



The Australian Museum of Motion Picture Technology (Inc) NEWSLETTER

Edition Nine

July 2006



JOHN DAVIES - NEWS CAMERAMAN

John Llewellyn Havard Davies was born in Deri, South Wales on 23rd December 1915. He was the sixth of a family with eight children. In 1928, when John was 13, the family moved to London. His first job was that of a telegram boy in 1930, after other jobs he later found work at Kays Film Labs in the negative developing and film drying room. At that time, Kays shared the building in Soho Square with British Movietone News.

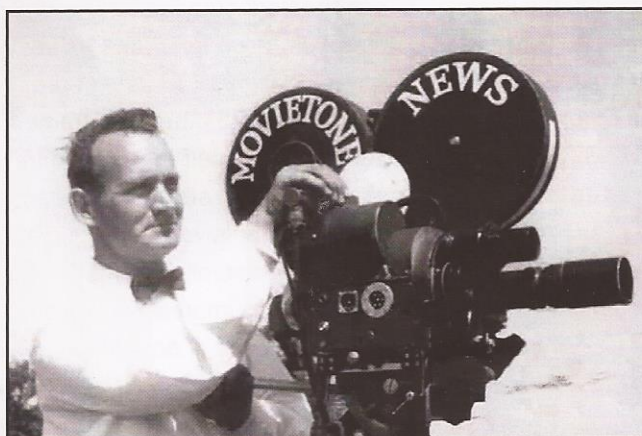
John married Lillian Bowers in 1940, in that same year he volunteered and joined the Royal Air Force and was called to active service the following year, his job of fitter / armourer, entailed the mechanical repair and the loading of ordinance into aircraft etc. He spent 3 years in the Middle East, attached to



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the 8th Army at El Alamein and later in Trobruk, following the 8th Army through to Naples. He was demobilised from the Forces in 1946, returning to Kays where he was employed as a negative developer. This was at a time when television was beginning in Britain. The neighbouring Movietone Company began losing its cameramen to the newly established commercial TV station ITN. Movietone production manager, Jack



Ramsden was asked by John if he could join them, to which Ramsden agreed. John was provided with a Newman Sinclair camera, and immediately despatched overseas to cover international stories of the time. From Cyprus he filmed events during the Suez crisis including the dropping of paratroopers into the war zone. He was the only

member of the press able to persuade the authorities to accompany the soldiers on the flight to the drop zone in Egypt. The coverage was sent to Kays on the evening flight and was shown in London cinemas the next day. The Cyprus assignment kept John away from home for 7 months. Movietone appreciated the value of John's stories and raised his wage from £12.10 a week to the high union rate of £21 p/w.

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JOHN DAVIES - NEWS CAMERAMAN

After returning from Cyprus, John received another wage increase to £32 a week. Later he was to travel to Seirra Leone to cover its independence from the U.K., on to Liberia for the African leader's conference, Royal visits as well as domestic stories within Britain, including Roger Bannister breaking the 4 minute mile record, six FA Cup finals at Wembley and numerous Wimbledon tennis finals. Some of the 35mm motion picture cameras used during these times apart from the Newman Sinclair was the Cameflex, the Mitchell and the Wall optical sound recording camera with 1200ft magazines.



Film stocks included Plus X, Tri X, and Super XX. Some others in the Movietone crew at that time were Norman Fischer (Chief cameraman), Ken Taylor, Len Waldorf and brothers David and Michael Samuelson. Reg Sutton was the sound engineer. With the BBC TV service expanding, John was hired out by Movietone to them for special sporting events and assignments throughout the U.K. In 1960 John noticed an advertisement in a trade journal seeking experienced cameramen for the recently established Australian Broadcasting Commission television station in Perth, Western Australia, ABW2. He applied for and was given the job. Resigning from Movietone, he was given a gift of a Newman Sinclair camera, a model which was now becoming obsolete with the introduction of the more modern Arriflex camera for news work. The camera was the one used by legendary European wartime cameraman Paul Wyand. One of his more notable feats was to film the signing of the armistice agreement when all the press were refused permission. The images now recorded of the historic event were taken by Paul by focusing the camera through a hole in the side of the army tent. Paul's book "Useless if delayed" is titled on Movietone's film despatch sticker. Migrating with his family the following year, John started with ABW2 as one of a two

