



Australian Government

SCREEN  
AUSTRALIA

## **IDFA & World Congress of Science and Factual Producers 2008, with additional London meetings**

### **Julia Overton, Investment and Development Manager – Documentary**

The objectives for attending IDFA and World Congress of Science and Factual Producers were many. To have face-to-face meetings with potential co-producing partners, broadcasters, commissioning editors, sales agents and distributors who could work with Australian companies to enable developed projects to be produced and finished projects to find a place in the market. To support the Australian filmmakers attending the events – in the case of IDFA it was those who had projects screening in the festival or who were pitching projects in the Forum or private meetings. To observe which documentaries were finding an audience, and in what form. And to establish new contacts, particularly in the area of science producing, where the cost of production is such that numerous co-production partners are usually essential.

Attending the two events back-to-back was an interesting conjunction of market/festival. It is best expressed via two conversations I had on my first day at each event. When asking a filmmaker at IDFA why they were there I was told it was with a film which was a 'post-Brechtian deconstruction of the Israeli Palestinian conflict' and on asking the same question at World Congress the response was 'to sell 26 hours on killer reptiles'. It gave a wonderful insight to the diversity of the world that is documentary.

### **London**

Before the festivals, time was spent in London having meetings with some of those with whom Screen Australia deals on a regular basis. I was also invited, as a guest of the UK Film Council, to attend Grierson 2008, the British Documentary Awards, regarded as the 'Gold Standard' of documentary awards. Indeed it is encouraging to see the active involvement in the awards of an extended peer group of those who commission, finance, produce, direct, write, perform, study and critique documentary film and television. Documentary production in the UK is buoyant and valued by a wide range of audiences – but there are immense changes taking place in the areas of documentary production, funding and distribution. It is an industry which is experiencing real tension as the 'long tail' becomes more important and the anarchic online world of VOD, peer-to-peer and YouTube delivers new, old and presumed lost content worldwide. Meanwhile audiences for broadcasts are fragmented or reduced. Despite all this, British

documentary filmmakers innovate constantly and continue to carve out a quality and quantity of work which is valued both nationally and worldwide.

Meetings were held with:

**Himesh Kar, UK Film Council:** He is very happy with the documentary slate this year, with films such as the Oscar® nominated *Man on Wire* from director James Marsh (via BBC Storyville) as well as the Terence Davies film *Of Time and the City*, the highly personal documentary about the filmmaker's hometown, the English city of Liverpool. There are a number of dramatised films which utilise recent events as the starting point for films – films such as the Stephen Frears/Rebecca O'Brien produced *Brazuca*, directed by Henrique Goldman, a Brazilian-born long-time resident of London, and co-written by Goldman and Marcelo Starobinas, a Brazilian journalist at the BBC (tells the story of the life of Jean Charles de Menezes who was shot by the police in Stockwell tube station in the days following the terrorist attacks in London 2005), and the Channel 4 production *Afghan Star*, set around an Afghan version of *Pop Idol*.

**Hilary Davis and Phil Hunt, Bankside** are happily involved in a number of films with Screen Australia. They are constant visitors to Australia and have keen antennae out for production activity, both drama and documentary. They are looking for acquisitions as well as projects in which they invest. Have involvement in the Screen Australia productions *Bran Nue Dae*, *Coffin Rock*, *Accidents Happen* and *Blessed*. They are interested in theatrical documentaries as well as dramas but emphasise that the projects must have international appeal.

**Iain Canning** who, in partnership with Emile Sherman, is the production company See Saw. Despite his credits as Executive Producer on the critically acclaimed *Hunger* and *Control*, Iain emphasised that he too, in these financially challenging times, is looking for projects with more obvious commercial appeal.

