



## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

It is certainly cinema weather! I think I said that last month, too.

July was the beginning of our FISH year and we welcome our new members who, I bet, will considerably reduce the average age of our membership.

Automatic renewal for membership has been set up for you by Highland Creative, so if you wish to opt in for automatic renewal next year log in and go to your member subscription on the FISH website and click on the 'Enable auto renew' link.

We hope that everyone is as excited by our film list as we are... but there aren't so many jolly films on offer. We have sweated over our choices...

Best wishes to all from your committee,

**Roz Garwen.**



### FILMS IN THE SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS INC

**President:** Roz Garwen 4886 4142 & 0414 820 890

**Guest Enquiries:** Deborah Blay : 0400 411 004

**TEXT ONLY minimum 24hours notice**

**Website:** [www.fish.org.au](http://www.fish.org.au)

**Email:** [fishfilmsadmin@gmail.com](mailto:fishfilmsadmin@gmail.com)

**Membership:** [Fishfilmsadmin@gmail.com](mailto:Fishfilmsadmin@gmail.com)

Membership is closed

**Enquiries:** [fishfilmsadmin@gmail.com](mailto:fishfilmsadmin@gmail.com)

**We are grateful to our sponsors :** EMPIRE CINEMA

ACE INTERNET SERVICES HIGHLAND CREATIVE

---

### FILMS IN THE SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS INC

10.00 am Sunday 17th August 2025

8.15 pm Tuesday 19th August 2025

---

*Paris, Texas*

[West Germany / France 1984]

**Spoiler alert: You may prefer to read this review after the screening**

**DIRECTOR:** Wim Wenders

**RUNNING TIME:** 145mins

**RATING:**

### **Synopsis:**

Out of nowhere, a gaunt man in a dark suit & a red baseball cap appears in the burning heat of the desert between the US & Mexico. The man, Travis, is driven by the desire to reconnect with his family.

### **Review:**

It took a German filmmaker to produce the quintessential American road movie. 40 years on the 4K restoration of Wim Wenders' *Paris, Texas*, starring Harry Dean Stanton, has a definite thumbs up for standing the test of time.

It's been 20 years since I last saw Wim Wenders' 1984 Palme d'Or-winning film *Paris, Texas*. I think it was downstairs in the little cinema at Metro Arts (long gone now) and the film print looked – to borrow a memorable line from the film – like “forty miles of rough road”.

Thankfully, for the 40th anniversary, Wenders has overseen a meticulous 4K restoration. Still, I was apprehensive about seeing it again. *Paris, Texas* is one of those films that haunts your memory and, like a memory, it's sometimes hard to know what you actually saw and what you thought you saw. It's a common risk revisiting a half-forgotten, classic decades later: Was it really as good I remembered? Yes. Yes, it was.

Directed by German auteur Wim Wenders and written by legendary American playwright and actor Sam Shepard, the film opens on a shabby, weather-beaten man walking through an unforgiving desert. He has a face that looks like it was carved out of a burnt log. The man's name is Travis (played with subtle tenderness by Harry Dean Stanton) and we don't know where he's been or where he's going. As it turns out, neither does he.

After collapsing from dehydration at a roadhouse, Travis is reunited with his brother, Walt (Dean Stockwell), who has been looking for him for four years. Walt has been caring for Travis' young son, Hunter (Hunter Carson) after Travis' wife, Jane (Natassja Kinski), dropped him off one day and never returned.

Where has Travis been? Why is he out here? What happened to him? Where is Jane? But Travis can't explain because he can't talk. He's mute and it's not clear if he remembers anything. From this point the mysteries of the story roll out at an unhurried pace, like tumble weeds delivered by a soft desert wind, as Travis, and eventually his son, Hunter, hit the road in search of answers.

Road movies are a staple of American cinema so it's ironic it took a German director to get this close to perfecting the form. *Paris, Texas* is a rare sort of cinema that feels as delicate and vulnerable as its characters who each try, and fail, to connect to each other using imperfect technologies – crumbling photographs, family movies, toy walkie talkies, crackling telephone lines.

Like a lot of classic cinema, the fact that *Paris, Texas* works as well as it does comes down to an uncanny convergence of talent arriving in the same place, at the same time, with exactly the right story to tell.

Wenders, fresh off his 1982 US debut, *Hammett* (after being hired by Francis Ford Coppola), was eager to continue his fascination with Americana. Sam Shepard, having won a Pulitzer Prize for his writing, was in hot demand as a writer and actor. Harry Dean Stanton, following minor but memorable roles in *The Godfather (Part 2)* and *Alien*, was looking for a lead role to show off his talents. Add to the team the captivating Nastassja Kinski (daughter of German star Klaus Kinski) and brilliant Dutch cinematographer Robbie Müller, and the stage was set for a modern classic. Even the young assistant director, future French auteur Claire Denis, was pedigree.

