



The Australian Museum of Motion Picture Technology (Inc.)

NEWSLETTER

Edition Eighteen

November 2008

For a full colour, high quality copy of this newsletter, download from our website; www.ammpt.asn.au

The production path ahead

REPORT ON THE IBC 2008 CONFERENCE IN
AMSTERDAM by AMMPT & ACS member **Harry Smith**

Put simply it was a very successful event, with almost 50,000 attendees this year, 15,000 up on 2007. When one attends these exhibitions it is clear to see the speed at which technology is advancing.



I have been attending IBC for some twenty or so years (off & on) and have seen the advancement of film & video tape technology and all of its associated formats and standards. I can recall all of the **associated video & TV cameras using various tube** formats and sizes, and all of their associated problems, I can also recall the nightmares we had with tube alignments registration, and with on location set ups and alignments etc.

"All of this technology has now gone". Virtually all of the television cameras on display were now using High Definition CCD technology from full size studio cameras to camera heads being manufactured as small as a little finger and costing as much as \$50,000.00 or more.

It appears too that **video tapes are virtually finished**; with solid state recording media taking over, and with almost all of the manufacturers now supporting solid state media in one way or another. From Panasonic with P2 cards – now up to 128GB, Sony with Videostick and CF cards up to 64GB and their HD disc format up to 54GB.

Most manufacturers are also using SD-MMC cards up to 32GB, with new file formats emerging all of the time to enable the use of the new media, and each manufacturer saying that this storage capacity will be double in the next couple of years.

This incredible storage capacity is just mind blowing when one considers solid state technology of only a few years ago. I think it started with 8mb on a MMC card. Several other storage formats are slowly emerging which were also on display.

Cathode ray tubes too were few and far between; Sony were still displaying a couple of high end models, but virtually every manufacturer is now producing High Definition LCD panels for precision monitoring, studio and media display. Every display was featuring this technology, which is now all being manufactured to the latest full High Definition standards 1920 x 1080; this is twice the picture resolution of 10 years ago.

Sound too has taken a huge leap from the old formats of either mono or stereo, we now have surround sound with almost all of the production recordings in 5 to 1 or 7 to 1.

The TV studio is also becoming extinct.

The virtual studio appears to be taking the world by storm and was well represented; it appears to be becoming the norm. Here a green or blue screen background can be placed behind a newsreader, presenter or performer, and a background can be imported from virtually anywhere. For example any city in the world can be superimposed or keyed behind a newsreader from say a laptop with either still or moving images, or even a webcam. The presenter can then make you believe he is there, even although he may be in his lounge room studio, or his hotel room.



*Outside
Broadcast
vans of
the future
– in fact,
today!*



It's clear the computer has taken over.

Almost everything displayed now relies on the computer or computer generated images, whether it is in post production and editing, or in generating graphics and incredibly unbelievable effects. Even the humble telecine systems on display were doing incredible things to old movie films with the aid of computer technology, from removing scratches to colourizing, to producing incredible results in full high definition from **old 8mm, 9.5mm or 16mm films.**

Some **35mm and 70mm film telecine systems** were demonstrating the use of new LCD technology in frame by frame transfers with incredible results, some were displaying on huge monitoring screens to show the detail of the end results. The cost of these systems started around \$250,000.00 up to perhaps \$1 million.



One true highlight of the IBC event was a first release film showing of the newly released "Journey to the Centre of the Earth"; it was

introduced by the Director of the film with a question and answer session following the presentation. This film was shot entirely in **High Definition 3D** and was literally awesome when displayed on the full size theatre screen in 3D with dolby 3D surround sound.

Some of the manufacturers were also displaying breakthrough technology with 3D television for the home theatre. Philips in particular was promoting this technology. I was also impressed by another display of surround television which uses 3 video projectors, one projecting to the front, one angled to the left and the other one angled to the right into wide U shaped half wrap around surround screen. This was a true panoramic experience with television. (*Ed's note: Son of Cinerama!!*)



Another system being promoted was the futuristic **Super High Definition 3840 x 2016 TV system with 22 channels of sound**; this has been manufactured

by NHK of Japan, but it has since been offered as a prototype to the BBC and various other European TV Channels. Initially it was believed that it would be impossible to transmit such a high definition format, but with no expense spared, NHK purchased time on two European satellites to prove it. It was demonstrated with a transmission from Turin in Italy to IBC in Amsterdam. They had to use the two satellites to accommodate the bandwidth necessary, but the transmission and reception was perfect.

A couple of other items grabbed my interest:

One American manufacturer who won a "Best of IBC Show Award" has designed a Flash/Nano portable HD drive unit that accommodates at least 4 and possibly up to 8 interchangeable standard size CF flash memory cards; it can record completely lossless XD Cam HD for example, or in almost all of the formats currently in use; it outputs in SDI or firewire with various other interface options available.

Using a Firewire-800 Compact Flash Reader (such as the Lexar) you can play files directly off the CF card, without re-wrap or transcode. Just pop the CF card out of the Flash XDR, drop it into the reader and double click on the file for playback!

This unit will shortly be available in Australia through Redback Designs.



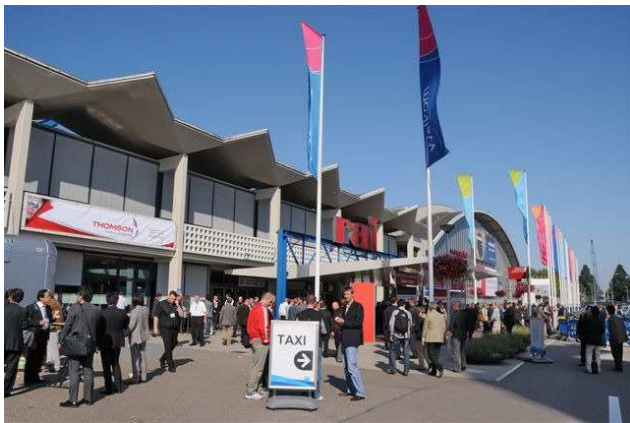
Australian company, MILLER received a lot of interest in its innovative camera support systems.

Focus Enhancements another manufacturer was also demonstrating their full HD storage formats using a newly designed compact high capacity 250GB hard disc drive, this enables quick and easy access for direct editing on P.C. or laptop. Storage was originally limited to 60GB on their first generation units, but capacities are now emerging with up to 320GB – equating to endless hours of uninterrupted recording in full HD 1920 x 1080.

These hard disc drives have been designed with inbuilt rechargeable batteries and are being supplied in a cradle to clip either on the back of, or underneath the camera. Focus Enhancements which has been on the market for a couple of years interfaces to almost all file formats, whereas Citidisk and others emerging are still limited only to the mov. file format.



