



australian cinematographer

# THE BACK OF BEYOND 1952

## Ross Wood shoots Tom Kruse



Quarterly Journal of the Australian Cinematographers Society  
RRP \$8.00 inc GST

Issue 23

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of the Australian Cinematographers Society's Articles of Association  
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## letters to the editor

Dear Associate Editor  
John Leake ACS,

Please forgive the massive time delay in my saying a very sincere thanks for your very kind assistance in enabling me to attend the National Awards at Surfers Paradise in May.

I have to say that I was surprised and delighted to receive such an honour as Hall of Fame from the ACS and it was wonderful to share time briefly with so many great guys and gals; it was a fantastic evening,  
Very best wishes to all

Rob Copping ACS

The Editor would like to mention the people at Film Australia, Sydney who kindly provided the still pictures of The Back of Beyond. These pictures made Max Lemon's story come to life. Things were different in 1952, especially location catering.

Thank you, Film Australia.

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ISSUE 23  
PRINTED SEPTEMBER 2004

Features

The Back of Beyond	8
The Precision Dolly Track Story	14
Michael Dillon AM	19
Profile Patricia Walter	20
D.I. Costs and Savings	21
Shootout	23
News	24
In Memoriam	26

Departments

Editorial	6
Short Ends	16
Film Review	27
The Big Picture	28
New Gear	35
Book Review	36
Flashback Ted Taylor ACS	37

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Australian Cinematographer is published quarterly for members and associates of the Australian Cinematographers Society.

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**NEW GEAR:**  
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**PRODUCTION:**  
Jamieson Publishing

**NATIONAL LIBRARY OF AUSTRALIA:** ISSN 1440-978X

**PRINT POST APPROVED:**  
PP255003/03506

**PUBLISHERS:**  
AustCine Publishing,  
PO Box 207,  
Camberay NSW 2062

Cover Picture by  
© John Heyer Family Trust



# EDITOR'S VIEW

**BUTCH CALDERWOOD ACS**



Congratulations to the American Society of Cinematographers on reaching 85 years and 84 years of American Cinematographer. ACS is almost 50 and I look forward to that anniversary. This issue of AC has several important Australian stories from 85 and 50 years ago.

The show business gossip writers continue to astound. Recently there was a small item about a campaign attacking cannabis's image; 'the ads will also be displayed in cinema bathrooms, bus shelters and on buses'. Cinemas with bathrooms must be a recent development.

More disturbing were the credits on a recent ABC TV production. After the cinematographer's name were the letters ACS in brackets. There is an established protocol for the use of ACS which should be observed.

**Butch Calderwood ACS OAM**

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## **From the President.**

By the time this issue reaches your mailbox all the State branches will have held their annual general meetings and elected their office bearers and committees for the ensuing year. To all those newly elected, welcome and thank you for supporting and giving your time to the ACS. To all members I re-iterate that the Society belongs to you. We, as office bearers, are just the caretakers of your Society, responsible for looking after your interests.

The National Executive is looking at ways to raise the Society's profile nationally and internationally. We currently have two proposals being considered that I believe will help to do this. The first one is that we open up the Awards to all Australian cinematographers, not just members of the Society. Non members would have to pay a substantially different entry fee, but this would make our Awards truly representative of the best Australian cinematographers have to offer. I believe it would also add value to the individual Awards by increasing the pool of entries. Hopefully any non-members who win an award would be encouraged to join the society.

The second proposal is that we introduce an international category where all members of the Society are asked to nominate their choice for an International cinematographer of the year. The cinematographer may be of any nationality. In this way we, as a Society, can show our recognition for excellence on the world stage. Entries in this category would only be member nominated. Individuals would not be able to enter themselves.

The finer points of both these proposals are still being considered and I would welcome any members comments or suggestions.

**Ted Rayment ACS**

**Federal President**





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# THE BACK OF BEYOND

by Max Lemon



**ABOVE:**  
The Royal  
Mail ready  
to roll  
© John  
Heyer  
Family  
Trust

When asked if I could recall a few details of “The Back of Beyond” location trip it all seemed a part of the “too long ago” file.

After 50 years, the day to day graft, the heat and the flies are all a hazy memory. But as I think about it more, certain incidents come to mind quite clearly, as if they happened more recently. Because they set themselves apart from the daily routine at the time I can recall them with a certain amount of clarity.

The Venice Film Festival Award to

“The Back of Beyond” was in 1954, so the location trip must have been about 1952. This would have made me 17 years of age.

Tom Kruse, the “mailman”, lived in Marree, South Australia at the bottom of the “Birdsville Track” and it was here that the crew assembled. John and Janet Heyer drove to Marree some weeks ahead of the crew arrival to enable them to do another survey.

Keith Loone (Camera Assistant) John Heath, (Sound) and myself flew to Adelaide, stayed overnight, then travelled by train for almost 24 hours

to arrive in Marree early in the morning. George Hughes, (Grip) must have travelled up with the Shell Co. truck, driven by Jack Dudgeon. This carried a generator, a portable tower and the bulk of the equipment which included Supreme’s “Velocilator” dolly which weighed “a ton”. Ross Wood (D.O.P) was working on an American Feature film in Fiji and was late returning to Australia. He and Warren Mearns (Gaffer) would fly to Marree with the last of the camera equipment and what must have been the original 17.5mm magnetic



recorder which Merv Murphy and Arthur Smith completed the night before departure.

The "Dragon Rapide" which was to fly them to Marree was so laden with equipment that it took two attempts to gain enough height to get over the Blue Mountains, and then only by jettisoning some of the 12

**The "Dragon Rapide" which was to fly them to Marree was so laden with equipment that it took two attempts to gain enough height to get over the Blue Mountains**

Volt batteries which were the power supply for the camera and magnetic recorder.

Those of us in Marree awaited the arrival of the aircraft with some concern. If it arrived after dark there were no lights on what was called "the strip" - an area of Sturt's Stony Desert where the larger rocks and stones had been removed. As dusk fell, we heard the drone of the approaching aircraft. John Heyer jumped into his car and hurtled off towards the strip, which was a short distance out of town. When he got there he had no idea which way to park his car to mark the direction that "the strip" took, so he parked it at one end with his headlights facing down the strip. Fortunately this was correct and the plane, made a safe landing in the dark

Asked how he managed to navi-

gate from Sydney to Marree the pilot, Warren Penny, remarked that he just followed the railway line West from Sydney, past Broken Hill, until he picked up the line going North towards Alice Springs, passing the airport at Leigh Creek and on towards Marree.

The next morning, after unloading the gear from the plane, Warren Penny took off and headed south to Leigh Creek. We heard later that he had come in unannounced at Leigh Creek and forced a DC 3 off the runway. His licence was suspended after that little episode.

We were now all in Marree and accommodated at "the hotel". Keith Loone spent the day and evening checking and cleaning all the camera gear ready for the next day. He had acquired another bedroom where he could keep the

**BELOW:**  
**Along the Birdsville Track - Max Lemon standing on left**  
© John Heyer Family Trust

10



equipment. The next morning, to his despair, he found all the gear covered in sand and dust. It was then discovered that the only window did not have any glass in it and the wind during the night had wreaked havoc on his precious equipment.

After a few days shooting around Marree, we headed off up the "Birdsville Track". We were now accompanied by Tom Kruse and his aboriginal off-sider Henry Butler

Our convoy consisted of :

1) Tom Kruse's Leyland truck, suitably laden with a range of articles which could most likely be found aboard on a typical run up the "track".

2) An ex army "blitz-wagon", which carried a 100 gallon water

**After many dunes, large and small, and many changes of direction we were starting to wonder if Tom was not lost.**

tank for drinking purposes and sundry equipment we may need along the way- shovels, coir matting and steel plates to assist the vehicles over the sand, and some of our camping equipment. This truck would also become the vehicle on the other side of Coopers Creek onto which everything from Tom's truck was transferred for the rest of the "film trip" from Coopers Creek to Birdsville.

3) The Shell Co. truck with the generator, fuel and film equipment.

4) John Heyer's Shell Film Unit car, a 1948 Chevrolet which carried, among other things, our Radio Transceiver for communication with the homesteads along "the track" and with the Flying Doctor Network.

The Birdsville Track was, at best, a series of wheel ruts which disappeared when you encountered a sand dune and which may, or may not reappear on the other side. So navigation was largely a matter of "instinct" until wheel ruts were found again heading in roughly the right direction. Or so it appeared to us "city slickers". To Tom Kruse it was different. In the absence of any landmarks and with sand dunes that changed shape and position every few hours, Tom Kruse seemed to know exactly where he was at all times.

A day or two up the "track" we came to Etadunna homestead. It had been arranged for us to use the drovers quarters as accommodation while we shot in the vicinity for a few days.

One day while at Etadunna, the rest went off shooting and I was left behind to do some chores around our quarters. During the afternoon I noticed a black cloud- a very black cloud, approaching from the West. It looked, at least, like a very severe storm. I decided it would be wise to stock up on logs for the fuel stove from the woodpile about 30 yards behind the building. I was about half way back to our quarters with an armload of logs when the wind hit. It did not build up from 10 mph, to 40 to 60 to 80 mph it just hit at about 100 mph. Logs and I went in all directions. It was impossible to walk against it. The sand carried by the wind hit the skin like a thousand needles. I took shelter behind something I don't remember what, until the wind abated enough for me to make a dash for the door of our quarters. The wind was now accompanied by rain. I was frantically trying to rescue sleeping bags and mattresses from the exposed veranda, where most of us had been sleeping, and cram them

into the adjacent rooms. Almost as suddenly as it had arrived, the wind and rain departed leaving a scene of some minor devastation.

A large barn type building which housed equipment, and served as a garage for some of their vehicles, was virtually non-existent. A tall metal pole, which was the homestead aerial for their two-way radio contact with the outside, was largely unsupported as most of the guy wires had been torn loose and a large section of the corrugated iron roof of the homestead was missing.

As some members of the family emerged from the homestead to survey the damage, I could make out a faint cry of "help....". The outside toilet was a telephone box sized structure, a plank with a large hole in it for a seat. This was situated over a hole in the ground. Unfortunately it had been occupied when the wind hit and it came to rest some distance from its original position, lying on its door, so that the occupant couldn't get out.

