



NEWSREEL

THE NEWSLETTER OF
THE BRITISH FEDERATION OF FILM SOCIETIES



October 2007 ~ Edition

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Welcome

Welcome to the October *e-edition* of NewsReel, here's a brief taster of what can be found in this month's edition:

- Hot off the press, the report on the BFFS 2007 Survey of Film Societies and Community Cinemas makes fascinating reading.
- October has proved to be a busy month for BFFS events. A free networking day to support community cinema provision in the South of England took place at the newly refurbished BFI Southbank and regional viewing sessions were hosted in the South West of England and North Wales.
- Further details of the BFFS National Conference for Film Societies and Community Cinemas have just been announced, see National Events for more details.

It seems the new season has taken off with a bang...

BFFS National News

BFFS 2007 Survey of Film Societies and Community Cinemas

The most recent and comprehensive survey of film societies and community cinemas has been published by BFFS. The survey, carried out by Jim Barratt the BFFS Advice and Support consultant, provides a key update on a sector of significant cultural importance to the UK – that of not-for-profit community cinema.

The key findings are summarised as :

- Annual admissions rose by 3.5% (compared with a 5% fall in commercial cinema admissions in 2006)
- Responding organisations screened 550 different titles, compared with 505 released in cinemas in the UK and Republic of Ireland
- An amazing diversity of programming choices is made by this sector as a whole, eg 346 different titles were screened by one organisation alone!
- Film societies and community cinemas enhance film provision in areas otherwise neglected by commercial cinemas: 48% operated in rural areas (compared to 3% of commercial screens)
- Just over half of those surveyed operated in urban locations (52%)
- The sum total of all admissions from responding organisations was 167,881 for 2006/07 - if extrapolated to all BFFS members the total number of admissions would have been around 339,000, equivalent to theatrical gross box office receipts of over one and a half million pounds.

The full survey report can be downloaded here: <http://www.bffs.org.uk/downloads.html>

BFFS Marketing Campaign: Your Union, Your Film

Student film societies, clubs and cinemas around the UK have been sent free flyers as part of the BFFS Your Union, Your Film marketing campaign.

The campaign, centring on Freshers Weeks at the start of the academic year, highlights the benefits and advantages of student film groups to both new and returning students and aims to increase audiences and attract students to actively participate in their nearest group.

Over 75 universities and colleges across the UK received bulk lots of flyers that they could personalise and distribute freely around campus.

The campaign marks the start of a major development project by BFFS to engage young people in regular and active cinema-going that enables them to both experience a wide breadth of film culture and develop technical and business skills associated with running their own group.

Reminder! Contacting BFFS by phone

Please note that the old BFFS phone no. 0845 6037278 is no longer in operation. The new phone no. for BFFS is **0114 2210314**. You can use this number now and calls will cost you less!

The BFFS telephone advice and query service is available from Monday-Friday 10am – 1pm. Where possible we prefer to be contacted via e-mail to allow us to supply you with the best researched response: info@bffs.org.uk

BFFS Regional News

BFFS South of England Networking Event

With the support of Screen South, BFFS held a free networking day on 6th October for all involved with community cinema provision in the South of England. The facilitated event was held at the BFI Southbank's Delegate Centre and was attended by 30 delegates from around the region, bringing together established film societies and volunteer-run community cinemas, potential new start-ups and venues.

As a result of the meeting three virtual networks of interested organisations and individuals has been set up to continue the exchange of news and ideas. These cover the 'South' (Bucks, Berks, Hants, Surrey, Oxon, IoW), the 'South East' (Kent, E/W Sussex) and 'London'.

To read the full report or to get involved with the BFFS Southern England network go to:
http://www.bffs.org.uk/Content/advice_and_support/supportfs_seevent.html

BFFS East England Network

BFFS has dedicated a webpage for film societies and not-for profit community cinemas in the East of England. The webpage will host an informal network to enable local groups to share information and ideas. The page provides a means to keep in touch with who is operating in the area, where they are and how to contact them. To get involved in the network go to http://www.bffs.org.uk/Content/advice_and_support/supportfs_eastevent.html

National Events

BFFS National Conference for Film Societies and Community Cinemas

The BFFS National Conference for Film Societies and Community Cinemas will take place on **Saturday 1st December** at the Showroom Cinema, Sheffield. The conference is the only national event dedicated to the needs and interests of the film societies and not-for-profit community cinemas. The day will include:

- facilitated networking
- training and information sessions
- screenings of hard-to-access cinema gems available from 2008

With speakers comprising industry experts and film society/community cinema specialists, this presents an ideal opportunity for volunteers and those working in the not-for-profit sector to interact with colleagues and quiz experts at an informative, comfortable and enjoyable event.

