



## THE ROLE OF THE FILM SOCIETY IN DIGITAL BRITAIN

– A DEDICATED TRAINING AND NETWORKING SESSION FROM BFFS

BFFS welcomed over 80 delegates from a wide range of film societies and community cinemas across the UK to a series of special training and networking sessions. In the first of the afternoon sessions the panel considered the impact of the digital revolution on film societies and asked: **What is the Role of the Film Society in Digital Britain?**

**Session leader:** Neil Chue Hong. BFFS Scotland, Edinburgh University Film Society (Scot).  
**Panellists:** Adrian Pickering. The Phoenix, Southampton Film Theatre (SE Eng).  
Peter Mitchell. Octagon Films (E. Mids).  
Ian Kerr. BFFS Scotland, Barony Film Society, Hippodrome cinema Bo'ness (Scot).

### All about the presenters:

**Neil Chue Hong** is the Vice Chair of BFFS Scotland and has been involved with Edinburgh University Film Society for many years.

**Websites:** **Edinburgh University Film Society**      [www.eufs.org.uk](http://www.eufs.org.uk)

After decades of projecting films exclusively on 35mm **The Phoenix (Southampton Film Theatre)** has recently invested in a DVD projector and have begun the switch over from celluloid to the age of the pixel. **Adrian Pickering**, a sound engineer by profession and film enthusiast by passion joined the panel to share his experiences of the transition.

**Venue:** **University of Southampton**  
**Projects on:** **35mm and DVD**  
**Website:** [www.thephoenix.org.uk](http://www.thephoenix.org.uk)

**Octagon Films** currently screen on 35mm but have been lucky enough to secure the funding to invest in cutting edge cinema technology - a DCI compliant kit. While the proportion of film societies for whom this is a realistic option is likely to be minimal, BFFS was delighted to welcome **Peter Mitchell** to the panel to give us a film society perspective on D-cinema.

**Venue:** **Harborough Theatre**  
**Projects on:** **DVD**  
**Website:** [www.harboroughtheatre.com](http://www.harboroughtheatre.com)

With a lifetime of projection experience and decades of service as an officer of BFFS both at a regional and national level there's not much **Ian Kerr** doesn't know about cinema projection and the technical support needs of film societies. As our resident expert Ian was a welcome addition to the panel.

Like Ian, **Eric Bastin** from **AVCOM** has a lifetime of experience in cinema projection. Eric has visited, advised and supplied kit to a host of film societies. BFFS was delighted to welcome Eric to give a talk and practical demonstration designed to show how film societies can get the best possible experience of DVD and Blu-ray projection. Many thanks are due to AVCOM for sponsoring this training session.

**Website:** [www.avcom.co.uk](http://www.avcom.co.uk)

The session closed with a behind-the-scenes tour of the Showroom's 2K Christie Digital Projector. BFFS extends its thanks to Dave Winstanley for arranging this.

### **Audience questions:**

- How much demand is there for alternative content?
- In upgrading to DCI – have you considered the alterations that may be needed to the venue e.g., to offset heat outlay?
- Does DVD projection offer a lower quality viewing experience as compared with 35mm projection?
- Is there any great difference between Blu-ray projection and an upscaling DVD player?
- In moving from 35mm to DVD how does this impact on accessing content – e.g., on release windows?
- Is there any point in investing in screen paint?

### **Top tips from the panel:**

-DVD projection is good enough, providing due care and attention are paid to the details e.g., proper black out.

-DCI projection will not be an option for more than a handful of film societies.

-Sound quality is paramount and will effect the audience's perception of image quality. To test the acoustics of your venue invite a musician (preferable classical) to test the sound quality – you're looking for someone with an excellent ear.

-Standard AV equipment i.e., for conferencing use will not be sufficient – make sure you're clear on your needs and use a reputable supplier who will visit your venue and demonstrate different options. Above all - try before you buy!

-If your audience are 35mm purists but the facility for DVD projection is available try screening to them on DVD, chances are they won't notice the difference.

-Cue up in advance for a clean, clear performance.

-DCI is not necessary but if the venue has it then by all means use it.

-3D is not likely to be an issue for film societies.

-A flat and plain white background is always best for your projection background.

-Where possible a ceiling suspended (DVD) projector is best.

-Rear projection is doable but far from ideal.

-Good illumination is vital – and should influence your choice of projector.

-DVD projection allows more equality in your committee as several members can share the responsibility of putting on a show.

### **BFFS Training**

This training session was held at the Showroom Cinema, Sheffield as part of the 2009 BFFS National Conference weekend for Community Cinemas. For more information on sector specific training and events visit the BFFS website [www.bffs.org.uk](http://www.bffs.org.uk) or email [info@bffs.org.uk](mailto:info@bffs.org.uk).