

# SUPER EIGHT

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE MELBOURNE SUPER-8 FILM GROUP NO. 17 AUG '87

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2ND MELBOURNE SUPER 8  
FILM FESTIVAL

AUGUST 13-15  
GLASSHOUSE CINEMA, RMIT



## Glasshouse Theatre



Our annual Super-8 festival is upon us again.  
It will have a selection of local, interstate  
and overseas films.

Nightly Thursday to Saturday at 7:30 p.m.  
Tickets are \$5 and \$3 concession.

After the Thu screening: drinks.  
After the Sat screening: forum.

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# JULY MEETING

Last Open Screening's films:

7:30 - Dirk de Bruyn talked and showed two of his films - Boerdery

Frames

8:30 - A selection of overseas films presented by Anthony Foot -

USSA (France)

Polkafox (West Germany)

Born House (Japan)

And All Those Hours in the Paddy Fields (UK)

Do It (UK)

Final Cut (West Germany)

Danki (Japan)

Dislocation 2 (Japan)

10:15 - An actual BYO screening -

Queensland Junk Culture (Drew Waters)

Sound Motion Film (Mark Freeman)

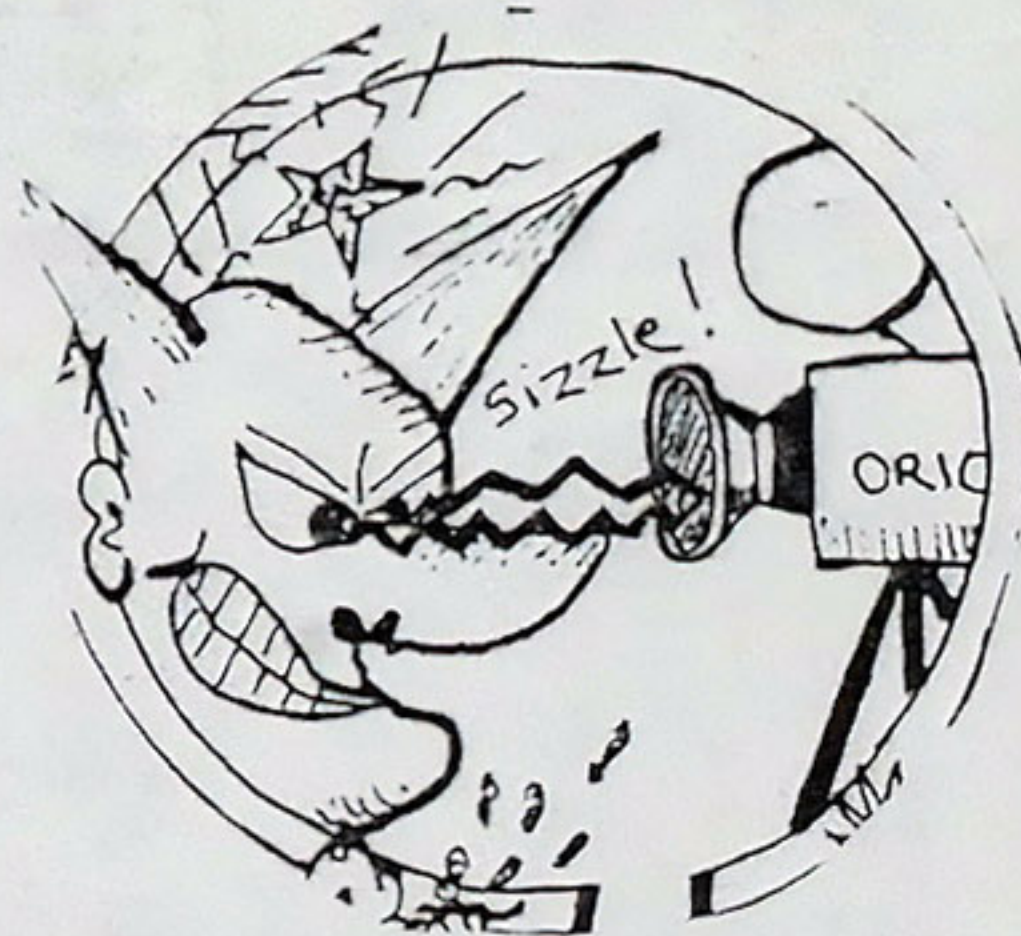
## DIRK DE BRUYN

At last months Open Screening well-known, experimental filmmaker Dirk de Bruyn enlightened and entertained those present with two of his films and his own personal view of Super 8 and independent filmmaking.

