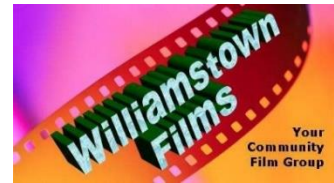


WILLIAMSTOWN FILM SOCIETY

www.williamstown-film-society.org

Last Wednesday of the month, 7:30pm at the Council Chamber,
Williamstown Town Hall, Ferguson Street, Williamstown, 3016



AGM

30th October 2024

President's Report

I would like to begin by acknowledging the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung and Bunurong people, Traditional Custodians of the land on which we gather today, and pay my respects to their Elders past and present. I extend that respect to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples here today.'

I was saddened to hear of the death of **Cyril Curtain** in October 2024. Cyril was a founding member of the Williamstown High School Ex-students Association Film Group in 1949, which would become the WFS in the mid-50s. The foreshore reserve which includes the Williamstown Football Ground, is named after Cyril, a long-time resident of Williamstown. I knew the family home on The Esplanade quite well as I used to listen to Jethro Tull records with his son Roger during our high school days. Roger died in 2023. May they both Rest in Peace.

Thank you to everyone for another enjoyable year of film watching as the WFS. It doesn't happen without effort from many - the committee, council venue staff and of course our loyal membership.

The Council Chamber at the Williamstown Town Hall is well loved by our membership. It is comfortable, central, easily accessible, with close parking (especially when we are the sole event). Apart from issues with daylight leaking in through the windows at the height of summer, conditions for watching films are quite good. The height of the screen for reading subtitles can be an issue and needs some creative thinking to find a simple, easy solution. It may mean sourcing a different kind of screen. Any ideas welcome.

A big thank you to HBCC venue staff who have assisted us on screening nights. They are obliging and only too keen to help when they can and have been happy to go the extra yard. It has been appreciated by the committee and members of the WFS.

In early 2023 it was communicated to the FS that from July of 2023 we would be required to pay venue hire fees. To date that has not eventuated. In January of this year, 2024, Maria Kouppas (WFS secretary) and I met with Janet Dawes at the council offices in Civic Parade, Altona. It was a polite and courteous meeting. Janet listened as we explained our position, our history and what the WFS does in terms of providing and building social connections within the community. We also explained our disappointment with the manner in which the topic of venue hire fees was raised. Acknowledging our concerns Janet waived the fees for the end of 2023 and the first half of 2024. She also made us aware of the Small Community Grants scheme, which we applied for and received (\$500) in early 2024. We have also applied for the same grant again for 2025.

However, there has not been any communication from HBCC to date, regarding the requirement of WFS to pay venue-hire fees for use of the Chamber. We have not chased them either! At the moment it remains a wait and see proposition.

On the topic of venues, I (Michael Slee) joined a Mechanic's Institute Interest Group. This Council established group is reviewing plans for the future development of the Mechanics Institute in Electra Street, for a long time the home of the WFS. I will keep you posted.

Attendances to our screenings have remained around the 40 mark, with a peak of 49 for *The Court Jester*, our final film of 2023. 48 attended our May screening of *Quartet*, but our audience dipped to 21 in July with some 1970s Sci-Fi, *Silent Running*. More than once in the lead up to our July screening I was told the 'Sci-Fi is not my thing' but those who attended were pleasantly surprised with a thoughtful, environmental story touchingly told. Regardless of the type of films we screen our audiences usually respond extremely positively. One small gauge of our programming success is the Starbox. Of our 9 films so far this year, 7 have scored 4.4 Stars out of a possible 5. It is impossible to please everyone but we do pretty well, especially when we intentionally curate a program of diversity. As I said last year, the committee should take a bow for their programming.

In 2023 we trialled a volunteer supper roster. A suggestion of Annie Link to spread the load, it continued again in 2024. Annie was happy to coordinate the roster and we had little trouble filling the spots on the calendar with members teaming up on some occasions. We decided to put a limit of two on the variety of treats to keep preparation to a minimum. It has been fun with old school treats like chocolate crackles bringing back nostalgic memories. Are we happy to continue with the supper roster?

The same can be said for our lucky door prizes. A bit of simple fun which helps to re-focus our attention as a group at the end of our cuppa and chat. The opportunity to mix and discuss 'the film story so far' is an important part of our screenings. Once again, we have put a limit of prizes to no more than three. Short and sweet is good.

Once again, the simple promotional device of our annual calendar and monthly fliers displayed in all library branches in Hobsons Bay area have led to a trickle of new members. Thank you to the staff at the Williamstown branch for being so obliging and taking an interest, often asking 'what's on this month?' Thanks also for the support of local state member, Melissa Horne M.P., and the staff in her office, who very generously do all of our printing - that's another chat about movies when collecting our printing (they also printed our AGM material).

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We receive positive feedback regarding the WFS website. It has been 'found' by quite a number of new members over the last few years, particularly some moving into the area and searching for connections. Coupled with my 'Wednesday Update email' which commenced with the launch of the website back in 2020. I enjoy alerting members to our forthcoming screenings, website inclusions and the gossipy what Therese & I have been watching. I get even more enjoyment reading members replies, particularly when they let me know of their intention to come to the next film. Return suggestions for TV viewing have been taken and enjoyed. In all seriousness these simple acts of regular communication are important as they help build and strengthen the bonds within our group.

As I have hopefully made clear there are many elements which contribute to the success of the Williamstown Film Society – the monthly Newsletter, our website, the annual calendar of films, supper volunteers and the committee of course. If you would like to participate let us know, we'd love your help. Are you a budding projectionist? Are you good at putting up screens? Do you have a hankering to help us update our constitution? This task has been pencilled in for 2025. None of us are getting any younger and it's always good to learn new things.

In conclusion, it is important and also my pleasure to thank those individuals and organisations which enable the WFS to do what it does.

The Hobson's Bay City Council, Mr Marcus Cassidy-Anderson, Garth Sheridan from Venues Department and the technicians on Wednesday nights in particular. Mentioned earlier but I'd rather make sure rather than forget.

Thank you to the FVFS (Federation of Victorian Film Societies) for their advice and support in the day-to-day running of a film society. I regularly check their online resources particularly when sourcing screening rights. FVFS information days are invaluable and fun with the added bonus of networking. If anyone would like to attend one of the information days, simply let a committee member know. There's an upcoming event in early December in Gippsland!

The Committee of the WFS are terrific – Barbara Sloan, Marilyn McIntyre, Ross Dufty, Pat Duncan, Andrew Radwadowski, Jack Neill (projectionist), Maria Kouppas (secretary) and Dimi Simeonidis (treasurer). A special mention to Allan Park who nominated and joined the committee in November of 2023. Allan is assisting Dimi with treasurer's duties and has made quite an impact already. Earlier in October the committee convened to plan the 2025 program. Our get togethers are productive and great fun. The announcement of next year's schedule of films is not far away, so keep an eye on our website.

Last but not least thanks to our loyal members. Nothing beats watching a movie with an audience. Without your reactions the Council Chamber would be pretty quiet. If you keep turning up, so will we and we'll keep challenging you, ever so gently.

Michael Slee

President

Williamstown Film society

14th October 2024