**Andy Glynn, Documentary Film Group:** Andy works with emerging filmmakers in a training capacity and is one of the most energetic, passionate and committed practitioners and teachers of documentary in the UK. His company works not only in the United Kingdom but in some of the most challenging production environments in the world in Russia, Africa, India and the Middle East where their production methodology always involves working with and, where appropriate, training local filmmakers. Looking for co-production partners to support their work in these countries. Keen to develop relationships with Australian filmmakers in order to facilitate further production.

**Roger Graef, Films of Record:** Roger is a very well respected and experienced filmmaker. Amongst his more than eighty films, he is best known for his pioneering work in gaining access to hitherto closed institutions ranging from ministries and boardrooms to police, courts, prisons, probation and social work. Roger has a long established relationship with Australia and is keen to continue this. Roger was UK producer on the recently screened *The Burning Season*. He is developing a series on Tasmanian history with Nicholas Shakespeare.

**Georgina Eyre, Target Entertainment:** one of the most successful distributors and rights management groups in Europe. Their documentary

and factual catalogue is a mix of one-offs and series and their acquisitions amount to around 500 hours. Georgina comes to Target via Off the Fence and BBC. They are involved with the Screen Australia-funded project *Anatomy of a Massacre*, Michael Cordell's film on East Timor. Looking more for series but will take one-offs if this is going to lead to an ongoing relationship with a production company.

**Jane Balfour** founded and ran for nearly 20 years an international sales agency which specialised in top quality documentaries, short dramas and arthouse feature films. Nowadays Jane is a consultant and mentor as well as maintaining a small but select catalogue of documentary films from filmmakers such as the Pennebakers, Alan Berliner, Sergey Dvortsevov, Victor Kossakovsky and the Longbow Group. She is a most generous and invaluable source of information. Jane is also highly sought after as a judge on many international festival juries.

**Jan Younghusband, Channel 4 Commissioning Editor Arts:** Jan has commissioned projects as diverse as the series *Operatunity* and the Screen Australia-funded production *Eternity Man* which recently screened to large audiences (in excess of 2 million) in the United Kingdom and a smaller number on the ABC. Jan was also Commissioning Editor on *Hunger*, the film about Bobby Sands which did extremely well on the festival circuit before theatrical release and eventual broadcast. Jan has a number of series in development with Australian filmmakers which it is hoped will come to fruition within the next year. She is always looking for unusual stories and ways of making 'difficult' subjects accessible to the wider audience.

**Phil Craig, Furnace:** Phil has an established relationship with West Australian production company Electric Pictures (Andrew Ogilvie), he could be called an Anglo-Australian regular. Is involved in a co-production with Electric, *Addicted to Money*, which has Screen Australia funds, looking at the current financial crisis.

## IDFA

The next stop was Amsterdam for IDFA, in particular the influential pitching and co-financing event The Forum. This year the Forum gave increasing space to cross media projects and new media commissioners in an attempt to keep up with the rapidly changing nature of content delivery across the world. Many of the traditional broadcasters have opened up new divisions dealing specifically with new media. Commissioners of more traditional linear product increasingly have to collaborate with people from the online department. Everyone is trying to figure out the best way to do this. It's a period of transition. The Forum is developing the area in a considered way and acknowledges that it takes time to find producers with really strong cross-media projects. It's not enough that there is simply an internet site attached to the film.

This is the second year running that the Forum has invited three cross media projects, the most ambitious of which was *24hberlin – A day in the Life*, marking the 20th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall this year. The project, capturing 24 hours in the life of the city, was shot by 70 German directors over one 24-hour period. It is due to be broadcast on television for 24 hours, in conjunction with a website on 5 September. The images will then be kept in a digital archive. The project was presented in the central pitch

section where it was looking for post production funding. A cinema version of the film is also planned, with Celluloid Dreams selling.

