

A message from the pit-top

ROBERT MILLIKEN looks at the documentary offerings of the Sydney Film Festival.

IT IS outrageous when our television networks, including the ABC, are not making films like *Kemira: Diary Of A Strike*, when independent filmmakers on far more meagre resources are prepared to take the gamble.

Kemira should be seen by a wider audience than the film festival set: it is an excellent example of the way a documentary filmmaker can highlight a piece of history when the rest of the media have, at best, treated it less than seriously or ignored it completely.

Tom Zubrycki took his film team in late 1982 to the pit head at *Kemira* near Wollongong, NSW, where 31 miners had begun an underground-occupation in protest at the decision by the BHP subsidiary, Australian Iron and Steel, to retrench two thirds of that mine's workforce. They were among the 400 miners sacked by BHP from coal pits which supplied the company's steelworks.

This was one of the most dramatic events in recent Australian history, one which exploded into the storming of Parliament House in Canberra by angry miners and their families and which shook Malcolm Fraser's Government in its dying days.

While BHP, the Big Australian, was sacking the *Kemira* miners, it was making \$300 million profit and buying less labour-intensive open cut mines in Queensland from Utah, the American mining giant. It was also later to receive an infusion of funds from the Hawke Government.

These events are significant but peripheral to Zubrycki and his director of photography, Fabio Cavardino, as they document the personal traumas of the *Kemira* miners and their families.

Apart from a few scenes shot from a camera smuggled underground during the 16-day

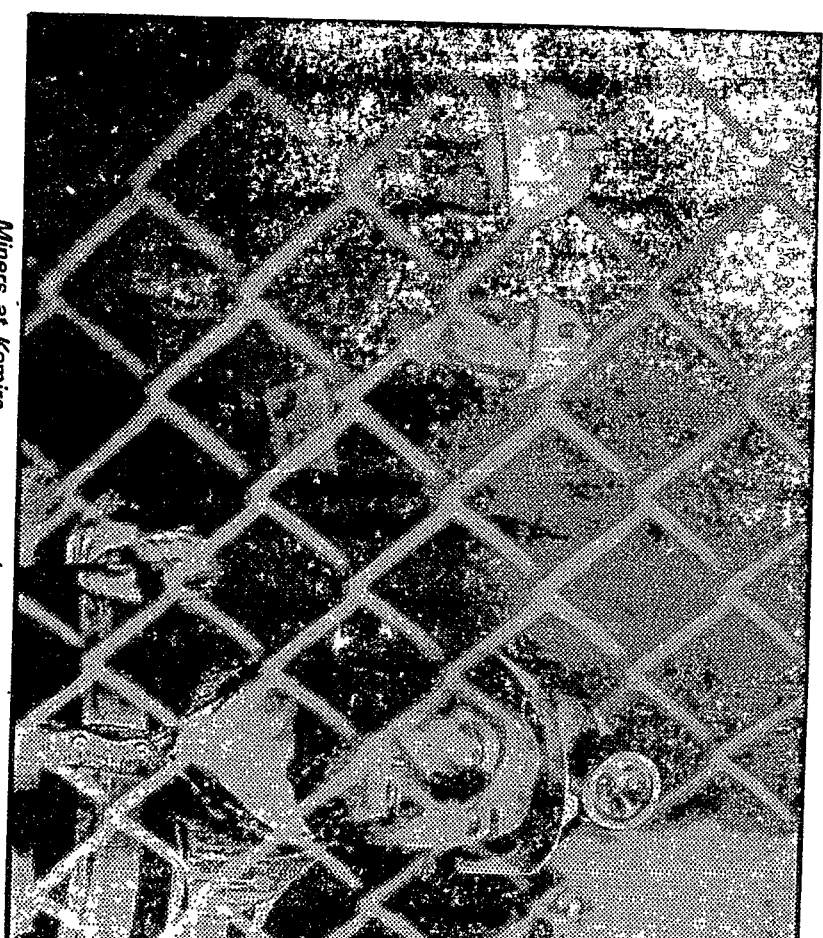
strike, the action takes place among those at the top of the pit who rallied to the miners' cause — other unionists, the people of Wollongong, but principally the women who organised meals, maintained vigils and kept their families going on next to no money.