Dirk's enthusiasm seemed to catch on and an interesting discussion followed. Chris Knowles interjected with what I think is an important point in relation to film-making, that in the end the gauge is irrelevant. There was also some comment that groups such as ours are ghettoising themselves. It was then suggested that the group could perhaps hire from the National Library in Canberra some historic independent and or experimental films to show at our Open Screenings before we start to actually screen the Super 8 films. This idea seemed to be well received and if any members are interested in helping to set this up, please contact one of the committee members.

I found Dirk's personal history of experimenting with film interesting and the effect quite mesmerising.

Sarah Johnson.

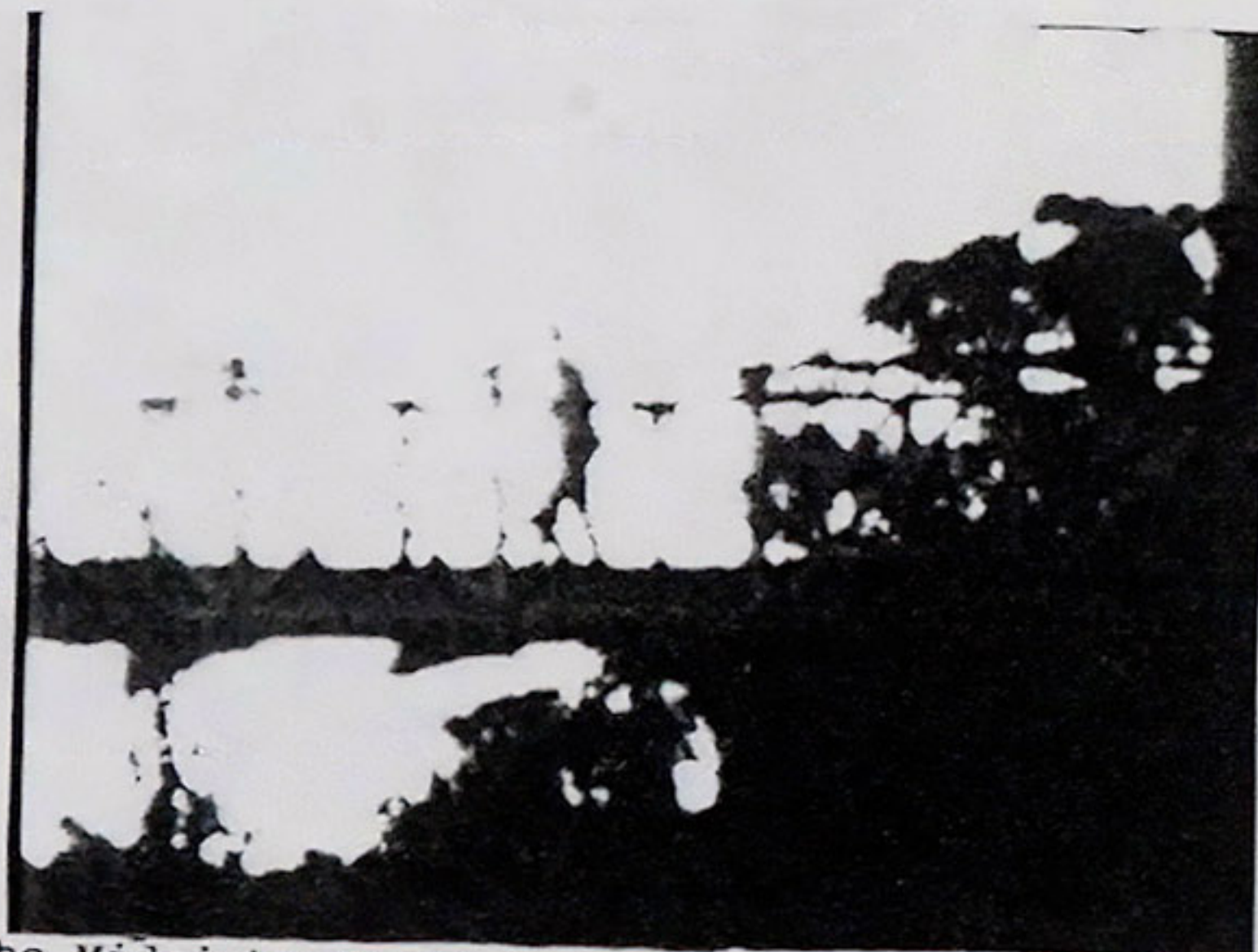


## VIDEO COMPILATION

MELBOURNE SUPER-8 GROUP VIDEO COMPILATION NO.1

This compilation (done off-the-wall) is now available for lending to group members. If you would like to borrow it, contact Matthew.