Sessions include Growing Your Audience: how to attract people and keep them coming! The Digital Future: see projection equipment in action. Your Union, Your Film: Student Film Societies take centre stage.

BFFS Annual General Meeting: the future of support for the community cinema movement. Plus the BFFS Annual Dinner at Showroom Restaurant: with prominent after dinner speaker.

For more information on ticket prices and titles or to book a place at the event go to http://www.bffs.org.uk/Content/advice_and_support/bffs_national%20_conference.html

Regional Events

BFFS South West ~ Viewing Session

Eighty delegates from 23 societies travelled up or down the A303 earlier this month to the delightful Somerset village of South Petherton for the South West Group's latest film preview day. The hosts were the Petherton Picture Show showing the six features selected in their usual venue the David Hall on their own recently upgraded digital kit and up the High Street in the Blake Hall where SW stalwart Paul Schilling worked his magic. The

delegates came from five counties and included the newly launched Lymptone Film Society and two others just about to start up in Teignmouth and Budleigh Salterton.

The audience reactions to the mixture of brand-new releases and over-looked titles were very enthusiastic with top honours going to Deepa Mehta's moving *Water* and the other, some might say more interesting, take on Truman Capote, *Infamous* with a wonderful central performance from Toby Jones. Not far behind was *Mountain Patrol*, one of titles from the BFFS's new block booking scheme - a gritty unflinching tale of poachers and game wardens on the Tibetan tundra. For more information and to book the film go to: http://www.bffs.org.uk/Content/film/film_blockbooking_kekex.html. The other titles also did well with Gérard Depardieu returning to form in *The Singer*, Maggie Gyllenhaall's brave performance in *Sherrybaby* and a much-praised French version of D H Lawrence's *Lady Chatterley*.

Another encouraging development of the Viewing was the high ratings received by the shorts taken from the two compilations from Best v. Best vol. II and Bitesize Cinema autumn collection, both collections are on offer at a special rate through the BFFS. For more information go to: http://www.bffs.org.uk/Content/membership/member_offers.html.

So, a great day of films made even better by the splendid hospitality of the PPS team and the wonderful catering from the Petherton Arts Trust team. The South West caravan now moves up the A303 for its next Viewing in Wincanton on Sunday 27th April next year.

For the full reactions and details of the films visit the South West website: <http://www.bffssouthwest.org.uk/> and for a set of splendid images from the day go to the Petherton Picture Show website: <http://www.pethertonpictureshow.com/BFFS/index.html>

By Brian Clay, Regional Secretary of BFFS South West

BFFS Wales ~ Viewing Session

Rialto Film Society at Theatr Colwyn, Colwyn Bay was the Welsh Group's venue for its annual Autumn Film Weekend. Total attendance for the two day event was well above expectations with 47 delegates. Welsh group film societies were well represented with delegates coming from Abergavenny Film Society, Brecon Film Society, Denbigh Film Society, Occasional Film Society, Pontardawe Film Club, Rialto Film Club and Theatr Mwldan and, from North-West England, delegates from Chester Film Society and Heswall Film Society.

Many delegates made the event a short holiday by staying in hotels to which the Welsh Group had been able to negotiate advantageous rates. Especially appreciated was the well attended Welsh Group annual dinner held in Virgilios Ristorante. This was followed by an evening of short films.

Six new feature films were shown. Reaction sheet information showed two films as being exceptionally good:

- *In the Shadow of the Moon* comments included, "The stuff of which dreams are made of. Marvellous" and "That was the Future. Inspiration for the future".
- *Die Fälscher (The Counterfeiters)*: comments included, "Fascinating subject, fine acting, a totally absorbing film".

Reactions and release dates for each film are available from the Welsh Group website: <http://www.pontardawefilm.co.uk/BFFSWelshGroup.html>

BFFS Wales would like to thank the Film Agency for Wales for the financial assistance to hold this event.

By Dave Phillips, Regional Treasurer of BFFS Wales

Information and Offers

BFFS National Block Booking Scheme ~ Reminder!

The Oscar nominated, critically acclaimed film HALF NELSON is now available for booking on DVD.