Overall 48 projects were presented in the three sections of the Forum. The three sections being: the Central Pitch for projects with 25 to 75 per cent of the funding already in place; Rough Cut, for films in the completion stage of production and financing; and Seedling Projects, for projects in the very early stages of development. The latter two sections take the form of a much less intimidating round table meeting and are very popular. Central Pitch projects this year included *Czech Peace*, about US plans to build a missile base in the Czech Republic, *The Other Chelsea* a serious and humorous approach to post-Soviet reality when two middle-aged miners come together in their favourite place, the football stadium and the topical *Georgian Year* by the perennial IDFA favourite Nino Kirtadze. Biographical subjects were a popular format this year with projects on Pentagon whistleblower Daniel Ellsberg (*The Most Dangerous Man in America*), *Joan Collins – Sex and No Pity* and *Another Side of David Bailey* in the Central Pitches and projects on the late The van Gogh and Susan Sontag were featured in the Seedling section. It is worth noting that projects pitched as far back as 2004 are just screening at IDFA, an indication of how difficult the financing process can be. The Forum is a fascinating place to observe the gladiatorial cut and thrust of the pitch and the high calibre of the projects is instructive. Over the three days filmmakers observe not only the pitches, but they get to hear and see the commissioning editors and their responses to the projects. The Forum takes over a restaurant in the centre of Amsterdam and each day it is dedicated to the Forum participants and observers. This gives unfettered access to the key players in the documentary industry. Mitzi Goldman, who produced last year's First Appearance winner *End of the Rainbow* attended as an observer and was able to progress the funding on her next projects.

Australia was well represented with screenings this year of seven Australian films – *Horsemen* (Nancy Muqing Wu), *In My Father's Country* (Tom Murray and Graeme Isaac), *Indonesia Calling* (Joris Ivens), *Skin* (Rhys Graham), *Solo* (Jen Peedom, Chris Hilton), *Twelve Canoes* (Rolf de Heer, Molly Reynolds) and *Wanja the Warrior Dog* (Angie Abdilla, Tom Zubrycki). One of these films was in First Appearance Competition, one in Reflecting Images – Masters, and two were in Silver Cub Competition. John Hughes attended, going to all the screenings in the Joris Ivens retrospective as part of his work on the film he is making about Joris Ivens and the Australian connection. The Australian presence was bolstered by those writers who were at Binger Institute at the same time: Alice Bell, Paola Morabito and Leon Ford. It really is a wonderful melting pot for cultural activity. The films were of a high calibre, with a film from Kim Logninotto, *Rough Aunties*, Agnes Varda's *Agnes Sur La Plage*, and *Burma VJ – Reporting From A Closed Country* from director Anders Ostergaard amongst the highlights for me.

Meetings were held with:

**Hengameh Panahi, Celluloid Dreams** was attending IDFA for the first time in many years. Her involvement in documentary stretches back to 1987, when she was the producer of Marc Hureaux's *Bird Now*, the feature documentary about legendary jazz musician Charlie Parker. Celluloid is now heavily involved in docs, representing nine of the titles screening at IDFA this year.

**Wouter Barendrecht and Catherine Le Clef, Fortissimo:** Wouter was president of the Joris Ivens Award jury. They continually look for documentaries with theatrical potential as well as projects for television. Their catalogue collection has around 25 documentaries including *Super Size Me*, *Capturing the Friedmans*, *Shine a Light*, *Berlin/Lou Reed* and *Black, White and Grey*. They have offices worldwide.

**Esther Van Messel and Ayse Poffet, First Hand Films:** They represent around 250 films and will act as EP on selected projects. They have an unerring eye for festival favourites and this year represent the final Joris Ivens Award winner *Burma VJ – Reporting From A Closed Country* as well as the winner from two years ago – *Mr Vig and the Monastery*.

**Jan Rofekamp and Diana Holtzberg, Films Transit International:** One of the most respected documentary sales agents, specialising in worldwide release and marketing of feature-length documentaries as well as shorter versions which will gain broadcast sales. An ongoing relationship with Australia and Australian filmmakers. Films Transit is suggesting that perhaps after the Forum next year there is a possibility of a debrief on the Forum to find out how the filmmakers fared at the Forum.

