" price, but remember you then have to pay the appropriate screening rights fee. Ronin will accept the recommended \$50 plus GST for DVD screening rights. [www.roninfilms.com.au](http://www.roninfilms.com.au) for details and purchase prices. Many of their titles are now available from KANOPY STREAMING.

Another Country

Ella, 2016, 86 min, recommend G.

Etched in Bone, 2018, 73 mins, recommend PG.

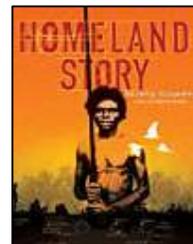
Homeland Story, 2019, 85 min, M.

Journey West, 2019, 95 mins, recommend G.

Lili, 85 mins. 2019, 85 mins, recommend PG (English + Hungarian versions).

Saltwater Story, 2017, 55 mins, recommend PG.

Wandering Souls, 2019, 75 mins, recommend PG.



**Sharmill Films**

All but closed due to the virus, but have some titles ready to be released.

Adam

Endless

Father, The



**Umbrella Entertainment**

For a full list of all Umbrella Entertainment Public Performance Rights List, contact [sales@umbrellaent.com.au](mailto:sales@umbrellaent.com.au)

Vivarium (now available On Demand)

Call on 03 9020 5136 or [sales@umbrellaent.com.au](mailto:sales@umbrellaent.com.au)

For Australian titles in the Umbrella catalogue, Umbrella may be able to assist you to invite the director to attend your screening for a Q and A.

**Vendetta Films**

(Can approve rights for DVD screening even if they don't have the DVD)

Alice Davies: [alice@vendettafilms.co.nz](mailto:alice@vendettafilms.co.nz)

Ailo's Journey

Girl

Girls of the Sun

Happy Prince, The

Ideal Palace, The

Inna De Yard

No Dress Code Required



Out of Blue  
Support the Girls

**Coming Soon**

Bygone, The  
Master Cheng  
Repeat Attenders  
Return to Ghandi Road  
Roxane  
Vai



For a full list of what's available go to [www.vendettafilms.co.nz](http://www.vendettafilms.co.nz)

## 6. New Titles from the NTLC at the NFSA

*The NTLC (Non-Theatrical Lending Collection) is part of the NFSA (National Film and Sound Archive) in Canberra. There are almost 1,000 DVD and BluRay titles available for loan to film societies at \$22 (including rights and delivery to you). See their catalogue at [loans.nfsa.gov.au](http://loans.nfsa.gov.au)*

*The following licenced DVD or BluRay titles are listed as having been added in the last 90 days:*

Berlin Um Die Ecke, 1957, BR  
Cat and Mouse – Katz und Maus, 1967, DVD  
Die Stadt von Morgen – Experimentierfeld Asien, 2015, BR

Contact [nontheatric@nfsa.com.au](mailto:nontheatric@nfsa.com.au) for details.  
Your contact there is Phil Hore.

*Also don't forget that the NTLC may have some older titles which you will not be able to get elsewhere. Even where the original Australian distributor no longer holds current rights, the NTLC may have purchased the screening rights themselves.*

*The NTLC may be able to licence a viewing of your own copy of a DVD where they hold the screening rights to that title in their collection. This means that if a title held by the NTLC is already booked out when you want it, you can use your own copy after paying the NTLC the normal \$22 fee for the screening rights for that title.*

In a recent email from the NFSA:

*"Our doors may be [closed temporarily](#) but when it comes to the NFSA, we are always open online. We are committed to helping you discover all that we have to offer online during these challenging times.*

*We will be adding **new content to the website every fortnight**, while also sharing content regularly via our **social media channels**. Social posts will help highlight key items from the collection along with **unique and behind-the-scenes content**.*

*If you like what you see, please share it using **#NFSAOpenOnline**."*

## 7. Two Film Society Challenges – and Responses.

Local film societies are facing two major challenges at present - the problem being how best to respond to both. They are:

1. The current Coronavirus lockdown, and
2. Once operational again, competition from film screening services - both free (e.g. *SBS On Demand*, *ABC Iview*, and *Beamafilm*), and subscription services (e.g. *Google Play*, *iTunes*, *Netflix*, and *Mubi*) etc.

