

INTRODUCTION

The first attempts to begin a film ‘appreciation’ society in Wellington in the 1930s foundered on the opposition of the film trade, jealous of every film-going penny, and on the organisers’ vain hope that their impeccable seriousness would exempt them from the processes of film censorship.

The Wellington Film Institute, which was instigated at a public meeting a decade later, in October, 1945, is seen as the foundation stone of the current Film Society movement. Its beginning is widely attributed to the influence of Gordon Mirams, a film censor and critic, whose book, *Speaking Candidly: Films and People in New Zealand* was published that year, and who, twenty years after it had been made, was still hoping some day to see *Battleship Potemkin* reach these shores.



The famous ‘Odessa Steps’ sequence in Sergei Eisentein’s *Battleship Potemkin* 1926.

New Zealand’s cities seemed much further apart in those days and independent groups in Auckland, Christchurch, Dunedin and Invercargill had begun to import their own films before the end of 1946. In February 1947 these groups held their first conference in Wellington, founded the New Zealand Film Institute, and began to collaborate on the importing and distribution of films that otherwise would never be seen here. In the ensuing sixty years, no other organisation has put more films onto New Zealand screens.

During that time the Film Society has also played a crucial role in nurturing film culture in New Zealand. You will find the Film Society implicated in the beginnings of the Film Commission, the Film Archive and, of course, the annual Film Festivals, currently our most influential contribution to the ever expanding options available to New Zealand filmgoers.

Film Societies continue, year round, to present a wealth of movies which might not otherwise make it to New Zealand cinema screens. In the 21st century DVDs make it possible to run your own personal screening programme in the privacy of your own home, but that can never compare with the experience of sampling the best in international filmmaking with a group of fellow cinema enthusiasts. If there’s not already a Film Society in your neighbourhood, maybe it’s time there was. Making that happen is largely up to you.

This booklet will tell you everything you need to know about organising a Film Society in your community, but please do not hesitate to contact the federation’s officers if you have any questions at all. We’ll be happy as well to put you in touch with other people running Societies near you. Nobody is better qualified to tell you about the pitfalls and the pleasures, the trials and the rewards of running New Zealand’s longest running and only truly independent movie network.

Bill Gosden
Director
New Zealand Film Festival Trust
December 2007

Bill Gosden was director of the New Zealand Federation of Film Societies Inc from 1981 until 1996. He is currently the director of the New Zealand Film Festival Trust, established by the Federation in 1996 to take responsibility for the annual international film festivals.

THE NEW ZEALAND FEDERATION OF FILM SOCIETIES

The Federation is an umbrella organisation which oversees the interests of some dozen or so affiliated Film Societies throughout the country. It negotiates for and acquires films for distribution, it sets national policy, gives practical and legal advice and generally assists in the running of the affiliated Societies. Membership of the Federation is open to any incorporated, approved Film Society of 30 or more whose rules comply with the Federation's non-profit, non-political aims and objectives. Smaller groups may be able to become a sub-branch of a Film Society nearby (see page 11).

The Federation is maintained by a film levy from affiliated Societies based on the membership of each Society, and whatever grants the Federation can acquire. This funding enables the Federation to share with the Film Festivals a full-time office in Wellington, and finances the acquisition of new film titles each year. Film Societies may borrow as many films as they like from the Federation's Permanent Collection each year at no additional charge. The work of the Federation is regulated by a Management Committee which is elected and guided by the Annual General Meeting of the Federation.

A draft programme is sent to each Society before Christmas and their programming committees are asked to comment on the selected programme noting any titles that may not appeal to their particular members, and proposing titles from the Permanent Collection that they might prefer. Catalogues, with detailed information on each title, follow soon afterwards. Programme confirmations are sent out to Societies in January. Most Film Societies operate from February or March to November or early December.

What is a Film Society?

There is a key difference between operating commercially and operating as part of the Federation of Film Societies. Should a group of people in an area which has no local commercial exhibitor wish to screen 16 mm films or DVDs for their own enjoyment, they need not necessarily form a Film Society. They can contact commercial distributors of 16 mm and DVD films and rent films for such screenings (see page 20). The Federation cannot rent films to such groups which choose to operate 'commercially'.

Commercial Operators must record details of all tickets sold and then pay the distributors an agreed percentage of the takings for the hire of the films. This requires sophisticated accounting and the employment of someone with office skills. It would also involve the operator in various commercial requirements linked to employment law and the IRD!



The Film Society movement operates differently. It shares the cost of the Wellington Office located in the same building and with some of the same staff as the International Film Festival of which Bill Gosden is the director. Michael McDonnell is the staff member responsible for sourcing a fresh programme for Film Societies each year. The Federation also has a substantial (but aging) permanent collection of films on the 16mm format. These films are obtained from the suppliers to be screened on a 'non theatrical' basis. The Federation makes a one-off payment to the distributors which is not tied to the number of people attending. This means that film-goers cannot be charged for each individual screening. Instead they have to pay an annual membership fee - \$45.00 of which goes to the Federation. Individual Film Societies will need to charge more to cover their costs. The general principle is that nobody makes a profit. We are 'non-profit' making clubs (although, hopefully you will have an annual surplus!) and we screen most of our films to 'members only'. There are a few films such as those supplied by the New Zealand Film Commission or the Goethe Institut where we are permitted to charge members of the public for a single screening – but these are the exception. However, it is possible to offer a 'sample membership' which allows someone to attend any three films of their choice (typically this costs them \$25 or \$30 of which \$12 is paid to the Federation).

