

## More than just a game

When Norman "The Wizard" Brookes won the Davis Cup in 1907, it was a first for Australia and the beginning of an extraordinary association with the famous sporting cup. Since then, Australia has dominated the competition, winning the trophy an astonishing 45 times.

The year 2000 is the 100th anniversary of the Davis Cup. To mark the occasion, Film Australia is producing *The Fifth Set*, due for completion mid-year. Directed by Sue Thomson (Boys and Balls), produced by Kate Latimer and Cristina Pozzan and written by Nick Place and Kate Latimer, the executive producer is Franco di Chiera and the ScreenSound executive producer is Ken Berryman. The 55-minute documentary will screen on ABC-TV. The program will be reversioned by ScreenSound in a 90-minute video format for retail sale.

*The Fifth Set* explores the history of Australia's relationship with the Cup. Through early success in the competition, Australian tennis players became known internationally for their sportsmanship. The idea of the fair-minded, good-looking, bronzed Aussie took hold. For a new nation, it was an irresistible profile.

At home, the Davis Cup inspired an obsession with tennis. Australia had plenty of space and a warm climate. A game that had been exclusive to the rich became a popular social pastime that bred fans as well as competitors.

As the years progressed and the victories continued, the Davis Cup became our

special domain. It was more than just a game, it was a source of national pride. The players were ambassadors for their country, farewelled in style and greeted with tickertape parades on their return.

These scenes are captured in the rare archival newsreels, photographs and home movies used in *The Fifth Set*, some dating from the turn of the century. In new interviews, tennis legends like Neale Fraser, Frank Sedgman and John Newcombe talk about their Davis Cup matches, especially the golden era that began in 1950 with Australia going on to win the Cup 15 times in the following 18 years.

The Davis Cup spirit is still strong today. In the program, younger players like Pat Cash, Pat Rafter and Lleyton Hewitt describe their pride in representing Australia in the competition. For them, like their predecessors, it is the jewel in the crown of international tournaments.

*The Fifth Set* is a Film Australia National Interest Program produced in association with Media Giants and ScreenSound Australia and with the assistance of the Australian Broadcasting Corporation.



Director Sue Thomson and sound recordist Mark Tarpey with John Newcombe.



Coming soon to Australian television screens, two new productions from Film Australia's National Interest Program:

**Uncle Chatzkel** Chatzkel Lemchen has lived through the Russian revolution, two world wars, the Holocaust, a communist regime and the transition of Lithuania from Soviet republic to an independent state but he's never met his Australian relatives...until now.

Tuesday 2 May, SBS-TV, 8.30 pm

**Lies, Spies and Olympics** The dramatic, untold story of the Melbourne Olympics, revealing how Melbourne almost lost the Games and how Cold War chicanery led to scores of defections and even murder.

Wednesday 24 May, ABC-TV, 8.30 pm

[www.filmaust.com.au](http://www.filmaust.com.au) see our web site for up-to-the-minute broadcast details of all Film Australia programs.

**Ratings success** Film Australia programs have achieved extraordinary success in the ratings recently. **Auto Stories**, a four-part series which screened on ABC-TV in January, attracted a huge audience with ratings as high as 21. This followed on from last year's 25-episode **Our Century** series on Channel 9, with ratings up to 29, and the **Federation** series on ABC, which doubled the previous ratings for its timeslot.

# real2reel

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## Major archival initiative

Film Australia has launched a major archival initiative. The company's new Library Manager, Bev Dalgairns, who was appointed late last year, will oversee a program to improve access to Film Australia's unique and extensive library of archival and contemporary audio-visual and stills materials.

Databases for both collections are currently being updated and expanded and will be available online in late 2000. This new system will make it faster and easier for filmmakers and other users to locate the material they require, with researchers off-site able to search for materials themselves.

The library has also started a telecine program to transfer to digital betacam, material previously available only on film.

The collection itself is stored at Film Australia's Lindfield site and at the National Archives. The company manages the copyright to the programs in its collection and can directly license them, and the valuable archival materials they contain, to the production industry. Clients range from independent documentary makers to major television networks and curators organising exhibition displays.

The Film Australia archive covers more than 85 years of Australian history, with over 5000 completed programs and 8 million feet of footage selected for its stock-shot value.

