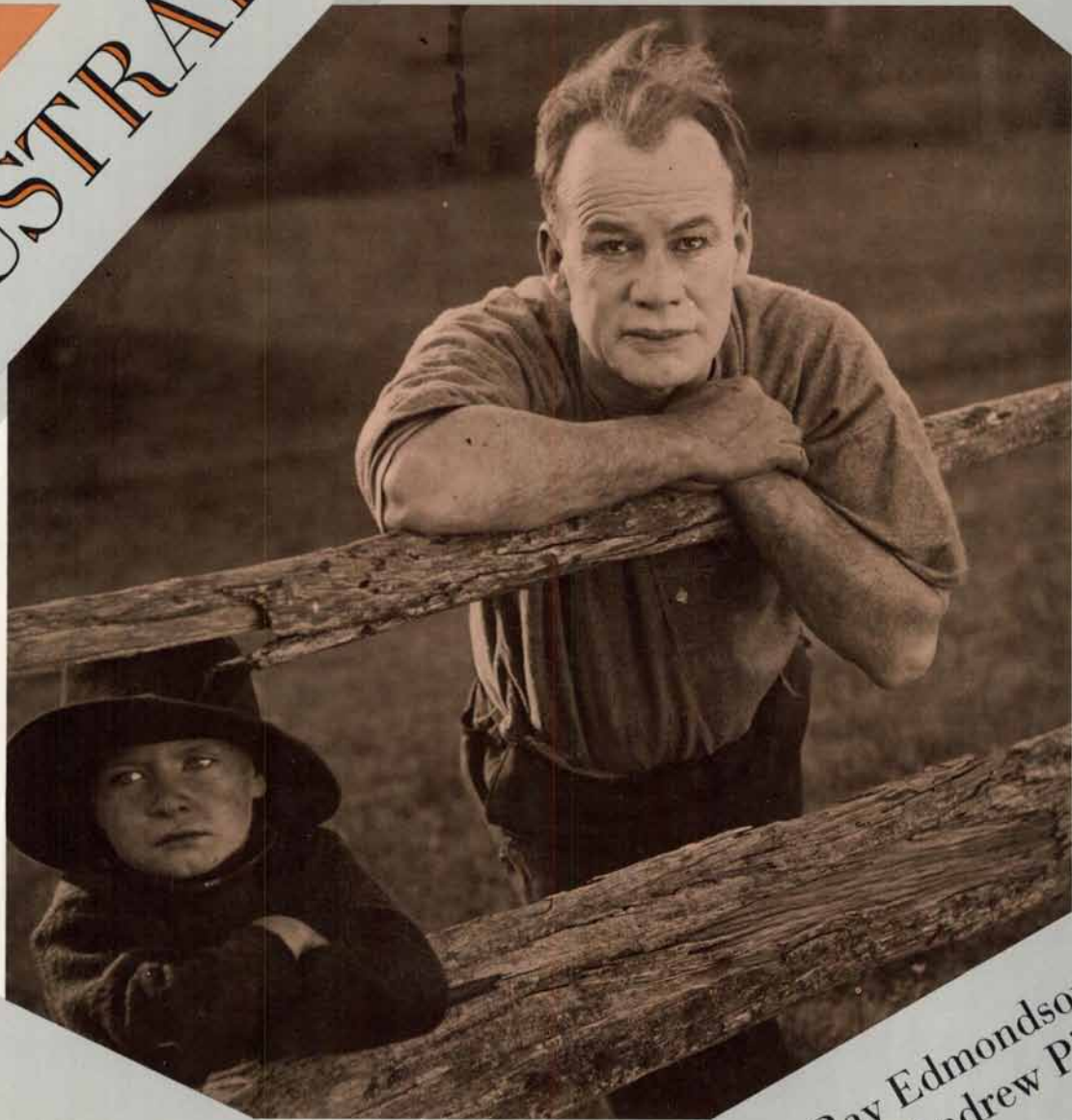


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AUSTRALIA'S  
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FILMS



Ray Edmondson  
and Andrew Pike

# AUSTRALIA'S

# LOST FILMS

*The loss and rescue of Australia's silent cinema*

Ray Edmondson  
and Andrew Pike

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National Library of Australia

*Front cover* Arthur Tauchert in pensive mood in a scene from Beaumont Smith's *Joe* (1924), one of the two hundred 'lost' Australian silent feature films.

Some of the Images shown in this publication can be found in the National Film and Sound Archive collection at <http://colsearch.nfsa.gov.au/>

The authors

Ray Edmondson, a film writer and historian, is Director of the Film Section, National Library of Australia, which includes the National Film Archive and National Film Lending Collection.

Andrew Pike is a film author and film maker with a particular interest in Australia's cinematic past. With Ross Cooper, he co-authored *Australian Film 1900-1977* (Oxford University Press 1980).

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#### ERRATA

- p.4      Uncaptioned still from *Joe* (1924).
- p.47     Caption refers to the large photographs on pp.47 and 48.
- p.89     Still is from *The Kingdom of Twilight*: caption has been reversed with that on p.90.

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# Acknowledgements

The text incorporates some factual material from the article *As We Were* by Joan Long (in *Salute to Australian Films*, Sydney Film Festival, 1975).

The checklist of Australian Silent Feature Films is adapted from material compiled by Ross Cooper and Andrew Pike for their book, *Australian Film 1900-1977* (Oxford University Press, in conjunction with the Australian Film Institute, 1980).

Acknowledgement is made to the still photographers, known and unknown, of the Australian film industry, through whose work it is possible to glimpse a vanished heritage.

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Estate of Dunstan Webb





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# Preface

**F**ilm is a fragile medium, whose survival depends not only on the inexorable laws of chemistry but also on the economic vicissitudes of a large and complex industry. In almost all countries with significant film industries, film archives are engaged in the twofold task of preserving the films of today – and recovering and preserving what remains of the cinema of yesterday. Both tasks are vital if the cinematic part of a nation's cultural heritage is to survive for the future. It is the purpose of this book to convey the particular urgency of the recovery and preservation of Australia's silent film heritage.

Australia not only has one of the oldest film industries in the world but became one of the first countries to recognise, at a government level, the value and necessity of film preservation when, in 1937, what is now the National Film Archive of the National Library of Australia was established. Since the mid- 1950s, when

the search for Australia's surviving silent films began in earnest, much has been recovered – though still a tiny proportion of the estimated output of the film industry in its early decades. As in other countries where similar tasks are underway, enough has been found to show how important it is to find more – while there is still time.

The launching in 1981 of *The last film search* ensures that the search and rescue operation continues in an accelerated and much more visible way. But the search will end when the lifespan of films still undiscovered expires – a point which may be no further away than a few short years. It is hoped that this book will not only provide a vivid glimpse of our cinematic past – but might even bring to light surviving copies of some of the lost films shown in its pages.

Harrison Bryan  
*Director-General*  
National Library of Australia



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# To begin with...

Australia's film industry is one of the oldest in the world. Since 1896, when the first short actuality films were made in Sydney and Melbourne, an industry of fluctuating fortunes but dogged optimism has turned out a steady stream of documentaries, newsreels, advertising films, animated films, travelogues, fictional shorts, and experimental films – in total, tens of thousands of productions.

It has also produced feature films – nearly 600 of them since 1906, a respectable output for a relatively small and remote country competing in world markets. Why 'since 1906'? On December 26 of that year *The Story of the Kelly Gang* was premiered. One and a quarter hours of action drama chronicling the exploits of the nation's best known outlaws, it was Australia's first feature film

#### THE STORY OF THE KELLY GANG (1906)

The first of many screen sagas based on the exploits of the Kelly gang, the progenitor of 'bushranger' movies and a breakthrough of world significance in narrative filmmaking. *The Story of the Kelly Gang* has such enormous historical importance that the discovery, in recent years, of some fragments and short scenes from the film attracted considerable media attention.

– by the modern definition of a continuous narrative drama running an hour or longer. At a time when European and American films averaged 15 minutes it quite possibly introduced the feature concept to world cinema.

Today – apart from fragments totalling a few minutes of screen time – the *Kelly Gang*, like so many other early features, is lost: lost because of the circumstances peculiar to the film industry, both in Australia and overseas, that govern film survival.

This book is about Australia's lost feature films – films of which copies are not known to survive today or of which only fragments remain. The laws of film survival, helped by some vigorous detective work by private individuals and film archive staff at the National Library, have now ensured that almost all of Australia's sound features – those made from 1930 onwards – still exist more or less intact. Hence this book is concerned with the pre-1930 silent era, from which the survival rate is much lower. Of about 250 silent feature films made in Australia between 1906 and 1930, little more than 50 survive in whole or in part today.

The survivors – including such well

known classics as *The Sentimental Bloke* (1919) and *The Kid Stakes* (1927) – are, by definition, not part of the pictorial coverage of a book on lost films. The pictures which illustrate this book are publicity stills chosen from the collections of the National Film Archive. They, and others like them, are the only remaining visual record of the lost films, good and bad, which – like the survivors – reflect the lifestyle, preoccupations and aspirations of a young nation.

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# A word about film stills

Stills are not blow-ups of frames from motion pictures but separate photographs, taken by a 'stills' photographer on the set during production for publicity or record purposes. Frequently they represent scenes from the film – often posed for the stills photographer after the scene itself had been shot. They also include behind-the-scenes or production shots and portraits of players, directors and crew members.

In the years before World War II stills were frequently photographed on quarter, half or full plate glass negatives, allowing a much better pictorial clarity than was possible in the motion pictures themselves. At their best, film stills were an art form in their own right; today, they have exceeded their original purpose in becoming the only visual record remaining for many lost films. Sadly, it is rarely possible to identify now the individual photographers responsible for this work.

Sadly, of course, for many films, not even stills remain; the circumstances which determine film survival also affect the publicity and production materials associated with those films. The presentation of this visual record, therefore, would be incomplete without an explanation of how films come to be lost – and what is being done to recover and make accessible those that can be found. This, together with a brief historical survey of Australia's silent cinema and a 'check list' of all silent feature films known to have been made, provides a context for the stills and indicates the importance of the films they represent.

It is possible that some of the films pictured or listed here still survive – in private collections, in forgotten corners of an attic, a garage, a store room, an old picture theatre. Films are still being found, but the chances of survival outside the National Library's Film Archive diminish with each passing year.



**SOLDIERS OF THE CROSS (1900)**

Joseph Perry and Herbert Booth's famous production was not a true film, but a complex audio-visual presentation involving slides, film segments, music and oratory evolved from the Salvation Army's 'magic lantern' presentations of

the preceding decade. Its significance lay in its ambitious concept, and the early use of film for sustained dramatic narrative. The music score and many of the slides survive, but efforts to trace the film segments have been unsuccessful.



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# The Australian film industry 1896-1930

Australians began to direct and act in their own films within four or five years of the commercial launching of moving pictures in Europe in 1895. Exactly which was the first fiction film made in Australia will never be known for certain, but by 1900 the Salvation Army had filmed enough short re-enactments of Biblical stories to use brief segments of film as highlights in a multimedia evangelical 'lecture' entitled *Soldiers of the Cross*. Narrative films were also being made in other countries at this time, but even by 1912 in two of the largest film producing countries – the United States and England – they were still quite short, rarely more than 2,000 feet (30 minutes) in length. A team of astute businessmen in Melbourne in 1906 may, therefore, have had a genuine claim when they advertised their own production, *The Story of the Kelly Gang*, as 'the longest film ever made'. The film ran for over 4,000 feet (the length varied from State to State, depending on censorship, and from time to time, as scenes were added and deleted), and proved to be an enormously profitable gimmick. Given its success, it is surprising that other entrepreneurs were slow to imitate it, and that the makers themselves

showed little inclination to produce many more of its type. It took four years before the boom in Australian production began, and a boom it was, for the years 1911 and 1912 rank among the most productive in Australian feature film history.

The large number of fiction films made in Australia in 1910-12, and the large proportion of them that were over 3,000 feet in length, is significant, not only because Australians can claim to have been making longer 'features' earlier than the major suppliers of film, but more importantly because the boom represented perhaps the most local or 'Australian' phase of the industry's history. In these years, filmmakers worked in direct response to their Australian audience, without much reliance on American or European models. Most of the films were about local subjects, usually with bush settings. The large number of films about bushrangers, for example, rivalled each other, and not Hollywood, in promoting stuntwork, derring-do and moral rectitude, and audience enthusiasm for them seems to have been extraordinary. From all that we can read about these films today in newspapers and magazines, it seems that the bushranging films had developed into a





"Robbery Under Arms" here no



local genre that would make intriguing comparison with American westerns of the same period. Regrettably, not one of these bushranging films survives today, other than a few fragments of the 1906 film about the Kelly gang.

By 1913 the boom was over.

Entrepreneurs who had provided capital had either gone out of business or had moved on to other activities. Stanley Crick, for example, who had managed the most prolific production house during the boom years, the Australian Photoplay Company, turned in mid-1912 to the distribution of imported films and eventually became managing director in Australia for the American corporation, Twentieth Century-Fox. Another key entrepreneurial figure, Charles Cozens Spencer, had also withdrawn from production by 1914, and within a few years had left Australia altogether. In 1912, some of the most powerful of the entrepreneurs began to merge their interests in a 'combine' trading as Australasian Films and Union Theatres, to concentrate on the management of theatres and the importing of European and American films, rather than on the more risky operation of production. After the formation of this combine, few major exhibition companies or distributors showed much interest in local film – either making it or handling it – until the mid-

#### ROBBERY UNDER ARMS (1907)

The first film version of Rolf Boldrewood's novel, and a precursor of later bushranging films, it was even longer than *The Story of the Kelly Gang* and, in Sydney, 'drew so large a crowd that the box-office was literally stormed'.



1920s, there were quicker and safer ways of getting rich, and the emotional nationalism that surrounds local production today was a thin voice in 1912.

The filmmakers who had worked for the entrepreneurs in 1910-12, however, remained: some went back to live theatre, some went overseas to seek more regular film work, but others struggled to continue in production, seeking financial backing wherever they could, and fighting to get adequate public exposure for their work against overwhelming foreign competition. Among the 'battlers' who began in production in these years were three of the key figures of filmmaking throughout the 1910s and the 1920s: Raymond Longford, Lottie Lyell and Franklyn Barrett.

Longford and Lyell had begun working together in touring theatre companies in Australia and New Zealand, and in 1911 when Cozens Spencer established his own production studio in Sydney, he appointed Longford as director, and Lottie Lyell as one of his stars. Spencer's films were all major productions: 'big' subjects, with lavish sets and costumes, and famous stars, and they attracted huge audiences. *The Fatal Wedding* (1911), *Sweet Nell of Old Drury* (1911) and *The Midnight Wedding* (1912) were among the most successful films of these years. Although only part of one of Spencer's films, *The Romantic Story of Margaret Catchpole* (1911) survives today, it is enough to indicate the sophistication of Longford's narrative style and the grand scale of the action. It must have been particularly hard for Longford, and Lyell as his main creative collaborator in the following years, to begin a career in

production with such generous creative freedom and financial backing as Spencer provided, only to find the support withdrawn when Spencer's business associates forced him out of production.

Throughout the rest of the 1910s and during the 1920s, Longford and Lyell moved from backer to backer, and failed to find continuity of work for more than two or three features in succession. After Lyell's death in 1925, Longford increasingly believed himself to be the victim of manipulation by the 'enemies' of production and failed both to produce films as good as his earlier work with Lyell, and to convince backers that they could rely upon him. During the 1930s he was reduced to acting in bit parts in a few feature films, and eventually left production to work as a tally clerk on the Sydney docks. Late in his life, in the 1950s, he was afforded some recognition by film enthusiasts but he died in 1959 before his position as Australia's most gifted filmmaker could be widely acknowledged.

Franklyn Barrett's career began more gradually, and he experienced less of a shock when the boom period ended. He gained experience as a newsreel cameraman and as photographer on feature films for other directors, before in 1912 he began working as director himself on a series of thrillers for one of the distributor-exhibitor tycoons, T.J. West. After West joined the 'combine', Barrett made films occasionally for smaller companies and also worked as a film buyer for a small distributor. His most important films (two of which luckily survive today)

were made over a relatively short period in 1920-22, towards the end of his production career. These were bush melodramas with conventional plots but with superbly photographed landscapes and a striking sense of realism evident in their outback settings. His best work, however, like *A Girl of the Bush* (1921), failed to win him stable financial backing, and he eventually gave up the struggle of production in 1922 and became a salaried

cinema manager for one of the major companies.

The 1914-18 war brought further problems for filmmakers. Film stock became scarce because its ingredients were

#### THE REPRIEVE (1913)

This simple morality tale, about a faithless wife killed by her jealous husband was good melodramatic fare. Like other Lincoln- Cass films, it starred Roy Redgrave, father of British actor Sir Michael Redgrave.





needed for explosives, and because European sources of supply were cut off. Most significantly, during the war years, Hollywood gained ascendancy over the world market for feature film entertainment, while America's European competitors were preoccupied with war. As

SEA DOGS OF AUSTRALIA (1913)

A spy drama about a secret explosive, *Sea Dogs* included footage shot aboard HMAS *Australia*. Perhaps for this reason, Commonwealth Defence authorities forced the film's withdrawal soon after its initial public screenings in Adelaide.

a result, films in Australian theatres soon came primarily from one source – Hollywood – and the pre-war diversity of film culture available in Australia disappeared. The rise of Hollywood in Australia was represented by the establishment during and soon after the war of powerful agencies for American production companies, concerned only with winning wide distribution for their American product, and it became even harder for the vulnerable Australian producer to reach sufficient screens in his





own country to recover costs, let alone make enough profit to attract further investments.