Interfacing all of these new digital and electronic formats with the old analogue formats has long been a problem for me, and is a problem now facing many of us in the industry. This problem may now have been partially overcome by an innovative new company with an impressive display of interfacing and patching options - Blackmagic Design. They have been working hard to design and create a huge array of options - all very economically priced.



Whilst there were many other excellent and impressive displays from the worlds media and broadcast manufacturers it is impossible to comment on everything in a short overview. However, from my point of view it was a very successful event and well worth the expense and the trip.

Time just escapes you everyday; the size of this event is now enormous, it was impossible to see everything that was on display in these 12 huge halls at the RAI Centre.

Harry Smith. Member AMMPT, ACS & SMPTE

Contact Harry on harry@wharfdale.com.au

Message not getting through?

Are you a Member, or know of others who are not receiving Newsletters, notices of meetings or other events? It may be because we have not been notified of any change of postal address or new email details. With a growing Membership it is difficult to follow up all bounced emails or enquire about members we have not seen for some time. Please check with the Membership Secretary Eddie Mills Ph: 9447 4531, Email edmills@optusnet.com.au to ensure your current details are on our database.



Cinema Equipment research book completed.

An extensive research project by Richard Ashton on the chronology of Australian cinema equipment manufacturers, Cummings & Wilson and the Raycophone companies has now been completed and a book produced. Richard reports;

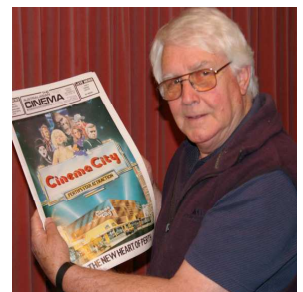
The collection and chronology from the pictures and articles from Everyones and Film Weekly magazines has been finished. It ended up with 350 pages and is quite a tome. It details the history of the Cummings & Wilson Company. Also that of the Raycophone company, founded by Ray Allsop including the development of Australian movie sound.

I started collecting information while I was holidaying in Sydney two years ago, during which I visited the Mitchell Library. They had a collection of Film Weekly and Everyones magazines on micro-film. We have since been able to get more micro-films from NFSA in Canberra which has greatly helped with the finishing of the project.

The story starts in 1922 with the manufacture of the first C&W projector of which some just under 300 were made by the time of the introduction of "talkies" into theatres in 1929. Then follows the introduction of the Raycophone Portable in 1932, when the two companies combined to make the very successful P5 model. The Raycophone battles with the mighty Western Electric and RCA sound companies are also documented.

In 1938 Cummings & Wilson made and installed their 1200th projector, not only with Raycophone sound heads but with all the major sound head manufacturers. By the end of 1939 the tenth anniversary of the Raycophone company, many popular newly made J3's were installed right around Australia, and 383 equipments were running in Australian theatres. During the World War 2 both companies made much precision military equipment including aircraft searchlights.

Copies on DVD will be available to Members. Cost of making hard copies is beyond my resources at the moment. Contact me if you are interested. Work has started on the next book three which I have called Series 3, 1943 onward.



Above: Richard scours old trade mags for info.

Left: Photo from the Hood Collection at the Library of New South Wales with info : "Sound engineers fit Vitaphone Sound on Disc equipment for the "The Jazz Singer" at the Lyceum Theatre in Sydney in 1929". The sound head below the C&W projector suggests it may be one of the first sound-on-film heads made in 1928 by Raycophone???"

President's report to 2008 Annual General Meeting

Four years have passed since it was decided to do something about preserving what's left of our fast disappearing industry heritage. The exponential evolution of technical advances over the past few years suggests we may already be too late to fully document stories and locate some items from the very early years. However the growing interest being taken in our objectives indicates there is enthusiasm to address this previous oversight.

Reflecting on our path over the four years, it is interesting to note the successes and failures which have permitted us to refine our operations in line with realistic expectations. Initially conceived as a local project, it was soon realized that a national effort should be made after enquiries revealed nothing comparable had been established elsewhere. Registration with the ATO as a charitable body enhanced the chances of securing ongoing funding from diverse sources.

The enthusiasm of some of the original foundation Members was tempered with the realization of the procedures and disciplines required for museum related activities. With most being technical persons this became a bit of a culture shock and a few fell by the wayside, rather than make a commitment to the long haul ahead. One of the first changes made was to redress the problem of our registered name, which suggested we were primarily focused on the cinema and motion picture industry. It was realized that as the film based cinema industry was in the process of going electronic, we should embrace all forms of moving images and include the television and related industries as part of the ever evolving technology. This would be the area where future Members of AMMPT are likely to emerge and keep our project alive.

Attempts to establish regional branches met with little success, however considerable numbers of interested parties attended the initial meetings. Understandably, most elected to adopt a wait and see approach before committing themselves to forming a local regional branch. Thankfully a number of key people who attended those meetings elected to join the AMMPT Western Region branch till such time as activity could be established in their area. One of those, Butch Calderwood, editor of the ACS magazine, *Australian Cinematographer*, has assisted us by running articles from our newsletter in his magazine, thereby informing the large Australian and overseas readership of our existence. The initial lack of numbers to form regional branches proved to be a blessing in disguise. It enabled us time to put ideas into practice in Perth, thereby identifying areas of strength and weakness in our structure. We now have a proven workable concept to assist other branches as they eventually come on stream. We are now better placed with a proven format for progress, and a growing list of Corporate members and sponsors to again attempt establishing other regional branches. This will be a priority for 2009.

To gain the skills necessary required in the diverse facets of museum operations, Members have been attending courses in materials conservation, collection cataloguing and oral history techniques. These have been funded by grants from Lotterywest via Museums Australia. Significant funding had also been provided by local government and government entities, TV stations etc to support public displays and events which have further enhanced our community profile.

Membership has shown a slow but steady increase of those who are prepared to materially assist. This resulted in several Committee positions changing hands during the past year to accommodate individuals' areas of expertise and job satisfaction. Some of the more elderly Members have commented that they feel they are not contributing enough to our project due to limited mobility or health reasons. They can be assured that the very fact they have joined as a Member, their annual subs of which assist with administration expenses etc., is adequate contribution without even considering the wealth of knowledge they offer to the organization of the very early days of the industry.

During the year our Treasurer Peter Foyster has designed and set up an administration data base which has greatly improved our efficiency and will permit national access to nominated office bearers of all new branches as they are established. We are also discussing with the makers of the Mosaic cataloguing software system on ways we can have that software available to all regions via similar technology.

Storage of the growing collection has been, and will continue to be a priority, especially in uncertain financial times ahead. Fortunately we have been able to find suitable temporary space, and with the purchase of a shipping container this year, we keep one step ahead of the ultimate problem. Fortunately funding for this and other acquisitions has been made easier with the growing returns from our monthly film screenings at the Cygnet cinema, which to date this year, have returned in excess of \$4000.00.

