



Talking Pictures

 Keswickfilmclub

 @keswickfilm

25 Years of Keswick Film Club

Our twenty-fifth film club year continues after the summer break.

We start at 4.30 pm on Sunday 15th September with our usual start of season drink.

Please renew your membership online via either

www.keswickfilmclub.org/membership or the Alhambra website -

www.keswickalhambra.co.uk

£10 gets you a whole £3.50 off every film you see for the whole year - until next April.

To get the discounted prices for membership, just follow the instructions on the site and join first. Simple!

You can still join at the box office - they will put in your details - but get there early to avoid the queue

It is amazing to think that the Club is now in its 25th year. It has been pretty successful from the start, and has won several awards nationally, including Film Society of the Year. I have been around since 2009, but have no real awareness of the club origins, so I asked Tom Rennie - the very first 'member' (!) - for his thoughts. Over to you, Tom...

I took over the management of the Alhambra in January 1991. The screening format at that time was to show one film a week at 8 o'clock every night, take it or leave it, and the programme only showed those films

which had a proven track record elsewhere and that format remained for several years.

I had been managing the Alhambra for 8 years when, on the 10th November 1998 a guy called Tony Martin came in to see a film and introduced himself as a film fanatic who had just moved up from Wales. He had previously set up a film club there showing "alternative" film, and had also started another successful film club in Hebden Bridge, Yorkshire. Since he planned to move his home to or around Keswick, he asked if I would be interested in his setting

up a Film Club for Keswick based on the Alhambra. I was sure the idea would be well received, so I contacted the owner, Michael Graves, and got his permission "on a trial basis". (We are still operating on that basis, but I think we can say the trial is successful!). Tony took on the post of chairman and I became treasurer to ensure the proper separation of finances between the Club and the Cinema. I think Paul Buttle became the first secretary and the first meeting to formalise the club was held on the 2nd December 1998.

[continued over]

An interview with... Roger Gook, KFC Secretary



TP: Roger, we know what a great job you do as secretary here, but I know you also help run the Caldbeck

Film Society, our 'sister' organisation beyond Skiddaw; how did that come about?

RG: When I moved here some years ago, I knew about Keswick Film Club and was looking forward to seeing some interesting films. But even better, I found films here on my doorstep - Caldbeck Film Society. This was the quintessential film club, run by a small group of enthusiasts in a cold village hall with a projector on a wobbly stand. Stretching back before recorded time, and with various ups and downs, the club had been running for 30 years, but most interestingly, had a reputation for showing "difficult" films, and even some with sub-titles. I went along and

was given the job of stacking chairs - I still do this but with some more interesting jobs as well.

TP: A real local club then. What is the hall like?

RG: We bought a new projector and sound system, and negotiated with the Hall to have it fixed to the ceiling. This is now seen as a valuable community resource, used by many other clubs for films and talks. The sound quality has been a great problem, echoing around a large empty space, but we are now in the process of fixing acoustic panels to the ceiling which should help. The cold on a winter evening was another problem, with people arriving swathed in jumpers and hugging blankets, but there's now a scheme to improve the insulation.

TP: What kind of films do you show?

RG: Selecting the films has always been difficult when choosing for a small but diverse audience. We try to avoid mainstream releases as they are either on at the local cinemas (Alhambra and Rheged) or streaming. We also look at which films worked well at Keswick Film Club - some of the Festival successes have gone down really well.

Our audience have great faith that we will find interesting and enjoyable films and we seem to be doing just that judging by the feedback.

TP: Do you get good audiences?

RG: Covid closed us for a while and like everywhere, it took a while for people to feel comfortable out and about. We seem to have recovered now, with good audience numbers and looking forward to 'American Fiction' in September and our very popular meal with a film in November.

TP: I guess the attraction is a lot like Keswick, though you deliver films to an even more 'off the beaten track' point...

RG: When I ask people why they come to the club rather than watching films from their sofa at home the answer is always the same - because it's great to watch the films with other people, to share them and be part of the community.

TP: Keep up the good work then!

