



Volunteers of The Picture House

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From the Editor

Welcome to the fourth edition of Volunteers of the Picture House. The past year of 2012 has been a mixed bag for us in terms of audience numbers, the summer being especially challenging. Despite this we continued in our commitment to serve the community, the previous newsletter displaying many examples of our donations to and work with local organisations, as does this edition. With films such as *The Quartet* and *Les Mis* getting the year started, and the Cinema celebrating its centenary, 2013 is already looking promising for Wotton Electric Picture House.

Greg Kinsey

October-December in Films

We showed 23 different films this quarter, spread over 114 screenings, with a total audience of 4320 (an average of 38 people a show). Whilst this is 900 customers fewer than the same three months in 2011, it is a significant up-turn from the July-September 2012 figures of 2650 customers averaging of 22 per film.

Skyfall was by far the most successful film we showed, with two full houses and an average audience of 87 over 12 films. *Anna Karenina* headed up the chasing pack averaging 60 over 11 films, and between them these two films accounted for roughly a third of our customers. The World Cinema films also performed well, with an average of 56 customers per screening. *Madagascar 3* was shown four times each in 2D and 3D, the average audience for each format was similar at 45 and 38 respectively.



2012 in Films

There are numerous ways of analysing the figures from an entire year's worth of details, especially for someone who enjoys looking into numbers and trends, so I'll try and stick to the more interesting and pertinent facts. We opened our doors 472 times in 2012, showing 84 different titles and welcoming over 18,850 customers at an average of 40 per film. April

was our busiest month, with just under 2400 customers, and September was the quietest with 790. We had 39 full-houses for the following films: The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel with 16 of them, the others being War Horse, The Artist, The Iron Lady, Skyfall, The Help, The Pirates in an Adventure with Scientists – 3D, Alvin and The Chipmunks and A Separation.

A Separation was the most popular World Cinema Film (which are shown once a month on a Sunday), with these lesser-known films returning an above average audience of 48 customers per screening. Approximately 12% of our customers watched a film in 3D; Brave, Puss in Boots and Prometheus being the most popular in this format. As well as regular films, we also screened an Opera, two Ballets, and hosted live events for Last Night of the Proms and the London 2012 Olympics Opening and Closing Ceremonies.



Which was the most successful film though? Well, it depends on how you choose to measure a film's performance. As you can see from above, The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel had by far the highest number of full houses. In terms of sheer audience numbers, it would also come out on top with over 2350, accounting for nearly 13% of our total audience for the year. In second place would be War

Horse and in third Skyfall. However, if you look at the average audience, The Artist wins with an average of 93, with Skyfall and The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel tied on 87. Taking everything into account, I think the case for The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel to be crowned our top-performing film of 2012 is too strong to deny!

Other Goings-on

The Cinema achieved two momentous milestones in the last three months, in what is the seventh year of its current incarnation. Anna Karenina on 24th October was our **3,000th show**, and on 2nd December, during A Royal Affair we had our **120,000th customer!**

The Cinema's **AGM** was held on November 19th, our Chairman Jeff Walshe reporting on the 2011/12 financial year and numerous developments such as investment in Cinema maintenance, charitable donations, relationships with distributors, the new website and ticket system amongst many other items.

On 30th November, we held our own premier of the latest instalment in the **Bond** franchise - Skyfall, complete with a car perfectly suited for Mr Bond parked right outside the Cinema to treat our customers on the way in. A couple of bond girls were seen in the vicinity and unfortunately no parking tickets were issued, so we didn't get to see Q's latest gadgets being deployed!



The very next day was Wotton's **Winter Fair**, stalls lining Church Street, Long Street, High Street and Market Street. The Cinema provided a human fruit machine (pictured) drawing in hordes of excited children, a lot of whom won prizes. Next door, the team had a stall that was giving away – for a small donation to Save the Children Fund – albums and singles donated by a radio station. In total, £150 was raised.

On 23rd December, we showed **The Holly and The Ivy**, originally released in 1952. We were honoured to have a relative of one of the stars - John Gregson - present who gave a talk before the screening. The proceeds from this special event - £350 – were donated to The Bournstream Trust. For those not aware of it The Bournstream Trust is volunteer-run organisation providing an outdoor adventure play area specifically for children with disabilities or special needs, and is located just outside of Wotton as you head to North Nibley.

Coming up...

The **Volunteer Appreciation Evening** in December had to be postponed and has now been moved to Saturday 9th March, please let Debbie know as soon as possible if you can go if you have not already done so. This promises to be a brilliant evening, with nibbles and live music arranged.

As detailed in the previous edition, we will shortly be overhauling our **membership system**. Various options with combinations of discounts and benefits have been studied over the past few months to get the best value for money not only for the Cinema, but primarily for our patrons and volunteers without whom the Cinema would not exist. Details of the revised scheme, including benefits and incentives for volunteers will be announced in February.