**Rudy Buttignol and Murray Battle, Knowledge Network:** Their mission is to deliver high quality, relevant, credible and compelling programming via television and the web. They are the public broadcaster of British Columbia, Canada. Very often they need to do this via co-production partners and are very keen to develop relationships with Canada. Knowledge Network won't pay a lot but will do pre-licensing to allow producers to secure further sources of funding. Priority is for arts and culture, social issues history and feature-length documentaries.

**Catherine Olsen, CBC** has international strands *The Passionate Eye* and *Wild Docs*. She looks for documentaries dealing with political, social and environmental issues. Recent titles include *Up the Yangtze*, *Hold Me Tight*, *Let Me Go* and *The Burning Season*.

**Erkki Astala, YLE Finland:** Erkki deals with co-productions for YLE, which has 20 slots a week for documentaries, over four channels. In co-productions and pre-buys he mainly looks for creative cinematic works with a distinctive authorial voice. They like to have the option to choose between a one-hour and feature-length version, with the decision often left until rough cut stage. Erkki is one of many commissioning editors from YLE. The most well known in Australia would be Iikka Vehkalahti who commissions the documentary strand and is interested in social, political and authored work. He committed to projects such as *The English Surgeon* and *Murderball* and is a passionate advocate for documentary film in its purest form.

**Christine Reisen, Arte France:** Christine works with Helene Coldefy in the Specialist Factual Unit at Arte, which is responsible for human adventure, discovery, history, civilization, science, environment and human interest projects. They will take projects of varying lengths, preferably delivered on HD. They have quite an involvement with Screen Australia via projects such as *Darwin's Lost Paradise*, *The Seed Hunter*, *Robot Revolution* and many more.

**Pierrette Ominetti, Arte France:** Pierrette has taken over from Thierry Garrel running the Documentary Department. They look for 90-minute

projects, again delivered on HD. Their recent involvement with Australia has been via the Robert Nugent/Mitzi Goldman/Jean Pierre Gibrat project *Tous L'Or Du Monde (End of the Rainbow)*, which was a very successful co-production partnership.

**Olaf Grunert, Arte GEIE** who, along with his colleagues, runs the Theme Evenings and commissions 'Cultural Documentaries'. They will take projects at either 52 or 90 minutes and the bulk of their work (80%) is via co-productions of some form.

**Katja Wildermuth, ARD/MDR Germany** commissions historical documentaries, cultural documentaries, author-driven films, theme nights and high-end docudramas which can be either 45 or 52 minutes or any length up to 120 minutes. Recent titles include the impressive *Letter to Anna*, the story of journalist Politkovskaya's death. Her strand is called History and Society.

**Hans Robert Eisenhauer and Martin Pieper, ZDF/ARTE:** They will take projects at any length for a number of slots including science, documentary, society, history, adventure, biography, art and culture.

**Ryota Kotani, NHK** is looking for co-productions from creative documentaries, human stories, experimental TV and those about artists. Recently picked up the Screen Australia-funded *Intangible Asset Number 81* with which they have been very happy. They will take films at 60, 90 or 110 minutes, and prefer HD shooting.

**Jessica Raspe and Marijke Huijbregts, AVRO Netherlands** are interested in documentaries on fine arts, architecture, design, photography film and fashion. Their preferred length is 52 minutes and 80% of their commissions are co-productions.

**Margje de Koning, IKON Netherlands** is interested in creative single 52-minute documentaries on contemporary, cultural and moral issues with a strong human interest angle.

**Barbara Truyen, VPRO:** Barbara is very well known to Australian filmmakers as she has long been a champion for them during her time at Films Transit. Now she is a commissioning editor at VPRO where she commissions character-driven creative documentaries which can be either 52, 75 or sometimes 90 minutes long. She is looking for inspiring films about universal contemporary experiences as well as stories that show us what moves people and how life affects them. Films that lead to a 'lean forward experience' as she calls it.

