



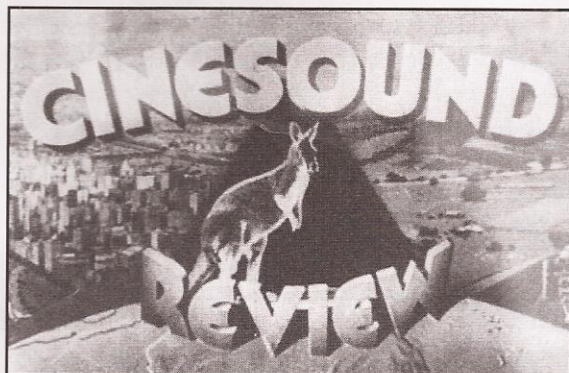
## The Australian Museum of Motion Picture Technology (Inc)

# NEWSLETTER

Edition Four

September 2005

### AUSTRALIA'S FORGOTTEN NEWSREELS



#### INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Items	Page
AUSTRALIA'S FORGOTTEN NEWSREELS	2
NEW INTRODUCTORY A.M.M.P.T. BROCHURE	2
MEETING OF DISCOVERY	3
TECHNOLOGY SPREADS THE NEWS: Roleystone Drive-In Theatre	3
HOYTS FREMANTLE	4
MEMBER'S PROFILE: Frank Worthington	5
50th ANNIVERSARY OF AUST PUBLIC TV BROADCASTING	5
ORAL HISTORY	6



Many of us were fortunate to live in the age of the cinema newsreel. Those pre-TV days when local, national and international events were a regular part of every programme at our local suburban cinemas and those at the Inner city picture palaces and newsreel theatrettes. The newspapers and radio broadcasts did not have the same effect as the dramatic visual impact of topical events on cinema screens. From the 20's till the 50's, and even to the demise in 1975 of Australia's last remaining newsreel, the *Australia Movie Magazine*, we were informed and entertained by the content of these regular productions from dozens of companies, both Australian and overseas.

While the industry was dominated by the offering of the major European and American studios such as Metro, Paramount, Universal, Fox, Warner Pathe, Gaumont etc, whose newsreels were part of a programme deal negotiated by the distributor with the exhibitor, many home grown productions flourished.

One of the leaders in early silent Australian newsreel productions

was *The Australasian Gazette* which was in competition with local editions of overseas companies such as the *Paramount Gazette* and the *Pathe Animated Gazette*. Before the event of sound, the *Australasian Gazette* had produced in excess of 800 editions, but unfortunately very few of these remain due to the then apathetic attitude towards archival preservation. Newspapers jumped on the bandwagon commissioning regular newsreels in joint ventures with a local production companies such as Melbourne's Herschells, producing *The Melbourne Herald Newsreel*, and the Perth based *Western Mail Newsreel*. Later, as the expense of equipping for sound saw the demise of many of the smaller newsreel enterprises, the dominance of the Union Theatre backed *Cinesound Review* and the *Fox Movietone News* became evident, later merging after the onslaught of TV into the *Australian Movie Magazine*. Even this last valiant effort succumbed in 1975 when on November 27th Australia's prolific newsreel production industry was read its last rites.

Even after the event of TV in the capital cities, 16mm prints of newsreels were circulated with feature programmes to outlying areas such as country recreation clubs,



CONTINUING FROM PAGE ONE  
"AUSTRALIA'S FORGOTTEN NEWSREELS"

mine sites and similar communities where film was still the main source of visual entertainment and information. Local producers continued to service newsreel theatrettes in most capital cities, as well as producing regular editions such as the *Papua and New Guinea News Review* which was used for a short time to inform the people of events elsewhere in the newly emerging nation. Unfortunately details of these east coast and other newsreel producers are not readily available to researchers in Perth so a search is now for those who can assist in recoding their history.

Details and memorabilia of local pioneers will form part of regional collections to eventually go on public display in that area. Till such time as a regional branch is established in your area. Information to be included in a national AMMPT database would be welcomed by emailing: [ammpt@inet.net.au](mailto:ammpt@inet.net.au) or phoning the national coordinator, Daryl Binning A.C.S. on 08 9310 3377.



