



NEWSREEL

THE NEWSLETTER OF
THE BRITISH FEDERATION OF FILM SOCIETIES



December 2008 ~ Edition

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Welcome & Seasons Greetings

On behalf of the BFFS team we wish you all a very pleasant winter break.



Block Booking Scheme/French Collection: Le Père Noël est une ordure

BFFS National News

New Website

In an exciting new development we will shortly be launching a brand new website. The site will contain a number of new features including an interactive map to help people locate their nearest film society or community cinema and an events diary pointing you to National and Regional events across the UK. In direct response to members' comments we will also be including more photographs and case studies and will be asking for your contributions!

Planned features that will come online later in the New Year include a searchable catalogue of Block Booking Titles, an online forum to facilitate debate and discussion and a members' only area where members will be able to share practical resources such as Programme Notes.

We plan to launch the new site next month and will be keen to hear what you think.

Block Booking Scheme - Latest Acquisition

We reported in the October edition of NewsReel that the scheme now includes over 100 titles and the collection keeps on growing and growing. The latest addition was facilitated by a film society member who attended the London Film Festival and who recommended the Scheme to the film's producer.

Of Parents and Children

This adaptation of Emil Haki's award-winning 2002 Czech novel provides an original take on the relationship between fathers and sons. The quotidian interaction between nonchalant forty-year-old Syn (Novotn) and his retired father (Somr) perfectly captures the awkward companionship and heartache typical of most conventional family relationships. Eloquently weaving together the two parallel stories, the film reveals striking similarities between the three male protagonists and also presents some superb comedic and tender moments which capably draw together director Vladimír Michálek's carefully formed observations on love, life and family.

Adapted review from Time Out online: <http://www.timeout.com/film/reviews/85920/of-parents-and-children.html>

The official website for the film is: <http://www.ordicichadetch.com/en/index.php>

Block Booking Scheme - Other News

We are working on an on-line catalogue so you can browse the full Block Booking collection at your leisure. In the meantime please email or phone the BFFS Central Office to request an up-to-date list of all the titles on the scheme.

From January 2009 film societies and community cinemas will be able to join the National Block Booking Scheme at the same time that they join BFFS. This will reduce paperwork and make the booking process even easier. Joining forms will be distributed later this month – so look out for them amongst those Christmas cards.

Background to Funding Appeal

In October's NewsReel we announced a funding appeal, highlighting a £20,000 shortfall in funds. BFFS has been asked to provide some more background on the reasons for the appeal. Below, newly-appointed BFFS Chair Julieanne Crothers-Gibson provides further explanation.

In 2005, the key funding stream from the UK Film Council that underpins BFFS activities was cut by 50%. In real terms this meant a cut to income from over £100,000 to just under £50,000. At the same time potential income-generating opportunities such as the National Viewing Sessions were effectively removed from the BFFS's portfolio of services.

The challenges created by the funding cut were met with a serious attitude and a fighting spirit. BFFS gloved-up and prepared to turn itself around.

The organisation identified the need for a major review of strategy and governance, and its relationship to the community cinema sector, the film industry and external partners. The outcome of the review would reposition BFFS and enable it to raise significant funds from a wide range of sources. A key priority was to ensure excellence in service delivery to members, to the sector as a whole and to stakeholders.

As a result of this review BFFS has developed a proven track record of delivery. It has appointed a new Board and is in an excellent position for the future in terms of governance and service provision. We believe that BFFS has established a positive national profile both for itself and the sector it serves.

However, during this three year review period we have had to rely heavily on reserves and income from annual subscriptions. Our reserves are now nearing depletion and while we await new funding streams, additional income is needed to bridge the financial gap.

Where funds are needed is on the core costs of the organisation such as running a central office, paying support staff, delivering national and regional events and making available dedicated services that are not funded by any other means. These core funds underpin the entire operation of the organisation.

To date we have received £2,210 of donations (with more pledged), the offer of two fund-raising screenings together with two-three days a week of volunteer time. We are very grateful to all of our supporters, who enable us to continue to champion the community cinema sector and our shared vision of Cinema for All.

Industry News

The Bands Visit – NOW AVAILABLE

Earlier this year we reported that the popular title 'The Band's Visit' would not be available for DVD screenings by film societies and community cinemas. We promised to keep you updated on any new developments.

We are pleased to report that following extensive lobbying of Filmbank and Sony Picture Releasing by BFFS The Band's Visit IS NOW AVAILABLE on DVD for community cinema screenings. It can be booked via Filmbank - and as it is available to buy in the shops there should be few issues with the quality of the DVDs provided by Filmbank.