The only thing they didn't have was a finished screenplay.

Shooting the story in order, across five short weeks, Wenders and Shepard had riffed on an idea about a man who had lost his memory. But before they had finished the script, Shepard was called away to another job. Wenders recruited actor and writer L.M. Kit Carson (the father of the actor playing Travis' son), to help devise an ending. The resulting last act of the story, with monologues written and dictated by Shepard over the phone to Wenders' on-set secretary, is a work of heart-breaking genius.

The restored 4K print is gorgeous, showing off Müller's masterful use of natural lighting while Ry Cooder's iconic slide-guitar soundtrack shimmers over the film's dusty landscapes like an aural heat haze.

The tonal range of the film remains remarkable – at times gently poetic, often whimsical, even funny, as well as dark and troubling. It's an emotional journey and some modern audiences will wrestle with the subtle undercurrent of violence in the film's mysterious backstory, as well as the sad, lonely redemption Travis is given by the end. But, like the town of its title, a place that is never seen, only alluded to, *Paris, Texas* works best in the open spaces it creates.

It was interesting seeing Wenders' most recent film, *Perfect Days*, set in modern-day Tokyo, and recognising Travis in the film's quiet and lonely main character, a man haunted by a distant trauma that shadows his journey through each day. *Paris, Texas*, like *Perfect Days*, reaches for, and achieves, a sense of healing that reminds us of cinema's enduring power as a storytelling medium.

Source: [www.indailyqld.com.au](http://www.indailyqld.com.au) ~ [Anthony Mullins](#) 28/10/2024 ~ Edited extracts accessed 10/6/25

## **Some thoughts on: *All We Imagine as Light***

As moths are attracted to the light, so our three main protagonists had been drawn to the excitement, conveniences and employment opportunities of a big and bustling city. In this case, Mumbai, a city with the most 'bustle' on the sub-continent.

Unfortunately, there was little happiness or satisfaction to be found for our three in the darkness, indifference and the isolation that can exist in huge populations. The palette and mood were sombre in poorly lit streets, crowded workspaces and cramped domestic situations.

I found this to be a somewhat unusual outing. There didn't seem to be a strong narrative driving it along. I felt like a detached observer without real connection to our overworked nurse whose husband has abandoned her, the frustrated youngster trying to develop her mixed background relationship, and, towards the older woman whose husband had died without leaving the appropriate paperwork, rendering her effectively homeless. This sense of detachment left me feeling devoid of the empathy that their circumstances would normally have elicited or deserved, such as in our last film outing from Iran, where the levels of audience involvement, care and concern were very high.

I felt this very slowly crafted film was, because of its style, much too long and could have had a good half hour or so of editing without compromising the final scenes at all. The final scenes brought a fresh, lightened palette, where a solution and/or resolution for all three, could be found by returning to village life under pale blue sunny skies.

I quite enjoyed the twist and intrigue at the end of the film, with the resuscitation of the swimmer at the beach. Dream? Real? Representing acknowledgement and acceptance that her husband won't return?

This film left me more bewildered than disappointed.

The unexpected rice cooker? And did we really need a pan of placenta for the training of nurses in a common room? And I still have three versions of what the film's title means circling around in my head!!

Thank you - FISH, see you in Texas.

**Ross Armfield [ Reviewer in Chief]**

~~

## More Thoughts on: *All We Imagine as Light*

What a dreamy, almost meditative film. There's just one section I'd like to comment on – and that's the scene with the man who drowned and whom Prabha manages to bring back to life. Was he in fact her husband?

I think she was imagining it: what if it were really he? What would he say? And what would she say? He seems tender, remorseful and she still trying to test out his words. As yet unsure whether it was real or imagined, I was pulled up short by her final response in that scene – I could not go back to you. Not ever.

Immediately after that, we see her sitting almost serenely outside. She sees the young Anu coming, and asks her straightaway and upfront, where is the young man you were with? Previously, she'd told Anu that she would have to accept her fate, presumably to marry the man her parents had already chosen for her (as she, Prabha, had done). But now, she openly refers to the young lover and Anu shyly brings him to sit with Prabha and Parvaty. Prabha accepts the situation, welcomes him and asks where he comes from, saying it's very beautiful.... as is here (Parvaty's village) beautiful. It's as if having settled in her own mind that her marriage is not, and perhaps never was, a situation she wants to go back to, then she is able basically to say to Anu, seize your chance. Despite parental, religious and society's disapproval, go with whom you love.