### NEW INTRODUCTORY AMMPT BROCHURE

AMMPT was invited to supply details of our objectives to the 800 delegates attending the annual convention of the Motion Picture Exhibitors of Queensland held on the Gold Coast in August. An offer too good to refuse. Problem was we had nothing suitable of professional presentation in such quantities, and had to deliver to them within 2 weeks. To the rescue came John Marsden with his bag of desktop publishing electronic wizardry. We decide on a single page A4 brochure, folded into 3 columns, with a basic message of what AMMPT was all about. Photos of various pieces of equipment were included. They were obtained from many sources, including our National Curator—exhibition, Allan Osborne in Melbourne. Also from our local curator Roy Mudge and the curator of History at the Queensland museum, Brian Crozier who sent a photo of the original prototype of Queensland Ron Jones' invention, the rolling loop movement which is now the heart of the IMAX system. The prototype is part of the Queensland collection.

It was decided an initial print run of 2000 should be ordered due to the options for other distribution. Quotes for same ranged up to \$1000, but John was able to do an incredible deal for \$400. The committee decided this would be a wise use of funds to further our aims.

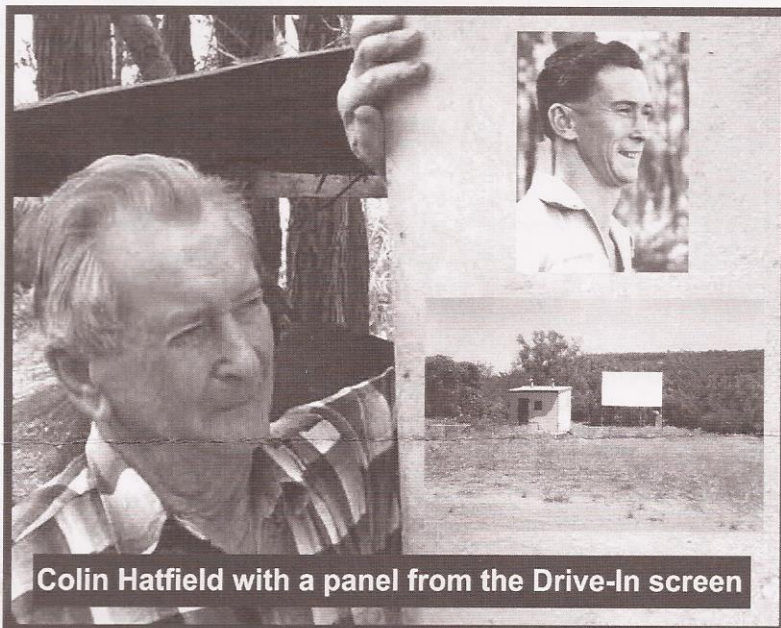
After John consumed numerous ulcer tablets to combat the frustration of trying to deal with some initial incompetent printing companies who put him 5 days behind schedule, the job was finally delivered on time and on budget by Mandurah printer Grahame Readwin of Footprint of WA. We owe John Marsden and Grahame a vote of thanks for getting the job delivered to Brisbane on time.

Copy of the brochure is included with this Newsletter. If you require more for local distribution contact the secretary.



## TECHNOLOGY SPREADS THE NEWS

Late in April, AMMPT was contacted by a journalist from the Melbourne Age Newspapers who had heard about what we were trying to do. Her article on May 2nd resulted in a number of emails in the following days from that region. Also the story was included in the newspaper web page which was noticed the following day by an ex WA resident, Glenda Fordman who operates a media business on the opposite side of the planet in Toronto, Canada who immediately emailed us and asked further about our activities. She lived in the Lesmurdie area in the 60's and remembered an old abandoned Drive-In Theatre nearby. We said



Colin Hatfield with a panel from the Drive-In screen

that we had only recently did an oral history recording with Colin Hatfield who built the Roleystone Drive-In Theatre on Brookton Highway, but he had no photos except an old press cutting with a photo of him constructing the screen. The site has long since been redeveloped. After the exchange of a couple more emails the same day, it was apparent that Glenda had been referring to Colin's drive-in, and more remarkable, had a color photo of it soon after it closed in 1967, taken when she was back in Perth for a short holiday. Within 48 hours if the article appearing in The Age, we had received a copy of the photo on our files, with a duplicate now in Colin's album. We often complain about the world spinning too fast but occasionally it has its advantages.

