

Issue 2 | Spring/Summer 2009

# Newsreel

Welcome to Newsreel. Film Studies has once again enjoyed a highly productive year. Our work has been recognised in a number of ways: Film staff came top of the medals in the 2008 Research Assessment Exercise; *The Guardian's* University Guide 2009 awarded Film Studies at Southampton first place in the subject category of 'Media studies, communications and librarianship', with a perfect teaching score, the most generous expenditure per student, and the most favourable staff-student ratio; and the latest news on funding is that our recent bid to the new AHRC Block Grants Partnership scheme, for grants to support doctoral research and research-preparation Masters programmes over the next five years, has been successful. In the meantime, as you will see, our undergraduates and postgraduates have continued to thrive in this stimulating research-led culture, enabling some important individual successes, which have allowed not only staff, but also our students, to develop their associations with other academics and institutions, both in the UK and overseas.

**Veronica Spencer** | Editor



## Guest appearance at film festival

Kevin Donnelly recently made a guest appearance at the internationally famous 'Abertoir' film festival in Aberystwyth.

Kevin had been invited for an on-stage interview with Italian film music composer Claudio Simonetti, as a prelude to a screening of Dario Argento's *Suspria* and a subsequent performance by Simonetti's band, Daemonia. Simonetti had been the leader and keyboard player for the band Goblin in the 1970s, who supplied unforgettable original scores for many films, including George Romero's *Dawn of the Dead* and *Martin*, and Argento's *Profondo Rosso* (sometimes known as *Deep Red*) and *Tenebre*, amongst others. The photograph of the interview was taken by and appears on the website of actor Doug Bradley, who was also a guest at the festival. He is best known for playing the character 'Pinhead' in Clive Barker's *Hellraiser* series of films.

## Latest publications



Dr Mark Aldridge's *T is for Television: The Small-Screen Adventures of Russell T. Davies* was published by Reynolds and Hearn in November 2008. Based on PhD work, the book is the first to consider Russell T. Davies' influential career in British television.



Dr Catherine Wheatley's book, *Michael Haneke's Cinema: The Ethic of the Image*, was published in January 2009 by Berghahn Books, as part of their *Film Europa* series. This is the first English-language study of Michael Haneke's work, and discusses all eight of his films in detail. The book discusses Haneke's 'ethical cinema' and its impact upon audiences.

# Collaborative project to celebrate the New Wave at 50

New Wave at 50 panel: Lucy Mazdon, Jonathan Romney, Christophe Dupin, Charles Barr, Philip French, Stephen Frears



Lucy Mazdon and Catherine Wheatley were part of a collaborative project to organise an international conference celebrating the 50th anniversary of the French New Wave and its arrival on British shores.

Entitled 'The Nouvelle Vague 50 years on', the conference was held in London on 13th and 14th March 2009. The event was a collaboration organised by Lucy Mazdon and Catherine Wheatley of the AHRC-funded French Cinema in Britain Research Project here at the University of Southampton, together with Geoffrey Nowell-Smith and Ginette Vincendeau of the Screen Studies Group, based at the University of London, in conjunction with the Ciné Lumière of the Institut Français in London.

The two-day symposium featured panel discussions and keynote speakers drawn from France, the UK and the USA, to discuss the legacy of the film movement that revolutionized cinema at the turn of the 1960s, with particular emphasis on filmmakers such as Jean-Luc Godard, Agnès Varda and Chris Marker; the relationship between the New Wave and politics; the New Wave and modernity; the critical reception of the New Wave; different cinematic practices on the 'Right bank' and the 'Left bank'; and the international reach and influence of the New Wave – from Britain to Brazil. Amongst those speaking at the conference were: Stephen Frears, Geneviève Sellier, Antoine de Baecque, Vanessa Schwartz, Jean-Loup Bourget, Roland-François Lack, Colin MacCabe, Chris Darke, Sarah Cooper, Valerie Orpen, Christophe Dupin, Emma Wilson, Yosefa Loshitzky, Isolde Standish and Lúcia Nagib.