Hollywood made an impact on local production in other ways as well. Some producers began to seek Hollywood directors, technicians and stars to work on Australian productions in order to compete more efficiently with the products of the American studios, and to make the films more attractive to the large American market. In 1920 the Carroll brothers brought out the director and character actor, Wilfred Lucas, the writer, Bess Meredyth, and others, to produce a series of 'westerns' in Australian outback locales, starring the athlete Snowy Baker. In the late 1920s an even more ambitious attempt was made to turn Australia into a little Hollywood, this time by Stuart Doyle, the head of the Australasian Films combine. Doyle arranged for the American director, Norman Dawn, and several Hollywood stars to come to Sydney for a projected series of films designed for the world market. Two were completed – *For the Term of His Natural Life* (1927) and *The Adorable Outcast* (1928) – but they were so expensive and the revenue so limited (mainly because the coming of sound made Doyle's silent films increasingly unmarketable), that Australasian had ceased feature film production by 1929.

The boost that the Hollywood publicity machines gave to the romantic image of film production, with its lavish lifestyle, its glamorous stars, and its potential for huge profits, also helped in the 1920s to shape Australian production, by drawing into

filmmaking a wide diversity of people. Production in these years was not yet the preserve of big corporations, as it became after the introduction of sound. During the 1920s, feature films were made not only by experienced professionals like Longford and Barrett, but also by child prodigies (Thomas Marinato, director of *Sydney's Darlings* in 1926, and George Palmer, director of *Northbound Limited* in 1925,) gangsters (Squizzy Taylor, star of *Riding to Win* in 1925), and social figures (various fund-raising bodies used local celebrities to act in mock melodramas to aid charity drives). Women were also making films. Mary Mallon, Kate Howarde, Juliette De La Ruze, and the three McDonagh sisters all embarked on features in the 1920s, working not as stars but as producers, writers and directors – positions that later, in the 1930s and onwards, became exclusively male preserves with the elevation of nearly all production activity to the level of big studio business.

But despite the pervading influence of Hollywood, the most notable Australian films had emphatically local subjects. A series of six comedies by Beaumont Smith about the Hayseeds, a family of farmers from the backblocks, was produced from 1917 onwards with great commercial success. From contemporary comments, Smith's films seem to have been crudely made and broad in their slapstick comedy, and it was in reaction to them that Longford produced his own version of the life of poor farmers in *On Our Selection* (1920). Longford's film stands as one of the masterpieces of Australian silent



cinema, a sympathetic and gently humorous story of a family struggling together against adversity which won enough popularity to justify a sequel, *Rudd's New Selection* (1921). At the same time as he told his bush stories, Longford was developing, with Lottie Lyell, similar sympathetic studies of the urban poor, in *The Sentimental Bloke* (1919), its sequel, *Ginger Mick* (1920), and its 'spin off', *The Dinkum Bloke* (1923). Both of Longford's surviving films from this period – *The Sentimental Bloke* and *On Our Selection* – reveal a degree of naturalism in the actors' performances that was remarkable for the time, either in Australia or overseas, and a sensitivity towards character development that has made the films durable. Both style and content are immediately accessible to audiences today.

It is in the few surviving works of Longford and Lyell, and of Franklyn Barrett, that the strongest indications are given of the creative force of the silent Australian cinema. The loss of other works by these directors is not merely the loss of local popular culture from the 1910s and 1920s, of interest only to historians and antiquarians, but also could well be the loss of mature works of art of more general value. Film criticism has never been such in Australia that one can be sure of any local film's quality without seeing the film itself, and it is obvious that no amount of

research can ever adequately reconstruct the early cinema of Australia, or allow proper evaluation of it, without the films themselves.

#### THE CRISIS (1913)

This story of a happy home broken up by a ruthless philanderer was inspired by a painting – 'The Crisis', by English artist Frank Dicksee – and directed by W.J. Lincoln.



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# Lost...

**T**he word 'lost' is a relative term with a meaning that depends on your point of view; in respect of a film, it usually means one that no longer exists or, at least, is not identified among the holdings of a film archive, production company, distributor or other publicly known organisation or collection. In other words, it is not in one of the places where one might normally seek to find it.

It may seem strange that a product representing such a high level of financial investment as a feature film could be allowed by its owners to disappear. Yet this is one of the facts of life of the film production industry.

Motion picture film is fragile material. With age it can shrink, warp and become brittle; the gelatin emulsion (which contains the photographic image) can succumb to fungus growth; the image itself – particularly if it is in colour – may fade or discolour, either through instability of dyes or the action of traces of processing chemicals still remaining on the film. These tendencies can, to varying degrees, be checked if the film is kept within storage environments of carefully controlled temperature and humidity, and is subject to certain regular examination

and handling procedures. Such environments are costly to maintain.

Throughout the silent era (and beyond it – until 1951) theatrical film was usually made of cellulose nitrate or 'celluloid' – a highly flammable, unstable compound subject to irreversible decomposition. The decomposition is not obvious until the film nears the end of its life – when it can, sometimes in quick succession, become sticky, congeal into a solid mass exuding bubbles of a honey-like substance, and finally turn to brown dust. The life of nitrate film can be anything from thirty to more than eighty years. Although decomposition can be retarded (though not stopped) by correct storage and care, nitrate film can, and does, literally rot away.

The laws of chemistry have not worked in favour of film survival: obviously, nitrate films still not held under archival

## THE MUTINY OF THE BOUNTY (1916)

This early version of the much-filmed saga of Captain Bligh and Fletcher Christian was a painstaking production, carefully researched from records in the Mitchell Library. Director Raymond Longford attempted to give an unbiased view of Bligh and the events surrounding the mutiny. The film performed well commercially.





conditions have today a very limited future. Many films have been lost, and others survive in less-than-perfect form, through this process of natural decay: yet it is not the only – or even the main – reason for the disappearance of silent films.

Unlike, for instance, books and gramophone records, which are produced and sold in many thousands of copies, theatrical prints of feature films are produced only in limited numbers. A principal reason is the high cost of 35mm film stock. Through the film rental system which, since the early years of the century, has been the means by which producers make their films available for exhibition in picture theatres, a relatively small number of prints can reach a vast audience. In the



THE PIONEERS (1916 and 1926)

Katharine Susannah Prichard's famous novel was filmed twice – in 1916 by Franklyn Barrett and in 1926 by Raymond Longford. The story of an escaped convict who tries to bury his past in a new life as a country schoolmaster, *The Pioneers* has the distinction of having been interpreted by both of Australia's major silent directors.







THE HAYSEEDS' BACKBLOCKS SHOW (1917)

Another entry in Beaumont Smith's Hayseeds series, built around the idea of the country agricultural show, complete with brass band. It starred Tal Ordell and Fred McDonald who, successively, became identified with the character of Dave in the 'Dad and Dave' films of the 1920s and 1930s.

1920s, for instance, as few as twenty or thirty prints of even the biggest blockbuster could be sufficient to saturate the Australian market. For most films, the number was far smaller, and Australian producers, for whom the cost of imported film stock was a substantial item in their



meagre budgets, often made do with as few as three or four copies – or less. Carefully scheduled around city, then suburban and country theatres, and finally sold to itinerant picture show men who exhibited films in outback towns, the prints were literally worked to death; they became



worn, scratched, broken and incomplete. By that time the producer, if he was lucky enough to be still in business, had turned his attention to his next production and the cycle would begin repeating itself. Statistically therefore, overseas films had a better chance of survival than Australian ones.

The original negatives of these films – from which further prints could be made – were stored by the producer or, more often, by the laboratory which processed and printed the film. New prints were not usually made after the initial release unless the film achieved totally unpredictable success or unless a major re-release occurred some years later: both eventualities were rare. Production companies were unstable (many only ever made one film) so their negatives might easily be lost, pass untraceably into private hands or be sold to another producer who might simply cut them apart in order to re-use some of the footage in a new production. Laboratories holding such negatives would cease to be paid storage charges, be unable to trace ownership, and might eventually discard the material. The survival rate of negatives has, in practice, proved to be much lower than that of prints of Australian silent films.

Silent films also offered the producer or distributor a possibility that sound films were never to match: they were easy to rearrange because there was no soundtrack to betray alterations to continuity. As prints wore out, or parts of them became damaged, it was easy to shorten them, recut them, or change the story line by the addition of new and cheaply made titles. It



is likely that a number of Australian films underwent this kind of 'reorganisation'. In the late 1920s, for example, a version of *The Kelly Gang* comprising footage from the three feature versions of the story made up to that time was in circulation to country exhibitors.

#### OUR FRIENDS THE HAYSEEDS (1917)

Journalist and entrepreneur Beaumont Smith (centre, standing prominently) broke into film production with this knockabout rural comedy. It was an instant success and inaugurated the Hayseeds series, of which the seventh and last – a talkie made in 1934 – is the only one now known to survive. 'One-take Beau' made his films quickly and economically, successful in his belief that technical frills mattered less than shrewd judgment of popular tastes.

It was, in other words, unusual for release prints of popular Australian films to survive in anything like good condition for a reasonable time. It is no accident that it is often the poorer films that have survived in most complete form – not being in great demand, the prints suffered less wear and tear.

Because release prints usually were the property of the production or distribution company, it eventually fell to one or the other to decide on their disposal once the film had run its course and future income was unlikely to be substantial. Prints that were not earning their keep took up valuable space; to make way for new films the old ones were simply discarded, thrown away, burned, or sold to recyclers as raw





material for the manufacture of paint or boot polish. Some were even cut into short lengths and sold for use in children's film projectors. It is an industry truism that yesterday's hits are today's junk. (They may also be tomorrow's relics, but a company might not survive if it becomes too preoccupied with its own history). Then, as now, larger and well organised distributors – and it was often they who acquired the best films – performed these house cleaning routines with some regularity, resulting in the efficient destruction of their old films. Smaller, more casual companies were haphazard – leading to, among other things, the passing of prints into private hands. Such prints had a chance of survival.

Although they are hard to confirm, there have always been stories of the large scale burning of old films, or the discarding of material in the course of changing addresses or renovating buildings. It is known for certain that some of the most spectacular fire scenes in Australian films (and no doubt in overseas ones as well) gained much of their effect from blazing nitrate!

Of all the production companies of Australia's silent era, not one remains active today. The structure of the silent industry was already disintegrating when the talkies loomed at the end of the twenties. As the silent film itself rapidly became obsolete – commercially speaking – prints were destroyed or dispersed with increasing rapidity. Even company libraries or other collections of footage lost their usefulness: stock footage shot to

silent specifications was often impossible to match in with sound material and everything had to be shot afresh.

It is easy, with hindsight, to criticise such practices in an industry which, more than most, has had to be preoccupied with the present rather than the past. In most cases, a film realises almost all its commercial potential within four or five years of its initial release (although there are notable exceptions). The cost of ensuring the careful preservation of the average film can rarely be justified in terms of future income – and for the producer or distributor, the problems and opportunities of the present are far more challenging and demanding than the dubious advantages of preserving films for an uncertain future. Just as the average person discards newspapers, household appliances or automobiles when they have outlived their usefulness, the industry discards its old films.

That, indeed, is what makes film archives necessary. Publicly funded institutions, free from considerations of profit and loss, are not ultimately limited to seeing films as commercial products but can give due recognition to their place as history, and as part of a nation's cultural and artistic heritage. The need to preserve films for these reasons was recognised in the early years of this century. Unfortunately, by the mid-1930s when the first steps were taken in Great Britain, France, Germany, the USA and Australia to create film archives, the fate of much of the world's silent cinema had already been sealed.

THE FACE AT THE WINDOW (1919)

This film version of a popular stage melodrama about the elusive Parisian master criminal, 'Le Loup', was both fast moving and light hearted, and achieved notable success. It even included a dash of science fiction.



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## ...and found

**F**inding and preserving films which have long since disappeared from public view is one of the basic roles of a national film archive. Along with its more contemporary film and television preservation activities, the National Film Archive of the National Library has been actively searching for Australian silent films since the mid-1950s. The campaign has steadily gathered impetus as many hundreds of important films – features newsreels, documentaries, even advertising films – have been discovered and sometimes, quite literally, rescued from destruction so that their preservation could be assured. Periodically, important finds receive wide media publicity, rightly so, for it is increasingly realised how important and fragile are these documents of Australia's past and how uncertain is their future unless action is taken in time.

One may acquire an old book, recording or other published or mass-produced article by approaching appropriate dealers in these materials who are part of a well established market structure. No comparable means exists for the acquisition of theatrical films which, for both technical and legal reasons, cannot be

accorded the antiquarian monetary value which would sustain such a structure. So the search for lost films must proceed in other ways, by identifying the many possible sources and exploring them as efficiently as possible. It is, basically, detective work and consequently both labour intensive and time consuming.

An obvious starting point is the film industry itself. Production companies, distributors, laboratories, theatres and so on are the places where one would usually expect to find the films still held. Unfortunately, although many picture theatres pre-date the coming of sound, few other industry organisations today have corporate origins which extend back to the silent era. Those which do have usually discarded much of their older output along the way, as changes of address, personnel and policy over the years have had their effect. Nonetheless, material remains, although it has sometimes been misplaced or forgotten. The building of relationships with industry bodies is, therefore, an important aspect of the Archive's work. Obviously, geographic considerations are important. It is easier, for example, to visit and assess the holdings of the relatively few film laboratories in Australia than to



visit the owner of every active or disused picture theatre in the country.

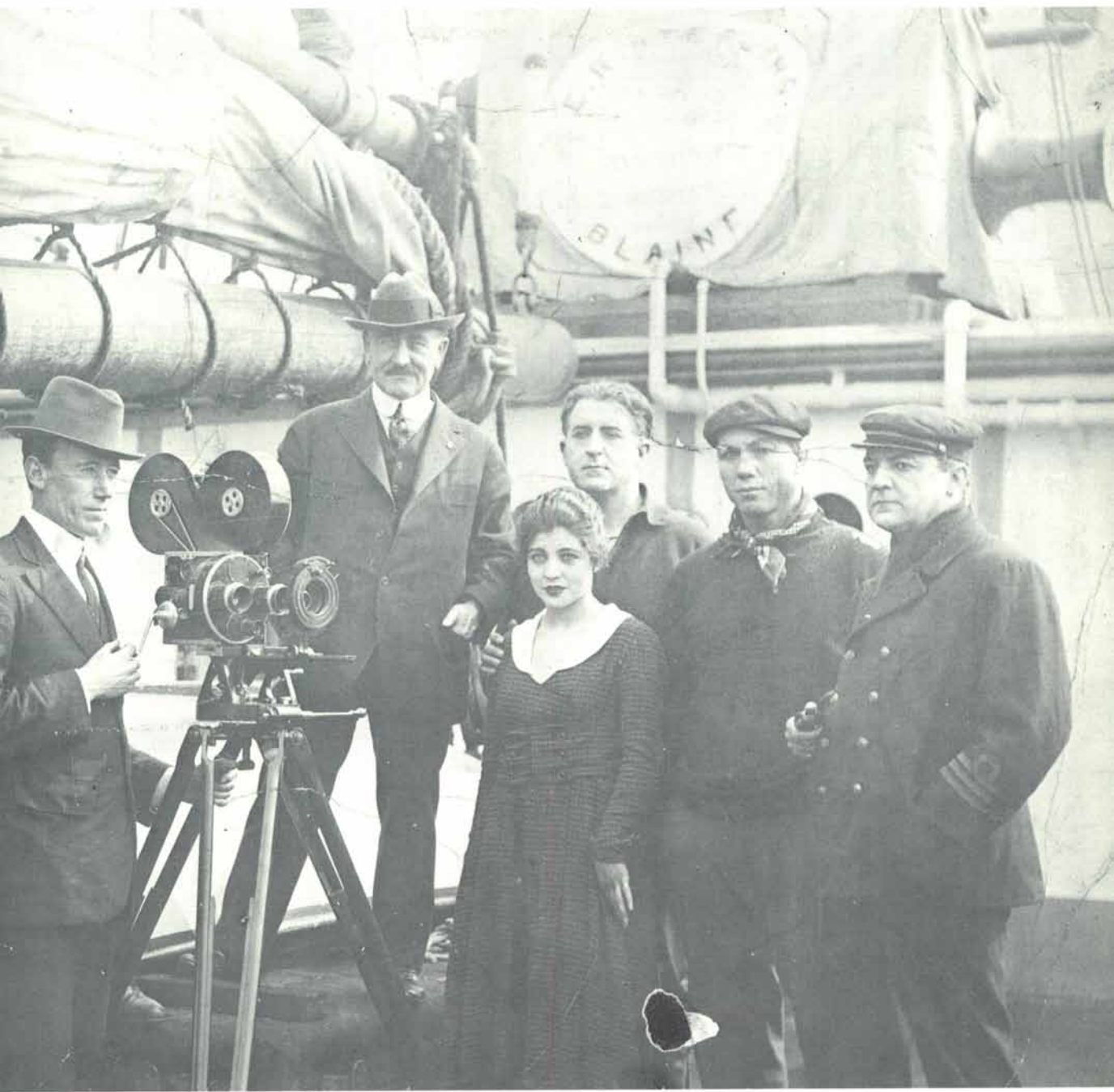
Beyond the organisations themselves are the many individuals who have long-standing associations with the industry. For reasons of personal association such people may own a venerable print or, just as often, a collection or scrapbook of stills, cuttings, posters or some old scripts. In choosing who to approach, such factors as the convenience or ease with which a person can be contacted, the relative importance of their contribution to the industry or the importance of the films concerned, must be taken into account.

