

## **CHAIR'S REPORT AGM SEPTEMBER 2023**

This report covers the period April 2022 to April 2023, with some later updates included.

First, I'd like to thank Philip Howard for his longstanding voluntary role as committee chair. His calm, methodical approach served our varied group well. Under his chairmanship, the cinema flourished, then survived the pandemic - no mean feat, when other organisations were sinking under the financial burden. Under his watch, we moved out of the pandemic closure, gradually increasing the proportion of screenings without social distancing. We're very pleased to have been able to hold ticket prices at their previous level, considering increases in the cost of living, and to offer student, under 25 and concession tickets at only £5.

### **Introductions to the current committee (slide 1)**

I moved from the role of Volunteer Coordinator to become chair in September 2022. Sam Clark has been secretary since June 2021, following the sad death of John Ingman. Thanks to her for her positive attitude and common sense.

Andy Howe became Volunteers' Administrator in November 2022, then added the voluntary role of Treasurer in January this year, following Margaret Siudek's retirement and the decision of Susan Roberts not to take up the role of treasurer due to changed circumstances.

Harshida Amin became Volunteer Coordinator in September 2022 and has set about recruiting significant numbers of new volunteers.

Leonard Bennett, in his capacity as a PR specialist, was invited to join the committee in October 2022.

After Deborah Davies stepped down as Box Office Manager, she was replaced by Michael Snowden in November 2022.

To update this, Michael and David Lavelli have recently exchanged their roles. David is now Box Office Manager, in addition to his many other voluntary roles, and Michael has taken on the rebranded post of Publicity and Outreach Manager. We must thank David for his many years of enthusiastic work and prolific output. He's the person every organisation needs, who always says yes!

The committee works within this organisational structure (slide 2). You may not have realised how many people do unseen work for us. At this point, I'd like to send a special thank you to the often unrecognised but essential little group of handy people who do the many small jobs without which the fabric of the cinema would certainly fall into disrepair and dysfunction.

This year we were delighted to welcome as our patron Joanna Scanlan, a local actress who had supported us previously (slide 3). We announced this at a volunteers' event 7 June, held to thank over 80 front-of-house, projection and backroom volunteers without whom we could not exist. Following this event, we screened *Girl With A Pearl Earring*, in which she stars, along with Colin Firth and Scarlett Johansson (slide 4). At this screening, she brought a surprise guest, her friend Tilda Swinton, who had some kind and very supportive words for us (slide 5).

We are currently in negotiations with Joanna about further screenings and fund-raising opportunities, some with her other friends - so watch this space!

A big thank you to the loyal supporters who have made generous donations, large and small, which have allowed us to purchase a new laptop for the box office, among other items. We're very grateful for these.

Some of the screening highlights of the year included *Lawrence of Arabia*, shown on December 10 2022, the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of film's release and of course, directed by David Lean himself. We have also put our 35mm projector to good use with a continuing programme of these films, starting with the enchanting *Jeanne de Florette* and *Manon des Sources*. Our thanks to Phil Clark, from the Cinema Museum who has the specialised skills needed to operate the projector and to David Lavelli for coordinating these screenings.

The dementia friendly programme was restarted following the pandemic, with funding from London Borough of Culture, as well as more recently, a programme of relaxed screenings for young people with autism and their families. Our successful LBoC bid, led by David Lavelli and Janet Smith, also includes local history films (*The Flying Fool* has already proved popular), a British Sign Language greeter at selected films and films on a Windrush theme.

And following his resounding success last year with the punk film *Are They Hostile?* we're proud to announce that Adrian Winchester, our indefatigable founder and continuing volunteer, is planning a Punk Film Festival week from 30 October - 4 November, to coincide with the Museum of Croydon's music events on the same theme. We're ordering large quantities of specially branded beer!

We restarted regular meetings with council building staff from early 2023. These have already borne fruit, with the expediting of an improved system for downloading films from distributors, new internal signage, and an opening of negotiations seeking a written licence to operate in these premises. Thanks to volunteer Lesley Syme and local graphic designer Jeremy Hopes, for their assistance in the design used for our internal signage. We continue to explore ways in which we can work with the council to improve the signage outside the Clocktower building too.

Also reinstated are regular directors' meetings, with more informative regular communications to them. Our directors are myself, Adrian Winchester, Janet Smith, Sam Clark, Philip Howard and Margaret Siudek. Margaret will be standing down from her director role in November and I would like to thank her for her long and sterling service to the cinema. These roles are important, as directors are legally responsible for overseeing our work and ensuring that we adhere to our Community Interest Company guidelines.

Falling later than April this year, but deserving of a special mention, our Operations Manager Roger Dowling carried out a potentially extremely tricky repair to the ageing projector server, without which of course, we could not show any films.

Roger is the conscientious and reliable person who has a solution to your problems before you know you have them, as was the case here.

A final thank you for the retiring manager of our sister organisation, the Arts Bar, Jenny Hussell, who for a number of years has capably, pleasantly and efficiently run the bar; and to Susanne Bacchini, who assisted her until recently.

On 27 March next year, we'll be celebrating the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of screening films back here in the Clocktower after our successful *Save the David Lean Cinema* campaign. We're planning some special events for that, and we hope all our friends and supporters will be there.

After the treasurer's presentation you'll have a chance to make comments or ask questions.

Thank you for your patronage of our cinema and for attending tonight.