man team on their news crew. The other ABC cameraman was Fred Combs who had started at their Sydney TV station a couple of years earlier. The ABW2 news crew subsequently grew to include Ian McKenzie, Don Hanrahan-Smith, Jim McPharlan, Brad Pearce and others. John's early film assignments included filming the 1962 Empire Games, the opening up of the north west for the mineral boom, the start of the Ord river diversion dam and irrigation scheme, iron ore port developments at Dampier and other locations. His 16mm cameras included the Bell & Howell DR, the Arri ST, and The Auricon Pro 600 with optical sound, the Éclair NPR with the Perfectone or Nagra for Sync Pulse double system, and the ARRI BL for single system magnetic. Other film cameras were used from time to time before the TV industry converted to electronic image news gathering. John was one of the original members of the then recently formed Western Australian branch of the Australian Cinematographer's Society, as were other cameramen in the local television industry. John retired from the ABC in 1978, building a home for Lillian, himself and his family in Mandurah, on the coast and south of the Perth metropolitan area. He has returned to Britain on several occasions since retirement to visit his slowly diminishing group of relatives and friends. Unfortunately John's very active life and continual hard work has



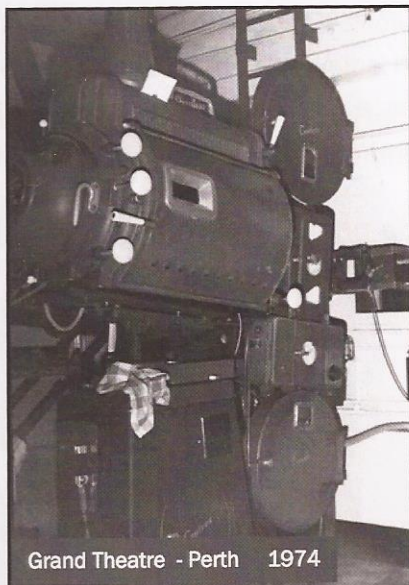
taken its toll on his body, with spinal degeneration severely limiting his mobility. John has indicated his desire to donate the Newman Sinclair camera with its impressive provenance to the Australian Museum of Motion Picture Technology, as an example of the type of equipment used by the pioneers of the film news gathering industry. It is technology which is in danger of being forgotten and unknown to those now entering the industry today, who aspire to follow the same action packed news gathering career.

50 years of Television in Australia Reunion

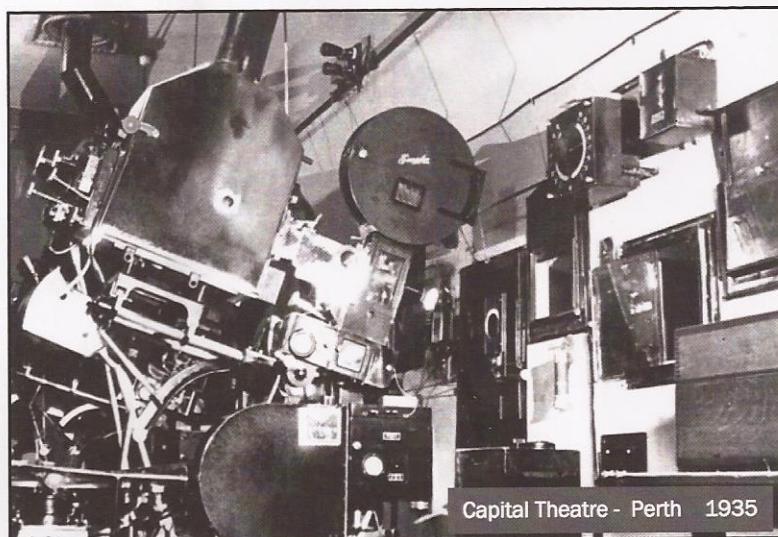
A reunion of past television workers is planned for October. If you would like to attend this reunion.

