

## Officers' Reports for Lincoln Film Society 2023-2024

### Chairman's Report

After the closure of The Venue because of Covid, there were concerns we might be forced to shut down for good after 67 years of continuous operation. The Extraordinary General Meeting held in early 2022 showed that members were very keen on the possibility of a return.

We then learned that the authorities at Bishop Grosseteste were considering reviving The Venue as a community resource with the cinema, and the Society, playing a substantial role. Those two events encouraged us to believe a return was feasible and we should look into how that might happen. There were challenges to be overcome. Previously, The Venue had been run as a self-contained cinema with its own team of staff. But post-Covid all of them had been made redundant and no one at Bishop Grosseteste knew what to do. We shared our experience of the previous relationship we had had - how films were booked, delivered and projected and the powerful social function the Society played. Bishop Grosseteste was impressed and as the year progressed, they began the process of bringing The Venue back to life.

Engineers, whose knowledge and expertise were essential to ensuring the projection equipment was in good working order after a long time out of use, were engaged. A new lens was fitted to the projector and the wired glass in the projection room was replaced with clear safety glass. The sound system was checked. Test screenings were organised.

We now felt we had many of the key pieces in place and a successful return would be possible. We decided on a programme of 12 films, starting in September 2023 and running through till March 2024. We set a target of recruiting 200 members, which we thought would be enough to cover our costs, and picked the first tranche of six films to show before launching a membership recruitment drive in June 2023.

We revived the Partnership Working Agreement with The Venue, which set out the roles and responsibilities that would apply to us both. We agreed the details of how screenings would be managed. We met the staff who would be running the projector. It was clear they were as enthused about the whole initiative as we were ourselves.

It's important to understand that running The Venue is now done by BGU staff from the Conferencing and Events team on a volunteer basis. They are given time off in lieu from their paid duties, so the scope for expanding what we can do is limited. The same applies to the bar, which is staffed by members of the Student Union. We are entirely dependent on their goodwill.

The results have surpassed all our expectations. Over 330 members have joined us, more than we had when we had to shut down in March 2020. A new screen has been purchased. This improvement, along with the new lens, means that projection quality has significantly improved.

Films have been very well attended too - 199 turned up for our first screening, *The Blue Caftan*, in September 2023. Since the turn of the year three films have attracted audiences of more than 200. In total, the films we have shown (excluding *Afire* and *Fallen Leaves*) have drawn a total of 1855 people. As a committee, we believe the Society is now on a very firm footing. We are looking to consolidate that success. We have already arranged a summer programme at the Terry O'Toole theatre and are in discussion with Bishop Grosseteste about the shape of the 2024/25 season.

It's important to pay tribute to the members of the committee for the work they have put in to revive the Society. It's also important to thank the Conferencing and Events staff at Bishop Grosseteste - Ellen Reed, Jennifer Jenkins and Jayne Robinson - for the extra work they do to ensure films go ahead, and to Sarah Moseley (Enterprise Development Manager) who took on the task of getting The Venue back into action and Allison Webb (Director of External Engagement) who provided support at the highest level within the University.

Without their help, we wouldn't be where we are now. We won't be going back to a programme of 26 films a season because the position at The Venue does not allow for that. But we do believe there is potential to increase slightly the number of films we show there and, along with our summer programme at the Terry O'Toole Theatre (which looks like becoming a regular feature and has certainly helped us reach new audiences who might never have known about us), 20 films a year is a real possibility. After all the doubts from 2020 onwards, as we start thinking in detail about our next season in the 71st year of our existence, that's not a bad position to be in.

### **Treasurer's Report**

The Society's financial position, as detailed in the attached accounts, shows a surplus in hand of £19,421 as at May 2023. This does not include any income from the summer 2023 season at the Terry O'Toole Theatre nor the current season at The Venue. As the number of current members far exceeds the 200 budgeted for to cover the Society's costs, it is anticipated that there will be a sizeable surplus of income over expenditure going forward.

John Rossington (Treasurer)

### **Secretary's Report**

The eight-film season at the Terry O'Toole Theatre for which 143 members signed up at a cost of £35 per head was successfully completed with an average attendance of 86 people per film. A four-film summer season, priced at £18 per head, was held there during May and June which attracted 114 members and had an average attendance of 78.

In September 2023 the Society was finally able to return to screenings at The Venue after an absence of three and a half years with a programme of 13 films, which is currently underway. The membership cost was £35 for the full season and £20 for half-season membership. 313 people signed up as members in the autumn, and a further 25 signed up for the half season during December, giving a total membership for the season of 338. Attendance for screenings have been high, averaging 186 per film and the average approval rating has been 77%.

Another summer season of four films at the Terry O'Toole Theatre will be held during May and June this year with the theme of films directed by women. The joining window for the season, which will be limited to 120 members due to the size of the auditorium, will open in April.

Sue Firth & Tony Butcher (Joint Secretaries)

### **Trustees' Report**

Due to the lack of activity within the Society since the last Annual General Meeting in 2020, the trustees have nothing to report other than that they have approved the operation and audit procedures being introduced for the Society's move to online banking.