The video contains over two hours worth of material, including films by Noel Lloyd, Chris Van Der Craats, Matthew Rees, Peter Napier, Mehmet Raif, Ian Kerr, Bill Mousoulis, Piero Colli, Damien Grant, Roland Gallois, David Cox, Rolando Caputo, and Heather Shimmen.



The Midnight Train to Kathmandu (Mehmet Raif)



WEEK COMMENCING:  
30 JULY 1987

### SINGLES CHART

LAST WEEKS  
WEEK IN

1. I WANT YOUR SEX	Sarah Johnson	2	5
2. HE'S GONNA STEP ON YOU AGAIN	Bill Mousoulis	1	7
3. LOCOMOTION	Matthew Rees	12	2
4. RESPECTABLE	Anne-Marie Crawford	3	10
5. ALONE	Ian Kerr	7	5
6. CRAZY	John Calder	5	6
7. I WANNA DANCE WITH SOMEBODY WHO LOVES ME	Noel Lloyd	9	4
8. BREAKOUT	David Cox	4	11
9. NOTHING'S GONNA STOP US NOW	David Cox	6	9
10. GET READY	David Cox	10	5
11. FRIDAY ON MY MIND	Ron Olthof	8	13
12. CITY FLAT	Nick Ostrovskis	19	3
13. SHIP OF FOOLS	Super-8 Group Committee	34	2
14. NUDE SCHOOL	Ross Doonan	17	4
15. I STILL HAVEN'T FOUND WHAT I'M LOOKING FOR	Bill Mousoulis	13	9
16. WHO'S THAT GIRL	Jo Hampton	32	2
		15	7
		11	10
		27	3
		14	13
		16	10

"When you do not know what you are doing and what you are doing is the best - that is inspiration." - Robert Bresson, Notes on the Cinematographer

"The trouble was that high-brow critics came around to explain his art to him." - Frank Capra on the downfall of Harry Langdon.

With this article I'd just like to comment on some of the ideas and thoughts floating around in the Super-8 Group currently; ideas and thoughts expressed either in speech (by our last two 7:30 guests, Chris Knowles and Dirk de Bruyn), or in writing (by Ron Olthof and Anne-Marie Crawford in the last newsletter.)

Starting off with Chris Knowles, I find his assertion (that he works instinctively) a brave one. It's like saying: "I don't know what I'm doing." To me this not so much signifies a random approach, but rather an anti-intellectual stance - a stance borne of the desire to experience and express, rather than explain and understand. It's the difference between what one feels and what one thinks. (Hands up all those out there who secretly liked some of Wham!'s songs. I bet there's plenty!)

Invariably the film-maker who works instinctively works with impressions, with sensations, ones that resonate deeply for him. In terms of ideology, these "autobiographically oriented abstract films" (Anne-Marie's words) reverberate around the personal rather than the political. Therefore, Marxists or feminists or Christians would see these works as unimportant, because of their obsession with the maker's self. But, ideological systems are infamous for "massing-off" people and their individual lives, and one wonders how effective they actually are in bringing people together (surely their main aim.) Again, one senses that these doctrinaire people think about life rather than feel it.

As Anne-Marie perceptively points out, individualized works like Jo Hampton's Gold Green Black or Mehmet Raif's

The Midnight Train to Kathmandu have the conviction that they will strike a chord in their audience because of their personal nature. These films believe there is something that connects everybody and everything, and they try to get to that "something". I'd suggest that this is how one begins the process of "bringing people together". And all people at that (one thing the "isms" can't guarantee.) That's why Bruce Springsteen, in the live (video-clip) version of "Born to Run" (a song about the dreams of one particular guy), can suddenly scream out before the song "NOBODY WINS...UNLESS EVERYBODY WINS." Springsteen's art is profoundly concerned with the dream of unification and its possible realization. Whilst critics accuse him of blatant capitalism, his message is the soft and tender "Janey, don't you lose heart" (his most recent song, the B-side to "I'm Going Down.")

Ron Olthof, in his article "A Short Whinge About Experimental Films", is also keen on films connecting with their audience. He categorically states "film is above all a method or means of communication", but with it he places one proviso: films must be clear, must be understandable. Fine, but do we ignore Pascal's words: "People want to find the solution where all is enigma only"? Ron's argument isn't quite as simplistic as the narrative versus experimental film one, but it borders close to an advocacy of institutionalized film practices (as opposed to personal, experimental film practices.) Under this schema, a sort of formalism is generated, i.e. the films that get made aren't about life, but about film. Whilst such a formalism can be pleasing, it is



Harry Langdon

probably lesser than the sincere songs-from-the-heart that film-makers like Crawford and Hampton deliver.

