



# NEWSREEL



Edition Twenty Three

November 2010

the official publication of

**The Australian Museum of Motion Picture & Television (Inc.)**

Preserving the proud heritage of Australia's moving image industries for future generations

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## Looming collection crisis

The escalating advances in digital image capture, transmission and presentation are creating an increasing dilemma for organisations involved in the preservation of examples of the technology. The rapid obsolescence of digital equipment for both the professional and consumer markets is due to the unprecedented leapfrogging technical advances by competing manufacturers. With every significant development, another item needs to be added to the inventory of those attempting to acquire an example for their collection. The acquisition cost, storage space, and the ongoing expenses of restoration and preservation of these objects are looming as major challenges for AMMPT and kindred institutions.

The rapid and costly transition in recent years for home movie enthusiasts and the film exhibitors alike is already taking its toll. Cinema owners proposing to make the change to electronic projection are bound to develop ulcers making the decision. Also those who have already made a substantial commitment are concerned at the potential life span and return on their investment. 2K resolution was originally considered optimum, now 4K – where will it end? To add to concern, cinema chains and independent exhibitors may have noted the September announcement by Kodak of a revolutionary new system which some claim will make many existing digital installations obsolete.

The story of Kodak's venture into digital cinema projection in Australia goes back several years when it was involved in the installation of Theatre Management Systems to some 20 pioneering electronic venues. There was a bit of unease when Kodak suddenly announced in November 2009 it was moving out of the digital cinema business. The reason has now become obvious.

In September 2010 Kodak's website announced **"A REVOLUTIONARY CHANGE IN DIGITAL CINEMA PROJECTION BASED ON LASER LIGHT SOURCES"** (see photos page 4)

The media release continued;

### **"- KODAK Laser Projection Technology**

**You've seen digital.** You've seen 3D. Now you can see the future. Welcome to Laser. KODAK Laser Projection Technology combines the strengths of lasers with digital projection to deliver more than just a new light source to the cinema industry. This unique full projector optical design leverages the best attributes of lasers to deliver high dynamic range, wide color gamut, high optical efficiency, low energy usage and substantially brighter 3D than systems common to the industry, while at the same time resolving laser's toughest problem — laser speckle. Kodak has developed a proof-of-concept prototype projector utilizing KODAK Laser Projection Technology.

This revolutionary projection technology proves the viability of using lasers in the motion picture exhibition industry — delivering: Combined 2D and 3D projection capability • Bright 3D images, twice as bright as those common in the industry • High dynamic range and wide color gamut performance • High power efficiency • DCI capable 2K resolution scalable to 4K • Since the invention of lasers some 50 years ago, engineers and scientists have made many attempts to use the technology for high quality motion picture projection. With KODAK Laser Projection Technology... ..now you can".

The days of spluttering carbon arcs, heavy six reel trunks, and 2000' changeovers are almost historical industry relics. Soon bio boxes will possibly be omitted from architects concepts for new cinemas – the whole operation controlled and monitored from the manager's office. With these profound changes, it is up to those who remain to document and preserve examples of the past for the information and enjoyment of future generations.

On the amateur/consumer front, the amount of narrow gauge film and early electronic equipment being offered to museums or being taken to the tip is staggering. The obsolescence factor appears to be far greater than any other consumer commodity on the market. The editor has experienced first hand of being caught up in the promotional whirlpool of this technology. A few years ago he succumbed to family pressure and installed a then state-of-the-art multi-media projector in his home cinema, alongside the trusty 35mm and 16mm gear. He selected a top of the range Texas Instrument model, re-badged as a 3M machine. After two years of hardly any use, a component in its internal power supply failed. Despite nearly six months of trying to get the machine fixed, 3M eventually advised him the spare part was no longer available. With over \$6000 down the drain, one ponders the reaction of cinema owners who fall victim to the same relentless stampede of changing technology in their industry.

If standards continue to be revised at this pace, it is imperative AMMPT and similar moving image focused institutions collect and preserve technical manuals and other supportive information to ensure future generations have an understanding of the inner workings and operation of items in their collection. Without such material, even the most significant design advancement in the equipment could go un-noticed. With limited budgets and space, government archives and museums will be hard pressed to meet this challenge. Volunteer community based groups such as AMMPT have limited resources at their disposal.

