



The Australian Museum of Motion Picture Technology (Inc.)

NEWSLETTER

Edition Twenty

July 2009

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Evolution – slow but positive progress

They say time heals many wounds. It also has the tendency to obscure past mistakes and reveal new pathways to objectives.



With the approach of our Association's fifth Annual general Meeting, and on the cusp of opening regional branches in Sydney and Melbourne (details of meetings

page 2) it is prudent to reflect on the changes since September 20th 2004 when a group mainly from the Society of Cinema Pioneers convened a meeting and decided to set up



a national community museum to preserve the industry's heritage. The realities of what was involved were obscured by the rose coloured glasses worn by those who had no concept of what lay ahead, and most being technical personnel, were destined for a severe culture shock.



Initial attempts to establish regional branches were less than encouraging and some brutal, but ultimately constructive feedback was received. The need to broaden the scope of the Association to embrace all forms of the moving image industry became apparent, to encompass past and recent developments in the cinema and television industry and beyond. Also we needed to clearly define our operational parameters.

There was a perception we were intending to move into areas that were well and truly serviced by other individuals and organisations. This was definitely not the case. However we firmly believe that amongst the many moving image related kindred bodies, there is a small percentage that want to take that extra step and try to preserve the end products of their current collection or documentation endeavours in a community accessible format. The operative word is "community" meaning we have to take our message and displays out to the population rather than have them track down centralised displays in far away places. This is also to enable future generations appreciate why we had such a passion for this industry.

Our original enthusiasm for setting up permanent public displays in all regions was tempered by the prohibitive set-up and ongoing cost of doing so. Collaboration with existing public museums and archives, as well as private museums and collectors was seen as the key to success, while at the same time building up AMMPT's own national collection.

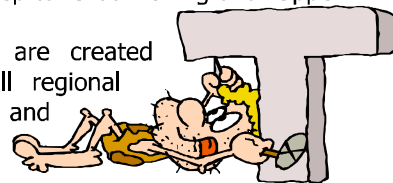
By the public promotion of private moving image related museums and collections owned by our members, who have demonstrated their professional standard of presentation of their displays and are adopting accepted museum standards and practices, we are able to involve many diverse communities who would not otherwise been aware of our nation's industry heritage or even that right in their own area. Once the regional branch network has been established, a register of member museums will be compiled for distribution to tourism and other interested organisations, including kindred overseas bodies.

With the establishment of a national collection database network accessible by all regional curators, items can be identified which may have provenance related to a particular district. These can be loaned to the local member for temporary display. In this manner, an awareness is created at grass roots level across Australia of what our industry has done – and continues to do.

This evolving appreciation and pride in what has, and is being done may even reach the ears of more of our State and Federal politicians. They may finally wake up to the concept this industry needs tangible ongoing support and promotion. A national network of community based AMMPT and private moving image museums is another positive step towards making this happen.



AMMPT's policies are created from input by all regional branches. Federal and state funding will increasingly



become available as the organisation grows. With a collective approach to this long neglected sector of our nation's heritage, we can achieve more than individuals can ever hope to do on their own.

AMMPT needs your support!

Dawn of a new era

Regional branches begin incorporation

The past five years have been a period of re-organisation and rationalization of ideas and policies for AMMPT. Originally it was expected we could encourage our colleagues in all other States to join with Perth based kindred spirits in forming a national organisation with a common goal – to preserve our nation's moving image heritage. Unfortunately this initially wasn't to be, which in hindsight, was a blessing in disguise. If AMMPT had taken off at that time, it would have been destined to long term failure and much wasted effort. Since then, we have re-worked our structure, refining policies and procedures to accommodate the appreciated input from all corners of the country. Fortunately we have retained the membership of several who came to the initial well attended meetings in Adelaide, Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane. It is from the steadily increasing membership, particularly in the Eastern and Southern regions that we now have sufficient numbers to begin incorporation procedures in Sydney and Melbourne of two new regional branches.

Following the ACS National award on the Gold Coast early in May, at which AMMPT member and ACS President Ron Johanson presented our organisation with a Bronze Sponsorship plaque, the return trip to Perth was routed via Sydney and Melbourne where meetings of existing and prospective AMMPT members had been arranged. The Sydney meeting was held in the darling Harbour **Sydney offices of the NFSA**, arranged by Graham Shirley. While the numbers weren't as large as the initial meeting held at Film Australia, the enthusiasm to get things moving was evident. Documents have been lodged with the appropriate authorities to begin incorporation formalities.

Member **Keith Kanaar** will be convening a meeting of all people interested in joining up with AMMPT Eastern Region and electing a local committee who will be requested for input into formulating future national policies. Keith can be contacted on **02 9524 9691** or email kkanaar@bigpond.net.au.

In Melbourne a meeting was convened at John Bowring's **Lemac theatrette** in Richmond. The outcome was Member **Malcolm Richards**, owner of another Melbourne film industry rental company with international connections, Cameraquip, agreeing to be convenor of a meeting to form a local committee. This will follow up on incorporation arrangements for AMMPT Southern region and also contribute to national policies.

