

Forest Row Film Society Annual General Meeting

Minutes of the meeting held on Friday 29th February 2008

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

Last year

The accounts for the 2006-7 season are available on the website. We made only a very small profit, which necessitated raising the ticket prices and membership fees this year. Each screening costs about £130-140; so we need about 35 people to break even.

This year

Membership is increasing; we have about seventy members this year and 151 people signed up for the email list, a 35 per cent increase over last year. This season has been even bigger than last year, with an extra screening at Michael Hall in November, which gave us an insight into the issues involved in using digital equipment. Thanks to the Fleapit Cinema Club, Westerham, for their help and support for that event. The silent films continue to have a strong appeal, with 230 tickets sold, and a good audience for Faust too. However, a small number of films didn't break even: Black Beauty; A Taste of Cherry; An Autumn Tale.

The 8pm start time appears to be working, though there is no perceptible impact on audience numbers. However, it has meant that members are coming earlier for the coffee and cake, which is creating a good social buzz before the films. The coffee and cake has raised about £100 this year.

The first consignment of new chairs has arrived. Thanks to everyone who has contributed. The village hall is still raising money for them, and also for a further batch.

Ongoing

Digital future. Grant applications are under way, and we expect to get new equipment before the start of next season. However, we intend to keep some 16mm screenings since some films aren't available in any other format; ideally, we will also have new portable big screen so can show 16mm on that, but that will require some experimentation with the existing projectors and lenses. That may be a future project.

Our grant applications present the possibility of doing more screenings of more varied programmes, and in other places, targetting wider groups. So, theoretically the new equipment could result in our having screenings once a fortnight or more. But, to do that will require more help, in manning the front desk, doing publicity, tea and cakes etc. Volunteers are required to help us realise that goal. If you are interested in helping out in any way, please speak with the committee.

14th June is Forest Row Fun Day, which coincides with our 30th anniversary. The possibility of our having a screening that night was discussed, eg Hitchcock's Rebecca, or Ophul's Letter from an Unknown Woman.

BFFS awards will be in Sheffield at the end of September. Considered entering for web site, best programming, and film society of the year.

3-5 Oct: Forest Row Festival. We will probably have another screening on Friday, plus silents again. This year's festival will be much bigger than last year's.

Programme for next year. The 16mm list from BFI is available on our website. Members are encouraged to let the committee know your preferences. We have also just received the digital catalogue from the BFI. After the ICO screening weekend (9th Mar) we will also have a better understanding of the process of licensing digital films from other distributors.

Business

The committee was formally re-elected unopposed.