It is about time those local and multi national companies who are profiting from this flood of technology begin to contribute something towards preserving its heritage.

# President's Report 2010

The past twelve months has been one of great satisfaction and some frustration. Satisfaction with the increasing public profile of our organisation here in Western Australia, evidenced by the growing number of items offered for donation, and the new membership applications. With the recent application by the GWN regional network, and with all four Perth metropolitan channels now represented amongst our membership, the decision to make the recent name change is vindicated. We now need to actively recruit new members from this industry, especially those able to assist with accession of related items.

The continual growth of our bank account, mainly due to receipts from our monthly shows at the Cygnet has allowed us to make purchases of capital items necessary for the increasing administration tasks required by activities such as temporary exhibitions and the new film library. Opportunities have existed to apply for grant funding, but due to various circumstances, we have had to forego them.

Special events and other publicity during the year have attracted new members and created a community awareness of our existence and objectives. The feedback from the Fremantle TV exhibition has been positive, and has resulted in the Western Australian Museum donating the acrylic display cabinets being used at our display for our future use. We are grateful to Liz and Peter Kirkham for providing temporary storage space for these units, as well as to Fred Clausen for storing the TVW display cabinets and panels, plus our shipping container and other AMMPT items on his property.

However they say there is never any gain without some pain.

Six years down the track and we are still looking for a permanent central storage site for our growing collection and a home at which to base operations. Only this month we have had to move a lot of heavy equipment from one temporary site to another, while trying to make room for more items being donated. One of the problems is the scattering of donated items over various sites. However generic separation is slowly happening, allowing the Registrar and the cinema accession team to be more time effective in their tasks. We still need active and self motivated teams to tackle the television related items, and also the amateur and consumer equipment.

During recent years we have been accepting image related donations which do not fit into our focused collection criteria. These have aggravated the storage problem and will soon have to be disposed of, once the accession teams have identified these and other items we do not need. Ongoing efforts by all to locate storage appear must be encouraged, considering the diversity of our membership and the potential contacts they could have.

Although we managed to schedule several interesting member events during the year, the lack of a regular monthly schedule and meeting place was needed. Fortunately we have now arranged for a permanent central venue where we will be having regular monthly meetings including screening films from our new library, technical discussions, viewing recently donated items, quiz nights and other social events. These will be held on the third Wednesday of each month, with details circulated in our Newsletter or by special notice.

Members would be aware of the uncertainty of our future screenings at the Cygnet due to plans to redevelop the site. Part of the success of this project has been the appeal of a heritage listed old suburban cinema and its programming. If we have to abandon the venue, our revenue stream will dry up. Members are urged to consider other means of creating regular income, because we would not exist purely on annual subscriptions. Creation of special projects for grant funding will be high on the future agenda.

Other concerns during the year include our website and the need to get more newsletters out to members. While Agnes Foyster has stepped in as Membership Secretary and also as Assistant Secretary, the urgency of getting a "full time" volunteer Secretary to attend to the important task of member communication and dealing with administrative matters is becoming critical. I am very much aware of my increasing inability as Acting Secretary to follow through on important matters due to the diversity of other urgent issues arising for my attention.

After six years as President, it is time to give someone else with fresh ideas the opportunity to take our organisation forward and for me to consider what position I should nominate for at the next AGM. Members should seriously think about a suitable replacement for the role of President and not leave it to "someone else" to look for a Secretary. I intend to concentrate on liaising with our interstate members and building the regional branches to create the same enthusiasm for our project which we enjoy here.