While there will always be a conflict of interest in those Members who are also collectors in their own right, efforts are being made to clarify lines of demarcation to ensure their private activities do not disadvantage AMMPT's objectives. This will be important as we develop a collaborative relationship with the many private collectors around Australia, as well as established statutory entities involved in preserving our industries' heritage. We anticipate working with them and other industry and related craft groups in the future.

We can look forward to 2009 with renewed confidence and with a dedicated team that has proven itself prepared for the challenges ahead.

From the Research dept.

A major factor in determining where we are at, also where we are heading, is having a knowledge and appreciation of where we have come from. This is the focus of AMMPT's research team who are charged with reminding the current and future generations of events, people and entities who have played a significant role in the evolution of the Australian moving image industries. This involves searching through old personal diaries, scrap books and trade journals to uncover items that would possibly have been forgotten.



A story in the March 28th 1946 edition of *Film Weekly* was recently found, advising the industry of the formation of a group known as the Australian Cinematographers Society. This seemed strange, as the ACS as we know it today celebrated its 50th anniversary this year. Enquiries with some current members of long standing with the ACS were equally perplexed.

Reading the text it became obvious that a group of pioneer cinematographers decided soon after WW2 to set up an organisation modeled on the American Society of Cinematographers. To date we have been unable to determine the exact where and when of the meeting, who was involved, and why it

eventually folded. Perhaps there are people out there who can help fill in the missing details.

Recent events

Members received some practical instruction in metals preservation at the RAAF Association Aviation Museum by workshop supervisor Graham Cotterell.



Cameramen Form Own Society

“NOT A UNION”

SYDNEY . Monday: Nine Australian cameramen have formed the Australian Cinematographers' Society, a non-sectarian, non-political, non-profit-making body which the Constitution states, “is not a union and never will be a union”.

Objects of the ACS are to unite first-class Australian cinematographers for their mutual benefit and the industry's benefit as a whole. The Society will also seek to establish a reputation so high that it will ultimately be common knowledge that if a cinematographer is a member of the Society he must of necessity be one of the most skilful in Australia. The Society hopes that such a reputation will provide an incentive to other cinematographers to increase their proficiency that they will be entitled to membership.

No person is entitled to membership unless he is considered unanimously to be sufficiently proficient in the art of cinematography, “and his integrity is such that his membership could not in any way reflect disadvantageously upon the Society”. Membership is by invitation after unanimous agreement of other members.

The Society may resolve to suspend any member if in the opinion is unanimous that such person has been guilty of conduct prejudicial to the Society's reputation; if he is no longer earning his living as a cinematographer; or his skill has deteriorated that he is considered no longer worth of membership.

President and Secretary are elected for one year. Annual subscription is one Guinea but this may be increased to a maximum of five guineas. Monthly meetings will be held.

The Constitution gives members the privilege of using the letters A.C.S after their names and they are urged to insist on the use of such letters on screen credits.

Ed's note: One possible reason for the demise of the fledging society was its modeling on the American counterpart, which could have been considered "elitist" by Australian standards. The success of the current ACS has been in part due to its Constitution encouraging aspiring cinematographers into its ranks with the free interchange of ideas between members with all levels of experience. Also noted is its Constitution's inability to foresee the day when women would take up and excel at the craft.

Research into an industry that was predominantly located on the east coast is inefficient when carried out from the other side of the continent. AMMPT urgently needs at least one branch to be established in this area to have people on the ground able to follow up local leads to put together fast disappearing pieces of the jigsaw. Our contact details are on the inside back page.

Footnote: Ron Johanson A.C.S. from Queensland has just been elected the Federal President of the A.C.S..

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

**SCHOLARS AND ARTISTS IN RESIDENCE AT
THE NATIONAL FILM AND SOUND ARCHIVE**

The National Film and Sound Archive (NFSA) invites research proposals from audiovisual industry and archive professionals, academics, performers and artists, to draw fresh, innovative perspectives from the national audiovisual collection. Fellows will use the NFSA's collection to create a new sound or moving image work, a publication, an exhibit, a live audiovisual event or a combination of these and other approaches.

The Fellowships offer specially facilitated access and research into the national collection; close collaboration with NFSA curatorial and technical experts; access to the Library; modern accommodation; and a fully equipped work space provided on-site.

APPLY NOW FOR 2009

Applications for the Fellowships are due by 14th November 2008. For further information and application forms, visit <http://www.nfsa.gov.au/sar> or contact Belinda Hunt at belinda.hunt@nfsa.gov.au Ph. +61 2 6248 2256

Ed's Note: The terms "scholars" and "artists in residence" are foreign to most technical people who are working or have worked in the moving image industry. As such, there are many who would not identify with opportunities offered by the grant. Our enquiries with the NFSA reveal the grant embraces projects by individuals or entities that would ultimately dovetail into the objectives of the Archive. It involves relocation to Canberra for the duration of the grant.

Educators at large

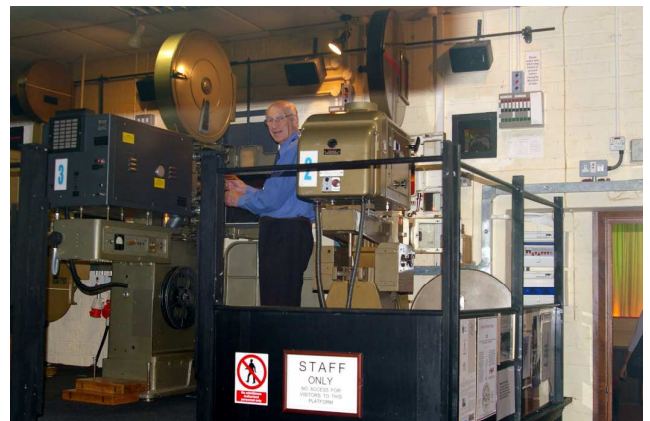
Concern has been expressed at some of the younger generation entering our industry who have no concept of its beginning or how the current technology has evolved. It is important that these people have access to knowledge of the industry's heritage and also are familiar with the operation of earlier models of equipment. Consideration is being given to offering the educators at various media and similar courses, AMMPT members who are prepared to pass on their knowledge of our history so students have more pride in the industry they are entering.

Kindred entities

Since AMMPT was established there has been the increasing realisation of the value of forming professional relationships with kindred entities. Not only on the local front with community, State and Federal museums and Archives, but overseas organisations who share the same objectives. It also allows exposure to new ideas and to gain extra knowledge of disciplines and procedures usually only gained by long experience in the museum sector.

In August the President and his wife were on holidays in Europe and used the geographical proximity to hop over (or under) the Channel to visit the Projected Picture Trust (PPT), with whom we had previously set up contact. The following day, a trip to Bradford and the National media Museum to experience how significant government investment can provide a world class facility.