Malcolm can be contacted on **03 9699 3922** or email m.richards@cameraquip.com.au

AMMPT Western Region Inc., through the national body will assist by funding the costs involved during the start-up phase of both branches. Interested persons are asked to make contact with local convenors to learn of meeting dates.



Part of John Bowring's Lemac collection of 16mm news and documentary cameras.



Malcolm Richards with one of the prized pieces in his collection – a 35mm blimped Mitchell studio camera.

Missing an edition?

For those who may have thought they had missed an edition (we have tried to get one out every three months), you will be relieved to learn that this edition # 20 is two months behind schedule. Other priorities have placed additional workload on the small administrative team, so it had to take a back seat. Perhaps when we can recruit a member who would like to take on this dedicated task, future delays won't happen as regularly.

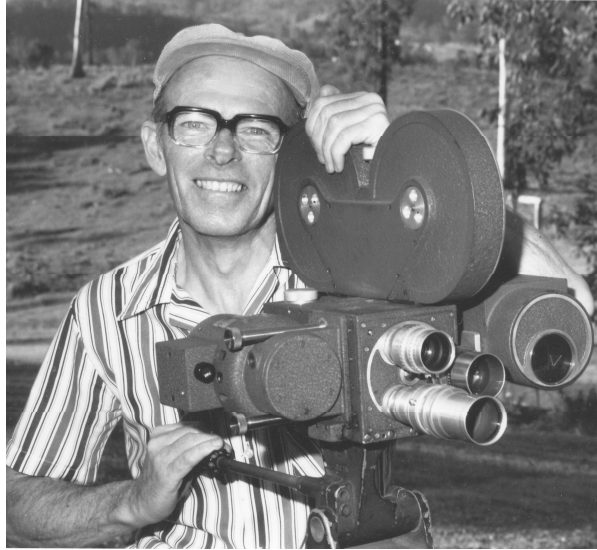
PASSWORD:

With new regional branches being established, it was decided not to password protect this edition on our web page. This will enable prospective members to gain an insight into our activities and objectives. Also the build-up of news over five months should contain items of varied interest to all members and others.

Kev Franzl re-visited

In the last edition we featured the profile of Queensland member, Kev Franzl, and also an article by him, **Boys and their Toys**.

Leading the article was a photo of Kev with his beloved 1947 Maurer, the Rolls Royce of 16mm cine cameras, at that time costing A£7000. This was then the cost of buying a fleet of ten brand new taxis. Unfortunately, due to this editor's lack of diligence, the photo succumbed to the ravages of electronic mutilation somewhere between his computer and being received via cyberspace by the printer. To put matters right so Members can have a closer look at this magnificent piece of work (the camera) it is again being included.



Kev did not say when the shot was taken but I suspect, having visited his museum a few years ago it is not of recent vintage. Unlike most of us, some items are ageless and in the right hands are destined to give pleasure forever.

Following is an article penned by Kev, and will give members an insight of what industry jewels still remain in our midst. It also reinforces the urgency for a credible community based organisation such as AMMPT to unite those in the industry who are concerned collections such as these may be broken up and could also be in danger of falling into the hands of overseas collectors. Government support at all levels is essential if we to create a strong public awareness of Australia's moving image industry heritage.

My Movie Museum (in a nutshell)

MY wife and I set up and ran the Movie Museum at Kenilworth, Queensland for over 15 years. Beginning in 1990 we produced a two hour show using vintage films and equipment from my fully working Cinema Heritage Collection

Our theatrette could seat a full coach group of 60 people and clubs of all kinds were soon queuing up. We produced a new show each year to keep the groups coming back Each two hour show featured different aspects of cinema history. After the first year the museum was self supporting and provided us with a modest living. Apart from producing a new

brochure each year, paid advertising was not required as we received excellent editorial coverage in the media (worth \$1000's). The brochures and "word of mouth" did the rest.

My Australian Cinema heritage collection spans over a century of technological development from the magic lanterns of the 1880's using chromotropes and lever slides, to the era of digital video production.



Our documentary film collection also spans over 100 years, with Edison films from 1893 to recent classics. All our nitrate material has been transferred to 35mm or 16mm safety film, with the best of the collection now going on to archival digital disc.



All this conservation was and is being done here in house. This film collection has been a great resource for our museum presentations. The collection includes valuable production stills from the 1920's to the 1970's, and a very large library of technical books on every aspect of motion

pictures from the 1890's onwards.

The theatrette has now become a video and photo studio and the rest is being used as a resource for my latest DVD and book project. The equipment waits patiently to find its final resting place – wherever that may be.



Editor's Note: Kev and his wife set up and operated their museum without receiving one cent of grant money. While it is often impossible to replicate the intense passion of individuals in a collective volunteer group, it indicates what can be achieved with realistic objectives and enthusiasm.