**Nick Fraser, Jo Lapping and Greg Sanderson, BBC Storyville:** They are looking for author driven creative documentaries and projects they have been involved with recently include *The English Surgeon, Man on Wire, Stranded, Gonzo, Roman Polanski Wanted and Desired* and *Please Vote For Me*. They commission 25 titles a year and it would have to be one of the most competitive slots in the English-speaking documentary world. They take projects at 59 or 89 minutes and for people with such a competitive strand they are remarkably accessible. Their ratio of co-productions to licence commissions is probably 40% each with the balance being made up of acquisitions.

**Tabitha Jackson, Channel 4:** Tabitha commissions for More4 and the True Stories strands which showcase the best of new international filmmaking.

The films cover a vast range of subjects with the only criteria being that the films concentrate on the contemporary world and are made by world-class directors. Not a bad brief really.

**Simon Kilmurry, POV:** Simon is looking for independent, point of view, personal/social issue, human rights, cinema verite, issues not covered in the mainstream media as well as experimental work. He has very specific lengths – 52.30 or 82.30. Recent involvement in films such as *Up the Yangtze* and *49 Up* indicates the diversity of choice. POV has a cross platform content strategy, which is interested in stories that ‘leverage the strengths and unique attributes of television and the web as appropriate and that allow for civic engagement’.

**Claire Aguilar and Cynthia Kane, ITVS:** These commissioning editors and their slots are familiar to most Australian filmmakers by now. They have an international call initiative for single documentaries which closes early February each year and they are interested in creative documentaries of historical, biographical, personal and essay styles that bring the rest of the world to American audiences. They have a huge involvement with Australia through work such as *The First Australians, 4, The Siege, Return of the Masta, End of the Rainbow* and much more.

**Ann Rose, Sundance Channel:** They commission, pre-licence and co-produce around six documentary series and eight shorter or feature-length documentaries a year. They are interested in contemporary stories about bold, uncompromising, iconoclastic people and topics that can air across a number of strands. Their recent titles include *The Return of the War Room, Stanley Kubrick's Boxes* and *Pop Star on Ice*.

**Klara Grunning Harris, Kudos:** Klara has come to Kudos from ITVS and she knows the Australian documentary community well. She was at IDFA representing several films, most particularly *Yodok Stories* a finalist in the Joris Ivens Competition. Kudos is a sales agent with a small but select catalogue. They are aiming to represent and distribute high-end documentaries internationally. They have co-production funds and are looking at films about arts and culture as well as Indigenous stories. They are also keen on picking up previous work by filmmakers to establish their catalogue. In other words, a new company worth pursuing.

### **World Congress of Science and Factual Producers**

After the intensity of IDFA the World Congress of Science and Factual Producers in Florence had a slightly different approach. Here it was very much ‘business and deals’, with around 40 Australians amongst the 800 or so delegates. It started off with a session that was an overview of the year – who is out there making great shows, breaking new ground and making people talk? What worked and what fell flat? Most importantly, what’s going to be the next big thing? This session looked at the best programs from 2007 and 2008 and was a highly entertaining way to start the conference.

The pattern in science was that internationally personal stories are attracting the audience and the interest. In Germany magazine stories do well but not documentaries. In Italy science is still very popular and in the US docs are doing well on cable but not much has really taken off in the format or series arena. In the UK the ‘palette is dull’, there are no significant trends. As far as

history, it is thriving, again as long as there is a personal touch. Not drama docs, they are no longer wanted. It is about Me, My Life, My Culture Identity and Self, culturally specific programs. Projects such as *Who Do You Think You Are?* have proved hugely successful and have produced a number of spin-offs, none with quite the success of the original. The UK/Australian co-production *Ten Pound Poms* was one of those cited as an example of a successful history program.