Both evenings of the conference offered more opportunities to continue earlier discussions, further stimulated by screenings introduced by a range of personalities, including filmmaker Stephen Frears. On offer were films such as Truffaut's *Les Mistons* and *Les 400 Coups*, and *Le Beau Serge* and *Les Bonnes Femmes* by Claude Chabrol, as well as a programme of shorts including *L'Opéra Mouffe* (Agnès Varda); *La Jetée* (Chris Marker); *Momma Don't Allow* (Karel Reisz and Tony Richardson); and *The Vanishing Street* (Robert Vas).



# East Asian Symposium and Seminar Series

Following a successful proposal to the prestigious film journal *Screen* for an award to host a postgraduate-organised event, a one-day symposium and international videoconference on ‘Transnational East Asian Cinema Since 1997’ took place in December 2008.

Organised by PhD students Richard Donne, Daniel Hickin, and Aramchan Lee, the event comprised seven papers from distinguished scholars within the field of East Asian cinema. Thanks to a live videolink with the University of Hong Kong, the invited audience of over sixty academics and students from across Britain witnessed a range of papers. The broad range of topics acknowledged the cultural and socio-economic changes that have occurred within East Asia since 1997, and explored the impact of globalisation



Prof Chris Berry at the East Asia Symposium

and intercultural communication between East and West. The first two papers were presented live via the videolink by Dr Gina Marchetti and Dr Esther Cheung (both from the University of Hong Kong). Speaking from Southampton were Prof. Chris Berry (Goldsmiths, University of London), Dr Julian Stringer (University of Nottingham), Dr Mark Morris (University of Cambridge), Dr Isolde Standish (SOAS, University of London), and Dr Rayna Denison (University of East Anglia). Topics covered included transnational Chinese cinemas, piracy and Japanese film policy, and popular Korean cinema.

The response following the symposium has been exceptional, both in terms of the organisation of the event and in the quality of the papers. The symposium acted as the forerunner to a second event, in which the theme of ‘Transnational East Asian Cinema Since 1997’ was explored within papers exclusively from postgraduate students. Scheduled for 13th and 20th March 2009, the seminar sessions also used a live videolink with the University of Hong Kong, and provided students with the opportunity to give papers, exchange ideas and enter into a frank and honest discussion about their subject. In creating an open dialogue between



East Asia Symposium delegates

scholars, academics and students both here in the UK and in Hong Kong, the ‘Transnational East Asian cinema’ project has succeeded in developing a number of important connections and relationships that will prove beneficial for years to come.

**Daniel Hickin** | PhD Film student and co-organiser of ‘Transnational East Asian Cinema since 1997’

For more information, please see:

‘Crossing borders - crossing continents: East Asian Cinema explored’:

<http://soton.blip.tv/#1800467>

For details of *Screen*’s 50th Anniversary celebrations and special events:

[http://www.oxfordjournals.org/our\\_journals/screen/fifty.html](http://www.oxfordjournals.org/our_journals/screen/fifty.html)

## Profile of an option module

This is the first in an occasional series where current undergraduates can give their views on some of our modules, starting with the third-year ‘Stage and Screen Writing’.

Third-year film students have had the opportunity to learn the craft of writing for film and theatre this year. Stage and Screen Writing differs from the theoretical modules in that, while you will still be writing reflective reports and critical analyses of your work, there are many different technical exercises to challenge you. Writing for these more concise exercises means you really have to focus on the quality of your grammar, punctuation and spelling: skills that are important for the majority of careers. Writing a full-length screenplay can be daunting. In this course, you have the opportunity to bounce ideas off one another, and to receive criticism every step of the way.

Taking this module has really encouraged me to pursue screenwriting. It’s something I’ve always wanted to do, but now I have the confidence to try for it as a career. Even if you don’t want to be a writer, this module will help you develop valuable skills, such as communication and group working. Since taking this course I’ve started earning money writing film reviews. Without this course, my writing would not have been professional enough to sell.