Some of the films that Michael gets for the Federation's use are on the 35mm format used by commercial cinemas. These require a very expensive projector. So, many societies come to some arrangement with a local commercial cinema to screen there once a week or once a fortnight or only when a 35mm print is programmed. If possible it is best to agree an annual payment to the cinema based on a 'per member' formula. If the theatre management ask for a flat 'per screening' payment there is a danger that you could go bankrupt half way through the season if your membership does not reach the expected level. The 'per member' system can often be sold to the cinema on the basis that if you do well they will get more than they might for the flat rate.

The Federation's 16mm prints can be screened on a relatively cheap projector. Many schools now have one lying in a store room somewhere. If possible one with a 'xenon lamp' should be used as you will need its brightness for a larger venue.

Finally, there are digital (more accurately 'electronic') projectors now available. (see page 6). Michael is sourcing more and more films on DVD format and it is possible that some will begin to be added to the Federation's permanent collection.

In summary, a Film Society can be described as a “non-profit cultural body formed to encourage the appreciation of film from the point of view of art and education, as well as entertainment, by supplementing the film fare provided by local commercial exhibitors, and by hosting seminars, discussions and social events”. A Film Society is, therefore, complementary to the service provided by local commercial exhibitors.

STARTING A FILM SOCIETY

In order to run an efficient and successful Film Society, you will require the following:-

- at least one 16 mm projector and/or a digital projector
- competent projectionists
- a good venue for screening
- an enthusiastic committee to carry out the duties

Assuming you can foresee the above being quite manageable within your area, the first step in starting a Society is, of course, the search for members. A public meeting, advertised in the local paper, and a notice to teachers and cultural organisations in the area is often the best approach.



Jeanne Moreau in *Baie des Anges* dir Jaques Demy, France, 1962.

If there is a Society already operating within thirty kilometers of your proposed new Society you will need to obtain their permission to proceed. You may like to consider the alternative of becoming a sub branch of the existing nearby Society (see page 11). Owing to the work and expense involved in obtaining and distributing films the Federation insists that all affiliated Societies must have at least thirty full members, or be prepared to pay an annual per capita subscription equivalent to that for thirty members. A hard copy or on-line copy of the Federation's catalogue is available on request so that you can survey the range of films available. The hard copy should be returned promptly if you decide not to proceed with the formation of a Society. To help you promote local interest the Federation is prepared to make two Programmes of film available before affiliation. Please nominate your screening dates and supply a long list of alternatives from which we can select your programmes.

INCORPORATE YOURSELVES

Once you have a group of interested people together, incorporation is the next step. This will ensure that you have a 'tax-exempt status' and will not need to be involved with the Inland Revenue Department. Incorporation requires a minimum of fifteen signatories, and a one off payment of \$150.00 to be registered; you should contact the nearest Registrar of Incorporated Societies (within the Companies Office - a division of the Ministry of Commerce) for full details of this process. They can be reached on-line at <www.societies.govt.nz> A copy of the Federation's Rules is available if requested - it can be useful when drawing up your Society's constitution. You will need to include a declaration amongst the "Objects" of your Society to the effect that "The primary purpose of the Society is the exhibition of films otherwise than for financial gain." Once registered - each year - you should send a copy of your audited accounts (the 'Annual Return') to The Registrar of Incorporated Societies, Companies Office, Private Bag 92061, Auckland.

Also, send a copy of your rules, and a letter of application for affiliation to the Federation so that we can ensure that your aims are in accordance with those of the Federation.

WELCOME TO OUR RANKS!

MONEY

You will need to charge a yearly subscription to your members; when fixing this, allowance should be made for the hire of a venue and projector, the cost of notices, printing, postage, freight (you are expected to pay the onward freight on the films you use, usually by courier) and the annual subscription to the Federation. This subscription - payable in two instalments - is currently \$45.00 per member with a reduction to \$35.00 for senior citizens (aged 65+), registered unemployed and full-time students. For school students there is an especially low rate of \$15.00 (School students should be aware that they will not be admitted to films carrying a restricted censor's certificate.) Remember that you must pay for a minimum of thirty members i.e., \$1350.00 p.a.

The Federation sends out certificates for membership declaration and payment in March or April and again in October each year.

RAISING FUNDS FROM GRANTS

Many societies make application to various funding bodies for grants. It would be nice to be able to get help with running costs but not many bodies make grants for day to day expenses. However, it is relatively easy to obtain money for specific items or projects e.g., for an electronic DVD projector and/or player; for publicity i.e. payment for the programme brochure and insert; for a 'special' screening e.g., payment to a pianist to play for a silent film.

Most councils are able to allocate funds delegated to them by Creative New Zealand through local 'community grants'.