**ROLEYSTONE** 9 7627  
Panorama Drive-In.  
**CAPE FEAR, A, Gregory Peck,**  
**Robert Mitchum.**  
**SEVEN WAYS FROM SUN-**  
**DOWN, G, Audie Murphy,**  
**Barry Sullivan.**

## MEETING OF DISCOVERY

A visit to the **LIGHT & SOUND DISCOVERY CENTRE** in the Fremantle History Museum, 1 Finnerty St. Fremantle (the old asylum building) is scheduled for **SUNDAY SEPT. 11th at 10.30am**. This will include a guided tour of the exhibits by one of our new members Richard Rennie who is curator of the Discovery centre. Many of the objects on display are related to the moving image and will be of interest to all. It will also provide us with an opportunity to see the style and standard of public presentation which will be required with our own exhibition.

After the tour, a brief meeting will be held to bring members up to speed on current events and preparing for the Annual General Meeting the following month. We should be finished before noon. It would assist if we could get an idea of the numbers intending to come. Please phone Secretary **Eddie** to indicate your intentions on **9447 4531**.

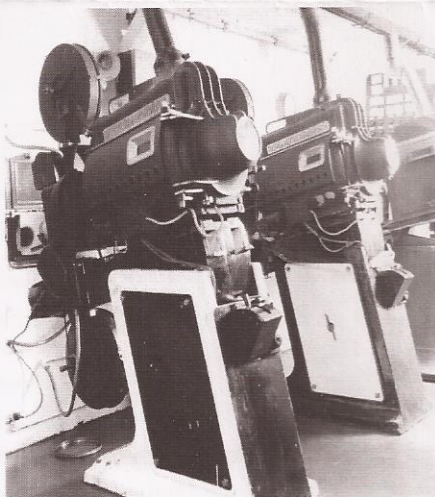
## MUSEUM TRAINING COURSE

AMMPT was allocated funding to enable two members to attend a four day museum training course held at Curtin University and other venues from August 30th to September 2nd. The course "Introduction to the roles of museums and methods" will provide AMMPT with a basic understanding of what lies ahead of us in this new venture. The course was organized by the W.A. Museums Assistance Programme, with delegate funding of \$570 obtained from Lotterywest by the WA division of Museums Australia. Roy and Daryl attended the course.



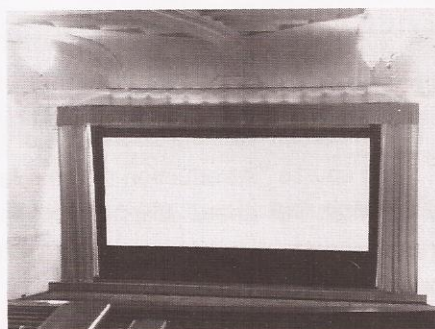
## HOYTS FREMANTLE

On the 4th of August 1938 the gold curtains opened on Walt Disney's "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs" at the new Hoyts Fremantle stating an institution in the life of the community of Fremantle. The new theatre replaced a historic landmark the Rose and Crown Hotel that had been built in 1838 with the advance of education in W.A. the old building made way for a boarding school for the Fremantle High School conducted by Sir Henry Briggs, and on his retirement in 1898 it became a well known boarding house and remained as such until the Directors of Hoyts Theatres Ltd, purchased the land in 1937 and demolished the old building to erect a modern motion picture theatre.



The new theatre was to have been called the Crown Theatre but on opening night the name was Hoyts Fremantle. The theatre replaced the small and old Majestic Theatre. Built in 1916 and run by Hoyts theatres Ltd for a number of years. The theatre was Art Deco in design and seated 1367 the projection equipment was Simplex transferred from the Majestic and new raycophone soundheads and amplifiers, the theatre had a floating screen the only one in W.A. which with the speaker rolled on tracks sideways on the stage to enable stage presentations to take place. In 1949 alterations were done to the auditorium and proscenium and new plaster work and chandeliers were supplied by Jas Llyall of Melbourne. New Centrex projectors, R.C.A. soundheads and amplifiers were also installed. In October 1954 Hoyts Fremantle installed Cinemascope and Westrex 4 track magnetic sound commencing with "Three Coins In The Fountain"

1959 was a happy and dark time for the theatre, in August it celebrated it's 21st birthday and then Hoyts Theatres sold their shares in the company to City Theatres and Goldfields Pictures which resulted in a name change for the theatre which was now known as the Oriana Theatre. The 30th birthday in 1968 was celebrated with a giant new cinemascope screen moved forward of the old proscenium but by now the theatre was on its path to the end. On the Saturday the 4th of December 1971 a few months after it's 33rd birthday those same gold curtains that opened so hopefully on "Snow White" in 1938 closed quietly on the Western Australian made film "Nickel Queen".