Getting now to my final point, I believe there is a very real connection between one's approach to the film medium and where one stands in relation to the economic spectrum of Super-8-16mm-35mm. This matter was raised by and around Dirk de Bruyn at the last Open Screening. It's obvious that if one is committed to the challenge of expressing oneself through film (and all that entails) then one will not allow economic reasons to disrupt that process. As Dirk said, if tomorrow he stops getting grants, then that's not the end of his film-making career. Could this be said of fellow

If we can safely say that Super 8 represents an opportunity for a truly new, and even progressive cinema for the world conscience, then where does this notion take us?

Apart from the obvious availability of super 8 to people denied access by larger and "professional" (this term continues to trouble me) formats, the medium seems to attract a natural feeling for its users of obliquity - Kodak film is available everywhere and many families have the camera lying around somewhere. Omnipresent S8 indeed seems to lie waiting to erupt from the dormant confines of the forgotten home movie cupboard, to be liberated for the purposes of urban, suburban application outside the institution of the family. Home movies of a new kind which reinforce and reflect the lifestyles of younger, often inner city, artists and others.

The language of Super 8 - simplicity, ease of operation - invariably spills over to subject matter. Narrative forms, non-narrative forms, the flotsam and jetsam of the lives of those who wield their means of communication, share screen space in semi-formal gatherings - the living room screening, the open screening. The feeling which emerges so often is one of community, a shared experience, a sense of celebration at S8's power as a unifier, a trading post of ideas. The S8 camera is characterised by its small size, its portability. The camera finds easy access to often the most private insights into its operators lives. Pushed into these new arenas of application, S8, Video's older "obsolete" sibling, gains a new identity. Liberated from propaganda home movie "Here are the members of the family. Here is proof, fun is had, we are happy", S8 is becoming a tool in new hands for many different and varied uses.

Politically where can S8 be said to be heading? No longer stigmatised by its forced ghettoisation, our medium is on its way to newer more varied uses. Children make more movies on S8 than video; they can't afford video. Neither can anyone else. In Europe, Berlin for example, filmmakers choose S8 as a matter of necessity. The luxuries of pondering the qualities of Super 8 go out the window when for reasons of economic and political practicality the medium becomes the one and only means to express dissention, revolutionary ideas and other matters of burning necessity.

Here in Melbourne the stagnant, conservative, dark and murky bourgeoisie preoccupation with fine art and mainstream film careerism tends to smother the chance for a similarly urgent political S8 cinema. It seems we just don't care. But this tendency is subsiding.

As the forces of the new right attempt each day to consolidate the concentration of the media locally (Australia has the highest concentration of media ownership in the world) and globally, those of us without access to more mainstream public and community communications are turning to low cost alternatives to express ourselves. The myth of S8 being outside "broadcast quality" criteria imposed by TV stations serves the interests of larger format

where larger cameras prove difficult. An entire series of "The Leyland Brothers" was made on S8. Dick Smith employed a Super 8 camera to record a geography doco from a helicopter - operated by remote control. The results of the Ch 9 "Hey Hey" program's Canned Film Festival reveal just how well S8 comes up on broadcast TV. In each of these examples, though, the use of S8 served the interests of the TV stations - to support commercial interests of the sponsor and the ideology of the station. The point is S8 can and is able to be broadcast. This should not deter us from making S8 production for broadcast intentions. Increasingly S8 is being used at public demonstrations to record events

which often get less than sympathetic coverage by commercial TV. In drama, comedy and experimental works S8 filmmakers are increasingly investigating subject matter which highlights issues of social and political concerns. Feminists, gay and lesbian filmmakers find in Super 8 and appropriate medium to express ideas and highlight issues of importance (examples are Ross Doonan, Jo Hamption, John Hardy, Gary Warner.) Marxist film is finding new audiences via Super 8 and works with a left message are on the increase, reflecting a counter response to the tide of conservatism sweeping the world. Accessibility places the Super 8 camera in the hands of ordinary people and we can expect films of a new kind emerging from the darkened shadows.

of importance to examples like Ross Doonan, Jo Hamption, Marxist film maker, is finding new audiences via Super 8 and works with a left message are on the increase, reflecting a counter response to the tide of conservatism sweeping the world. Accessibility places the Super 8 camera in the hands of ordinary people and we can expect films of a new kind emerging from the darkened shadows.