Which brings me to the frustration – the tyranny of time, distance and cost. This limits our ability to adequately promote our objectives and to get significant numbers of industry personnel in the other States interested in our project and being pro-active in preserving their local heritage. Although we have a slowly increasing interstate membership, and were pleased to recently receive the Liverpool Plains Shire Council in N.S.W. and ACMI in Melbourne on board as Corporate members, we are still having difficulty in forming local committees. My trip earlier this year revealed there was plenty of enthusiasm amongst individual members, but the desire to work collectively by forming local committees was another matter. Attempts to attract the support of high profile industry identities yielded little interest, nor has numerous media releases sent to both print and TV outlets in other regions been given any exposure. It will be a shame if those who are sitting on the mother lode of Australia's film and television industry heritage fail to grasp this long overdue opportunity to take collective positive action to preserve and display significant fast disappearing memorabilia.

Finally, my role as President during the year has been fruitful due to the support of a dedicated committee and others who showed practical support for our various projects. I also appreciate the continuing membership of those, who, through various reasons, are unable to attend our events. I am also conscious of our interstate members who receive nothing for their annual subs except an occasional newsletter. I appreciate they are hanging in with us till hopefully meaningful activity starts to take place in their own region.

I look forward to the final 12 months of my current term as President and seek the active involvement and support of those who are able to participate in our association's varied activities of their choice.

## Finally, a regular venue

During the past six years, one of our ongoing concerns was the lack of regular scheduled events or meeting place. Despite several attempts to lock in on a convenient venue, the opportunity to meet and socialise with other members and their families fell short of expectations.

The committee has now managed to lock in on access to a central modern hall with all the necessary facilities. It will enable us to hold a variety of functions including committee meetings, technical discussions, display of new donations, film shows, quiz nights and the like. Full catering, bar and barbecue facilities are included as well as abundant adjacent parking. All it needs now is for all of us to suggest and arrange functions of interest which would also attract and retain new members.

The venue is a popular facility which is almost totally booked out by various community groups. It is the RSL East Victoria Park Sub branch hall, in Fred Bell Parade, a short street off Hill View terrace and a short distance from the Curtin Uni campus. The hall is located at the top of the hill amongst trees overlooking tennis courts and other sporting areas.



We have managed to secure a regular booking next year in the evening of the

**3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of each month.**

**Please mark these days in your diary now.**

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## Film library news

Following a premature start to our 16mm lending library during which an animated feature was seriously damaged while on loan and another silent film classic “went missing” after being taken by a person who wanted to join AMMPT to access the library, a strict set of conditions have been established in order to protect our valuable asset. Every Member wishing to use the film library will be required to agree to those conditions. The library will officially begin operation on January 1<sup>st</sup> 2011

Graeme Lacey has taken on the role of film librarian in charge of the library and is being assisted by new Member Keith Rutherford. The job of sifting through the 6000 titles to select those suitable for retention and inclusion in our catalogue is currently in progress. Graeme would welcome assistance from other members prepared to hasten this process. A film hire catalogue is being compiled which will be available to members who register with Graeme as a “borrower” for which only financial AMMPT members will be eligible. Tony Smith is arranging for some of the more interesting titles to be listed for screening at our regular meeting nights next year in conjunction with other activities.

## Conflicting interests

How do you handle a perceived conflict of interest of members of a volunteer based community museum who are also recognised private collectors in their own right. This is a dilemma faced by many special focus museum groups who must weigh up the advantages of having the knowledge and expertise of the collectors available to the organisation, against the potential of competition for acquisition of objects coveted by both interests.

Since our cinema and television industry began, collection of most of the obsolete but significant items from these areas has been the province of private collectors and enthusiasts. Apart from those objects acquired over recent years by Federal and State archives and museums, the industry has to thank these dedicated individuals from saving many important items from going to the tip or falling into the hands of overseas collectors. While some individuals covet memorabilia for their own personal enjoyment and give scant regard to their preservation, others lovingly restore objects to display standard and make them available for public display. AMMPT has been fortunate to have been loaned these items from its members to enhance their own collection at recent exhibitions.

The perception of divided loyalty arises when it is known that objects are available for donation to the group’s collection. Members with the appropriate expertise must be selected to visit the prospective donor to determine the suitability of what is offered. As has happened with AMMPT, the only members with the necessary knowledge were private collectors of the same objects. The situation exists where that Member is in a position to decide what should go into the communal collection and what will be available to others. Clearly an uncomfortable position for all concerned.