**ORIANA**  
5.1894 High St.  
LAST DAY  
1.30 p.m.  
7.45 p.m.

**MADE IN PARIS**

**ANN MARGRET**

Plus "Honey-moon Machine" (G) Color Cinemascope "THE HORSE SOLDIERS" "THE LOST MISSILE"

**SUNDAY NIGHT AT 8.15**

**TODAY! HOYTS Fremantle** ALSO Sat. Mon.  
PHONE L1884

Warner's bring you the Greatest entertainment experience in one Attraction!

**62 STARS in - "HOLLYWOOD CANTENET"**

**TUESDAY, WEDNESDAY & THURSDAY**

Hazel Greed! Vengeance! In a Whirlpool of Sordid Death! Merle OBERON, Franchot TONE in - **"DARK WATERS"**

Plus "MADEMOISELLE FUL" featuring Slim in Simeone.

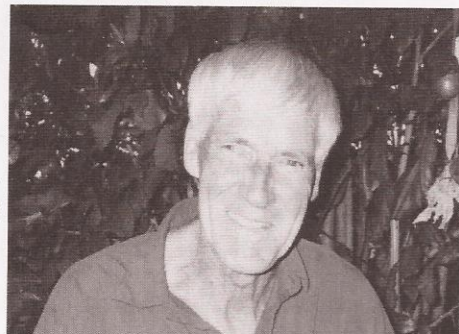
The end came swiftly with demolition in February 1972, in it's 20th birthday Anniversary Souvenir Book a dedication concluded with the following lines; May it's doors never cease to be, within our memory, the gateway from yesterday to tomorrow. That magnificent theatre is still remembered today after 34 years by the older residents of Fremantle as **HOYTS FREMANTLE**.





## MEMBER PROFILE ON FRANK WORTHINGTON

With a career spanning nearly 40yrs in the movie industry, Frank has seen technical changes in the way films are projected and screened. Inspired to become a projectionist by his older brother Harry, Frank began as a rewind boy at the 20th Century Fox Film Exchange in Shafto Lane in Wellington Street Perth City. Soon Frank was promoted to film examiner, his job was to check the quality of film prints before sending them out to the suburban theatres. He then became an assistant projectionist at the Broadway and Windsor Theatres in Nedlands. part of his duties included cleaning the theatre in the morning and was responsible for pulling the curtains open and shut by hand. After gaining his projectionist license at the age of 21, Frank worked at a number of theatres in the suburbs. As films were popular in the country areas Frank started working for Ray Dean Talkies in the early 50's and began to take the famous Hollywood flicks out in the bush. Toensfolk stopped what they were doing when Frank's one night movie shows visited to there local town hall. The equipment was loaded in a old Vanguard van and driven around to the towns in the Geraldton area, stopping to show the movies. Everything happened on the film night, they were special evenings. All the committees would have their meeting in the afternoon and then come over to the Town Hall for the films in the evening. "Everybody in the country towns who came to the movies knew Frank as the "Picture Show Man." Frank returned to the City in the early 60's, and after a short break began to operate at a number of City and Country Drive-In's until his retirement from the Movie Industry in 1983. Frank still today shows movies to film buffs on his outdoor screen in the summer time in the hills of Perth. "Frank said during his career he travelled the world with M.G.M. Fitzpatrick's Travel Talks, laughed at Abbott and Costello, cried with Lassie and Bambi, met leaders and hero's on the "March of Time" news-reel and his favourite movies were "GONE WITH THE WIND" and "THERE'S NO BUSINESS LIKE SHOW BUSINESS". Frank recently turned 70 and his love of the movies has never left him.



**An appeal to all Members to make use of this newsletter to pass on any information you consider may be of interest to other members around Australia - seeking information, profile on members, stories of interest, to buy sell and swap. A better quality reproduction than this photo copied issue is available electronically direct from the editor.**

**Please email John Marsden if you wish to receive one.**

**Ph 9581 7565 or email: wesaus@westnet.com.au**



### TREASURER WANTED



Due to personal circumstances, Treasure Fred Clausen has had to relinquish this position, but is still available to assist whoever takes over the role. We urgently need a member who has some basic idea of financial record keeping and is conversant with Windows Excel to take of the role.

