

# super eight

THE NEWSLETTER-MAGAZINE OF THE MELBOURNE SUPER-8 FILM GROUP NO.6 AUG. 1986

## Meeting Reported

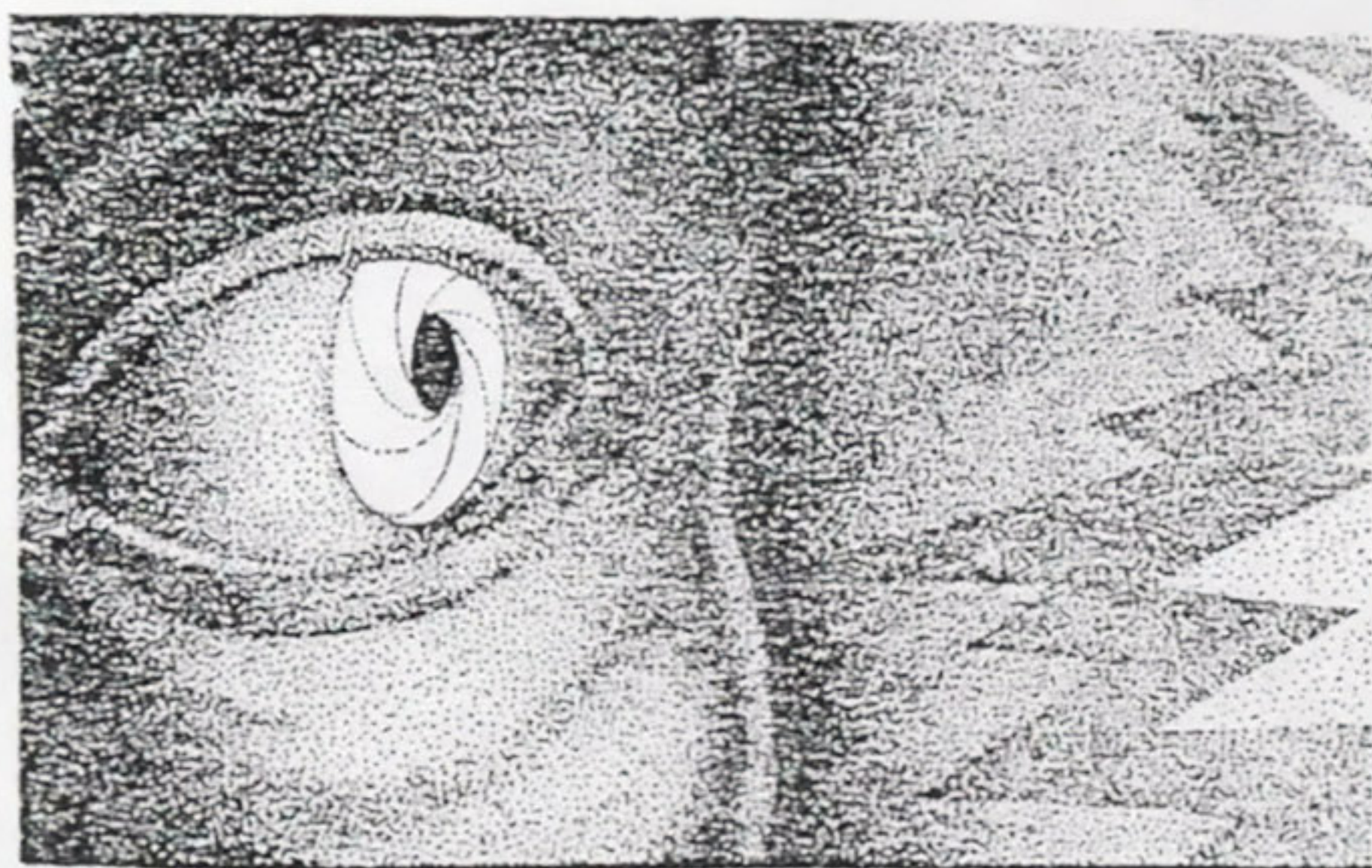
### WORKSHOP REPORT

At last month's open screening, record numbers turned up to hear an informed and informative talk by Suzanne Chapman and Kathi Sands. No-matter the gauge and in fact no-matter the medium, poor acting can ruin any project and turn the best aspirations to laughable and or mediocre results. As Sue and Kathi pointed out, a little organization and communication between actors and film-makers will work to overcome this.