Details of the PPT were provided by George Robinson in the July-August 2007 edition 14 of our newsletter after he and Jane returned from a visit to the UK. This time the same hospitality was offered by PPT Curator Ken Draper and his wife Joan, the visitors being given an extensive tour of their facilities including the Enigma cinema, their display gallery, workshop and storage areas. Unlike AMMPT which has realised the importance of embracing contemporary technology as well as past systems, the PPT has concentrated on the motion picture film and related processes.



Ken Draper threads a projector in readiness for a "command performance". Audiences enter from the left side, past the open bio box, then into the auditorium by the door on the right. There is no mystery about what goes on behind those square holes in the back wall.

Concentration on technology that is disappearing from everyday use, both in the home and the cinema may be having an impact on the PPT's recruitment of new members. Ken advised that four members died last year. Therein is a lesson for AMMPT in that it should always be relevant to new generations if all the hard work in setting up and maintaining the collection is not to be wasted. Ideas were discussed on how both organisations could assist each other in the future, such as the exchange of items in the collections. Also mutual invitations were extended to Members of each organisation to make contact with the other when in the area.

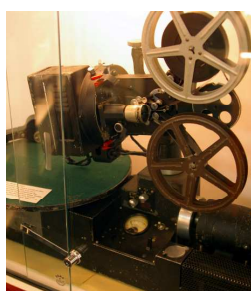


Cinema patrons are always aware of the industry's heritage

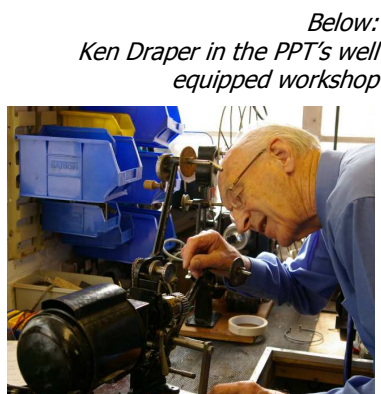
Display cabinets with narrow gauge equipment.



Below: Rare sound-on-disc home movie machine.



The PPT are fortunate to have plenty of storage space on site. They occupy one of several abandoned WW2 bunkers used as the top secret Enigma code breaking centre at Bletchley Park.

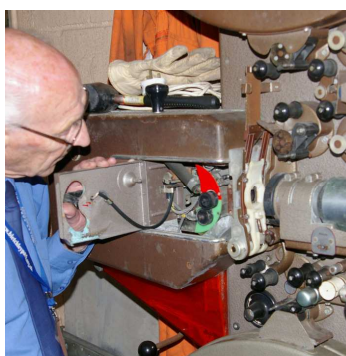


Below: Ken Draper in the PPT's well equipped workshop

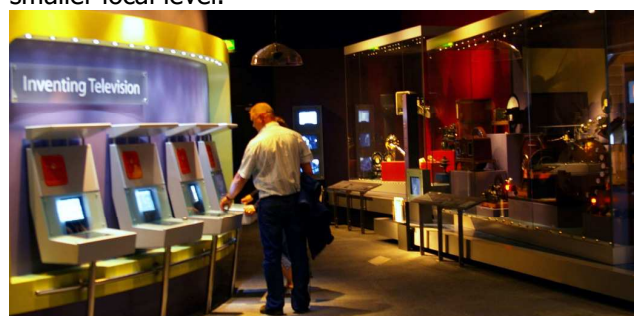


Left: The main telephone switchboard used during the war is a haunting reminder of the time when those stationed here changed the course of history.

Right: Ken inspects a machine that uses a pulsed Xenon light source.



The following day a visit had been arranged by Ben Eagle to visit the National Media Museum at Bradford in West Yorkshire. This entity is in marked contrast to the PPT, in that the Trust relies on Membership subscriptions, donations, sponsorship and the support of a dedicated volunteer workforce to survive – much the same as AMMPT. The NMM, previously known as the National Museum of Photography, Film and television was re-named in 2006. The complex houses an IMAX cinema and also original three projector Cinerama screenings are held at regular intervals. It was established and continues to operate on considerable government and other funding, with public admission being free. The professionalism of the numerous interactive and other displays is way beyond the wildest dreams of any volunteer based organisation, but the ideas and creativity abundant there assists in stimulating similar concepts at a smaller local level.

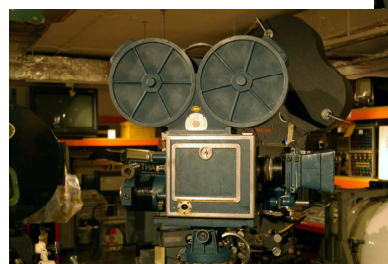


Curator of Cinematography Michael Harvey provided an extensive tour of the displays, which includes the Kodak gallery and a working TV studio used by Bradford BBC. What is also noticeable is the amount of money required in setting up the behind-the-scenes storage and restoration facilities, the scale of which only a public funded entity can provide – similar to that of the NFSA in Canberra.



Above: Old TV sets in storage.

Below: Technicolor 3 strip camera in store with other unique items.



Above: Michael Harvey with Kinemacolor projector, similar to one in AMMPT collection.

Both entities are worth a visit if you are in the UK. Kindred souls are sure of a warm welcome.

Atlab joins Deluxe

Deluxe Entertainment Services Group Inc. (Deluxe), and Amalgamated Holdings Limited (AHL) announced on September 26th that Deluxe has acquired the Atlab Group from AHL. Atlab is the largest film processing laboratory in the region and traces its roots in the Australian film industry back 80 years.

"Over the last few years we've developed a strong alliance with Atlab and look forward to the continued working relationship with them," said Cyril Drabinsky, CEO and President of Deluxe. "This next step will strengthen our ability to service the film and post production needs of our clients in the southern hemisphere". The Atlab facilities will be rebranded Deluxe Sydney, Deluxe Melbourne, and Deluxe Auckland.

The management team will remain in place. Alaric McAusland was named as Managing Director of Deluxe's Australian operations. McAusland said, "This announcement cements our already good relationship with the Deluxe group. Their investment in Atlab, and in particular their commitment to our new digital and sound facilities demonstrates their confidence in our operation and in the local industry". Atlab's main laboratory in Lane Cove, Sydney, provides processing, printing and post production services for feature films, television and commercials. Sydney operations also include EFILM™, which offers a broad range of creative services including digital post production and deliverables; digital intermediates and StageOne Sound, a brand new first class sound mixing facility. The 400 channel mixing stage is fully integrated into Atlab's film laboratory and EFILM's Sydney location so that filmmakers can manage all of their post needs under one roof. The group also includes Cinevex's film and digital operations in Melbourne and Atlab New Zealand in Auckland.