There is a host of subjects covering Australian life in the 20th century, from architecture and agriculture to immigration and royal tours, and early works of filmmakers like Peter Weir, Fred Schepisi and Gillian Armstrong.



FROM THE ARCHIVE: Bert Ive, cinematographer to the Australian government from 1913 to 1939.

The stills collection dates back to 1911. It includes photographs that document the filmmaking process as well as images used for a title's promotion.

Many of the titles recently produced by Film Australia under the National Interest Program, such as *Federation*, *Our Century* and the upcoming *Lies, Spies and Olympics*, make extensive use of the archive, which is constantly updated and replenished with footage from each new Film Australia production.

"The upgrading of access to the archive is a long-term program for Film Australia. We are committed to ensuring not only the preservation of, but also wide access to, its unique and historically valuable image collection," said Film Australia's Chief Executive Sharon Connolly.

## Ready for the GST?

The GST and changes to the tax system have serious ramifications for all film industry practitioners, from actors to producers, technicians to funding bodies.

A series of FREE information seminars will be held throughout Australia in April and May.

Call Sydney (02) 9321 6444, tollfree 1800 226615 or Melbourne (03) 9279 3400, tollfree 1800 338430. Or email [gst@afc.gov.au](mailto:gst@afc.gov.au)

For the schedule and details, see [www.afc.gov.au/resources/online/gst/](http://www.afc.gov.au/resources/online/gst/)

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## On the festival front

Three new Film Australia National Interest Program productions will premiere at the **Sydney Film Festival** in June. Buried Country, produced by Liz Watts, directed by Andy Nehl, reveals the untold story of Aboriginal country music. The Diplomat, produced by Sally Browning, directed by Tom Zubrycki, written and coproduced by Wilson da Silva, follows the final 18 months in José Ramos Horta's fight for East Timor's freedom. And Tosca, produced by Patricia Lovell and directed by Trevor Graham, lifts the curtain on the closed world of opera.

This year the prestigious **Hot Docs** festival in Toronto has selected Sadness, Uncle Chatzkel and Tosca to screen in its special Australian Spotlight section.

Uncle Chatzkel and Sadness will screen in Sydney and Melbourne in April as part of the DOCO2000 program at the **Real: Life on Film** festival. This new documentary forum aims to promote cultural diversity and human rights through film.

At Sydney's **Festival of Jewish Cinema**, a second sell-out screening of Uncle Chatzkel was held by popular demand.

Bruce Petty's *Leisure* will be included in the **Best Animated Shorts of the 20th Century** at France's Anney International Animated Film Festival in June.

The **Singapore International Film Festival**, held in April, will screen three Film Australia productions—Sadness, The Post and Big Brother of Christmas Island.

The much-visited **Hermitage Museum** in St Petersburg is hosting an exhibition of indigenous Australian art which includes two Film Australia titles, Dances at Arukun and Aboriginal Dance from Cape York.

## More awards for Sadness & Calcutta

Sadness has been awarded the Best Documentary of 1999 by the **Film Critics Circle of Australia**.

A *Calcutta Christmas* picked up the Silver Conch at **MIFF** (Mumbai International Film Festival for Documentary, Short and Animation Films) in the international video section for non-fiction up to 60 minutes. At the Golden Gate awards at the San Francisco International Film Festival, the program received a certificate of merit. This festival is one of the oldest in the US and competition is fierce—over 1600 entries were sent from 60 countries. Back at home, *Calcutta* was a finalist in the Film Critics Circle of Australia awards.

## Once Were Monks

What happens when a religious order decides to renovate its monastery, forcing the close-knit community to temporarily disperse? What if the alternative accommodation for many of the brothers and fathers turns out to be the pub across the road? And what if the church in the middle of this upheaval is Australia's busiest, with over 3000 people attending Mass every Sunday?

This is what faced the Blessed Sacrament Congregation at St Francis Monastery, in the heart of Melbourne's CBD. It is a fascinating story told over five half-hour episodes in the series *Once Were Monks*.

Relocating creates upheaval under ordinary circumstances, but imagine its impact on a group with many elderly members where communal living is an intrinsic part of each person's everyday routine, from sharing meals to singing prayers.