Please contact: National Secretary EDDIE MILLS on 9447 4531

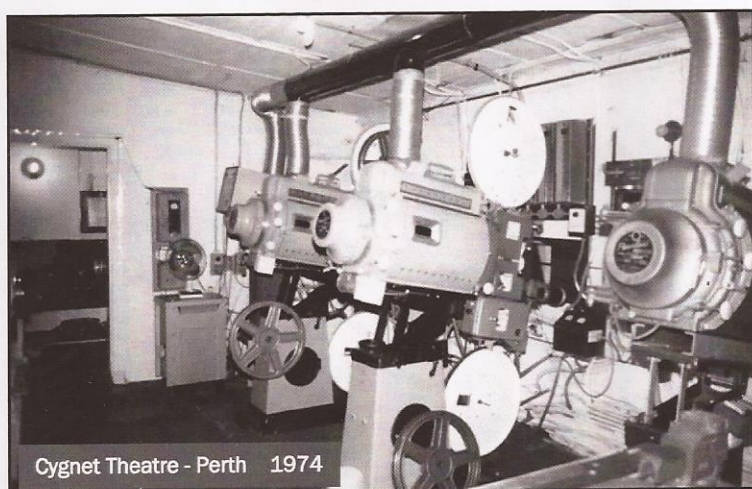
PROJECTION ROOMS OF YESTERYEAR



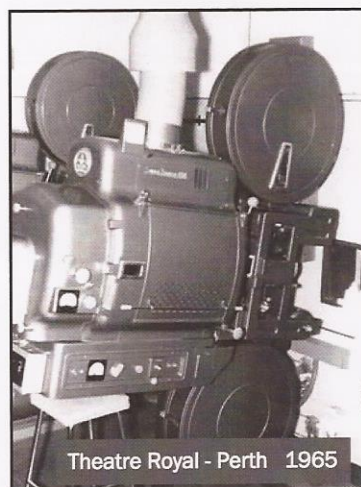
Grand Theatre - Perth 1974



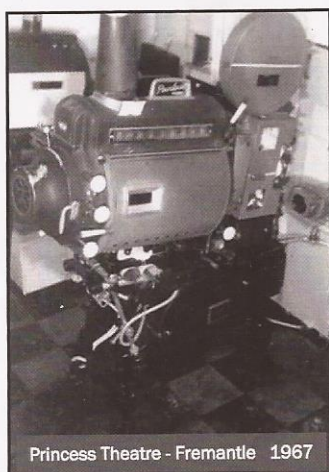
Capital Theatre - Perth 1935



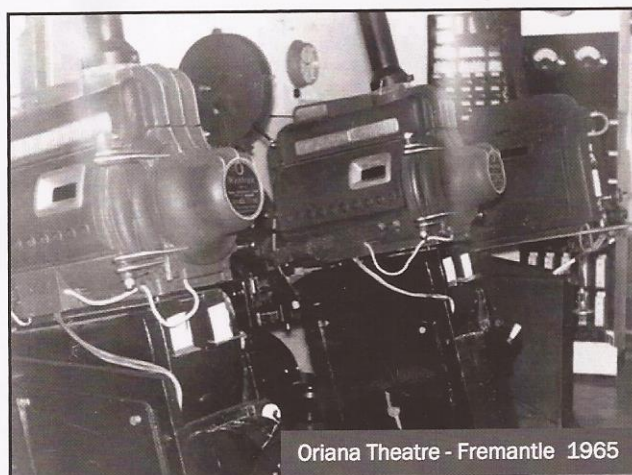
Cygnets Theatre - Perth 1974



Theatre Royal - Perth 1965



Princess Theatre - Fremantle 1967



Oriana Theatre - Fremantle 1965

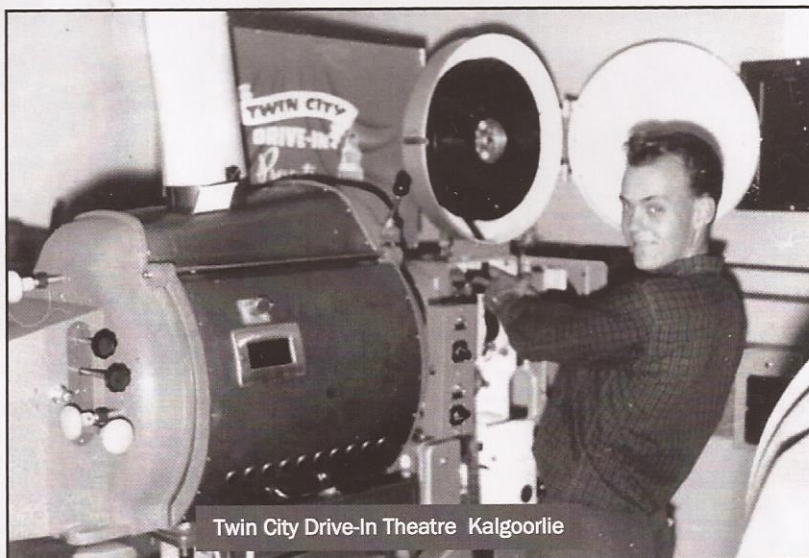


Member Profile on NORMAN ROBINS

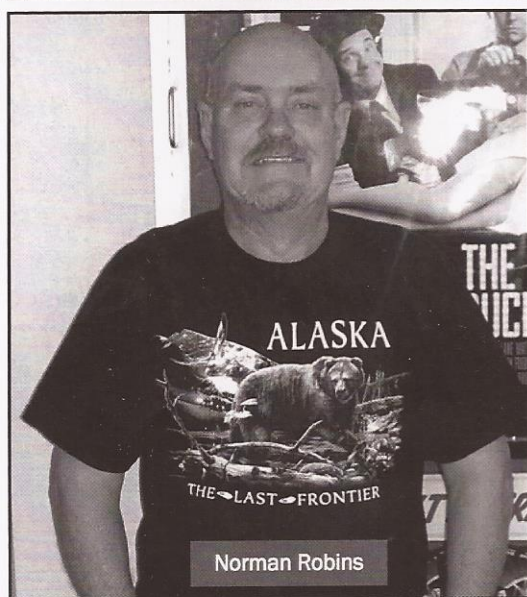


Savoy Theatre in Victoria Park

Norm's first interest in the projection box was in 1958 when he helped his brother in-law AMMPT member Hedley Sims in his travelling picture show circuit at Byford, East Cannington and Carilla. With a recommendation from Hedley to Ron Eldsgood of Goldfields Pictures Norm started as a Assistant Projectionist under Colin Nicholas at the Savoy Theatre and Gardens in East Victoria Park.



Twin City Drive-In Theatre Kalgoorlie



Norman Robins

With the introduction of Television in 1959 the Savoy Theatre closed and Norm was transferred to Goldfields Broadway Theatre in Victoria Park .

After a short period of time the Broadway Theatre also closed and Norm secured a position at the Mayfair Newsreel Theatrette in Hay Street Perth. Projectionists Bennie Quinlan and Bob Jones took Norm under their wing for training to be a Projectionist but when Norm turned 18 years of age he was made redundant .

Norm obtained work at a factory and continue visiting Bob Jones at the Mayfair to continue his training as a Projectionist until he finely obtained his Projectionist Licence. Part-time work at

the Hoyts Plaza Theatre in Hay Street Perth under Eric Nichols saw Norm back in the Projection Box again . When the new Twin City Drive-In Theatre in Kalgoorlie opened in 1963 Norm secured a Projectionist position opposite AMMPT member Merv Partington.

Norm finally left the movie industry in mid 1964 and spent 10 years in Fire protection and a further 25 years as a career Fire Fighter before retiring.

After over 40 years out of the Bio Box Norm still shows movies with his 16mm Projectors at home and for his hobby club anttik machinery based at the old Midland Railway Workshops.

