



real2reel

Plumpton High Babies

They're schoolgirls—dreaming of the future, wanting to go out and have fun, trying to work out relationships with families, friends and boyfriends—and attempting to finish high school while raising their babies.

Plumpton High, in Sydney's outer western suburbs, is the only school in Australia with a program that supports schoolgirl mothers completing their education, integrating them into the general student population. Over 100 girls have been helped by the program since it began. In 2001, 13 were enrolled.

A new four-part series *Plumpton High Babies*, produced by Julian Russell, directed by Aviva Ziegler and executive produced by Mark Hamlyn, follows a year in the lives of some of these young mothers as they hurtle from girlhood to womanhood.

"It didn't take us long to become extremely fond of the girls," recalls Aviva. "And it very quickly became apparent that the stereotype so commonly held in the media of pregnant teenagers in the outer western suburbs didn't fit any of them. They were bright, charming and complex; and mostly had supportive, helpful families behind them. They surprised and sometimes completely frustrated us; they were teenagers after all, and teenagers—whether they are mothers or not—are often unpredictable in their behaviour."

So what does it take to help a teenager with a baby stay at school? At Plumpton, the principal Glenn Sargeant and program co-ordinator Rebecca Cowin offer understanding, a supportive environment, flexible hours and practical health and welfare assistance as well as constant encouragement.

This dedication made a huge impression on the filmmakers. "Every time we entered Glenn's office we would be amazed by the way he dealt with the girls," observes Aviva. "I believed I could see so clearly that they were making rash and possibly unwise decisions but Glenn never lost patience and never judged them. I was reminded by the all-accepting Glenn that success could be gauged in many different ways."

The filmmakers were there to record the highs and lows, including the birth of two babies.

"It's not often that you have the chance to spend so much time getting to know your subjects. The year at Plumpton was a great experience," says Aviva, "possibly the best filmmaking experience I've had in 30 years."

A Film Australia National Interest Program in association with 220 Productions, *Plumpton High Babies* was produced with the assistance of the Australian Broadcasting Corporation. It will screen on ABC-TV at 8.00pm from Tuesday 25 February.



Culture and ethics— who decides?

The management of access to audiovisual materials raises many complex issues involving privacy, copyright ownership, censorship and community attitudes. Specialist expertise and information is required when licensing or releasing material that may be culturally or ethnically sensitive.

On Thursday 27 February at 5.00pm, Film Australia will host the first meeting of the Footage Industry Group for 2003, where expert speakers will lead a group discussion on the topic.

Subjects will range from when and how to contact Aboriginal communities regarding the use of footage to whether films on public health issues such as AIDS, mental illness or drugs should be relicensed.

Anyone interested in attending should contact Bev Dalgairns, Film Australia Library Manager on 02 9413 8770 or email filmlibrary@filmaust.com.au



Film Australia's *Outback* DVD was officially launched at the company's Roxy Theatre on 7 November 2002 by The Hon Tim Fischer, Ambassador to the 2002 Year of the Outback. At the launch: (left to right) filmmaker/animator Jeannie Baker, *Outback* producer Denise Haslem, Tim Fischer, *Outback* executive producer Anna Griève, Film Australia CEO Sharon Connolly and veteran filmmaker Lee Robinson.



Law and Order



Silent Storm

In production

Australian Biography Series 9

Editing is underway on four new episodes in the *Australian Biography* series, featuring former National Art Gallery director Betty Churcher, author Thomas Keneally, art historian and critic Bernard Smith and athlete Marjorie Jackson-Nelson. Producer/director Rod Freedman and writer/interviewer Robin Hughes will also travel to Western Australia to interview Aboriginal elder and health worker Joan Winch and to Tasmania to talk to environmentalist Bill Mollison.

Executive Producer: Mark Hamlyn

Australian Biography Online

Producer Ron Saunders, website director Thomas Ashelford and their production team have completed the first "prototype" phase of this project to bring online a wealth of material collected for the *Australian Biography* series. The second phase of production will concentrate on preparing more of this invaluable archival material for the website, which will be hosted by the National Library of Australia.

Executive Producer: Mark Hamlyn

The Capitalist Drive

Writer/director/producer Barbara Chobocky and co-writer/DOP/editor Jeff Bruer spent two months in the Czech Republic at the end of 2002 filming this very personal account of contemporary Czech and Australian history. They will return in April for a second shoot, Damien Parer is co-producing the one-hour documentary for ABC-TV.