Acting exercises were suggested and maybe workshops to as a way of familiarizing your actors with their role, the film, it's style and the director's intentions.

I think the over-riding emphasis of this talk was that with narrative films (and generally this will mean fairly conventional film styles) organization and confidence in your project will help to ensure a more succesful result.

Sarah Johnson.



### THE SCREENING

by Barry Branchflower

Examples of an I.D. film title for the group premiered first up to let it be known it is available to all members to tack on to their films in order to give the group a higher profile. Clips are available from John Calder. John also brought in the edited results of the filming done during June's animation workshop.

Now, about the other films - One Night in Chippano by Nick Donkin was a good way to commence the evening. A plasticine creature fed on raw meat and kept in a bird cage, naturally, escapes and adds a little life to the three friends who share a house. Some clever sequences add humour and delight. Sydney's Michael Hutak showed again he can point a camera at a television screen. A short live segment of an improptu street interview held a glimmer of pathos but why join it to the rest of Immortal Turf.

Matthew Rees presented a successful example of audience manipulation in Normal Bias. The same piece of film, shot in black and white was played twice with two different music tracks. The visuals - a man and a woman, in love, in a house. The first music was moody and romantic and gave this version a sweeping feel. The second had boppier music and with the film speeded up gave the appearance of a pop film clip. The effect this treatment had on the audience was evident by the spontaneous discussion after.

The idea of two people who inevitably meet is explored by Bill Mousoulis in Physical World. We see a man and a woman played by Matthew Rees and Georgina Campbell getting ready for work, separately. We even see Bill for an instant in Matthew's mirror. (Hitchcock lives.) Although I anticipated that Matthew and Georgina were going to cross paths, (and that is not because I helped out in a couple of scenes), we are left wondering the consequence of this coming together of the pair.

In Destiny David Cox asks the question of "Do we create our futures or do they lie there waiting for us?" I am not sure how the endearing, though eccentric, performance by Jo Hampton, with the balloon, realises this premise. The film's objectives seem a little blurred. Was the pet kangaroo introduced as a 'post Skippy Australiana sarcosis' or did it just hopen (sorry) to be there.

Maladaption No.3 by Peter Napier is a stark, sometimes touching study. Ian Ecclesmith plays William, a complex character we see typing on a sea chest in an otherwise empty room. Someone sends him a package containing a telephone. It is as if it is the first time William has ever seen one (lucky William). He retreats to the typewriter for security. Nice bit of symbolism. Ian Ecclesmith also composed the music for the film.

### \*\*\*\*\*ACTORS\*\*FILM CREW\*\*EQUIPMENT\*\*\*\*\*

The idea of developing a resource pool of actors, crew and equipment has arisen, so we are now gathering information as to who is prepared to offer something in these areas. Matthew Rees will be covering the acting area and Bill Mousoulis will be collecting details about crew and equipment. The intention is that Matthew and Bill will act as liaison between the filmmaker wanting assistance and those willing to give it.

If you are able to contribute to the work of other filmmakers in any way, (it could be as diverse as art work or music to lending a tripod), please ring and say what you have to offer and on what conditions you offer it, (eg. do you want to be there while your equipment is being used?). expanded access to skills, technology and talent is good for us all.

You can also ring if you want help with your film, but bear in mind the project's just begun,

CREW AND EQUIPMENT - Bill Mousoulis: 419 6562

ACTORS - Matthew Rees ; 387 9292



Berlin Wall, Jo Hampton's record of the graffiti-strewn 'division' between East and West was visually pretty average. True, there is only so much you can do with a two-dimensional subject, but I am not sure it was fully done here. The real plus to this piece is the original music by David Cox. An unlikely combination which did not necessarily work in this case, but is to be encouraged.

