

Foxton Meeting – May 2006

Excerpts from the write up by David Lascelles.

Date 5th 6th 7th May.

The meeting was held at the Foxton Rotarians Room (MAVTEC Museum).

The doors opened early and it wasn't long before buffs started arriving with lots of material for the sales table and auction. An excellent supper was served and our host Gavin Cowern invited us to proceed into the theatre's Dress Circle for an evening of films from the Museum's collection. Variety was the theme, beginning with a compilation of Universal – International Newsreels from 1951 to 1955, then a rare NFU short *Kariotahi Beach* (1971), an NFU *Pictorial Parade No 99* (1960) showed the new airport at Christchurch, NZ Railways faster running time for the new Auckland to Wellington express and the Navy at Waitangi Day celebrations. A vision of glorious colour was next in the form of clips from old MGM films. These excerpts came mainly from a one hour promotional film (introduced by new MGM head Dore Schary and fronted by Lionel Barrymore), released to theatres showcasing their up and coming product for 1951. Two Tom & Jerry cartoons, *The Cat and the Mer Mouse* (1949) and *Casanova Cat* (1950) brought the evening to a close.

Saturday began with the meeting followed by morning tea and when this was over, the auction began. There were so many items but not so many bidders, so it was a buyer's market. At the completion of the auction, we went to the Manawatu Hotel for lunch and a short rest.

After lunch we boarded the buff's bus for a trip to Shannon and our visit to "Owlcatraz" Native Bird & Wildlife Park. Here we saw native owls with such names as Owl Capone, Owl McPherson and Owlvis Presley. A visit to the Waiuru Cave with glow worms was quite an experience. A cuppa was very welcome after the long walk through the native park.

The Saturday evening meal was at the Hollywood Dining Room and was an excellent one, during which the signed placemat was auctioned. We returned to the theatre for a special programme of films especially put together by Colin Martin – former projectionist at the Town Hall in the 1950s. A serious illness prevented Colin from presenting this programme so it fell to his colleague and close friend Gavin Cowern to present it on his behalf. First up was *Telephone Talk* (NFU 1953) in which Aunt Daisy makes a brief appearance, *New Zealand Grand Prix* (NFU 1961), then from Western Australia, a Southern Cross films presentation of *Iron Island* about mining raw materials, then *Dustie* (NFU 1971), filmed around Wellington – a day in the life of a rubbish collector, *It Help's to be Mad* (NFU 1966) with our own confident but inquisitive interviewer Michael Woolf, then the award winning *Fresh Water Dive* (NFU 1975) and another Australian film *Watch the Coast*. Finally two early Paul Terry cartoons *Victor the Volunteer Fireman* and *Bullets and Ballots* completed the programme. It was an excellent and diverse selection of films to end an event filled day – thank you Colin.

Sunday began with morning tea after which Dave Turnbull introduced Jane Paul, her assistants Emily and Geoff Rogers from the Film Archive who talked briefly about the programme they had especially put together for this morning screening. Films shown were *Clubs Get Togethers and Wild Times'*, *Cars to Carrington 1938-1940*, *Survey: Getting Together* (NZMC/Pacific Films 1971), *Hutt Valley Youth Club – Pictorial Parade 79* (1958), *Children Entertained*, *Film Men's Zoo Picnic – Pictorial Parade 32* (1955) and from the NZBC *Looking at N.Z. A Pictorial Magazine: Auckland Connoisseurs Club* 1968. At the end of the screening, lunch was served and the official farewells took place.

For those staying on, it was a return to MAVTEC for a screening of *Annie Get Your Gun* (1950), before heading to the Cowerns home for a BBQ tea. Later in the evening some films were shown, which made for a perfect finish to a perfect weekend.