BROADCAST ASIA REPORT

by Harry Smith

Having recently returned from the Broadcast Asia Conference in Singapore which was held from June 16th to 29th, I am pleased to report on the advances in television and satellite communications. Singapore is truly the media progressive city of our region, high speed broadband for example is expected to be available to all of its citizens by 2012. Media & innovation in media (I have observed) is extensively sponsored and promoted by the Government of Singapore, hence electronic media is increasingly being accepted as a part of their lifestyle and culture.



I have personally been attending the Broadcast Asia Conferences since their inception around 20 years ago.

These are similar to IBC in Amsterdam and NAB in the U.S. and enable us to keep up to date with technology. They also add another perspective on where the world is heading in television and media, something we don't generally achieve sitting in our offices or otherwise in the production environment most of us work in so far away, here in Australia.



The Aussie stand – promoting Australian manufactured products

New products and innovations are usually launched at these events, and which offers the opportunity to discuss them first hand with manufacturers or their agents. Companies like Arri, Sony, Panasonic, JVC, Fujinon, Canon, Angenieux, Miller, Manfrotto, Adobe, Canopus - Grass Valley and many more are always present launching their latest and greatest new products, software or inventions. People such as Barry Green, the world renowned media producer and technical author frequently hold seminars or technical presentations on new products at these venues.



Internet Television:

Many manufacturers here were demonstrating internet television, with offerings from some providers to sign up for services to receive several hundred channels from all parts of the globe.

In my opinion some of their quality was questionable, perhaps similar to poor quality YouTube, but it did appear the more you spend the better the quality options you have available. For example if you have super high speed broadband (which we don't as yet have in Australia) you can receive virtually broadcast standard quality, which is quite amazing when we consider that only a few years ago (when we all on dial up) that it took forever to download or receive anything.

The Electronic Home:

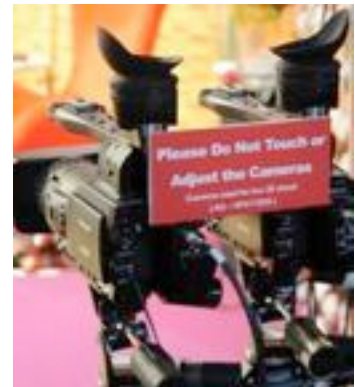
Another display was the fully integrated media and electronically controlled home complete with every electronic device you could think of, TV and digital radio in every room, full security monitoring, bluetooth controls of anything and everything, remote control and monitoring on a mobile phone from anywhere in the world, and the list goes on.

How deep is your pocket - virtually anything is possible now!!

3D Television:

Be aware 3D television is just around the corner, clearly this will be the next push from TV manufacturers after they finally get us all hooked on High Definition TV, with the plethora of LCD HD TV screens, the Plasma HD TV screens and of course Blu-ray full HD recorders with their programmable hard drive systems. I was fortunate to witness the introduction of consumer 3D television from Philips last year at IBC, which really wasn't too impressive. But now after seeing this latest display in Singapore I was quite impressed with the progress that has recently occurred. I have now personally experienced true 3D television without the need for 3D glasses - the glasses that most of us would have experienced in the past - and that had to be worn previously to experience 3D movies.

3D television is now a reality, basically it is created using 2 television cameras mounted parallel to each other on a common rail or bracket mounted system attached on the tripod; the recordings from each camera are fed into a 3D editing suite and the end result after processing is 3D television.



Panasonic test rig set up for 3D demo

In reality, assuming you are positioned within about 15 degrees of centre of screen for viewing the 3D effect is real. You actually feel a part of the action with things popping out of the screen in front of you.

The New Recording Media vs Videotape:

It now appears that videotape is the medium of a bygone era. Every manufacturer of professional broadcast cameras and recording equipment, whether it be sound or vision, is now offering either solid state media interface cards, DVD disc recording, or other equipment manufacturers hard disc or solid state recorders. Sony have their solid state media cards & Blu-ray disc cameras and recorders with up to 50gb recording time on one disc. Panasonic have their P2 solid state media cards up to 64gb - with 128gb around the corner. Plus various other equipment manufacturers are also offering cable connectable portable hard disc drives up to 320gb - or even more, all of which are software supported and thus capable of recording full high definition 1920 x 1080 broadcast standard digital recordings.

Clearly we have now gone beyond videotape, and whilst videotape was always considered vulnerable to erasure, some of it has lasted for almost 50 years. I have personally transferred 1" tapes and ¾" U-matic videotapes to DVD that were created in the 1960's and 1970's. Having lived through both the film and video era's and used both mediums extensively in my work, I am now personally concerned that at this moment in time we don't appear to have any means of 'reliably archiving' any of this new digital media material for future generations. As distinct from film, most of this digital media can be erased or lost with the click of a mouse or a flash of lightning, backing up everything is extremely important, but even after backing up there is no guarantee from the hard drive manufacturers that your hard drive will work the next time you go to use it.

Satellite and Future Technology:

I was fortunate to be invited to visit the Singapore Broadcast Innovation Centre held at one of their 4 satellite television and media stations on Singapore Island. It was truly an impressive demonstration and display of the progress that is being made in present day television, and television into the future.