The next day we all mucked in to try and restore things to some normality. We found a long length of ridge capping from the roof, with a dozen sheets of corrugated iron still attached to it, about a mile and a half away over the sand dunes.

Shortly after this we all left Etadunna to make our way to the lake at Kopperamanna, the site of the old Lutheran mission.

With Tom Kruse leading, we headed off over the sand dunes, along sandy ridges, over and around dunes, stopping more than occasionally to dig out one of the trucks bogged down in the sand. Dig away the sand from in front of and behind the wheels, back it up a little if possible, lay the matting, or large steel plates in front of the wheels, push, shove, sweat, swear, as the vehicle progressed



**LEFT:**  
**The Camel  
Driver and  
The  
Director**  
© John  
Heyer  
Family  
Trust

10 or 15 feet. Repeat the process, over and over, until the truck reaches the top of the dune and its momentum carries it down the other side.

After many dunes, large and small, and many changes of direction we were starting to wonder if Tom

was not lost. John Heyer approached him to ask this very question. Tom looked around and remarked casually “if we go to the top of that next sand hill you will see the lake”. With some misgivings we clambered up the shifting sands. On reaching the

top, what did we see? You guessed it .....the lake!. Tom’s unerring ability to find his way among featureless surroundings, devoid of landmarks, never ceased to amaze us.

It had taken all day to reach the



# THE BACK OF BEYOND

11

*continued*

lake and as we pitched our tents Tom found two old fish traps. They were in need of much repair. I guessed that a fish would find its way out easier than find its way in. However, Tom lowered them into the lake. The next morning we retrieved the traps absolutely crammed with fish, a fresh water Perch-like species. That night we agreed that they were a bit oily and tasted rather bland but were a welcome change to the tinned food we had been living on for weeks.

It was while we were at the lake that Ross tackled John Heyer about some time off. We had not had a day off since leaving Marree and it was agreed that the next day, Sunday, we would not start until midday. This

would give us an opportunity to do some washing. However, everyone was so tired we all slept until about 11am and then there was a mad dash to the lake to do some washing and hang our clothes over the spinifex bushes that grew in the sand.

One day when shooting on the edge of the lake, and quite a distance from our camp, a severe sandstorm hit. Caught out in the open in shorts, boots and possibly a "T"-shirt is a painful experience in these conditions. We were quite exposed and as much as we tried to protect the equipment, it was a losing battle. All the gear had to be dismantled, cleaned and reassembled. The sand and talcum like dust got into everything.

When it was time to move on further up the track, we vacated our camp knowing that henceforth there would be no refreshing dip in the lake at the end of the day. Our one little luxury would no longer be available. The flat featureless gibber plains of Sturt's Stony Desert are amazing to see. At times you can stop and look around 360 degrees and nothing taller than a rock will break the horizon. At one spot we stopped and looking around the 360 degrees the only thing that broke the horizon was a spindly, seemingly dead, tree about 15 feet high with a trunk about 8 inches in diameter. At the base of the tree, as a possible example of "sod's law", was the rusted wreck of an old car

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which appeared to have crashed into the only thing within 50 miles that stood more than 6 inches off the ground. I don't believe it was an accident but, more likely, an example of the sense of humour of some local.

On our way to Clifton Hills we came to an area of the Birdsville

**A clean bed, fresh vegetables and a cold beer – what else could one want?**

Track known as “Goyders Lagoon”. It was an area where during the dry season you could drive straight across, a “thimble full” of rain needed a 20 mile detour and anything more than a cup full required a 40 mile detour into Sturt’s Stony Desert. It was night when we arrived and Tom said we would have to detour a

considerable way around it.

So our little convey headed off into the night, pitch black, nothing but stony ground, the occasional dried out creek bed and on into the darkness. Again, no such thing as a landmark, or anything to give you an idea of where you might be.

Tom had proven to us in the past his ability to find his way but as the hours went by, with a total absence of wheel tracks or any sign of humanity, doubts crept in. Once again John Heyer caught up to Tom’s leading truck to ask “do you know where you are?” Tom replied “within the next 30 minutes the lights of Clifton Hills homestead will come up dead ahead”. As promised, in about 30 minutes the lights appeared-not 5 or 10 degrees to the left or right but dead ahead, as he predicted.

A few nights later we were camped beside the track eagerly looking forward to getting to Birdsville the next day. The camping out, the tinned food and the mug of hot Coopers Beer would give way to

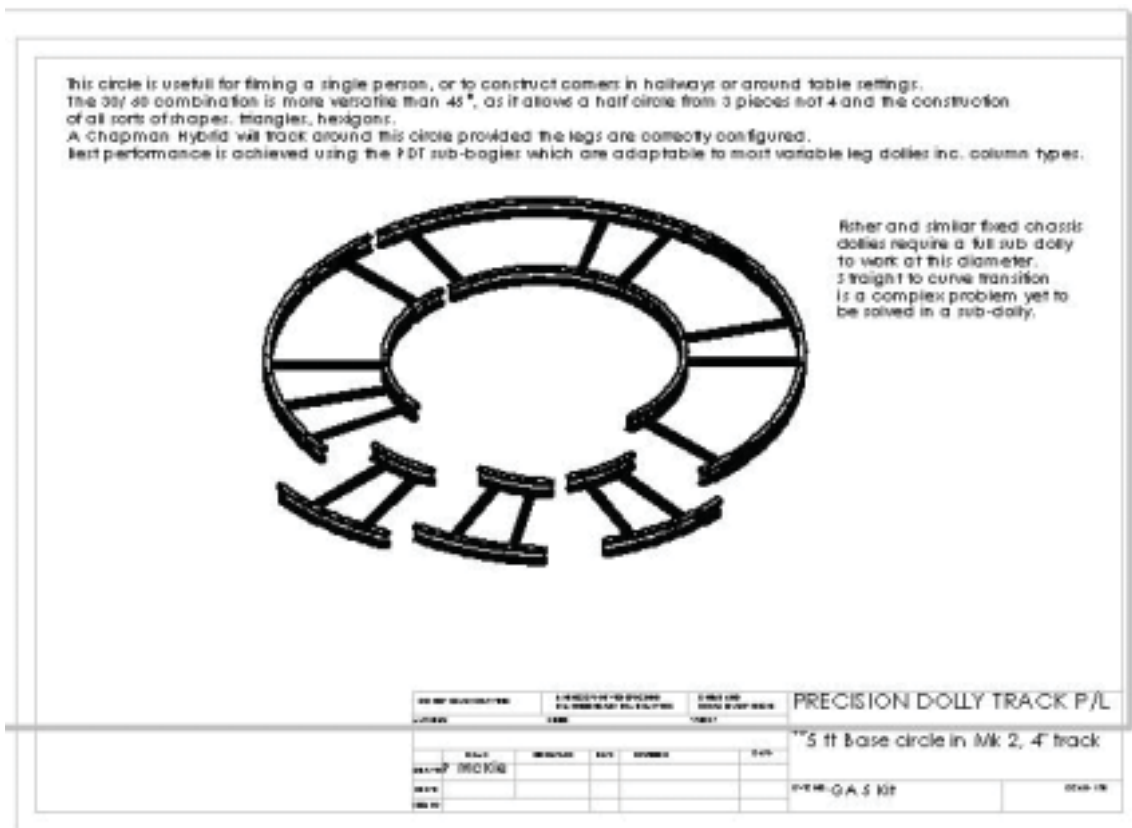
a bed in the hotel, fresh vegetables and, most of all, a cold beer. A pair of headlights approached heading South. It stopped by our campsite and the driver got out. It was the publican from Birdsville. His fridge had broken down and he was on his way to Marree to pick up some replacement parts being sent up from Adelaide. It would be 3 or 4 days before he would be back so until his return –“hot beer I’m afraid! At 17, I was not much of a drinker anyway, but I could feel an air of despondency descend over the others as the publican drove off into the night towards Marree.

Birdsville was possibly the most remote town in Australia at the time. I can’t say that I remember much about the town at all. The hotel, a few houses, a hospital, a few more houses. The publican arrived back from Marree with the spare parts and the fridge was duly repaired, much to everyone’s delight. A clean bed, fresh vegetables and a cold beer – what else could one want?

**ABOVE:**  
**Location**  
**Catering**  
© John  
Heyer  
Family  
Trust

# The Precision Dolly Track Story

*By Peter McKie,  
edited by David Wakeley ACS*



Peter McKie has been a film industry identity for many years, in several forms including special effects, standby everything, and, most notably to me, an underwater set building/lone underwater standby/production saving expert. He moved on to changing the Grip world by designing the Precision Dolly Track (PDT), which has become a major international standard. Following, some of it necessarily technical, is his story.

The track of choice for Matrix, Precision Dolly Track was used for dolly, crane and motion control. As the inventor/designer, this is a gratifying pinnacle for PDT. PDT began 20 years ago.

I was frustrated with a synchronized car shot, a simple parallel tow rig. Peter McDonald planned to shoot a 10 x 8 still using around a 5 second exposure at *f* tiny pinhole, for the technical among you. Or about 120 feet of track for the rest of us. The first plate returned from the Lab, there was 'fanning' on both ends of the car as if the car was porpoising, rocking lengthwise. We checked and re-measured everything, and found only some small deviations in the Panther's track wheels. On the second day of the 'one-day' shoot, having re-built the bogies overnight, the first plate showed us just exactly how sharp 'fanning' can be in a large format transparency. The problem boiled down to the weight of a basically naked dolly flexing the pipe

track. The next time we ran into this 'problem', it was obvious the art had surpassed the equipment.

Over the next months I designed the first extruded dolly track, 10 times stiffer than the best existing track, overkill perhaps. I had no real idea where it would all lead, judging by the way it was received by the rental companies, nowhere much.

The prototype track made its debut, in the hands of Grip, Graham Litchfield, on Frog Dreaming. Greg Molineaux suggested it fold like Matthews track, I figured he meant scissoring. Roy Mico thought telescoping would be handy. Someone had the 'not 45( curve' idea, which led to those folding as well. Grip, Ray Brown took on the role of advocate largely because during Crocodile Dundee he 'spent all night straightening pipe track on top of a New York building,' not quite in those words.