Ideally, knowledgeable members without personal collection agendas should be asked to select the offered items. In reality, they may not be available. To avoid a collector member being placed in a situation where a conflict of interest could be perceived and to protect their integrity, at least two members, one of which must be a non collector, should inspect and make the decision on what should be acquired for AMMPT’s collection. It should also be made clear to the donor what was required by our organisation and what they should dispose of elsewhere. The Registrar should provide the inspection team with our Donor/Deed of Gift forms for completion and signing by the donor at time of pick-up.

There should be no argument where a donor has first offered private collectors objects for their own inventories and the member subsequently offers items not required to the AMMPT collection. At the end of the day, it is up to the integrity of all involved in community organisations and for them to have established procedures in place to ensure the risk of perception of any impropriety is minimised.

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## New Members

The President and Committee welcome our new Members;

- GWN Television
- Keith Rutherford
- John Fuhrmann
- Russell Goodrick

# Ambassadors display

Members were treated to an extensive display of photos and other memorabilia related to the old Ambassadors theatre in Hay St. Perth. They were guests of Ivan King,



Above: Ivan with a poster of the 1933 Cinesound production, *In the wake of the Bounty*, directed by Charles Chauvel.

curator of the Museum of Performing Arts, located in the basement of His Majesty's Theatre. Many objects had never before been seen by most whom attended, and were donated to Ivan's collection many years before AMMPT was conceived. Items from adjacent theatres in Hay St. were also on display such as old poster boards from the Royal



Ambassadors interior



Marian Napier-Winch, Ross McDonald and Jack Honniball



Installing the first silent Simplex equipment in the bio box

# The C&W story

Perhaps the most detailed presentation ever made of the history of the Cummings and Wilson company and affiliated cinema projection equipment manufacturers was made at the September members meeting at the Curtin University. It was the culmination of several years of research, visits to various state libraries and archives, and a Fellowship at the NFSA in Canberra. The presentation by former AMMPT Registrar Richard Ashton also covered other Australian companies such as Raycophone and their distribution and installation arrangements. Working details and descriptive parts lists of the many C&W models are included in extensive manuals he



has produced on the subject. Richard is currently compiling a list of all models of C&W known to still exist together with their location and serial numbers. He would like to hear from anyone who can supply this information. Richard can be contacted through AMMPT by email [ammpt@inet.net.au](mailto:ammpt@inet.net.au)



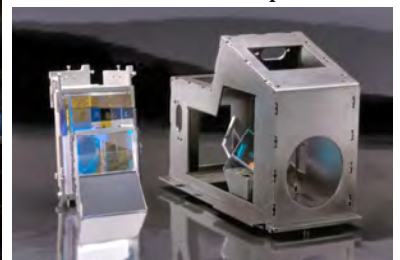
A video record was made of Richard's presentation, and after editing and post production, will be made available to AMMPT members.

## Laser projector prototype

See story front page



Below: Barco & Kodak prism



# Search for South-west cinema memorabilia

A special event is being planned to commemorate the legacy of the southwest's pioneering traveling picture show man **Allan Jones** and of 50 years of continuous operation of the States only remaining purpose built country drive-in cinema. Also to draw attention to the need to locate any remaining artifacts or photos of the days of the country based film exhibitors and the contribution they made to the social cohesion of many remote communities.

To mark the occasion, the Australian Museum of Motion Picture & Television (Inc.) and the cinema owner operator and AMMPT member Ron Jones are presenting a special double feature programme and a 1960's themed display at the Drive-in on Friday December 3<sup>rd</sup>.

The film programme has been supplied by the National Film & Sound Archive. They include the iconic Australian produced titles **The Picture Show Man**, starring John Meillon and Rod Taylor, a story based in outback N.S.W. This parallels the showmanship life of Allan and Doll Jones from the silent movie days as they provided film entertainment to the tiny timber mill towns in the South-west till they built their own permanent picture theatres and drive-ins throughout the region, of which Busselton is the only venue remaining in operation. The other feature is **The Man From Snowy River**. The programme will also include a newsreel taken of Allan when he operated a cinema museum in the now re-configured Allan theatre in Busselton.