Singtel - who own Optus in Australia - own and operate these 4 satellite stations. They can each provide services to anywhere in the world, virtually covering the globe with their satellite coverage. Huge servers have been set up in these stations to store the media from their sponsors, which is then distributed around the world by satellite to fit in with various time shifts and schedules. It is truly amazing to see how they have established this state of the art world of entertainment and media distribution system.

Under instructions from their sponsors they can hold and delay any telecast that is not required at a certain time, or for example that might not be politically correct for a certain audience. They have complete back up substitutions that can be inserted if their sponsor advises them of an alternative; advertising can be changed or inserted whenever or wherever, and delays created when and wherever necessary. This whole distribution system covers the entire globe, with sponsors paying for airtime on various contracts as and when required.



In the Singtel satellite control room

In their control room I observed transmissions underway to Sydney, Paris, London and various other areas around the world. These transmissions are all monitored for content on a delay system, and can be stopped at any time if need be.

The technical quality of each transmission, as well as the program content and material is monitored on both the up link (to the satellite) and the down link (to earth), to ensure the best sound and vision quality is being achieved. Everything is backed up with an equivalent system being available to be switched in, should a technical failure occur. It was very interesting to see the millions of dollars worth of patching and test equipment (all working) that has been set up throughout the station in huge and complex racking systems.

Beyond television, they are also transmitting digital radio, signboard display advertising and distribution etc., as well as various other media, and confidential military intelligence.

I was also able to take part in a live satellite up link, and at the same time monitor the output from the down link. It was interesting to monitor yourself move across camera on the up link screen, and then a short time later you actually see yourself making the same move (delayed) on the down link screen.

The delay is actually caused by the time the signal leaves earth and then returns again after being re transmitted from the satellite over 22,000 kilometres away - effectively traveling at least 44,000 kilometres.

Interestingly Singtel had the foresight to engineer all of their satellite systems to accommodate full high definition television, which I did see operating and which is now being fully utilized - HD requires a much greater bandwidth than standard definition.

They were actually testing 3D television on satellite transmissions during my visit, 3D requires even more bandwidth still to operate, and it too was also working perfectly.

After three enjoyable days at Broadcast Asia and a weekend in Singapore to catch up on some shopping, I returned home as usual with a huge injection of information which will be passed on to my AMMPT and ACS colleagues, and a bag full of brochures, which I will eventually get around to reading.

God is in the details

By Dominic Case,

Reproduced with permission from his article in *Australian Cinematographer*, February 2004

From across the square, the cathedral (or Dom) in Cologne towers above you. It's an extraordinary Gothic building, started in 1248. The nave took 150 years to build, but the distinctive twin towers were not completed until 1842. Right in the centre of Cologne, it's so vast that you almost don't see it at first, as it looms over you, defying any photographer to find a lens to encompass it.



No doubt it's all for the greater glory of God, who certainly gets the best view: the towers reach 157m up towards heaven. It's only as you climb the ever-narrowing stairs to the top that you catch glimpses of the hundreds of gargoyles and carvings outside every one of the narrow windows. It's dizzying to think about the steeplejacks balanced precariously out there above the Rhine years ago, working at such detail.

In a sense, the construction workers are like the artists and composers working at intricate levels of detail on digital effects shots for a feature film. So much of the picture detail in a multi-layered composite is obscured completely in the final shot: such as complete new skylines behind passing train windows. In just the same way, many of the gargoyles on the Dom's towers simply can't be seen from ground level where the magnificence of the building is first seen.

"God is in the details," said the celebrated architect Ludwig Mies van der Rohe. His style of architecture was far from that of the Dom, but he saw that the success of great buildings came not from their mass and shape but from the details you only see close-up. In the case of the Dom, it's not just the fine stone carvings, but also the rich texture of the stonework itself. Once again, the grain and texture of a film image are a crucial part of its nature. This is true even though a normal audience isn't normally conscious of grain at all – let alone different types of grain! The only people to see the texture in any detail are the cinematographer standing right up close to the cinema screen looking at stock tests, and the graphic artists in front of their monitors working on grotesquely enlarged sections of the frame, pixel by pixel.

And yet that fine texture is all-important. It's what gives projected film that "living, organic" feel or look, that is quite different in fully digital images (which one you prefer is not the point here).

Along with all the other attention to infinitesimal detail, the correct grain is one of those things that gives character to an image: that gritty, grainy feel, or a more sublime almost (but never entirely) grainless image.

Perhaps architecture and building have more in common with filmmaking than we might suspect. Like film, and more than any other art form, it serves a broad spectrum from creative to functional purposes: like film there is an extended planning stage followed by the realisation; like film it involves large numbers of people with a wide range of technical skills; like film, once completed it is there to be seen for many years to come.

Then there is the question of the creative source of the work. Films can be the children of a writer, a director, or sometimes a cinematographer – or a creation of a team. Buildings are almost invariably attributed to the architect: for example, Christopher Wren "built" St Paul's Cathedral in London. Pedants would argue that Wren was the architect, not the builder. But of course the architect's role in those times was on site, every day, working as designer and engineer, and probably labourer as well: if a wall was to fall, it would take him with it; if it looked wrong he could alter it.

