

Napier Meeting – November 2003

Excerpts from the write up by David Lascelles.

Date 7th 8th 9th November.

The meeting was held in the Henry Hill School hall in Onekawa. There were 71 in attendance.

Friday night began with registrations, meeting up with old friends and checking out the sales tables where many items were already being sold. At 8 pm, after a welcome by President David Turnbull, supper was served and a special auction commenced. About 40 lots went into this auction of films donated by the Archives. As usual John Bell, Syd Chell and John Turnbull got things off to a cracking pace by moving some good titles at reasonable prices, with all proceeds going to the club. Then another 40 odd lots of film, equipment and other cinema accessories went under the hammer, spirited bidding was maintained and soon it was all over. The evening was rounded off with a little gem from Dave Turnbull's film library – a short excerpt from the 1925 colour tinted film *The Wanderer*, starring Greta Nissen and Wallace Berry and directed by Raoul Walsh. This 16mm tract was title *The Feat of Ishtar*.

Saturday began with morning tea with freshly baked muffins and cheese scones. The meeting followed during which Christchurch member Fred Herring was awarded Life Membership. With the meeting over another great auction began as our auctioneers led by John Bell again showed their skills by painlessly extracting large amounts of money from members for items some didn't know they even wanted! At the completion of the auction, a beautifully prepared lunch was served.

After lunch, we boarded the buff's bus for a trip to Hastings and a tour of the Hawke's Bay Opera House which is about to have its renovations completed. This was the first theatre in New Zealand built for the dual purpose of films and live theatre in 1915. Moving on, we visited the Beatles Museum which although confined to a small space was interesting. We then returned to the venue for a quick cup of tea.

The Saturday evening dinner was held at the venue and was a wonderful meal. Some raffles were then drawn before we were entertained by Mike Hocking, who gave us some wonderful music on his Yamaha Tyros keyboard. The signed placemat was auctioned. Now it was time for a couple of reels and first up was the Tommy Steel film, *In Search of Charlie Chaplin* – a musical journey tracing the very early life of Chaplin as a child and young man. It was made by the BBC around 1970 or 1972. The second film was *Laughter USA – What Makes America Laugh*. This excellent film was made by NBC in 1961 and had some amazing footage of American comedians and comedy teams from the days of vaudeville to present day television. This brought the evening to a close.

After morning tea on Sunday, we boarded the bus and headed off to the Century Theatre for a programme of 35mm shorts courtesy of Peter Goodbehere. First up was a silent film from the Dept of Tourist and Publicity titled *Sunny Napier* (1929). This was followed by *The Great Holocaust* – a film on Napier's earthquake of 1931 and *Le Petomane* – a very funny film starring Leonard Rossiter and a host of British character actors (1979). Peter rounded the show off with some trailers – *The Sixth Sense*, *Far From Heaven* and *Whale Rider*, which showed the full extent of his Dolby Digital Sound system. Our next stop was a visit to John Turnbull's Edison Museum where we viewed a fantastic collection of recording and playing machines, many lovingly restored by John himself. Soon it was time to return to the venue for a wonderful lunch followed by the official farewells.

The stayers enjoyed a BBQ at Dave's place later that evening.