

# ReelNews

The official newsletter of the  
Federation of Victorian  
Film Societies

#99

August 2013

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## Editor's Desk

We're back in Australia! Spent nearly two months visiting Mom in Cincinnati, basking in the lovely, warm American summer!

As well as contacting some independent filmmakers and distributors, and testing all sorts of film and animation software, during our visit Prodos did quite a bit of

research on the American Film Society Movement, concluding, if I may quote him: "Crikey girl! They haven't got one!"

That's disturbing. Where did it go?

This issue of ReelNews – much of it assembled in the USA – is a veritable gold mine of helpful information and inspiring reading. Film and festival reviews by Marilyn Martyn and John Arkins. Valuable, practical tips by Ian Davidson. An interview with Roger Seccombe on the importance of defending the Film Society Movement's 16mm film, equipment, and artistic traditions. And, of course there are the *Starbox* scores and *What's On* pages (thank you Susan Davidson). As usual, all illustrations hand drawn by me. Enjoy it all!

Lights off. Imaginations: ON!

**Barboo A H Marinakis**

[ReelNews@FVFS.org.au](mailto:ReelNews@FVFS.org.au)

*PS: Please share this newsletter with friends and colleagues! Print it out, email it, leave it lying around.*

**Discover. Join. Defend.**

16mm.org.au



[www.FVFS.org.au](http://www.FVFS.org.au)

# What's On

## ACROSS THE FILM SOCIETY CIRCUIT

### Arapiles Motion

#### Picture Society

Road to Nhill, Australia, 1997.  
84 Charing Cross Road, UK/USA, 1987.  
Four Minutes, Germany, 2008.  
Children of the Revolution, Australia, 1996.

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### Australian Bing Crosby Society (Film Society Arm)

Each session screens a Bing Crosby film plus supporting feature from the same era.

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### Ballarat Film Society & Buninyong Film Festival

La Bete Humaine, France, 1938.  
Silent Light, Mexico, 2007.  
Letter from an Unknown Woman, USA, 1947.

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### Bannockburn Movies Film Society & Film Festival

### Barwon Heads Film Society

Bi-annual film festival – A Taste of India.  
The Last Dogs of Winter, NZ, 2011.  
Monsieur Lazhar, Canada, 2011.

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### Beechworth Film Society

### Bright Film Society

Babette's Feast, Denmark, 1987.  
Molokai, Australia, 1999.  
Shadow Dancer, UK/Ireland, 2012.  
Burnt By the Sun, Russia/France, 1994.  
I Wish, Japan, 2011.  
A Separation, Iran, 2011.

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### British History Film Study Festival

### Camberwell Film Society

The Sapphires, Australia, 2012.  
Mrs. Miniver, USA, 1942.  
Coco Avant Chanel, France/ Belgium, 2009.  
Broken Embraces, UK, 2009.

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### Celebrate Israel Film Study Festival

### Corangamite Film Society

### Court Film Society

Silver Linings Playbook, USA, 2012.  
Red Violin, Canada +, 1998.  
Song for Marion, UK/Germany, 2012.  
Camille Rewinds, France, 2012.  
Goddess, Australia, 2013.

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### Croydon Film Society

Midnight in Paris, Spain/USA, 2011.  
I Wish, Japan, 2011.  
The Guard, Ireland, 2011.  
A Royal Affair, Denmark, 2012.  
Arriety, Japan, 2010.

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### DADo Film Society

Visual Acoustics, USA, 2008.  
Utopia London, UK, 2010.  
Koolhaas/ Houselife, France, 2008.

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### F Project Cinema

### Far East Film Society

### Ferntree Gully Film Society

A Separation, Iran, 2011.  
I Am Eleven, Australia, 2011.  
Elena, Russia, 2011.

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### Flexible Respite Film Society

### Flickside Film Society (Arts Yackandandah)

### Geelong Classic Cinema Inc

### God Loves Atheists Film Study Festival

### Goulburn Valley Film Club

Everlasting Moments, Sweden, 2008.  
Le Havre, France, 2011.  
Norwegian Wood, Japan, 2010.

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### Goulburn Valley U3A Film Group

### Grampians Film Society

The Secret in their Eyes, Argentina/Spain, 2009.  
Mao's Last Dancer, Australia, 2009.  
Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon, Taiwan+, 2000.

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### Gusto Film Society

### Horsham Film Society

In Darkness, Poland, 2012.  
Café de Flore, Canada, 2011.  
Life, Above All, South Africa/USA, 2010.

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### International Film Group

Hugo, USA, 2011.  
Honey, Turkey, 2010.

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### Late Show Film Society

### Liberate Education! Film Study Festival

### Lounge Lizards Film Society

### LV Film Society

The Music Teacher, Belgium, 1988.  
The Kite Runner, USA, 2007.  
Searching for Sugar Man, USA, 2012.  
Incendies, France, 2010.

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### Macartan Club (Inc) Film Society

On Golden Pond, UK/USA, 1981.  
The Third Man, UK, 1949.  
The Count of Monte Cristo, (version not stated)

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### Macedon Ranges Film Society

Withnail and I, UK, 1987.  
Rear Window, USA, 1954.  
Harvey Krumpet, Australia, 2003.  
Jane Campion – 3 short films.