Even the Dom is attributable to one man known only as the "master builder Gerhardt" who drew up the plans for the entire building in 1248. Even the towers, finally added 600 years later, followed Gerhardt's original design. History doesn't record the names of the countless hundreds of draftsmen, stonemasons, carpenters, and labourers whose contributions all led to the building we see today. In this, at least, film is different: we know every individual who has contributed to the project: if God is in the details, the entire crew is in the credits.

Donation of storage space

The committee was pleased to receive an offer of a small lock-up unit at a new self storage facility in Palmyra. The donation was made by the owner of the business, Mr. Lyndon Lewis, after he had seen our promotional materials at the Cygnet cinema. The environmentally stable and high security storage has been given to AMMPT free of charge for eighteen months, which on commercial terms, is worth about \$4500.00. The committee approved the purchase of three new sets of shelving on which will be stored some recently donated items and materials received from Dr Ina Bertrand relating to her Cinemaweb project.



Registrar Clive Woodward starts stacking the shelves

Old time film night

The gods smiled upon us by providing perfect weather for the Old Time Picture Show night held at Wireless Hill park in Ardross. The outdoor screening which was free to the public was held alongside the studios of our co-promoters of the event, Capital Community Radio 90.5 FM. The station targets mainly the Seniors of the community who are increasingly supporting our regular fund raising shows at the Cygnet.



Graham (left) and Tony do a run-through the previous evening.

The programme of old 16mm silent film comedies including Charlie Chaplin, Laurel and Hardy, Buster Keaton was arranged and presented by Graham Lacey and Tony Smith.

The weather was always going to be an unknown factor in scheduling the show, which had to be delayed till April after the finish of daylight saving. Contingency plans were in place in case the event had to be cancelled. As it turned out, a beautiful balmy evening with families picnicking in the surrounding parks and watching a magnificent sunset reflecting in the waters of the Swan River, set the scene for a great nights entertainment.



The early birds secure the best "lounge balcony" seating

It was a case of BYO seating and refreshments of your choice. Not only was the event a successful public relations exercise for AMMPT, it provided the added bonus of donations being offered, not just monetary, but of equipment which included two 16mm Marc 300 arc lamp projectors.



With future daylight saving now abolished, we can be more confident in the scheduling of next year's show.



Historical Film & Video team

Progress is being made with the formation of our team to view and assess the thousands of feet of amateur and other film and video material that would otherwise been sent straight to the tip. Hidden amongst this mountain of moving images, most of little interest to those not directly associated with the cinematographer and a lot of questionable image quality, are to be found scenes of previously unrecorded aspects of our social history. Our Western region team, led by John Napier Winch has been in close consultation with David Whiteford, Team Leader, Archive, State Library of Western Australia, and are establishing criteria which would assist them in identifying these images of State or National significance.



From Left: Ian Newman, Tony Smith, David Whiteford, John Napier-Winch and Daryl Binning discuss areas of collaboration between AMMPT and the State Library.

The task of viewing all the film and video material has been made easier with the donation of various items of preview and projection equipment. Batches of films will be taken by retired members who can view the material at their own pace and in their own homes. A central facility will be established to house the 35mm and 16mm equipment, with obsolete video gauges being inspected by members set up with those formats.



David gives the crew a look behind the scenes at the Archive

When to say NO!!

Small volunteer run community museums such as AMMPT could be well advised to heed the message contained in a recent Public Health campaign aimed at avoiding teenage pregnancies. The natural urge is to accept all donated items, however the stage is soon reached where the organisation is swamped with duplicated offerings and no space to store or properly care for them. A museum without a fully functioning Accessioning Committee soon loses its discipline and purpose and all the original good work is for nothing. The ability to politely refuse donated items is a skill gained through experience and enhances the museum's chances of survival.

Here is something rather different from the usual technical focus of the items published in our Newsletter. It is a glimpse at the business achieved by a few first-class films shown at one city cinema in times long past. It is drawn from the one surviving volume that the cinema kept as a register of daily ticket sales and takings. Statistics are at the core of this article, but not in excessive quantity, we trust.

Those Money-Making Musicals

by AMMPT member Jack Honniball

Some great musicals of yesteryear feature prominently in the series of monthly film screenings being held to raise funds for the AMMPT at the Cygnet Cinema in South Perth. The first this year, **Naughty Marietta** was a big success when originally released and was the first of eight films that teamed Jeanette MacDonald and Nelson Eddy. It also enjoyed a place of honour in the history of Perth's leading cinema chain of the golden years, the Grand Theatre Company (or as it was later called, City Theatres).

With Jimmy Stiles its vigorous director, the local company surged ahead strongly when it played Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer product at the second house it acquired (in August 1934), the Theatre Royal. *Marietta* was its Christmas attraction of 1935, and gave Perth a long-run record of nine weeks. Five weeks had been the city's previous record, created in 1929 by the first 'talkie', **The Jazz Singer**, at the Prince of Wales Theatre.