The stylized look at married life in A Relationship Study by Drew Waters can be viewed on different levels. Set in a tip, was the open-air house a post nuclear lifestyle-compromise, a clinging on to memories of obsolete mores, or as the rooftops and powerlines on the horizon belied, was it a surreal representation of current values? Whichever you prefer, the haunting 'Clean the house, quiet as a mouse' chant of the wife clearly encased her opinion of the relationship.

The indomitable Jo Hampton, in addition to her involvement with the two films already mentioned and a live commentary which drew a unanimous response of "Shh!", also presented Rain Dance, Travel, Travel, Travel. Basically, it is composed of visual images scratched on dark film. While this kind of treatment is fine in a workshop environment of for expanding one's grasp on the medium, at public screenings they tend to fall into the category of 'obscure experimental'. There are probably enough examples around to complete the program of an entire film festival; that is if anyone could sit through it.

A couple of points come to mind from this screening. Every film was applauded. This is unusual, so no film stood out as a crowd favourite. I do not think this means all the audience liked all the films all the time. Perhaps whoever started the applause for the first film also set a precedent for those to follow. (John Calder, where were your hands at the time?)

Looking over my notes taken during the screening, I found I was unusually unmoved by the majority of films. Even Michael Hutak drew nothing stronger than a 'Do we have to?' notation, which surprised me considering my previous views on his style (June '86 Newsletter). Maybe I was just having an 'attack of the apathies', or is it possible a series of unrelated and unconnected films when shown together determine and create an overall continuity of mood, a persona for that whole screening? Volatile chemistry, indeed, which was never intended by the film-maker nor the screening co-ordinator. Something to consider if you have any input into film festivals.

It was good to see more than a couple of films containing music composed especially for these films. This type of endeavour helps to elevate the art of Super-8 and even gain respect from those who favour other mediums. A good topic for a future workshop. \*

## THE IMMEDIATE BREATH

The Immediate Breath - devised and performed by Dave Cox.

Dave Cox is the complete artist in his performance of this work: painter, draughtsman, poet, composer, musician, film-maker and performer.