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### Melbourne Horror Film Society

### Moira Film Group

Calendar Girls, UK/USA, 2003.  
Guess Who's Coming to Dinner, USA, 1967.  
The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel, UK, 2011.  
Charade, USA, 1963.  
Green Fingers, UK, 1947.

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### Moviehouse

### Moving Clickers Inc & Lorne Film Festival

The Secret in their Eyes, Argentina/Spain, 2009.  
A New Leaf, USA, 1971.

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### Murrindindi Film Society

A Town Like Alice, UK, 1956.  
Since Otar Left, France, 2003.

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### Myrtleford Film Society

Cinema Paradiso, Italy/France, 1988.  
The Artist, France, 2011.

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### Network Film Club

# ACROSS THE FILM SOCIETY CIRCUIT

## Old Scotch Film Society

Phantom of the Opera, UK, 2004.  
Three Dollars, Australia, 2005.  
Water for Elephants, USA, 2011.  
San Francisco, USA, 1936.

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## Phillip Island Film Society

Declaration of War, France, 2011.  
All that Jazz, USA, 1979.  
The Angel's Share, UK, 2012.

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## Plaza Cinema Group

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## Port Fairy Film Society

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## Portarlington Film Society

Café de Flore, France, Canada, 2011.  
Gosford Park, UK/USA, 2001.

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## Portland Film Society

Storm Surfers, Australia, 2012.  
Bernie, USA, 2011.  
A Separation, Iran, 2011.  
To Rome with Love, USA, 2012.  
Searching for Sugar Man, USA, 2012.  
Performance, USA, 2012.

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## PRODOS Film Study Group

Courses in free market principles, history of ideas, life & work of creative heroes

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## Prom Coast Film Society

Margin Call, USA, 2011.  
A Separation, Iran, 2012.  
The Ides of March, USA, 2011.

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## Queenscliff Film Society

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## Red Rock Film Society

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## Red Rum Film Society

Monsieur Lazhar, Canada, 2011.  
All About Eve, USA, 1950.  
Safety Not Guaranteed, USA, 2012.  
The Bicycle Thief, Italy, 1948.

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## Science and Technology Film Study Festival

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## Shimmy & Shake Film Society

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## Smart Girls Film Club

Amazing women in history & fiction

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## St Andrews Film Society

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## St Dunstan's Hall Film Society

The Sapphires, Australia, 2012.  
The Intouchables, France, 2011.  
The Way, Spain, 2010.  
Oscar and Lucinda, UK, 1997.

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## Teddy Bobo Film Club

Short films + lateral thinking exercises.  
Tuesday nights.

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## The Impossible Film Club

Studying fantasy, science fiction, heroic adventure.

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## Trentham Film Society

Where Do We Go Now?, Lebanon, 2011.  
Departures, Japan, 2008.  
Margin Call, US, 2011.

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## Whitehorse Film Society

Some Like It Hot, USA, 1959.  
A Separation, Iran, 2011.  
The Descendants, USA, 2011.  
The Kid with a Bike, France, 2011.

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## Williamstown Film Society

Breakfast at Tiffanys, USA, 1961.  
The Scent of Green Papaya, France, 1993.  
The Thin Red Line, USA, 1998.  
Casino Royale, UK/USA, 1967.  
Cria Cuervos, Spain, 1976.

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## Yarra Ranges Film Society

Carnage, France +, 2011.  
A Time for Drunken Horses, Iran, 2000.  
Midnight in Paris, Spain/USA, 2011.

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## (incl. Warburton Film Festival)

Missing in the Land of Gods, Australia, 2012.  
About Elly, Iran, 2009.  
Robot and Frank, USA, 2012.  
Last Dance, Australia, 2012.  
Beasts of the Southern Wild, USA, 2012.  
I Wish, Japan, 2011.  
The First Grader, UK/Kenya, 2010.  
Shadow Dancer, UK, 2012.

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## Leo Baeck Centre

(NPV Cinema)  
Theme: Films relevant to Judaism

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## Halls Gap Film Festival (NPV Film Festival)

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## Valhalla Social Cinema

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New South Wales

## Deniliquin Film Society and Film Festival

Lore, Australia/Germany, 2012.  
Football Under Cover, Iran, 2008.  
The Brothers McMullen, USA, 1995.  
Performance, USA, 2012.  
The Grapes of Wrath, USA, 1940.

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South Australia

## Adelaide Cinematheque

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South Australia

## Adelaide Film Study Group

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South Australia

## Adelaide University Film Society

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South Australia

## Barossa Film Club

Lonely Hearts, Australia, 1981.  
North by Northwest, USA, 1959.

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South Australia

## Port Lincoln Film Society

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South Australia

## Reels @ Wehl Film Society

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South Australia

## RiAus Film Society

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South Australia

## Southern Fleurieu Film Society

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South Australia

## Yankalilla & District Over 50s Film Club

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**We don't make movies to make money.**

**We make money to make more movies.**

Walt Disney

# Pearls of the Far East

Reviewed by Marilyn Martyn

**Origin:** Vietnam 2011

With contributions by film makers and actors from Vietnam, USA, Canada

**Duration** 103 minutes

**Category:** Drama / Romance

**Director:** Cuong Ngo

**Producers:** Igor Szczurko, Tom Yarith Ker, Cuong Ngo

**Based on:** Several stories by Minh Ngoc Nguyen (who also appears in the film)

**Screenwriter:** Matt Guerin

**Cinematographer:** Mikhail Petrenko

**Original Music:** Alexina Louie, Alex Pauk

## Featured actresses:

Truong Ngoc Anh (*The White Silk Dress*, 2006)

Nhu Quynh (*Vertical Ray of the Sun*, 2000)

Hong Anh (*Moon at the Bottom of the Well*, 2009)

Ngo Thanh Van (*The Clash*, 2010, *the Rebel*, 2007)

Minh Ngoc Nguyen

Kieu Chinh (*Joy Luck Club*, 1993).

