



# Homemade History

*Homemade History* is a private record of Australia, told using the often forgotten heritage of 8mm home movies. Each five-minute episode relates the small stories that fill in the gaps of our formal history. Colourful, intimate, and occasionally out of focus, *Homemade History* celebrates amateur filmmakers and their remarkable archive of memories. The director, producer and editor of *Homemade History* describe the creation of their series

## Robert Herbert, Director

Contrary to what one might have expected it was intriguing watching hours of other people's home movies. We always sat down to watch mysterious rolls labelled 'Mums Favourites' and 'Glamour Girls' with anticipation. What I have learnt is that when someone says that his or her home movie footage is boring and of no interest to anyone, this is a long way from the truth.

In making each five-minute episode I was very conscious of trying to maintain the direct and intimate experience of watching home movies. We asked the photographers not to look over their films until we arrived to interview them. Often families hadn't watched them for 10 or

fifteen years. This way, we captured on tape their candid and spontaneous reactions to the footage. This first audio recording became the foundation onto which a more detailed story was laid.

In editing down each collection, I felt it was important that the hand of the director and the editor was not apparent and that the spirit in which the footage was originally shot was embraced and enhanced. Often how things were shot (rough and spontaneous or careful and constructed) tells as much as what was shot. I wanted to reveal the personalities of the photographers, not simply through the style of their voice-over commentary, but through their images as well.

## Sophie Jackson, Producer

The desire to record our own lives is a strong pull. We had anticipated using the ScreenSound Australia collection of home movies, but word of mouth took over and we contacted or were contacted by people we didn't know, from all walks of life. From approximately 40 possible episodes we selected thirteen, not necessarily because they had the best footage, but because they had the best stories about a broad sweep of Australia.

As historical documents, there is something far more resonant in the unmediated quality of home movies against the grander images of the newsreel footage. Home movie makers were capturing the small moments that were of importance to them. It is the gathering together of all these small moments that really make up a record of our society.

## Nick Meyers, Editor

I started making films when I got a super-8 camera for my 13th birthday. In those early days I thought everything was done in the camera, so I carefully constructed and shot my miniature epics one fragment at a time, moving from location to location.

I soon found out from a friendly high school teacher that you could cut the film with a pair of scissors and splice it back together in new and wonderful ways. I realised then that filming was only the start of the adventure, and it

wasn't long before I had a whole post-production studio going in my bedroom. The spirit and energy of those times has guided us in the making of the *Homemade History* series.

After years of honing our skills in professional environments, the advent of affordable digital technology has allowed us to move back into the home to edit these films. For the second time in my life I have an entire post-production studio set up in my bedroom. I wound up cutting on a laptop computer hooked up to a domestic TV.

All these people are skilled observers of their surroundings, and, whether they know it or not, they're all expert photographers, whose distinctive styles are used to tell their own homemade history.

## Homemade History

13 five-minute documentaries  
 directed & conceived by Robert Herbert  
 produced by Sophie Jackson  
 edited by Nick Meyers  
 contemporary portraits by Yanni Kronenberg

Arcadia Pictures production, in association with the Australian Film Commission, New South Wales Film & Television Office & SBS Independent

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