Kemira is as much a feminist film as a critique of the insensitive actions of a rich, powerful corporation. Zubrycki has highlighted the central role of women when tragedy strikes families, the changes the women go through and their growing sense of individuality. One woman has to cope with a mysterious break-in to her house, an apparent attempt at intimidation which fails. A marriage collapses due to the strains of the strike's aftermath. All of the women recognise they are fighting for the survival of not just their families but their city as well.

The *Kemira* miners and their families had a clear sense of history and the role of stay-in-strikes as a weapon for fighting pit closures and mass sackings. (The first such strike, at Korumburra in Victoria in 1936, is the subject of Richard Löwenstein's forthcoming feature, *Strikebound*, acclaimed recently at the Cannes Film Festival.)

Zubrycki's film tells the story of the *Kemira* miners' pyrrhic victory expansively and sensitively, but one is left to question the use of Elizabeth Drake's music. Drake's work is very good but in this sort of film, where the images set the mood, the introduction of any music tends to be an unwarranted and over-stated form of assistance.

Zubrycki's first film, *Waterloo*, about housing evictions in inner Sydney, won the documentary section of the Greater Union awards at the Sydney film festival three years ago. *Kemira* is a finalist in the documentary section of this year's Australian Film Institute



Miners at *Kemira* . . . Personal traumas documented.

awards along with three others: *For Love or Money*, *Celso and Kora* and *Antarctic Man*.

I'll Be Home for Christmas is a new Australian documentary which, by contrast, fails to make the impact it so clearly set out to achieve. Director Brian McKenzie and producer-sound recordist John Crutlers spend more than two years filming a group of down-and-out men living rough in Melbourne.

The result is a film more than two hours long that appears random and rambling, testing its audience's tolerance and leaving it asking why the film was made in this way. Certainly the filmmakers wanted to explore the legitimate question of what brought men from perfectly ordinary backgrounds, some of them highly qualified, to the lowest rung of society.

But instead of following the stories of two or three people in depth, McKenzie and Crutlers have weakened their case by cutting back and forth across a broad group of men in an ill-defined attempt to examine the supporting roles each gives to the other. A few speak sensitively about what made them

in neighbouring Honduras, as "democratic freedom fighters".

Pilger has his own black and white vision of things, and he easily skirts over some of the undoubted internal problems of the Nicaraguan revolution. But his concluding comment on the Nicaraguans is direct and beyond question: "If governments won't help them, why can't they leave them alone?"

Bitter Cane, a film about Haiti photographed clandestinely over six years, and When the Mountains Tremble, an account of the struggle against the American-backed military dictatorship of Guatemala, show one reason why the US regards Nicaragua as a threat. In both Haiti and Guatemala, American business controls the economy and American businessmen extol the "virtues of a workforce that is, to quote one of them, "easily trained" (read docile and cheap).

Unions and political parties are banned and US companies flock to these countries where American economic and military aid ensure "stability." Haitians are told \$2.64 a day is

Sydney Film Fest Reviews

Hotel New York (U.S.-COLOR/B&W-16m)

Sydney, June 17.

An International Showcase release of a Zanzibar production. Produced by Jackie Raynal, Sid Geffen. Directed and written by Raynal. Dialog, Gary Indiana; camera (color/b&w, 16m), Babette Mangolle; editor, Suzanne Fenn; music, Lee Erwin; sound, Helena Kaplan. Reviewed at Sydney Film Festival, June 15, 1984. Running time: 56 MINS.

Loulou Sid Jackie Raynal
Sid Sid Geffen
Gary Gary Indiana
Lanford John Erdman
Director Tom Bueche
With: Jonathan Rosenbaum, Errol Morris.

A funny, low-budget 16m featurette about a French femme filmmaker and her misadventures in Manhattan. Loulou is invited to show one of her films at the Museum of Modern Art and, despite the ponderously silly questions she gets from the minuscule audience after the screening (questions on structuralism and feminism and whether the urinating scene was real or faked), she decides she likes New York and will stay for a while.

She takes a bed in an apartment shared by two bizarre women, paying exorbitant rent to a grasping landlord, and gets a job cutting a gay porn movie whose pretentious director talks like Samuel Fuller. And she meets, and marries, a middle-aged film buyer for CBS who hates her film but thinks she can help his kinky son.