This year, Wotton EPH will be celebrating a **Centenary of Cinema in Wotton**. It will form the basis for the town's summer festivities, culminating in a Centenary Week in early July. In the run up to this we will be screening a series of films titled Films of the Decades as chosen by Flix. We will work from the present day backwards until



Centenary Week, when we will show a very old film at very old prices! We fully intend to give our Cinema a birthday to remember and hope you can help. If you would like to be part of a group to assist organising events or simply contribute ideas, please get in touch with Janet at janetwalshe@icloud.com



January-March in Films

We are currently experimenting with booking what we believe will be our most popular films far in advance so that people can better make plans to come and see them at Wotton. If peruse the website, you will see films arranged as far ahead as the middle of March. The Quartet and Les Mis will be big films for Wotton EPH, hopefully people will also turn out in numbers for Life of Pi, Andrea Bocelli and Nostalgia for the Light, as well as our World Cinema offerings. We are also looking to get Lincoln, Song for Marion, Zero Dark Thirty and Cirque du Soleil (in 3D) and Hitchcock (also in 3D).

Get Involved

Collections are still ongoing for stamps and milk bottle tops in the **two jars** on the counter next to the drinks fridge. The stamps go towards donations to **Tenovus** on the High Street (£10 was donated in December from the stamps). The milk bottle tops help fund the purchase of **wheelchairs** for the disabled.

Any volunteers can attend **Flix**, which is held once a month. You can suggest films and review trailers of upcoming releases to see which should be put forward for the Cinema to try and book. If you would like to have your say in which films we show, email John Selby - j.selby86@gmail.com - who will send you more information.

Sparky's is our very own Film Club. Once a month we screen a film that we didn't necessarily get to show in Wotton. Anyone can suggest a film and a vote is held following which, the most popular film is shown. For more information, watch out for emails from Debbie and posters behind the counter.



We are always on the look out for new **volunteers**, if you know of anyone who would be interested, please put them in touch with Debbie or Janet. We are also always looking for people to volunteer on the **weekend slots** as many people now have regular week-time slots. If you could help out at one of the weekend screenings, maybe even only once or twice a month it would make a real difference. Please keep an eye out for Debbie's emails or get in touch with her via text.

Meet the Committee

Previous editions have featured the Chairman Jeff Walshe, our Chief Boothie Eve Smith and Trevor Mason, Chairman of the Electric Cinema Company. This edition is the turn of **Rachel Sleight**, one of the newest Committee Members:

My initial impression of the cinema as a teenager was negative, Wotton friends spoke of dirt and discomfort. So it was with some trepidation that I made my first visit. Oblivious of the refit and change of management I even considered bringing a cushion. Imagine my delight to be sitting in a clean, plush, comfy seat, clutching my posh ice cream having just been given a chocolate! The Electric Picture House had me at 'hello'...

I've always loved film. Whilst most of you know Marguerite as a volunteer, as my French teacher she introduced me to Truffaut and Godard. As a student I couldn't resist adding cinema modules to compliment my history degree, but on returning to Berkeley in my thirties, cinema became a solitary pleasure. Where were the like-minded souls?

That changed in the spring of 2011 with the South West Regional Screening. The exhortations to contribute from a visiting attendee, the friendly volunteer who recognised me as a regular punter, and the jovial team who had organised it, all spurred me to get involved.



I joined the committee in spring 2012 as an unelected non-voting member. I'd already provided a few thoughts, (though Jeff might call it a deluge) and I really appreciate the opportunity to now present them in person. I'm firmly believe that even the worst idea can trigger a brilliant one when shared, and even the most excellent plan needs thorough interrogation. Currently I'm looking at the logistics to bring National Theatre Live to Wotton. With the large costs involved this is an exciting challenge, but I believe this will prove a worthwhile venture to broaden our programme. I also attend FLIX and Sparkys, relishing the opportunity to debate the merits of new releases and see films we feel inappropriate for our demographic.

Away from the Cinema, my day job is at Berkeley's decommissioning nuclear power station. Initially involved in coordinating our increasingly detailed underpinning for returning the site to a brown field site, when the team disbanded I stumbled into planning. Stimulating, though often frustrating, this employs my love of logic, and I'm constantly learning as our waste retrieval strategies evolve. In effect the nuclear industry's cleaners, it's a privilege to be part of the team removing hazards and making it safe for future generations in my hometown.

I'm also a member of Cardiff Hash House Harriers, the international 'drinking club with the running problem'. I can't say I run like I used to, but having paid my dues organising national events, I'm now happy to be just part of the 'knitting circle', chatting away to old friends walking the shorter trail with the younger kids. I can keep up with them!

What is striking about The Electric Picture House is the massive amount of work involved in its operation, with an incredibly wide range of tasks requiring a very varied skill set, much of it behind the scenes. If anyone wants to contribute, there is a place for them. A truly awesome amount of effort and dedication goes into making us a very professional outfit. As a Johnny come lately, I'm proud to be a member of the team, value the friends I've made, and hope this section will expand to provide a profile for those whose work is less visible.