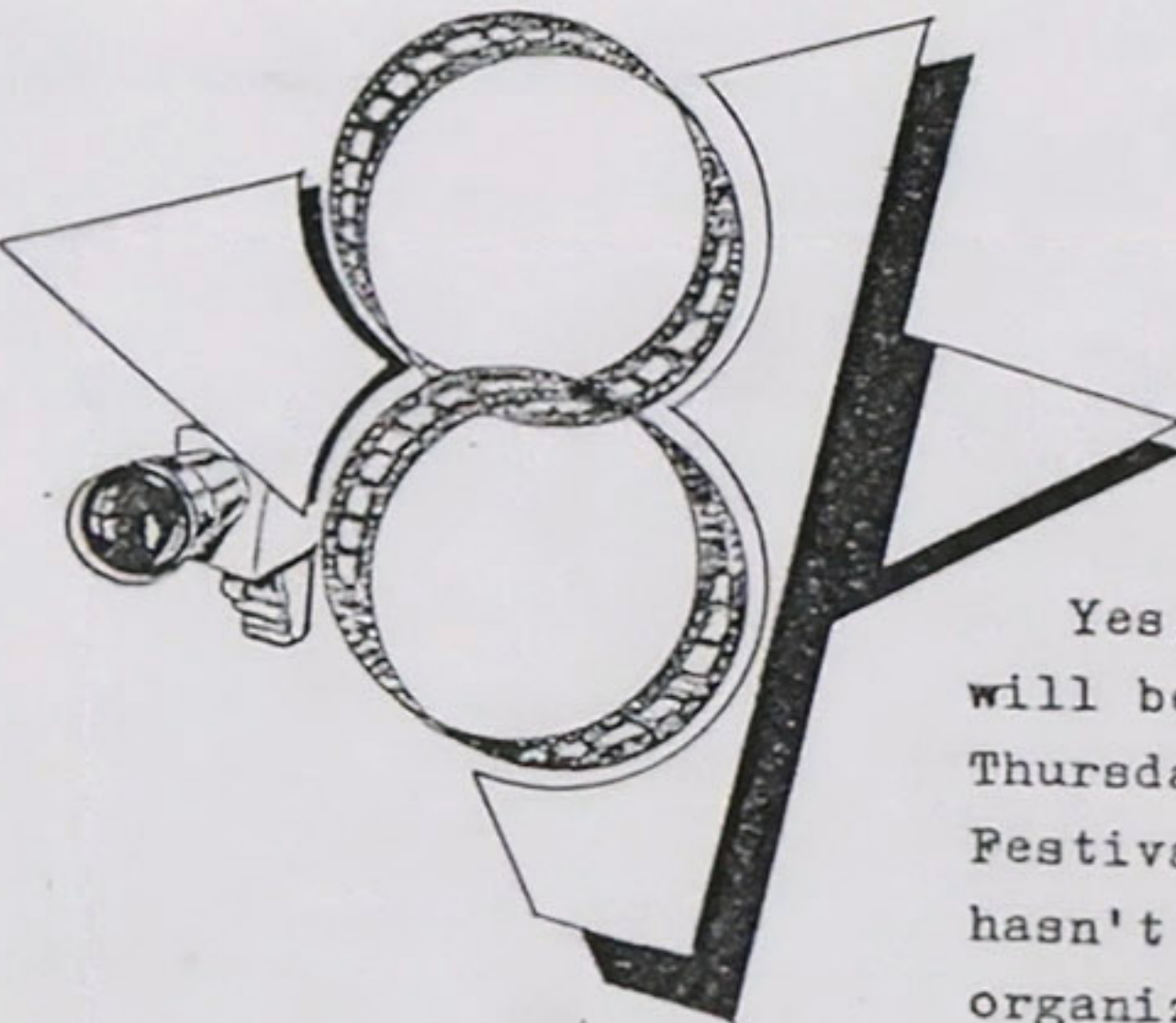
He experiments with the interaction of live and recorded performance - the immediate versus the delayed. I found Dave's use of the microcassette recorder the most vivid example of this interaction. The live performer and his tinny distorted recording take turns to speak the lines of the piece. (Dave plans to build on this approach in future pieces.)

The theme of "The Immediate Breath" struck me as being one of accusation. We are all guilty of the misuse of power - directly or as accomplices - and we are all seduced into fighting the "fortune wars". The plight of Nicaragua becomes a symbol of all war, as Dave steps into the character of a veteran of those campaigns, sometime in the future, looking back into our present - his past.

Dave projects a Super-8 film with part of his performance - ultra close-ups of an eye and a mouth. Even these images carry an expression of accusation to glare at us all.

- John Calder.

# The 1st Melbourne SUPER - 8 Film Festival



Yes, there is going to be a Super-8 Festival in Melbourne this year. It will be held at the Glasshouse Cinema, R.M.I.T., 360 Swanston St. City, from Thursday August 28 to Saturday August 30, 7:30 p.m. start each night. The Festival is not being run by the Melbourne Super-8 Film Group because it hasn't the money or the funding for such a venture. It is hence being organized by Bill Mousoulis.

Although Bill has a substantial part of the program already lined up, he is still looking for films. He is particularly keen to highlight new Melbourne material. There are no entry forms for this Festival, so if you have a film you would like to be considered for the screenings, ring Bill as soon as possible on 419 6562.

Preview screenings will be occurring throughout early-to-mid August, and the program will be finalized a good 10 days before the festival. So if you have a film that fits the requirements, and that you'd like to be screened in this festival, and that Bill doesn't know about, give Bill a bell quick smart!



# MUSIC IN FILM

or ROLL OVER BEETHOVEN

by Bill Mousoulis

Never let it be said that Super-8 is different; not where music is concerned anyway. The use of music in Super-8 film is very similar to the use of it in other film: it's either used well or not well, creatively or not creatively.