As in all types of collecting activity, an important role is played by the enthusiast who has built a private collection of theatrical film, documentation and memorabilia. There are hundreds of these collections in Australia, some of considerable age. Many of the collectors are film historians in their own right and possess a keen appreciation of the silent cinema and a strong rapport with those who were involved in it. Some films have survived solely as a result of the work of Australian collectors who have diligently

#### 500 POUNDS REWARD (1918)

Claude Flemming, Renee Adoree and John Faulkner starred in this adventure yarn of kidnapping and shipwreck. As director, Flemming locked horns with the censorship authorities in trying to find a more exploitable title. He suggested, in succession, *The Lure of a Woman*, *Primal Passions*, *When Men Desire*, *The Auction of Virtue* and others. The censor remained unmoved. It was the screen debut of Renee Adoree, who later moved to Hollywood and stardom in *The Big Parade* (1925) and *La Boheme* (1926)







sought out discarded material or unique items in danger of destruction. The Archive enjoys strong support from such enthusiasts because it has the means to ensure the permanent preservation of their material, which they do not.

Overseas sources have importance even though Australian silent films were not widely distributed outside this country. In

**BARRY BUTTS IN (1919)**

Visiting British vaudeville star Barry Lupino teamed with a young Agnes Dobson in a lively comedy about a simple country boy who inherits a fortune – and wins the girl.

Britain and the USA for instance, Australian films had some chance of eventual survival in private hands because they were often handled by minor distributors, who are less prone to house cleaning than their larger competitors. Often, such films have now gravitated to archives in those countries. Titles were, however, frequently changed for an overseas release, making identification difficult. And more often than not, the film was re-edited or altered for local marketing reasons and so is not in the form in which Australian audiences



originally saw it. Nevertheless, there are many Australian films for which the 'overseas' version is today the only surviving one.

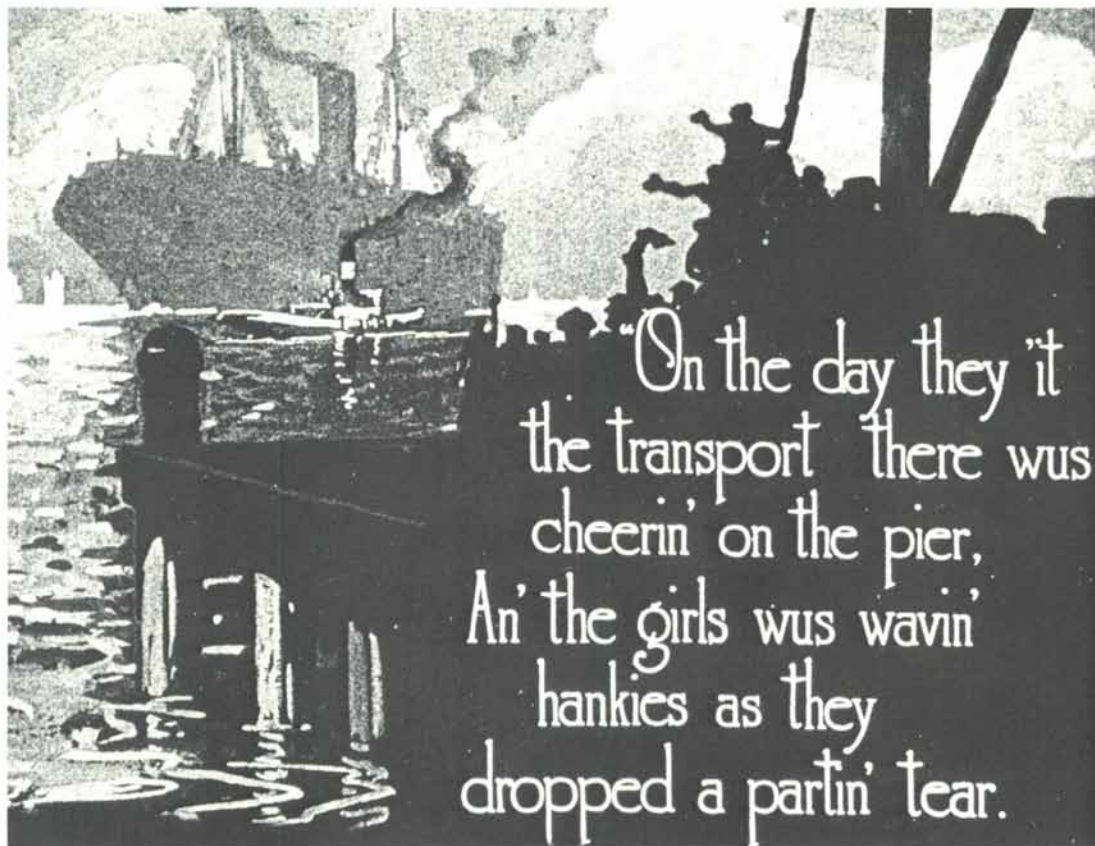
Of course, experience has shown that many individuals who are neither film enthusiasts nor connected with the film industry may hold, or come into possession of, early film. It is impossible to trace such people by any logical process and resultant finds are mostly luck. Often it is only because the person concerned has seen the Archive's work publicised, and has taken the initiative by contacting it, that the

material finds its way into the preservation process.

Exploring these sources (and other, less obvious ones as they come to light – such as fire brigades whose officers sometimes come across caches of nitrate film) is the continual task of Archive staff.

#### GINGERMICK (1920)

The first sequel to *The Sentimental Bloke* (1919) used the same principal actors and the same style, with titles again based on C.J. Dennis' idiomatic verse. Like the *Bloke* it was an instant success and – if it were to come to light today – would possibly share the same classic status.



On file in the National Library are numerous fascinating stories of film discoveries: the cache of silent film found behind the electrical switchboard of a disused Tasmanian theatre; the roll of venerable footage found inside a can which some schoolboys were using as a football; films uncovered in locations as varied as backyard sheds, barns, flea markets and

**THE MAN FROM SNOWY RIVER (1920)**

Strong on nationalistic pride and based loosely on the works of A.B. 'Banjo' Paterson, this was one of several films to be inspired by the writings of Australia's bush balladists.

the yards of scrap metal merchants. A rabbit trapper in outback NSW wrote a letter on the back of jam tin labels and sent some World War I newsreels to the National Library addressed 'Canberrar via Goulbourne', and a Melbourne family brought several reels to Canberra in the course of a touring holiday after ignoring friends' advice to throw them on the tip (it turned out to be an important feature film from 1929).

Just as numerous are the too-lates and near-misses, films which were thrown out during a clean up, disposed of after the





death of their owner, or simply burned because of the fire risk they represented. Almost always there had been no realisation that the films could have had historical value, or that anyone was interested in saving them. Equally tragic are the discoveries of film reels which have decomposed beyond redemption. The known losses could make quite a long list.

The most fascinating discoveries are, inevitably, the ones based not on detective work but on pure luck. In 1976 a resident of the Sydney suburb of Hornsby offered her collection of books for sale to the National Library, mentioning in the course of correspondence that the Library might also care to remove an old box of film which she had found in the basement of her house. It did so, and among the collection of what turned out to be silent nitrate films – some badly decomposed – was an incomplete but remarkably well preserved print of *The Breaking of the Drought*, directed in 1920 by Franklyn Barrett. It happened that the Archive had acquired another incomplete copy of the film some years before; it was possible to compile from both copies a more- or-less complete version of the film, ensure its preservation and restore it to public view. Since probably no more than three or four prints of the film had originally been made it is remarkable that two of them should have survived for so long. The discovery made the front page of *The Australian*, was broadcast to the world by Radio Australia and some months later a turnaway crowd came to the Sydney Opera House to see a premiere of the restored film.

Another feature film – the 1936 sound production *The Flying Doctor* – figured in a discovery story which spanned two years. Workmen clearing a building site in the Sydney suburb of Fig Tree came across a steel-doored structure which – it was later discovered – was the old film vault of the demolished Fig Tree film studio. Had the workmen been aware of its contents, they might not have used an oxy torch to cut through the door. The vault was full of nitrate film which – fortunately – did not ignite from the heat. The film was loaded on a truck; en route to the tip, it attracted the attention of a local council employee who saw the can-laden truck pass his office window. Giving chase in his car, he prevented the destruction of the film which, shortly after, found its way to the Archive.

Amongst the collection was an eight-reel print of *The Flying Doctor* – the only copy then known to exist. The ninth and last reel was missing, a source of consternation since the plot reached a heart-rending and apparently insoluble climax at the end of reel eight. Two years later, a routine inquiry to the National Film Archive in London turned up a master copy of *The Flying Doctor* in the hands of a large film company. On receipt in Canberra it, too, proved to have eight reels – being the shortened, re-edited version in which the film had been released in Britain. But it was complete, and despite the fact that the storyline had been totally rearranged in the British version, the last reel took up the plot at precisely the point where the incomplete Australian print left it.

The Archive acquires film and other



S. & C. Carroll  
*Presents*

# The JACKEROO of COOL

"The Jackeroo arrives... eye gla



materials in one of four ways, depending on the nature and condition of the material, its copyright status and the wishes of the supplier. The first is by donation, which, under the Government's present Tax Incentives for the Arts Scheme, allows the donor to seek a valuation for the material which, under certain circumstances, is an allowable deduction from taxable income. The second is by 'copy and return', whereby the Archive returns the supplied material after a preservation copy has been made, or swops it for a new copy. The third is by deposit, where material remains the property of the owner but is physically stored in the Archive. The fourth is by purchase, where a price based on the film's length, condition and technical nature may be negotiated. Not being a distributor or lending library, the Archive does not pay royalties on acquisition, nor does it seek distribution rights. Similarly, it does not pay prices based on the age or rarity of the item. Because nitrate film has a limited life and any film can, in theory, generate an infinite number of copies, these concepts have little meaning when dealing with film in the physical sense. Moreover, funds spent on purchase are not available for preservation work.

In any transaction, the Archive deals in confidence with the individual or

#### THE JACKEROO OF COOLABONG (1920)

The last of the 'Snowy' Baker adventure films was, like the others, unpopular with critics but popular with audiences. Baker's scripts gave ample opportunity for stunt-riding, spectacular fights and leaps and (in this film) a large scale kangaroo hunt.



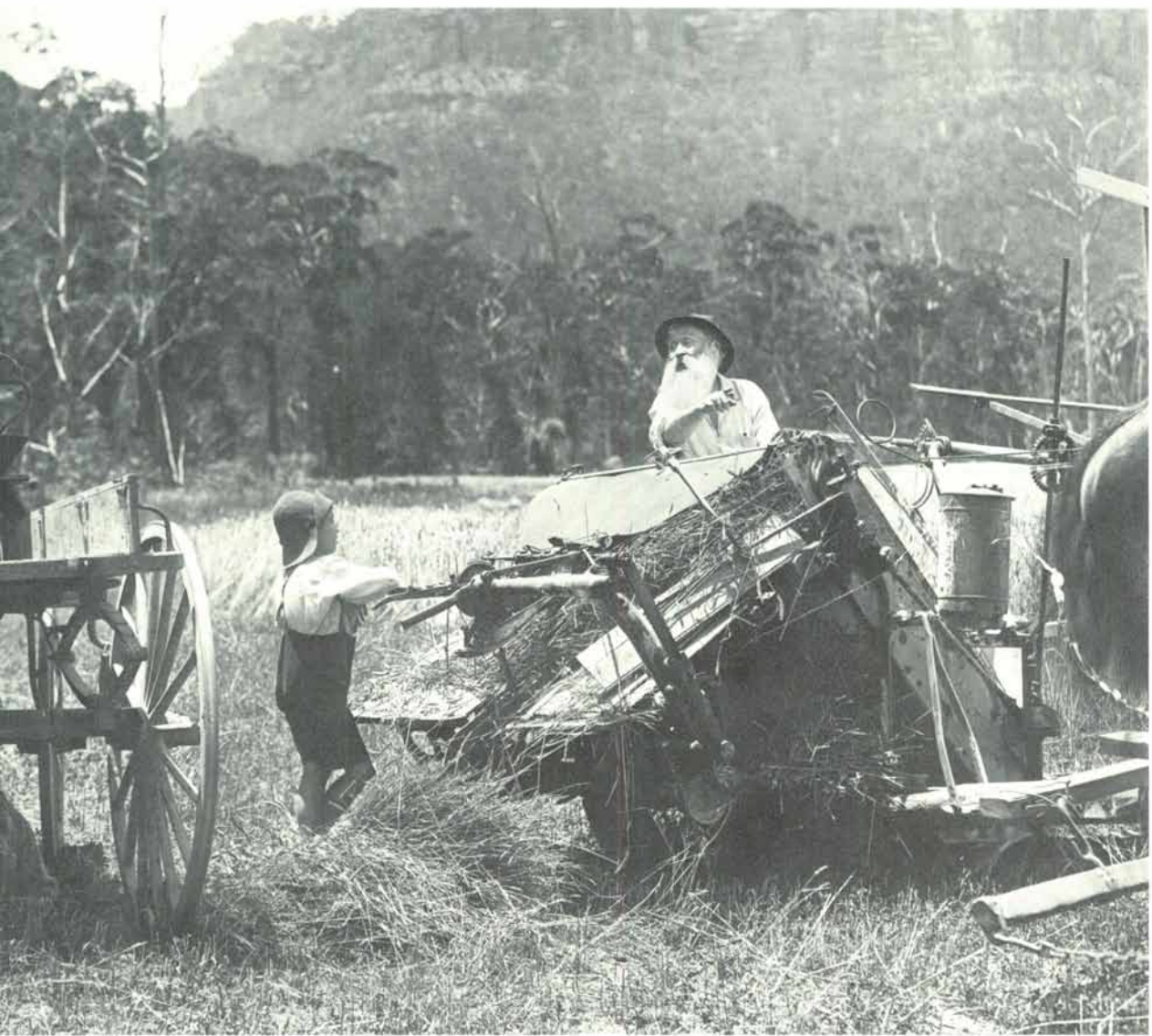
organisation concerned and always seeks to establish in each case a clear mutual understanding of the terms under which material is acquired. It meets reasonable expenses, such as the cost of packing or freighting film to Canberra. As a custodian of the nation's film history it preserves films but does not usurp the right to commercially exploit them: that right belongs, in the first instance, to copyright owners and, in certain cases, donors.

It is as well to dispel a number of myths about nitrate film which colour the public imagination and sometimes put surviving material unnecessarily at risk when found. It is true that nitrate film is flammable: it will burn vigorously and if a large quantity catches alight it can get out of control. It also releases gases – particularly when burning – which are not especially healthy to inhale. Nitrate film should be properly stored in vaults which have safeguards against these risks. But it does not explode, does not ignite spontaneously unless it reaches a temperature of +9 degrees Celsius (120 degrees Fahrenheit), and so is safe to handle under normal temperatures if treated with the respect and commonsense due to all flammable materials. And not *every* old film is nitrate. The non-flammable cellulose acetate formulation was almost always used for every film gauge except 35mm, and occasionally it was used for 35mm as well.