Northern Film and Media: Network Meeting and Digital Film Archive Fund Launch

Northern Film & Media are pleased to announce its first Film Exhibitor Network Meeting for all North East Exhibitors including film societies and community cinemas on 17 December at the Digital Lounge, Tyneside Cinema, Newcastle.

The new Digital Film Archive Fund is also being launched at the meeting - find out how you can get involved.

For further information on the event please go to: <http://www.northernmedia.org/?mod=events&pageid=40>

Film Reactions from ICO Screening Days

The ICO Autumn Screening Days took place at the Filmhouse in Edinburgh on the weekend of 08-10 November. The complete list of film reactions is below: can be downloaded from the BFFS SW Group website: <http://bffssouthwest.org.uk/>.

The top ten highest scorers were:

FILM TITLE	REACTION INDEX
Four Minutes (Vier Minuten)	87.0
Bring Me the Head of Alfredo Garcia	83.3
Summer	82.8
'Tis Autumn: The Search for Jackie Paris	80.0
Love Letters and Live Wires: Highlights from the GPO Film Unit	79.2
Anvil! The Story of Anvil	77.9
Dean Spanley	77.0
Il Divo	77.0
Che – Part 1	76.4
The Class	75.7

SEEN IT? LOVED IT? BOOK IT!

Four Minutes is available NOW on the National Block Booking Scheme
Summer is COMING SOON to the National Block Booking Scheme

For more information on how to book the other films screened over the weekend visit the ICO website: www.independentcinemaoffice.org.uk

Regional News

Community Cinemas Come Together in the South East of England

The first BFFS Viewing Session in the South East of England for many years was held on Saturday 18th October at South Hill Park arts centre in Bracknell. Funded by Screen South and BFFS, the event was sponsored by South Hill Park and supported by Bracknell Film Society.

As well as bringing together film societies and community cinemas from across the region to see a wide-range of classic, current and preview titles, the day provided networking opportunities between established and embryonic organisations. A panel session dealt with several tricky questions including licensing, classification, equipment spec and film availability. DVD projection equipment was demonstrated, and the event was captured on video for posterity – coming to a YouTube near you very soon!

After the screening of *Ruby Blue* the participation in a Q&A of regional filmmaker and writer-director Jan Dunn proved highly illuminating, as did the introduction to *In Prison My Whole Life* given by Kim Manning-Cooper, Amnesty International UK Campaign Manager, who spoke about Amnesty's campaign to end the death penalty.

The response to the event from delegates was unanimously positive, with requests for more of the same. Particularly appreciated were the facilities provided, the chance to speak with a filmmaker, the opportunity to talk to people over lunch and tea, and the variety of films on show. Comments fed back included:

'I saw some very good films - all of which would be suitable for a society showing'

'An excellent selection'

'Availability of experienced film society people was very helpful'

'These were films that I would not have otherwise seen. Very informative panel discussion'

The list of films screened at the event is below:

FILM TITLE	REACTION INDEX
Closely Observed Trains	90.6
The Visitor	84.1
Gravel and Stones (Regional Short)	83.3
Return to Gorée	80.9
In Prison My Whole Life	76.9
Ruby Blue	76.3
Time Piece (Regional Short)	66.7
Would Like to Meet (Regional Short)	66.7

SEEN IT? LOVED IT? BOOK IT!

Closely Observed Trains is available NOW on the National Block Booking Scheme.

Ruby Blue is available NOW on the National Block Booking Scheme.

In Prison My Whole Life is available from January 2009 on the National Block Booking Scheme.

Return to Gorée is coming soon to the National Block Booking Scheme

The Visitor is available for booking from Unanimous Pictures: <http://www.unanimouspictures.com/>

For more information on the Regional Shorts visit the Screen South Website: <http://www.screensouth.org/>

BFFS Release Tops at Exeter Viewings!

The South West Group's Viewing at Exeter University in October attracted 85 delegates from 27 Societies from all over the South West. The programme featured six new features – three in the 35mm cinema projected by Nick Keen and three more upstairs on DVD in the Digital Room with Paul Schilling and the BFFS kit.

The highlight of the day was a new release from the BFFS Block Booking scheme – *In Prison My Whole Life* – a powerful documentary on the tangled world of renowned Death Row prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal. The screening was greatly enhanced by being introduced by Human Rights lawyer, Niki Adams, who had travelled down especially from London. The film was very well received and was afforded the top rating of the day, a remarkable 93%. The other digital offerings, the indie comedy *In Search of a Midnight Kiss* and *The Visitor* from the director of Film Society favourite, *The Station Agent*.