**‘Pearls of the Far East’ is a visually stunning film.**

**It includes images and landscapes from the north to the south of Vietnam. The scenery is not what Westerners usually see!**

This film had amazing success at the Toronto *Reel Asian International Film Festival*.

With its beautiful scenery as a backdrop, the stories of seven women who span different generations are told. Their inner lives and forbidden loves are explored intelligently and sympathetically.

For me the complexity and history of Vietnamese society as it unfolded through this poetic masterpiece intrigued and delighted.

Dialogue is kept to a minimum and each story is incredibly moving. The musical score is beautifully interwoven with each characters’ emotions.

Members from a couple of Film Societies viewed this film and we were all equally dazzled by its beauty and we all had empathy with the characters.

Our collective score for it was:  
4.7 stars (out of 5).

I recommend this film as both a stunning visual and emotional experience.



## Director Cuong Ngo talks about his film

(From various sources including *LiveWithCulture.ca*)

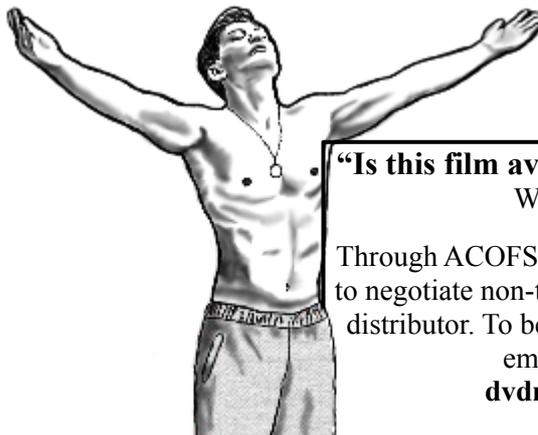
“In this film I want to explore the inner world of human desire to love and to be loved”

“This film is about my desire for utopia.

After the war in 1975, Vietnam was a Third World country, very poor. And I wished my country could be beautiful, that the people could be beautiful, that I could speak the language of beauty. That’s my dream and I put everything into this film.”

“I love inner dialogue ... and in this film I use music as a language for the characters.”

“I really want an audience to see ... Vietnam portrayed like this by a Vietnamese director.”



## “Is this film available for my Film Society?”

We’re working on it!

Through ACOFS, the Federation is currently trying to negotiate non-theatrical screening rights with the distributor. To be notified of developments please email Susan Davidson:

[dvdrights@acofs.org.au](mailto:dvdrights@acofs.org.au)

# Update on Film Society Rules (Part 2)

By Ian Davidson

Still wondering how and when you will meet *Consumer Affairs Victoria's* new requirements for incorporated associations?

The situation is simply stated in the Consumer Affairs Victoria letter sent to all incorporated associations (or groups) in October 2012 and in follow-up items on their website.

On 26<sup>th</sup> November 2012 the "Associations Reform Act 2012" replaced the "Associations Incorporation Act 1981" and all incorporated associations are expected to meet the new requirements in due course.

If a group uses their own rules (as opposed to the *Consumer Affairs Victoria* Model rules), these continue to be valid. But once it is decided to make any change, the rules must also address every item required under the new Act.

In the meantime, if there is an inconsistency between the group's existing rules and the new Act, the requirements of the new Act apply.

These new requirements can be found on the Consumer Affairs website ([www.consumer.vic.gov.au/forms](http://www.consumer.vic.gov.au/forms)). For your convenience we also listed them in the last ReelNews and also on the FVFS Information Sheet 27 available from [www.fvfs.org.au](http://www.fvfs.org.au).

If your group uses the Consumer Affairs model rules the new rules will automatically replace the old rules from 26<sup>th</sup> November 2013.

Until 26<sup>th</sup> November 2013 the fee for adopting model rules has been waived and the fee for an association changing their own rules has been halved to \$75.20. If you use your own rules they must meet all the requirements stipulated by the new Act. After 26<sup>th</sup> November 2013 the normal fees will apply (see the Consumer Affairs website for details).

In Summary:

1. If you use your own rules, you don't have to do anything, and those rules will continue to apply until such time that you decide to amend them, but then they will need to meet ALL the requirements of the new Act.
2. If you use the Consumer Affairs model rules, you don't have to do anything, and they will automatically be replaced by the new rules on 26<sup>th</sup> November 2013.
3. If you do need to upgrade your own rules, doing so by 26<sup>th</sup> November 2013 will be cheaper.
4. If you currently use your own rules but the new Consumer Affairs model rules do suit you, adopting them before 26<sup>th</sup> November 2013 will be free.
5. If you do decide to change your rules your group may either: (Quoted from Consumer Affairs website instructions):
  - a. Notify [Consumer Affairs] that a special resolution has been passed to accept adoption of the model rules, or
  - b. Apply for approval to change [your] rules (after passing a special resolution) and [Consumer Affairs] approves that request."
6. The FVFS recommends that if they suit your group, you adopt the Consumer Affairs model rules as soon as possible, and also prepare some Standing Resolutions to interpret the rules for your group and spell out associated procedural matters. Standing Resolutions do not need to be submitted to Consumer Affairs but will, of course, need to be approved by your AGM.

