

# Forest Row Film Society Annual General Meeting

Minutes of the meeting held on Friday 3rd February 2006 after the screening of *Yellow Earth*

Committee members present: Robert Evans, Marie-Claire Thomson, Diana Comer, Yolene Crawford, Brad Scott, Patrick Crawford

Apologies: John Comer

## Recent history

The meeting began by noting how the society has changed in recent years. We had dwindling audiences, and were losing money on almost every screening. Two seasons ago we had run out of reserves, and so would have had to have closed if revenue continued as before. However, from last year things have now turned round and the society is on a much more secure footing. Thank you to everyone who has supported us over the years.

## Finances

Each screening costs about £130-140; need 35-40 people to break even. We currently have about £1300 in the bank; last year's accounts will be available on the web site as soon as possible; let us know if you have any questions.

## Audience size

A few years ago, our audiences ranged from 20-50, and usually too few to cover our costs. Now we routinely get 40-50. We have 56 members this year and 80 people are signed up for the email list. It would be good to have bigger audiences still, but it is very encouraging. We are continuing to think about ways of attracting more people.

## Film supply challenges

16mm films are very difficult to source nowadays; few studios now produce this format, and the BFI (our main supplier) hasn't acquired any new prints for many years. Other suppliers are either not particularly geared up to supply the old 16mm prints they have, and have few that we would be interested in, or are only supplying digital copies. However, just using the BFI's collection we are OK for the next few years, but beyond that it may be very difficult to continue with interesting programmes.

## Going digital

The film supply issue has lead us to think about the options, and going digital is certainly appealing. Many more films are available in this format, and it would be more easy to include new shorts in the programme; Screen South will help with sourcing them. The cost is an issue, since suitable equipment will cost possibly about £6000, and we should also investigate the purchase of a bigger screen. A digital projector will also mean that we could use the projection room, and project towards the stage.

To do this, we need to research what we need (projector, screen, sound) and get some informed advice. The funding for it may be covered by grants from Screen South, UK Film Council, and Awards for All. All such awards have certain strings attached: one has to make a business case, and demonstrate such things as an increased outreach to the community as a result of such award. We can also use part of our reserves, appeal for donations, and conduct fundraising.

It will be the thirtieth anniversary of the society in June 2008, so that could be a good target for acquiring digital equipment. We will need help and support if we are to do this, since it will be a great deal of work. We would welcome anyone who would be interested to join the new committee, or casual informal help specifically in this area would be of great value.

It was suggested that we could hire equipment instead, since it is so expensive; the committee will look into this. It was also suggested that we could share the equipment with other societies, especially since it will only be used for a small number of times a year. This is a possibility, though the nearest two film societies are at least half an hour's drive from Forest Row, and we would then have to closely co-ordinate our screenings. Both already have digital equipment.

Emerson College was also suggested as a possible venue and collaborator, and it may be prudent to buy a projector that could also be used effectively in Michael Hall Theatre, since it would broaden the scope of possible screening opportunities. Indeed, the film society in Westerham has a very large screen which is used outdoors for drive-in screenings.

In the future, we could also apply for awards from Screen South for such things as film festivals, or to support the screening of silent films with live music. Once we have the equipment to back it up.

## **Business**

The society's constitution will be available on the web site soon.  
The committee was formally re-elected.

## **Films next year**

We have just starting planning next year's season; these are some films that have already been discussed. Please let us know if there are any here that particularly appeal to you.

The BFI does have a good collection of German films; if you have a particular interest in German cinema let us know.

### ***A. BFI has indicated these are available:***

Powell & Pressburger:

- The Small Black Room
- Black Narcissus
- The Life and Death of Colonel Blimp
- 49th Parallel
- I Know Where I'm Going
- M Hulot's Holiday
- La Belle et la Bete
- The Magnificent Ambersons
- The Iron Horse (John Ford, 1927)
- The Blue Angel (German version, with English subtitles)
- Junoon (Shyam Benegal)

### ***B. The following are in the BFI online catalogue and may be available:***

- Chikamatsu Monogatari: Japan 1954 Dir Kenji Mizoguchi
- The Householder: India 1963 Dir James Ivory
- It Began in Brighton: UK 1966 Dir Tristram Powell (documentary about the early days of British cinema)

- La Strada: Italy 1954 Dir Federico Fellini
- Blonde Venus: USA 1932 Dir Josef von Sternberg
- Cours du Soir: France 1967 Dir Nicolas Ribowski
- Happy Together: Hong Kong 1997 Dir Wong Kar-Wai
- La Grande Illusion: France 1937 Dir Jean Renoir
- Paisa: Italy 1946 Dir Roberto Rossellini
- Red Desert: France-Italy-Germany 1964 Dir Michelangelo Antonioni
- Tokyo Story: Japan 1953 Dir Yasujiro Ozu