The most conventional usage of music in film, what I really cringe at, is when it's used as filler material, to fill up a gap here or there (gasp, imagine a silent establishing shot) or to act as a background for whole scenes. This music seeks not to be heard and experienced as music (combining with film in some way), but to serve a particular function, a small role in the film's overall make-up (conforming with rather than combining with the film), and always low in the mix. What would Beethoven think of this action, this relegation? He'd be rolling over, I'm sure.

I never thought I'd see a Super-8 film use music in this way, but it's happened - Peter Nathan's Dulcie's Love and Peter Napier's Maladaption No.3. Now don't get me wrong; music used in this way can work (the films of Dreyer or Spielberg for example), it's just that most times it seems a dull, unadventurous way to use music. Now, these two Super-8 films have moments in them when the music genuinely does liven the films; it's all the other moments that have got me worried, skeptical. The films in question are narrative ones: why are narrative film-makers afraid to let sounds of cars, doors, etc. stand on their own? (Someone show them to the nearest theatre playing Bresson or Akerman. Please...)

C'mon guys! Let's explore what we can do with sound, with music. Let's take a risk....and see what happens.

What I personally find very exciting is the combination of pop songs with film. And I don't mean video clips - I mean Kenneth Anger's Scorpio Rising and Martin Scorsese's Mean Streets, for example. In Super-8 we have Virginia Hilyard's Yes It Is, the work of Paul Fletcher, and most recently of all, Matthew Rees' Normal Bias. Matthew's film is an interesting case in point, actually. The film is practically about the power of music. It's in two parts: the first part has a classical music soundtrack to it. The second part is the first part repeated, but faster (24 fps rather than 18), and with a pop music soundtrack alongside. The difference in effect is breathtaking, while the difference in quality (of the two parts) is negligible (indeed, at the film's premier screening, some said they liked the first part better, others the second part - there was no bias towards either one.)

Even though I prefer pop music with film (maybe because it isn't done that frequently) I still like classical or other music when combined with film. All I have to do is think of Mark Titmarsh's Legion, for example: the reverberation of the strings in the title sequence or the opera singer at the end. This is the kind of thing I like to see: music being given a mission, a direction, to hopefully create something new, something exciting, to enliven and expand the film's horizons, to boldly go where no man...

After all, it is not 'film' that is important (and notions of conventional film in particular), but that which can be done, with sight and sound... \*

## THE FILMS OF JOHN CALDER: A REVIEW

(Grierson Cinema, July 28)

The first time I met John Calder (August 1985) he was shy, but hardly reserved. It was at a Fringe Open Screening and he was new in town (from New Zealand), testing the waters, feeling his way. For here was a man with a wealth of Super-8 experience, wondering just what kind of independent film scene there was in Melbourne. I told him of a little Super-8 collective doing stuff also, and the rest, well, is history...

His films are like him: enthusiastic, childlike, bizarre, sensitive, intelligent, and, certainly not least of all, funny. And clever-funny, mind you, not dumb-funny. He has been working on Super-8 now for almost ten years (i.e. in adulthood); surely this is some sort of record? (Will any of us others, enthusiastic Super-8 film-makers that we call ourselves, turn out so passionate?) He has made short films, long films (feature-length), 3-screen films, comedy, drama, documentary, sci-fi, animation, the list goes on... No matter what we think (or love or hate) about his films themselves, John has to be given full marks for his incredible elan, his incredible enthusiasm for making films.

And he is generous too; that's why, given the chance to choose and structure this program of "The films of John Calder", he included a couple of films in which he just helped out, and then proceeded to talk to the audience inbetween each film, about (his) film-making. There's no two ways about it: John gives of himself. Most weekends he is to be found shooting (and I don't mean rabbits...) and at

most Super-8 screenings he is to be found talking: asking questions, giving answers, giving advice, etc.

The good news is that he's also a good film-maker. The crowd at the Grierson on July 28 (a disappointing 20 or so - where were you, guys?) would've noticed this for themselves had their eyes been open. Still, I recognize, quite strongly (from conversations I have with others), that I am empathetic towards and in tune with John's work more than most people.

