



PRESS INFORMATION FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**Forest Row Film Society receives prize at
BFFS “Film Society of the Year Awards”**

Forest Row Film Society has received an award at the national **Film Society of the Year Awards** ceremony at the magnificent **Cutlers’ Hall** in the heart of **Sheffield**. Organised by **The British Federation of Film Societies (BFFS)** as part of last weekend’s **National Conference for Film Societies and Community Cinemas**, this is a significant recognition of the society’s activities in the provision of community cinema in Forest Row.

Receiving the prize in the best website category on behalf of **Forest Row Film Society**, **Brad Scott** commented “About six years ago the society was on the verge of closing; since then we have managed to increase our audience considerably, and extended the range of our programming. We have also raised £13,000 for new digital equipment, which will mean we can reach out to other parts of the community as well. This award provides great support for our activities.”

BFFS President Derek Malcolm (film critic, *Evening Standard*) introduced talented Kent-based director **Jan Dunn** (*Gypo* 2006, *Ruby Blue* 2008) who presented these prestigious awards. Jan commented, “*What an absolute honour to be invited to speak at the annual BFFS awards when my own interest and motivation to become a film director stems from joining my school Film Club in the 1970’s. Watching something other than commercial films was a whole new discovery for me and expanded my life as well as my interest in film. Today as an independent filmmaker in the UK, it is very exciting to be speaking to what I think of as the Front Line, when it comes to building a cinema audience that sustain British films and open our eyes to the cream of foreign cinema.*”

Each year **BFFS rewards excellence** in the vital work that film societies do in **cultural and community cinema**. The Film Society of Year Awards are vitally important in achieving recognition for the matchless work of **dedicated film devotees**, all of whom work for their film societies entirely voluntarily to bring **high-quality cinema to their local communities** throughout the country.

BFFS welcomed an array of the best in **British filmmakers** to the conference, and to the dinner and Awards ceremony afterwards, including **Kenny Glenaan** (*Summer*), **Stuart Urban** (*Tovarisch, I Am Not Dead*), and **Seb Duthy** (*Blindsight*).

Recently appointed **BFFS Chair, Julieanne Crothers-Gibson** commented, “*The achievements of community exhibitors is amazing and deserves to be recognised widely. All should be congratulated on attaining excellence in such a diversity of endeavours. BFFS is proud to support your work.*”

Attached: Photograph of Julieanne Crothers-Gibson (BFFS Chair), Brad Scott (Forest Row Film Society) and Derek Malcolm (BFFS President). Where possible credit as: © Pixelwitch Pictures 2008

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Notes for editors:

Forest Row Film Society was founded in 1978 and now screens about 18 films a year. It is planning collaborations with other local groups in the village to extend the range and scope of its programming to appeal to a wider sector of the community. Mostly screening in the village hall, the film society continues a tradition of film exhibition in Forest Row that has been almost continual since the 1920s.

BFFS is the national support and development agency for the film society and community cinema sector. Its 300+ member organisations across the UK represent a membership of over 29,000 people. BFFS prime funder is the UK Film Council. BFFS members screen about 3,000 films per year of over 500 different titles to a combined total audience of almost half a million. BFFS has supported specialised (art-house) cinema exhibition in the voluntary sector since its inception over 60 years ago and today continues to provide advice, technical support and education opportunities to communities across the UK. Each year BFFS hosts the UK Film Society of the Year Awards, recognising excellence in all aspects of film society and community cinema endeavours.

BFFS extends a diversity of viewing choice critical within the UK cultural economy and offers increased opportunities for access and diversity – in more remote regions of the country where access to any sort of cinema is restricted, but also in metropolitan areas with no alternative to mainstream titles. Community exhibitors have a strong history of bringing to audiences those films not on general commercial release and in this way have provided national exposure for many minority interest and foreign language films. Many recent specialised films made here and abroad owe much of their exhibition opportunities in Britain to film societies and community cinemas.