David Cox  
6/87



# Mainstream

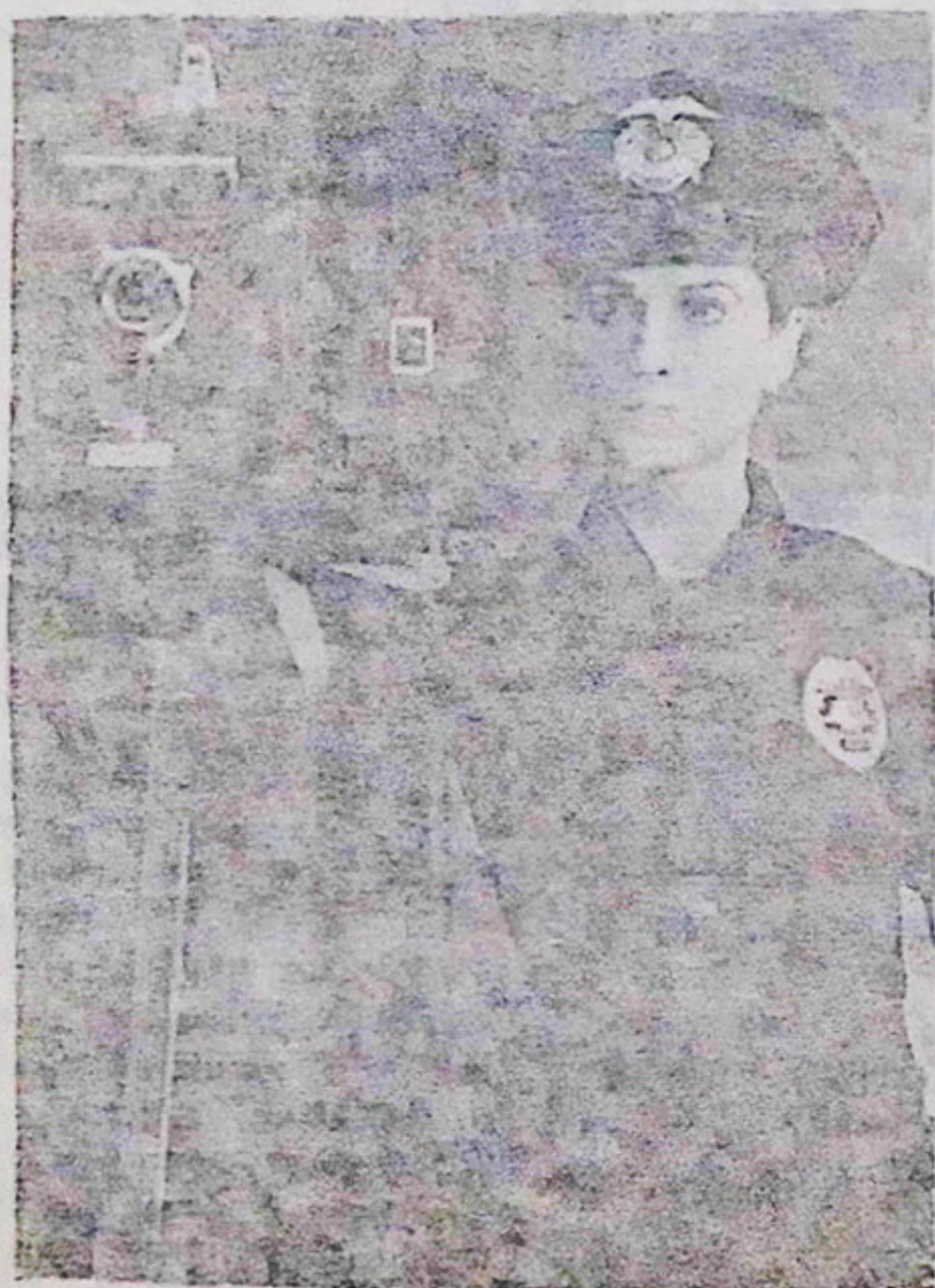
## FILM OF THE MONTH

RAISING ARIZONA (U.S.A., Dir: Joel Coen.)