The 'Big Break' in the US was



Dracula and the track started to gain U.S. acceptance.

Jim Kwitkowski asked me to design a solution for Steven Spielberg, to enable 'a 90( crab move' on I-Beam (as PDT had become known in the USA). The benefits in terms of shooting and construction were put to the test on Private Ryan. According to Jim, my prototype was used to great effect. On that note, we parted ways. It did serve to focus me on the way people are blinded to market reality by shiny objects. I began to take a good hard look at the track design in the new context of film.

Industry expectations built on I-Beam

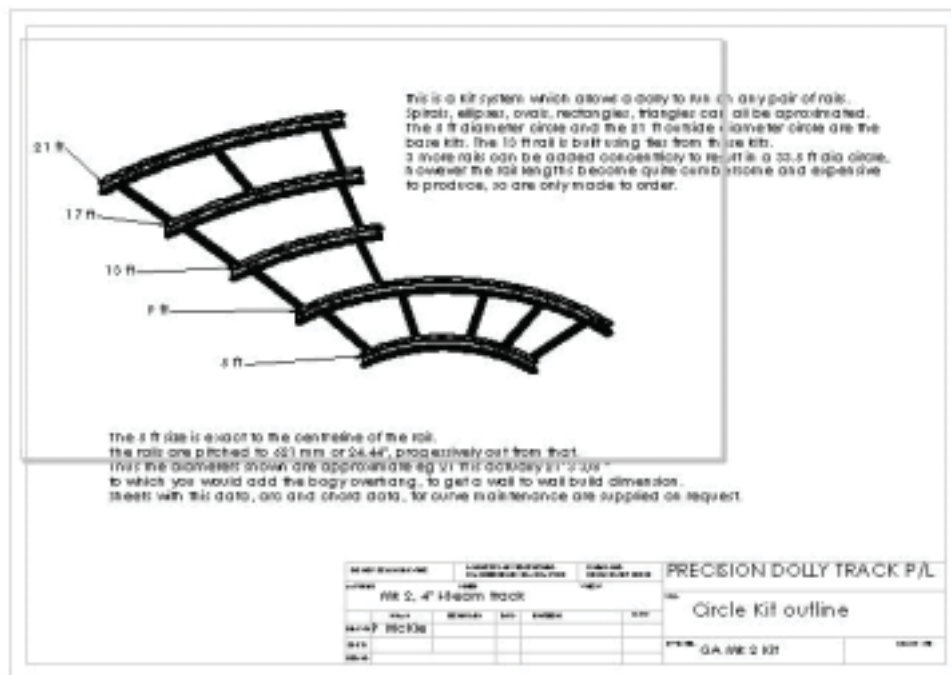
some. The joint was never up to this attitude.

As every track had become 'precision', it was also time for renaming. McKie I-Beam track was chosen. The new joint is now truly solid in shear and virtually independent of wear. It adjusts, free, snug or to the point of locking a run solid. The 'free' fit on assembly means laying and wrapping are faster, hopefully less damage. The much requested over center latch, replaces turnbuckles. It detaches to eliminate damage in racks and its tension is hand set in the action of placement. It aligns the track accurately making locking of the joints an

further simplifies the matching process throughout a build.

Curves: I patented a new bogey concept, which is currently being assessed, which solves the problems in curves. The technology improves all track performance and raises the specter of 'dolly at the run' around a circle.

Circles: Seem to be another random event, so I decided to create a system. It is 5 concentric circles, 5 ft inside diameter to 21 ft outside diameter, in 621 mm steps, in a kit. A Hybrid dolly will go around a 5 ft circle. Gone is the folding curve idea with its essentially fixed ties. These ties provided



performance have found I-Beam limits. Joint maintenance became a big issue, gone is TLC by the single owner. Speeds impractical to shoot at before PDTs arrival are now commonplace and rising. A 'joint separation' issue emerged with dollies using brakes to stop from high speed. This tends to 'walk the track' and upset wedging, therefore everyone.

I began the process of re-design. Lester and Adrian Kortus, agents for the product and active participants in the industry, had a very clear idea of the accumulated complaints about the entire track system. It was clearly time for a whole system approach. Most complaints encompass; joints, turnbuckles, pitch restrictions and curves. At some point the track became 'perpetual' therefore maintenance free, to

## The big break in the U.S. was *DRACULA* and the track started to gain U.S. acceptance

option, not a necessity

The new telescopic tie allows a grip to find an exact match for any dolly 620 Euro pitch through all pitches to 1 metre, and duplicate the pitch for the entire run. Leonard Chapman took a personal interest in my research and the gathering of data. I have encoded 13 common pitches that cover leg configurations of Hybrid, HyHy and any model Peewee dollies, which

most of the conflict in laying/levelling. In place is 'loose assembly'. Building is now similar in time to straight track. The new over center latch, aids levelling and progressive pulling of curves together. Locking the joint eliminates 'kinking', and enables high 'g' forces to be withstood with-out separation. Because it's a kit, it is far more versatile. Spirals, rectangles, triangles are practical.

*Peter McKie trained in industrial design and engineering, entered the industry in around 1978, 'pretty much by accident'. Time on-set in special effects, lead to the understanding of camera rigs and general Grips needs and how far each 'next idea' pushed equipment.*

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### FRED REMBRANDT

A review from The Motion Picture Technicians Association of Australia Journal, 30th October 1944

*'The three abstract films were particularly interesting. Although I felt the one dealing with Choreography missed out in its interpreting and I could see very little coming out of it as a medium for ballet - the others were technically beautifully done with emphasis on the editing, but how many of us are capable of trying to fathom such abstract neurosis without a rational study of sexual introspection.'*

Syd Wood.

On the regional Prime TV News on Tuesday May 11th an excellent coverage was given to two brothers who have built a stadium-style cinema in part of an old convent in the Central Western NSW town of Parkes. No commercial cinema has existed in the town for some years and this enterprising duo spent a great deal of effort and money to bring movies back to the town only to be knocked back by Parkes Shire Council on the basis of complaints from neighbours. Although the old convent is in spacious grounds and not backing immediately onto adjoining houses, the pathetic residents raised issues of noise and traffic congestion among other things. One would assume that residents and Council would welcome the cinema with open arms, but then there always has to be killjoys in a community. The cinema can seat 110 people and is fitted with rich red fabric-covered seats and raked in stadium style. Projection is 35mm. It would now appear that the brothers can only use the cinema for their personal use with perhaps a few friends. Hopefully DRESS CIRCLE readers might spend 10 minutes writing a letter to Parkes Shire Council, 2 Cecile Street, Parkes, NSW 2870 expressing their feelings about the issue.

From DRESS CIRCLE MOVIE ENTHUSIASTS MAGAZINE, MAY 2004.

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# Michael Dillon AM

MICHAEL DILLON AM became a Member in the General Division of the Order of Australia in 2004. The citation reads 'For service to the Australian Film Industry as a pioneer in adventure and mountain film cinematography, and to the community through support for international humanitarian work.'

His Documentary "Everest, Sea to Summit" which he conceived, produced, directed and filmed is the most internationally awarded Adventure documentary of all time winning nine Grand Prizes at International Mountain and Exploration Film Festivals worldwide. Filming this documentary, during a 4 month period in 1990 involved walking for 700 kilometers carrying a heavy camera.

He has made 5 Adventure Documentaries with Sir Edmund Hillary including the Grand Prize Winning "From the Ocean to the Sky" about a 4 month jetboat journey along India's River Ganges, and the National Geographic Special "Return to Everest". His latest film "Beyond Everest", about Sir Edmund Hillary's ongoing work with the Sherpa people of Everest, has won 5 International Awards.

Other expeditions and adventures he has filmed include the first Australian Ascent of Everest in 1984, two Everest B a l l o o n i n g Expeditions, a base jumping expedition in the Karakoram, four Antarctic Expeditions, two English Channel Swims, other expeditions in Siberia, Irian Jaya, Africa and the Andes, and a journey by London Taxi from London to Sydney.

Michael has received two US Primetime Emmy nominations for Cinematography, for his camerawork on "Survivor- the Australian Outback" and the National Geographic Television Special "Those Wonderful Dogs" Natural History Documentary Credits include "The Big Wet", "Living Edens- Tasmania" and "State of the Planet" with David Attenborough".

Michael won Australia's top award for Documentary Cinematography, the ACS Golden Tripod Award in 1985 and 1986, for



Michael Dillon, AM

a film about the Bicentennial camel race and an expedition with Sir Edmund Hillary in India.

He is also a founding Director of the Australian Himalayan Foundation and is a Fellow of the Royal Geographic Society and was awarded the inaugural Australian Geographic Silver Medallion for Excellence in 1986, and was the first Australian to win the Duke of Edinburgh's Gold Award.

Now in his fifties Michael Dillon is actively involved in the industry and is currently filming a documentary about the cataclysmic eruption of Papua New Guinea's Mount Lamington in 1951.