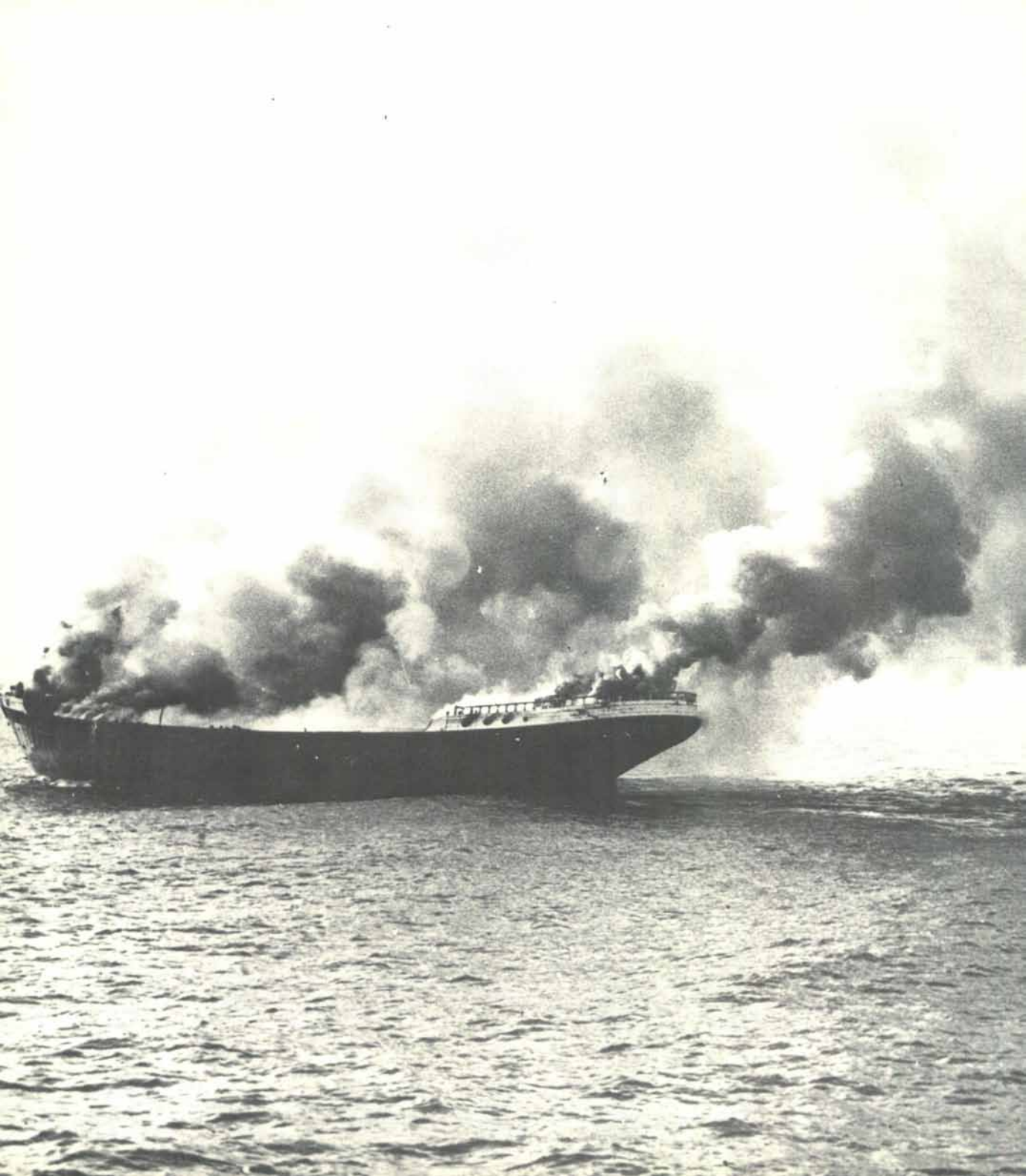
#### RUDD'S NEW SELECTION (1921)

With this film, Longford continued the commercial success of *On Our Selection* which, the previous year, had first translated Steele Rudd's 'Dad and Dave' characterisations of rural Australia to the screen. They have remained, in one form or another, firm favourites ever since.











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# Preservation

For the Archive, the discovery of a film is not an end but a beginning. The film has been found, but the task of preservation lies ahead. Whatever the nature and condition of any film it is not enough simply to put it safely on a vault shelf. Permanent preservation involves many operations and ongoing responsibilities. These are illustrated by the passage of a typical silent nitrate film through the preservation system.

On receipt the film is examined in order to identify it, to confirm that the Archive does in fact wish to preserve it, and to make some assessment of its technical condition. The title of the film is determined, it is given an identifying number and, as necessary, re-canned, rewound and leadered. Since all nitrate film has a limited life and must be copied onto modern non-flammable film stock if it is to survive, a judgment is made as to the urgency of this copying work. Often copying is done immediately after receipt, but sometimes it can safely wait several years, so that priority can be given to other

films for which decomposition is imminent. At this stage technical and accessioning records are initiated, so that the film's existence, condition, content and whereabouts within the system are known and it can be readily compared with other copies of the same film, or related films, already held in the collection.

When the film is scheduled for copying it first undergoes a detailed examination to establish all the factors that are likely to affect the quality of the new copy or pose practical difficulties during the process. For example, the film may be shrunken and will not pass through a conventional film printer; perforations may be broken or missing and need replacement; the film may need to be cleaned or treated for scratch removal. Any of a host of other problems resulting from age, wear or poor storage may be present. In some cases editorial or photographic restoration may be necessary. Whatever the problems, the object is to produce a new 35mm negative or master positive which will be an exact reproduction of the nitrate film, with the same visual and technical quality but without the visible blemishes of age, so far as these can be removed. This reproduction becomes the 'preservation copy'.

Films up in smoke ..... The burning ship sequence from *For the Term of His Natural Life* (1927) relied for its effect on tons of old nitrate film loaded into a hulk, and then set alight.

During the copying process, which will involve the efforts of one or more film laboratories as well as the Archive's technical staff, the film's technical record is carefully built up so that the quality of

Two stages of nitrate decomposition: the 'honey' stage, where a sticky substance oozes from the film spiral and the layers of film begin to congeal, and the final stage, where the film breaks down into a brown powder.

the final preservation copy can be properly assessed against the quality of the nitrate original. Sometimes the results are judged to be unsatisfactory and the process is repeated. Not surprisingly, making an acceptable preservation copy can be extremely time consuming and expensive.

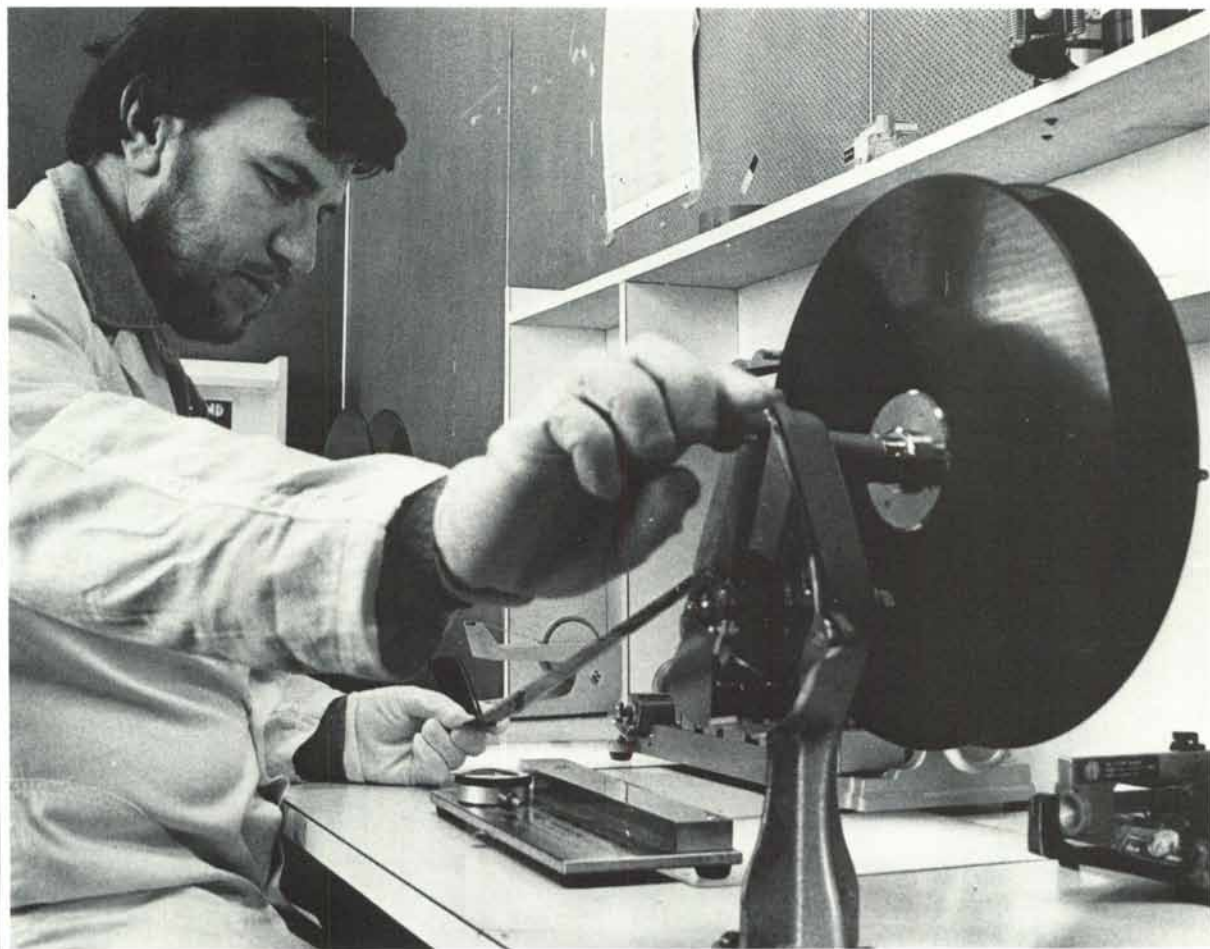
Technical and accession records are also made for the preservation copy. From this point, strict usage rules will apply to the



copy. An elaborate system of internal controls ensure that it can always be readily located and that every subsequent use or movement of the copy is recorded so that its condition and well being can be monitored. The life of a single black and white preservation copy may be as long as 400 years. If it is to survive intact into the future, it will not only need to be stored at the correct temperature and humidity, but

its movement and use must be rigidly controlled. The Archive must assume that if a preservation copy is ever damaged, however slightly, it may never be possible to recover that damage.

Examination of newly-acquired films, or of preservation copies made from existing film nearing the end of its life, occurs at several stages in the preservation process. Among other routines, films are measured for shrinkage to determine problems likely to arise in the copying process.



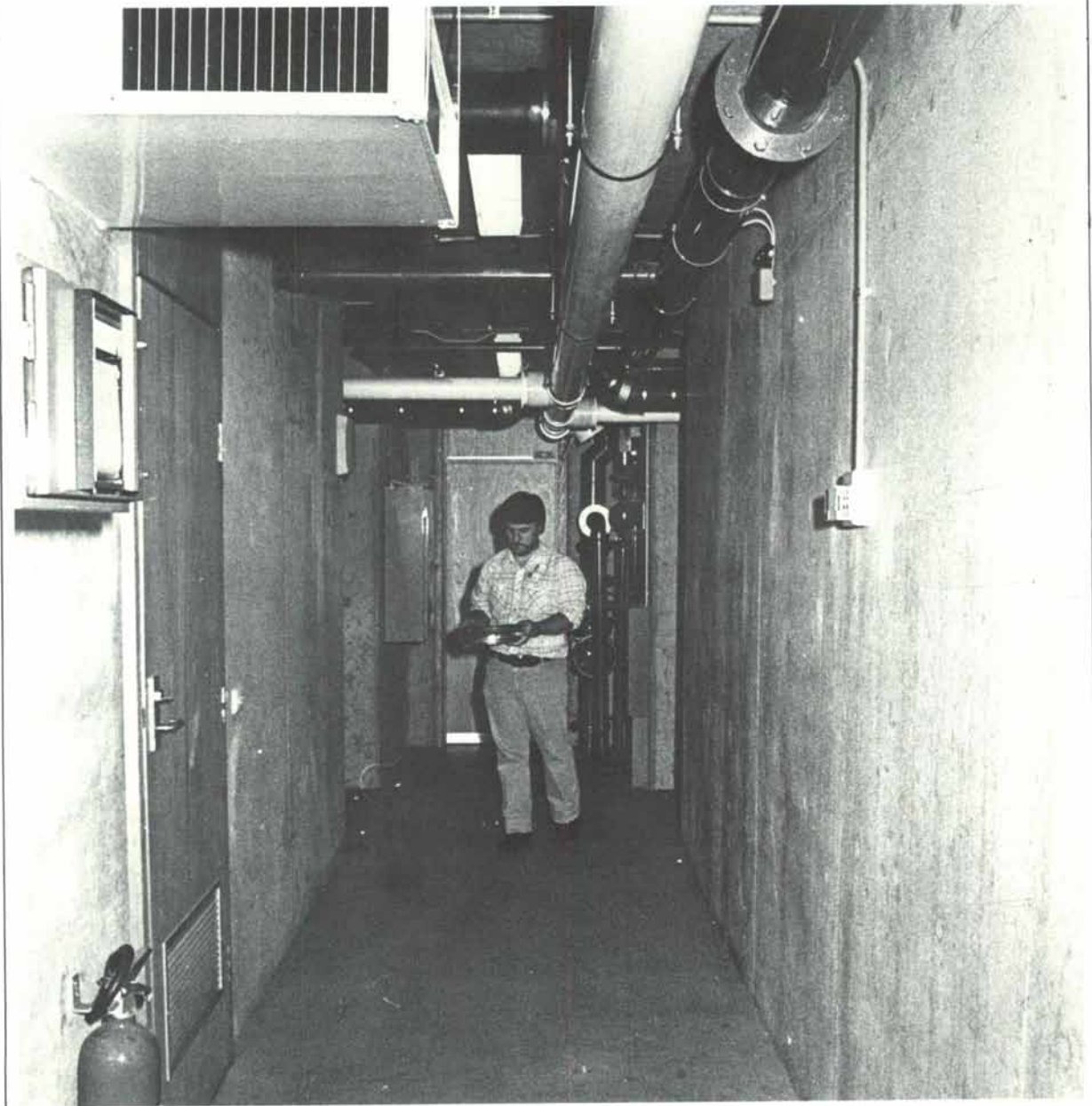


Preservation Copies must not be projected, so they are examined for quality on specialised low-stress viewing machines.

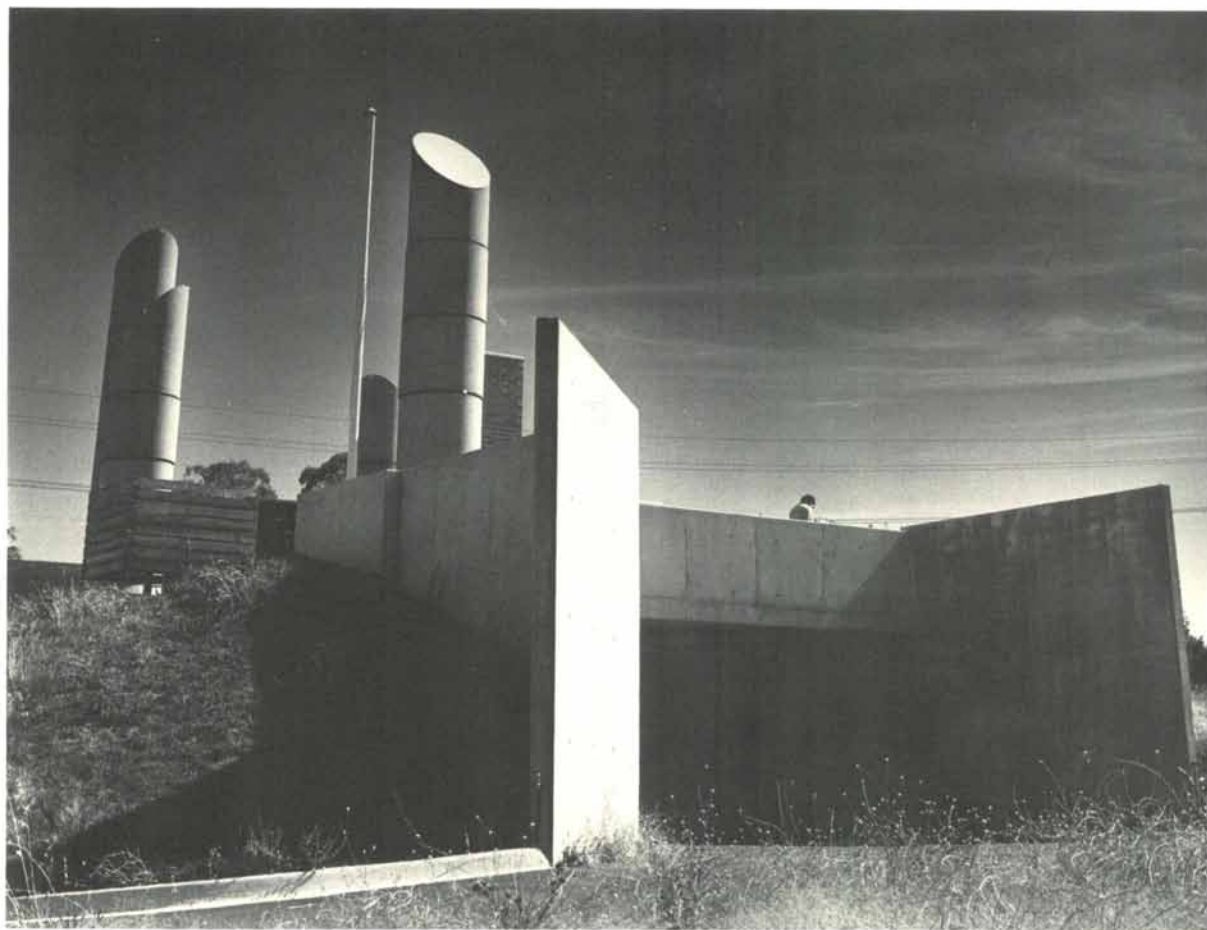


One of Canberra's most striking buildings is the Archive's nitrate film vault, where nitrate films are stored in a cold, stable environment (8 degrees

celsius and 50% relative humidity). The building is also designed to cope with the fire risk inherent in nitrate film.



Acetate preservation copies are stored flat in air-conditioned compactus shelving. Their well-being is controlled by an elaborate records system, and strict technical and security procedures.





While researching a new film at the Archive, Bruce Beresford (centre) browses with the authors in the film poster collection.





Mummy, - why won  
dey ever play with  
me.?

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# Seeing and using

**F**ilms are preserved so that people, now and in the future, may see them, study them, understand them and use them. A film archive is not a graveyard for old films. Rather, it is the means by which the achievements of the past provide a resource and an inspiration for the present.

