

## GRAHAM SHIRLEY BIOGRAPHY

Before joining the staff of the National Film and Sound Archive, **GRAHAM SHIRLEY** was a documentary film director and scriptwriter, researcher, film historian and oral historian. Graham wrote and directed a string of historical documentaries that blended interviews with archival footage, still photographs and re-enactment. These films were Prisoners of Propaganda (1987), which told of Australian prisoners of war who appeared in a Japanese propaganda film during World War 2; three episodes of the sports history series Blood, Sweat and Tears, screened on the 7 Network in 1988; and Striking for State Aid, an episode of the ABC-TV social history series, Timeframe (1997). For the Australian Army he directed, wrote and researched Behind the Lines: The Secret War of Z Special Unit, screened by the 9 Network in 2003. That same year he directed White Bay Power Station, which won the Electronic Media Award (Corporate/Govt) in the Energy Australia National Trust Heritage Awards. In 2005, for Film Australia, Graham directed and wrote Road to Tokyo which was screened nationwide by the ABC to commemorate the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of World War 2.

Graham also worked extensively as an archival footage researcher on a broad range of one-off and series documentaries. They included Wings Over Australia (1989), Allies (1983), The Dismissal (1983), Bodyline (1984), Cowra Breakout (1984), Wharfies (1988), Hindsight (1990-91), Submarines: Sharks of Steel (1992), Federation (2001), Colour of War: The Anzacs (2003), Frank Hurley: The Man Who Made History (2004), and Blowing Up Paradise (2004). In 1981, for NFSA, he restored the classic Australian silent film, For the Term of His Natural Life (1927). For many years he was a valuer for film, video and associated materials for materials donated to cultural institutions under the Australian government's Cultural Gifts Scheme.

Graham has put much of his film industry knowledge to use in researching a string of landmark documentaries on the history of Australian cinema. These have included the ABC's Sunshine and Shadows (1976), Capital 7's The Australian Image (1986), and Film Australia's The Celluloid Heroes (1995). On White Fella's Dreaming, the Australian episode of the international Century of Cinema series, Graham was associate producer, script consultant and researcher. He is co-author of the book Australian Cinema: The First 80 Years, published in 1983 and 1989. For more than 30 years he has recorded oral histories with people from the film and broadcast industries, and in 2003 spent four months interviewing war veterans under the auspices of the Australians at War Film Archive.

In 1973 he was one of the original intake of the Australian Film, Television and Radio School, where one of his films, Transition was a finalist in the Sydney Film Festival's Benson and Hedges Awards for short fiction films. The next year A Day Like Tomorrow, another of his film school shorts, won the Documentary prize in the same festival's Greater Union Awards.

In January 2006 Graham joined the National Film and Sound Archive as the organisation's Senior Curator, Documents and Artefacts. In November 2006 he became NFSA's Senior Curator, Moving Image (a position which in October 2009

became Senior Curator, Film). In mid-2010 he was the first appointee to a new role in the organisation, that of NFSA Historian.