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# Patricia Walters

by Robyn Turner

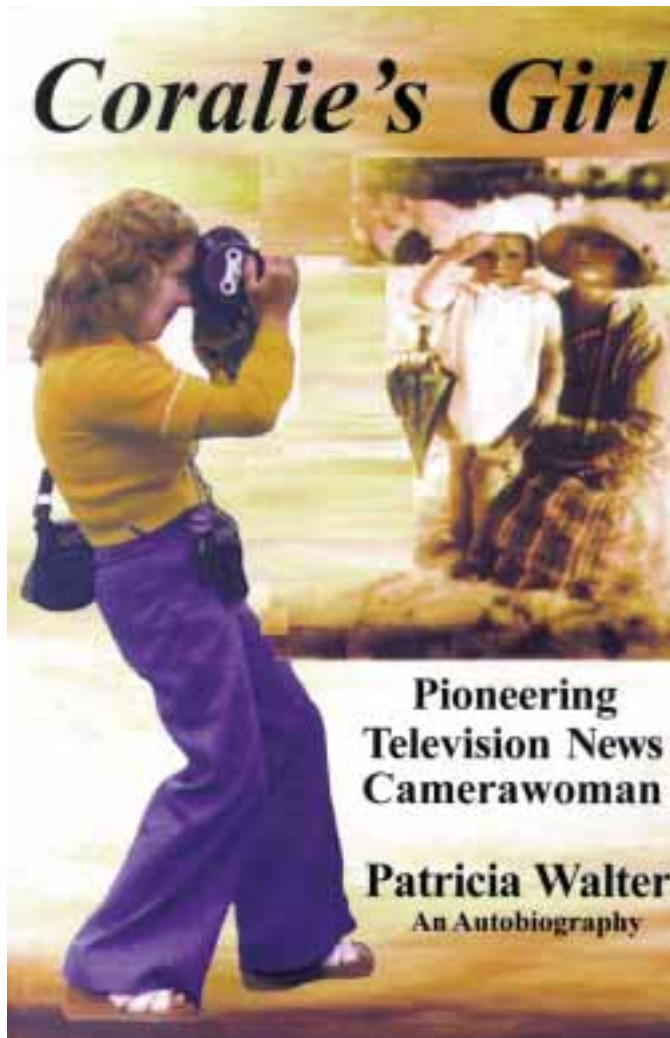
Patricia Walter was honoured with Life Membership of the Australian Cinematographers Society in October 1993 - the first female to achieve that distinction.

Patricia's cinematographic career began on a whim to chase a fire truck near her home in Adelaide in 1964. That footage of a fire in thick scrub at Eden Hills, shot with a Bell and Howell camera, was shown on ABC TV News that night and so began her 22 year career. A second assignment followed - a light aircraft crash in the Adelaide Hills and that led to a position as a stringer with the ABC.

As a female TV cinematographer, Patricia suffered the taunts, teasing, sexist and chauvinistic comments and actions of colleagues and others in the business.

However, one can't help wondering if this wasn't partly due to jealousy especially once she started to make her mark with exclusive pictures in tricky situations. One particular example was a shooting in a major department store in Adelaide where by using her initiative and finding a side door, she gained exclusive footage shown nationally on ABC TV News that night.

Patricia didn't shy away from the hard stories covering plane crashes, the aftermath of Cyclone Tracy and the Ash Wednesday fires. She worked as a stringer primarily for the ABC in Adelaide but also did freelance filming and work for the other commercial networks in South Australia. Patricia had two full time stints with the ABC filling in behind people who had temporarily moved on but unfor-



tunately for her, returned. Like most TV News cinematographers, she didn't know what the assignment sheet would show from one day to the next and hers had everything from political events, ceremonies, royal visitors and celebrities to sieges, fires, floods, dog shows, demonstrations, rock music festivals, rodeos, a mouse plague and even a runaway elephant. Not only was there the usual range of news (and not so newsy stories) but she was chased by horses and bees, attended cow races and filmed aerial acrobatics. Some of the programs she filmed for the ABC included: This Day Tonight,

Countrywide, Countdown and Man on the Land for Channel 10. Channel 10 News in Adelaide also had the benefit of Patricia's cinematographic skills for two years from 1965. Filming Channel 9's Humphrey Bear provided more creative opportunities, although her first love would always be the fast pace of TV news.

Patricia always had an interest in photography using a box brownie camera when her children were born - she raised three children on her own when her husband Mervyn was killed in a motorbike accident after only 8 years of marriage.

Patricia started late as a cinematographer, first training as a psychiatric nurse after initially working as a cleaner and completing a business college course.

Some of the equipment Pat used throughout her career included a fair array of film cameras in use in Australia from the mid-1960's until the mid-1980's: Arriflex, PRO 600, Auricon Frezzalini Mitchell Conversion, Bell and Howell and CP16. Needless to say, she was familiar with all their foibles.

Patricia retired in Adelaide, becoming involved with the ACS, continuing her public speaking, and participating in media forums. She has also found time to write her story which was published this year, "Coralie's Girl". The book can be purchased from Maria Armstrong on email to: [marusha@dodo.com](mailto:marusha@dodo.com)



# D.I. Costs and Savings

## **Andrew Lesnie ACS writes -**

Here is a Digital Intermediate costing created last year. I found the only way to initiate a conversation with producers about this process was to discuss its cost. Some of the figures will be obsolete, but it's a talking point, considering so many people are offering the service for feature films and yet so few have actually done a D.I. of that length.

**COSTS and SAVINGS TO PRODUCE A DIGITAL ANAMORPHIC INTERMEDIATE and HD MASTER OF A 100 MINUTE SUPER35 FEATURE FILM.**

COSTS for 100 minute Super35 feature film.

Digital Post	
Neg logging and extraction	\$ 10,000.00
Scanning of select camera rolls (I/O)	\$ 75,000.00
Digital Grade (in a two week period)	\$ 80,000.00
(This is also when the opticals are created, FX, Titles head/tail including roller, Cleaning, Anamorphic blow-up, render, etc, therefore I would allow 8/10 weeks for the finished product)	
Grading tests through Lab during Grading process, I/O, processing Printing, stock	\$ 5,000.00
Record-Out (I/O) 1 reel to D>I>	
Process Neg, Answer Print 1Reel	
Digital grade Adjustments (1 day)	
Record-out (I/O) 5 reels to D.I. Per reel	
Process Neg, Answer Print 5 reels	\$ 90,000.00
Lab Post	
a) Contact I.P.off D.I	\$ 65,000.00
Contact I.N.	
Release Print	
b) Release Print straight off D.I.	\$ 2,000.00
(better quality than the I.N.)	
Convert Digital files to HD Master	\$ 25,000.00 ?
Total	\$352,000.00 Or less

SAVINGS for 100 minute Super 35 feature film

All Neg Cutting	\$ 10,000.00
"Whilst you are saving from not Fine Cutting the neg you will still need a neg cutter to log and extract the selected takes etc".	
All Opticals	\$ 40,000.00
All Titles	\$ 20,000.00
Allowance for I/O for proposed VFX shots, title sequences	\$ 20,000.00
Lab Optical Squeeze process to I.P Lab I.N.	
All Telecine Costs to achieve HD Master	\$ 25,000.00
Approximate saving	\$135,000.00



# THE BACK OF BEYOND

13

*continued*

The good times couldn't last..... it was time to head back down the track to Marree.

On the way, we detoured to the lake at Kopperamanna for a few pickups. In the three weeks since we had been there the level of the lake had dropped about ten feet.

Once back in Marree, it was pack everything up. I don't remember who left first or how they travelled back. I do remember that I was the last one out having to pack the last items and see them onto the train as freight to Sydney. When it was all finished I hitched a ride down to Leigh Creek, caught a plane to Adelaide and then to Sydney.

I had been away for three months and the relationships formed during this trip were to stand the test of time. Although our paths did not

cross all that frequently in the years that followed, we all remained very good friends, with a respect born of having come through some arduous experiences with a smile and good natured banter. It saddens me to find that I am the last remaining member of that crew. With the passing of these friends we have lost some great craftsmen, men who were the backbone of an industry finding its way to the recognition it enjoys today.

**MAX LEMON's film career started well before *The Back of Beyond*. As a child actor he played the part of Terry in Charles Chauvel's *Sons of Matthew* in 1946. In later years he became a well respected**

**editor and director in Australia and overseas. In early times he would often mark up the opticals in a film, then make up the negative ready for printing, then go the Special Effects Dept. and print his opticals on the Oxberry Optical Printer. He has spent his lifetime as a film maker. Max is now living in London.**

*July 25th 2004. About 1000 people gathered in Marree for the 50th anniversary of the first Outback screening of the film. Tom Kruse, 89 and his wife Valma were the guests of honour.*

*All photographs supplied courtesy Film Australia.*

©



**BELOW:**  
Ready when you are Mr Heyer  
© John Heyer Family Trust

# SHOOTOUT 2004

**by Nathan Wilson**

Having lived in Newcastle all of my life, and being an avid fan of all things filmmaking, you would think that I would be a veteran of The Shootout 24hour Film Festival. However, this year was the first time I entered. Once more I was going to let the opportunity pass, but two weeks before the festival commenced, my friends, Rohan Everingham, Catherine Dubos, and I, decided to give it a go

Our late entry was our first major problem – we only had two weeks of pre-production. Rohan wrote a script and after a few drafts our film, *Cut This*, was as tight as it was going to get given the time frame. The story is about four film censors debating whether to ban a film when an avenging alien appears on screen seeking retribution on the worst offender. Quirky scripts are generally successful in the Shootout.

A number of hastily organised production meetings and a location recce ensued before we gathered at Shootout headquarters located at Wheeler Place, Hunter Street for the festival opening on Friday night, July 9th. Hundreds of participants waited. Excitement was building. My nervous apprehension dissipated and I couldn't wait to get started.

Just before 9 p.m. festival organisers announced the 15 required items and locations – 5 of which had to appear in the finished film. The town hall clock struck 9 and everyone rushed for their cars. After deciding what items and locations best fitted into our script we headed off to shoot our first scenes. That night and following day exist in my memory as a blur. We were well organised but the pace was still hectic. We wrapped early on Saturday afternoon because some of our actors had to leave for work. Our rushed production had to suffice. The most disappointing aspect of the whole experience came when we had difficulty dubbing our finished film onto VHS. After the problem was solved our film was handed in late which meant disqualification. We were crushed.

I shot *Cut This* on a Canon XM2. It is one of the best Mini DV cameras around in my opinion. The extremely tight shooting schedule is not helpful to cinematographers, but the Shootout is a lot of fun. I enjoyed the experience and am already planning for next year. The spirit of the festival is that anyone – professional or amateur alike – can have a go.

*The Shoot Out is a 24 hour film making festival in Newcastle NSW. Anyone can enter; all you need is a*



*camera and some creativity. The idea of the film and its execution rather than the technology used to make it slick is the important thing. Films must not be longer than 7 minutes including titles, must be shot in sequence with no editing apart from in camera. Films must contain a selection of 5 items from a supplied list and made within the 24 hour period, 9pm Friday to 9pm Saturday. Dubbing of voice over or music is allowed. What are you waiting for? Please visit [www.theshootout.com.au](http://www.theshootout.com.au)*

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Written applications addressing the selection criteria, giving full details of experience and qualifications, and nominating 2 referees should be forwarded to:

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or emailed to [nickip@aftrs.edu.au](mailto:nickip@aftrs.edu.au) or faxed to (02) 9805 6510.