As with other media, there is a conflict between the physical requirements of preservation on the one hand, and of use on the other. Film is fragile; repeated use wears and damages it. Film archives resolve this conflict by paralleling their collections; that is, by aiming to have both a preservation copy and a second or 'viewing' copy of any film. Archives normally devote a part of their budget to the making or acquiring of viewing copies so that as much of their collection as possible is accessible for viewing. The National Film Archive applies this practice

## KNOW THY CHILD (1921)

Franklyn Barrett was a major figure in Australia's silent cinema. Tragically, little of his work survives and even stills from his films are rare. In this film – possibly his best – he explores the social injustice attached to illegitimacy. The star of the film, Vera James, later went on to a Hollywood career.

to poster, stills and other collections as well as to film and videotapes.

Every year the Archive services many hundreds of user inquiries and thousands of information requests from Australia and overseas. Many are from film and television producers who require film footage or who need to research a current project, others are from journalists, academics or private individuals who may have a thesis to write, an article to prepare or some curiosity to satisfy. The user comes by prior appointment to the National Library in Canberra, where viewing facilities are available, a project can be discussed at length and maximum value be obtained for available research time. (Viewing Centres in other cities are projected, with the first – in Melbourne – currently operating on a trial basis). By arrangement with copyright owners, prints of many Australian films preserved in the Archive are distributed, as a public service, to non-theatrical film users through the National Library's National Film Lending Collection or other film libraries. Use of material in the Archive is subject, firstly, to the overriding requirements of preservation and, secondly, to the wishes of the owner of copyright in the material concerned.



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# Discoveries

The following silent Australian features have been located and acquired since 1970 (refer to the check list for credits and complete silent feature holdings). As this book goes to press, inquiries on the possible existence of others are being pursued. It should also be remembered that since 1970, many hundreds of silent documentaries, newsreels and other Australian films have been discovered – numerically, feature films are a very small part of the nation’s total film output. Except for *Silks and Saddles*, all films in this list have survived in release print form only.

**The Story of the Kelly Gang** (1906) – fragments only.

**The Life’s Romance of Adam Lindsay Gordon** (1916) – reels 1, 3 and 5 of the five-reel film.

**A Romance of the Burke and Wills Expedition 1860** (1918) – fragments totalling about half of reel 1.

**The Breaking of the Drought** (1920) – copy comprising about two thirds of the film, since combined with footage already held to produce complete version.

**The Man from Kangaroo** (1920) – near complete copy (a sequence of about 3 minutes is missing).

**Robbery Under Arms** (1920) – copy comprising about three quarters of the film, since combined with footage already held to produce a near-complete version. A sequence lasting about five minutes is still missing.

**Silks and Saddles** (1921) – original negative, complete except for footage segments totalling about five minutes lost through decomposition.

**When the Kellys Were Out** (1923) – copy comprising about three quarters of original footage.

**The Adventures of Algy** (1925) – complete copy.

**The Exploits of the Emden** (1928) – footage totalling about one third of the original film. A further third was already held by the Archive.

**Coorab in the Isle of Ghosts** (1929) – complete copy.

**For the Term of His Natural Life** (1927) – incomplete copy of six-reel American release version (the Australian release version was ten reels, about two thirds of which was already held by the Archive).

THE BLUE MOUNTAINS MYSTERY (1921)

Raymond Longford and Lottie Lyell co-directed this murder mystery of 'the sunlight and shadows of Australian society', filmed in the fashionable, opulent resorts of the Blue Mountains, west of Sydney. Commercially successful, the film was also released in Britain and America.



THE BETRAYER (1921)

Beaumont Smith's cast and crew on location in New Zealand during filming of this drama of interracial romance and intrigue. Country and city settings in Australia and New Zealand were varied, and the film was widely screened in both countries.





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# Restorations

Making an old film 'viewable' again is not an automatic result of preservation. Some films which have survived only in incomplete copies or in a disorganised form have undergone editorial reconstruction and other restoration work in order to create versions which, as nearly as possible, are identical in continuity and content to the form in which the films were originally released. Silent Australian features so far reconstructed by the Archive are:

## **Silks and Saddles (1921)**

The reconstruction was derived from the original negative, via two intermediate duplicating stages. Extensive re-editing was necessary to achieve correct continuity since the negative, in keeping with technical practice of the time, was not arranged in narrative order. Decomposed title footage was replaced by stretch printing of satisfactory frames, or insertion of newly lettered titles. The reconstruction was premiered at the Sydney Film Festival, 1977.

## **The Breaking of the Drought (1920)**

A near-complete version was assembled from two incomplete nitrate release prints,

via a duplicating negative stage. Decomposed titles were stretch printed or replaced. The restored version was premiered by the National Film Theatre of Australia at the Sydney Opera House, January, 1978.

**Robbery Under Arms (1920)** – copy comprising about three quarters of the film, since combined with footage already held to produce a near-complete version. A sequence lasting about five minutes is still missing.

## **A Girl of the Bush (1920)**

A near-complete version was assembled from a duplicating negative of various ages and quality, which in turn had been derived at different times from a single nitrate release print.

## **Pearls and Savages (1924)**

Restoration involved rearrangement of disorganised footage into a logical sequence, and the addition of narrative titles and introductory material gleaned from information published at the time of the film's initial release. A music track was added.

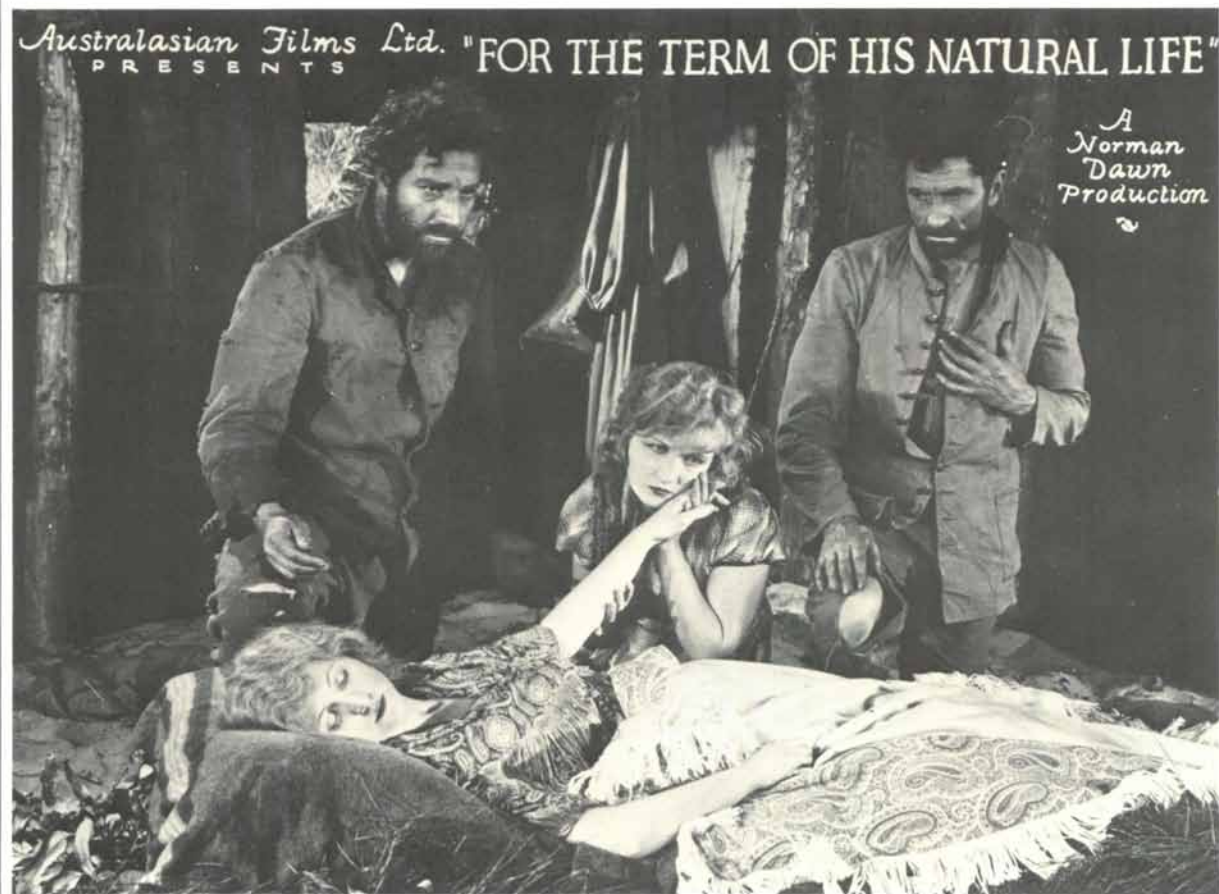
### **For the Term of His Natural Life** (1927)

The film was assembled from incomplete copies of Australian and American release versions and other sources, with newly-

#### FOR THE TERM OF HIS NATURAL LIFE (1927)

Norman Dawn's complex epic, based on the Marcus Clark novel of convict days, was the most publicised and most costly (60,000) silent film made in Australia. The Archive's reconstruction of the film, premiered in 1981, combined all known surviving footage into a complete continuity which is still, however, some 15 minutes shorter than the original version.

written titles and montages of stills to cover remaining gaps in continuity. Stretch printing and optical work were used extensively to produce realistic action at modern projection speeds. Coloured tints and tones, in the manner of the original, were introduced using modern colour film stock and printing techniques. A contemporary orchestral accompaniment was compiled and recorded. Premiered at the Sydney, Melbourne, Hobart and San Francisco film festivals, 1981, and due for theatrical release in 1982.



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# Recent uses

One of the more obvious values of a film archive is its use as a resource for film and television producers, and for film festivals and similar undertakings. The National Film Archive frequently plays a creative role in the development of productions and projects, from the conceptual or scripting stages onwards, which the following list – a *representative selection* from the Archive's files of recent years – will illustrate. Not listed here, but nonetheless an important aspect of the Archive's services, is the provision of footage extracts for television news, current affairs or variety programs. It is estimated that every Australian within reach of television sees something from the Archive on an average of once a week.

## Films

**The Picture Show Man** (1976) Limelight Productions, Sydney  
Provision of silent and early sound film extracts, and selection and copying of vintage posters, for this feature film about a touring showman in the late 1920s.

**The Nation Emerging** (1976) Film Niugini, Port Moresby  
Provision of Papua New Guinea footage of various vintages.

**A Road in Time** (1976) South Australian Film Corporation, Adelaide  
Provision of footage of Adelaide early in the century.

**Sunshine and Shadows** (1976)  
Australian Broadcasting Commission, Sydney  
A thematic overview of Australian film history composed largely of feature film footage extracts and stills from the Archive.

**The Magic Arts** (1977) Film Australia, Sydney  
Provision of footage for cartoonist Bruce Petty's film on art.

**Now You're Talking** (1980) Film Australia, Sydney  
A compilation film on the Australian film industry of the 1930s, for which the Archive was the principal source of footage, stills and research facilities.



**Newsfront** (1977) Palm Beach Pictures, Sydney

This highly acclaimed feature film set a fictitious story against the background of Australian newsreel production in the 1950s. Newsreel footage, viewing and consultation facilities were provided.

**Construction of the Trans-Australian Railway** (1977) Film Australia, Sydney  
Provision of a range of vintage railway footage.

**Depression in Australia** (1976) Audio Visual Education Centre, Melbourne  
Footage of the 1930s Depression.

**Mutiny on the Western Front** (1979) Mingara Films, Sydney  
Substantial range of World War I footage.

**The Distant Lens** (1978) Perth Institute of Film and Television, Perth  
Provision of wide range of footage for this documentary commemorating the 150th anniversary of Western Australia.

## Television

**This Fabulous Century** (1979) Peter Luck Productions for the Seven Network, Sydney

Thirty-nine half-hour episodes on Australian life and times in the 20th century. Consultation from concept stage onwards, and provision of most of the vintage footage.

**The Sullivans** Crawford Productions, Melbourne  
This long running serial, still in production, has made regular use of the

Archive's viewing and research services as well as drawing film sequences from its World War II holdings for incorporation in individual episodes.

**This is Your Life** Lifetime Associates, Sydney for the Seven Network  
Provision of footage for selected programs, relevant to the life stories of featured personalities. Series still in production.

**Stax** (1979) Open Channel Productions  
Provision of footage for this children's series.

**All Time Greats in the Cinema** (1977) British Broadcasting Corp., London  
Provision of footage of Errol Flynn's first screen appearance (from the 1933 Australian film 'In the Wake of the Bounty') for this series on famous film personalities.

**Australians at War** (1976) United Telecasters, Sydney  
Substantial range of footage for this series on Australia's involvement in war.

**Click Go the Years** (1972) Australian Broadcasting Commission, Sydney  
Provision of master material and assistance in assembly of this series of 15 Cinesound feature films of the 1930s, re-released for television.

## Radio and audio

**The Coming of Sound** (1979) Australian Broadcasting Commission, Melbourne  
Provision of soundtrack excerpts and research, consultation and viewing facilities for this three-part series on the

introduction of sound to Australian film production around 1930.

**Australians at Talk** (1979) Curriculum Development Centre, Canberra  
Provision of soundtrack excerpts and research, consultation and listening facilities for a series of audio tapes on the development of speech patterns in Australia.

## Books

**The Mastermind Book** (1979) Cameron Hazlehurst for the Australian Broadcasting Commission  
Provision of film stills for publication.

**Australian Film 1900 – 1977** (1979) Andrew Pike and Ross Cooper, Oxford University Press in conjunction with Australian Film Institute  
Provision of research facilities and film stills for publication.

**Cinema Papers' Book of New Australian Cinema** (1980) Ed. Scott Murray  
Provision of stills for illustrations.

**The Australian Cinema** (1970) John Baxter, Angus and Robertson  
Provision of information and stills for publication.

**Australian Film Posters 1906-1960** (1978) Judith Adamson, Currency Press in association with Australian Film Institute  
Provision of stills and posters for illustrations.

**Australian Silent Films** (1970) Eric Reade, Lansdowne Press

Provision of stills and research information.

**Directed by Ken G. Hall** (1977) Ken G. Hall, Lansdowne Press  
Provision of stills and research information.

**Legends on the Screen: The narrative film in Australia 1919-1929.** (1981) John Tulloch, Australian Film Institute/Currency Press  
Provision of stills, documentation and research information.

## Festivals and events

**Cinema Australia 1896-1956**  
A touring retrospective festival of Australian films, comprising 12 features, 24 shorts and a stills/poster exhibition, assembled by the Archive from its collections and mounted with financial assistance from the Department of Foreign Affairs and others. After opening in Tokyo in March 1979, the retrospective began a three-year circuit of European cities under the auspices of the International Federation of Film Archives. A second version of the Retrospective began a tour of America in October 1981.

**Salute to Australian Film**  
Probably the first really major retrospective of Australian feature films ever held, this event was a part of the 1975 Sydney Film Festival. Most of the 25 features and nearly 40 feature extracts were supplied by the Archive, whose staff co-operated in the preparation of the program.

### **Splish Splash**

An exhibition on swimming and the life of Australian swimmer/film star Annette Kellerman, mounted by the Sydney Opera House Trust in 1976. The Archive provided a range of film clips for inclusion in the exhibition.

### **Australian Film Week in New York**

The Archive contributed prints of *The Sentimental Bloke* (1919) and *Forty Thousand Horsemen* (1941), plus an exhibition of stills and posters, to give a historical perspective to this week of new Australian films in New York, organised by the NSW Film Corporation in 1978.

### **Film Festivals in Australia**

The Archive frequently provides material from its collections for Australia's major film festivals, particularly those of Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane. The premiering of the Archive's latest restoration has become a regular feature of festival programs.

### **National Film Theatre of Australia**

The NFTA frequently exhibits films from the Archive in its screening venues throughout the country. Important seasons based largely or entirely on material from the collections included *The Forties at Fox*, *British Classics of the Thirties* (both using some of the Archive's overseas holdings) and *Australian Retrospective* (in 1970, 1978 and 1980.)

### **Soldiers of the Cross**

A re-presentation of surviving elements of the famous Salvation Army production of 1900 was mounted jointly in Canberra in July, 1976 by the Arts Council of Australia, (ACT Branch) and the Canberra Salvation Army. The presentation was based on slides and music of the production, together with contemporary footage, preserved in the Archive.

### **Australian Film Encounter – Sorrento, Italy**

The Archive provided the eight 'retrospective' titles in this festival of 22 Australian feature films presented in October, 1980 and coordinated by The NSW Film Corporation. This unusual event focussed considerable overseas attention on the Australian film industry.

### **Newsreel Nostalgia**

The National Library's own theatre, in the Library building in Canberra, is itself the venue for many film presentations based on the Archive's collections. In the Christmas holidays of 1979 and 1980, a popular attraction for visitors to Canberra was a recreation of the programs and atmosphere of the now vanished newsreel theatre – once a fixture of the film scene in pre- television days. The Archive is probably the only place in Australia where the traditional program ingredients – short comedies, advertising films, cartoons, documentaries and the newsreels themselves – are available in quantity.



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# The last film search

Time is not kind to our film heritage. The inexorable laws of chemistry dictate that nitrate films of the silent era are nearing the end of their life.

For some, it is already too late. For others, preservation is possible – but only if they are found and copied in time. After a few short years, there will be no second chance – no hoping that a 60 or 70 year old film will have somehow survived, to ‘turn up’ in the future. How does one find these films – in thousands of forgotten storage places – in time?

**The last film search** is an attempt to tackle this problem. A well-publicised two-year search, with a further three years of follow-up, cataloguing and preservation work will be the nation’s last chance to save its missing silent film heritage. The search invites wide public cooperation.