Another possible source is offered by the gaming trusts formed to distribute profits from gaming machines. Popularly known as 'pub charities' these give much of their largesse to sporting bodies but have been directed to offer support to cultural activities as well. Film Societies are well positioned to fulfil this obligation for them. You should stress the age range and cultural variety of your membership in your application.

New Zealand Post offers pre-paid envelopes to many charities. Application needs to be made in July but you can store the envelopes for your annual mail-out of programmes at the start of the next season. Application should be made through your local Post Office.

Note: In many cases it will be necessary to stress that you represent an 'Incorporated Society' (see page 4).

PROJECTION

It is very important that the services of one or two competent projectionists are available to your Society. Proof that our films will be in the hands of such an officer is a prerequisite to affiliation to the Federation. So, too, is your written undertaking to screen our films on a **fully serviced** 16mm projector. The machine you use should be in excellent mechanical order and will need to be able to run at both 'sound' speed (24 fps) and 'silent' speed (16 or 18 fps) if you want to draw on the Federation's substantial selection of films from the silent period. Occasionally the Federation distributes CinemaScope prints. To screen these you will require an "anamorphic" lens. If you can make arrangements with a commercial cinema it may be possible to screen some of the 35mm films which the Federation obtains primarily for the main cities (see page 3). Also, if you have access to a digital projector and DVD player you may choose to programme some of the increasing number of films becoming available on disk.

There are two types of DVD projector on the market. The majority are primarily designed for 'Powerpoint' data shows. Projectors designed for data shows are more concerned to provide the maximum brightness which means that they work well where there is ambient light (e.g. in a lecture situation) – Thus the publicity stresses their brightness through the number of 'lumens' that they can output. The tiny dots (pixels) which make up the image can be a nuisance when projecting moving images.

However, projectors with the letter 'DLP' (digital light processing) as part of their product descriptor are intended for video/DVD display. The DLP machines use some form of mirror technology in conjunction with a spinning colour wheel instead of the LCD (liquid crystal display) slide screen that is inside most data projectors. This offers a wider contrast range which means that there will be more detail in the darker parts of a pictorial image and the pixels will not be obvious. However, the DLP machines need full black-out to maximize their visual advantage.

Cheaper DLP machines (circa \$2-3,000.00) cannot operate from a distance greater than approx seven metres from the screen which means that in some situations e.g. where the projector can be placed in a theatre's projection box it will be necessary to buy an admittedly expensive one (\$10-20,000.00) that can manage theatrical distances!

From the audience point of view it is probably more filmically authentic if they can't see the DVD machinery so, the projection box is the best bet when it is possible to place it there. It is also more secure.



A Panasonic PT-D3500 projector (ca \$8,000)

However, a projector can be hung from the ceiling if that is preferable and the picture can be flipped vertically so that it comes out the right way up!

Another important consideration is the aspect ratio that the projector can output. A 'native 16:9' projector will maximize the display when cinemascope films are being projected. The word 'native' means that the default (built in) provision is provided to

show wide-screen movies. Quite a few of the DLP projectors do have the 'native 16:9' provision but tend to need the best black-out as their light output is compromised by the large screen area to be covered.

The more common 4:3 projectors will work in 16:9 mode but place black bands at the bottom and top of the image - these can be hidden by using the zoom facility but some vertical resolution will have to be sacrificed when working with wide-screen movies. Actually, Film Societies don't screen that many wide-screen movies!

PRODUCT RECOMMENDATIONS:

Developments are continuous – for those with internet connections the best equipment reviews are to be found at <www.projectorcentral.com> or you could contact the Federation for advice.

People with e-Bay experience might choose to take the risk and purchase their projector via the web. Some societies have done so successfully. It is the cheapest way – especially if our dollar is strong but you may have to forgo a warranty.

WHAT ELSE WILL YOU NEED?

A DVD PLAYER – be sure that the one you buy is 'multi-zoned'. Some DVD players will only play discs bought in certain countries (this was a failed attempt by film distributors to control the date of release for their films in various territories).

It may also be useful for your player to be capable of playing various DVD formats so that any 'home movies' offered to your society on disc can be played at your venue.

SPEAKERS – these may be driven by an amplifier connected to your DVD player but it is possible to specify that the DVD player itself should give you a sound output ('5:1 Surround Sound' is usually the descriptor) that can be connected directly to the speakers.

You will need advice as to what you require for your specific venue but they need not be hugely expensive e.g. hundreds rather than thousands of dollars!

VENUE

Finding a suitable venue in which to screen is most important. A reasonably central location is usually best, or at least one which can easily be found by intending members. Start with a small hall—if your membership outgrows it you can change your venue later. Ensure that you can achieve a complete blackout - check that windows do not admit distracting light from flood-lighting, street-lighting or passing traffic. Some Societies use school facilities: one of your local schools may have a "audio-visual" room which can be made available. To enhance the social aspects of your Society it is ideal if facilities for making refreshments are attached to the venue. An application for a licence can be made to the local City Council if you wish to sell alcoholic beverages to your members. It may be that you can come to an arrangement to screen your films in a local cinema (see page 3)

DISTRIBUTION OF FILMS

The physical distribution of our films is handled by the Federation Office in Wellington. All programme bookings and despatches are arranged by the Federation office. The responsibility for films arriving in time for screening lies with the receiving Society, and every Society is responsible for forwarding their film on to its next destination, promptly. The cost of courier freight needs to be budgeted for.