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Yellow Pelican 1525 case

Sachtler Video 20P 2 stage carbon fibre heavy duty tripod & fluid head (s/n 20P2606)

Portabrace 33B shell pack tripod transit case

The equipment was hired to a person claiming to be Alex Bergman from Bergmans Pty Ltd. The police and insurance company are investigating. If you have any information regarding the stolen gear, or you have been contacted by someone using the name Alex Bergman, we would be grateful if you would call Jo on 0419 599 944 or Judith on 0412 898 657.

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## ***Australian short film forced to be withdrawn from local film event by US Distributor***

Director of Fitzroy Shorts, Thomas Baricevic was disappointed to learn that one of the Australian shorts which was proposed to screen at Fitzroy Shorts travelling show Satellite Shorts, at Mt Buller was forced to withdraw from the program because the US distributor wanted to explore all opportunities and was sorry for the inconvenience!

*I think that it is disgraceful that a US company could prevent an Australian short film from screening in its own country on such grounds. It brings home the realities of the free trade agreement and what that might mean for Australian culture. I caution any short filmmaker who is asked to sign up a worldwide exclusive distribution deal by a US distributor to really look at what they are signing away, and what they are getting out of it, particularly when they are prevented from entering their film into a local festival. Everyone knows the difficulties in making money from a short film alone, so being supported in festival environments is crucial to exposure. It can also be lucrative when there are awards to be won at such festivals. - Thomas Baricevic*

# MOTION PICTURE MUSIC CLIP COURSE AT FOX OCT 11-13 2004

A dozen directors and DOPs are being offered the chance to get to grips with motion picture technology in a special three-day course at Fox Studios.

Called Making Music Clips on Motion Picture Film, the October 11-13 course involves the shooting of a music clip using Kodak film and Panavision equipment, with Atlab doing the processing.

"We're using both 16mm and 35mm equipment and there are three half-day shoots in different lighting conditions in between expert

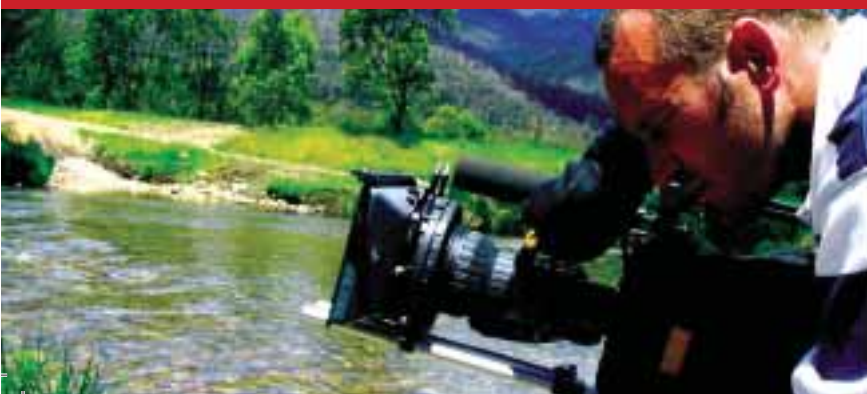
briefings," says organizer Anthony Maguire, who is running the course as an offshoot of his BelowGround Music Video Fest.

The course is being led by veteran music video director Anthony Rose of One Trick Pony Film Co and other key names in it are US-based Kodak staff cinematographer Bart Durkin and colorist Warren Lynch. Cost is \$600, with a 10 per cent discount on that price for ACS members. More information: Anthony Maguire 0402 388742, mongrelp@tpg.com.au



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## "The Sentimental Bloke"



**Cinematographer  
Arthur Higgins  
and Bell Camera  
on set**

Hailed as a masterpiece of its time Raymond Longford's film *The Sentimental Bloke* is the most widely celebrated classic of Australia's silent cinema, and its restoration by ScreenSound Australia, The National Screen and Sound Archive, represents an important landmark for our heritage.

The restoration of the film was a combined effort with the Australian Film Commission; The National Film and Sound Archive; George Eastman House, Rochester, N.Y; Kodak(Australasia) and Atlab Australia.

Raymond Longford is regarded as one of Australia's leading silent film directors. Tragically, of his 30 features most are lost, only a handful remaining in shortened or incomplete versions. A fire in Melbourne in 1953 destroyed a number of early Australian feature films. One of these was *The Sentimental Bloke*. ScreenSound records that of 259 feature films produced between 1906 and 1931 only 67 were known to have survived.

When first released in Melbourne Town Hall in 1919 many proclaimed the film to be the greatest picture ever produced. It is reported to have broken all box office records at the time in Australia, New Zealand and England. It did not have the same success in America. The film was re-edited and new titles were drawn to reflect a story that would be understood by American audiences but to no avail.. It was this later version of the film that when located in 1973 gave access to to-day's film.

The story of the restoration is told by Dominic Case in *The Big Picture*. I am quite sure that the resulting film that was premiered at the Sydney Film Festival on Tuesday June 15th 2004 would have made cinematographer Arthur Higgins ACS delighted with the quality of the restoration of his beautiful images. The added bonus at that screening was a live orchestra on stage accompanying the film. Jen Anderson who had composed music specially for the film performed with her band *The Larrikins* using piano, guitar, mandolin, violin and tin whistle.

Great credit should be given to those technicians under the guidance of Steve Clark who with their determination and skill were able to bring this beautiful motion picture of last century into to-day.





by **JOHN LEAKE ACS, HISTORIAN**



**ABOVE:** Invitation to attend the Sydney Film Festival Screening

# THE BIG PICTURE

by Dominic Case

## Keeping the bloke fair dinkum

**T**imes change, and people with them. The film archivist's job may seem simple - to preserve the rolls of film exactly as they were when the film was made. But when it comes to restoring a film and releasing it to a new public, eighty five years later, it's a far more complicated task.

The Sentimental Bloke was a popular hit in 1918-19 when Raymond Longford directed the screen version of CJ Dennis' "Songs of a Sentimental Bloke", a book

of verses published four years previously. But like many archival treasures, its survival today was never to be taken for granted. Longford and his film were all but forgotten in 1955 when the sole surviving nitrate print was rescued after a fire in the Commonwealth Government's News and Information Bureau in Melbourne. The print was duplicated and 16mm prints were circulated. Unfortunately, there was no 35mm duplicate made, and all but one reel of the original print have now disappeared.

So, the much later 35mm preservation copy that was held by the National Film & Sound Archive was made from the 16mm copy, and was therefore of disappointingly poor quality.

When the then deputy director of NFSA, Ray Edmondson, discovered cans labelled "The Sentimental Blonde" at George Eastman House in Rochester, New York, it seemed to good to be true. But, inside was the mislabelled original negative of the film. The archive was, in due course, persuaded to lend a

fine grain preservation copy to the NFSA, (by then it was Screensound Australia), and the plan was to produce a first class duplicate negative and print for Australian use.

But there was one snag. The negative was the "international version" cut from 8 reels down to 5 for the American release: and to add insult to injury, the original CJ

**The first issue was one of running speed. The Bloke was shot at 16 frames per second**



A frame of Arthur Higgins' work

Dennis intertitles had been replaced with American vernacular. When the Bloke gets carried away at the theatre, shouting "Put in the boot" I sez, 'Put in the boot!', the US version had "The slats', I'ollers, 'Kick 'im in the slats.'"

And so the task changed from one of duplication to one of reconstruction, using as much of the US version as was possible, together with the original intertitles, and replacing the missing scenes and shots with the poorer Australian dupe.

This led us to confront several fundamental questions of restoration. How could we be most faithful to the origi-

*Me ideel tart!... An', bli'me, look at me!  
Jist take a squiz at this, an' tell me can  
Some square an' honist tom take this to be  
'Er own true man?*

## The Sentimental Bloke - Reconstructed Male, or Sensitive New Age Guy?



Raymond Longford directing *The Sentimental Bloke*

nal intentions of the filmmaker? How could we reproduce what audiences had experienced in 1919? How could we make the best possible experience for modern audiences?

The first issue was one of running speed. The *Bloke* was shot at 16 frames per second. The strictest archival practice would insist that the restored version should not be altered, and that projection speed should be varied accordingly for modern screenings. More pragmatically, Screensound Australia chose

to stretch print the old material on a Nielsen-Hordell optical printer, repeating every alternate frame twice to bring it up to 24 fps for the reconstructed version. The action seems perfectly natural and correct at that speed, although the pace of the editing seems languorous, and the intertitles are on the screen for a long time. Here's the dilemma: in the silent era, films were invariably projected faster than the camera speed, at anything between 18 and 22 fps. This reduced screen flicker, and

got through the program quicker, and was an almost universal practice. At that speed, the length of the intertitles seems more reasonable, as if the editor had allowed for the faster projection speed. Should we screen the restored film at its original camera speed, or at the speed it was probably projected at in 1919? What speed did Longford expect? What speed did he intend? The philosophical question runs even deeper: if we projected the film, today, at exactly the same speed as it was



# Keeping the bloke fair dinkum

29

*continued*



Steve Clark gets Sentimental at ScreenSound Australia

**Now, a word about the colours. The tinting and toning is a recreation of the look of prints that were screened in 1919**

projected at in 1919, would modern audiences read it the same way? Or would they read an unwanted comic effect into the slight speed-up?

The next question is a more practical one: which is the "correct" editorial version - the original, longer Australian version, or the recut US (or "international" version)? George Eastman House holds the international version, so it was always the plan for the Australian archive to reproduce the original cut.

But this too produced a dilemma. The American version was much better quality, having come directly from the original negative: but there were shots and even complete scenes missing, while in other cases the editing had been significantly altered. In most cases, scenes had been tightened up - usually concentrating on the action and cutting out the sometimes lengthy shots that dealt more with character and expression than with progressing the story forward. Maybe this brought the film more into line with supposed US audience expectations: certainly it put more "zip" into the film, but at the expense of a lot of its finer touches. Lottie Lyell (Doreen in the film) is credited as editor: it's not clear if she also had a hand in the recut. The change in style may have been necessary to achieve the shorter length. But in attempt-

ing to match the US material to the existing (but poor quality) Australian version, there was always a temptation to "improve" the edit for modern audiences. What would the original editor have done today, with another 80 years of film experience to draw on? A hypothetical question of course, but today's audience comes to the cinema with that experience, and with certain expectations.