So, how best to react during the lockdown? By:

- Using the time to prepare an impressive film program for when the “All Clear” is sounded, and life returns to “normal”. This film program will need to be a varied one with each film carefully checked to ensure both that it genuinely is a good one, and also will reassure any wavering members that their continued membership of your film club is worthwhile.
- If you’ve not already done so, make it as easy as possible for new and existing members to pay to join/re-join you - e.g. by allowing them, in addition to cash payments on film nights for membership, to make direct deposits (including online) via your bank account, when paying their membership fees.
- Tell them what you’re preparing for them, and invite them to participate by suggesting some film titles for you to consider as future possibilities. Alternatively, have a survey of them (e.g. using *SurveyMonkey*) to find out which of your films and film genres they’ve liked in the past, and which they didn’t - including rating them, and commenting on them if they wish to.
- Then circulate the film suggestion list and survey results to keep the discussion going, and put in some of your own recommendations if the discussion flags.
- This could give you a chance to vary or alter the kind of films or genre that you normally show - and help revive your current and recent former members’ interest, as well as finding new markets in your locality of potential new members. And to retain their confidence in you, how about telling your members how you will deal with their unused pre-paid membership fees now that you are in indefinite lockdown?
- Once the ‘All Clear’ is called, you perhaps could offer them new membership cards with expiry dates extended to cover the number of screenings you have had to cancel. Alternatively, if the lockdown is raised soon, you could book additional screening dates this year to “catch up” on all your missed screenings. This would eliminate the need either to make any refunds to members, or issue special new membership cards.
- Alternatively, you could offer a discount on next year’s fees to any re-joining members, to compensate them for all this year’s missed films.
- Is there also any special membership recruitment or fundraising plan that you’ve been thinking about for a while now, but haven’t yet tried it out?
- E.g. i) specifically appealing to the kinds of people who are most likely to join a local film society - ie mature age people, educational staff, and people in managerial and professional occupations, or
- E.g. ii) a mass letterbox leafletting campaign using a very carefully written leaflet or flyer? Now’s the time to check out which streets in your locality may have the sort of residents that might join your film club. Your membership address list could be a good guide for this.

How should you start off again once the “All Clear” is sounded (which may in fact be limited or ‘conditional’)? Firstly, current and potential members will need to be reassured regarding their personal safety. How can you do that?

- By encouraging social distancing at your venue - both before and after your films, and also during them.
- How? In your publicity, both in circulars to your members beforehand, and in your publicity to your local community, eg
- in the Community Notices sections of your local papers, and on your posters and leaflets, and
- perhaps doing a mass leaflet-drop in letterboxes in those streets which look as if their residents might be potential members.
- On their arrival at your films, you could remind your members both verbally and with notices about social distancing etc,

- Provide seating arrangements which encourage it - e.g. gaps marked between available rows, and also seats within rows. However, this may be difficult if your normal attendance figures routinely fill up your venue - especially if it's a small one. Instead, it may also mean that, if you normally have a social event afterwards, it may have to be much reduced in size - perhaps tea and coffee only, but no cheese and biscuits etc.
- Naturally, also ensure there's soap in the toilets - and that sanitizer is available as well. Interestingly, one film society is considering using a 'no-touch' thermometer to scan everyone on arrival - viewing this not only as a defence mechanism, but also as a sign that they are taking their members' safety seriously.

How can you make your members' first post-coronavirus film more welcoming?

Could you:

- Have a 'Return to Normal' party for your members, before or after the film - while allowing for social distancing?
- Or providing lucky-door prizes, or other low-cost free gifts - including any DVDs on hand from previously shown films - as a pre-film welcome to returning members?

Tell your members your plans, both for your upcoming films and any special revenue raising ideas you may also have, including any to recruit more members. These could also include any plans you have for future special events, e.g. taking part in Seniors Week, Mental Health Week, Harmony Day, Youth Week, or your town's annual special event or festival etc.

Is there anything else that you can also suggest! If so, please tell us all about it.

David Harcombe [dpthfilms@gmail.com](mailto:dpthfilms@gmail.com)  
 [ACOFs and TFOFS Secretary: 20 April 2020]  
 [ACOFs and TFOFS Secretary: 20 April 2020]

## 8. Additional Thoughts from Whitehorse Film Society

With the benefit of pre-publication access to David's paper, we would like to offer some comments based on the experience, procedures and situation of the Whitehorse Film Society.

Regarding the challenge from film screening services, we hope to maintain our membership by stressing the benefits of the large screen and the associated social gathering, with opportunities for discussing the films either over supper or in a specific discussion group. We believe these social aspects of screening are an important one for our members. We have a significant number of small friendship groups who attend because of each other. That our members vote for the films they want to see in the next year's program is also an important aspect of member participation, which is further enhanced by our keeping a DVD library for members, at no extra cost.

The idea of drawing up an impressive new film program during lockdown isn't really applicable to us. We prepare our program for a year on an annual basis, in which we present a list of about 80 films to the membership, selected in part from films which members have suggested in the first half of the year, collect their votes and, guided but not ruled by their votes, select the program for the following year. If we need to, we can do the voting this year for 2021 remotely, largely by email if necessary. If there are films we have been unable to screen this year they would presumably be involved in this process, but they wouldn't be guaranteed selection.

