

Melbourne Film Buffs Weekend 1999

Held over the weekend of 13th and 14th February 1999 by the Cinema And Theatre Historical Society (CATHS), the Melbourne Film Buffs Weekend is believed to be the first of its type to be held in Australia. The weekend's program followed closely the very successful format by the New Zealand Film Buffs' Association for their six monthly meetings.

For some people, the concept of a whole weekend filled with 'filmic' activities was hard to grasp. However, for the 69 people who attended the weekend, it was non-stop film collectors' and enthusiasts' activities all the way. We were pleased to have the company of 13 New Zealanders and 4 other enthusiasts from interstate,

Commencing at 9am on the Saturday morning, at the Victorian Movie Makers rooms (VMM), the weekend got off to a flying start with all of the buy and sell tables occupied, with many goodies on offer. Following morning coffee, a tour of the Salvation Army Heritage Centre in central Melbourne took place. At the completion of lunch, an auction of film and related items was held with approximately 50 lots being auctioned. During the afternoon, the group were transported to, and entertained at two home cinemas in the eastern suburbs.

By the time the buses returned from the home cinema visits, the VMM had been transformed into the 'CATHS Newsreel Theatre Restaurant'. The Saturday night dinner was a buffet style meal, followed by a selection of shorts similar to those shown in the Newsreel Cinemas of the 1950s.

For many, the highlight of the weekend was the Sunday morning tour of the Village Jam Factory cinema complex in South Yarra. Conducted by Village's National Technical Manager, David Kilderry, we were shown all aspects of the complex, ranging from the more usual cinemas to the Cinema Europa and the latest Gold Class deluxe cinema.

Next, we were off to The Rialto for a high rise view of Melbourne, together with a look behind the scenes of the RialtoVision cinema and a viewing of the 20-minute film of Victoria's tourist attractions. Following lunch nearby, we were then treated to an afternoon of vintage shorts at the recently restored Sun Cinema in Yarraville.

The Weekend concluded at about 5pm, with many friendships having been made and assurances by everyone that they will be back for the second Melbourne Film Buffs Weekend in 2000!

By Mike Trickett.