Executive Producer: Anna Grieve

Colour of War—The Anzacs

The production team has moved into offices at Film Australia to begin the massive task of sourcing colour footage for this three-part series (see *Looking for Colour*, page 3). Paul Rudd is producing with Anita Sheehan and directing with Ben Ulm. To be screened nationally on Channel Nine, the program is being produced in association with TWI, the Nine Network, Television New Zealand, NZ On Air, the New Zealand Department of Defence and ScreenSound Australia.

Executive Producer: Mark Hamlyn

The Last Great Amateurs

This one-hour program from director Sue Thomson for ABC-TV follows the women of the Melbourne Phoenix Netball Club as they struggle to survive the demands of elite-level amateur sport. These players are among the very best in the world yet, in an era of multimillion dollar sporting contracts, their clubs are run by inexperienced volunteers and financed by raffles and fete days. Richard Keddie is producing with Andrew Wiseman and writing with Angela Buckingham.

Executive Producer: Franco di Chiera

Under One Roof: The Kapsalides Family

Shooting began in mid-December on the third episode of this series for SBS-TV, featuring a mum and two daughters who are proud of what they've achieved as a sole-parent household. They don't fit the stereotype of a "typical" Lebanese-Australian family. Mother Helen has always been open with her daughters and allows them a freedom that is unusual in Lebanese culture. Her concern is that the girls make the most of their education and opportunities. Kay Pavlou is directing this episode. Rosemary Blight is series producer.

Executive Producer: Anna Grieve

In post-production

Land of the Morning Star

Editing will begin in February on this one-hour documentary exploring the rich and turbulent history of West Papua. Writer/director Mark Worth finished filming in Queensland and Papua New Guinea in December. Made with the assistance of the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, the program is being produced by Janet Bell.

Executive Producer: Anna Grieve

Law and Order

After more than six months in northeast Arnhem Land, producers Denise Haslem and Rose Hesp and director Trevor Graham will return to Sydney in January to begin editing this one-hour documentary for ABC-TV. *Law and Order* will look at how Australia's legal system has failed to deal with the complexities of crime and social issues in Indigenous communities.

Executive Producer: Mark Hamlyn

Silent Storm

Writer/director/co-producer Peter Butt has started editing this one-hour documentary which raises serious questions about widespread health repercussions from British atomic tests in Australia. Filming in Adelaide and Melbourne finished late last year and included dramatised sequences starring Billie Brown as maverick CSIRO scientist Hedley Marston. Made in association with SBS Independent, the film is co-produced by Rob McAuley.

Executive Producer: Anna Grieve

The Slow Food Revolution

Filming is now complete for this one-hour program exploring the international eco-gastronomic movement known as slow food. Executive producer Franco di Chiera describes the footage as "beautiful to watch and deliciously captivating". Written by Gabriella Pignatelli and directed by Carlo Buralli, the documentary is being produced by Carmelo Musca in association with CM Film Productions and SBS Independent and with the assistance of ScreenWest and the Lotteries Commission of Western Australia. It was developed with the assistance of Film Victoria.

Executive Producer: Franco di Chiera

Under One Roof: The Puckeridge Family

The *Under One Roof* team has started editing a mammoth amount of material from eight weeks recording the daily life of the Puckeridge family—mum, dad and five very active kids aged 2 to 10. Ray Argall is directing this episode. Rosemary Blight is series producer.

Executive Producer: Anna Grieve

Wildness

Michael McMahon is producing and Scott Millwood writing and directing this one-hour documentary, which examines the legacy of two of Australia's greatest wilderness photographers, Olegas Truchanas and Peter Dombrovskis. Principal photography concluded in November, with a three-day rafting trip down the spectacular Franklin River one of the highlights. Produced in association with Big and Little Films, the program was developed with the assistance of the AFC and produced with the assistance of Film Victoria, Screen Tasmania and the ABC.

Executive Producer: Franco di Chiera



At the Film Australia Melbourne end-of-year party, 16 December 2002 (clockwise from above, l to r):

- Film Australia Chairman Rob Fisher and Deputy Chair Eve Mahlab.
- Film Australia Executive Producers Anna Grieve and Franco di Chiera with Sue Thomson, director of *The Last Great Amateurs* which is currently in production.
- *In the Realm of the Hackers* producer John Moore and co-producer Suelette Dreyfuss with Dan Spielman who played Electron in the docu-drama, which was screened before the party.