It would be a pity if this strange and beautiful film were left circumscribed by its image of outlandish story and cartoony fun. For its vision of a pathological America is counterpoised by an undercurrent of lovingness that makes it a surprisingly touching and tender work. That's why the caricatural Nathan Arizona (Trey Wilson) can stop and plaintively advise the troubled couple not to split. Later that night, with no reconciliation apparent, HI (Nicolas Cage) dreams not only that his bond with Ed (Holly Hunter) survives, but that they have kids and grandkids. Just as the biker from hell (Randall Cobb) appeared first in one of HI's dreams, this glimpse of heaven comes across as predistant likelihood. Whatever, it's the dream to match that nightmare.

Joel Coen's camera skirts blissfully around the houses, roads, etc. and his editing is razor sharp. This film is so fast that the 10-minute pre-title sequence covers several years and several events. The obviously contrived (storyboarded) shots don't come across that way, and the use of point-of-view ranges from the gruesome (one of the babies falling on HI) to the delicate (Nathan Sr. looking at the couple looking at Nathan Jr.) Thus, even Raising Arizona's style displays (and reveals) the film's double-edged nature; a nature that makes it a brother to Blue Velvet and a son to the original American innocence/American evil exposition, Charles Laughton's *The Night of the Hunter* (1955).

(Bill Mousoulis)



SUPER-8 REVIEW ★

Faith (Bill Mousoulis, 27mins, 1987)

I could say that Bill Mousoulis' most recent film *Faith* tells the story of a failing relationship between a couple. We see one character (the husband) leaving for work, at work, searching for another job and coming home to bath the baby. His wife between these scenes bakes a cake, feeds the baby and eventually leaves a note saying that she has "left for a break".

Yet Bill's most recent film is of a type of cinema far removed from that of telling stories. *Faith*, with its prolonged shots of people just thinking and going about ordinary tasks does not rush towards a story by establishing connotative meanings. Instead we learn, just by looking and with patience, that the couple are together and slowly separating.

With gentle directing Bill does not impose a story upon the viewer. *Faith* lets its story grow from its spaces, revealing how the cinema and its meanings can be very hard to pinpoint. By distancing himself from his work, Bill does not invest the film with obvious/meaningful editing, framing, etc. Instead he lets meaning grow out of silence; significance grow out of the fact that he has faith, as much as the viewer begins to slowly realize, that the characters do not have to be spoken for. Their richness slowly rises to the surface. It is controlled by the ordinariness the film believes in and endeavours to capture.

A direct antithesis of the type of cinema which believes that the image must be ruptured by sound and editing in order to discover meaning, *Faith* places its reliance upon an audience's patience to observe; a belief that the cinema, without cynicism, still has realistic potential and that directing need not necessarily and overtly refer back to the director's style to be seen as rigorous, involved and involving.

DARRON DAVIES

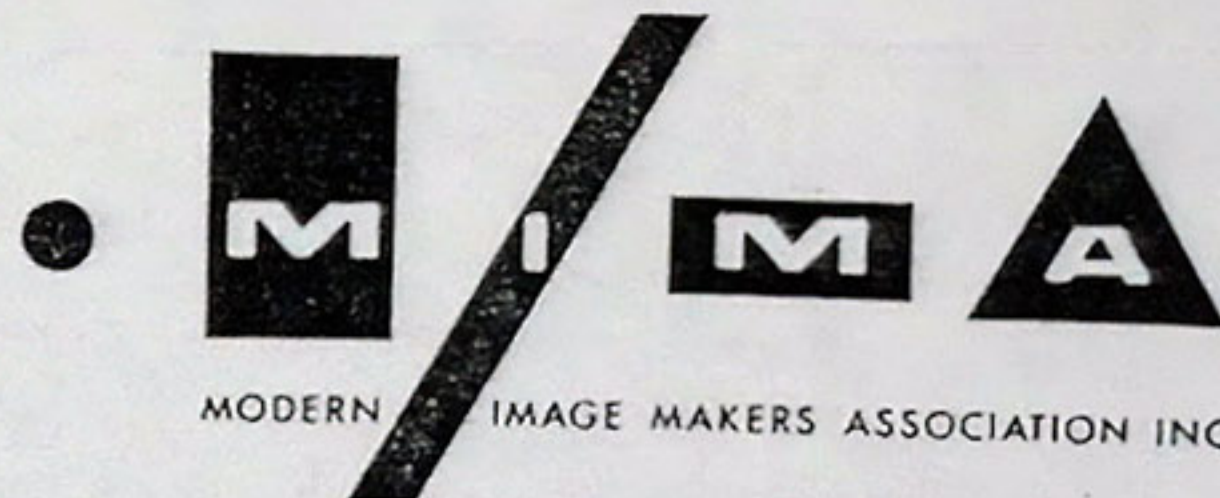
"UNTITLED" continued -

Australian film-makers Auzins, Schultz, Trenchard-Smith, or even Pringle, Lowenstein, Cox? These names mean nothing in terms of passion or resilience. There's only de Bruyn, Knowles, Cantrills, Lee, Buckley, Bergner, Ostrovskis, Titmarsh, Tammer, Windmill. And of feature film-makers currently working in Australia, there is only one who seems to have a passion for the stuff - Stephen Wallace (The Love Letters from Teralba Road, Stir, The Boy Who Had Everything, For Love Alone, and for TV Captives of Care and Mail Order Bride.)