Photographs, equipment and other memorabilia from the days of the Allan Jones Circuit Pictures will also be on display. The public will be able to purchase car speakers, film spools and other reminders of the days when drive-ins provided a generation of teenagers and others with a regular meeting place and family entertainment.

To recreate the atmosphere of those heady days, a local radio station will provide rock and roll music before the show from 6.00 pm, where those who are still physically able, can turn the clock back 50 years. Local vintage cars, one being the model used by Allan Jones as he traveled from town to town, will also be on display. Food will be available at the kiosk from 6.00 pm. To ensure everyone gets a clear view of the screen, the Busselton Scout Troop will be available to wash windscreens in return for a small donation towards their activities.

Members of the AMMPT Cygnet cinema team will also be there in uniform to assist and add to the colour of the occasion. Other members and their families are expected to attend, perhaps incorporating a short holiday in the nearby wine producing region of Margaret River.

AMMPT is appealing to residents in the South-west region to let them know of the existence of any cinema related equipment, photographs or other memorabilia. It is their intention to collaborate with local community museums to arrange displays depicting the cinema heritage of each area. Unless urgent positive action is taken to record and preserve the stories of these pioneering film entrepreneurs, a colourful and significant chapter in Australia's social history risks being lost forever.

50th!  
ANNIVERSARY  
**BUSSELTON  
DRIVE-IN**

And to celebrate this momentous occasion, 2 Great Australian Movies!  
**FRIDAY DECEMBER 3RD**  
from 7.30pm with pre-show entertainment from 6pm!

**The Picture Show Man**  
Print courtesy of the National Film and Sound Archive of Australia

**NATIONAL FILM & SOUND ARCHIVE AUSTRALIA**

Put your glad-rags on and enjoy the 60's-themed evening!

**MEMORABILIA ON SALE**

**THE MAN FROM SNOWY RIVER** PG  
Print courtesy of the National Film and Sound Archive of Australia's Kodak/Atabo Collection

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BUSSELTON-DUNSBOROUGH



*Bruce Dargie (left) with Ron Jones at the Drive-in. Bruce designed the promotional material for the event.*

## Additions to the Collection

During recent months our members have been active in collecting several donated items. Recent media coverage of our activities has enhanced the public awareness of our activities. While this is encouraging, unfortunately it places greater pressure on our already stretched scattered storage sites. While there has been a considerable amount of television related items offered, the selection criteria of significant items has had to be more discerning than previously due to limited storage space and the shortage of suitably qualified members to restore and preserve these items.

One of the donations received in recent months was located in a shed on a farm near Kellerberrin. Telstra people contacted AMMPT to advise they were taking the contents of the shed,

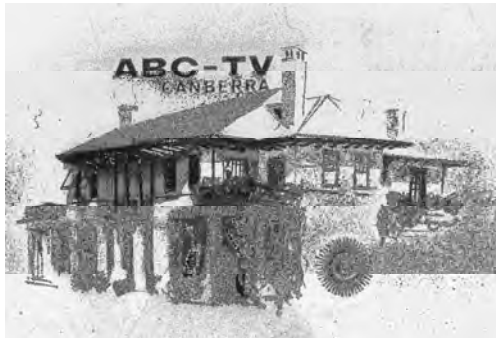


*Ian inspects an old transmitter cabinet belonging to his old employer, Southwest Telecasters of Bunbury, now GWN.*

being eleven TV transmitter units and other items to the local tip the following day. Ian Stimson and Clive Woodward were available to travel at short notice to the wheatbelt with a trailer and identify what could be salvaged.

Some significant smaller items, such as a complete translator station re-transmitter were recovered for AMMPT, as well as other interesting items of significance to other States in Australia from which the equipment had been purchased. Amongst the slide and caption machines were a number of transparencies, obviously left in the equipment when the gear was shipped out to the west.