Manhattan film scene insiders should get plenty of yocks from this economically made and quite winning item. Director Jackie Raynal (a former cutter from Rohmer, Chabrol and Godard) plays Loulou herself with a wide-eyed innocence that works perfectly. Her real life husband, Sid Geffen, also has lotsa fun with his role, especially in a sequence where he goes off looking for a younger lover for his wife and winds up in the Carnegie Hall Cinema watching Buster Keaton in "Sherlock Junior." (Geffen owns that theater in real life.)

"Hotel New York" is an exceedingly modest affair, but could find an audience if billed with another quality item of similar length. It ends on one of the brightest sight-gags since the Broadway night opening of Jack Buchanan's show literally laid an egg in Vincente Minnelli's "The Band Wagon."
—Strat.

I'll Be Home For Christmas

(AUSTRALIAN-DOCU-COLOR)

Sydney, June 17.

A Brian McKenzie production. Produced by John Crutcher. Directed by Brian McKenzie. Camera (color), McKenzie; sound, Crutcher. Reviewed at Sydney Film Festival, June 16, 1984. Running time: 132 MINS.

A painstaking documentary, shot over a two-year period, about a group of homeless, alcoholic men who live out in the parks and streets of Melbourne. Filmmaker Brian McKenzie, who previously made the award-winning short documentary "Winter's Harvest," obviously achieved considerable rapport with his subjects, and concentrates on five of them. But his film is way overlong at over two hours, and by his apparent inability to be more ruthless with his material, he has reduced the impact of the subject.

The men, of all ages and some with obviously good education, spend their time sitting around either in the open or in special hostels, drinking cheap wine and talk-

ing and arguing among themselves. Since their speech is often slurred, and the park where they meet is close to a main road, it's often very hard to pick up what they're saying. McKenzie eschews any commentary or titles, which might have bridged some gaps and helped him to edit the film more tightly: but the structure seems odd anyway, since we have to wait until the very end to discover the moving story that a youthful Irishman came out to Australia to be best man at his brother's wedding and stayed on, after his mother died, in this tragic and wasteful environment.

McKenzie, who says his film was "exploratory" in the beginning, originally planned a 50-minuter, and would have achieved much more if he'd disciplined himself to retain that length. Almost thirty years ago, Lionel Rogosin's "On The Bowery," a similar film in many ways to this one, managed to tell its tragic story in a little over an hour.

Visually the film is good, though as noted sound recording is not always up to snuff. —Strat.

Kemira: Diary Of A Strike (AUSTRALIAN-DOCU-COLOR)

Sydney, June 17.

A Kemira Production. Produced and directed by Tom Zubrycki. Camera (color), Fabio Cavardino; editor, Gil Serine; music, Elizabeth Drake. Reviewed at Sydney Film Festival, June 10, 1984. Running time: 61 MINS.

"Kemira: Diary Of A Strike" ranks as one of the best documentaries ever made in Australia. It's theme is familiar enough: coverage of a bitterly disputed coal-miners' strike of two years ago centered on the N.S.W. South Coast industrial city of Wollongong.

The giant BHP company, Australia's largest, controlled coal-mines in the area has announced that 400 miners will lose their jobs — this despite the company having earned a staggering overall \$300,000,000 profit the previous year. Some 31 miners stage a sit-in deep below the surface, and their union battles in court for a moratorium on the sackings.

The miners' stand caught the attention of the nation when two trainloads of angry miners journey to the capital, Canberra, to protest outside Parliament House. When the then Prime Minister, Malcolm Fraser, refused to see a delegation, the miners literally smashed their way through glass doors into the Parliament building, a momentous event captured on prime-time tv. Soon after an apparent settlement was reached and the miners ended their sit-in; but they had been deceived, and the sackings continued and even accelerated.

Zubrycki, a sociologist turned filmmaker with one other docu under his belt ("Waterloo," 1981) has handled the subject with both intelligence and expert craftsmanship. Not content to end his film with the strike's end, he waited until he could follow the fortunes of the key strikers months later. Result makes for an exceptionally moving human document, as he discovers marriages have broken up and families scattered as the men are mostly still jobless. This is particularly touching in the case of one couple, the Wiltshires: the plucky wife had been to the fore in support of her husband during the 16-day sit-in, and now we find her left

alone to look after her kids.

Pic is unusually well photographed (Fabio Cavardino), and imaginatively edited (Gil Serine). Zubrycki has edited it to the bone, making the story unfold with economy and drive, never dwelling on the unnecessary but always injecting a touch of humor and humanity. Another rarity for this kind of film: a musical score by Elizabeth Drake was specially commissioned, and is a major plus.