La Grande Illusion (dir Jean Renoir, 1937, France)

CHECKLIST

FORMING A FILM SOCIETY

- Call a public meeting and draft a constitution
- Register your Society with the Registrar of Incorporated Societies in your district.
- Apply to the Federation for affiliation
- Elect a committee.



THE ORGANISATION

SETTING UP A COMMITTEE

Your committee will be made up of like-minded people who, hopefully, all enjoy films. In filling the key committee positions though, you need to be fairly hard-headed, and select the best person for the job. Duties vary but a typical Society could look like this: -

- **The President** should be a person with a highly developed sense of responsibility who will convene regular meetings; chair them efficiently; enthuse loudly and articulately about the Society and films in general (ideally, the president should be the Society's spokesperson when fronting up to the media) and be able to delegate authority easily while retaining responsibility.
- **The Secretary** should have a good working relationship with the president; be an avid phone-caller; supervise the door duties; keep membership lists up to date; answer correspondence; distribute mail and magazines, and liaise closely with the Federation office, particularly in the event of problems, but also to keep the Federation alert to your needs, wishes and your Society's state of health.
- **The Treasurer** must be someone who can use a calculator; or at least has a good, honest head for figures. The treasurer should work out a budget, based on the number of members you expect; the amount of income you will derive from them; and set that against your expected outgoings. The treasurer should keep a close eye on regular takings, deal with annual payments to the Federation and present accounts at the AGM. It is usual practice for all cheques from your Society be countersigned by two people — the treasurer, and the president or secretary.
- **The Film Handler** should be **one** person who must be responsible for the films which are received by the Society and sent on to their next destination. It is important, in the interest of efficiency and harmony, that one person should remain film handler for the whole year, so that other Societies know whom to contact if a film goes missing or is delayed. The handler should always send on a film **as soon as possible** after the screening. One of the worst sins a Society can commit is to make another Society miss out on a film through inefficient handling. (The other **GREAT SIN** is to damage a film through faulty projection).
- **In Addition** you will probably need three or more other **committee members** to help carry out door and other duties. A good way to keep in touch with your membership is to try to get at least one new committee member each year.

MARKETING THE ORGANISATION

A new Society needs the equivalent of 30 members to become affiliated to the Federation. Above that, the sky is the limit. But how to attract the members? You need to publicise yourselves well, and a good way to start is to appoint a **Publicity officer**.

Free publicity is available from many different sources, so learn to use it:-

- Write a press release at least a week before the start of your year
- Arts pages of newspapers will usually oblige with feature articles, especially if they already have a page devoted to film previews.
- Radio stations usually have free 'community noticeboard' slots.
- Libraries have display cases which you can fill with posters and leaflets.
- Offer yourselves for interviews on radio, TV, or newspaper (it can be a good idea to get to know a sympathetic reporter who, in return for a complimentary subscription, may be willing to write up forthcoming attractions).

Publicity which costs, but is essential

- Printed brochures detailing the year's films are available, at cost, from the Federation in January. Your Society will need to enclose a leaflet giving details of your venue and programme for the year. Place these in strategic places (libraries, shops, tourist offices, universities, technical institutes, and other educational establishments) and maintain supplies.
- Posters - available, at cost, from the Federation - which include a space where you can add your own message.
- Design yourselves a bold logo and buy regular small advertisements in the entertainment section-of your local newspapers - next to the cinemas'.
- At the start of your year, splurge on several large advertisements. You should be prepared to spend a little money to attract more members.
- **THE MOST IMPORTANT ADVERTISING IS WORD OF MOUTH** - if you have a friendly Society, showing good films in reasonably civilised surroundings without any slipshod amateurism, late starts, breakdowns and avoidable omissions, the word will quickly spread and you'll have a thriving Society (but no amount of promotion will sustain a dissatisfied clientele!)

NEWSLETTERS

- The larger Societies have newsletters to give members regular information about events and detailed critiques of the films about to be screened. Newsletters are an excellent way of keeping your members in touch and maintaining their interest. They can be anything from a typed, photocopied, page to a professionally printed, interesting, magazine (Wellington Film Society's '**Cinephile**' and Auckland's '**Close-Up**' are excellent examples and all Societies may ask for copies.)
- The Federation's Catalogue contains well researched and entertaining information about the films for you to use in your publicity and newsletters. Regular publications should be registered with the Post Office to qualify for reduced postage rates. Don't forget to send copies of your newsletter to the Federation Office - we like to know how you are getting on!