To allow the Archive’s limited funds to remain dedicated to preservation work, the \$100,000 budget of THE LAST FILM SEARCH will be jointly met by a group of sponsor organisations who support its objectives. The sponsorship will finance the employment of staff, including a travelling field officer dedicated to the project, will meet other practical expenses, and will greatly increase the Archive’s

capacity to seek material, and to respond to those who wish to help.

Announced to a national television audience during the 1981 Australian Film Awards on 16 September, THE LAST FILM SEARCH was officially launched in Melbourne on 27 October 1981.

## **Sponsors:**

KODAK (AUSTRALASIA) PTY LTD  
THE UTAH FOUNDATION  
Greater Union Organisation Pty Ltd  
Australian Film Commission  
Victorian Film Corporation  
NSW Film Corporation  
Queensland Film Corporation  
ESSO (Australia) Corporation  
TVW Channel 7, Perth

## **Contact point:**

Field Officer  
National Film Archive  
National Library of Australia  
Canberra 2600  
Telephone 062 – 621 611  
Telex AA62100  
Telegraphic NATLIBAUST  
The Archive will be glad to hear from anyone holding, or knowing the whereabouts of, early film material and will respect the confidence and rights of individuals or organisations concerned.

THE DINKUM BLOKE (1923)

Longford's second sequel to *The Sentimental Bloke* (1919) was also a major critical and financial success both in Australia and Britain (where it was released as *A Gentleman in Mufti*). Arthur Tauchert and Lottie Lyell revived their original characterisations in this simple story of fluctuating family fortunes which captured 'the spirit of Sydney city life' with 'intense sincerity'.



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# Epilogue

There is a unique thrill in finding a lost film – in discovering that it does exist and, just as importantly, that its future survival can be assured. Every newly-discovered silent film adds measurably to the all-too-incomplete record of early twentieth century Australia. Like their contemporaries overseas, Australia's early filmmakers knew the unique ability of the motion picture film to record life with truth and immediacy, and to communicate

with artistry the ideas and ideals of their day.

It would be hard to guess the significance of a rediscovery of, say, Longford's *Ginger Mick* or Barrett's *Know Thy Child* – or even a complete copy of *The Story of the Kelly Gang*. Yet it is still possible that these, and other important films, survive intact – waiting to be discovered. It is hoped that the publication of this book improves their chances.



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# Australian silent feature films 1900-1930

## A checklist

Andrew Pike and Ross Cooper  
Feature films (over 4,000 feet in length) and feature length documentaries are listed. Because the modern feature-length film was only progressively established as standard in the earlier years, the checklist also includes fiction films of any length made up to 1914, and significant short fiction films after 1914. The titles are arranged roughly in chronological order of release within each year. Following each title the director (d), producer (p) and leading players (l.p.), are listed if known.

Films preserved in the National Film Archive are denoted by one of these symbols:

\* means that the film is held in complete or substantially complete form with its story-line more or less intact

\*\* means that the film is held only in incomplete form with a significant part of its storyline missing. In some cases, only fragments of the film may survive.

- 1900      **\*\*Soldiers of the cross**  
d. Joseph Perry, Herbert Booth  
p. The Salvation Army  
(Note: This was a multi-media presentation, not a continuous film. Its film segments were integrated in a story told principally by lantern slides. Most of the slides are preserved, but not the film segments).
- 1906      **\*\*The story of the Kelly gang**  
d. Charles Tait  
p. J & N Tait/Johnson & Gibson
- 1907      **Eureka stockade**  
d. George and Arthur Cornwell  
p. Australasian Cinematograph Company  
**Robbery Under Arms**  
d. Charles MacMahon  
p. MacMahon's Exquisite Pictures
- 1908      **For the term of his natural life**  
d.,p. Charles MacMahon  
l.p. Martyn Keith
- 1910      **The Life and adventures of John Vane**  
d. S. A. Fitzgerald  
p. Spencer's Pictures  
**The squatter's daughter**  
d. Bert Bailey  
p. William Anderson  
l.p. Olive Wilton, Bert Bailey

1911

- d. **Thunderbolt**  
 John Gavin  
 p. H. A. Forsyth  
 l.p. John Gavin
- Moonlite**  
 d. John Gavin  
 p. H. A. Forsyth  
 l.p. John Gavin
- It is never too late to mend**  
 d. W. J. Lincoln  
 p. J & N Tait  
 l.p. Stanley Walpole
- Ben Hall and his gang**  
 d. John Gavin  
 p. Crick & Finlay  
 l.p. John Gavin
- Captain Midnight**  
 d. Alfred Rolfe  
 p. Spencer's Pictures  
 l.p. Alfred Rolfe
- Frank Gardiner, the king of the road**  
 d. John Gavin  
 p. Crick & Finlay  
 l.p. John Gavin
- The mystery of a hansom cab**  
 d. W. J. Lincoln  
 p. Amalgamated Pictures
- Captain Starlight, or gentleman of the road**  
 d. Alfred Rolfe  
 p. Spencer's Pictures  
 l.p. Alfred Rolfe
- A tale of the Australian bush**  
 d. Gaston Mervale  
 p. Australian Life Biograph Co.  
 l.p. A. J. Patrick, Godfrey Cass
- The luck of roaring camp**  
 d. W. J. Lincoln  
 p. Amalgamated Pictures  
 l.p. Ethel Buckley

- The golden west**  
 d. George Young  
 p. Australian Film Syndicate
- A bushranger's ransom, or a ride for a life**  
 p. Pathe Freres  
 l.p. E.J. Cole's Bohemian Dramatic Co.
- The assigned servant**  
 d. John Gavin  
 p. Crick & Finlay  
 l.p. John Gavin
- Called back**  
 d. W. J. Lincoln  
 p. Amalgamated Pictures  
 l.p. Arthur Styan
- The squatter's son**  
 p. Pathe Freres  
 l.p. E. J. Cole's Bohemian Dramatic Co.
- The fatal wedding**  
 d. Raymond Longford  
 p. Spencer's Pictures  
 l.p. Raymond Longford, Lottie Lyell
- Keane of Kalgoorlie**  
 d. John Gavin  
 p. Crick & Finlay  
 l.p. John Gavin
- One hundred years ago**  
 d. Gaston Mervale  
 p. Australian Life Biograph Co.
- The five of hearts, or Buffalo Bill's love story**  
 p. Pathe Freres  
 l.p. E. J. Cole's Bohemian Dramatic Co.
- The lost chord**  
 d. W. J. Lincoln  
 p. Amalgamated Pictures
- Dan Morgan**  
 p. Spencer's Pictures
- The life of Rufus Dawes**  
 d. Alfred Rolfe







- p. Spencer's Pictures  
l.p. Alfred Rolfe  
**A ticket in tats**
- d. Gaston Mervale  
p. Australian Life Biograph Co.  
l.p. A. J. Patrick  
**Moora Neya or the message of the spear**
- d. Alfred Rolfe  
p. Australian Photo-Play Co.  
l.p. Ethel Phillips  
**\*\*The romantic story of Margaret Catchpole**
- d. Raymond Longford  
p. Spencer's Pictures  
l.p. Lottie Lyell  
**The sundowner**
- p. Pathe Freres  
l.p. E. J. Cole's Bohemian Dramatic Co.  
**The lady outlaw**
- d. Alfred Rolfe  
p. Australian Photo-Play Co.  
**In the nick of time**
- d. Alfred Rolfe  
p. Australian Photo-Play Co.  
**Mates of the Murrumbidgee**
- d. Alfred Rolfe  
p. Australian Photo-Play Co.  
**Colleen Bawn**
- d. Gaston Mervale  
p. Australian Life Biograph Co.  
l.p. Louise Carbasse  
**Way outback**
- d. Alfred Rolfe  
p. Australian Photo-Play Co.

**PREHISTORIC HAYSEEDS (1923)**

The last of Beaumont Smith's silent Hayseeds comedies used the comic device of stone-age characters being thrust into modern city life. Because of his actors' unusual garb, Smith ran into trouble with the authorities when trying to shoot scenes in or around public buildings.

**What women suffer**  
 d. Alfred Rolfe  
 p. Australian Photo-Play Co.  
**The bells**  
 d. W. J. Lincoln  
 p. Amalgamated Pictures  
 l.p. Arthur Styan, Nellie Bramley  
**All for gold**  
 p. West's Pictures  
 l.p. Herbert J. Bentley  
**Assigned to his wife**  
 d.p. John Gavin  
 l.p. John Gavin  
**The double event**  
 d. W. J. Lincoln  
 p. Amalgamated Pictures  
**The girl from outback**  
 p. Australian Life Biograph Co.  
**The cup winner**  
 d. Alfred Rolfe  
 p. Australian Photo-Play Co.  
**Caloola, or the adventures of a jackeroo**  
 d. Alfred Rolfe  
 p. Australian Photo-Play Co.  
**Driving a girl to destruction**  
 p. George Marlow  
 l.p. Louise Hampton  
**The christian**  
 p. West's Pictures  
 l.p. Roy Redgrave  
**Sweet Nell of Old Drury**  
 d. Raymond Longford  
 p. Spencer's Pictures  
 l.p. Nellie Stewart  
**Gambler's gold**  
 d. George Young  
 p. Australian Film Syndicate  
 l.p. Roland Conway  
**The miner's curse**  
 d. Alfred Rolfe  
 p. Australian Photo-Play Co.

**1912 King of the coiners**  
 d. Alfred Rolfe  
 p. Australian Photo-Play Co.  
**Do men love women?**  
 d. Alfred Rolfe  
 p. Australian Photo-Play Co.  
**The sin of a woman**  
 d. Alfred Rolfe  
 p. Australian Photo-Play Co.  
**Angel of his dreams**  
 p. George Marlow  
**The strangler's grip**  
 p. West's Pictures  
 l.p. Cyril Mackay  
**Hands across the sea**  
 d. Gaston Mervale  
 p. Australian Life Biograph Co.  
**A Daughter of Australia**  
 p. Australian Life Biograph Co.  
**The crime and the criminal**  
 d. Alfred Rolfe  
 p. Australian Photo-Play Co.  
**The octeroon**  
 d. George Young  
 p. Australian Film Syndicate  
**Cooee and the echo**  
 d. Alfred Rolfe  
 p. Australian Photo-Play Co.  
 l.p. Ethel Phillips  
**Breaking the news**  
 d. W. J. Lincoln  
 p. Amalgamated Pictures  
**The mystery of the black pearl**  
 p. West's Pictures  
 l.p. Cyril Mackay  
**Conn, the shaughraun**  
 d. Gaston Mervale  
 p. Australian Life Biograph Co.  
**Strike**  
 d. George Young  
 p. Australian Film Syndicate  
 l.p. Casper Middleton

**The love tyrant**

- d. Alfred Rolfe
- p. Australian Photo-Play Co.

**Rip Van Winkle**

- d. W. J. Lincoln
- p. Amalgamated Pictures
- l.p. Arthur Styau

**The eleventh hour**

- p. West's Pictures
- l.p. Cyril Mackay

**The tide of death**

- d. Raymond Longford
- p. Spencer's Pictures
- l.p. Augustus Neville, Lottie Lyell

**The cheat**

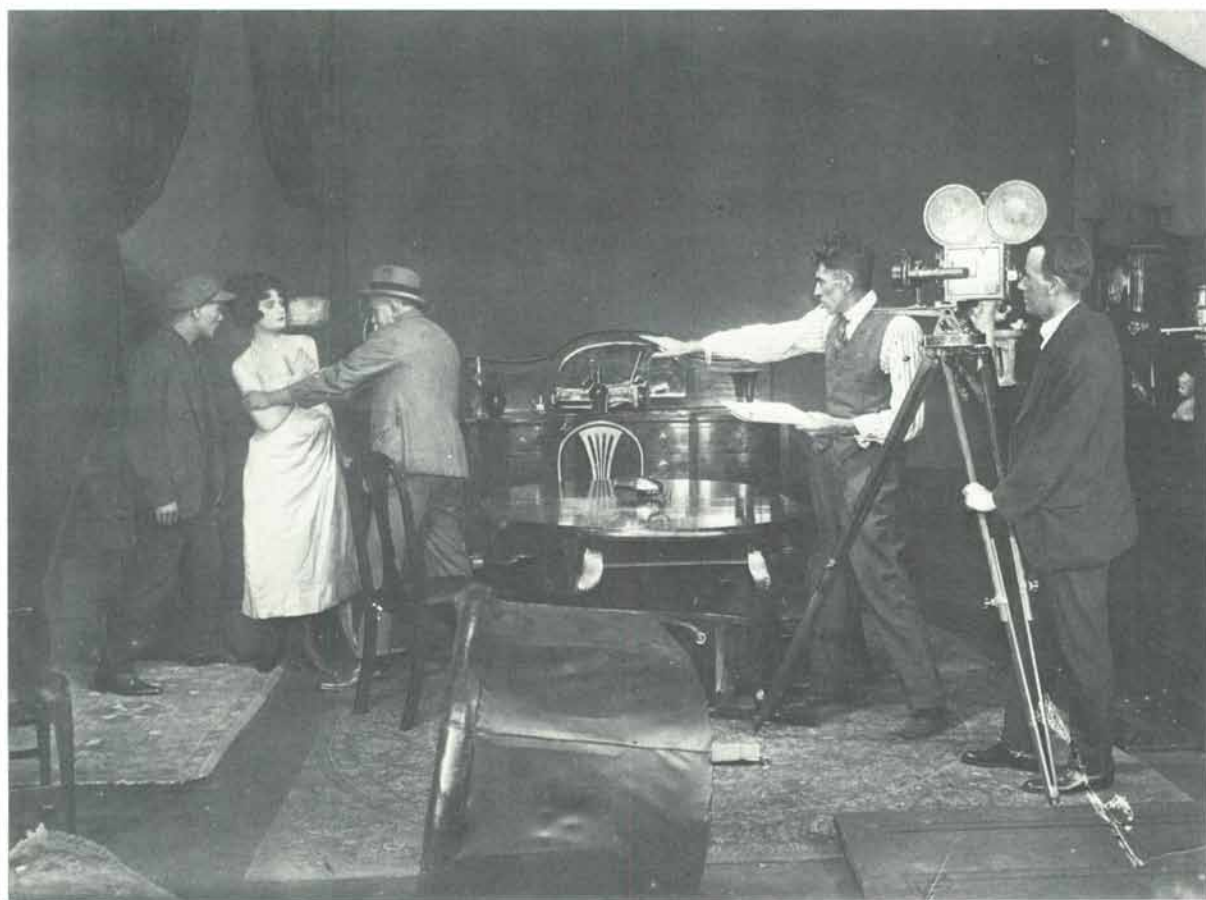
- d. Alfred Rolfe
- p. Australian Photo-Play Co
- l.p. Ethel Phillips

**Percy gets a job**

- l.p. W. S. Percy

**DOPE (1924)**

Dunstan Webb directs, and Lacey Percival photographs, this scene from Australasian Picture Productions' racy yarn of blackmail and opium smuggling. Then, as now, filmmakers had an eye for the sensational.