The first John Calder film I ever saw was Mock Commercials and I laughed my head off. I then saw Do it With a Real Fox and was convinced this guy was crazy...but great. Talk about zaniness! But Amandlal, for one, is different: a totally engrossing documentary, and done quite lovingly, quite beautifully. Only an excerpt was shown on this night, however, the same for the manic Space Ace and the Rain of Death, because the films are quite long.

Is You Is and Big City Living show John the animator at work and they remind me of Denis Tupikoff's work: emotionally effective. Faust Ballet, another animation, with its strictly green and yellow colours, is practically mystical in its effect. On the other end of the scale there is Patterns, a full-blown narrative, in John's words "a soap opera parody". I somehow prefer the other films.

The Microwave, one of John's most recent works, had a live (jazz) band accompanying it. A disappointment for me this film, rather staid compared to his best work. Like Men of the



John Calder

Weeds or Fleas - is the word ("it's given it a new meaning") neither of which appeared on the night. Same for Imagex Three, John's three-screen work, which has a breath-taking scene on the MET in it.

Those of you who missed this night, well, kick yourselves. And make sure not to miss a similar night coming up once again at the Grierson in a couple of weeks. This time the focus will be on three of our younger Super-8 film-makers: Anne-Marie Crawford, Matthew Rees, and Nick Ostrovskis. Come and see their films: Monday, August 25, 7:00 p.m. Grierson Cinema, 17 St. Andrews Place, East Melb. \$3.00.



CANTRILLS FILMNOTES No.49/50 has articles in it on and/or by Super-8 film-makers: Adrian Martin, Bill Mousoulis, Marcus Bergner, Maggie Fooke, Alexander Campbell, and Andrew Preston.  
(Available from Readings Books, Lygon St. Carlton)

FILM VIEWS No.128 has articles on Super-8 in it by Dirk de Bruyn and Bill Mousoulis and also reviews of Amandla! (John Calder), Death City (Anne-Marie Crawford), Solitary (Michael Borenstein), Train of Events (Michael Hutak), Legion (Mark Titmarsh), and Dulcie's Love (Peter Nathan)  
(Available from most newsagents)

\*\*Copies of both magazines will be available at the next Open Screening on August 12.

# CANTRILLS FILMNOTES FILM VIEWS

NEXT MEETING...NEXT MEETING...NEXT MEETING...NEXT MEETING...NEXT MEETING...

Tuesday, August 12 at the Glasshouse Meeting Room, RMIT

## GROUP MEETING

At 7:30 p.m. DO-IT-YOURSELF PROCESSING

John Calder and Matthew Rees present a workshop on home processing of film.

At 8:30 p.m. SUPER-8 FILMS

Films made-on-eight. BYO film!

Everyone welcome, including non-members

New members (for the months of June and July): David Cox, Mark Freeman, Jo Hampton, Bill Jordan, Darron Davies, Chris Knowles, Maris Rocke, Marcus Bergner, Michael Buckley, Ian Poppins, Anne-Marie Crawford, Christina Pedder, Judy Schreiber, Harry Starverkos, Adam Saulwick, Jennifer Mitchell, John Graham, and the APTS.

\*\* It was only a short while ago that we were struggling for money - now we're surviving...and practically thriving. Thanks guys!

MEMBERSHIP is open to anyone with an interest in independent film-making and is only \$10 for twelve months.

# 8

## super eight

This newsletter-magazine is published monthly by The Melbourne Super-8 Film Group

Layout by Anne-Marie Crawford and Bill Mousoulis

Contributions are welcome

Membership to the Group is \$10 for twelve months

## super eight

Registered by Australia Post  
Publication N° VBG 7570

if undeliverable return to:  
Melbourne Super 8 Film Group  
P.O. Box 1150  
Richmond North 3121

Postage  
Paid  
Rich. Nth  
Vic Aust  
3121

CHRIS WINDMILL

6/158 Chapel St.

Balaclava, 3183