Festivals & awards

Leah Purcell's **Black Chicks Talking**, distributed by Film Australia, won Best Documentary at the LEXUS if Awards held on 6 November 2002. The program was also a finalist in the Television category of the Human Rights Medal and Awards held on 10 December, where another Film Australia distribution title, **Troubled Waters** was commended.

The National Interest Program production **Fortress Australia** won Best Achievement in Sound for a Documentary at the Australian Screen Sound Awards on 8 October.

The Australian Cinematographers Society held state awards late last year. In Victoria/Tasmania, the **Rosa's Story** episode of **East Timor—Birth of a Nation** (DOP Valeriu Campan) won a Gold Award in the Documentaries, Cinema and Television category and **In the Realm of the Hackers** won Silver in the Dramatised Documentary category. **Ten Million Wildcats** was highly commended in South Australia/Western Australia. Film Australia distribution titles **Two Thirds Sky—Artists in Desert Country** (DOP Joel Peterson) and **In Limbo** (DOP Helen Barrow) won the Gold Award and Highly Commended respectively in NSW.

Two Thirds Sky was voted Best Local Documentary by *Sydney Morning Herald* critics in December.

Three National Interest Program titles were honoured at the Centre for Australian Cultural Studies National Cultural Awards on 6 December. **Welcome to the Waks Family**, **The Trouble with Merle** and the **Everyday Brave** series were commended for their outstanding contribution to the quality of Australian cultural life.

The first five five-minute episodes of the ten-part **Human Contraptions** series by Academy Award winning animator Bruce Petty will have their world premiere screenings at the inaugural Adelaide International Film Festival, which runs from 28 February to 6 March.

The **Rainmakers** episode of **Bush Mechanics—The Series** screened at the prestigious Margaret Mead Film and Video Festival in New York in November. The series has developed cult status in the city since the screening of the first episode at the festival in 2001.

The Film Australia distribution title **Breaking Bows and Arrows** also screened at the Margaret Mead festival this year. In October, it was awarded Best Television Program at the United Nations Association of Australia Media Peace Awards.

At the Film and History Conference in Adelaide (28 November–1 December), producer Martha Ansara presented a screening and discussion of **Ordinary People** and Judy Adamson presented **Mike and Stefani** (see also In Brief, page 4).

Looking for colour

A new documentary series, to be screened on the Nine Network and TVNZ and produced by Film Australia in association with TWI Australia, is asking all Australians for their colour home movies.

Colour of War—The Anzacs will tell the story of Australians and New Zealanders at home and abroad from World War Two to Vietnam. The series will use only colour film and be mostly made up of home movies taken by service personnel and people on the homefront.

"Colour brings a fresh look to the topic, highlighting the human side of the story," observes executive producer Mark Hamlyn. "Much of the colour film of the day was taken by ordinary people and is still in private hands. We hope that people will lend us their films and help create a dynamic new version of one of our most important national stories."

"Colour film, especially from the World War Two era, has a remarkable quality," adds series producer Paul Rudd. "We can identify with the people on the film. You can't disconnect the way you can with black-and-white footage, it transports you back there."

The *Colour of War—The Anzacs* team is seeking colour film taken anywhere in the world by Australians prior to 1975.

It is little known that colour film was available as early as 1911, but time is running out for this precious footage. If it isn't stored correctly, it degrades and this unique record will be lost forever. The documentary's producers hope that anyone with colour film will contact them. Any material, no matter how seemingly trivial or domestic, that captures daily life and the unique spirit of the times is of potential interest.

The team can arrange for storage advice or it may be possible to organise for the film to be stored in one of the national collections.

In addition to colour footage, diaries or letters written by Australians during conflicts between 1939 and 1975 are also being sought.

