



afi research collection

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In partnership with



# AFI RESEARCH COLLECTION ANNUAL NEWSLETTER

2011

## INTRODUCTION

2010–2011 has been an exciting time for the AFI Research Collection (AFIRC). New projects (such as Crawford Productions cataloguing) have been developed, while we have maintained and expanded the highly specialised collection of materials around film, television, and media held at the AFIRC.

The AFIRC has welcomed some new staff to the collection. Cathie Gillam worked as a library assistant in 2010 with Jenny Anderson. In January 2011, she was given the position of co-librarian (sharing with Alex Gionfriddo), whilst Jenny has been made the sole library assistant. Both Cathie and Jenny have made a huge contribution to the AFIRC, and their knowledge and enthusiasm has consolidated and enhanced the work of their predecessors. We are happy to welcome back former library assistant Olympia Szilagyi who has taken over a one-day-a-week role with the collection.

The staff at the AFIRC are looking forward to tackling the challenges for the remainder of 2011 and we hope that we can share the fruits of our labour with you.

**Alex Gionfriddo and Cathie Gillam, Co-Librarians AFI Research Collection**



Alex Gionfriddo



Cathie Gillam

## INTRODUCING CATHIE GILLAM

I first started working at the AFI Research Collection (AFIRC) as a volunteer in 2009 while I was completing my Postgraduate Diploma in Information Management. The AFIRC is a fantastic place to volunteer and to gain experience working in a specialist library, and I felt very welcome and part of the team, right from the start. In fact, you could say I have loved being here so much I haven't left.

In 2010, I was one of the library assistants and this year I am sharing the librarian position with Alex. I really enjoy helping our students and the researchers who use our collection. I think all the staff would agree that we get a lot of job satisfaction from the wonderful feedback that we receive from students as they leave with a great range of resources for assignment tasks and improved research skills.

The great range and depth of our collection means working here is always interesting, and in particular, projects such as our Crawfords Collection provide wonderful insights into the television industry.

## MAJOR GRANT SUCCESS:

### SCREEN MEDIA RESEARCH ARCHIVE ESTABLISHED

The Australian National Data Service (ANDS) has awarded \$130,000 funding to the Screen Media Research Archive (SMRA) project. Participants are RMIT's eResearch Unit with the AFI Research Collection (AFIRC). The project will capture data on a wide range of research that has been undertaken within the Screen Media industry. Project results will be shared once the project is completed by the end of 2011.

## HONOUR ROLL

### AFI RESEARCH COLLECTION STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS 2010–2011

#### Collection Staff

Deb Verhoeven, Alex Gionfriddo, Cathie Gillam, Jenny Anderson, Olympia Szilagyi, Amree Hewitt. Extra thanks to Fincina Hopgood (consultant).

#### Extra Staff/Volunteers/ Industrial Placements

Harley MacDonald, Tim Marriott, Veryan Croggon, Jarrod Zlatic, Suz Cochrane, Alejandro Castro, Julia Conti, Sathiyaseelan Veerappan, Aaron Ngieng, Eleanor Colla, Zach Holly, Emma Lawler, Peter Gravestock, Marina Matthews, Felicity Kelly.

## AFIRC RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP ANNOUNCED

In keeping with the School of Media and Communication, and RMIT University's mission to develop a global research environment, an international Research Fellowship was established to raise the profile of the collection amongst film and television scholars in Australia and overseas, and to develop research projects connected to the collection.

In a highly competitive field, Brenda Weber was awarded the 2010 Fellowship. Brenda is Associate Professor, Gender Studies (also Adjunct Associate Professor, Communication and Culture, American Studies, Cultural Studies and English) at Indiana University, USA. She will make use of the extensive holdings of the AFI Research Collection in support of *Reality Gendervision: Decoding Gender on Transatlantic Reality TV*, a new critical collection for which she is the editor. She will present her research at a seminar (to be announced later in 2011 in Filmfile – the AFIRC e-newsletter).

## PROJECTS

### EMPIRE AUSTRALIA (INDEXING)

The AFI Research Collection holdings of Empire Australia have been indexed for the articles pertaining to the Australian film industry and Australian cast and crew.

### CARD CATALOGUE DIGITISATION

The AFI Research Collection is working feverishly on digitising the old AFIRC card catalogue and uploading the records onto the online AFIRC catalogue. This should enable a far deeper online search on materials held here at the AFIRC than previously possible.

### THE CRAWFORD COLLECTION: MAJOR TELEVISION ARCHIVE CATALOGUING PROJECT

The team at the AFI Research Collection have recently started cataloguing some of the wonderful resources donated to us by Crawfords Australia. The collection spans a range of productions from early radio plays through to television icons such as *Homicide* and *The Box*. Materials include stills, scripts, ephemera, promotional items, and research.