Joining AMMPT has enable Norm to reacquaint himself with people from his life in the Projection Box.

JOLSON SINGS AT THE PORT

To celebrate the 60th anniversary of **THE JOLSON STORY** the Port Cinema screened the Columbia Pictures Technicolor film on Saturday 1st July.

Released in 1946 the film telling the life story of stage and screen entertainer Al Jolson was a huge Box-Office success on its release.

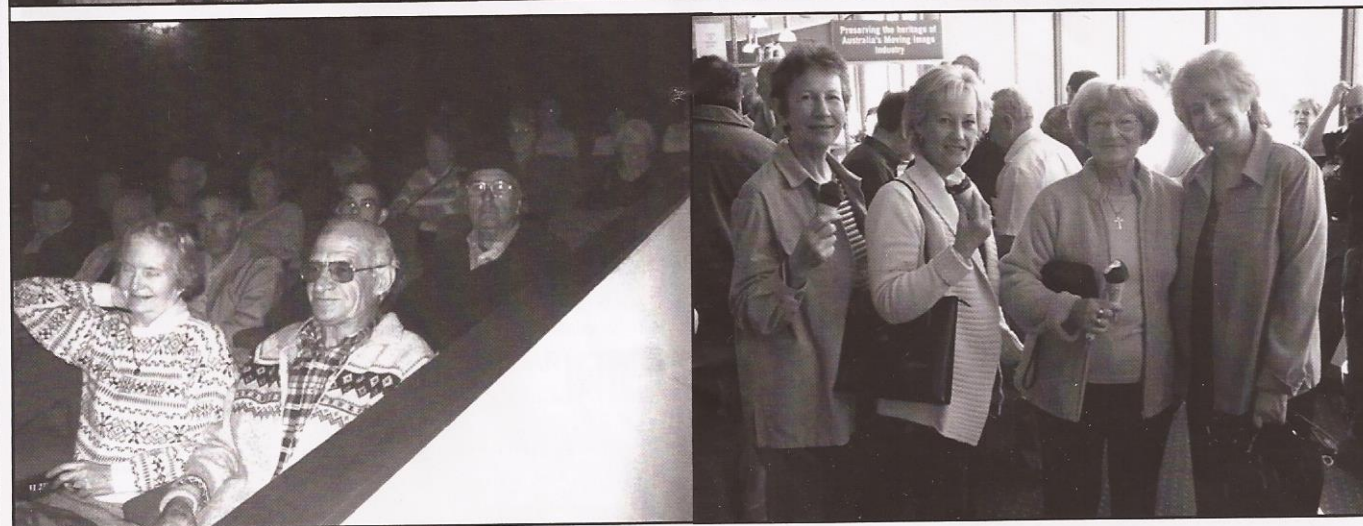
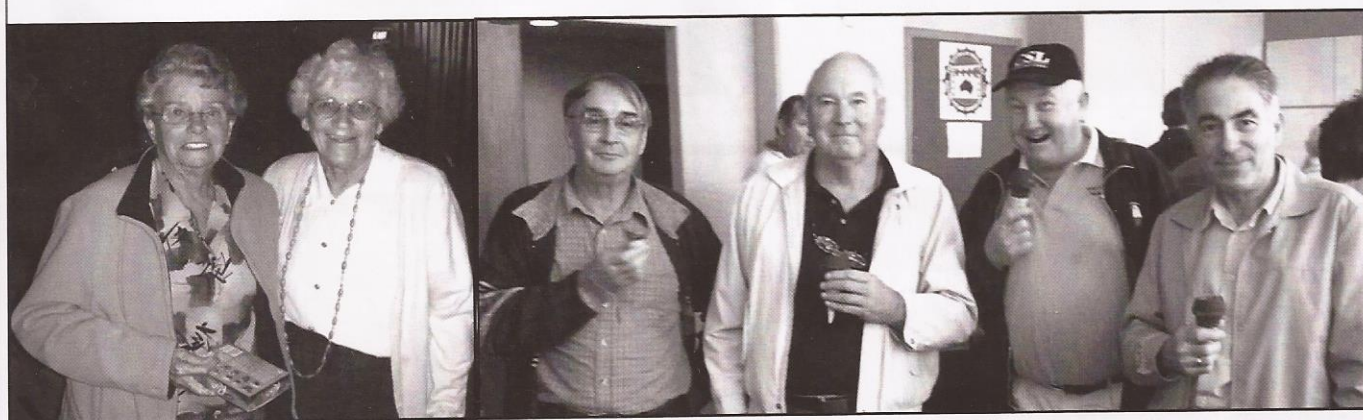