The dreams of de Bruyn, Springsteen, Crawford et al are beautiful but fragile ones; generous and energetic, they swerve magically upwards, but are met by a sad and tricky world. In this scenario it's no wonder people and ideas go cynical. The way out, however, is to accept that scenario, and then proceed. As Springsteen once said in an interview, "Where there's truth, there's always hope." \*



This man is running to the Glasshouse to see The Second Melbourne Super 8 Festival.



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## FALL FROM THE GARDEN

FRIDAY AUGUST 28 9.30PM  
SATURDAY AUGUST 29 5.30PM

Remnant Blue (Tom Psomotragas and Trevor Graham)

Dandenong Forest: For Cage and Thoreau Grass (Warren Burt)

Erratica (Jonas Balsaitis)

Afternoon (Michael Lee)

Dream (Maggie Fooke)

The White Tree (Nick Ostrovskis)

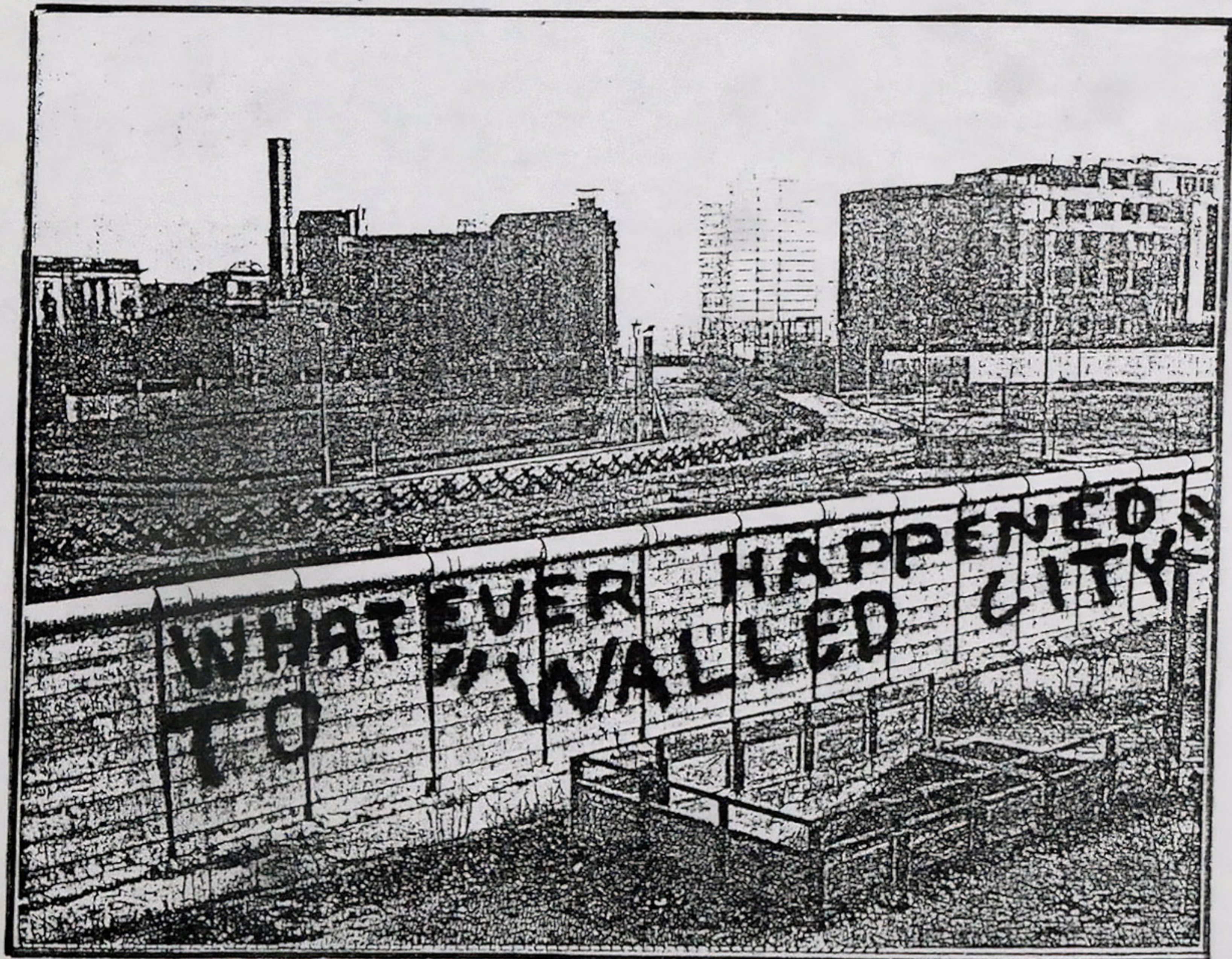
Bark Rind (Paul Winkler)