We have recently been uncovering fascinating insights into *The Flying Doctors* series. Our collection covers the development of the series from the original concept through to international success. Some of *The Flying Doctors* highlights that can be found on a visit to our collection include:

- A wide range of background research from technical specifications of planes to the finer points of medicine in the outback
- Title and storyline changes
- Scripts from initial drafts and rewrites, through to actors annotated (shooting) scripts
- A large collection of publicity stills
- Wardrobe continuity notes
- Graphic materials
- Domestic, trade and international promotional material

And much, much more!

This is the start of a major ongoing project. It will provide valuable information on the development of a series as well as an insight into Australia's television industry.

## FAREWELL DEB VERHOEVEN

In March 2010, the AFI Research Collection (AFIRC) bade a fond farewell to its Director, Professor Deb Verhoeven. Deb was director of the AFIRC after it moved over to RMIT University from the Australian Film Institute in 2002. In the time she oversaw the collection, she spearheaded numerous research projects (both government and industry funded) that utilised the AFIRC's staff and resources, as well as keeping the collection expanding and its holdings relevant for all.

Deb's great knowledge of Australian cinema and the film industry was an enormous advantage for the AFIRC. She was committed to the collection as an invaluable asset to RMIT University, and the screen industries generally. We wish Deb the very best in her future endeavours.



Professor Deb Verhoeven



Flying Doctors archive material



Flying Doctors archive material

## NEW MAJOR EQUIPMENT AT THE AFIRC

### MICROFILM ONTO DIGITAL FORMAT

The AFI Research Collection (AFIRC) has an excellent set of film holdings in the microfilm format, and a microfilm reader to view these images. We are delighted to announce that the AFIRC has recently obtained a microfilm reader/scanner that enables users to scan images off the microfilm and onto a digital format (we are also able to print out in hardcopy).

The majority of AFIRC holdings on microfilm are based around cinema and entertainment trade publications. The titles held include:

- *Australian Variety* (1913–16)
- *Australian Variety and Show World* (1916–1921)
- *Everyones: the motion picture authority* (Australia) (1920–1937)
- *The Exhibitor* (Australia) (1923–1926)
- *Film Weekly* (Australia) (1926–1972)
- *Motion Picture Herald* (USA) (1915–1972)
- *Variety* (USA) (1905–1977).  
Note: We hold the print version from 1976 onwards.

Researchers wanting to use the Microfilm reader/scanner should contact the AFIRC and we'll be happy to give you access and guide you through the process of using it.



Dean Brandum with the Microfilm reader



A notable visitor to the AFIRC was Philippa Hawker - Senior Arts Writer for *The Age*

## BONZA DATABASE WINS ATOM AWARD

bonza is an online collection of national cinema databases (to date French, Australian and New Zealand) prepared by film researchers and students, and both funded and administered by the AFIRC.

bonza is also an educational tool that gives students the opportunity to learn research skills by undertaking the work of investigating, evaluating and publishing on films, and by actively connecting their own work to that of other researchers.

At the 2010 Australian Teachers of Media Awards (ATOM Awards) in September 2010, Deb Verhoeven and Alex Gionfriddo were awarded the ATOM Award for the Best Tertiary Educational Resource in recognition of their work on the bonza database. Presented by awards host Vince Colosimo, Deb thanked the AFI Research Collection, RMIT University, database consultants Strategic Data, and Elosie 36 (yes, that's her real name) the former RMIT student whose research on Helen Twelvetrees inspired her, and bonza co-creator Adrian Miles, to create the database.

If you are interested in checking out the database, or adding data to it, please feel free to visit the database website [www.bonza.rmit.edu.au](http://www.bonza.rmit.edu.au) or contact AFIRC at [afiresearch@rmit.edu.au](mailto:afiresearch@rmit.edu.au)

## RESEARCHERS AT THE AFIRC

### DEAN BRANDUM TALKS ABOUT A VISIT TO THE AFI RESEARCH COLLECTION

*Dean Brandum is currently researching a PhD thesis exploring the fortunes of British films at the American box office in the 1960s. Below he charts his research adventures at the AFIRC.*

Today I have an urgent need to know what film was playing at the Fiesta theatre in Pittsburgh in June 1971 and how much money it grossed. Where on earth would you find such information? Well, *Variety* magazine is about the only public source for such data and the AFIRC is about the only place in Australia that has the entire run on microfilm.