BECOMING A SUB-BRANCH

- If there is an existing Film Society near you, but not within easy travelling distance, you might like to consider approaching that Society with a view to becoming a sub-branch. As a sub-branch you would screen the same programmes as the existing Film Society a night or two before, or after, their screenings. Your sub-branch should be represented on the parent Society's committee which would enable you to influence the choice of programme and to participate in other policy decisions which might have some bearing on your members. The advantages of sub-branch status are mainly administrative. You are, in effect, becoming members of an existing Society and are subject to their rules. This way you are spared the trouble and expense of evolving your own rules and negotiating the red tape involved in setting up a new Society. You are also, in principle, spared the minimum membership requirement. However the Federation discourages existing Societies from taking on sub-branches with fewer than twenty members.
- As a sub-branch your dealings with the Federation would be carried out through the parent Society. The parent Society would receive all Federation mailings and would be expected to take responsibility for passing on all such to you. The parent Society would collect your subscriptions, when making payment to the Federation for example. Otherwise the financial details of such relationships vary from Society to Society. One thing is certain: before embarking on such a relationship it should be very clear to both parent and sub-branch just who pays for what. The Federation is reluctant to arbitrate in any squabbles that may arise when casual relationships go sour. The disadvantages of sub-branch status derive mainly from the lack of autonomy for the sub-branch. It may, however, be well worth investigating the possibility with a nearby Society. Several Societies now flourishing in their own right began life as sub-branches.

TAKING ON A SUB-BRANCH

Sub-branches provide the only possible access to Film Society films in many rural areas and are an important service to be encouraged in accordance with the objects of the Film Society movement. From time to time you may be approached by nearby communities who have read the above paragraphs. When considering their blandishments you should keep the following in mind:

- A sub-branch means more members. It may also mean extra work in administering an additional venue. This work should be done by the sub-branch, but your Society will be expected to take ultimate responsibility. You must ensure that the officers of the sub-branch are fully advised of their duties and fully competent to carry them out. The Federation will require confirmation that the film-handler at the sub-branch is qualified to handle and screen our films and that the projection equipment is fully serviced. Note: there could be difficulties if you use 35mm facilities and the sub-branch does not have access to any.
- The sub-branch should be represented on your committee.
- You are expected to keep the sub-branch up-to-date regarding all Federation postings.
- You collect the Federation's share of sub-branch members' subscription payments and pass it on to the Federation along with that for your own members.
- Otherwise your financial relationship to the sub-branch is an internal matter to be evolved in consultation with the sub-branch. Some Societies subsidise sub-branches to a large extent. Others insist that their sub-branches be financially self-supporting. The decision is yours.
- The Federation discourages the formation of very small sub-branches, simply because they tie up popular film titles for an inappropriate length of time.
- The sub-branch's screening date should be within a day or two of your own. If you yourselves are a small Society, you would be most unwise to consider a sub-branch screening date more than two days before or after your own. A booking request from a small Society requiring a film for one night is likely to take precedence over a request from a small Society requiring the same film for more than three.
- When making your booking requests you are expected to make it clear to the Federation where and when the films will be screened. You should make it clear which film-handler will be receiving the film (sub-branch or parent Society) and who will be sending it on. We require names, address and contact telephone numbers for both. Dispatches from sub-branch to parent Society or vice versa are to be arranged internally.

HOW TO CHOOSE AND PRESENT YOUR PROGRAMMES

Procedure

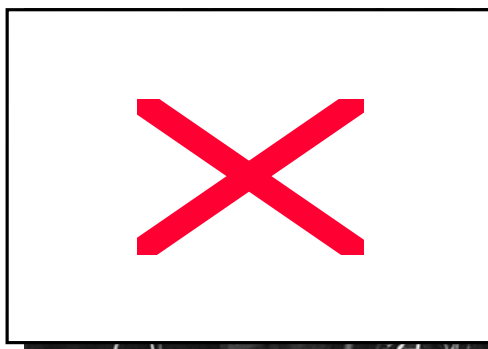
Late in the year your Society will receive a descriptive list of the films which will be available to you for the first time in the following year. You will also receive booking request forms, on which you are required to list your screening dates for the following year and to list any of these films you do **not** want to screen. Unfortunately it is not always possible to fulfil every request so you are also required to provide a list of alternative titles from the Permanent Collection. All this is clearly set out on the forms provided, which also require you to order printed brochures and posters for the next year. In January you will be sent confirmation of your programme. Wherever possible the Federation will have provided the titles you requested.

Societies should reflect the needs and tastes of their members in their booking requests. You should not allow the situation to occur where the tastes of one, or a few, members of your committee dictate the requests for all. Your primary objective should be to provide as broad a range of film as possible to your members. Many committees select their titles by voting and, provided that your committee represents a cross-section of your membership, this can provide a desirable programme. You should not shy away completely from difficult films: the catalogue will give you a clear indication of which these are. Keep your programme as 'international' as possible and try to present a selection of drama, comedy, documentary, live-action, animation, period film, contemporary film, silent and sound film.

Shorts

Opinions vary widely as to the importance of short films in your programming. Some Societies have dispensed with shorts altogether, claiming that their members are grateful to escape the programming concept of supporting shorts which used to be one of the more tiresome aspects of attendance at the commercial cinema. On the other hand there are Societies which present up to an hour's worth of short films before the feature film.