SUNDAY AUGUST 30 7.30PM

Raak (David Corke)

The Second Journey (To Uluru)  
(A. and C. Cantrill)

Venue: STATE FILM THEATRE



# NO Next Meeting !!

There will be no Open Screening this month because of the Festival's proximity to the Open Screening date. There will however still be a screening on the 2nd Tuesday:

Tuesday, 11 August, 7:30 p.m.

Glasshouse Meeting Room, RMIT.

Special screening of David Cox's feature film/  
performance

Onus On Us (approx. 90 mins)

## CONTACT NUMBERS FOR THE GROUP

Anne-Marie Crawford	527 8496
Sarah Johnson	534 4344
Ian Kerr	859 1683
Noel Lloyd	481 5832
Bill Mousoulis	419 6562
Ron Olthof	481 4157
Matthew Rees	489 4183
John Thomson	417 5193

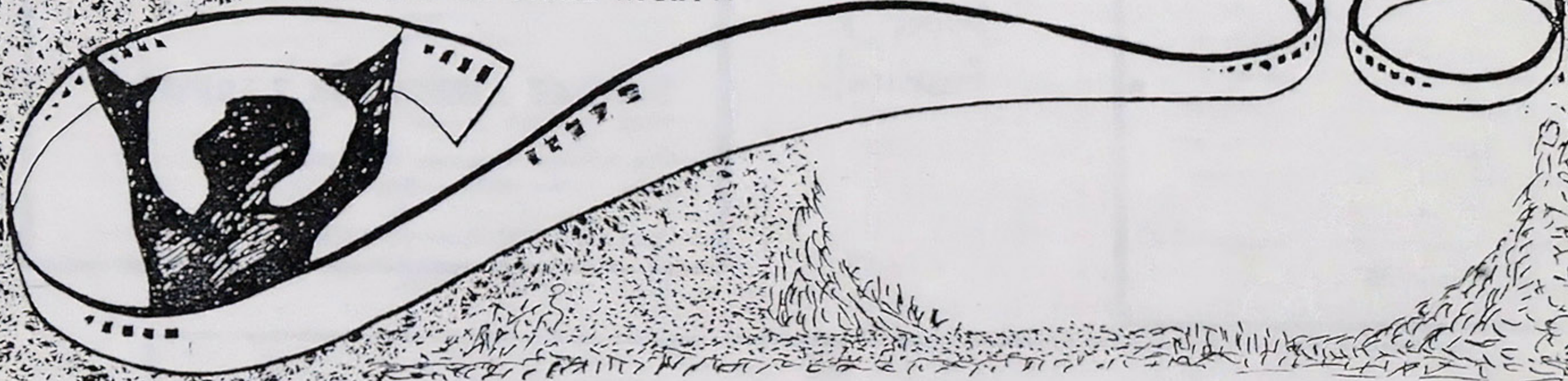
## RESOURCE POOL

Equipment & Crew	(Bill)
Actors	(Matthew)
General	(Sarah)

## THE 2ND MELBOURNE SUPER-8 FILM FESTIVAL

AUGUST 13<sup>th</sup> 14<sup>th</sup> 15<sup>th</sup> 7:30 PM ~~~~~ GLASSHOUSE CINEMA RMIT

FORUM HELD ON FINAL NIGHT!!



This newsletter is published monthly by the Melbourne Super-8 Film Group.

Contributions welcome (deadline: 4th. Monday of each month).

Membership to the Super-8 Group is \$10 per 12 months.

Editorial and layout by: *Ian & Bill*

## SUPER EIGHT

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