(Sounds good! Anyone who wants to try out Caldbeck, we have a joint agreement on members prices. See 'info/friends' on our website or search 'Caldbeck film' on Facebook for their programme)

Autumn Season Films

With nine picked by you, the members, there has got to be something for everyone here..

A couple of rare points about this season; there are NO films from the USA and just over half the programme qualifies for the 'F' rating - meaning that either the director and/or the writer is female. A good sign of things to come..?

We do still manage to visit many countries around the world, of course. Starting September in Denmark with 'Rose', we go straight to South Korea before coming back to the UK for the 'Poor Things' follow up - 'Kinds of Kindness'.



October sees us in France, Morocco and Sweden before Josh O'Connor chases 'La Chimera' in Italy. Then November starts in the wilds of the Orkneys with 'The Outrun' before a wild blast of Irish comedy in 'Kneecap'.

We then follow a 'Radical' teacher in Mexico and two possible lovers who meet over sandwiches and... moss! 'Here' comes from Belgium.



December finds us on the 'Green Border' between Belarus and Poland, trying to find a way into Poland with the hopeful refugees. Then we are off to Turkey to find out 'About Dry Grasses', the new Nuri Bilge Ceylan movie - as ex-



quisitely beautiful as ever, but can we trust what is said?

Then the last two films of the season take us to China for a film noir thriller and finally to Mongolia where we share the winter with Ulzii in 'If Only I Could Hibernate'.

A great selection, a good number chosen by you, for our 25th year.

Tom Rennie looks back on 25 years of Keswick Film Club - continued from page one

With Tony's prior experience in the field, he very soon had a programme of great films lined up and we had our first screening on the 7th February 1999 - 'The Governess', starring Minnie Driver and Tom Wilkinson. This very successful first screening set the tone for the next 25 years.

It is interesting to note that we have only had four chairmen since the start up - Tony Martin, Ian Picken, Rod Evans and Vaughan Ames and three treasurers - myself, Astrid Perret and Paul Titley. (I stood down when I felt there might be a conflict of interest when I took over the cinema from Graves in 2012.)

Only one year into our existence as a club, Tony felt confident enough to propose an annual Film Festival and the first screening took place on 21st February 2000. This again established a fixture in the Keswick events calendar and of course is still running today to great acclaim.

I believe we can look back on 25 years of remarkable success, largely due to Tony's bold vision in the first place, and the willingness of many volunteers to take up the necessary roles to keep both the club and annual festival as much loved features in Keswick's year. [TP - thanks Tom... and thanks too for YOUR bold vision in agreeing to help Tony!]

Film Club AGM

This year's AGM will again be at the start of the new year. This is because we now have to have fully signed-off accounts and, by the time we have our last invoices in for the 2023-24 year, there is not time to complete the process until later in the autumn; leaving the AGM until January guarantees we will have time to do this.

KFC Spring 2024

20 Days in Mariupol	91.07%
Poor Things	85.96%
The Holdovers	84.33%
Anatomy of a Fall	84.00%
Totem	74.39%
Shayda	71.67%
Fallen Leaves	69.75%
Love Life	68.15%
the peasants	67.45%
the end we start from	66.94%
Snow Leopard	64.58%
Lost In The Stars	62.05%
20,000 Species of Bees	61.90%

Average audience size: 76

Twenty-five years of Keswick Film Festival too!

As Tom says above, the Film Festival started out in 2000, so that our next one (**Thursday 6 March 2025 - Sunday 9 March 2025**) will be the 25th Festival too. All told, we will have shown around 1400 films in that time! Ian Payne, the Festival Director, is working on making the Silver Anniversary edition even more special than normal - hard to do I would say! Ian tells me 'We are aiming to do the anniversary justice by bringing in some special guests, a couple of classics plus the usual mix of damn fine cinema from around the world. The first quarter of this century has produced some amazing films and Sight and Sound have published their list of the very best - we might just pinch one or two of their ideas, particularly those ones that we missed first time around'. I couldn't possibly tell you who those special guests are (!), but put the dates in your diary now; not to be missed!