The FVFS has prepared some sample Standing Resolutions for you to consider. (See page 6)

## **Urgent and Yet ... Ironic Add ReelNews to your Allowable Email Addresses!**

It has been brought to our attention that spam filters might be blocking delivery of *ReelNews* to some members. This creates something of a quandary for us at *ReelNews*, since putting a notice in *ReelNews* won't be seen by the very people who need to be told to add the *ReelNews* e-mail address to their allowed addresses in their email application. Nevertheless, here is the notice, useless as it might be.

# Sample Standing Resolutions to match the Consumer Affairs Victoria Model Rules for Incorporation

The following resolutions are to be read in conjunction with the Consumer Affairs Model Rules, and together constitute the rules of the .....Film Society, Inc.

Standing resolutions can be changed only at a General Meeting of the society in accordance with the appropriate procedures for dealing with special resolutions, as prescribed in the Model Rules.

1. A completed application form constitutes a formal application to become a member of the film society. (Ref Model rule 9)
2. At each meeting of the committee a list of membership applications received since the last meeting is to be presented to the committee for ratification. And the fact is to be recorded in the minutes. (Ref Model rules 10 and 11)
3. The society annual membership ticket is sufficient to advise the applicant of their successful application to join the society, and constitutes a receipt of payment. (Ref Model rule 10)
4. A member is still regarded as a member until 12 months after membership is due, but their rights (admission to screenings, right to vote, newsletter) are suspended until membership payment has been made. (Ref Model rule 12). After 12 months they are taken to have resigned. (Model rule 17)
5. The film society recognises Full members, Concession members and Life members only. (Ref Model rule 14)
6. Nominations for election to all positions on the committee must be called for in sufficient time for nominations to be received at least 7 days prior to the meeting at which the elections are to be held. (Ref Model rule 51)
7. At the AGM the meeting decides:
  - a. The fees for the forthcoming year and when they are due.(Ref Model rule 12)
  - b. The office bearers for the next year. (Ref Model rule 51)
  - c. The number of general committee needed and who they are. (Ref Model rule 53)
8. The treasurer is permitted to use EFT (Electronic funds transfer) for payments on behalf of the society for any amount previously approved by the committee for payment.
9. The treasurer may expend funds on behalf of the society (including by EFT) up to \$100 without requiring prior approval from the committee for each item for which funds are expended. (Ref Model rule 69 (3))
10. The treasurer may maintain a cash float provided that all money paid to or from the float is accurately recorded at the time of the transaction. (Ref Model rule 69 (6))

Ian Davidson  
July 2013

## New Info Sheets

There are three new information sheets on the FVFS website:

Info Sheet 25 – feedback using the Starbox  
Info Sheet 26 – shopping for technology  
Info Sheet 17-9 V2 – StarBox scores for films screened in 2012

# Star Box Ratings

StarBox results received since Issue 98 - Mar 2013

Send your StarBox results to [starbox@fvfs.org.au](mailto:starbox@fvfs.org.au) - See what others are screening at [www.fvfs.org.au/ideas](http://www.fvfs.org.au/ideas)

DVD Title	Film Society		DVD Title	Film Society	
Cinema Paradiso	Southern Fleurieu FS	5.0	Of Gods and Men	Croydon FS	4.0
Cinema Paradiso	Myrtleford FS	4.9	Separation, A	Portland FS	3.9
Pearls of the Far East	FVFS Review Panel	4.7	Robot and Frank	Warburton Film Festival	3.9
Kite Runner, The	LV Film Society	4.7	Door, The	Yarra Ranges Healesville	3.9
Intouchables, The	Whitehorse FS	4.7	I Wish	Warburton Film Festival	3.8
First Grader, The	Warburton Film Festival	4.6	Women on the 6 <sup>th</sup> Floor	Goulburn Valley FC	3.8
Last Dance	Warburton Film Festival	4.5	Separation, A	Goulburn Valley FC	3.7
Separation, A	IFG	4.5	Shadow Dancer	Warburton Film Festival	3.7
Castle, The	Murrindindi FS	4.4	Havre, Le	Croydon FS	3.7
Separation, A	St Andrews FS	4.4	Romantics Anonymous	Horsham FS	3.7
On the Waterfront	Murrindindi FS	4.4	Bernie	Goulburn Valley FC	3.6
Marley	St Andrews FS	4.3	Broken Embraces	Camberwell FS	3.5
Monsieur Lazhar	Croydon FS	4.3	Alamar	IFG	3.5
Tale of Ruby Rose, The	IFG	4.3	Kid With a Bike	Goulburn Valley FC	3.5
Artist, The	Myrtleford FS	4.3	Wish You Were Here	Portland FS	3.4
Royal Affair, A	Whitehorse FS	4.3	5 Shorts by Clayton Jacobson	Myrtleford FS	3.4
Incendies	Whitehorse FS	4.3	Lore	Goulburn Valley FC	3.4
Bill Cunningham New York	Southern Fleurieu FS	4.3	Maltese Falcon, The	Croydon FS	3.3
Love Serenade	Southern Fleurieu FS	4.3	Door, The	Yarra Ranges Warburton	3.2
Cosi	Murrindindi FS	4.2	Vertigo	Yarra Ranges Warburton	3.0
Twin Sisters	Yarra Ranges Warburton	4.2	Elena	Croydon FS	3.0
Twin Sisters	Yarra Ranges Healesville	4.2	Beasts of the Southern Wild	Warburton Film Festival	3.0
Missing in the Land of Gods	Warburton Film Festival	4.2	Goodfellas	Southern Fleurieu FS	3.0
Hugo	Whitehorse FS	4.2	To Rome with Love	Portland FS	3
Driving Miss Daisy	Camberwell FS	4.1	Melancholia	Croydon FS	2.9
Lust for Life	Murrindindi FS	4.1	Norwegian Wood	Croydon FS	2.9
Artist, The	Croydon FS	4.1	Vertigo	Yarra Ranges Healesville	2.8
Salute	Camberwell FS	4.1	Take this Waltz	IFG	2.8
About Elly	Warburton Film Festival	4.1	Around the Boree Log	Myrtleford FS	2.5
Midnight in Paris	Whitehorse FS	4.1	Elena	Horsham FS	2.4
My Week with Marilyn	Whitehorse FS	4			