The remodeled façade with a balcony and new cinema entrance.

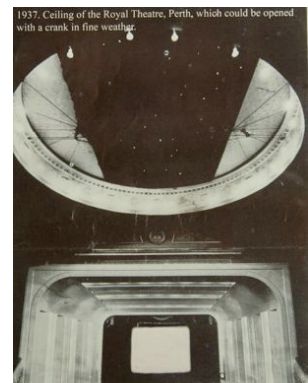
Built in 1897, the Royal was originally a stage theatre, and seated about 1450 in its three-tiered auditorium. Later as a cinema it generally presented three sessions daily, six days a week, as did most of its competitors in Perth. In its first 16 months under Stiles, it drew



The original Royal theatre building façade

average weekly admissions of 6724. Most of its offerings ran for two weeks, but attendance figures often dropped by as much as 50% for the second week.

After runs of 8 weeks in Sydney, 6 in Brisbane and 5 in Melbourne, *Marietta* was originally expected to do 4 weeks in Perth. The 9 weeks it achieved then was all the more remarkable against the heat of summer in the days before air conditioning. Was there a particular fondness for operetta in Perth perhaps?

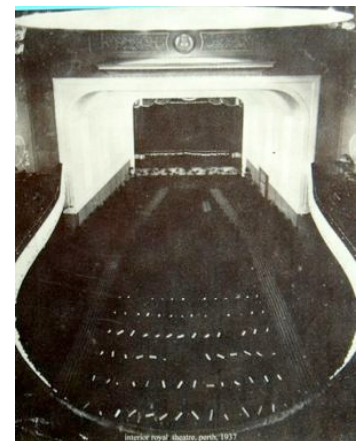


The ceiling dome opened to let in the cool night air

The simple fact was that the admission figures well and truly justified the film's holdover week after week. For Christmas week the total patronage was 9643 and it was even higher for New Year's week with 10642. Thereafter the successive figures were 8701, 9915, 10427, 8691, 7730, 9062 and 6829. Apparently the boosts shown in the figures for the fifth and eighth weeks to some extent reflected the complete changes in the supporting program as duly advertised. For apparently by this move many a patron was the more readily induced to see *Marietta* for a second time or more. Indeed one lady went to see it eleven times altogether, so it was reported in the weekly newspaper, *The Mirror*.

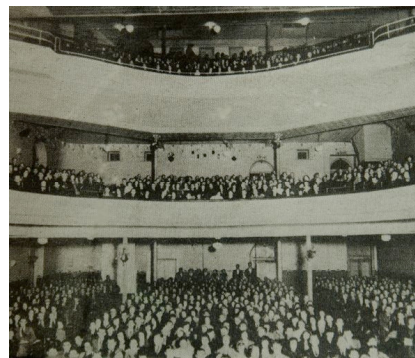
The grand total of admissions was 81640, and the weekly average worked out at 9071. The management added yet another feather to its cap when it learnt that the Royal had achieved a world record run for this film. As soon as *Marietta's* season ended, the Royal went dark for nearly a month in order to undergo major renovations. The new standard of comfort combined with a succession of excellent product and a healthier economy to improve the box office figures markedly. For the rest of 1936 the average weekly admissions stood at 7147, and then rose to 8058 in 1937.

The Royal's next best performer in this era was **San Francisco** with a run of 6 weeks and total paid admissions of 62951. One useful compendium has aptly described it as a 'disaster musical', although in fact its range of content could well fit it for classification under three or four genres.



This splendid film was the third of the classics shown in our current year's programme at the Cygnet and again pulled the crowds seventy two years after it first hit Perth Screens.

San Francisco opened at the Royal with a midnight remiere on 11/12 February 1937, which attracted a paying audience of 576. A new house record was created when it drew 16009 for the first week, and in the following weeks it went on to attract 14247, 10417, 9069, 6953 and 6256. All this in warm weather, and really hot at times.



The second MacDonald/Eddy musical, ***Rose Marie***, also warrants mention here, although not in our current series of classics to be shown. It too proved a worldwide success, but was rather slow in coming to screens in Australia and especially to Perth. It opened at the Royal on Christmas Eve of 1937 and created a new record with 18289 admissions in its first week. It then drew 15994 for the second and 11006 for the third. But there the surviving in house register runs out! However, it ran for 5 weeks, and a trade magazine reported total admissions of 60115. *Naughty Marietta* retained Perth's long-run record for seventeen years. It was eventually overtaken by the circus film, '***The Greatest Show on Earth***', which ran 10 weeks in the summer of 1953, again at the Royal.

Then in the 1960s long runs became quite remarkable for their frequency and their length. Many of the films concerned were treated to 'roadshow' release, which meant that their sessions were restricted to 12 or 14 a week. Musicals continued to figure prominently, Thus we had ***South Pacific*** playing 44 weeks at the Plaza in 1960-61, and ***The Sound of Music*** notching up 70 weeks in 1965-66 at the same cinema, by then renamed the Paris. Again the Royal was at the forefront with ***My Fair Lady*** running 68 weeks in 1965-66 and ***Paint Your Wagon*** also running 68 weeks in 1970-71. Clearly then, good musicals have brought exhibitors a lot of money and continue to do so, while contributing to the preservation of the industry's heritage.

