

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT FOR 2023-24

THE FORTY THIRD SEASON

And so another AGM comes around and it's time for a review of the season.

What a difference a year makes! This time last year I considered that the future of the club was under severe doubt as attendance numbers had struggled to recover post Covid.

After the agreed switch of name from Woking's New Film Club to Woking Film Club, the Committee undertook a concerted effort to increase our publicity, with posters displayed in a number of locations plus regular items in local magazines.

We have since regularly seen a healthy number of guests, which together with an increased number of members, sees us likely to break even and we could even make a small profit if the number of guests mirror the season average over coming films.

Everyone on the Committee deserves praise for their concerted efforts on behalf of the membership.

John Myall has once again undertaken projectionist duties for the entire season. John has as ever sought to ensure that each film is presented to its best both in terms of sound as well as picture.

I again also record my thanks to Stephen Lock, our Membership Secretary and his wife, Pauline who despite having moved to Wiltshire have continued to regularly attend to "meet and greet" you all.

Also, at the "Welcome table" has been our Treasurer, Steve Willson. He introduced this year the online system to enable all payments to be made electronically, which has helped ease the administrative task of managing the evenings takings. I'm grateful to all attendees for their co-operation as we made this technological leap for the club!

Steve was assisted by both Ishret Mirza and Barbara Millington who passed the appropriate "cake" or "refreshment" ticket to the payee.

Ishret remains our Film Bookings officer and manages the ever-increasing library of discs which club members can buy or borrow.

Barbara Millington is the Club's Honorary Secretary. Her husband Jon is another Committee member who has contributed significantly to the efforts to increase the number of display board items we issue.

Michael Hipkins is in his 2nd year as the Film Notes Editor and has a well organised process for the note writers, printers etc as well as getting them published in good time on the website.

Having done the role previously I appreciate the improvements he's made! I'm also grateful for the support given by Redeye for the production of the printed copies.

He has a regular group of notewriters, including Eugene Smith. His contributions have invariably raised a smile when I've read his submission.

Anyone who talks to Michael Widdup about the club will have quickly realised that he is another Committee member who is passionate that the club prospers

A new Committee member, Suzanne Lawrence, joined for our first Film Selection evening and she will I'm sure prove an asset.

If anyone else wished to join the Committee you would be most welcome – we try and meet quarterly and happily discussions are convivial and progressive. The actual film selection meeting took less than 40 minutes with a good consensus reached.

Aside from the Committee a number of members play an active role at our screenings and the most visible means is the cake rota, which has again been co-ordinated by Sheila Coles. Members will I am sure wish to record their thanks to all who've contributed to a hugely popular part of the evening.

One aspect of the evening that I take responsibility for is the selection of the short film. I try to select an item that is complimentary to the main feature. At other times, I tend to choose an animated short as the standard of such material is of an exceptional standard.

We are fortunate indeed that several members are prepared to arrive early and or stay late on film nights to help sort out the chairs and tables and to tidy up after our presentation. I am grateful to everyone who helps the club. It is especially pleasing to have very positive feedback from the Trustees for the hall on the condition we leave the hall, especially as their cleaner has been indisposed recently.

Finally on a personal note, although work has meant that I've missed a few more evenings than planned, when I have attended, I have felt that the club has a renewed air of confidence with long term members commenting on how pleased they are to see more people attending. The experience of sitting in a darkened hall with a group of like-minded individuals enjoying a shared experience is one well worth preserving.

As mentioned, our selection of titles for the **44th season** was a very smooth process, and I thank the Committee for their assistance and contributions at the meetings.

The season, which is subject to confirmation with the film distributors, includes;

The Great Escaper, starring Michael Caine and Glenda Jackson in her final role.

Barbie – this big blockbuster will be shown as our second film

We'll also show the multi award winners Anatomy of a Fall and Past Lives.

At Christmas we have The Holdovers

We look to mark Holocaust Memorial week with One Life starring Antony Hopkins.

We're also showing "Wicked Little Letters", starring Olivia Colman and Jessie Buckley

In addition, we've titles from Morocco, Lithuania and Iran that you will be unlikely to have had the chance to see in any local cinemas.

Our "oldie" is the original "The Color Purple" from 40 years ago.

We end with *"a rollicking black comedy straight from the rain-soaked northern fish docks of Grimsby"*.

I hope that you find the list of 17 films for £60 (£3.53 per film) irresistible!

Please do tell your friends, neighbours and colleagues about our new season.

Enjoy the summer and I look forward to seeing you on Thursday 12th September.

IAIN McGLASHAN