People who have suitable material are urged to contact the producers:

- phone 02 9413 8695
- toll-free phone 1800 88 33 20
- email colourofaust@filmaust.com.au

Sales highlights

Since MIPCOM in October, Film Australia has licensed *Cunnamulla*, *Uncle Chatzkel*, *The Forgotten Force* and *Return to Sandakan* to RTE for free-to-air broadcast in Ireland; *The Trouble with Merle*, *Welcome to the Waks Family*, *Surviving Shepherd's Pie* and *Black Chicks Talking* to HRT-Croatian TV for free-to-air in Croatia; *The Fifth Set* to Czech TV for free-to-air in the Czech Republic; and *Human Contraptions* to SVT for free-to-air in Sweden. *Muddy Waters—Life and Death on the Great Barrier Reef* and *Surviving Shepherd's Pie* have been licensed to Planete for pay television in France.

In Israel, *Staying Out*, *Myths of Childhood*, *Nice Guys Finish Last* and *Our Brother James* have been licensed to NOGA Communications and *Welcome to the Waks Family* to IETV. *From Korea With Love* has been licensed to Korea's Q Channel.

Belinda's Baby, *Breathing Space* and *Staying Out* have been licensed to Canal Vie for pay television in French-speaking Canada. In the USA, *Cane Toads—An Unnatural History*, *City of Dreams*, *A Calcutta Christmas*, *China Dolls* and *Cunnamulla* have been licensed to the Sundance Channel for pay television and *Lake Pedder*, *Black Chicks Talking*, *From Korea With Love* and *Surviving Shepherd's Pie* to narrowcast broadcaster Free Speech Television. *Breaking Bows and Arrows* has been licensed to Filmmakers Library for non-theatrical distribution in North America.

Domestically, *City of Dreams*, *The Battle of Maryang San—Korea 1951* and the *History of Australian Cinema* series have been licensed to the History Channel for pay television along with eight short programs for interstitial programming. *Fortress Australia* has been licensed to Qantas for its inflight entertainment network.

ABC Television Asia has purchased a package of 43 hours of programming for its digital service to the region.

Recent acquisition

Film Australia has recently acquired the independently produced documentary *Diverted to Delhi* for distribution. Written, directed and produced by Greg Stitt, with Paul Roy as associate producer, this one-hour program examines the growing tendency for Australian, US and British companies to secretly re-route customer queries to Indian call centres, where Indians are taught to speak and think like their international callers.



Education producer appointed

Film Australia has appointed Chris Warner to the newly created position of Producer, Education, commencing 20 January. Based in the company's Melbourne office, his role will be to devise, develop and produce programs for the educational market.

Chris has been an independent filmmaker for 27 years, working as a producer, director, writer and script editor in educational production, drama and documentary. A former director of the Film Development and Marketing Branch of the Australian Film Commission, he has served on the boards of Film Victoria and the Open Channel.

"Chris Warner has enormous experience as a creator of programs, including educational programs, and he has a comprehensive understanding of new online delivery systems. He will be a tremendous asset to Film Australia," said CEO Sharon Connolly.

In brief

- Congratulations to Judy Adamson, the 2002 recipient of the Ken G Hall award, presented for outstanding contributions to Australian film preservation. Judy's research and oral histories have played an invaluable part in documenting the history of government filmmaking in this country, particularly the heritage materials held in Film Australia's archives. During an association with the organisation dating from 1952, Judy worked on films such as *The Pictures that Moved*, *Now You're Talking* and *Celluloid Heroes*, which are among the most influential documentary histories of Australian film, as well as the 12-part series *Film Australia's Australia* and the classic 1952 film *Mike and Stefani*, an eye-opening look at post-war immigration.
- Acclaimed filmmaker Dick Mason died in November 2002 at the age of 76. A director turned producer, Dick made an important and lasting contribution to Film Australia and the Australian film industry in a career that spanned nearly half a century. He challenged documentary conventions with innovative work such as the classic drama-doco-travelogue *From the Tropics to the Snow* and went on to produce features and television dramas including *Let the Balloon Go* and *Winter of Our Dreams*.
- Rebecca Webb has joined Film Australia's Sydney office as production assistant and assistant to executive producers Anna Grieve and Mark Hamlyn.
- In Conversation with Ken Burns was a special event presented by Film Australia and the NSW Film and Television Office in October 2002. A transcript of this discussion between the celebrated US filmmaker (*The Civil War*, *Jazz*) and Paul Byrnes (film critic for the *Sydney Morning Herald*) is available for download in the Industry Resources section of the Film Australia website. A video recording is available at the Australian Film, Television and Radio School library.

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