Getting it right!

Articles published in our newsletter are derived from various sources, local, interstate and overseas. They are based on available information, which sometimes is incomplete or possibly misleading.

Where any new information is available or mistakes identified, we would appreciate learning of it ASAP so corrections can be made in the next edition.

Some examples of where we may have been, or proved to be wide of the mark are printed to the right.

It is hoped the preceding article shows the value of preserving some examples of business records pertaining to commercial film exhibition. Clearly they complement the technology in filling out the history of the exhibition industry.

About the author – Jack Honniball.

Jack is a retired librarian, having spent most of his career at the State library of W.A. He spent a lot of his time in the Battye Library of Western

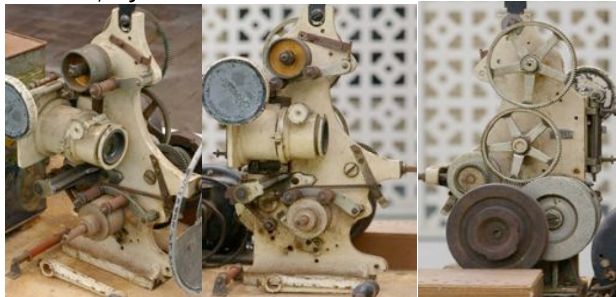


Australian history and was also in charge of the State Film Archives. With a keen interest in local cinema history, he collaborated with the late Barrie King, documenting a lot of the industry's early history. He has written articles for several journals over the years with his more recent pieces featuring in the KINO Cinema Quarterly magazine.

With the numbers employed in the local cinema and television industries shrinking to a size considered almost unthinkable five decades ago, it is up to those remaining, either still working or who can remember the details, to document this information before it is too late.

Identification required

In the November edition, we featured a donated projector that we were told was a Simplex, mainly due to the cast framing knob with that name. Because the machine had undergone many "modifications" during and after its butchering for sound operations, it is now thought to be a Pathe, or more exactly, due to its common use in classrooms of its era, a junior model known as a "Teacher's Pathe"



If anyone has more knowledge of this machine we would like you to email us at ammpt@iinet.net.au

Western Electric Engineer

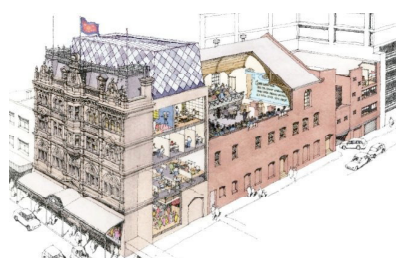
In the last edition, we incorrectly named the Western Electric engineer being farewelled from *The Prince of Wales theatre* in Perth after installing the sound system for *The Jazz Singer*, as Ray Derrit. Ian Stimson has pointed out his correct name is **Ray Devitt**

Salvation of industry heritage

Members recalling the March 2006 edition may remember the story about the birthplace of our industry – the Salvation Army Limelight Department and its film studios on top of the Bourke Street headquarters. At that time the building was in a state of disrepair. AMMPT member and the Salvos Territorial Archivist Lindsay Cox recently advised of a change of fortune, which may ultimately render the hallowed ground of the Limelight unit to again be accessible to the disciples of our industry. Lindsay reports;



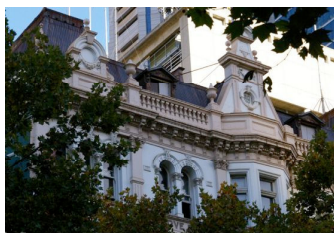
Built in 1891 by the YMCA, 69 Bourke Street is a grand old building retaining most of its original stately appointments; albeit somewhat over-painted and chipped and cracked with age. The Salvation Army purchased the premises in 1894 after the banks foreclosed on the YMCA during the depression and bank crash on 1892-4. As National Headquarters for The Salvation Army, it housed the Limelight Department's studios, playing an integral part in the production of the many pioneer motion pictures directed by Joseph Perry (including the famed production of *Soldiers of the Cross*).



The Limelight Department was suddenly closed down in 1909. The "life-model studio" at the rear of the building was altered to

become a Band Room; but the "attic studio" at the front became a storeroom for seemingly not required any more – it survives in its original paintwork and layout having been unused even as a store for over 30 years.

With the aid of "heritage" and "government" money, 69 Bourke Street is being restored to its former glory. Work has commenced under the guidance of an accomplished Conservation Architect (Michael Taylor), to strip away the layers of paint and inappropriate renovations and additions. Importantly, the original cast-iron verandah will be reinstated.



Perhaps the most exciting aspect is the clever addition of two addition upper floors, masked from the street by the Attic Studio, and,

importantly incorporating the heritage-listed, conserved studio into the new museum area. It's truly an archaeological dig butted onto a modern museum.