The important thing is not to consider shorts as mere fill-ins. Many short films are of considerable interest to the serious film-goer and can often provide a lively and stimulating start to the evening's screening. Many Societies present an occasional evening of shorts on a specific theme, and programmes such as these are usually welcomed by members. Programmes of short silent comedy features are frequently well received, especially if you can make arrangements for a musical accompaniment.



Buster Keaton in *Sherlock Jr* 1924

You will be criticized! Remember, whatever you programme, there will be somebody who will be happy to tell you how little they enjoyed it and that you should have programmed the spectacular Russian ballet film that their wife's sister-in-law saw in 1958 at the wonderful little Film Society in Sheffield. Learn not to be too discouraged!

THE YEAR IN FOCUS:-

- JANUARY**
- Receive notification of programme from the Federation.
 - Receive your Federation supplied brochures, posters etc., and prepare your own programme insert.
 - Prepare for Federation AGM. Appoint your delegate. Submit any remits you may have for the AGM's consideration.
 - Contact old members before their free evenings become committed to other organisations!
- FEBRUARY**
- Step up your recruitment campaign; press releases, displays, widespread distribution of leaflets, posters etc.,
 - First screening?
- MARCH**
- Keep a high profile in your community
 - A delegate should attend the Federation AGM
- APRIL**
- Return membership declaration and subscription payment to the Federation
- MAY**
- Run smoothly!
- JUNE**
- Run smoothly; prepare a campaign for 'half-year membership'
- JULY**
- Institute a 'half-year' membership drive
- AUGUST**
- Run smoothly
- SEPTEMBER**
- Run smoothly
- OCTOBER**
- Return final membership declaration and subscription payment to the Federation
 - Book screening venues for next year
- NOVEMBER**
- Final screening(s) and recruitment drive for next year
- DECEMBER**
- Receive new catalogue supplements from the Federation; prepare booking requests
 - Enjoy a well-earned rest!

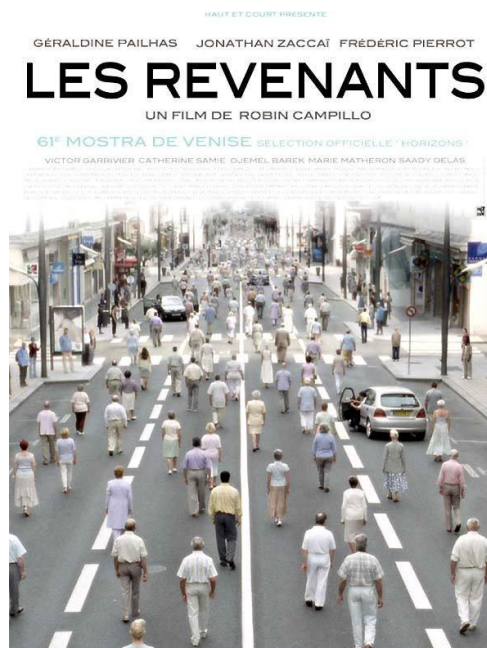
WHERE THE FILMS COME FROM

The obvious starting point in the search for Film Society movies is hearing about movies. The Federation subscribes to numerous overseas film journals, is on the mailing lists of many overseas film distributors, maintains frequent contact with equivalent overseas organisations and enjoys particularly close relationships with independent distribution agencies in Australia. An increasing number of New Zealand film personnel visit the world's major Film Festivals and often provide useful first hand accounts of the wares on display. Occasionally we even receive suggestions from Film Society members.

Once we've established that a title may be of interest to Film Society members, the work begins. The first task is to ascertain who holds the New Zealand rights on the film. There are a number of ways of obtaining this information; more often than not our friends involved in distribution outside New Zealand can tell us what we need to know.

Of course no rights are worth owning unless we can also obtain a 16 mm print or DVD - subtitled where necessary - of the title in question. In recent years this has proven a major stumbling block. As the 'art-house' market has grown film-owners are increasingly concentrating on 35 mm exploitation of their foreign-language titles. The video market made major incursions into the 16 mm market and many interesting films were simply not available in 16mm sub-titled versions. The funding structure of the Film Society movement in New Zealand was never geared towards paying for our own sub-titling and we simply cannot afford this expensive process ourselves. Frequently negotiations for attractive films have to be abandoned for want of an affordable 16mm print. In recent years some Societies have moved into commercial multiplexes or university campuses where 35 mm projectors are available. As a result the Federation has been prepared to negotiate for some films in this larger format. Nowadays, fortunately, more and more 'art' films are being issued on the DVD (Digital Versatile Disk) format (see page 6).

The programme we purchase each year is supplemented with films which are made available to us from the libraries of the British Council, French, Japanese, and German Embassies in Canberra or through sponsorship by the Goethe Institut in Wellington. These institutions are generous enough to let us select what we like from their collections. Without their assistance Societies would be hard pressed to field complete programmes in any year; the extent to which we have become dependent on the continuing generosity of these Government cultural services may be cause for alarm. We are also constantly discussing the possibilities with the cultural agencies of other Governments with varying degrees of success.



Les Revenents (They Came Back) dir Campillo,
2004, France – supplied by the French
Embassy.