Within a couple of minutes of arriving at the AFIRC for the day I have discussed the weekend football results with Alex, the centre's librarian, charged up the microfilm reader and have found the information I need. But now I need to know about this theatre, who owned it and what was its screening policy? *Motion Picture Herald* could tell me and guess what? Yes, the AFIRC has that on microfilm too. Now I need data on the exhibition industry for the entire year of 1971. Thank heavens they have a copy of that year's *Motion Picture Almanac* on the shelves (and not the only one – they stretch back into the 1930s).

Now I'm off on wild tangential inspirations: How was the market performing in Australia at the time? Good to know that decades of *Film Weekly* are there on microfilm, and for a comparison with how Britain was faring, I can bug the staff to access the years of *Kine Weekly*. Now, about this particular film playing at the Fiesta ... I'm not familiar with it and I need to know more than what IMDb can tell me. Wow! The library has a clippings file available, containing reviews, interviews and articles from the time of its release. Hmm ... I might need a little academic weight behind this. The library has access to the Film Index International database that, with a quick search, can provide me with a listing of journal articles, interviews and reviews pertaining to that film and those who made it. And better still, a vast number of the sources listed are available here at the library.

Loaded up with photocopies, pages of notes and database entries completed. Another (as always) bountiful day at the AFIRC. But, once I sort through all I have found I know I will now have more questions to go with these answers. Looks like I'll be back tomorrow. One thing I can be certain of though: without the AFIRC, its collection and the assistance of its staff, there is no way I would have contemplated the thesis I am now researching. For any cinema academic, researcher or just general buff, there is no better place to spend a day with the world history and theory of film only a page, mouse click, file flick or microfilm scroll away.

*Dean Brandum is a PhD student and academic at Deakin University. His main area of research is in cinema exhibition. He runs the 'Technicolor Yawn' website <http://technicolouryawn.com> (Melbourne cinema going: 1970–84) and is a die-hard Richmond Football Club supporter.*

## ALAN HOPGOOD DONATES FILM AND TV ARCHIVE

The AFI Research Collection was very fortunate to receive a number of donations in the past year. Amongst them is a particularly fascinating one from writer/actor Alan Hopgood, who donated his archive on TV shows and films he worked on in the 1970s and 1980s.

A portion of the donation is an amazing collection of letters from fans of the television serial *Bellbird*. In 1975 there was a proposal to change the show from a 15-minute-a-night screening, to a one-hour-a-week show. The letters are very touching and reflect the wide and varied audience the show attracted. Another significant part of the donation is a massive collection of clippings on the Alvin Purple films and television show (of which Alan was the writer), as well as clippings from other productions which he worked on.

Many thanks from the AFI Research Collection to all our generous benefactors in the past year, including: RMIT University Library, Senses of Cinema, Deb Verhoeven, Jenny Anderson, Alan Hopgood, Raffaele Caputo, Les Rabinowicz and Greg King.

## AFIRC SUPPORTS MAJOR RESEARCH PUBLICATIONS

The AFIRC has a long history of supporting screen research of all kinds. Notable publications that utilised the AFI Research Collection in the past year include:

*Parlato in Italiano: the heyday of Italian Cinema in Myrtleford in the 1960s*. Edited by John Taylor and Cynthia Troup.

Published by the Myrtleford and District Historical Society Inc. 2010

*Parlato in Italiano* is a tribute to the cinema as a meeting place in the cultural landscape and memory of a regional area – most vividly during the post-war years before television ownership became the norm. The AFI Research Collection provided technical and financial support for this publication.

Verhoeven, D and Gionfriddo, A (2009), 'Australian screen adaptations in the AFI Research Collection', *Studies in Australasian Cinema* 3:3, pp. 325–343.

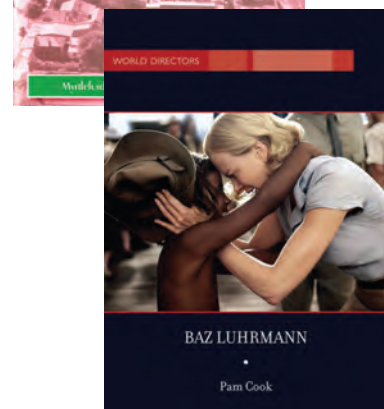
Deb Verhoeven and Alex Gionfriddo wrote an article on some of the fascinating novel adaptations that were primarily donated to the AFIRC by the estate of Wayne Levy.

*Baz Luhrmann Pam Cook British Film Institute, 2010*

Pam Cook used the AFI Research Collection back in 2005 for her research on Baz Luhrmann and she was kind enough to mention in her introduction the AFIRC staff 'who were exceptionally helpful in guiding me through this invaluable resource and its extensive materials on Australian cinema'. Thanks Pam!



Letter from a fan of *Bellbird*



## FIND US



Enter from Russell St via lane between corner of La Trobe St and The Old Melbourne Gaol

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