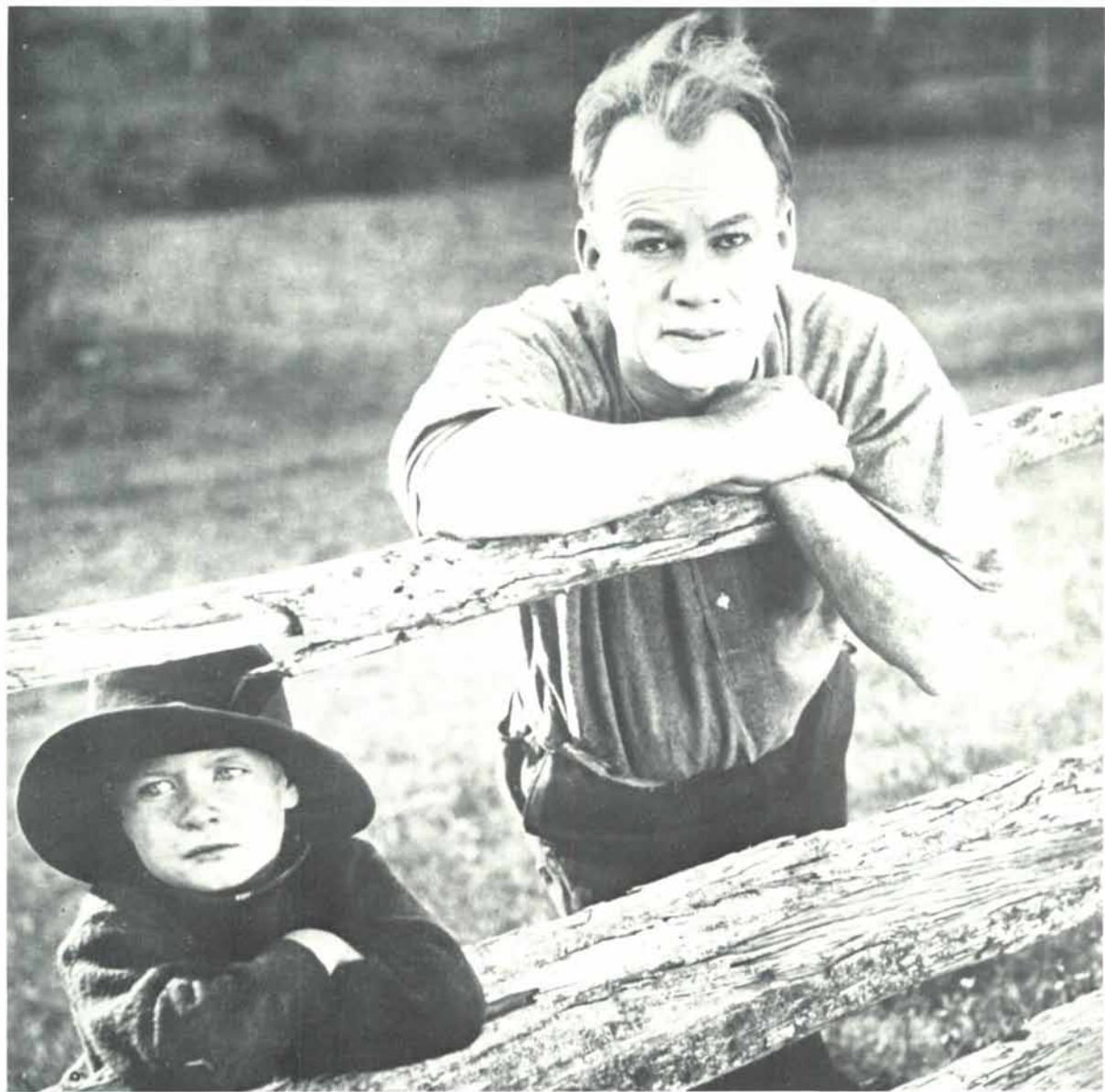


- The bushman's bride**  
p. Spencer's Pictures
- A silent witness**  
d. Franklyn Barrett  
p. West's Pictures  
l.p. Cyril Mackay
- War on the post**  
d. Alfred Rolfe  
p. Australian Photo-Play Co.
- The wreck of the Dunbar**  
p. Universal Films  
l.p. Louise Carbasse
- Whose was the hand?**  
d. Alfred Rolfe  
p. Australian Photo-Play Co.  
l.p. Charles Villiers
- Moira, or the mystery of the bush**  
d. Alfred Rolfe  
p. Australian Photo-Play Co.
- The ticket of leave man**  
d. Gaston Mervale  
p. Australian Life Biograph Co.
- The midnight wedding**  
d. Raymond Longford  
p. Spencer's Pictures  
l.p. Augustus Neville, Lottie Lyell
- Call of the bush**  
p. Gaumont Agency  
l.p. Charles Woods
- The life story of John Lee, or the man they could not hang**  
d. Robert Scott  
p. Phillip Lytton  
l.p. Mervyn Barrington
- A Melbourne mystery**  
l.p. John Gavin
- Australia calls**  
d. Raymond Longford  
p. Spencer's Pictures  
l.p. Lottie Lyell
- A blue gum romance**  
d. Franklyn Barrett  
p. Fraser Film Release & Photographic Co.  
l.p. Tien Hogue
- The life of a jackeroo**  
d. Franklyn Barrett  
p. Fraser Film Release & Photographic Co.  
l.p. Tien Hogue
- The bondage of the bush**  
d. Charles Woods  
p. Woods' Australian Films  
l.p. D. R. Rivenall, Charles Woods
- Pommy arrives in Australia**  
d. Raymond Longford  
p. Fraser Film Release & Photographic Co.  
l.p. Tom Cosgrove
- \*The sick stockrider**  
d. W. J. Lincoln  
p. Lincoln-Cass Films  
l.p. George Bryant, Godfrey Cass
- Moondyne**  
d. W. J. Lincoln  
p. Lincoln-Cass Films  
l.p. George Bryant, Roy Redgrave
- The remittance man**  
d. W. J. Lincoln  
p. Lincoln-Cass Films  
l.p. Roy Redgrave, Godfrey Cass
- Transported**  
d. W. J. Lincoln  
p. Lincoln-Cass Films  
l.p. Roy Redgrave, Godfrey Cass
- The road to ruin**  
d. W. J. Lincoln  
p. Lincoln-Cass Films  
l.p. Roy Redgrave, Godfrey Cass
- The reprieve**

JOE (1924)

Loosely based on Henry Lawson's *Joe Wilson* and *Joe Wilson's Mates*, the story centres on farm hand Joe Wilson (played by Arthur Tauchert) and his wife Mary, and the dissipated Harry Black, who

marries Mary's sister. Praised as a 'faithful reflection of the spirit of the pioneers', it was probably one of the high points in the career of director Beaumont Smith.



- d. W.J. Lincoln  
 p. Lincoln-Cass Films  
 l.p. Roy Redgrave, Beryl Bryant  
**The crisis**
- d. W. J. Lincoln  
 p. Lincoln-Cass Films  
 l.p. Roy Redgrave, George Bryant  
**The wreck**
- d. W.J. Lincoln  
 p. Lincoln-Cass Films  
**Sea dogs of Australia**
- p. Western Pacific Feature Films  
 l.p. Eric Howell
- 'Neath Austral skies**
- d. Raymond Longford  
 p. Commonwealth Film Producing Co.  
 l.p. Lottie Lyell
- 1914 **The swagman's story**
- d. Raymond Longford  
 p. Commonwealth Film Producing Co.  
 l.p. Lottie Lyell
- The shepherd of the Southern Cross**
- d. Alexander Butler  
 p. Australasian Films  
 l.p. Arthur Shirley, Vera Pearce
- The silence of Dean Maitland**
- d. Raymond Longford  
 p. Fraser Film Release & Photographic Co.
- l.p. Harry Thomas
- A long, long way to Tipperary**
- d. George Dean  
 p. Higgins Brothers
- The day**
- d. Alfred Rolfe  
 p. Fraser Film Release & Photographic Co.
- 1915 **The unknown**
- d. J. E. Mathews  
 p. Fraser Film Release & Photographic Co.  
 l.p. Peter Felix, 'Porky' Kearns

- The sunny south**
- d. Alfred Rolfe  
 p. Fraser Film Release & Photographic Co.
- The rebel**
- d. J. E. Mathews  
 p. Mathews Photo-Play Co.  
 l.p. Allen Doone
- The heart of a champion**
- d. J. E. Mathews  
 p. Mathews Photo-Play Co.  
 l.p. Les Darcy
- Ma Hogan's new boarder**
- d. Raymond Longford  
 p. Fraser Film Release & Photographic Co.
- l.p. Ern Vockler
- Will they never come?**
- d. Alfred Rolfe  
 p. Australasian Films
- \*\***The hero of the Dardanelles**
- d. Alfred Rolfe  
 p. Australasian Films  
 l.p. Guy Hastings
- Within our gates, or deeds that won Gallipoli**
- d. Frank Harvey  
 p. J. C. Williamson Ltd.  
 l.p. Cyril Mackay
- The loyal rebel**
- d. Alfred Rolfe  
 p. Australasian Films  
 l.p. Reynolds Denniston
- For Australia**
- d. Monte Luke  
 p. J. C. Williamson Ltd.  
 l.p. Alma Rock Phillips
- How we beat the Emden**
- d. Alfred Rolfe  
 p. Australasian Films



THE PRICE (1924)

Dunstan Webb directed a largely amateur cast in this modest but successful melodrama about a missing heir finally reconciled to his family.







1916

**A Maori maid's love**

- d. Raymond Longford
- p. Vita Film Corporation
- l.p. Lottie Lyell

**Within the law**

- d. Monte Luke
- p. J. C. Williamson Ltd
- l.p. Muriel Starr

**Get-rich-quick Wallingford**

- d. Fred Niblo
- p. J. C. Williamson Ltd
- l.p. Fred Niblo

**The martyrdom of Nurse Cavell**

- d. John Gavin, C. Post Mason
- p. Australian Famous Feature Co.
- l.p. Vera Pearce

**Nurse Cavell**

- d.,p. W. J. Lincoln
- l.p. Margaret Linden

**\*\*Officer 666**

- d. Fred Niblo
- p. J. C. Williamson Ltd.
- l.p. Fred Niblo

**La Revanche**

- d.,p. W. J. Lincoln
- l.p. Arthur Styan

**Murphy of Anzac**

- d. J. E. Mathews
- p. Fraser Film Release & Photographic Co.

**PAINTED DAUGHTERS (1925)**

Luxurious sets and costumes characterised this archetypal 'flapper' generation story of backstage life and high society, publicised as a 'glorious whirl of perfect girl'. It was F. Stuart-Whyte's first effort for Australasian Films, and re-established their production program, with sights set firmly on overseas as well as Australian markets. Only a fragmented version of the film – equal to about half the original length – is preserved.





**\*Charlie at the Sydney show**

d. John Gavin

l.p. Ern Voekler

**An interrupted divorce**

d. John Gavin

l.p. Fred Bluett

**The Joan of Arc of loos**

d. George Willoughby

p. Willoughby's Photoplays

l.p. Jane King

**In the last stride**

d. Martyn Keith

p. Double A Productions

l.p. Dave Smith

**\*\*Seven keys to Baldpate**

d. Monte Luke

p. J. C. Williamson Ltd.

l.p. Dorothy Brunton

**If the huns come to Melbourne**

d. George Coates

**The woman in the case**

d. George Willoughby

p. Willoughby's Photoplays

l.p. Jean Robertson

**The mutiny of the Bounty**

d. Raymond Longford

p. Crick & Jones

l.p. George Cross

**\*\*The life's romance of Adam**

**Lindsay Gordon**

d. W. J. Lincoln

p. Lincoln-Barnes Scenarios

l.p. Hugh McCrae

1917

**The pioneers**

d.p. Franklyn Barret

l.p. Winter Hall

**Remorse, a story of the red plague**

d. J. E. Mathews

p. Mathews Photoplay Producing Co.

l.p. Cyril Mackay

**The murder of Captain Fryatt**

d. John Gavin

p. Australian Famous Feature Co.

l.p. Harrington Reynolds

**Our friends, the Hayseeds**

d.p. Beaumont Smith

l.p. Roy Redgrave

**Australia's peril**

d.p. Franklyn Barret

l.p. Roland Conway

**The Hayseeds come to Sydney**

d.p. Beaumont Smith

l.p. Tal Ordell

**The monk and the woman**

d. Franklyn Barret

p. Australian Famous Players

l.p. Maud Fane

**The church and the woman**

d. Raymond Longford

p. Humbert Pugliese

l.p. Lottie Lyell

**An East Lynne fiasco**

d. John Cosgrove

l.p. John Cosgrove, Will Gilbert

**The Hayseeds' back-blocks show**

d.p. Beaumont Smith

l.p. Tal Ordell

1918

**\*The enemy within**

d.p. Roland Stavelly

l.p. Snowy Baker

**The woman suffers**

d. Raymond Longford

p. Southern Cross Feature Film Co.

l.p. Lottie Lyell

**JEWELLED NIGHTS (1925)**

After a successful career as a rising Hollywood star, Louise Lovely returned home in 1923 with plans to produce films in Australia. *Jewelled Nights*, a mining drama, was filmed largely in Tasmania. Louise co-starred with the 1920s matinee idol, Gordon Collingridge.

**Yachts and hearts**

- d. Charles Byers Coates  
p. Antipodes Films  
l.p. Beryl Clifton

**\*\*The Waybacks**

- d. Arthur W. Sterry  
p. Koala Films  
l.p. Vincent White

**His only chance**

- d. Dick Shortland  
p. J. C. Williamson Ltd.  
l.p. Captain N. C. P. Conant

**Cupid camouflaged**

- d. Alfred Rolfe  
p. Australasian Films  
l.p. Mrs. T. H. Kelly

**Satan in Sydney**

- d.p. Beaumont Smith  
l.p. Elsie Prince

**Just Peggy**

- d. J. A. Lipman  
p. Mia Films  
l.p. Sara Allgood

**Algie's romance**

- d.l.p. Leonard Doogood  
p. South Australian Feature Film Co.

**\*\*A romance of the Burke and Wills expedition of 1860**

- d. Charles Boyers Coates  
p. Antipodes Films  
l.p. Charles Clarke, George Patterson

**The lure of the bush**

- d. Claude Flemming  
p. Snowy Baker Films  
l.p. Snowy Baker

**Scars of love**

- d.l.p. Walter S. McColl  
p. Austral Photoplay Co.

**What happened to Jean**

- d. Herbert Walsh  
p. Trench Comforts Fund Committee  
l.p. Edith Crowe

**500 pounds reward**

- d.p. Claude Flemming  
l.p. Renee Adoree

**The laugh on dad**

- d. A. C. Tinsdale  
p. Austral Photoplay Co.  
l.p. Johnson Weir

**Dad becomes a grandad**

- d. A. C. Tinsdale  
p. Austral Photoplay Co.  
l.p. Johnson Weir

**High heels**

- d.p. P. J. Ramster  
l.p. Fred Oppey

**His convict bride**

- d. John Gavin  
p. Australian Famous Feature Co.  
l.p. Ethel Bashford

**Should girls kiss soldiers?**

- d.p. P. J. Ramster

**The Hayseeds' Melbourne Cup**

- d.p. Beaumont Smith  
l.p. Tal Ordell

**A Coo-ee from home**

- d. Charles Woods  
p. Woods' Australian Films  
l.p. Gertrude Darley

**Australia's own**

- d.p. Jack Ward  
l.p. Nellie Romer

**Desert gold**

- d.p. Beaumont Smith  
l.p. Bryce Rowe

**Does the jazz lead to destruction?**

- l.p. Ethel Bennetto

**Barry butts in**

- d.p. Beaumont Smith  
l.p. Barry Lupino

**\*The sentimental bloke**

- d. Raymond Longford  
p. Southern Cross Feature Films Co.  
l.p. Arthur Tauchert, Lottie Lyell

1919



TALL TIMBER (1926)

With location scenes filmed at Langley Vale in the North Coast forests of NSW, *Tall Timber* was a story of love, revenge and blackmail – with some

comic relief. Directed for Australasian Films by actor Dunstan Webb, it was also released in Britain.



**Struck oil**

- d. Franklyn Barrett
- p. Australian Art Productions
- l.p. Maggie Moore

**The face at the window**

- d. Charles Villiers
- p. D. B. O'Connor
- l.p. Agnes Dobson

1920

**\*The man from Kangaroo**

- d. Wilfred Lucas
- p. Carroll-Baker Australian Productions
- l.p. Snowy Baker

**Ginger Mick**

- d. Raymond Longford
- p. Southern Cross Feature Films Co.
- l.p. Gilbert Emery

**\*\*The Kelly gang**

- d. Harry Southwell
- p. Southwell Screen Plays
- l.p. Godfrey Cass

**The shadow of Lightning Ridge**

- d. Wilfred Lucas
- p. Carroll-Baker Australian Productions
- l.p. Snowy Baker

**\*The breaking of the drought**

- d. Franklyn Barrett
- p. Golden Wattle Film Syndicate
- l.p. Trilby Clark, Dunstan Webb

**\*On our selection**

- d. Raymond Longford
- p. E. J. Carroll
- l.p. Percy Walshe, Tal Ordell

**THOSE WHO LOVE (1926)**

The first venture of the three McDonagh sisters was a romantic drama built around the conflict of class distinctions and prejudices. Imbued with the sense of style and sophistication which characterised their work, it was made with notable discipline and economy – its success financed the sisters' next production, *Far Paradise*.







THOSE WHO LOVE (1926)

The McDonaghs handled Sydney's 'low life' with as much aplomb as its high society. They learned filmmaking from watching movies – lots of them – and it shows.

**The man from Snowy River**

- d. Beaumont Smith, John K. Wells
- p. Beaumont Smith
- l.p. Cyril Mackay

**\*Robbery under arms**

- d.l.p. Kenneth Brampton
- p. Pacific Photoplays

**The jackeroo of Coolabong**

- d. Wilfred Lucas
- p. Carroll-Baker Australian Productions
- l.p. Snowy Baker



1921

- \*The Hordern mystery**  
 d. Harry Southwell  
 p. Southwell Screen Plays  
 l.p. Claude Turton
- \*\*Possum paddock**  
 d. Charles Villiers, Kate Howarde  
 p. Kate Howarde  
 l.p. John Cosgrove
- \*Silks and saddles**  
 d. John K. Wells  
 p. Commonwealth Pictures  
 l.p. Brownie Vernon
- The betrayer**  
 d.p. Beaumont Smith  
 l.p. Stella Southern
- \*A girl of the bush**  
 d. Franklyn Barrett  
 p. Barrett's Australian Productions  
 l.p. Vera James
- Rudd's new selection**  
 d. Raymond Longford  
 p. E. J. Carroll  
 l.p. J. P. O'Neill, Tal Ordell
- The Guyra ghost mystery**  
 d.p. John Cosgrove  
 l.p. John Cosgrove
- Jasmine Freckel's love affair**  
 d.p. P. J. Ramster  
 l.p. Nancy Simpson
- Mated in the wilds**  
 d.p. P. J. Ramster  
 l.p. Elsa Granger
- While the billy boils**  
 d.p. Beaumont Smith  
 l.p. Tal Ordell
- Know thy child**  
 d. Franklyn Barrett  
 p. Barrett's Australian Productions  
 l.p. Roland Conway
- Retribution**  
 d. Armand Lionello  
 p. Astrolat Film Co  
 l.p. Thorene Adair

- The blue mountains mystery**  
 d. Raymond Longford, Lottie Lyell  
 p. Southern Cross Feature Films Co  
 l.p. Marjorie Osborne, John Faulkner
- Cows and cuddles**  
 d.p. Tal Ordell
- \*The life story of John Lee or the man they could not hang**  
 d. Arthur W. Sterry  
 p. Sterry & Haldane
- The gentleman bushranger**  
 d.p. Beaumont Smith  
 l.p. Dot McConville, Ernest T. Hearne
- 1922 Circumstance**  
 d. Lawson Harris  
 p. Austral Super Films  
 l.p. Yvonne Pavis
- The triumph of love**  
 d.p. P. J. Ramster  
 l.p. Jack Chalmers
- A rough passage**  
 d. Franklyn Barrett  
 p. Barrett's Australian Productions  
 l.p. Stella Southern
- A daughter of Australia**  
 d. Lawson Harris  
 p. Austral Super Films  
 l.p. Yvonne Pavis
- East Lynne**  
 d.p. Charles Hardy  
 l.p. Ethel Jerdan
- \*\*Sunshine Sally**  
 d. Lawson Harris  
 p. Austral Super Films  
 l.p. Yvonne Pavis
- The lust for gold**  
 d. Roy Darling  
 p. Olympic Films  
 l.p. Dorothy Hawtree
- The tale of a shirt**  
 d.p. P. J. Ramster  
 l.p. Charles Russell

THE HILLS OF HATE (1926)

Raymond Longford's last silent feature, about two feuding bush families, was probably not equal to his best work, but it was a step in the career of Dorothy Gordon – later better known as the columnist and radio personality, Andrea – shown here suffering at the hands of 'Big' Bill Wilson.