*An example of the forgotten skills of the graphic artist at Channel 3 in Canberra, well before today's computer generated art work.*



## Almost too late

Expectations run high when a call is received from a person saying they have an old 9.5mm projector and film to donate. It will be quite a challenge to bring this termite attacked and badly corroded Pathe Baby back to display condition.



## From Fox studios

The camera crane, articulated hydraulic dolly, a 8Kw HMI lamp head and replica display model of a Panavision camera were donated by FTI in Fremantle.



*Simon Akkerman (seated above) and FTI technician Glen Adams*

The equipment was purchased from Fox Studios in Sydney by



Kosmic Sound for display purposes and later given to FTI.

The equipment will be refurbished to display condition by AMMPT members, camera and crane by Simon Akkerman, assisted by his brother Karl, and the camera model by John Jeffery.



## From NEW Channel 10 Perth

Clive Woodward received a call from Channel Ten saying they were about to take a heap of obsolete equipment to the tip and wondered if AMMPT or he would be interested in it. Clive was

delegated to have a look over the gear and retrieve a range of equipment and was assisted by Keith Coote in selecting several items suitable for our collection.



*L-R: Andrew MacDonald - Snr. Broadcast Technician, Clive, Brian Handley - Station Broadcast Engineer and Dave Newton - Station Operations Manager with trailer load of equipment.*



*Left: Equipment selected for AMMPT collection.*

*... and into storage.*



*Fred Clausen and Graeme Lacey identify donations before being recorded by Registrar Ross McDonald (seated) and placed in storage.*

#### Business Plan revision

With continually changing circumstances, it is important we keep focused on achievable objectives and modify our Business Plan accordingly. Screenwest has helped Assistant Secretary Agnes Foyster in devising a suitable professional template which can be tailored for many applications.

Vice President Harry Smith and Agnes Foyster check over the new Business Plan.



#### Membership Directory

The call in the last edition for members interested in being included in a proposed membership Directory yielded little response, prompting a further call to those on email if they wanted to be listed. This time, the only information to be listed was the member's name and email address which evidently has more appeal, judging by the positive response. Ian Stimson will be closing off entries at the end of this year, so those still wanting to be included on the list contact him on 9537 6577 or [stimo@primus.com.au](mailto:stimo@primus.com.au).

#### Annual General Meeting

Members were given detailed reports on current and proposed activities and continuing attempts to find a secure central storage area for the collection. Refreshments were provided during which a presentation of photos taken of interstate Members and their collections was screened.

#### Admin systems upgrade

Treasurer Peter Foyster is continually upgrading our admin data base and will soon be including our film library, as well as other communication data. He has also assisted Registrar Ross McDonald familiarise himself with the IT application of our Mosaic Collection Cataloguing system.



Ross(left) and Peter test out new systems

#### Hedley's humour hangs in.

During the early days of the Cygnet screenings, Hedley Sims was a regular volunteer, in charge of rostering the pre-show live entertainment. Despite now having continuing massive doses of chemotherapy and other treatment, Hedley has not lost his legendary sense of humour. His regular visits to SCGH for the chemo sessions are referred to as being topped up with battery acid. He wishes to inform members that while Valmae and he are unable to attend events as regularly as before, they are with us in spirit. We wish Hedley a return to good health and enjoying his company in the near future.

Members were saddened to learn of the death of John on September 3<sup>rd</sup>, a respected member of the WA cinema community and a previous editor of the AMMPT newsletter. John started his film industry career working for Columbia Pictures in the despatch dept. He went on to manage and operate many city and country cinemas and drive-ins, eventually buying the Dowerin Drive-in from industry legend Paddy Baker



Space limitations preclude a fuller account of John's rich experiences in and contribution to the local cinema industry, but it is hoped fellow members may be able to produce a fitting article for publication in future additions of *Newsreel*.

#### Brian Chirlian

Brian started and ran Ajax films, the Sydney studio responsible for many prize winning TV commercials. With the start of the feature film industry Ajax made such early successes as They're a Weird Mob, Age of Consent, Wake in Fright and the popular television series, Woobinda-Animal Doctor. Brian worked at Ajax in Neutral Bay as well as Bondi Junction in the old Cinesound Studio.

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