We encourage payment by direct deposit into the film society account. This works well, not withstanding the occasional need for investigation when someone pays their annual subs but fails to leave any clue as to their identity.

In general, we have an exercise book available at screenings where members can record films which they would be interested in seeing the following year. We use the StarBox system to enable our members to give their impressions of the film they have just seen. We don't generally generalise from individual films to genres, however. In the particular circumstances of this year we will use our newsletters to solicit requests for films, also to advise members on alternative sources of films (hoping, as above, that they will remain convinced of the advantages of membership of a film society).

We haven't discussed the issue of membership fees in detail, but there is little doubt that, once we know when we can start screenings again, we will determine and publicise a discounted price to apply to membership in 2021.

We find membership recruitment to be an ongoing challenge. We try to get publicity in local media (which, sadly, are becoming rapidly less local), we try to publicise our program in local libraries and we put on a stall at the annual festival put on by the council, which is focused around community groups. There aren't any silver bullets though.

A mass letterbox campaign doesn't look like a good idea for big cities. The City of Whitehorse, from which most of our membership is drawn, probably contains 100,000 letterboxes.

We couldn't aim to maintain 1.5m social distancing - the premises aren't big enough. In March we were planning to continue to serve tea and coffee but to discontinue biscuits and cakes, but lockdown started too soon for us to implement this decision. It would be our view that, if we still need to maintain social distancing with limits of 15 minutes face-to-face contact, in our situation with two hours in the same venue (the time of a screening session), we would not be able to start screening again.

We hold our screenings on Council premises, so we rely on them for soap and sanitiser in the toilets. They're not perfect but they are normally pretty good. We are planning to acquire and use a non-contact thermometer, whereby anyone who does come up as having a high temperature should refrain from attending on that occasion.

The idea of celebration at the first post-lockdown film is a good one. We normally have a party in July to celebrate our birthday (62 this year!), so if we don't resume before then we might celebrate resumption with a belated birthday party. The idea of free gifts etc could be good too; although once we have screened DVDs we keep them indefinitely and lend them out to members who would like to catch up with them.

We will be communicating via emails (and a small number of snail-mails) with our members during the lockdown, keeping them updated on our plans. The idea of trying to get publicity during special events is a good one. As above, we maintain a presence at the annual Whitehorse Spring Festival. Some of the other options for publicity look like good ideas, in particular Seniors' Week – the majority of our members are seniors.

John and Merienne Shortridge, Whitehorse Film Society.

## 9. From Dress Circle

In the May 2020 issue of Dress Circle, some interesting comments are made in the leading article (on page 1), regarding film societies. I quote :

*Numerous film societies are endeavouring to recreate the cinema experience of the 1940's and 50's, perhaps even into the 60's. Little niceties, like being welcomed on arrival by well attired committee members; supper at interval or after the movie; even selling Jaffas, Fantales, Choc Top ice creams; and comfortable cinema seating.*

*But what many film society members seem to value most is the intimate social atmosphere of being in a film society. While we may have relished the opulence of the great cinema palaces, at the same time we also loved the intimacy of the small cinema, even the various newsreel cinemas that existed in most capital cities.*

Dress Circle is a small quarterly magazine, lovingly produced by Ross Adams (Lithgow Valley Film Society). Subscription \$34 per year. Contact [lawsonco@tpg.com.au](mailto:lawsonco@tpg.com.au) for details.

[Editor's note: Ross has accurately described what a film society needs to be today - to be more than just another place to simply watch movies. A film society needs to be a social experience. It should be a place where members get together to watch films of their choice, in an environment that is welcoming and comfortable, and leads to friendly discussion over a good cuppa after the movie.]

## 10. Where to get your "fix" of free movies

Many thanks to the Croydon Film Society who have sent me the following list of FREE on-line film festivals. Just click on the highlighted link.

[Japanese Film Festival](#) ONLINE NOW - head over to the click and discover new and emerging Japanese creators.

[International Documentary Film Festival Amsterdam \(IDFA\)](#) - check out the website, available for your viewing are documentaries and free films. Navigate to the option Collection > Watch Films Online > Free Films (highlighted in blue) > click on the link.

Tasmanian [Breath of Fresh Air Festival](#) - BOFA is a free film festival which viewing starts from May 1 through to May 17. If you subscribe then access codes will be sent all films. This is free, to subscribe please click on the above link.

[Revelation Perth International Film Festival](#) - Members are available however there is an option to view free films, (click on link > sort by > choose free option ) enjoy !!

[SCINEMA International Science Film Festival](#) - an amazing range of documentaries for you to watch!!