Deluxe has been servicing the entertainment industry for 93 years. Today the company has laboratory and post production facilities in Hollywood, Toronto, Vancouver, New York, London, Madrid, Barcelona, Rome and now Sydney, Melbourne and Auckland. Deluxe Entertainment Services Group is a leading provider of a broad range of entertainment industry services and technologies to major Hollywood Studios and an international client base. Services include motion picture film processing, printing and distribution; EFILM™ digital intermediates; post production and subtitling services; titles design and digital VFX; DVD compression, encoding and authoring; digital cinema services, digital asset management, digital distribution; and marketing fulfilment services. Deluxe laboratory and post production facilities are located in North America, Europe, and Australia/New Zealand. Deluxe Digital Studios offer home entertainment services in North America, Europe and India. For more information, please visit www.bydeluxe.com

For further information please contact Dominic Case (02) 9429 7324 or cased@atlab.com.au

Greater Union to celebrate

2009 will be a year of celebration for the Greater Union organisation when it celebrates 100 years in the cinema business. The first cinema in the JD Williams chain, later to morph into Australasian Films, Union Theatres then eventually as The Greater Union group we know today, opened in George St. Sydney in 1909. The story of the entrepreneurial Canadian Williams makes fascinating reading in many publications covering the history of Australian cinemas. From the time when the fledgling Australian industry was heavily dependent on overseas product and technology to survive, we are now in a position where we are exporting our know-how to overseas countries.

From Brisbane, Ken Robbins' Entertainment Services not only provides technical support to Australian customers, but does a significant amount of installations and service in the Asian area. All the Imax cinemas in the world owe their very existence to a Queensland invention – the Ron Jones Rolling Loop film transport system which is also serviced by Ken and his international team.

Australian expertise and technology has been a major factor in the installation of cinema complexes and training of personnel in the United Arab Emirates where the Greater Union and Atlab teams are in high demand. One such complex, the *Deira CineStar* in



Dubai also comes under the control of Greater Union's Middle East Technical and Facilities Manager Peter Khamas. (below)

Not only is Peter's role to oversee the installation and maintenance of the equipment, he also has the task of training staff to operate it.



Left: L-R Jay Casupang, Vic Siapoc, Peter Khamas and Gerry Tacuyan in the projection room.

With major changes now taking place in the cinema industry, many more countries will be looking towards Australian companies to help them adapt to the times ahead. We hope to have more news on GU's plans for their centenary in the next edition.

Museums, Collectors and Hoarders.

With the ticker making strange noises consistent with the approach of the biblical allocation of three score years and ten, and having the privilege of working most of that time in an industry which captivates the imagination of most of the population, it comes as a bit of a culture shock when your "retirement" project turns out to be an unexpected venture into the unknown. Such was the case when a group attending a Cinema Pioneers social gathering thought it would be a good idea if we were able to preserve some stories and memorabilia of times gone by so future generations could understand why we enjoyed our careers so much.

The initial zeal, possibly fueled by amber fluid at the function, was quickly diminished in the following weeks as the realisation of what was required if we were to have any credibility with the industry and museum fraternity became apparent. Rather than re-invent the wheel, it was decided to look around to see what already existed.

Support for community and specialised groups wishing to set up a museum is available in all States, primarily from Museums Australia and local Museums Assistance Programmes who support groups to gain knowledge of procedures and disciplines required if their project is to be successful. It was also apparent there were four levels of entities or individuals which were operating in this area. These were;

1. Government museums
2. Community or special interest museums
3. Private Collectors, and
4. The hoarders.

Government, or government sponsored museums usually adhere to internationally accepted standards and in the main are staffed by professionals. Volunteer groups often support their activities. The ongoing concern is their exposure to dependence on the government of the day for ongoing budget funding or other political considerations.

Community or special interest museums are usually operated by volunteers, with some larger or local government ones being successful at applying for grants to employ full time staff or hire casual workers. It is rare to find these types of museums totally funded by private sponsors and most rely on grants to keep open. Public admission fees rarely cover all expenses. They usually operate, or attempt to, within an established set of standards.

Private Collectors, especially in the case of areas of specialised interest, are probably jointly responsible for preserving most of this nation's heritage. Unfortunately astute overseas collectors have also been pro-active in locating many treasures and taken them offshore, most never to be returned.

On the positive side, at least these items were located before possibly been taken to the tip or left to rot. Hopefully they are now treasured items in a display somewhere.

On the local moving image scene, private collectors have gathered items either for public display or for their own private enjoyment. Many have been, or still are, employed in some aspect of the industry and realise the significance of items that, due to the evolution of technology, are being discarded. Due to several factors, some are reluctant to donate or loan these items to public institutions, even though many do not have the means to display these items themselves. There are those who are extremely secretive, understandably with good reason, of their collections and rarely let anyone, except their most trusted confidants, know what they have. Generally an attempt is made to provide suitable storage for these items and restoration and preservation efforts are made. Others have large collections which have grown beyond their means to adequately store it but are reluctant to donate items to established entities.

The more devoted collectors usually network locally and internationally with kindred souls and carry out and document extensive research on items in their inventory. In Australia there is a wealth of objects and information secure in the premises and minds of these dedicated individuals. Unfortunately in many instances these people, while always saying they intended to display these items or publish the results of their extensive and invaluable research efforts either succumb to dementia or pass away before their dreams become reality.

Hoarders include those who probably have never been involved in the community or industry related to the items they covet. Yet they are obsessed with surrounding themselves with anything and everything with a connection to their area of interest, whether significant or not. This means that genuine collectors may miss the opportunity to save the item from extinction. In most cases hoarders do not give any importance to the preservation of the items and rarely make any effort to ascertain their provenance. In the process they invariably seal the death warrant for many rare items in their possession.

There are those who join special interest groups purely to identify the location of objects. There are recorded instances where one group published a list of items held by its members. Soon after, a member who lived in a remote rural property had his premises burgled and the only thing taken was a unique item he had nominated for inclusion on the list. This reinforces the reason for secrecy of some collectors. Other instances include Members learning of potential donors to the museum, then making an approach to that person or entity offering considerable sums of money – often more than the museum could afford, to purchase the item.

These are important lessons we need to address when fine tuning our operations and planning a course for the future.

Annual General Meeting

What could be described as the best turnout at an AGM occurred on Sunday October 26th when nearly half of the local financial Members of the Western region branch debated the current status of the organisation and offered some thought provoking suggestions. At the conclusion of the meeting a video titled "Members at Work" was screened which was produced by Ken McKay and Richard Ashton. This was designed to assist Members in getting to know each other and provide them with an idea of the interests and expertise available from others in the group. Earlier a short video presentation showing Members the logistics of the planned 2009 TV exhibition was also screened. This included comments from members Derrick Wright and Richard Rennie. Some changes to the committee structure during the year were ratified, the new team being;

President:	Daryl Binning
Vice President:	Harry Smith
Acting Secretary:	Brenda Collins
Assistant Secretary:	Eddie Mills
Treasurer:	Peter Foyster
Registrar:	Clive Woodward
Research/Librarian	Richard Ashton
Oral Hist. Team leader:	Bridget Curran

and other committee as previously appointed.