## Free Website Services For Film Societies!

Get your Film Society its very own free, beautiful, easy-to-manage website!  
Groups already benefiting from this service include:

International Film Group, Barossa Film Club, Camberwell Film Society, Smart Girls Film Club, Old Scotch Film Society, Teddy Bobo Film Club, Gold Coast Film Study Group, Ferntree Gully Film Society, Taree Film Society, Valuers Film Society, Adelaide Film Study Group, and many more!

Brought to you by FiSMoTron (the *Institute for the Study & Advancement of the Film Society Movement, Inc.*)  
Contact Prodos. Phone: **03 9428 1234** or email [prodos@prodos.com](mailto:prodos@prodos.com)

# Film Society Veteran Passes Away

**Gordon Mitchell**, a stalwart for many years of both the **Ferntree Gully Film Society** and **FVFS**, has passed away, aged 89.

Gordon was involved with the revival of Ferntree Gully Film Society in 1958 and became their delegate to the FVFS in 1962. In 1963 he was elected to the organising committee for the **Melbourne Film Festival**, and in 1964 the Federation Executive.

Gordon served both bodies assiduously until the late 1970s. For the Federation his main involvement was in organising appraisal sessions for short films and he controlled this activity for about ten years from the time of his election to the executive.

The main centre of his activities, though, was with the Melbourne Film Festival where he would organise the hundred or so volunteers who staffed the Palais Theatre when the Festival was organised totally by the FVFS.

Gordon was also the Federation nominee who helped to establish the NFTA (National Film Theatre of Australia) in Victoria.

Gordon was a very private person who was totally dependable and after he stepped down from the Federation he was always willing to help out in Federation activities for many years. His expertise was often sought after because of his position with Kodak.

*John Turner*

## “Dress Circle” published by Ross Adams \$25 per year. Four issues per year.

This “Little Titan” of a magazine in A5 size, comes out absolutely jam-packed with over 70 pages of information, ideas, & resources. Includes articles on: historic cinemas, profiles of film industry personalities, technical how-to articles, reviews of books & films. Features a “Trader” section where you can advertise “for sale” or “wanted” items. Offers an Events Diary, interesting Film Society news, and movie world news. It's gigantic!

Ross will include screenings from any film society and has offered a free sample to any film society that asks.

To subscribe or find out more  
Phone **02 6353 1897** or Email [lawsonco@vic.chariot.net.au](mailto:lawsonco@vic.chariot.net.au)

# Are You Missing Out On Free Publicity?

You have no doubt noticed that we publish a list of what is screening across the film society circuit in each edition. This has proved to be one of the most popular items in ReelNews.

Unfortunately not all film societies send us their annual programmes or monthly newsletters. We really would like to publicize what your film society is screening, so please send us an email with your upcoming screenings. Not only does it let others know what you are showing, but the list can also be helpful when you are planning your next year's programme. If a number of film societies have screened a particular film it can be a good indication that it could be worth considering for your screenings. You can also check its StarBox rating elsewhere in ReelNews, another good indicator of suitability. Of course, this relies on all societies having a StarBox and submitting their scores once the film has been screened. (See Information Sheet No 25 for further information about StarBoxes.)

Another useful publicity tool is the Find Your Local Film Society listing on the FVFS website. If you have a website we can link to it from this page, so people can go straight from the listing to see what your film society is doing. However, it is imperative that you keep your website up-to-date. (I have noticed several websites are out of date, or the links no longer work.) If you need help to do this, or would like to set up your own website contact Prodos.

*Susan Davidson*

## John Arkins Reports on the St Kilda Film Festival Showing at Camperdown

This winter the "St Kilda Film Festival Touring Highlights", featuring some of the short films from the St. Kilda Film Festival, travelled to nine different country towns. In June I attended a showing hosted by Corangamite Film Society.

Held in the Theatre Royal in Camperdown – a wonderful 1900's building, only recently refurbished - the Festival's tour was an interesting mix of shorts shown in two sessions, with some of the animated ones being quite engaging.