Half Nelson: Axiom Films

Smart, moving and politically engaged HALF NELSON is one of the most exciting American independent films in years. Strong performances from the cast (which includes Ryan Gosling, Shareeka Epps and Anthony Mackie) and an original score that includes Canadian indie rock group Broken Social Scene, enable director Ryan Fleck to weave together a moving story of redemption in an unforgiving world.

"This is really a special film, rich with heart and laced with a bittersweet melancholy... Subtle and poignant, Half Nelson exerts a powerful hold... fresh and beautifully sad.. Ryan Gosling gives one of the outstanding performances that only turn up every ten years or so... the same is true of his young co-star, Shareeka Epps" (4 STARS) *THE SUNDAY TIMES*

"Blasts out of the Hollywood comfort zone with brains, attitude and blistering performances. Essential viewing." *James King, RADIO 1*

For more information and to book the film go to:
http://www.bffs.org.uk/Content/film/film_blockbooking_nelson.html

BFFS National Block Booking Scheme ~ What's New?

A number of new titles have been added to the scheme and will be available for booking from January 2008. A selection of the new titles will be screened at the BFFS National Conference, giving film bookers an exclusive opportunity to see the films on the big screen.

Watch this space for more information on the *new* titles...

Community Cinema in Action

In a series of focus pieces BFFS is pleased to offer film societies, clubs and community cinemas the opportunity to report on special events, educational activities, success stories and many other examples of cultural and community engagement. We hope that these pieces will provide a through-the-keyhole glimpse of these organisations in action, illustrating the unique breadth and diversity of the community cinema sector as well as providing inspiration for other exhibitors.

In the second profile piece we are delighted to include an in depth case study of Real 2 Reel Cinema, Ramsbottom, Lancashire. Real 2 Reel Cinema won the award for Best New Film Society at the 2007 BFFS Film Society of the Year Awards.



Image Copyright: Karen Wright Photography

These enterprising committee members are also budding film makers who have had have short films accepted into the Under Exposed Film Festival at the Cornerhouse, Manchester this December.

To read the Real 2 Reel Cinema case study go to:
http://www.bffs.org.uk/Content/membership/member_commcinema.html

BFFS Interactive

Research by BFFS estimates that there are over 700 community cinema providers in the UK. This includes all types of film societies and clubs including those in schools, Higher and Further Education colleges and universities, community groups, social clubs, youth clubs, small-scale film festivals, mobile and touring screen networks, mixed used venues that screen film and independent cinemas who run active programmes of community engagement. This markedly different collection of organizations shares a common vision: providing 'Cinema for All'.

There's a wealth of intelligence across the sector and in the spirit of cooperative engagement we'd like to invite you to share your resources, knowledge, expertise and experience. For example:

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.

Calling Charities

Is your film society or not-for-profit community cinema a registered Charity?
Is the organisation registered with HM Revenue and Customs to receive Gift Aid?

If the answer to both of these questions is yes, then BFFS would like to hear from you. We are particularly interested to learn of any organisations that have qualified for Gift Aid for membership subscriptions.

BFFS and two of its members are currently researching how forthcoming changes in charitable status and HM Revenue and Customs rules may benefit qualifying community cinemas and film societies.

Please get in touch: info@bffs.org.uk

FREE Film Festival

The Festival of the Moving Image will take place at the Bloomsbury Theatre, London from Monday 29th October to Thursday 1st November.

The event is organised by UCL Film Studies to celebrate the centenary of Frida Kahlo's birth, the New Latin American cinema movement, Gabriel Garcia Marquez and the end of the slave trade in the British colonies.

Admission is free, there is no need to book.

For more information go to: <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/news/news-articles/0710/07100501>

For Your Consideration

Information, offers and requests from selected external organisations and individuals.

Sustaining Grants

The National Association for Voluntary and Community Action (NAVCA) have published a leaflet on sustaining grants. The resource is designed to:

- Promote the benefits of an active community and voluntary sector
- Inform discussions about how to support community initiatives and social cohesion
- Maintain or increase grant funding
- Deliver improved outcomes in a local area in line with their priorities and aspirations

To download your free copy of Sustaining Grants go to: <http://www.navca.org.uk/publications/sustaininggrants/>

Dates for Your Diary

03rd-05th November

ICO Screening Days

25th November
01st December
08th-09th December

BFFS Scotland Viewing Session
BFFS National Conference
BFFS Yorkshire Film Education Weekend

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