## 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF AUSTRALIAN PUBLIC TV BROADCASTING



AMMPT is to coordinate a local display commemorating the above event later next year. Already expressions of interest in being involved have been received from local TV stations, and some of the early "on air" personalities. We will be establishing the part played by the film equipment used by the stations in the early days, as well as increasing our own community profile. We will soon be forming a working group to put this event together, and are seeking volunteers from our membership. Please contact the secretary if you want to be involved.



### AMMPT NEW MEMBERS WELCOME ABOARD

John Bowring - Frank Worthington - John Porter - Graeme Lacey - Allan Beer - Lindsay Morris - Peter Savill  
Peter Harries - Ron Frank - Sian Churcher - Richard Ashton - Richard Rennie - Norm Turnbull





## ORAL HISTORY

There are a number of the "real" old timers around who are prepared to put their memories of the industry onto tape for posterity. Unfortunately even though a couple have already been interviewed, the usual suspects who made the initial recording do not have the time to continue this project due to the pressure of other AMMPT duties. If you think you are up to the task and have a good background in the industry to know what questions to ask, then please step forward. Equipment will be provided and assistance with oral history procedures will be given.



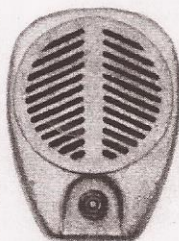
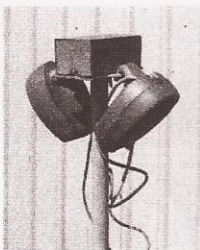
## BUY - SELL - SWAP

**Free! Free!** Metal film cans 16mm & 35mm various sizes. Surplus to requirements as contents have been transferred to new plastic cans. Contact **Daryl Binning** on **9310 3377**

**Curator of Exhibition: Roy Mudge** is looking for Bell Punch Ticket Machine and Bell Coin Dispenser for the museum.



**Tuscan** Plastic film cans 16mm & 35mm various sizes. **\$1.00** each to members to raise funds for AMMPT  
Contact **Graham Lacey** Ph 92756559



### Wanted- Bernard Hartland Drive-In Speakers

The drive-in speakers and junction box in the photo were made by the late Bernard Hartland for the late Bob Yelland. I would like to buy any of these speakers or junction boxes.

Please contact **Allan Osborne**.

Phone: 03-9725-8187. Email: [bioscope@ozemail.com.au](mailto:bioscope@ozemail.com.au)

### **Searching For The Impossible!**

The first Drive-in theatre in Western Australia was the Highway Drive-in at Bentley. It opened on Thursday, October 13, 1955. It was equipped with Westrex in-car speakers. But they were very different in appearance to the Westrex speakers that were later used in drive-ins throughout Australia. We know how the public liked to "souvenir" a speaker or two. The Highway Drive-in is long gone, but I live in hope that someone, somewhere out there, still has one (or two or three) of these original Westrex speakers from The Highway. If you have one, or know someone who does, I want to buy it. Please contact **Allan Osborne**.

Phone: 03-9725-8187. Email: [bioscope@ozemail.com.au](mailto:bioscope@ozemail.com.au)



*Web pages worth a look!*



There have been Increasing request if we had a **WEB PAGE**.

**Paul** Trimboli has been ask to put a Web Page together, any suggestions of Content . contact **Paul** at [Ptrimboli@iinet.au](mailto:Ptrimboli@iinet.au)

### THE AMERICAN WIDESCREEN MUSEUM

ESTABLISHED 1997

WIDE SCREEN SYSTEMS - COLOR HISTORY - SOUND DEVELOPMENT  
THE INTERNET'S LARGEST FILM TECHNOLOGY RESOURCE

<http://www.widescreenmuseum.com/>



## FILM-TECH

<http://www.film-tech.com/>



### THE AUSTRALIAN MUSEUM OF MOTION PICTURE TECHNOLOGY (Inc)

P.O. Box 476 LEEDERVILLE WA 6903

National Coordinator

**DARYL BINNING** a.c.s.

Ph 08 9310 3377 Email: [ammpt@iinet.net.au](mailto:ammpt@iinet.net.au)

ABN 73 111 667 924