In putting together the annual programme every effort is made to encompass as wide a spectrum of film-making styles, subjects and nationalities as possible. But finally the choice comes down to the simplest of considerations: we make every effort to find out what is available to us and we take the best of what we find.



Considering the difficulties involved the Federation has been surprisingly and consistently successful in assembling strong programmes over the years. The number of major titles which have fallen through the nets of commercial distribution and into our hands, is gratifying. All of these films have enjoyed commercial success almost everywhere else in the English speaking world. Yet, for many years the only way to see them in New Zealand was to join the Film Society. Clearly the primary aim of Film Society exhibition - to supplement the choice of films available to the New Zealand film goer - is still a valid one.



Jane Campion's *An Angel at My Table* (1989) based on the book by Janet Frame and available from the New Zealand Film Commission

PROJECTING FILMS:-

(NOTE: A SEPARATE COPY OF THESE NOTES IS SUPPLIED - ATTACH IT TO YOUR PROJECTOR).

Film Societies would cease to exist if they had no films to show. For this reason the films we use are our greatest asset. Practically all the feature films we show are owned by the Federation - either as part of the "Permanent Collection" or on a lease arrangement for periods varying from six months to five years. With normal care the prints should last for many years and, in the case of Permanent Collection titles, giving all Film Societies the opportunity to screen them repeatedly. Several prints in our collection were, in fact, first screened in the late Forties and are still giving service six decades later.

With care, new prints should remain in good condition for a considerable time. The Federation draws your attention to four basic points of film care (during projection) on the back of each screening report.

1. KEEP THE GATE CLEAN.

This is **very** important. The gate is the only place in a projector where the film is pulled between two pieces of metal in intimate contact with the film surface. It is here where most of the continuous scratches occur. Dirt or emulsion may build up on the runners, the heat from the lamp tending to harden the deposit, leading to scratching and sometimes the loss of the 'loop'. If the "chatter" of the film in the gate changes its sound, or if the picture becomes unsteady, or if a build-up of "dirt" is visible on the edge of the picture - STOP, and clean the gate, both rear and front runners. Any hard deposit or "corn" on the runners should be removed with the finger nail (or plastic or wooden instrument), never a metal object. Above all, ALWAYS clean the gate BEFORE threading EACH REEL of film. Use a gate brush or cloth. And don't forget to periodically clean the complete film path.

2. TEST THREADING BY TURNING "INCHING KNOB".

This is certainly recommended with manual-threading machines and many automatic-thread projectors have a button which may be pressed to facilitate this.

3. TEST SPROCKET HOLE EDGE FREQUENTLY BETWEEN FINGERS AFTER IT HAS PASSED THE LAST SPROCKET.

This simple check will soon show if the projector is chewing up the sprocket holes. If you are uncertain, check the film coming off the feed reel. Both should feel the same. At the first sign of roughness SWITCH OFF.

4. PLEASE TAKE EXTRA CARE WITH NEW FILMS. - Yes, certainly.

5. REMEMBER TO COMPLETE AND FORWARD TO THE FEDERATION OFFICE THE 'FILM SCREENING REPORT'.

SOME GENERAL POINTS ON FILM CARE

- When threading up a manual projector don't unreel all the leader on to the floor and thread up on the titles. Not only will the film on the floor pick up dust and dirt and run the risk of being trampled under foot but also any error in threading will result in damage to the beginning of the film where repairs will disturb the continuity - a damaged leader can be replaced. Always thread up on the leader, unreeling only enough film to thread through the projector and on to the take up reel.
- Check threading by turning the 'inching knob' or 'advance button'.
- With an automatic threading projector, always trim the beginning of the leader before inserting it into the mechanism (auto projectors usually have a built-in film cutter). Many threading problems can be traced to an improperly cut film end.
- Stop the projector once sufficient film has passed out of the projector to wrap around the take-up reel.
- Don't use the wrong size take-up reel. If the reel is too small, loops of film may fall off the reel with the likelihood of damage and collection of dust and dirt. If the take-up reel is too large you will probably find that the next film requires that particular size, and you've already used it. All Film Societies should have a complete set of take-up reels. In these days of metrication they are still known as 400, 800, 1200, 1600 and 2000 foot reels.
- Stay by the projector at all times and check the machine frequently during the screening.
 - As mentioned before, feel the sprocket holes periodically as the film passes on to the take-up reel to check for damage Get used to the sound your projector makes.
 - Any change in the normal "chatter" of the film in the gate should alert the projectionist to investigate. If a change of projector noise is accompanied by jitter in the picture, this is cause for alarm.
 - The soundtrack too can indicate problems If the sound suddenly becomes garbled or fluttery this could mean a loose film around the sound head.
 - Remember, if you are suspicious that damage may be occurring to the film—**STOP!** Check carefully, adjust the threading if necessary and recommence. If the trouble persists abandon the screening. It is better to disappoint one audience than all the other Film Societies who won't be able to screen the film you damaged.

The projector should be maintained regularly. Periodically the whole of the projector's film path should be cleaned - runners, rollers, sprockets - all should be cleaned with a gate brush or cloth to remove the accumulation of dust, dirt and oil. Lubrication should be carried out as recommended by the projector manufacturer.