I must point out that the second session had films that were much darker than the first. However there were two that I enjoyed.

The first film, "Briagolong Characters: Greg Dunsmuir" by Rod McMillan, about a resident of Briagolong, was most interesting in its topic and its history.

The last film called "Julian" is an international award-winning short and has a wonderful last line. It is worth consideration by any film society.

Simon Buccheri, the president of the Corangamite Film Society, welcomed over 100 guests to the showing of the films. He also welcomed all visitors, including the FVFS representatives, and pointed out the important supporting role of the FVFS for all film societies.

Corangamite Film Society provided a most pleasant environment and a sumptuous supper, and is to be congratulated on a well-run film showing and an enjoyable evening.

For Information on Corangamite Film Society please contact  
Simon Buccheri, President  
Corangamite Film Society  
PO Box 89  
Camperdown VIC 3260  
Ph: 0412 943 799

# On Choosing Films

Recently **Ian Davidson** received an email request for advice on how to choose films for screenings. We think Ian's reply might be of interest to our readers:

Everyone seems to do it a bit differently.

At Whitehorse we initially seek suggestions from everyone, but mainly the committee, and compile a "long list" of suggestions and possible titles. There may be as many as 200 in this list.

I then do a quick check of all titles to see that I can purchase the DVD if chosen, and I determine the likely rights owners for each of them. If I fail on either count then we defer the suggestion to next year.

Then in early August a subcommittee of 3 - 4 get together and discuss every suggested film, look at reviews or the trailer if we know nothing about it (Trailers are available for most titles through imdb), and come up with a short list of around 80 titles.

This list is then given to every member to tick their choices before being handed back for analysis by the sub-committee.

In late September the subcommittee compiles the results and determines the top 20 titles from the feedback received, but then modifies that list to include some "unknowns" that we want to include, and promoting some that "should have" scored better.

We also ensure that we have a balanced programme considering genre, language, country, topic etc. Maybe one doco and one older film, but discarding any that upset the balance.

We then have to decide when to screen the 19 films to be most useful for promoting and selling to our members as "a package".

Our final list is of 19 films, 2 in most months, which we then seek rights for and purchase straight away.

**Editor's Note:** How does your film society choose films? Let us know by e-mail and we'll pass the info on to our readers. [ReelNews@FVFS.org.au](mailto:ReelNews@FVFS.org.au)

## Something to Chew On?

*Speaking of Ian Davidson and emails, Ian sent us a nice little story. He had gotten an email thanking him for a StarBox, but saying that the only trouble had been that the film society members who hadn't read the StarBox notice were disappointed to find that the tokens on the table were for voting, not free white chocolate buttons.*

*Ian replied: "Yes, we have also found that it does not pay to have lollies out for the members to chew on at the same table as the voting box. We found a number of musk lollies used to cast a vote once, and I truly hope that no voting tokens were eaten!"*

**Drama is life  
with the dull bits  
cut out.**

Alfred Hitchcock

# 16mm: A Passion for the Mechanical & Artistic Genius of Mankind

PRODOS interviews ROGER SECCOMBE on the vital importance of 16mm film to the Film Society Movement. This is an edited, highly condensed transcript of a phone interview recorded on July 22 2013.

**PRODOS:** I maintain that the Film Society Movement – as a Movement – as a widespread phenomenon across Australia and internationally -- really began with 16mm film. Am I right?

**ROGER SECCOMBE:** In Australia 16mm was terribly important -- as it was overseas -- in allowing people to set up Film Societies. The problem, initially, was that the (commercial) 35mm exhibitors were not terribly pleased at the idea of people running films unless they were running them in registered cinemas.

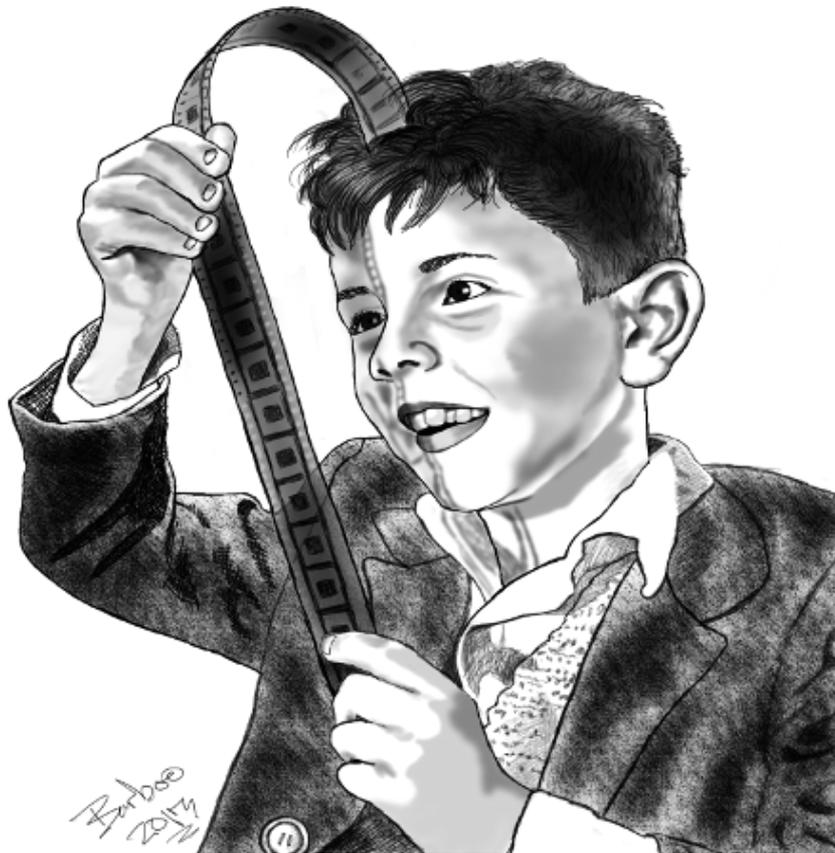
16mm was a means of breaking the stranglehold that the commercial distributors and exhibitors had over the use of film for whatever purpose the Film Society wanted to use it.