Ultimately, wherever possible, the reconstructed version follows the original cut, even where we had to use the poorer Australian footage. In a couple of instances we recreated missing intertitles, checking the text against the CJ Dennis verses, and using a digital "cut and paste" technique to replicate the original font by cutting each letter out from other titles: a bit like the classic ransom note made of pasted-up letters from news-

paper headlines.

Now, a word about the colours. The tinting and toning is a recreation of the look of prints that were screened in 1919. The originals were chemically dyed to give a grey and black image on a coloured film base (tinting), or reprocessed to convert the neutral silver image to brown or sepia (toning). In the silent days, sections were printed separately and dyed to the required colour, then each release print was assembled from the various coloured sections. Unfortunately, one side effect of this treatment was to accelerate the decay of the prints, so the single reel of nitrate and a few frame clips that have survived were of little use as a guide. Another problem was that replacement sections in the surviving reel - repairs to damaged lengths - do not seem to have been reliably printed in the same colours. With some films the "colour script" has survived in the form of notes for the printing lab - but not in the case of *The Bloke*. All that was possible was to follow the clues of the surviving frames, the hints in the intertitles, and the conventions of the technique: blue for night exteriors, sepia for interiors, amber for sunny days help to define the location and time, while pink for romance and mauve for dreams or visions help to set the mood. The print was made on colour print stock, using simple grading of the black and white image to create a sepia tone where required, and a flashing technique (a second run through the printer without the negative) to



**The Bloke leaves after meeting Doreen's "Mar".**  
frames from the surviving tinted nitrate reel: sepia toning, and yellow tinting.

impart the tints to the whites. Different scenes "take" the colour by different amounts, making this a harder process than it might seem, but still more practical (and long-lasting) than using chemical dyes.

Today it's especially significant to see this film from a young Australia of 85 years ago: its story is universal, but it is told in a characteristic Australian way - not just using Australian vernacular text, but using Australian actors with expressive - rather than Hollywood's glamorous - faces. (One US reviewer, excusing the film's poor showing there, referred to "the Australian ugliness".) Perhaps if the film had been left alone

it would have played better. Not only Australian but also British audiences are reported to have loved the original Australian cut. Most of the film's players - as well as Longford himself and cinematographer Arthur Higgins - stayed in Australia: but the industry had peaked and would begin a long decline: there weren't many more roles for them. But, albeit fiction, poetry or just whimsy, *The Sentimental Bloke* is an authentic impression of its place and time, and such films still deserve to be made - and seen - and preserved.

*Dominic Case*  
July 2004



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# in Memoriam

## **Derrick Edmund Timmins. 1921-2004**

Derrick was born County Durham in August, 1921. He was the middle child of a happy family.

He joined the Territorial Army aged 17 after an apprenticeship in a Sainsburys delicatessen, - this was to stand him in good stead in later years. During the war he served in the Royal Horse Artillery, on the East Coast of England and Gibraltar where he organised a camp for R & R personnel, returning to England before the war finished. He always said he'd be a good soldier until the war was over.

We met on a bus in London on V.E. Day when the crowds viewing the King blocked the traffic and Derrick decided we'd be married then and we married in 1946. He was demobbed in May 1946 so the hunt for work was on. He had run a projector on the Isle of Wight and decided that films were for him. He joined the ACT (union) getting work as a film editor with Paramount News where he learnt so much. Then more editing at Pathe.

Our daughter, Lesley was born in 1947 and following the offer of sponsorship from friends who had migrated to Australia we decided to move to a warmer place.

The film industry was in a slump when we arrived in January 1951 and Derrick searched the Sydney studios for work but to no avail. We caught the train to Kempsey and he worked in a butter factory in Toorooka. Another string to his bow. After four months we moved to Brisbane where Derrick worked in a delicatessen, so the Sainsbury experience helped



him there. Following this was a job with Long Range Weapons in Salisbury S. A. making films about rockets in the early 50's

Our son, Tony was born in 1953 and Derrick was elected councillor for Salisbury North.

Television was starting in Sydney and off again we went for Derrick to work with the ABC as a film editor. Some of his earliest work was on Weekend Magazine and I remember him cutting news footage of the Melbourne Cup in the back of a processing truck on the way from Mascot to Gore Hill. He was appointed Senior News Editor and later Senior Films Officer with a national staff of 500.

The ABC Film Department under Derrick's leadership set most of the trends and techniques for the future film industry in Australia. In fact

all equipment purchased by the ABC became the industry standard and the staff household names throughout the country. He was always proud of his "boys", never more so than when a number of them would earn the highest awards in the film world.

Derrick started mucking around in boats, building a few including his pride and joy, "Tricia" (named for me) and then on to the classy "Pankina". We moored her at the Royal Motor Yacht Club, Broken Bay which was to be our family's weekend base.

Our daughter, Lesley became a negative matcher in Sydney, then moving on to take a position at ABC, Melbourne as a film editor before returning to Sydney at

Channel 10 where she met Warwick Finlay, a film sound recordist. Their youngest son, Paul is also a sound recordist making him the third generation in the film industry...A very proud Grandad. In his retirement Derrick carried on with his hobby of building furniture for the family. Some of his best times were with our family of two children, a son and daughter-in-law, six grandchildren and one great-grandson. Macular degeneration and emphysema got the better of him, which was very sad to happen to such a vital person. He slipped away one day short of our 58th wedding anniversary and one week after his 83rd birthday.

**by Pat Timmins.**



by **JOHN LEAKE ACS**

## Bolex H-16

Paillard S.A. of Switzerland introduced the first Bolex H-16 type camera in the early 1930s as a compact versatile high quality motion picture camera. The parent company state that the basic features of the original H-16 were so well selected or designed that they withstood the test of time and all of these features are present without significant change on the most modern Bolex spring driven cameras of today.

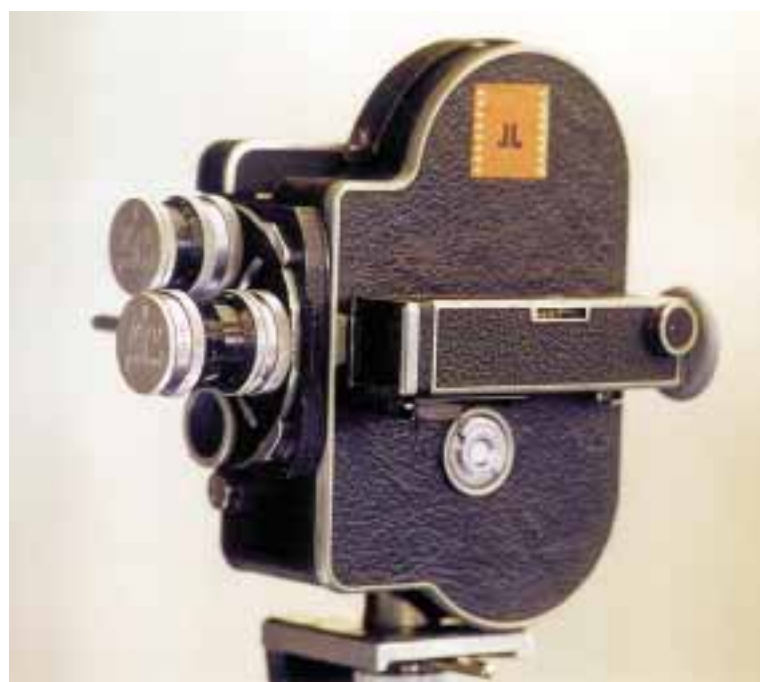
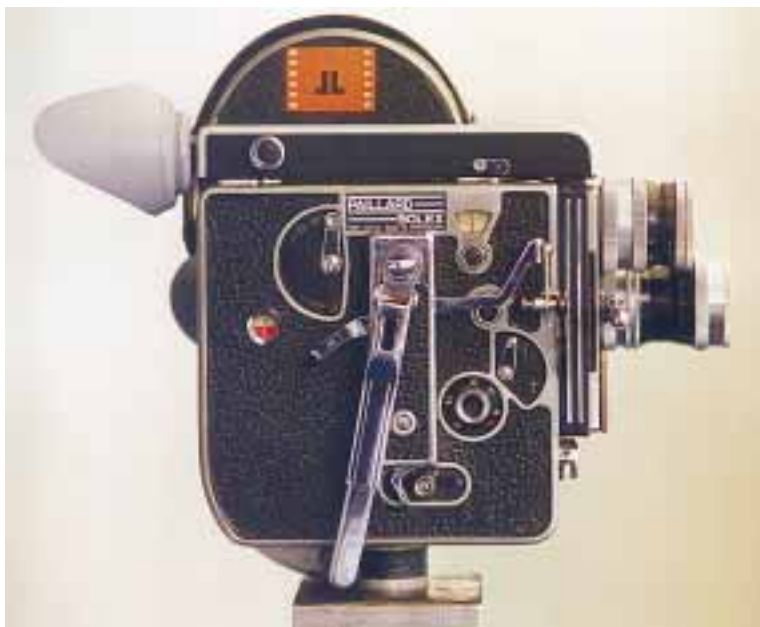
The features on the H-16 are extensive and indeed it was a much more versatile camera than many 35mm motion picture cameras. The inclusion of the reflex viewfinder made this camera useful. This optical system is described as being flickerless as it was achieved by inserting a prism between the taking lens and the film plane and directing approximately 25% of the light to the viewfinder. It was necessary to consider this when calculating exposure. This viewfinder system made composition simple and accurate. An additional parallax correcting viewfinder was also included with the camera but was perhaps unnecessary.

The camera is equipped with a turret accommodating three lenses. The back pressure plate is removable making gate cleaning simple and the self automatic threading of the 16mm film accurately formed top and bottom loops and was a delight to use.