The President's and Treasurer's reports were tabled, copies of which are available to members on request, with the President's report included in this newsletter.

The required formal AGM of the national entity was convened immediately after. Till such time as other branches are established, this meeting is necessary to comply with statutory requirements.

Our forgotten heroes

It is amazing how many of our industry pioneers are forgotten over time, their exploits buried in the avalanche of electronic information which pervades society today. The remarkable achievements of Sir Hubert Wilkins and that of Salvationist Major Joseph Perry have remained almost unknown except to the most ardent students of Australian cinema history. South Australian born Wilkins was not only a pioneer cinematographer and film exhibitor, he was also a critically acclaimed wartime photo journalist, later becoming an internationally renowned explorer and adventurer. Not being a self promoter or a person always seeking the limelight, it has been suggested that Wilkins often turned a blind eye when others claimed some of his better work as their own.

Joseph Perry can lay claim to having started the first successful Australian film production company, the Limelight Unit producing both features and corporate productions for government and industry. Perry also formed an equally successful exhibition outfit – the Biorama Company, as part of the Salvation Army's astute assessment of the potential of the new moving image phenomena. Both these men deserve greater recognition by the industry they pioneered.

Allan Jones Collection

During September, in conjunction with the DAMMPT film screening crew putting on a silent film show as part of the Museums Australia conference in Bunbury, our Collection assessment team went to nearby Busselton to document and photograph over 200 individual items in the Allan Jones collection.



The team begin to unpack the 40' container



Ron Jones cranks his father's Ernemann, and evidence of Allan's support of locally manufactured sound equipment.



The team with a small section of the collection.



Old trade journals (left) and equipment operating instruction manuals (above) assist in current research.

New historical series

One of the major challenges to an amateur editor is gathering together enough material to fill each edition which is of relevant to our Members with a diverse range of interests. An attempt is made to keep a balance between the film and electronic formats, and to include articles of both historical and contemporary interest. The content also depends on the input of material from Members and other sources to fill these pages.

Recently we have been fortunate to obtain a series of articles written by industry historian **Dominic Case** who had previously had them published in *The Australian Cinematographer*. As this material would not have been seen by the majority of AMMPT Members, we have received approval from both Dominic and the editor of AC and AMMPT Member Butch Calderwood to give them a re-run. These, and other expected articles from Queensland AMMPT Member **Kev Franzi** may sometimes be too long to run in the limited space in this newsletter and may have to be serialized.



Dominic Case is employed as Communications Manager for Atlab at Lane Cove in Sydney. He is highly regarded for his knowledge of and research into the Australian film production industry and related matters. Following is the first of a series of articles on what is fast becoming rapidly vanishing technology.

THE BIG PICTURE

By Dominic Case

Life at 24 fps ???

From the Transactions of SMPE, September 1925:-

Mr. Porter: "your committee has followed your instructions and investigated the question of camera speed. From the data we have been able to collect, it seems apparent that the best cameramen try to stick pretty close to a speed of 60 ft per minute. . . . The matter was taken up with the American Society of Cinematographers, who strongly recommend 60 ft per minute. . . . Your Committee recommends for the first time as standard practice, a camera taking speed of 60 ft per minute, with a minimum of 55 ft and a maximum of 65 ft when normal action is desired in connection with the Society of Motion Picture Engineers' recommended practice of 80 ft per minute projection speed."

Dr. Mees: ". . . While I know that the theatres will project at 80 ft or even 100 ft a minute, and that the cameramen will take at 60 ft a minute, I think that the Society should not endorse this practice."

Mr. Kelley: "This is a good recommendation. My experience is that a taking speed of 60 ft a minute and a projecting speed of 80 ft a minute do not produce an abnormal result. . . . We set up a camera having a meter attached . . . on the Fairbanks lot The meter held steady at 12 pictures per second (45 ft per minute) on all takes."

Mr Egeler: "I do not see how you can tie 60 ft a minute taking speed and 80 ft a minute projection speed together, and call them normal."

President Jones: "Action has been suspended until the autumn meeting: this recommendation has not been finally adopted."

It's not clear whether the SMPE (the T for television was added many years later) ever resolved this proposed double standard, which in more familiar units would have had cameras running at 16 frames per second (or less), and projectors at just over 21 fps (or more). It seems from the discussion though, that this was more or less standard practice at the time. It's interesting that the discussion was largely about the normality of the action on the screen: the speeded up movements that we have come to associate with "uncorrected" silent film were apparently considered acceptable – if not normal – at the time. Moreover, in the silent days it seems to have been common for good cameramen to crank according to the mood of the scene: undercranking for comedy chases: overcranking to heighten drama. The most commonly stated reason for cinematographers preferring to run slow was the amount of light needed: black and white emulsions in the 1920s probably weren't much above 20 ASA, and a speed-up from 60 to 80 fps would have demanded another 1/3 stop. Of course, just as today, the increased cost of stock would have been an important consideration as well.

The practical and aesthetic reasons for cameras to run slow were countered by commercial considerations in the cinema business. A judicious speed-up of the projector rate would allow one extra session per day: a significant increase in revenue for the exhibitor. Clearly these considerations counted as strongly as any SMPTE standards or concerns about realism.

It all changed just a few years later when the talkies arrived. There could be no question of shooting sync dialogue scenes at varying speeds, or projecting faster than the camera speed: fast action may be entertaining, but varyingly high-pitched voices would have just been laughable. As we know, some silent stars turned out to have squeaky voices even without the speed-up, and lost their box-office appeal overnight.

Sound reproduction demanded faster film running speeds – increasing to 90 fpm or 24fps - and the cost of negative stock for sound films now became a pressing factor. It has been noted that costs were cut by changes in production techniques.

Continued next page

The number of takes was reduced, and their length increased to accommodate the dialogue, therefore needing less coverage. Sound features were shot in two thirds the time that a silent film had taken. With less cutting, and, for several years, little or no camera movement, cinema became, visually, a much less stimulating medium: interest relied more and more on dialogue. And so it seems that varying the speed of action was to become for many years, an almost forgotten art.

There was a move in the late 1980s to alter the normal camera taking speed – and cinema projection speed – to 30 fps. It was demonstrated that flicker is much less noticeable, and motion artefacts such as strobing were greatly reduced, while moving subjects became a lot sharper with the shorter shutter times and more images. Behind all this, of course, were video engineers, less concerned with cinema than with bringing cinema's long-established norms into line with the NTSC television frame rate. Shooting 30 fps film for television is well-established in the USA, but of course, cinema projectors the world over were standardised to 24fps.