However, the very first Film Society in Britain, in London in 1925, was on 35mm. Simply because there was no 16mm (yet available) [Note: 16mm had only just been invented & launched on the American market -- by the Eastman Kodak company -- in 1923]

Until 16mm came along Film Societies had a great struggle to survive. An example of that would be the first Film Society I ever joined -- at the tender age of 15: The *Realist Film Association*, which was a very strongly political Film Society.

**Had the commercial distributors not blocked the wider use of the 35mm format would the 16mm revolution have happened anyway?**

It would have in America, I believe. Because the *Bell & Howell* company and *Kodak* and several other smaller companies were incredibly focused on the idea of bringing in a new format for the Amateur filmmaker. In particular, a non-flammable "safety" film. [Note: Early nitrate based 35mm film was highly flammable] One that you could use in your own living room. In America, 16mm was going to be "The Amateur Gauge".



*Bell & Howell*, and *Kodak* and other camera makers were very keen to promote it for the well-heeled American traveller to take on his travels around the world or around America. It was introduced to provide the Amateur with a reliable, safe film to make his little home movies on.

The Film Society Movement recognised its value to them -- but that was only afterwards.

In America, however, as you've said to me yourself (*elsewhere*), the Film Society Movement didn't evolve the same sort of vibrancy, historically, that it did -- say in England.

**So the impetus for developing the 16mm format was commercial -- American companies thought there was a market for amateur film users!**

Then close on the heels of that came the recognition that if they then made releases of maybe commercial or other non-commercial film for this market they could encourage home movie shows as well.

Then the idea of film libraries developed to provide the Amateur with programme material to augment their own home movies.

This then spread rapidly to France, to England, all over the place.

All this early development had nothing to do with Film Societies, as such, but to do with the Amateur.

**Some of the greatest inventors, innovators, entrepreneurs, etc. began as so-called "Amateurs". And isn't the Film Society Movement itself a movement of "Amateurs" -- in the finest sense of the word?**

Yes! They're "lovers" of the medium of film. [Note: The word "amateur" comes from the French, meaning "lover of"]

And of course the early filmmakers -- so many of the feature directors -- began as Amateur filmmakers who loved filmmaking so much themselves that they made their own short films in order to try and break into the industry.

Back as a kid myself, when I started making films, when I went to the University, I bought myself a camera and started shooting films of my own. I was very much an Amateur filmmaker (hoping to) break into the film industry once I'd left the University.

**Was the home cinema trying to emulate the commercial cinema?**

Oh, absolutely. Many people took it really seriously. They saw it as their way of running a cinema. Not just running a film or two, but running a true programme of films! In presenting films to an audience, and trying to encourage them to get as much out of it as possible.

**Were you dissatisfied with the Realists?**

I was disillusioned. I was dissatisfied in some ways because their commitment was to run certain types of films. Not a breadth of films but only certain types. Very then-radical Socialist films and I knew there were just so many other films that I would like to see as well -- and I thought they could have



run as well. But of course they wouldn't.

**Why not?**

Well, every film had to be part of their ideology - part of the reason why they existed.

I got frustrated because after a while I thought "No, I've seen enough of those sort of films. There's other ones I want to see." By now I was at the University and joined the Melbourne University Film Society.

Suddenly the whole world seemed to be open to me!

No longer was it films presenting one ideology. It was films made by all sorts of filmmakers from all around the world. They were films from the very earliest years of the cinema.

This, to me, became the epitome of the sort of Film Society that should be the standard -- which would show films drawn from the whole life of the Cinema and package them in such a way that people got more from the films.

**There's nothing wrong with an ideologically oriented Film Society, is there?**

No! I just felt that I wanted to see so many other films that they wouldn't show.

**I know it's a sensitive issue, but I'd appreciate your opinion on ACMI (Australian Centre for the Moving Image) weighing up whether or not to dump its 16mm collection.**

ACMI inherited the enormous collection that the State Film Centre had built up over so many years -- from the end of the 1940's. I mean they built up an incredible collection which, at its height, was regarded as one of the world's best collections of non-theatrical film.

The aim was education. The aim was instruction. The aim was enlightenment. The State Film Centre was (taxpayer) funded to acquire these works for the people of Victoria.

It was designed to be an incredibly important resource ... not for entertainment, not at all.

That was never part of its aim at all.

It was for instruction, for enlightenment, for education.

And they acquired a vast amount from overseas as well through the British Film Institute and through other sources. At its height the library was an amazing resource.