Feature documentaries have seen surprising commercial success Down Under, and this one should be no exception. Overseas festivals are definitely indicated, and even an Oscar nomination isn't out of the question on this film's quality. —Strat.

Film Reviews

(Continued from page 19)

Escape From Womens Prison

terrorist while the other three women are hardened criminals.

Two prominent cast members are wasted: Lilli Carati, a beautiful and popular starlet cast as the tough terrorist, and Ines Pellegrini, an Ethiopian actress featured by Pier Paolo Pasolini in his "The Arabian Nights" and "Salò," here marking time as a wide-eyed victim.

Tech credits are poor, especially the brackish color and generally underlit visuals. —Lor.

Night Of The Ghouls (B&W)

Mediocre horror opus escapes from the vaults.

A Wade Williams presentation of an Atomic Prods. production. Executive producer, Major J.C. Foxworthy. Produced and directed by Edward D. Wood Jr. Screenplay, Wood; camera (b&w), William C. Thompson; editing supervision, Donald A. Davis; music supervision, Gordon Zahler; assistant director, Ronnie Ashcroft; art direction, Kathleen O'Hara Everett; costumes, Mickey Meyers. Reviewed on The Nostalgia Merchant videocassette, N.Y., June 15, 1984. (No MPAA Rating.) Running time: 60 MINS.

Criswell	.....	Himself
Dr. Acula	.....	Kenne Duncan
Lt. Dan Bradford	.....	"Duke" Moore
Lobo	.....	Tor Johnson
Sheila, white ghost	.....	Valda Hansen
Capt. Robbins	.....	John Carpenter
Kelton	.....	Paul Marco
Crandel	.....	Don Nagel
Darmoor	.....	Bus Osborne

Also with: Jeannie Stevens (black ghost), Harvey B. Dunn (Henry), Margaret Mason (Martha), Clay Stone (young man), Marcelle Hemphill (Mrs. Foster), Tony Carozza (Tony).

"Night Of The Ghouls" is a below-average B-picture, of interest since it is the 1959-lensed, theatrically unreleased sequel to the cult favorite "Plan 9 From Outer Space." After 25 years in the vaults, it now is available to home-video fans and is reviewed here for the record.

Narrated by Criswell, the late psychic who used to appear annually on Johnny Carson's "Tonight Show" with his "I predict" routine, "Ghouls" has the L.A. County Sheriff's office investigating strange goings-on at the old house on Willows Lake. Years before (a vague reference to "Plan 9"), a mad doctor had made monsters there, but everything was destroyed by lightning.

Currently, the fake swami Dr. Acula (Kenne Duncan, wearing a turban) is swindling gullible folks by pretending to reanimate dead relatives. Unbeknownst to him, Acula's fake powers were strong enough to actually bring back the dead, who, in the lore of this film, have 12 hours of freedom to walk on Earth every 13 years when called forth by a spirit medium. Led by Criswell, the undead attack, and Acula's assistant Sheila

(Valda Hansen) is lured by a black-veiled ghost (Jeannie Stevens) to join them in the grave, as a real ghost rather than a fake one. Despite its title, film is not about ghouls, since there is no grave-robbing per se, nor any of the currently fashionable (in horror films) feeding on corpses.

The late filmmaker Edward D. Wood Jr. displays his usual minimal approach, utilizing barely-dressed sets (typically a blank wall with a lonely looking picture hanging on it), poor acting tending towards swishiness in the supporting cast and an assortment of silly sound effects and cheap insert shots which lamely try to inject humor into a dull script.

For those who place Wood's work on a pedestal, beyond the usual critical standards, it should be recalled that both earlier directors (e.g., Edgar Ulmer) and contemporaries (John Sayles, Wayne Wang) have crafted effective pictures on similarly minuscule budgets, with no apologies necessary. —Lor.

Paul Cadmus — Enfant Terrible At Eighty (DOCU-COLOR-16m)

A Fairfield U. presentation. Executive producer, Stephen L. Weber. Directed and produced by David Sutherland. Camera (color), Joe Seamans; editor, Michael Colonna; art director, George Petrakos; research and associate director, Phillip Eliasoph. Major funding provided by the Sara Roby Foundation, Forbes Inc., and Maupintours. Reviewed at the American Film Festival, N.Y., May 31, '84. Running time: 64 MINS.