On the outside of the camera the features are numerous. The footage counter allows the leader to be run through the camera until zero appears in the window. There is a precise frame counter showing the exact frame count, very necessary for fades, lap dissolves and single frame shooting.

The camera has a speed control knob with settings from 8fps to 64 fps and a slide release on the side allows for either continuous running or single frame. A delight is the RX fader. This device attaches to the camera allowing accurate 40 frame fades by closing the variable shutter and stopping the camera allowing the film to be rewound 40 frames by viewing the frame counter and when restarting the camera the RX fader opens and a beautiful dissolve occurs. Many a grey hair would have been saved by early cinematographers if a similar device had been fitted to their Mitchell and Bell cameras.

It, of course, can be adapted with accessories for many complex cinematography projects, micro and macro for scientific work or the other extreme, mounted in a special housing for underwater cinematography.



The H-16 is really a dream to use - so small and light weight, a real beauty.

EDITOR'S NOTE. The H-16 remains a powerful cinematographic tool in the 21st Century. In July 2004, on eBay.com.au there was for auction a 'Bolex Super16 Film Camera with 4 Switar Lenses in original travel case. New viewfinder mirror and C-Mount to Nikon adaptor'. The starting bid was \$3,800.00 Australian Dollars.

## Complete "CineAlta" HDCAM Production Kits & VTR's

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The Panasonic AJ-HD27FE "VariCam" camera kits bring variable frame-rate acquisition to the Hi-Definition world. Individually select 4-60 frames per-second in single frame increments even whilst recording. This native 720P camera produces amazing "film-like" results that will truly surprise even the most discerning directors of photography. Producers will also be impressed with the budget savings made possible with these powerful production tools.



## New Panasonic SDX-900 DVCPRO

The new Panasonic SDX-900 DVCPRO camera is now available for hire. This innovative camera redefines the creative boundaries of standard definition video. The SDX-900 is switchable between 25p and 50i. It also has a variable cine-like gamma curve to simulate the look of film stocks and a 12-pole matrix colour correction feature that provides single colour manipulation. In short, the image quality is extraordinary. Leading DoPs share our excitement about the creative potential of this new camera.



## BROADCASTCAM ENGINEERING

The new Broadcastam service department has opened. Video Engineer Peter Liu has been working in broadcast video engineering since 1983. Factory trained at Sony Japan and at the Panasonic training centre, China. Peter repairs cameras & VTR's in all broadcast tape formats, Sony's HDCAM, Digital Betacam, Betacam SX, SP Betacam, DVCAM and Panasonic's DVCPRO as well as the VariCam range. We engineer, design and manufacture specialist video devices as required. Our workshop is fully equipped with the latest in Tektronix HD & SD analysis equipment.

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by **NICOLA DALEY**

## PANAVISION INTRODUCE NEW 300X HD LENS FOR THE BROADCAST INDUSTRY

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Zoom™ technology provides high image quality in a wide variety of shooting scenarios by maximizing contrast at high definition resolution. Very low veiling glare and ghosting attributes, exhibited by Panavision's established Primo cine lens technology, are also incorporated. Other features include boresight stability through zoom, and an active, closed loop internal optical stabilization system to reduce vibration-induced image shake. For more information please call Panavision on 02 9436 1844 or your local office for more details.



Panavision 300x HD Lens

### Target Resolution Charts Straight from Canada

Richard Stringer CSC, producer of the Target Resolution Charts, has designed a unique product for recording accurately and easily, format frames for film or video.

The Target Multi Format Framing Chart is laminated on thin metal, measures 12" x 20" and uses movable magnetic panels. There are two large panels to line up with six indicated aspect ratio formats (1.33, 1.55 or 14x9, 1.66 for Super 16mm, 1.78 or 16x9, and 1.85), as well as 2.35 and 2.40 anamorphic (but they can adjust to any position). There are also 8 smaller markers to define TV safe or secondary formats. This makes adjusting to your format choices quick and easy.

Some other features include: incremental edge lines for judging frame edge errors, space for production logo and slating (post it notes or wet erase), and a star target to aid in eye focus with a square box graphic (which can be used as a squeeze indicator).

For more information go to [www.stringercam.com/target.html](http://www.stringercam.com/target.html) or email

Richard Stringer CSC at [richard@stringercam.com](mailto:richard@stringercam.com)

### Sony Launch XDCAM Products

Sony is proud to announce the arrival of the new XDCAM professional disc system. The system is fully integrated from capture to delivery. Broadcasters, professional camera operators and editors can now shoot and deliver their images using the rugged new optical disc-based format, without waiting to digitise shots for editing. Production time is greatly reduced so time-sensitive operations including news gathering, sports and professional events coverage are now able to turnaround shots with a minimum of delay. The XDCAM system also makes extensive use of Metadata, or additional data associated with the video and audio, in order to further streamline any kind of production environment. Scripting, logging information and even final EDL's can be stored on the disc, along with the source video and audio data. As digital files, images and audio, together with their metadata, can be distributed or transmitted almost anywhere through broadcast TV, the Internet and mobile applications. This, combined with cost effective media makes XDCAM suitable for all aspects of production, from acquisition right through to archive.

For more detailed product information, please visit [www.sony.com.au](http://www.sony.com.au). To find the nearest Sony authorised dealer or service location, please call 1800 017 669.



by JOHN LEAKE ACS

## THE MAILMAN OF THE BIRDSVILLE TRACK by Kristin Weidenbach

*"It was never really intended as a place for people. All that is Australia begins not with man but with the land itself." "In the face of man's small victories the land itself continued to impose the limitations." so wrote George Johnston in his book "The Australians" 1966.*

It was on this land that Tom Kruse chose to live his life. A dedicated life of delivering the mail by truck from Marree to Birdsville week after week, winter, summer, drought and flood.

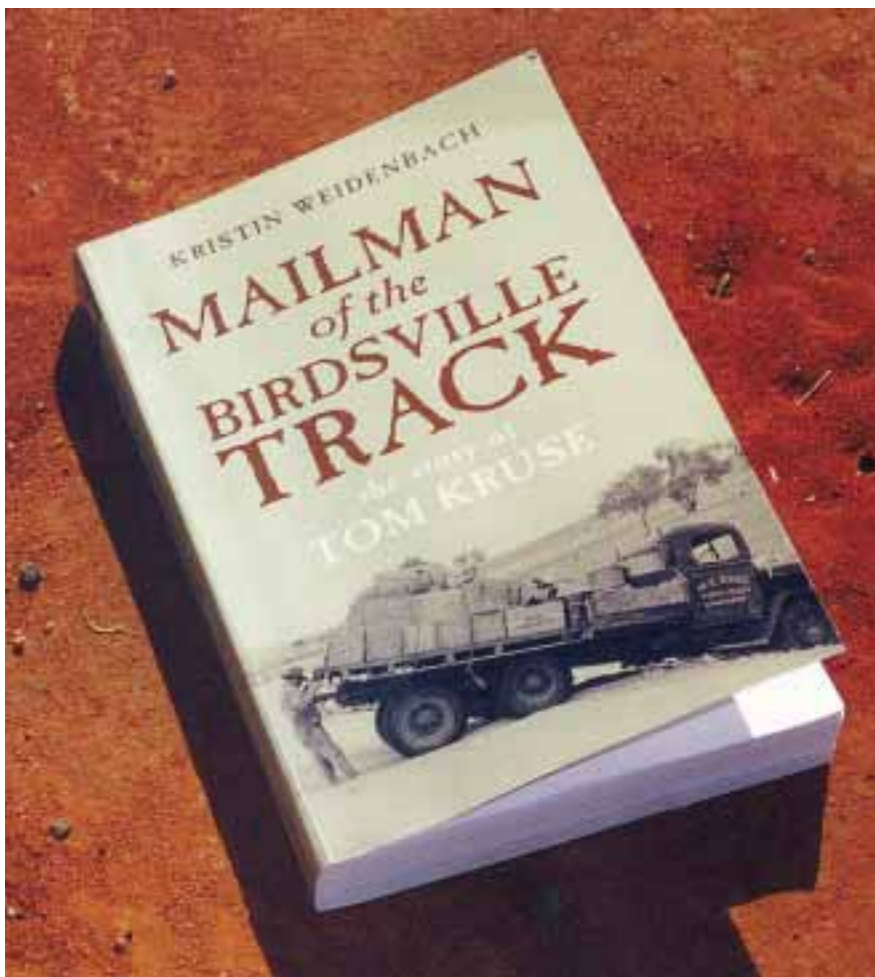
The story of Tom Kruse is a story about a great Australian, a man of the bush, a clever bush mechanic and a great story teller. Kirsten Weidenbach's book tracks the life of Tom Kruse and his wife Valma and many friends and characters. Kristin writes in the preface "for a storyteller in his 80s nothing beats whiling away the hours with yarns of the bush and reminiscences of the outback"

Tom Kruse was the star of John Heyer's film *The Back of Beyond* 50 years ago. The book journeys through Tom's life explaining what he did before the film and details many of the days of filming, then takes us to recent times when his beloved Leyland Badger Truck was restored to its original condition by Kristin's father Neil. Before Federation the Birdsville Track was known as the Queensland Road, a cattle route where taxes were charged per head of cattle, making Birdsville a thriving community.

The arrival of the motor vehicle brought about the end of the camel train where camels were connected with a light rope from a wooden nose peg to the tail of the animal in front. Led by an Afghan cameleer who would walk off into the desert taking 24 days to do the trip The story of the Marree to Birdsville mail run is fascinating as it winds the reader through the outback.....Diamantina River, Coopers Creek, Mungerannie Gap, Goyder Lagoon, Pandie Pandie Station, Gilpininna Dam and the infamous Ooroowillanie Sandhill.

In those earlier years the Birdsville Track was just that, a track. Two tyre tracks wandering kilometre after kilometre and then vanishing when a dust storm covered them. The track at times would pass around the base of a sandhill and at other times because of the unpassable terrain it would necessitate driving straight to the top of a sandhill, over and down the other side, needing plates and mats to be laid to prevent the tyres sinking in the sand. If the truck bogged it necessitated many hours of digging.