SUNRISE (1926)

Falsely accused of murder, Robert Travers rescues his persecutor (Dunstan Webb) after a mining accident. A supporting feature, *Sunrise* was completed by Raymond Longford after the abrupt departure from Australia of F. Stuart-Whyte.



ODDS ON (1928)

Race course melodramas were a staple of Australian cinema. In his directorial debut, cameraman Arthur Higgins put a strong cast through their paces in a film whose appearance belied its small budget of 2,000.

ODDS ON (1928)

Society settings seemed to turn up frequently, even when the main storyline led elsewhere. Arthur Higgins, as one of Australia's greatest cinematographers, had an eye for them – and for making the sets and costumes look more expensive than they really were.



1923

**The dinkum bloke**

- d. Raymond Longford
- p. Longford-Lyell Australian Productions
- l.p. Arthur Tauchert, Lottie Lyell

**The dingo**

- d. Kenneth Brampton
- p. British Australasian Photoplays
- l.p. George Edwards

**The twins**

- d. Leslie McCallum
- p. Blue Gum Co.
- l.p. Ray Whiting, Jim Paxton

**Townies and Hayseeds**

- d.p. Beaumont Smith
- l.p. George Edwards

**\*\*When the Kellys were out**

- d.p. Harry Southwell
- l.p. Godfrey Cass

**Should a doctor tell?**

- d.p. P. J. Ramster
- l.p. Fred Oppey

**Australia calls**

- d. Raymond Longford
- p. Commonwealth Immigration Office
- l.p. Ernest Idiens

**An Australian by marriage**

- d. Raymond Longford
- p. Commonwealth Immigration Office

**Prehistoric Hayseeds**

- d.p. Beaumont Smith
- l.p. Hector St. Clair

**A naughty elopement**

- d.p. P. J. Ramster
- l.p. Angelo Zommo

**Riding to win**

- d. Eric Harrison
- p. E. H. Pictures
- l.p. Squizzy Taylor

1924

**\*\*The digger earl**

- d.p. Beaumont Smith
- l.p. Arthur Tauchert

**Dope**

- d. Dunstan Webb
- p. Australasian Picture Productions
- l.p. Gordon Collingridge

THE GREY GLOVE (1928)

Dunstan Webb (in peaked cap) directed this thriller, based on an E.V. Timms story of a mysterious criminal who always leaves a grey glove at the scene of his crimes.





**Joe**  
 d.p. Beaumont Smith  
 l.p. Arthur Tauchert  
**Daughter of the east**  
 d. Roy Darling  
 p. Blue Bird Films  
 l.p. Dorothy Hawtree  
**Fisher's ghost**  
 d. Raymond Longford  
 p. Longford-Lyell Productions  
 l.p. Robert Purdie  
**The price**  
 d. Dunstan Webb  
 p. Mary Mallon  
 l.p. James Alexander  
**The Rev. Dell's secret**  
 d.p. P.J. Ramster  
 l.p. Rex Simpson  
**How McDougal topped the score**  
 d. V. Upton Brown  
 p. Pacific Screen Plays  
 l.p. Leslie Gordon  
**Hullo Marmaduke**  
 d.p. Beaumont Smith  
 l.p. Claude Dampier  
 1925 **The mystery of a hansom cab**  
 d. Arthur Shirley  
 p. Pyramid Pictures  
 l.p. Arthur Shirley  
**\*\*Painted daughters**  
 d. F. Stuart-Whyte  
 p. Australasian Films  
 l.p. Zara Clinton  
**\*The adventures of algy**  
 d.p. Beaumont Smith  
 l.p. Claude Dampier  
**The bushhackers**  
 d. Raymond Longford  
 p. Longford-Lyell Productions  
 l.p. Eddie O'Reilly  
**Those terrible twins**  
 d.p. Jack Ward  
 l.p. Ray Griffen

**\*\*Around the boree log**  
 d.p. Phil K. Walsh  
**\*\*Jewelled nights**  
 d.p. Louise Lovely, Wilton Welch  
 l.p. Louise Lovely  
 1926 **\*\*The moth of Moonbi**  
 d. Charles Chauvel  
 p. Australian Film Productions  
 l.p. Marsden Hassall  
**\*The tenth straw**  
 d. Robert G. McAnderson  
 p. Pacific Films  
 l.p. Ernest Lauri  
**Sydney's darlings**  
 d. Thomas Marinato  
 p. Beacon Light Productions  
 l.p. Doris Harrison  
**Peter Vernon's silence**  
 d. Raymond Longford  
 p. Longford-Lyell Productions  
 l.p. Rawdon Blandford  
**Should a girl propose?**  
 d.p. P. J. Ramster  
 l.p. Cecil Pawley  
**\*The jungle woman**  
 d. Frank Hurley  
 p. Stoll Picture Productions  
 l.p. Eric Bransby Williams  
**The pioneers**  
 d. Raymond Longford  
 p. Australasian Films  
 l.p. Virginia Beresford  
**\*Northbound limited**  
 d.p.  
 l.p. George Palmer  
**The sealed room**  
 d.l.p. Arthur Shirley  
 p. Pyramid Pictures  
**Tall timber**  
 d. Dunstan Webb  
 p. Australasian Films  
 l.p. Eden Landeryou

THE ADORABLE OUTCAST (1928)

Norman Dawn's second feature for Australasian Films was a Pacific Island romance, with lush, exotic settings, startling special effects and a huge budget – 35,000 – which was exceeded in the silent era only by the vast expenditure on *For the Term of His Natural Life*. As with *Term*, the main stars were American, though the finance was Australian. Less than two of the original eight reels are preserved in the Archive.

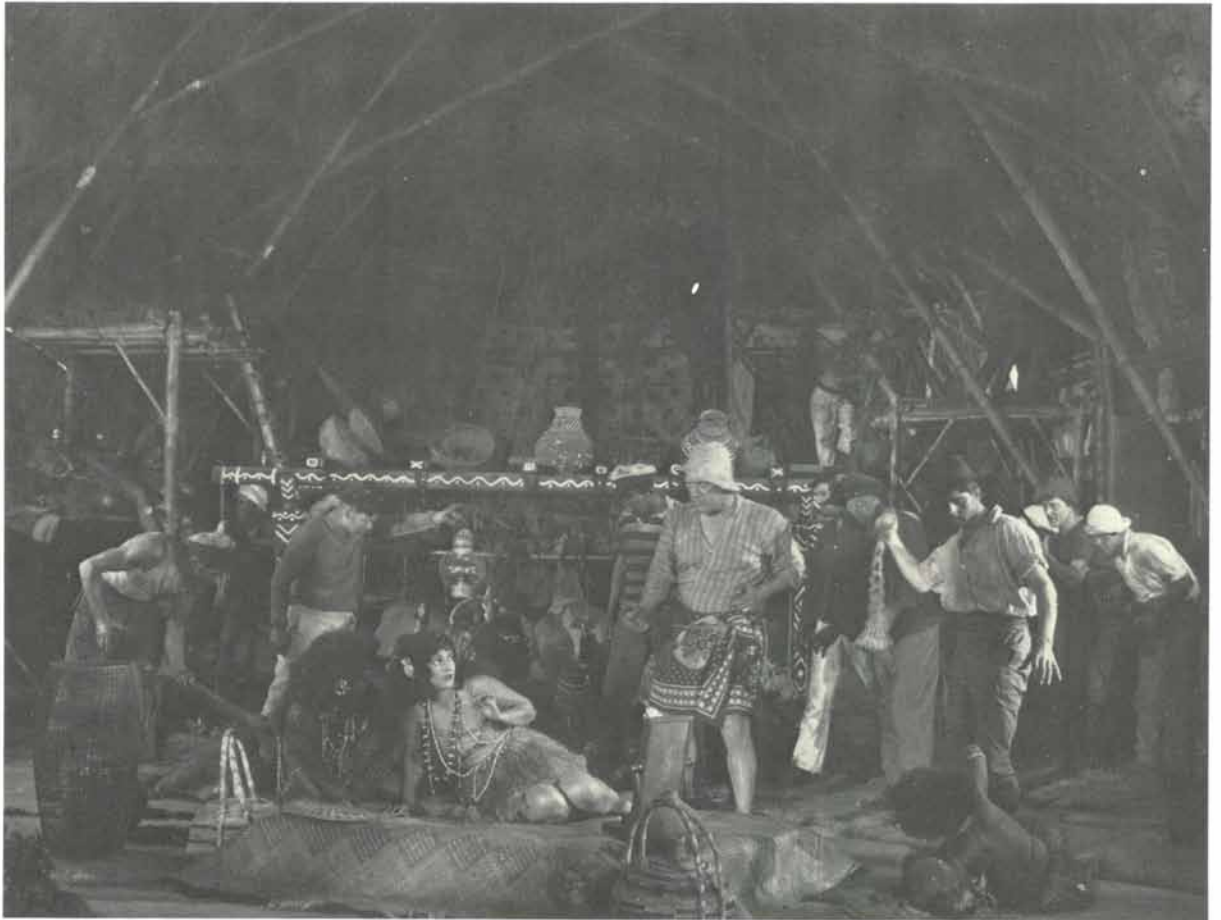


THE ADORABLE OUTCAST (1928)

Edith Roberts, as Luya, 'a beautiful untamed little pagan', was an attractive leading lady. However, although *Outcast* performed well on its initial release, the coming of talkies undermined its possibilities both at home and abroad and the film probably did not recover its production cost.

THE KINGDOM OF TWILIGHT (1929)

British author and explorer Alexander Macdonald directed this experiment in Australian exotica, set in the early gold mining days of the Northern Territory.







- Sunrise**  
 d. F. Stuart-Whyte, Raymond Longford  
 p. Australasian Films  
 l.p. Phyllis Du Barry
- \*The hound of the deep**  
 d. Frank Hurley  
 p. Stoll Picture Productions  
 l.p. Jameson Thomas
- \*\*Greenhide**  
 d. Charles Chauvel  
 p. Australian Film Productions  
 l.p. Elsie Sylvaney
- Those who love**  
 d. P. J. Ramster, Paulette McDonagh  
 p. MCD Productions  
 l.p. Marie Lorraine
- Hills of hate**  
 d. Raymond Longford  
 p. Australasian Films  
 l.p. Dorothy Gordon
- 1927 Down under**  
 d.l.p. Harry Southwell  
 p. Anglo-Australian Films
- \*The kid stakes**  
 d. Tal Ordell  
 p. Ordell-Coyle Productions  
 l.p. 'Pop' Ordell
- \*For the term of his natural life**  
 d. Norman Dawn  
 p. Australasian Films  
 l.p. George Fisher, Eva Novak
- \*Environment**  
 d. Gerald M. Hayle  
 p. Advance Films  
 l.p. Beth Darvall

**THE BIRTH OF WHITE AUSTRALIA (1928)**

This extraordinary film was set against the clashes between Australian and Chinese gold miners at Lambing Flat (now Young) NSW, in 1861. The Archive's preservation copy, made from the decomposing negative discovered at Young, is incomplete.







FELLERS (1930)

A drama of soldiers in the Australian Light Horse in Palestine during the war. *Fellers* best symbolised Australia's brief flirtation with the part-talkie, that curious hybrid of sound and silent narrative

through which the film industry came to terms with the microphone. Dialogue surfaced only in the last reel – the rest of the film simply had a music accompaniment.



1928

- The rushing tide**  
 d. Gerald M. Hayle  
 p. Koala Films  
 l.p. Beth Darvall
- The man who forgot**  
 d.p. A. R. Harwood  
 l.p. Walter Nicholls
- The miner's daughter**  
 d. Leo Forbert  
 p. Southern Cross Productions  
 l.p. Bert McCarthy
- \*The romance of Runnibede**  
 d. Scott R. Dunlap  
 p. Phillips Film Productions  
 l.p. Eva Novak
- \*The shattered illusion**  
 d. A. G. Harbrow  
 p. Victorian Film Productions  
 l.p. J. Robertson Aiken
- \*\*The menace**  
 d. Cyril J. Sharpe  
 p. Juchau Productions
- \*The spirit of Gallipoli**  
 d.p. Keith Gategood, William Green  
 l.p. Keith Gategood
- \*Trooper O'Brien**  
 d. John Gavin  
 p. Australian Artists Co.  
 l.p. Gordon Collingridge
- \*\*The adorable outcast**  
 d. Norman Dawn  
 p. Australasian Films  
 l.p. Edith Roberts, Edmund Burns
- Caught in the net**  
 d. Vaughan C. Marshall  
 p. Advance Films  
 l.p. Zillah Bateman
- \*The far paradise**  
 d. Paulette McDonagh  
 p. MCD Productions  
 l.p. Marie Lorraine

- The grey glove**  
 d. Dunstan Webb  
 l.p. Aubrey Kelner
- \*\*The birth of white Australia**  
 d. Phil K. Walsh  
 p. Dominion Films  
 l.p. Dot McConville
- \*\*The exploits of the Emden**  
 d. (Australian sequences) Ken G. Hall  
 p. (Australian sequences) First National Pictures
- The Russell affair**  
 d. P. J. Ramster  
 p. Juliette De La Ruze  
 l.p. Jessica Harcourt
- Odds on**  
 d.p. Arthur Higgins  
 l.p. Arthur Tauchert
- \*The devil's playground**  
 d. Victor Bindley  
 p. Fineart Films Productions  
 l.p. John R. Allen, Elza Stenning
- The kingdom of twilight**  
 d. Alexander Macdonald  
 p. Seven Seas Screen Productions  
 l.p. Wendy Osborne, John Faulkner
- 1929
- \*Coorab in the isle of ghosts**  
 d. Francis Birtles, Torrance MacLaren
- 1930
- Trobriana**  
 d. Victor Bindley  
 p. Fineart Films Productions  
 l.p. John R. Allen, Elza Stenning
- \*The cheaters**  
 d. Paulette McDonagh  
 p. MCD Productions  
 l.p. Marie Lorraine  
 (Made as a silent film, with a few talking scenes added before release. Silent version only survives today).

**Tiger island**

d. Gerald M. Hayle  
p. Victoria Films  
l.p. Beth Darvall

**Fellers**

d. Arthur Higgins  
p. Artaus Productions  
l.p. Arthur Tauchert

(Part-talkie: made as a silent film with synchronised music throughout, and dialogue scenes in the last reel only).

**SHOW GIRL'S LUCK (1930)**

'The mike is king' in Australia's first 100% talkie. A musical directed by Norman Dawn, *Show Girl's Luck* signalled the end of silent feature production in Australia. Just two intriguing minutes survive from this historic production.





# AUSTRALIA'S LOST FILMS

What do Raymond Longford's *Ginger Mick* (1920), Franklyn Barrett's *Know Thy Child* (1921) and the 1906 'blockbuster' *The Story of the Kelly Gang* have in common? They are among the lost treasures of Australia's silent cinema, films of which only a few fragments or sequences, in some cases only a title, remain. Of about 250 silent feature films made in Australia between 1906 and 1930, little more than fifty survive in whole or in part today.

In *Australia's Lost Films* Ray Edmondson and Andrew Pike show just how important it is, from both the aesthetic and historical points of view, that as much as possible of this heritage be recovered. The task is an urgent one, as these films were made on highly flammable, perishable nitrate stock which is rapidly nearing the end of its lifespan. But although the films themselves are lost, in many cases production stills remain to indicate their quality. More than fifty of these important photographs, many of them originally on glass negatives, are reproduced in *Australia's Lost Films*.

*Australia's Lost Films* has been published by the National Library of Australia to coincide with THE LAST FILM SEARCH, a project sponsored principally by Kodak (Australia) Pty Ltd and the Utah Foundation to find as many of these important films as possible and commit them to the care of the National Film Archive. But with its many photographs and a complete checklist of silent feature films 1896-1930, the book stands as an important record of a necessarily little known part of Australia's cinematic past.



# AUSTRALIA'S LOST FILMS