This film is a biographical portrait of octogenarian Paul Cadmus, since 1979 Academician at the National Academy of Design, and among the few survivors of the American Scene school of painting of the 1930s Great Depression era.

Cadmus at 80 is portrayed in his studio in Connecticut. Perhaps self-portrait is a more accurate term to describe this film, as Cadmus was involved closely in the daily production mechanics of making it.

The film was pre-planned, storyboarded and rehearsed, including a 12-hour study film in Super 8m as a rough draft, before shooting began in 16m.

Cadmus' comments on life, his art, painting techniques, fellow artists, etc., were first audio-recorded, transcribed, compressed, then fed back to him on big cue-cards as a succinct distillation of his philosophy. Cadmus, on camera, then spoke his own thoughts naturally, rephrasing them spontaneously but with exactitude.

Similarly, some action in "Cadmus" was staged, in order best to bring out the Cadmus lifestyle and work habits. The result is a controlled and tight film, packed with information, that preserves an aspect of American cultural history.

The artist emerges as a striking personality, mild in manner while strong in character, cool and poised, handsome with full white hair, erect and alert in manner,

Cadmus is renowned for his studies of male nudes. His work includes, but is not limited to, updates of Bosch, Breughel and Signorelli, adapted to modern locales such as YMCA locker rooms, parks and beaches, as satirical observations of the working-class in joyless pursuit of pleasure. "People's noses should be rubbed in all sorts of things — both pleasant and unpleasant," states Cadmus.

Debut of the "Cadmus" film coincides with publication of "Paul Cadmus," hardcover by Lincoln Kerstein, founding director of the New York City Ballet and brother-in-law of Cadmus. —Hitch.

Tibet — A Buddhist Trilogy

(BRITISH-DOCU-COLOR-16m)

A production of Thread Cross Films, Bath (U.K.), presented in U.S. by Orient Films, Orient Foundation, Seattle, Wash. Produced by David Lascelles. Written and directed by Graham Coleman. Camera (color, 16m), Lascelles; lighting and still photography, Michael Warr; sound, Robin Broadbent; editor, Pip Howard; special effects, Rank Post Production; translations, Glenn Mullin; narration in English subtitles to Tibetan voices. Reviewed at Van Dam Theater, N.Y., June 8, 1984. Running time: 231 MINS.

An independent production costing \$125,000, financed in part by the Arts Council of Great Britain, and circulated to European festivals via the National Panel for Film Festivals, this four-hour trilogy has participated in festivals and has played theatrically in Los Angeles, San Francisco and Seattle.

Part One is closest to a conventional documentary, exploring a commune in India in which refugee Buddhist families and monks from Tibet live in harmonious primitive socialism, oddly combining Maoist with Gandhian principles. We see monks in both their private moments and in vigorous theological dispute, also gardening and painting murals. A carpet-making cooperative provides support for the commune, which is run by democratic decision-making with universal education, unprecedented in Tibetan culture.

Forced to flee from Tibet in 1959, when invading Chinese expelled him and his followers, H.H. The XIV Dalai Lama continues his reign from exile in India, a benign and popular figure. "When we look at it from this point of view," says the Dalai Lama, "the invasion of Tibet has been something good for the Tibetans, providing we can follow the right path in the future." His attitude is tolerant and forgiving, when one remembers that thousands of Buddhist monasteries and libraries were destroyed by the Chinese.

Part Two is set in a breathtaking North India mountainscape and uses a day-in-the-life format to show the eternal rhythmic tilling of the fields by poor farmers and the daily monastic work and rituals of the Buddhist monks in their monastery above. This part ends with the ceremonial cremation of a brother, shot in close detail, but oddly with no horror even as we see the flesh sizzle, as by now we recognize the Buddhist concepts of impermanence, non-attachment, and acceptance of death.

Shot in a remote Buddhist monastery in Nepal, Part Three is relentless, a long traditional Tantric ritual of protection for the female deity Tara, condensed from five to two hours. The camera merely records everything, watching, without judgment, emphasizing the hands and faces of the worshipping monks. The only sound is the droning of chants and tinkling of bells for two hours. English subtitles render the Tibetan, sparingly but with surprising sophistication. No narration intrudes on the film to explain these strange visuals, which cast a spell. By now we are converts, or we are mesmerized or stultified (or doubtless a few of us) asleep. Quite rightly, to preserve its authenticity, the producers have shot this Buddhist performance in long takes, and without Western voice-over interpretations.