It was in the days of the great depression that Tom's first job



was in a blacksmith's shop, giving him a valuable education in bush repairs and mechanical improvisations. Tom is not his real name but a nickname carried from younger days. His proper name was only used by his mother and I suggest that those interested should read the book to find out why.

Kristin writes "the Birdsville Track was a dry lonely cattle track in the centre of Australia, a meandering path of hoof trails and camel pads. It was 500kms of harsh sunlight, glaring off the orange gibber stones, 500kms of flies, choking dust storms and sand that would suffocate mouths and clog up a vehicle's air filter, 500kms of searing heat where walking away from a disabled vehicle could mean your death, 500kms of mind numbing monotony and mind shattering isolation where a person might not meet another living soul from one end to the other."

That was the Birdsville Track. The track that Tom Kruse reclaimed.

*Kristin Weidenbach has captured all of this in her book. It is a great story about a real fair dinkum Aussie and the outback. Published by Headline Australia Pty. Limited 2003*

Ted Taylor ACS was born in Victoria in 1918 and he notes that my "early childhood recollections were of our house at Long Street, Blackrock in the 1920s very much in the country and also a very pleasant seaside area. There was a mass of ti-tree which became a blaze of white in flower and there was a carpet of red and white when the heath was in bloom. The surrounding paddocks were home to bandicoot and my short walk to Arkarings Crescent State School was through paddocks of dairy cows."

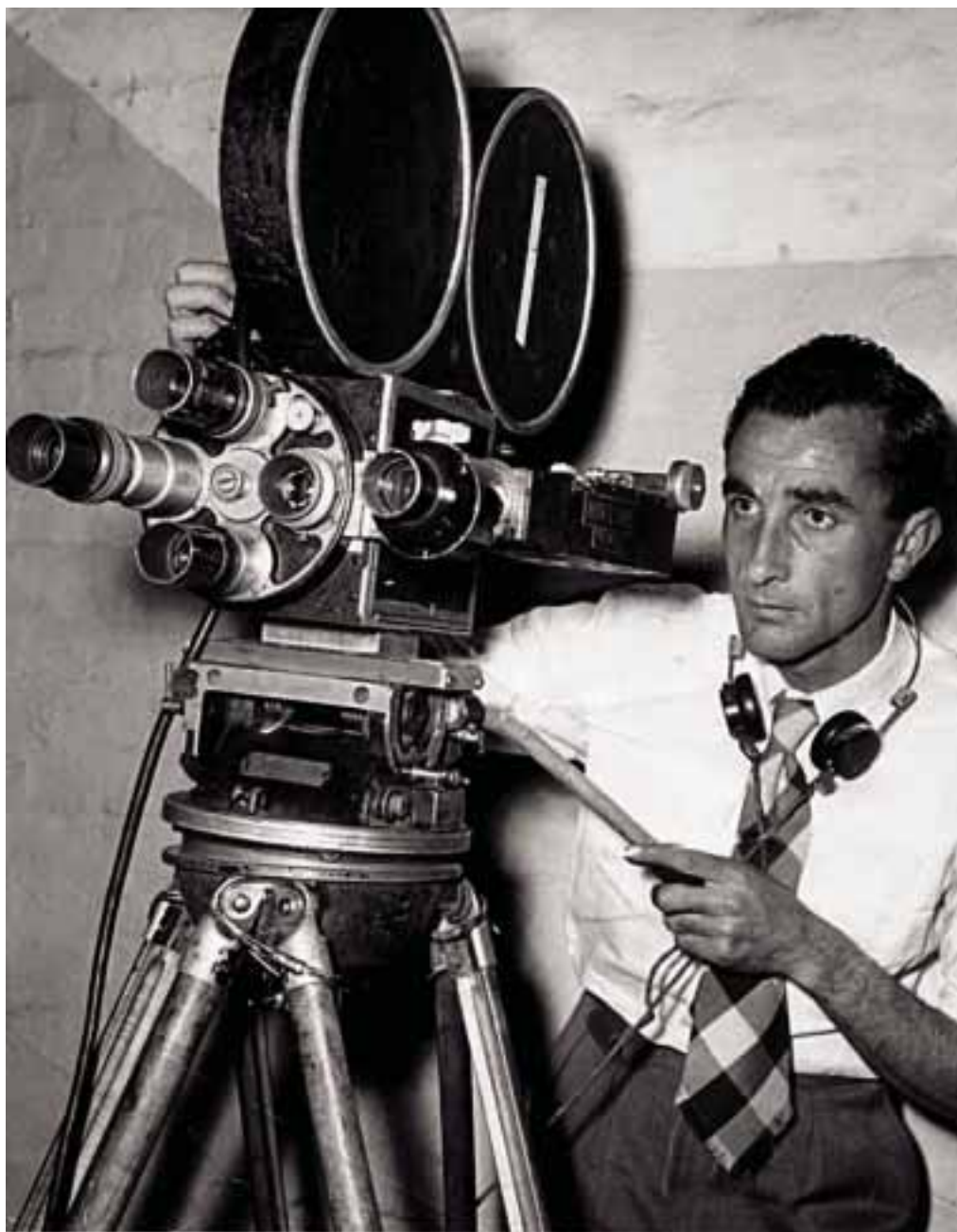
Occasionally the travelling picture show man would come to Robinvale and everyone came to town to see the latest silent movie, sitting on hard wooden seats with a generator thumping outside whilst a pianist played music appropriate to the scene.

"My first camera was a 120 Box Brownie and it gave me my love of photography. I was able to convert a cupboard at home into a darkroom and I developed my own pictures."

Although Ted served an apprenticeship as a fitter and turner his love for photography continued. He bought a Pathe 9.5mm camera and took up movie making and joined a cine society in Armadale.

"We would gather round the radio listening to cricket Test matches being played in England. I filmed the gathering, processed the film in the bathroom and screened it for the guests."

When World War 11 broke out Ted was a tool maker working for an engineering company.



Ted Taylor ACS

**My first camera was a 120 Box Brownie and it gave me my love of photography.**

The Dutch East Indies administration set up a Government in Exile in Melbourne and an organization called the Netherlands East Indies Government Information Service, NEIGIS under the leadership of Fred Daniel. This was the start of a most extraordinary life of travel and adventure Ted never dreamed of as a boy.

The Japanese Army had occupied Java and by promising the Javanese independence from the Dutch after the war, gained their cooperation.

Ted's first assignment was to join a Dutch submarine that was to land a party of Australian Commandos in Japanese occupied Java. During this exercise they torpedoed a Japanese ship and later attacked a destroyer which countered with depth charges. They suffered only minor damage

These early days took Ted on many missions, Broome and Darwin after the bombing and the signing of a peace declaration by Japanese commanders on HMAS Burdekin. When Ted arrived in Batavia every building was daubed with "MERDEKA" (Freedom) and red and white flags flew everywhere. The blue band of the Dutch flag had been dropped leaving the red and white. The only money the locals would accept until 1947 was Japanese invasion currency.

Later Ted went to cover the occupation of Surabaya and was quartered at the Oranje Hotel which was attacked by the Indonesians who captured Ted, confiscated his camera gear and threw him in prison. He was released and although his camera gear was returned his clothing and personal belongings were not. He was offered a Japanese soldier's uniform but it was too small and it didn't seem to be appropriate clothing. Ted and his wife Merle were offered residence in Java but he resigned from NEIGIS and returned to Australia.

This led to 10 years as Chief Cameraman

filming newsreels and documentaries for Movietone News stationed in Melbourne. Ten minute newsreels were screened before a feature film and little theatrettes were set up showing an hour long presentation of news, cartoons and travelogues.

Big annual stories like the Caulfield and Melbourne Cups meant additional crews from Sydney and although there was great rivalry between Movietone and Cinesound there was always a get together at Ted's home on Cup eve. Ted filmed local stories like the man who invented fire proof paint. "He built a small house, painted it with his invention and invited the fire chief and myself to a demonstration. He set fire to the house and it promptly burnt to the ground. Oh well, back to the drawing board". The newsreel took Ted all over Australia - stories like servicing lighthouses, Mobil Oil Rallies, the first Australian Royal Tour, emergency rescue of a doctor from Heard Island in Antarctica by HMAS Melbourne and of course the usual floods, fires and famines.

With the advent of TV, Ted and family left Melbourne and went to Artransa Park in Sydney. He teamed up with Ross Wood, George Lowe, Gordon Lloyd and Bren Brown. George Lowe and Gordon Lloyd he knew from the NEIGIS days. Artransa was probably the biggest Australian studio with three sound stages, BNC Mitchell camera gear, Brute arcs and rear projection equipment.

"I worked a good deal with an independent producer, Gordon Grimdsdale who made a number of medical films that I photographed in Papua New Guinea, Singapore, Manilla and Hong Kong"

Ted became familiar with the Pearl and Dean organization in Bangkok and he was asked to join the company and head their camera department. "I suppose because I had been living in Asia I had

come to like the lifestyle and managed to talk Merle into accepting the Pearl and Dean offer". Back in the East life was much more luxurious than his wartime experience. The supplied home came with servants and it was in an attractive part of Bangkok. and was much more befitting a professional cinematographer.

Filming was now entirely in colour as Thai TV was broadcasting in colour long before Australia. "Life in Bangkok was very pleasant and Merle and our children became proficient in speaking Thai and the studio staff spoke mainly English. I travelled extensively in Asia filming cinema commercials and documentaries. A commercial I particularly remember was for Tiger Balm, the well known Chinese lotion. We used a tame large tiger that caused quite a stir when the owner released him to roam freely in the Lopburi Botanical Gardens. I took Merle to stay at the Oranje Hotel in Surabaya where I was captured by the Indonesians all those years ago but this time staying in the lap of luxury".

"Time came to return to Australia, a very different film scene than when I left. Then cameramen would work permanently for a studio now they worked on a casual basis and with the influx of graduates from the various film schools the market became very competitive. Before retiring from the film industry I spent the next several years filming commercials and documentaries and amongst many memorable times were those spent travelling around Australia with Gordon Lloyd for Trans Australia Airlines (TAA). This is just a small part of my filming life and I am now happily retired in Queensland".

***This Flashback information is a small selection from a self published autobiography Ted Taylor ACS compiled for his family and given to John Leake ACS***







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