Another amusing session was one based around the number of programs that are being produced to celebrate the 200th anniversary of the birth of Charles Darwin and the 150th anniversary of the publication of *On the Origin of the Species*. This has inspired producers and broadcasters around the globe to get on the bandwagon. Science and History commissioners have supported a number of projects which have actually lasted the distance, and there are apparently some 27 projects being made to celebrate this event. National Geographic, CBC Canada, WGBH Nova, BBC UK, SBS TV, ABC TV, BBC Scotland, Arte France are amongst those who have programs – some are of the historical ‘boat and wig’ variety, and others claim to be more of the enquiring and scientific variety. It is to be suspected that by the end of 2009 the general public will be either enamoured with, or completely fed up with, Charles Darwin. The panellists were all most persuasive in the hopes that it will be the former.

Amongst those I took meetings with were:

**Helene Coldefy, Arte France** who deals with the Science and History genres. She is very happy with the work they are commissioning with Australia. She is looking for stories which have a new vision, an unusual connection – ‘complexity made simple’ is how she describes it. They commission factual-based drama as well as documentary of almost any length, series and one-offs.

**Naomi Boxer, TV Ontario:** Naomi deals with 8–10 slots of factual programming and can contribute a small amount of funds to co-productions. Enough to help them get across the line, but there has to be a Canadian angle. She prefers to see a trailer with a written proposal.

**Ralph Lee, Head of Specialist Factual Channel 4:** Ralph commissions up to 200 hours of programming a year, of which about 30% of which is co-production. They invest between \$100,000 and \$600,000 per hour for a one-off, and slightly less for series. They prefer to have a cross-platform element for which they will provide additional funds. He is looking for global project, projects of scale, not small parochial pieces. His brief is for prime time material, usually for a one-hour slot with an occasional special if the topic demands it.

**Ellen Windemuth, Off the Fence:** One of the most established and successful sales agents, with their headquarters in Amsterdam. Ellen is keen to continue her relationship with Australian filmmakers. Looking in the main for series, wild life and natural history are of particular interest. It is hard if a project is too parochial for this company to take on the project. They will put up \$50,000 on great science, history and natural history projects that are internationally relevant. Off the Fence has a library of over 1,000 hours and it acquires an additional 200 hours each year. Their team covers all territories and are all familiar with the production process. They work with the



Smithsonian Channel to generate their HD output of around 100 hours a year. They also have their own production arm based in Bristol, UK.

**Sean McKnight, Director Programme Development Science Channel, Discovery Communications:** They have an audience reach of 85 million people and want to engage people in an interactive journey to the brink of possibilities ‘exploring and celebrating the full spectrum of science and technology and all the innovation that entails’. They have programs where they take things apart and put them back together to see what happens. Often very simple but effective ideas. Their audience is skewed to males between 25 and 54 and do not want things trivialised, as they have a lot of geeks and are looking for programs that will appeal. You must submit proposals online to them but it only needs to be brief. A one-page synopsis plus four or five pages which includes an outline plus outline of the company and the people involved in the production.

**Lilla Hurst** has set up a company called Lilla Vision which represents a number of producers, directors and production companies. She is based in the UK and her clients include Phil Craig, Renegade and Pulse Films. She helps people find the project and the people who can make it work for them. She has worked in the industry for many years and is impeccably connected. An essential visit for people going to London.

**Maurice van Sabben, President National Geographic Television International:** This company, through Edwina Thring (currently on maternity leave) has a long tradition of dealing with Australia. They have around 180 hours of independent production annually from acquisitions to co-productions and are particularly interested in wildlife, science and eco climate projects across all genres and are interested in developing more projects themselves. To this end they are sending a contingent of four to AIDC this year, actively soliciting projects.

**Susan Werbe, Executive Producer Programming History, USA:** She commissions 50 hours a year of history programming and she co produces more than 400 hours annually. While Susan directly commissions producers from other territories, it is not particularly important to include a ‘territory related’ segment in the documentary. They consider all lengths and forms of history. What Susan does look for is an unusual angle or connection into the story with spectacular visuals and an entertaining or investigative approach. Susan is a commissioning editor with a generous view of the world.