Pic is devoid of explanatory narration except for brief and austere comments in early scenes.

Already visible in a smattering of U.S. art cinemas, "Tibet" can doubtless exhibit further, in other cities and in the universities. Public television seems a likely prospect as well. —Hitch.

the grand finale

ROCK

ANNA-MARIA DELLOSO
Age Cinema, City and Parramatta.

h, the last plane out of Sydney's most gone ...
— *Kite Sani*, by Cold Chisel

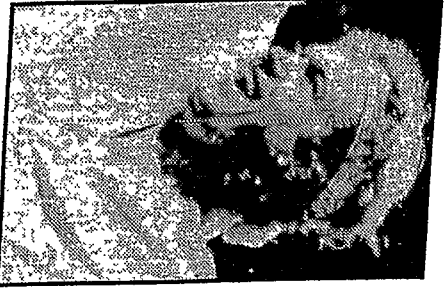
TOOK just under half an hour for Sydney to get its act together after hearing that Cold Chisel, the wrong-side-the-tracks pub band that sank its part out for the city, had split, according to the clacking telex in Jay Stevens' *Last Stand*. Cold Chisel's last concert in the Sydney Entertainment Centre in December last year sold out in 28 minutes flat.

Last Stand is a tribute to this great Australian band which tackled a rock 'n' roll with a manly, pliant energy, as though every night was a riot at the Star Hotel. Yet this is not just another in-the-concept-of-the-album "epic" roll picture. If this is commercial exploitation, it's worth every cent of it. *Last Stand* has an intelligent construction. Eschewing high-production values, excellent hand, camera and editing.

There are no cinema write shots, the band in the back rooms, jangling guitar strings and crackling jokes no-one can hear. There is no boring sequences of horsing around in tour buses. There is no trying into the lives of the musician, no playing of one's feelings against the other, no terminable eccentric raves, no gimmicks — just the hard-driving rock and roll that endeared the band to the mostly suburban working-class youths who supported them on the pub circuit through the worst of the recession from '78 to '83.

Those who spent Wednesday nights at the Bondi Lifesaver might be *Standing on the Outside*, those who set off to the pub on a lurchy night with their Jimmy James Japanese headbangers, those who remember the exhilaration of 1981's Cold Chisel Rook Awards Party. Cold Chisel broke into a "we" protest rampage after being struck by the channel into the key of playing to a backing tape — all these fans will be delighted to move at Tony Stevens's compilation of the Cold Chisel

And even detractors, those who laud Cold Chisel a pack of arrogant machine-heads with a monotonous stage act, would welcome the idea that an unpretentious



Jimmy Barnes

Cold Chisel pushed its own band's repertoire, a move that cost it temporarily, its audience



Tony Stevens

Australian pub band, without million-selling record status or industry hype, is the subject for the sort of movie that is normally imposed on Sydney theatres from the

English or American rock music industry. Cold Chisel originated in Adelaide in 1973 in the days when Australian bands played cover versions to survive. The idea of original music and lyrics delivered in Australian accents was only just beginning. Cold Chisel pushed its own songs into the band's repertoire, a move that cost it its manager and, temporarily, its audience.

Last Stand features video shots at the early Adelaide gigs, with the boys almost unrecognisable in shaggy 1970s working-class mechanics hair. By contrast, a clip shot by students at the Australian Film and Television School in 1978, shows them at the beginning of their success, playing regular Wednesday nights at the Bondi Lifesaver.

LAST STAND attempts to look at the rise of Cold Chisel in terms of the early 1980s, the urban recession which led to the revival of the pub music scene in Sydney and Melbourne. The band's many concerts in jails such as Bathurst, songs such as *Four Walls*, *Tomorrow*, *Star Hotel* and *Kite Sani*, show Chisel as an intensely local band that spoke politically and socially for Australian youth. Hence its cinematic tribute is made with much love, skill and insight by local filmmakers. Director Tony Stevens edited *Greetings from Wollongong*, John Whittam (who shot the Men At Work clip *Down Under*) and Ray Atgill (*Plains of Heaven*, *I'll Be Home for Christmas*) contribute to the film's excellent photography.