The "Attic Studio" part of the museum will be devoted to The Limelight Department and pioneer film production in Australia.

Cygnets developments

With the sudden death of AMMPT supporter and Cygnet cinema exhibitor, Eddie Herbert, the future of our monthly fund raising shows was in doubt. Fortunately the buildings owners have done a deal with AMMPT member Graham Kahn who will take over running of the cinema and who confirms it will be "business as usual". A special tribute screening to the work Eddie had done in restoring the cinema to its former glory will be held on July 19th. The event will also include the first public performance on our new theatre organ, recently donated by Don Walker.

The instrument will be played by local veteran organist John Fuhrmann who used to play at the Ambassadors and Metro cinemas in the city.



Graham Kahn, with John Fuhrmann at the keyboard

Returns from the monthly shows are growing with word-of-mouth publicity. The lounge and dress circle now have to be regularly opened. Live entertainment before the show is proving to be a popular drawcard, as well as the variety of old film favourites on the programme – selected to appeal to an audience of mainly the older demographic.



"The Quartz" quartet perform at the April screening

Cinema team coordinator George Robinson has been dependent on finding suitable product and has been supported by titles from the Melbourne film vaults of Chapel Distributors and the product knowledge of their crew. It is certainly an Australia wide team effort.



*Chapel Distribution crew
Left: Craige Blencoe and
Right: Mark Spratt.*

TV Exhibition changes

Recent tenancy changes at the Fremantle Arts Centre has resulted in the WA Museum being forced to leave the premises, thereby voiding the arrangements we had with them to stage our TV exhibition later this year. We have subsequently renegotiated with both parties re space availability and period of the display. Our exhibition **50 YEARS OF WA TV** will now be housed in a single larger gallery, instead of the previously arranged three smaller ones, running from **Monday October 5th to Friday December 4th**

The display will be open from 10 am to 4 pm 7 days a week. Due to museum personnel now not being on the premises, we will be more dependent on members to be available on roster to attend the gallery. Members living in the metropolitan area will be asked to indicate their preference of morning or afternoon roster times. Promotional support is now being given by the TVW7 reunion committee who are setting up a big birthday bash at the station for all ex employees.



The exhibition planning team discuss mock-up of gallery layout.

The four metropolitan stations and regional stations are all supporting and will be featured at the exhibition.

Donation of studio equipment

WIN TV and Channel 9 Perth recently made a generous donation of a large quantity of studio equipment as they changed over to digital operations. Storage space has always been a problem, but the offer of station boss Ian McCrae to



Above: Steve Nikola, Station Production and Operations Manager shows Terry Spence over the donated equipment.

keep the gear on site in the short term made life a lot easier.



Right: Bruce Dargie on left with Terry Spence after discovering a virtual treasure trove of forgotten photos and documents in a back room. These will feature in the exhibition.

Desperately seeking...AMPEX ACR 35

Southern Region Member John Flanagan is trying to locate one of these machines, most of which were believed to be cut up for scrap.

If you can help, please contact John on **0419 329 654**

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETINGS

The 2009 Annual General Meetings of both

AMMPT Western Region (Inc)

and

The Australian Museum of Motion Picture Technology (Inc)

will be held at **The Cygnet Cinema**, Preston St. Como
on

SUNDAY OCTOBER 4th 2009,

the regional meeting beginning at 10 am.

A formal notice with the agenda will be sent to all Members within the prescribed period.

PLEASE MARK IN YOUR DIARY NOW AND MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO ATTEND. THE FUTURE DIRECTION OF THE ORGANISATION DEPENDS ON YOUR VALUED INPUT.

So much news – so little time and space

One of the problems brought on by delaying each edition is the build-up of surplus material sent in for publication. Cost of printing and postage is also a limiting factor. Unfortunately this is the case today with some articles being deferred till next time.

- List of new members
- Perth born Oscar winning cinematographer
- New Mosaic cataloging software
- Admin data base on line
- Imax 3D visit and demo
- Archival film cans
- Prospects of new premises
- Cinema Technology - optimum screen shape
- Visit to Wongan Hills, etc.

AMMPT Contact details:

The Australian Museum of Motion Picture
Technology (Inc.)

ABN 73 111 667 924

and

AMMPT Western Region (Inc.)

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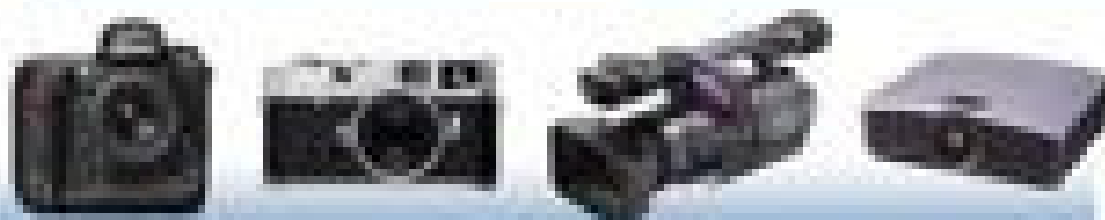


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