If you are screening the film again or sending it on to another Film Society it must be rewound. If this is done on the projector it should be done according to the manufacturer's instructions. DON'T leave the projector whilst rewinding. Keep your hand lightly on the feed reel during rewinding to help obtain a firmly-wound reel. A loosely

wound film becomes scratched as the loose coils flop around during transit. If the film has wound loosely on the reel (whether in projection or rewinding) never tighten the film by pulling the end. This will grind dust particles into the soft emulsion causing scratches. If necessary, double-wind the film holding it by the edges to keep sufficient tension.

Always ensure that reels are in good condition and not distorted. The sides of some plastic reels, particularly 1600 or 2000 footers, sometimes bow inwards to a width less than 16mm. Guiding the film carefully with the fingers may be required during rewinding. After rewinding ensure that the loose film end is taped down. If you don't have a reel of adhesive tape, check the sides of the reels as a piece is often stored there.

If you take the films off the reels on which they are supplied in order to join them together to fit onto a single very large reel do be sure when breaking them down to replace them exactly as they were. Put them back onto the original reels and ensure that the leaders and tails are attached to the correct reels. Chaos can be caused for the next society if the reels are wrongly labelled and if the cue circles are not exactly where they should be i.e. at ten and two seconds from the end of a reel!

The Federation expends a considerable amount of effort in obtaining films for Film Society use and the films are expensive. Anything Film Society projectionists do to prevent damage to our assets is greatly appreciated.

DVD PROJECTION

THE PLAYER:

- Turn on power at the wall...
- Switch on the DVD player AND any speaker amplifier
- OPEN THE PLAYER– insert the disc (it will run forward to the menu – you will see it when you turn on the projector).

THE PROJECTOR:

- Press 'ON' on the projector's remote – wait for it to warm up – it takes about 30 seconds (often a red light will change to green and then the menu will gradually brighten up).
- Turn the house lights off and look at the menu – select the correct option (you should choose the language of the film – subtitles can be secured next).
- Press 'subtitle' on DVD remote and choose 'ENGLISH' press the 'ENTER' button in the centre to choose this...
- Adjust the DVD sound on the amplifier you should go into the auditorium when the film is running to check that it is right and adjust the volume knob up or down as required.
- Hopefully, the 'aspect ratio' on the projector will have been correctly set – the basic choice is between 16:9 and 4:3 (if you have to adjust this press MENU on the projector's remote control then go down one to POSITION and choose the alternative setting – you will see the effect immediately. When O.K., press MENU again and you will be back to the film).

- LET THE MOVIE RUN FOR A WHILE TO CHECK ALL IS WELL – Then when all is fine press STOP (the square button) TWICE – this will take the disk back to the beginning of the film (not all the way back to the menu).
- Then (if you have the option) press SHUTTER on the projector remote. It will blank out the screen.
- When READY TO ROLL – press the PLAY (right arrow →) on the DVD remote and when you hear the opening music press ‘SHUTTER’ on the projector remote – and it should all come up in the right place on the screen.
- Now, dim the auditorium lights and go check the sound level in the auditorium.

AT THE END

- If available - close the ‘SHUTTER’ using the projector remote.
- Press ‘STANDBY’ on the projector remote – the option to switch off will appear on the screen (if you open the SHUTTER!) – press ENTER on the projector remote and the light will go out. THE FAN WILL KEEP RUNNING (for several minutes). Don’t switch off at the wall until it has stopped! You will notice that the green light will have turned red again.
- Press ‘OPEN’ on the DVD remote and remove the **disk (don’t forget to do this) – it may need to be forwarded to the next film society urgently** – check.

COMMERCIAL SOURCES FOR FILM AND DVDs:-

There used to be three or four companies in New Zealand which hired films in the 16mm format. They no longer operate here although one: ‘Reel Movies/Film Link’ now based in Australia has made its catalogue available to the Federation. Each year a selection is made for general society distribution but other titles may be chosen from the list by societies willing to pay the \$100.00 or so required per screening.

DVDs: may be rented with permission to screen to a closed audience at a price that depends on the size of the venue, the likely audience and the ‘value’ of the film. Hireage around \$100 - \$150.00 could be expected.



Lia
U.S.
- a film which is available for rental from Reel Movies Ltd.,

Polyphony Entertainment
PO Box 44 180
Pt Chevalier
Auckland
Ph (09) 815 1947
Fx (09) 815 1942
ruth@polyphony.co.nz

Rialto Distribution Ltd
PO Box 47 045
Ponsonby
Auckland
Ph (09) 376 9166
andrew@rialtodistribution.com

Arkles Entertainment
12/4 Arkles Strand
Arkles Bay
Auckland
Ph (021) 397 892
john@arklesentertainment.com

CENSORSHIP

The Censor's certificate for your film should be enclosed in the box in which it comes. You are required to display this where your members can see it. You are also required to enforce any restrictions which may relate to age or the requirement that the film be screened to members only. **Be sure to replace the certificate in the film box before it is dispatched.** They are often lost as a result of societies forgetting to collect them from the desk at the entrance!

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