Erica Addis (*Serious Undertaking*) worked in production. Shot around the extraordinary four farewell concerts that stacked the Sydney Entertainment Centre in December, the film's most emotional moments range from a rendition of *Star Hotel* cut with still-shocking news footage from the Newcastle riots on the closure of the Star Hotel to Jimmy Barnes tending to his baby daughter backstage between numbers, to interviews with the young Westies who were the base of the band's cult support, to the way and affectionate reminiscences of Peter Garrett of Midnight Oil.

This movie is a vital piece of contemporary Sydney history. To thank the local culture that created the band, Cold Chisel has insisted that tickets to *Last Stand* be discounted to \$5. For those who follow music and good filmmaking, *Last Stand* is more than well worth the price.



From *Kemira* — *Diary of a Strike*

Miners' failure is Zubrycki's success

FILM
By MARGARET SMITH

WHEN TOM Zubrycki's film *Kemira* — *Diary of a Strike* — was screened at the recent Sydney Film Festival, David Stratton wrote in *Variety* that it was "one of the best documentaries ever made in Australia... and even an Oscar nomination isn't out of the question".

It was praise indeed for Zubrycki, who had gone into his project with no principal financial backing — only his own limited resources. The Australian Broadcasting Commission had refused to assist him so he used defunct film stock donated by other filmmakers. Two days into the shoot he stopped the extraordinary processing of rushes. It was cheaper that way, although, as Zubrycki says, "it meant we shot blind. I was terrified... we didn't know if there was a film in the can".

Kemira premiered last night in Wollongong, the town in which it was shot. It will be shown tonight and tomorrow night at the Wollongong Miners' Federation Hall, where again Zubrycki is putting up the money. Later it will screen at the Sydney Opera House cinema, and eventually (Zubrycki isn't one to give up easily) it will appear on ABC television because as he sees it, "they have a public character to fulfil".

His small house in Balmain still shows the carnage of post-production. Film cans are everywhere and Zubrycki is obviously a little exhausted. After the Wollongong screenings he says he will have a week off before he tackles the overseas distribution and launches himself into a new project.

The documentary film fellowship which Zubrycki has been granted recently has given him renewed hope.

He can pay off his debts and plan ahead. "It gives me the feeling that I can still innovate," he says. "Tom Haydon and the Australian Film Commission know it's the only way films like *Kemira* can be made, especially while the decision-makers in Australian television remain 10 years behind new developments."

He explains that the narrative style of *Kemira* borrows to some extent from modern feature filmmaking with its concentration on main characters, and scenes that cross-cut and parallel action, and with the dynamic editing used by Gill Smithe.

Specifically, Zubrycki decided, "there would be no talking heads or a ers Co-op, though it has not "as yet" been bought by the ABC despite pending negotiations.

After the miner's call, Zubrycki quickly gathered a small crew together who decided to work for deferred payment. Zubrycki, his cameraman and sound recorder then left for Wollongong and continued to leave on subsequent days at 4:30 am so they could be at the pit top ready to film at 8 am when a small group of men came up to receive the breakfasts prepared by the miners' women's auxiliary and take them down to the other men.

The men were greeted tearfully by wives and families as they emerged into the daylight. Zubrycki was conscious that he was filming a poignant social history. He felt strongly, he says, "the miners' sense of their historical struggle and that they were actually striking for the sake of their whole community, rather than any short-term gains."

BHP would not negotiate with the miners. It would not follow the Coal Tribunal's recommendation. It would not respond when the miners, as a last resort, stormed Parliament House in Canberra. "Not-would it respond when Fraser, attempted to mediate. But the determination of the men underground never waned. "They argued," says Zubrycki "that once the coal mines were neglected they would cave in and that coal would never be able to be

mined again once the seam had gone!" The 31 men were blacklisted and still cannot find work as miners. But Zubrycki says he was careful in his film "to show them as people confronting the loss of their jobs, not as victims". He kept filming when the strike had ended because he wanted to find out what happened to the men and their families.

Zubrycki understood something of their struggle. He left academia in 1974, where he was a tutor in sociology at NSW University, because he wanted to communicate to a wider public. "I was a personal thing," he says. "I saw other people in my department who were making the move because they had a social concern that went beyond academic journals. I was also attracted to express myself visually and I liked the idea of structuring words and images into a context that has its own life."

He used the video access centres — set up during the Whitlam era — to teach himself to use the equipment. He remembers "learning by filming on the streets of Sydney". Then he saw Ken Loach's *Days of Hope*, which has been an eternal inspiration on "because Loach was a craftsman who also gave people's lives dignity".