The necessary matching of camera and projection speeds was by this time essential to the system, and the increased length, bulk and above all, cost of release prints weighed heavily against any change. The proposal of a universal change to three-perf cameras and projectors would have offset the extra stock costs, but the potential upheaval in projection boxes around the world simply added insult to injury! And so projection speed has remained the same as it was in 1927. The predominant HD digital standard of 24p has followed the cinema standard just as camera taking speeds have done. Life – or at least art – is shown at twenty four frames per second.

Most cameras have long been able to be overcranked or undercranked – conventionally for non-sync shots – and optical printing techniques have been available to stretch or skip print sequences, more often to lengthen a shot than to visibly change the speed of action. But it seems to me that non-natural action speeds, whether achieved by camera speeds or in post, have become much more widely used since digital non-linear editing made them more accessible. While these sequences tend to be non sync, it is now straightforward to digitally repitch audio, allowing speed shifts in dialogue sequences as well.

This may be the opportunity for a creative leap. There is nothing to prevent filmmakers from reverting to the spirit of the 1920s in this faster-than-ever 21st century. Camera speeds of –say- 18fps, still played back at 24fps with audio repitching, would allow the director to get a third more action packed into the film – or possibly get those 2 hour films back down to 90 minutes, allowing the theatres an extra session, and the audience to get on their way sooner.

Ends.

Sponsorship option to an IBC conference in Amsterdam

by Harry Smith

During my recent attendance of the 2008 IBC Conference I had the good fortune to meet up with a group of about 8 young people - male and female. All been sponsored to attend this internationally renowned broadcast television conference and exhibition. We were attending the conference presentation function and had plenty of time to chat and discuss each others whereabouts and exchange pleasantries. I soon learned all of these young people were TV and Electronic engineering students as well as graduates from a variety of universities and technical institutions in various parts of Europe. They explained that they had heard about the IABM (The International Association of Broadcasting Manufacturers) sponsorship scheme through their institutions and had simply completed the paperwork, applied and been successful.

Their trip was fully sponsored and paid for by IABM, including their conference attendance fees, air travel and accommodation for the 6 day event. I was literally amazed by this fantastic opportunity being offered by a private enterprise organization. It was clear to me that all of these young people were very appreciative of having such an opportunity given to them. The feedback I got from them was 100% positive; they were all having a fantastic experience and enjoying the conference, and at the same time having an opportunity to see for themselves all of the new technology on display in the exhibition area.

They had each met up as complete strangers and had since developed new friendships; quite possibly friendships that would last well into the future. I was so impressed that the following day I sent a complimentary email with my thoughts and the feedback that I had encountered to the CEO of IABM congratulating their organization for doing such a great job. I would have given my right arm to have had such an opportunity when I was doing my apprenticeship in television in the late 1950's and early 60's.

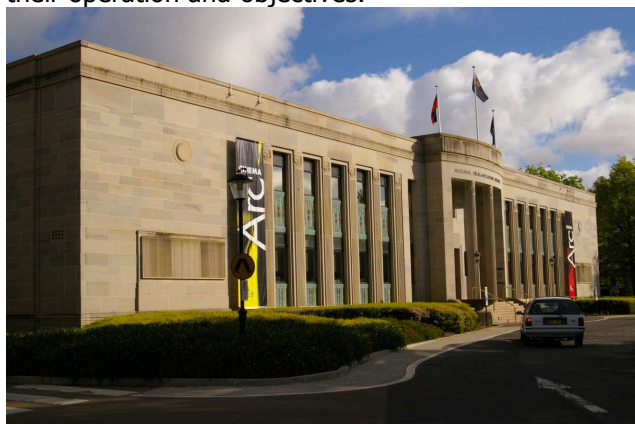
A thank you reply email was received from Roger Stanwell, the CEO of IABM as follows;

*Harry,
Thank you very much for your kind words of encouragement which are much appreciated.
The IABM Student Awards are growing in stature and we will certainly be repeating these next year. If you can spread the word to get other institutions involved, we would be grateful. We all know that there is a yawning gap in training for engineering in our industry and we hope to offer other initiatives in the year ahead. Thanks for joining us at the event and hope your IBC was a good one.*

Their website for those interested is:
www.theiabm.org

Meetings with the NFSA

Early in October the President spent two days in Canberra having meetings with the various department heads and others at the National Film & Sound Archive. The meetings were coordinated by Senior Curator Moving Image, Graham Shirley. Graham had been to Perth earlier in the year during which he met Members of AMMPT and discussed their operation and objectives.



Previously the Institute of Anatomy with its imposing front entrance, the NFSA has now been located there since 1984

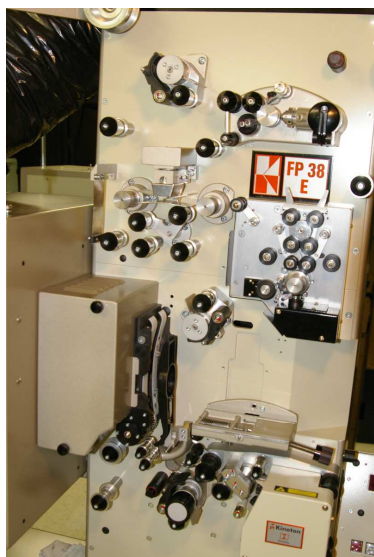
The first call was at the state-of-the-art *Arc Cinema*



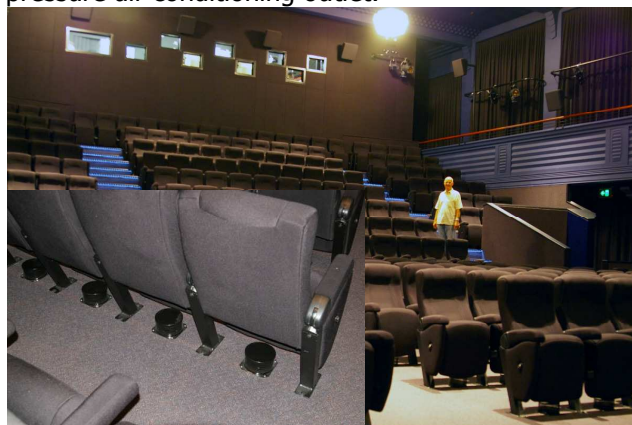
where Theatre Technical/Facilities Manager Trevor Anderson (left) explained the versatility of the installation with the centrepiece being the multi-

gauge film, and multi-tube electronic projection systems. One of the features in the several optional film threading paths available, was the placing of the white light sound head, in front and above the picture aperture, with the red-led sound reader positioned in the conventional location 20 frames after the picture aperture for 35mm and 26 frames for 16mm. When the white light reader is selected, the sound is electronically delayed till the film reaches the position where it would have normally been read. This delay is automatically adjusted when the running speed of the projector is changed. When the machine is slowed to about 20 fps and below, the shutter automatically changes from two to three

blades to overcome the induced flicker. Lenses are available for all gauges, formats and ratios.



