



The Weekender

FREE

"EAST KENT LIFE AT ITS BEST" ISSUE ELEVEN / AUTUMN WINTER 2011

The Film Issue

**Pop Up Cinemas
The Big Kent Film Quiz
Thoroughly Modern Spaces
Scrumptious Ciders**

PLUS: Jeremy Piven / Potamo Foith
Roger Moore / Audrey Hepburn / Gavin Esler

www.weekenderonline.net

Cinema Goes Pop!

A shortage of film venues and cultural centres has led movie lovers in Kent to provide their own entertainment and share their tastes with like-minded souls. Never mind the multiplex, today's cinephiles are more likely to be found at a pop-up screening where unique locations and word-of-mouth marketing help to create a night to remember



NOVELIST HATTIE EDMONDS began showing films in her Sausalito fisherman's shack last winter. The first screening was *Mary Poppins* for a handful of local friends and their offspring.

"Many of my friends have children so they can't always pop out to the cinema," she explains. Buoyed by the success of the Disney classic, she followed it up with a showing of *Brigadoon*, the 1954 musical starring Gene Kelly, Cyd Charisse and some questionable Scottish accents. She recalls: "There were a few sound problems and the children who came didn't like it at all!"

Undeterred she has since gone on to host successful screenings of *Il Postino* and other indie cinema favourites, often serving home made cakes, or for *Cinema Paradiso*, plates of spaghetti.

Her technical set-up is basic and cheap—the projector was just £400 "bought off a friend" and the speakers are a £50 steal from Richer Sounds. The setting is similarly simple and homespun; an audience of up to 15 can settle comfortably in front of three domestic blinds which become the screen.

"It's wonderful to sit here by the sea watching my favourite

films with mates," she says. "There is a lovely communal feel to it."

If she ever ventures out to the cinema herself, it is to small independent cinemas such as The Cockett in Notting Hill or The Royal in Faversham. "I would only go to a multiplex if you dragged me there," she says adamantly.

Best moment Showing *Mary Poppins*. When that first image came up on the screen we were all ecstatic.

Worst moment A friend, who had had a rather heavy lunch, toppled off his chair and all the children thought he had died!

Final word of advice Keep it informal and be democratic—listen to the suggestions of others.

ZACHARY COOKE is a Folkestone-based film maker who also runs a small production company. With his Open Air Cinema, he brings Hollywood movies to the great outdoors and has recently introduced *Esai Kent* to the American-style Drive-In. "We have some very expensive equipment including three screens of various sizes," he says. "We can roll up anywhere, and in a couple of hours, we're up and ready."

This November Cooke will be taking his set up to Haguelands Farm near Hythe for a Halloween triple bill. "It's the perfect drive-in location because the screen can't be seen from the main road plus the film will be silent—you can only hear it from inside your car."

While, on average, each screening attracts 300 to 400 punters, the challenge, he explains, is to find "imaginative ways

Photo opposite: An outdoor screening of *The Old Man and the Sea*, Wimborne Park, Wiltshire
Left: Hattie Edmonds outside her Sausalito fisherman's shack

to encourage families to come out and watch films". "Without sponsorship, we have to charge for tickets," he explains, "but the experience still works out cheaper than going to the local cinema."

Recent screenings have included blockbusters *Top Gun* and *Grease* but he would consider showing the classic war film *Reach for the Sky* if he could get his gear into the Battle of Britain Museum in Hawkinge. He doesn't even mind if it's raining—just as long as his screen doesn't get blown down by the wind!

www.theopenaircinema.com

Best moment When people get dressed up. For *The Wizard of Oz*, someone turned up as a house!

Worst moment In Margate it was so windy we had to take the screen down, put a new one up in the wind and rain and move 150 cars in 45 minutes.

Final word of advice Things always go wrong; be prepared for technical hitches.

THE LONG, DARK WINTER NIGHTS and the dream of walking to the pub to see big screen films was the inspiration behind Tim Sygne's Kingsdown Film Club.

New into its second year, the bi-monthly club continues to draw an appreciative gang to his local The King's Head for a regular dose of classic and foreign movies.

"We showed Robert Altman's *The Long Goodbye* at the launch, followed later by Jules Dassin's heist thriller *Right and Left* and *We Were Strangers*, where warming Brandy with cherry was served at the interval."

The club advertises solely via

by email and social media. On a good night, he is able to fill 35 seats. "In terms of programming, there are some seasonal references but otherwise it's a scatter-gun approach; we cover film noir, comedy, sci-fi and horror genres." To his surprise, Synge found that Woody Allen's films have an far got the thumbs down from members. More successful have been special screenings at the nearby Astor Community Theatre in Deal. Cult classic *The Wicker Man* was followed by traditional folk dancing and *Carry on Camping* was preceded by Synge's own short film *Mystery As Nightclub Closes*. "The club has quickly become quite a sociable event here in the village and perhaps the most surprising and most rewarding thing is finding a receptive audience for the more obscure films, which, for me, is the whole reason for running it."