And here is a few more [A Night of Horror International Film Festival](#), [Kino](#),  
[Sydney](#), [Filmonik Melbourne](#), [Monster Fest](#)

*Also, note that THE AGE of April 26th included the following potential sources for getting your fix of free films: Kanopy, Beamafilm, YouTube, Tubi, Internet Archive, Open Culture, and on free-to-air TV - SBS World Movies (Channel 32). [Editor]*

## 11. Drop me a Line

Please send all comments, suggestions and articles to [ian24davidson@gmail.com](mailto:ian24davidson@gmail.com)  
This newsletter is intended to reflect information and news from all societies, so please let us know about anything of interest at your society.

Do you make use of the list of recent acquisitions supplied by distributors in every issue? Are they useful? Drop me a brief email to let me know if we should continue with this feature.

Many thanks for all contributions. Ian Davidson, editor.

## 12. Letters

- From AGFA (American Genre Film Archive). AGFA's inventory aggregates theatrical rights for [Shout Factory](#), [Arrow](#), [Severin](#), [Vinegar Syndrome](#), [Umbrella](#), [Cult Epics and more](#). Amongst these, [Vinegar Syndrome](#) has the largest # of int'l rights. Cheers, Bret Berg (From USA) 310-272-6728 [americangenefilm.com](http://americangenefilm.com) [AGFA do theatrical for companies worldwide and do have the Australian rights for a number of titles, some of which our members may have been seeking.]

- From Ross Adams (Lithgow Valley Film Society).

I would like to reply to Simon of the Shit Movie Club printed in the February issue of the latest Bulletin.

I found it difficult to understand what Simon is driving at. Firstly I am not imposing my own personal ideas on any member in our Film Society. The Lithgow Valley group attracts a wide selection of people from the area with wide interests. We provide movies and documentaries from almost every genre and also select movies that members ask for. For instance I am not particularly interested in musicals; however they are included in the program, as many members request them. To suggest that as the Coordinator for the group I am catering for a select or niche group is way off the mark. At the present time we have a waiting list for people to join our Film Society and most Sunday afternoon sessions see a near or full house. As regards playing the Australian National Anthem, this was suggested by members and we gave it a trial run of three months. As for upsetting certain members we have not had one critical comment over the past twelve months. And, we did not suggest members sing the words but many do. New members joining actually compliment the committee for playing the National Anthem. So what is wrong in having pride in the country in which we live? As for upsetting the indigenous community, not one complaint!

Simon, you assume that I would not like what you do if I visited your movie club. As you have not visited our small cinema I don't feel you are in a position to criticise what we do. When we started the Lithgow Group in 2002 we screened movies to cover all age groups from children to aged pensioners. Within twelve months we were able to ascertain the age group that we should concentrate on. Children and teenagers in this area are not interested in movies as Lithgow is a very sports-minded district. Various groups including the Police Citizens Youth Group tried movies for the young and it failed. We have a membership ranging in age from the early twenties and our oldest member is over 90. Screening weekly we are able to offer a wide selection of movie subjects to interest all members. And to complement our program we run After-Movie Dinners, Bus Tours and Film Festivals. In addition we run special fund-raising and social sessions for local community groups as well as organisations such as the Cancer Council, Guide Dogs Australia, Dementia Australia and this year for the Rural Fire Service, especially as the Lithgow area was heavily impacted by fires.

If Simon is suggesting that we encourage a "Tie and Tails" dress code or that we are overly formal in our approach he is wrong in that regard also. We are an informal group and don't impose any restriction on members apart from encouraging them to attend at least once each quarter. At our ARTSUNDAY sessions, held on the last Sunday of each month we serve wine and cheese

at interval and on all other occasions offer complimentary tea, coffee and cake which gives all members the opportunity to socialise.

Simon, don't be in a rush to criticize without knowing how other groups function.

Ross Adams (Lithgow Valley Film Society)

- From (name withheld).

*"Hi. I receive The ACOFS Bulletin directly on the (name withheld) Movie Club website; any committee member can access it there. Truthfully I rarely read it."*

[Is this the case with your committee also? There must be some committee members who find the information provided in THE BULLETIN of interest – or at least of value for programming. The Editor.]

- From David Donaldson (Adelaide). Maybe some time remind people to monitor their Junk/Spam/.. folder in case the n'letter gets caught there (mine did).

*[Editor's note. Not much point putting that reminder in the newsletter if it is going to get stuck in the spam folder! But point taken. We will remind readers in other ways to monitor their spam folders for important emails.]*

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**NOTES:**

1. *If clicking on a highlighted link in this newsletter does not take you to your Internet browser, try copying it and pasting it into your browser search bar.*
2. *Please ensure your spam filter is NOT set to capture our emails which include relevant material from ACOFS, such as this Bulletin.*

*ACOFS and the State federations do not necessarily endorse the statements or view contained in any personal statements in articles, letters to the editor or in the films mentioned in this Bulletin.*