**Jennifer Stevens** | Third-year Film Studies student

## Film studies’ staff welcome visiting professor from Sweden



The first semester of this academic year saw an addition to staff in Film Studies when Ann-Kristin Wallengren became visiting professor for a few months, taking a sojourn from her native Sweden and post at Lund University.

Ann-Kristin had received support to take up a short visiting position at a university outside Sweden, and Film Studies at Southampton was

privileged to be chosen. During her stay, she made a presentation of her current research (into Swedish film and the relationship to immigration to the United States in the early part of the twentieth century), and discussed the potential for future research collaboration with several members of staff at Southampton. She also participated in exchanges and tutorials with MA and PhD students. Ann-Kristin is one of the organizers of this year’s NECS (Network of European Cinema Studies) conference, which is being held at her home university in June 2009.



## Southampton Student Film Festival

The annual Southampton University Film Festival held last May showcased the best of the university's student filmmakers.

The prize for the 'Audience Choice' award for best film was won by Ed Wilkes, who at the time was a first-year Film Studies student. His short film, *Belle and the Blind*, won by an audience majority vote, with Dan Cox's film, *Milk*, about a first-year student living in Halls, also proving popular with the audience. However, the festival was to show us more than short films, with a strong showing from second-year documentary filmmakers. Franzi Florack's *Student Robotics Competition*, followed the ups and downs of the team from Peter Symonds College, as they attempted to succeed in a university robotics competition.

The 2009 Film Festival will take place on 3rd May. This year, the festival has expanded considerably and will move to a new venue, the Students' Union Uniplex Cinema. Students at other universities in the south have been invited to submit their films and join in the competition. Last year we had around a hundred guests over the course of the evening and we expect to top that this year.

More information on the next Southampton University Film Festival can be found at: [www.sotonfilmfestival.co.uk](http://www.sotonfilmfestival.co.uk).

## Research Seminar series

This year's Research Seminar series has offered a diverse range of topics and approaches, continuing the opportunity for postgraduates and researchers to engage with recent developments in film scholarship.

Ann-Kristin Wallengren, visiting from Lund University, Sweden, opened the series by presenting her research on 'Sweden and the Swedish-American: National Identity and Cinematic Representation'. This was followed by work on 'Selling Spectacular Sound: Dolby and Entertainment Branding' from Paul Grainge (University of Nottingham); and I. Q. Hunter's exploration of 'The Golden Age of Cult Films Maudit'.

This semester, papers have been given by Julian Jackson (Queen Mary, University of London) on 'Jean Renoir and the Politics of France' in a joint seminar with History; Annette Kuhn (also from Queen Mary) on 'The Child's World in Films: *Ratcatcher*'; and by Murray Pomerance, of Ryerson University, Canada, speaking on 'Hitchcock's Mountain: Technologies of Engagement in *North by Northwest*'.

The final two papers in the series for this academic year will be:

'Naziploitation: Fascism and Sexuality in Italian Films of the 1970s' by Sabine Hake (University of Texas) on 29th April; and

The Montefiore Lecture, in association with the Parkes Institute, delivered by Simcha Jacobovici (film maker and television's 'The Naked Archaeologist').

## PhD students curate retrospective at the BFI

Two PhD students, Kelly Robinson and Ingrid Stigsdotter, curated a week-long retrospective strand for Bird's Eye View in 2008 at the BFI Southbank in London, entitled 'Clowning Glories: Women in Film Comedy Before 1930'. The films were accompanied by female musicians and introduced by female comedians. The event was very well received, and Kelly and Ingrid were interviewed on Radio 4's 'Woman's Hour' and for *The Independent*, which reviewed the season in an article on 'Funny Girls: Heroines of slapstick'.

Contributors: Tim Bergfelder; Kevin Donnelly; Franzi Florack; Daniel Hickin; Jennifer Stevens; Lucy Mazdon; Catherine Wheatley; Ed Wilkes

## For more information

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