It made me wonder if she, Prabha, would eventually seek out her doctor/poet.

## Trish Topp

~~

### COMING UP:

September	<i>Holy Cow</i> [France]	Sunday 21 <sup>st</sup> & Tuesday 23 <sup>rd</sup>
October	<i>Sons</i> [Denmark/Sweden]	Sunday 19 <sup>th</sup> & Tuesday 21 <sup>st</sup>
November	<i>An Unfinished Film</i> [China]	Sunday 16 <sup>th</sup> & Tuesday 18 <sup>th</sup>
December	<i>The Movie Teller</i> [Chile/Spain]	Sunday 14 <sup>th</sup> & Tuesday 16 <sup>th</sup>

~~

### **\*\* Further Message from the President**

We are a cinema club of like-minded people and have a **Code of Courtesy** when we are at a screening. We ask that people arrive **before** the film begins and that we remain seated until **after** the credits have rolled no matter if it is in a language you do not speak personally.

Members may have one guest per FISH year [having registered 24 hours before the screening at the text number on the front of the newsletter] and phones must be tuned off.

## Roz Garwen

# **Notice of the ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING of FISH**

## **[Films In The Southern Highlands Inc.]**

to be held on **Sunday 21st September 2025 at 9:30am** (before film screening)

### **AGENDA**

1. Attendance and Apologies
2. Minutes of previous Annual General Meeting
3. Business Arising
4. Treasurer's Report
5. President's Report
6. Election of Office Bearers and Committee Members for **2025 - 2026**
7. General Business

### **President's Report for AGM 2024-25**

It has been a relief that membership renewals have been easier this year now that we have adjusted to on-line technology. Highland Creative has been so helpful, above and beyond their initial role.

Our hard-working committee is to be thanked, in particular Liz Stevenson and Helen Jones. Liz researches the reviews of new films from many sources, creates our monthly newsletter and liaises with the printer. Helen helps many people to smooth the way for membership renewals. She also creates the detailed membership list to facilitate our contact with members. We must also thank the other members of our committee who are always willing to help in every way: Deborah Blay, Virginia Romney, Simon Woffenden, Sandra Gillespie and Sue Hanrahan.

We are delighted to say that our committee is complete at present as we welcome a new film-trained researcher, Milena Stojanovska who has immediately reduced our average age considerably.

The films we chose for the past year were of different genres and from many countries: Sudan, Italy, Australia, Germany, USA, UK, China, Sweden, Iran among them. We were happy to receive appreciative comments from members.

Many thanks are due to our now official Reviewer-In-Chief (erstwhile President Emeritus) Ross Armfield, dear Trish Topp and young Poppy Dowsett. Their analyses of films are always fascinating.

Last, but certainly not least, great thanks are due to the Empire Cinema team without whom we would not exist. Everyone eases our way, particularly Gerard who is so very helpful and knowledgeable.

We believe FISH to be the oldest surviving film club in NSW (Australia? The world?)

**Roz Garwen**

# FISH EOFY 2025

## INCOME

2025

2024

### Subscriptions

Cash	\$70.00	\$260.00
Stripe	\$29496.99	\$25 632.64

Interest (TD ...53/2501)	\$300.00	\$579.18
--------------------------	----------	----------

<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>\$29866.99</b>	<b>\$26 471.82</b>
---------------------	-------------------	--------------------

## EXPENSES

Film hire & screening	\$25740.00	\$23 800.00
Printing	\$215.70	\$339.70
Postage		\$526.63
Computer/Internet (Highland	\$1363.26	\$7 566.44
Creative)		
Stripe	\$176.81	-
Office Supplies	\$384.29	-
Dept Fair Trade	\$56.25	\$54.24

<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$27 936.31</b>	<b>\$32 287.01</b>
-----------------------	--------------------	--------------------

Surplus/(Deficit)	<u>\$1930.68</u>	<u>\$5 815.19</u>
-------------------	------------------	-------------------

SH has 3 accounts

		Opening Balance	Closing Balance
1.	0049603053/2501 Term Deposit	\$15000	\$7500
2.	004903053/V501 Savings Account (now closed)	\$83.78	\$0
3.	0049603053/1201 Working Account	\$17 914.61	\$27 345.29

## NOTES

23/12/24	Transfer from TD to statement account	\$7500.00
22/05/25	Transfer from Savings Acc (when closed) to Working account	\$84.93
	(made up of \$83.78 + \$1.15 interest)	

“Stripe” refers to the system which handles FISH payments and subscriptions

Deborah Blay (Treasurer)

Simon Woffenden (Committee)