

## ANOTHER FULL HOUSE FOR SW VIEWING

The Arts Centre in the Dorset hill-top town of Shaftesbury has been the venue for South West Group Viewings on a number of occasions as far back as 1984 but the Group's latest visit broke all records. Fortunately, the Arts Centre has recently taken over some of the next door building so was able to accommodate the sell-out crowd of 125 delegates from 32 Societies that arrived for the Autumn Viewing. The other good reason for returning to Shaftesbury venue was the catering and Sue Cadmore and the Arts Centre team did not disappoint. Paul Schilling and the Film Society committee also made sure that the day went well and were able to show off their newly refurbished venue.

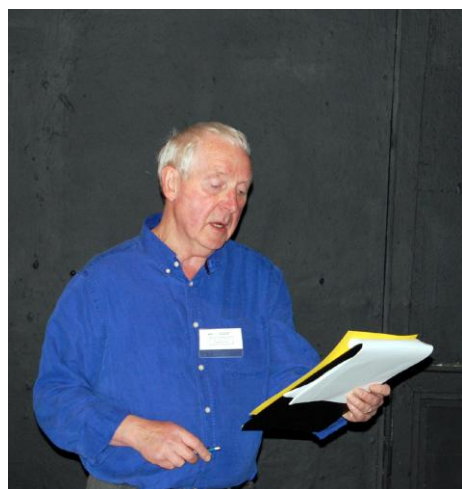


The 'new' Shaftesbury Arts Centre

The headline news on the films previewed was the good showing of three titles recently added to the BFFS Block Booking catalogue. *Burma VJ*, an exceptional Danish documentary on the fight for democracy in Burma, topped the ratings whilst the gentle French comedy *Conversations with my Gardener* with Daniel Auteuil and the Oscar-nominated *Frozen River* were close behind. Ken Loach's latest, the good-natured comedy *Looking for Eric* with the charismatic Cantona, was also a hit but left some delegates wondering whether their village society was ready for the ripe language. The delightful *Mid-Summer Lunch* also won approval but the latest reflective drama from director Claire Denis; *35 Shots of Rum*, divided the audience with as many As Ds and Es.

Title	Total Votes	Reaction Index
Burma VJ	44	92.0
Looking for Eric	65	91.9
Conversations with My Gardener	54	89.8
Frozen River	59	82.6
Mid-August Lunch	69	80.1
35 Shots of Rum	26	59.6

## SOUTH WEST GROUP AGM REPORT



John Holmes Co-Chair at AGM

The Group's AGM, held after lunch in the main Theatre during the Viewing, heard from Co-Chair John Holmes of an active 18 months since the last AGM supporting community cinema in the South West. Fellow Co-Chair Ralph Willett completed the double act with a gentle reminder that one of our aims was to promote World Cinema. Some support for this came during the Members Forum when consultant Julia Vickers reported that the BFFS annual National Survey had found that the top three films shown by societies in 2008 were *The Kite Runner*, *Persepolis* and *Happy-Go-Lucky*. Julia also stressed the good news that pressure from the BFFS in involving MPLC in non-theatrical DVD distribution appeared to have resulted in Filmbank changing their policy and allowing venues to screen their own copies under licence. This and other initiatives in support of community cinema, including the Block Booking scheme, public liability insurance and the new Source Book, were being delivered despite the difficult funding position

which had meant the loss of two members of staff including Ros Hill. The remaining staff member in the Sheffield office, Jaq Chell, was also a guest at the Viewing and she stressed the need for all societies to renew their memberships early in the New Year. In his report as Regional Secretary, Brian Clay reported that BFFS membership in the region was approaching 70 but he agreed that it was important that all potential non-commercial exhibitors became full or associate members for BFFS to be able to continue to provide the high level of support both nationally and through the SW Group. Jaq Chell acknowledged the great efforts by the Group in helping with new start-ups by presenting a Distinction to Chudleigh Film Society in the Best New Society category of the BFFS Film Society of the Year awards. Torbay Film Club had also received a Distinction in the category and Bude Community Cinema a Commendation.



Jaq Chell presents the Distinction certificate to Carole Smart of Chudleigh Film Society

Brian Clay