### **Did many film societies rely on that archive?**

Yes, definitely for short films. Not (so much) for features because, while they did always have a collection of some particularly outstanding examples -- such as (1922 silent documentary) *Nanook of the North* by Robert J. Flaherty, and some War time features, that was not their primary aim. Their primary aim was the short film.

They assembled this vast collection largely for supporting programmes. They were for groups that wanted to run maybe a programme of shorts. Maybe to study animation ... they had an amazing collection of animation -- (spanning) the history of animation. They had Norman McClaren stuff and they had a lot of Canadian stuff, they had a lot of material.

(When programming, Film Societies could) team up an early short by a famous filmmaker with a feature that that filmmaker then later went on and made.

Particularly in the British part of the collection -- there were a lot of early short films made by budding British filmmakers. For instance, by Karel Reisz -- a number of his short films were in the collection.

So if you wanted to run a feature made by him or Lindsay Anderson for example, you could find maybe a couple of the shorts he made as an amateur or as a semi-amateur, and team them with a feature that he later made like "If" or whatever. There was all sorts of potential to use the collection creatively as part of a Film Society's learning process, its film study process.

### **Why hasn't your film society, Plaza Cinema Group "upgraded" to DVD?**

The reason we're still on film is, I suppose, the primary one: Because to me these films were all made *as* films.

### **An important point!**

Even if you've got an old print it is still, to me, closer to the original film than even the best DVD.

The "film look" is something that's very real. I spend my life making films so I feel I know what the film look is. It's not the "digital look".

We've got a very great friend of ours at one of the

main distributors in Melbourne. **Craig Blencoe** is a terrific guy. He's at **Chapel Distribution**.

Craig knows exactly what I mean.

### **What about films explicitly made for digital? Would that be a different scenario?**

If they're *made* for digital, of course.

### **Do you agree that DVD does have advantages?**

If your viewpoint is: "It's cheaper, it's easier, it's less hassle, we can get all the latest things" ... Okay.

The quality of DVDs can be excellent and with these super DVDs -- High Definition -- that are coming out, it's going to be even better again. That's one viewpoint.

The other viewpoint -- where I'm coming from is: I don't just want to run the latest film. I want to see films that go right back to the early days. I want to see films that are rare films, that are still available on film prints -- many of which are simply not available on DVD anywhere.

You check up *Leonard Maltin's Movie Guide*, for example, and you'll find that numbers of films -- famous films -- are still (not available) on DVD. Are we to say: "Who cares about those old films?"

I mentioned Craig at *Chapel Distribution* before. They now have acquired a large collection of classic RKO films. Many of them almost brand new prints which were struck for television. With a lot of these films, there's no DVDs of them at all around!

### **But hasn't it become just too hard to obtain and maintain 16mm machines?**

No, it's not too hard. The projectors are still around. Those projectors that the schools got rid of, they're still floating around. People are selling film projectors on the second-hand market. There's a superb *Bell & Howell* repair guy in Melbourne who's only a few kilometres away from where I live (Mitcham) who does all our repairs. He's a meticulous technician.

You can keep 16mm projectors going. Our youngest projectors are now probably close to 45 years old and still in marvellous condition!

### **Then how about 16mm users getting together to share knowledge, experience, resources? To support each other?**

Yes! ... "We can't get spare globes" ... "Our person who used to look after our equipment is unavailable, Can you tell me the name of someone else?" ...

“Has anyone got any projectors they're no longer using? Do they want to sell them to people who want them?” ... “Has anyone got any other equipment that might be useful?”

Or if a particular Society were to say, we only get our films from distributor X, someone else could point them to others they could try.

Perhaps prepare a list of all the distributors or sources people have been using. Maybe different 16mm Societies could even rate them. We could compare costs, and so on. People might begin to see that this notion that film is now impossible to deal with isn't right.

Because film *is* possible.

**If we just abandon 16mm there's no chance for another generation to discover it's value.**

When we were taking our travelling shows on the road -- which we did for twenty years -- we often had audiences with lots of kids in them. And the kids absolutely loved, at the interval, coming up and looking at the projectors and seeing how they were threaded up!

I remember one time this wide-eyed kid came up and stood there staring at the projector. I was threading up

one machine and something was running on the other one. And he was looking at it. He was looking at it from the front and then he was turning around and looking at the screen.

Suddenly, the penny dropped, and he realised that that pink colour coming out of the lense was the same pink that was on the screen! And the picture must be “in there” -- in that projector. The picture must be in there in order for it to end up on the screen.

He was so excited. He had to tell his mother he'd worked it out -- and he was so thrilled!

**He'd discovered ...**

The mechanical genius of man!

**Exactly!**

You can watch it all in operation. You can see how it works. And I think children need that. That's also why kids love steam trains. I'm convinced. They don't go and stare at a diesel. They stare at a steam train because there's steam coming out, there's the sounds of the boiler, there's all the controls, and there's the compressor working.

It's the mechanical genius of man that created something like the steam engine, that also created something like the film projector.

It was an amazing thing that (those pioneering inventors) could suddenly make all these little still images seem like *moving* images!

That they could create, from the stills: Movement!

Like they could create, from steam, the pressure of steam, they could create something that would move the train along. Again: Movement!

I see the genius of man in the film projector as I do in the steam engine.

**Beautifully put, Roger.**

**Thank you.**