The Kingsdown Film Theatre. *The King's Head, Upper Street, Kingsdown*

Best moment Getting Stuart Hoppe, *The Wicker Man* choreographer, to introduce a 40th anniversary screening.

Worst moment Panning a film

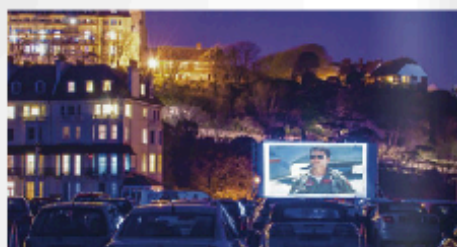
for the interval, only to see it jump three scenes at the restart. No-one noticed but the standing ovation at the end was embarrassing.

Final word of advice Don't pander too much to your audience. I would also recommend investing in a good sound system.

MARGHERITA GRAMIGNA's *gizero* *Voyager* film festival grew out of a community project which explores alternative cinematic experiences. "We bring cinema to unusual venues to bridge the gap between the moving-image and local people," she explains. Their recent festival in October centred on the Medway towns and included al fresco screenings in Chatham. A small boat turned into a miniature cinema for two while local churches and theatres provided the backdrop to foreign and art house films.

For the Whitstable Biennale in June, *gizero* hosted a well-attended screening of student films projected directly onto The Old Neptune pub. "We killed the audience out with sleeping bags when it got windy and, of course, endless supplies of popcorn," she recalls.

www.gizero.org



Above: Tom Cruise was taken a little too close to the audience in *Top Gun*

Best moment When talented film makers sign up to show their films. Also the sight of a fully grown man wearing a little Princess blanket to keep warm during a screening in 2012.

Worst moment A howling wind nearly blew away our screen along with the marquee. Luckily some men from the nearby pub acted as human tent pegs, allowing the film to be shown.

Final word of advice Hang on to the reasons why you started as well as your enthusiasm and sense of humour. Keep calm and carry on showing films!

How to Start a Film Club

BY HATTIE EDMONDS

- 1** **DECIDE** whether you want a casual get-together or a more official club, where you sell tickets. If it's the latter, don't forget that you will have to pay to rent out the films.
- 2** **THINK** how many people you want to be members. Seating is key: nobody wants to sit on a hard floor for two hours.
- 3** **CHOOSE** how often to screen your films—once a month is a good start. Make it a memorable date like the First Tuesday (in the month) Club.
- 4** **WHAT** sort of films do you want to show? Put on seasons: Hitchcock, early Almodovar, Julien Temple etc. Choose whatever you and your filmgoers fancy.
- 5** **BE PLAYFUL.** In summer, use a wall, garage door or an outdoor mini screen. In winter it's obviously more restricted, but I know someone who projected *Wings of Desire* on a ceiling with every body lying on the floor!

www.independentcinemaoffice.org.uk / www.bfs.org.uk



Independent Cinemas in East Kent

A guide for real movie lovers



The Royal Cinema

Grade II-listed mock-Tudor gem in the heart of Faversham. Shows the latest releases plus art house classics via the Faversham Film Society.

royalcinema.co.uk

Karoonagh Cinema

Well-equipped two-screen indie cinema located next to the Herne Bay Leisure Centre. Classic Film Club on Wednesdays.

karoonaghcinema.com

Gulbenkian Cinema

Canterbury's independent film theatre screening blockbusters, indie and world cinema. Open to students and non-students.

thegulbenkian.co.uk

Carlton Cinema

Family-friendly cinema in Westgate-on-Sea (above right) offering blockbusters and indie films on three screens. Housed in a historic building with a tea room next door.

www.carltoncinema.co.uk

FOR YOUR INFORMATION
PRICES OF ADULTS
STALLS
1923-34
CIRCLE
33
TERTIUM
PURE & SBT
CHILDREN
5-11
TUES
DAY & SAT
10-12-13

Silver Screen Cinema, Dover

Dover's 99-seat independent cinema recently re-opened following a £40,000 digital upgrade. A classic cinema experience with prices to match.

dover.silverscreencinemas.co.uk

Silver Screen Cinema, Folkestone

Two-screen cinema in Guildhall Street which takes cinema goers back in time: paper punch tickets, red velvet seats, balcony seating etc.

folkestone.silverscreencinemas.com

Kino Concept

Boutique entertainment venue in Hawkhurst, near Folkestone (bottom right) featuring a stylish café/bar and outdoor terrace. Showing regular screenings from the National Theatre plus ballet and opera events.

www.kinodigital.co.uk



Empire Cinema

Fully functioning Art Deco throwback to the golden age of cinema (left). The films may have moved on, but the setting has changed little since it opened in 1937.

empireandwich.co.uk

Astor Theatre

The Last Picture Club in Deal show regular feature films at the town's main cultural hub. A good, affordable way to see golden oldies and new releases.

thelastpictureclub.org