The Port Cinema screening attracted a large audience showing that the film still has great appeal after 60 years. The film was introduced by the president of the WA Jolson Society Len Martin who gave a short talk on the career of Al Jolson.

The program was sponsored by AMMPT Member LINDSAY MORRIS of Kookaburra Outdoor Cinema.

Two lucky audience members won Cadburys roses chocolates in the raffle at the intermission.

The film received a rousing round of applause at the conclusion of the film and word from the audience was "what a great program it was and how much they were looking forward to the next screening".



Please note change of day from SATURDAY to SUNDAY.

COMING ATTRACTIONS
To the
PORT CINEMA

SUNDAY MATINEE 24th SEPTEMBER

NATHAN LANE MATTHEW BRODERICK UMA THURMAN WILL FERRELL

THE PRODUCERS



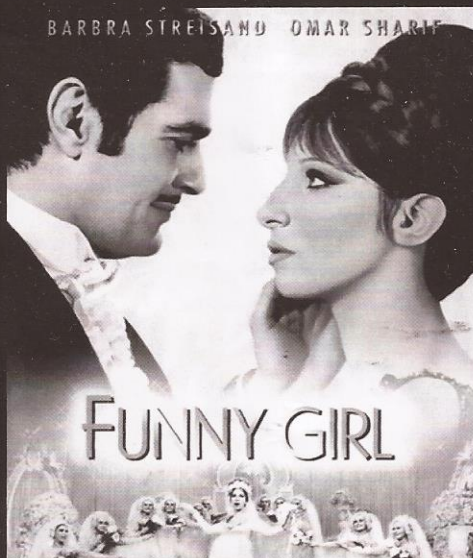
"THE PRODUCERS DELIVERS HUGE BELLY LAUGHS AND LOTS OF FUN!"
- Pete Hammond, MAXIM



Celebrating the 30th Anniversary of the PORT CINEMA
SUNDAY MATINEE - 3rd December at 1.30pm



BARBRA STREISAND OMAR SHARIF



FORMATION OF THE WA CINEMA PIONEERS



Left to right: REG STARR ARTHUR STILES CHRIS SPIVEY ERIC NICHOLLS

Perth members of the Australian Cinema Pioneers attended several cocktail functions at the Perth Entertainment Centre in 1978. So successful were these functions in attracting new members that the WA Branch was formed later in the year with Arthur Stiles elected as WA state president. A photo and story in the weekend newspaper "The Sunday Times" resulted in many enquires for membership. As well as attracting city members a number of members were from Rural WA. Some of the older members were Reg Starr from the Piccadilly Theatre and Eric Nicholls from Hoyts Paris Theatre who both had over fifty years service in the movie industry. While Chris Spivey who had retired from Hoyts Fremantle had spent 65 years in the projection box.

AMMPT NEW MEMBERS

MICHAEL WOLLEMBERG - ROSS ADAMS - Sir JAMES CRUTHERS - ARTHUR STILES - ERIC WHITE
REECE BLACK - JOHN NAPIER-WINCH - RONALD JOHANSON - MICHAEL FRANKLIN - BRIAN LYONS - JUNE HOLMES



BUY - SELL - SWAP

Curator of Exhibitions **Roy Mudge** is looking for a **Bell Punch Ticket Machine** and a **Bell Punch Coin Machine** for the AMMPT Museum



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