The cinema itself provides comfort and sight lines well beyond that normally experienced in commercial venues. Each seat is positioned above its own low pressure air conditioning outlet.



Discussion with other departments covered nitrate receipt, inspection and storage. Because of the considerable amount of nitrate that is continuing to emerge, an effective way of getting it to the NFSA is required. The policy and process of having copies made and future viewing by the donor was also clarified.



Julie Heffernan selects donated film for inspection by her team. Nitrate is placed in archival vented cans and stored in an environment controlled room.

The subject of cataloguing systems was also high on priority for discussion. The NFSA is moving from MAVIS (Merged AUDIOVISUAL INFORMATION SYSTEM) to a more focused and flexible alternative. AMMPT is in the early stages of starting to catalogue its collection on the newly acquired MOSAIC system – software favoured by an increasing number of community based museums with whom we will be extensively interacting. This will eventually be installed in all future AMMPT branches. It was felt

before we went too far with our own input of data, consideration should be given to structure it so it could possibly integrate with NFSA's system. Generic descriptions, Terminology, codes etc. need to be established that are compatible to both cataloguing systems.



Janine Boyd (above), the Manager, Collection Information Management supplied some accessioning documentation and other material. Janine will be an established point of contact for assistance as our Registrar develops our own collections data base.

Continued next page.

With the NFSA recently becoming a statutory entity in its own right with new policies and procedures being developed, the main reason for visiting the organisation apart from gaining better understanding of their overall operations, was to explore what, if any, avenues of mutually beneficial collaboration are desirable and feasible between both organisations.

Senior Curator- Documents and Artefacts, Sonia Gherdevich (*left*) and Senior Curator - Moving Image, Graham Shirley (*below*) both were interested in progress made by AMMPT in the past four years and its plans for future initiatives. Frank discussion was held, with the President citing instances a couple of decades ago which



created an unfavourable perception of the NFSA that still exists amongst collectors today. The NFSA is now fully aware of the need to interact with its constituents and has a mandate to communicate its activities and make its collection widely available. AMMPT has proposed that it and the NFSA both work together to correct old outdated perceptions, suggesting this could be achieved by its network of collectors and individuals. This includes some, who for their own reasons, have no desire to be directly associated with "the bureaucracy". An independent group with the same objectives as the NFSA and working collaboratively with it could entice hitherto unknown significant items out of the woodwork for public display, and possibly eventually into the national collection.



Glen Eaves, Head of the Preservation and Technical Services team provided an informative tour through some of the most sophisticated moving image and sound restoration and preservation equipment in the word. A lot of this innovative technology has been developed in house and is unique to the archive industry. Copies can be made of most gauges of film including 16mm, 9.5mm, Super & Standard 8mm 28mm etc. with micro adjustments being available on the gear to allow for shrinkage and other ravages of time and deterioration.

Below: Glen with specialised film printer.



the many short rolls of film comprising the complete production.

The NFSA also has a vast collection of glass lantern slides, some used as an adjunct to the very early film shows such as *Soldiers of the Cross*. These were needed while the cinematograph operator changed



Conservator Shingo Ishihara repairing glass lantern slides

Special techniques have been developed to preserve selected artefacts donated to the NFSA. To determine the extent of the deterioration and to accurately prescribe remedial action is

the task of the Senior Researcher – Collection Management, Mick Newnham. Mick was responsible for promoting the concept of vented cans for archival film storage.

These are now being manufactured by Tuscan in Sydney and are now in use by archives worldwide.



Mick inspects donated material in lab.

Another service provided by the NFSA is a loans service of an extensive range of audiovisual material. The catalogue can be accessed on the internet and provides a valuable resource to those studying the Australian moving image, broadcasting and related industries and beyond.



Collection Access Mngr. Bronwyn Coupe & Stewart Shannon

Another jewel in the NFSA crown is its extensive library. This could be considered the mother lode of industry research material. Its range and depth is unequalled elsewhere in the nation. It is accessible to all those studying our moving image and related industries' heritage and standards.



This facility will also be available to those receiving Fellowships (*see page 6*) allowing them to spend time at the NFSA furthering their research endeavours.

The meetings reinforced confidence in the dedication and professionalism of those who are now in charge of preserving our nation's moving image heritage, and the high quality of facilities needed for the task. It is a pity the tyranny of vast distances in Australia precludes many of those interested from making more regular visits.

Christmas Social gathering

All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy – so the saying goes! With this in mind the Committee have decided to have a Christmas get-together immediately after the final screening for the season on **Sunday December 7th** at the Cygnet cinema. This year these monthly fund-raising shows have raised over \$4000 towards our objectives, with programming for 2009 now under way.

The final film *HIGH SOCIETY* should also be well attended by our growing list of regular patrons. Also expected are those Members who do not normally attend, but would like to enjoy catching up with old friends and colleagues at the Christmas lunch gathering immediately after. This will possibly be held at the Tavern opposite the cinema or another venue yet to be nominated, depending on the interest shown.

If you think you would like to attend, it is essential you **notify George Robinson on 9458 4227 by November 16th** – the day of our monthly screening. This will permit a decision to be made on choice of venue and Members advised. Please make a note in your diary NOW.

Recent donations

One of the more recent items donated to our collection was a very early model Simplex 35mm picture head #1547 which had been converted from its original hand cranked silent configuration to accommodate sound. Eventually when it was being taken to the tip in 1972, a cinema enthusiast rescued it and converted it for home movies, showing the reels of film that were also being thrown out.



Unfortunately some significant items of this person's collection were plundered by a visiting "collector", never to be seen again. AMMPT needs to get the message out to the community we offer a credible repository for disposal and restoration of such items.

New Members

The President and Committee welcome;

Damian Smith, Phillip Hallett, Patrick Hogan and Thomas Creamer

and are also pleased to have received advice from the President of the ACS, Ron Johanson that;

"AMMPT is proudly supported by the Australian Cinematographers Society"



The ACS have also offered AMMPT a Bronze sponsorship of their organisation which includes promotion at all their major events and publications and other collaborative advantages.



AMMPT Contact details:

The Australian Museum of Motion Picture Technology (Inc.)

ABN 73 111 667 924

and

AMMPT Western Region (Inc.)

P.O Box 476, LEEDERVILLE, W.A. 6903

Email: ammpt@iinet.net.au

Phone (08) 9310 3377

Web page: www.ammpt.asn.au

Preserving the heritage of Australia's moving image industries

Proudly supported by



**Channel
Seven
Perth**



**NATIONAL
FILM
& SOUND
ARCHIVE**