Downstairs in the CinSoc Cinema, the titles were also well-received, all scoring over 70%. These were a diverse World Cinema line-up with *The Pope's Toilet*, a bitter-sweet farce from Uruguay, Juliette Binoche leading a terrific cast in *Summer Hours*, exploring French heritage and the latest gem from our own Shane Meadows, *Somers Town*. With both *In Prison My Whole Life* and *In Search of a Midnight Kiss* both future titles for the BFFS Block Booking Scheme, the success of the day underlined many of the advantages of BFFS membership!

FILM TITLE	REACTION INDEX
In Prison My Whole Life	92.9
The Visitor	91.9
In Search of a Midnight Kiss	80.0
The Pope's Toilet	72.5
Summer Hours	72.2
Somers Town	71.9

SEEN IT? LOVED IT? BOOK IT!

In Prison My Whole Life is available from January 2009 on the National Block Booking Scheme.

In Search of a Midnight Kiss is available NOW on the National Block Booking Scheme.

For more information on how to book the other films screened visit the BFFS SW website: <http://bffssouthwest.org.uk/>

BFFS Interactive

Welwyn Garden City Film Society Welcomes BFFS Members

Welwyn Garden City Film Society has decided to encourage film enthusiasts from other societies (who are Members of BFFS) to attend screenings at the society's venue by offering half price guest tickets.

The venue (Campus West) is run by the local authority and has extensive facilities, including wheelchair access and a bar which remains open until 11pm so those who wish to do so can stay behind afterwards to socialise.

Films are screened on 35mm, with facilities for 16mm. The film society hosts 12 shows a season from September and June. It has over 200 members with a seating capacity of 326.

If you would like to attend a screening please telephone a member of the committee in advance. The external liaison is: Michael Adams ph 01992 479997.

Further information is available on the society's website: www.wgcsf.org.uk

About BFFS Interactive

Do you.....

- want to buy, sell, or hire 2nd hand film equipment?
- want to screen a film but can't locate the distributor?
- know a handy tip that other organisations may benefit from?

E-mail us with your request and we'll post it here.

Please note that this service is exclusively for use by not-for-profit community cinema providers.

For Your Consideration

Films We Like

Summer is coming! No not the season but a terrific new film directed by Kenny Glenaan and starring Robert Carlyle.

The film previewed at the BFFS National Conference in September where Kenny, writer Hugh Ellis and editor Kristina Hetherington talked at length about the film and filmmaking process. Released in UK cinemas on Friday 5th December, **Summer** will be available on the BFFS National Block Booking Scheme early next year.

'A flawless performance in a great uncompromising film that touches the heart' Edinburgh Film Festival Jury

<http://www.summerthemovie.co.uk/>

Son of Man

This fantastic film from the Director of U-Carmen eKhayelitsha was the BFFS film choice the ICO Screening Days in March. If you would like to book the film for your community cinema screening please email info@bffs.org.uk. The DVD is also available for private sales.

"Son of Man could hardly be bettered" Variety

<http://www.spierfilms.com/sonofman.php>

Carnegie UK Trust search for rural champions

Carnegie UK Trust is on the lookout for unsung rural champions across Britain. The champions – or Rural Sparks as they are being called - will be found through a widespread search for excellence, run by Carnegie. The Rural Sparks mission has been launched by Carnegie to recognise the rural champions who have helped transform the areas where they live.

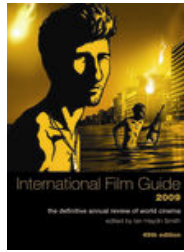
Nominations for Rural Sparks are invited from anyone who considers themselves or someone they know to have achieved something remarkable within their rural community. Top Rural Sparks will receive a contribution towards their project and will be included in a new book, Carnegie's compendium of rural innovation, which will be published in early 2010.

Application forms are available from www.carnegieuktrust.org.uk. To register your interest or to find out more, email the rural team at ruralsparks@carnegieuk.org or phone 01383 721445.

Source: Voluntary Arts Network

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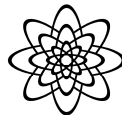
ELECTRIC SHEEP MAGAZINE | New Issue Out 1 December
The winter issue of Electric Sheep explores celluloid snow with articles on Werner Herzog's Encounters at the End of the World and John Carpenter's The Thing as well as Christmas slashers, film noir and cult Japanese 70s revenge tale Lady Snowblood.

WIDESCREEN: Watching. Real. People. Elsewhere by Mark Cousins
Cinema has undergone huge changes in the last decade. Month by month, in the acclaimed journal Prospect, critic and filmmaker Mark Cousins has charted and contextualized these changes brought together in this passionate, skeptical, eye-witness account of film today.

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Dates for Your Diary

08	March	Corsham	BFFS SW Group: Viewing Session
11-12	April	Falkirk	BFFS Scotland: Community Cinema Festival
18-20	April	London	ICO Screening Days

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