Not surprisingly, the move provided a catalyst for a series of personal journeys for the men of St Francis. In *Once Were Monks*, we follow one of the fathers, Gonzalo Munoz, as he takes a job as a caretaker at a meditation centre where he pursues his interest in buddhism. At the same time, the intellectual of the community, Father Donald Cave, travels to Rome with his new book and then on to Istanbul to realise a long-held dream.



**FROM LEFT:** The Minister for the Arts and the Centenary of Federation, the Honourable Peter McGauran MP, who launched the series on 28 March, with Film Australia CEO Sharon Connolly, Provincial Leader of the Blessed Sacrament Order Father Jo Dirks, Film Australia Chairman Rob Fisher, the Order's Community Leader Father Peter Collins, and Father Ken Boland.

They are just two of the characters in a very engaging 'cast'. We meet Brother Gerard Develin, the amateur magician, who fills the dual roles of church organist and photographer, despite being visually impaired. And Father Ken Boland, whose witty quips punctuate the program, juggles his supervision of the renovations with his passion for caving and gliding.

As a group and as individuals, the men of St Francis are progressive and forthright, and their startling candour is one of the achievements of the series. They question long-held values, wrestle with the tenets of their faith and talk openly about

their own conflicts with the orthodoxy of the church.

It was this honesty that attracted filmmaker Luigi Acquisto to the community and their story. Acquisto was first introduced to St Francis in 1981 while studying at the University of Melbourne. He became a regular guest at Sunday dinners at the monastery at the invitation of his then lecturer in existential philosophy, Father Donald Cave. The convivial gatherings were eye-opening. "The priests were erudite, bawdy and witty, not to mention open, tolerant and non-judgmental—nothing like the images to which we're accustomed," Acquisto recalls.

The series that Acquisto eventually produced with Stella Zammataro and directed with Andrew Sully shatters those stereotypes. "We sometimes forget that religious orders are part of Australian life," explains the program's executive producer, Franco di Chiera. "Once Were Monks reminds us that spirituality within the established churches is as diverse and complex as the society from which it emanates."

A *Film Australia National Interest Program* in association with *Abracadabra Films*. Produced in association with *SBS Independent* and developed with the assistance of *Cinemia's Film Victoria*.

*Once Were Monks* will screen on SBS-TV at 8 pm weekly from 9 April to 7 May.



**AT THE LAUNCH:** Film Australia Executive Producer, Franco di Chiera with *Once Were Monks* producer/director Luigi Acquisto, producer Stella Zammataro and director Andrew Sully.

## Who's new?

In January, Susan Wilson was appointed **Program Promotions Manager** at Film Australia, bringing with her a wealth of experience in marketing, promotions and publicity within the film industry. Susan was a programmer and publicist for the Sydney Film Festival and Director of the Travelling Film Festival from 1986 to 1999. She has worked for the Australian Law Reform Commission, and as a consultant for the Australian Film Commission as well as spending time in Papua New Guinea with the Department of the Prime Minister. Susan will head the Promotions Department, reporting directly to the Chief Executive Officer.

Brigid Phelan, who has been at Film Australia since 1997, has been appointed **Festivals and Events Coordinator**. This new position is responsible for promoting Film Australia programs on the international festival circuit as well as coordinating the company's events and overseeing corporate sponsorship projects.

Assisting both the Promotions department and the Director of Sales is newcomer Sara Goss.

Matthew Tucker takes on the role of **Site and Facilities Manager**. Matthew will already be familiar to many filmmakers; he has been Film Australia's Operations Supervisor for over six years.

Sally Regan is the new **Business Affairs Manager, Production**. Sally comes to Film Australia from the Australian Screen Directors Association where she was administrator, financial controller and cultural officer. She has also worked as a script and budget assessor at the Australian Film Commission. A producer, director, writer and script editor, Sally designed and taught a number of Metro screen courses this year.

Karen Skea and Kylie Burke are on maternity leave. The **Production Liaison Officer** position is being filled by Harry Ree. Sue Cowden joins the Executive office as **Policy and Research Manager** after working in similar areas at the Communications Law Centre and the MEAA.

In the Melbourne office, Kylie Smith has been appointed Production Secretary.



**FROM TOP:** Film Australia's new Program Promotions Manager, Susan Wilson and Business Affairs Manager, Production, Sally Regan.