**Dirk Neuhoff, NDR** works with Patricia Schlesinger in the science area and is keen for filmmakers to send topics about science for consideration. He will also consider the occasional nature or wildlife program, however these are not of great interest to him.

**Melanie Wallace, Senior Series Producer NOVA–WGBH:** Melanie does not have a staff of producers, she works with independent producers and commissions 18 – 20 new shows a year. This extremely established science documentary series has been on air since 1985. They are trying to broaden their demographic and are concerned, like many broadcasters, that they skew older viewers. They have worked successfully with Australian producers such as Ruth Berry (*Dinosaurs on Ice*) and are keen to continue this relationship. NOVA is still one of the most popular science series on American television.

**Michael Alder, Executive Producer Science and Natural History Unit, CBC Canada:** They work often with Australia and are keen to develop relationships. They do not contribute large licence fees but are very useful in assisting filmmakers raise the balance of their funds on particular projects. Their flagship program *The Nature of Things* explores issues, discoveries and events in the worlds of science, medicine, technology, wildlife and the environment. Screen Australia has several projects which have funding from him in various stages of production, or recently completed. Projects include *Real Hobbits* and *Robot Revolution*. Enjoys working with Australia and Australians.

**Caroline Behar, Head of Acquisitions and International Co-Productions, France 5:** Caroline is looking for projects in the areas of world culture, geography, ethnology, wildlife, environment and science with which France 5 can partner.

**Susanne Mueller, Head of Co-Productions, ZDF:** Susanne heads up ZDF Enterprises which is the commercial arm of ZDF and is responsible for all documentary and drama co-productions both adult and children's. She can invest in projects, both ones that go to ZDF, and ones that might not. She is trying to source young programs and program makers and will recommend to ZDF if she thinks it is appropriate. Their website gives hints to producers re slots and is worth sourcing: [www.zdf-enterprises](http://www.zdf-enterprises). As well as Susanne, other people at ZDF that producers can contact are the commissioning editors – Peter Aarons is Head of Culture, Alexander Hesse runs History and Society, and Heine Gatzermeyer runs Current Affairs. Most approachable.

**Jo Evans, Head of Development, Southern Star:** Based in the UK but very keen to develop projects that will work domestically in Australia, Producers can deal direct with him if they wish, rather than via Australian entity.

**Dan Chambers and Justine Kershow, Blink:** A UK production company which recently completed the five-part series *True Stories*, examining the reality behind well-known films. They have a series titled *Extraordinary Animals*, which is ongoing and popular and they are developing a number of history, science and other documentary programs and are keen to develop co-producing partnerships.

**John Farren,** who was editor of the BBC flagship program *Timewatch* for six years, has just launched his own independent production company which specialises in history and science for TV and across emerging platforms. He too is looking for co-producing partners.

**Daniel Glaser, Head of Special Projects, Wellcome Trust UK:** This is a fascinating organisation that directs activities with young people, broadcast media and scientists' public engagement. They sponsored six recent science graduates to attend the conference with a view to them ultimately having an involvement in the production of science shows. Science shows that are able to affect change. They were one of the major investors in the multi award-winning Geoffrey Smith film *The English Surgeon*, which follows the story of a retired UK surgeon who travels to Eastern Europe to work with doctors in the region who have no funds, no assistance, but a high incidence of brain diseases. Rather like Fred Hollows with eyes, he works with local equipment (including a Black and Decker power drill) to devise ways of assisting the

community. An inspirational story. Perhaps we can find ways to start a Trust such as this in Australia?

The overall message from the conference is that people are looking for entertaining ways to tell stories, to make them personal and relevant and to attract younger audiences.

Later this year the World Congress of Science and Factual Producers will be held in Melbourne. It is exciting that a conference of this calibre with such a range of commissioning editors will be coming to Australia. It should be very beneficial to the local production sector.

**Julia Overton**