Consequently, Zubrycki tried for "a jibbing cinema style".

"I wanted to engage upon what was happening to people. I wanted to look at the factors influencing their lives," he says.

In *Kemira* he made use of montage in such an inventive way that it added immediacy. He reconstructed the tribunal proceedings on computer print-outs to interpose with the actual footage. Now he feels he would find it hard to return to the more traditional style of *Waterloo*. His next film will probably be a move of a departure than even. He adds finally: "A film like *Kemira* can be made only if some initial risks are taken by the filmmaker."

There are no talking heads or a narrator acting as God who informs the audience at each point of the film what is going on. Instead, the people tell their own story

narrator acting as God who informs the audience at each point of the film what is going on. Instead, the people tell their own story.

The decision to make this particular film came like a bolt of lightning out of the night. In October 1982 Tom Zubrycki received a call from a retired miner telling him that 31 coal miners at BHP's Kemira colliery were staying in the mine to try to avert 400 redundancies. They would stay down the pit as long as necessary, and they needed an independent film crew.

Zubrycki was an ideal choice. He had previously made *Waterloo*, winner of the Greater Union award, which had covered the actions of a resident group against developers. It is still rented out continually from the Sydney Filmmak-

"Kemira — diary of a strike"

Film shows making of a strike



Striking underground miners arrive at Kemira pit-top anxious for news, unaware that their mates have 'stormed' Parliament House.

Soon to be released is Tom Zubrycki's film *Kemira — diary of a strike*, a film documenting events surrounding a stay-in strike in 1982, a sixteen day occupation by 31 miners at the Kemira colliery.

Given the international importance of Australian labour history, surprisingly little of it has been documented or recreated on film. During the 1950s, the Waterside Workers' Federation Film Unit produced some strong films on union issues but, until recently, there has been little else.

In the past several years, both unionists and film-makers have begun to reconsider the strength of both film and video as a means of documenting industrial actions and communicating union issues.

Now, important films are emerging dealing with labour history. These include the three-part television series, *Waterfront* about the 1930s waterfront strike in Melbourne; the recently released film, *Strikebound* on the nation's first stay-in strike by miners in 1937; *For Love or Money* which examines the history of women and work in Australia; and now *Kemira — diary of a strike*.

In the last two years, 2,000 jobs have disappeared in the NSW coal mining industry. In September 1982, BHP's subsidiary, Australian Iron and Steel, in Wollongong announced that 400 miners from six of its South Coast pits would be retrenched. The mining unions argued for a moratorium on the sackings, pending a proper inquiry.

However, twenty days before the sackings were to take effect, 31 miners from the Kemira colliery, the worst affected by the dismissals, decided that arbitration would get them nowhere and occupied the pit, establishing themselves five kilometres underground.

The stay-in strike became a national news event, highlighting the job crisis in the

Wollongong area. Support for the miners came not only from unions across the country, but also from small businesses and clubs in the district. The Miners Womens Auxiliary organised a kitchen and, with a support group, built an "embassy" at pit top and kept vigil. As the strike progressed a strong unity was forged between miners and steelworkers on the South Coast, resulting in the demonstration and 'storming' of Parliament House in Canberra.

The film-maker and crew travelled daily to the pit top throughout the strike to record the dramatic events. The story is largely told by the rank and file and their families.

Kemira — diary of a strike is the first Australian film to document the organisation of a strike and its unfolding over time from an "inside" perspective. This 62-minute colour film is an important educational resource and tool for trade unionists. The film has been well received by unionists and critics and has won several awards. *Kemira* is an excellent example of how a film-maker can highlight an historical event which the rest of the media have tended to treat less seriously or ignore completely.

Screening Dates

Sydney

Sydney Opera House, Nov 19 — Dec 2
Group bookings, phone 33 0721

Perth

Film and Television Institute, Nov 19—24,
Dec 1, 2, 8, 9
Group bookings, phone 335 1055

Adelaide

Classic Cinema, Nov 23 —
Group bookings, phone 223 7722

Melbourne

Glasshouse Cinema, RMIT, Nov 22—26
Group bookings, phone 660 2645

Union members concessions

Rental inquiries, phone (02) 33 0721

Winner
1984 A.F.I. Award
for
Best Documentary

FILM

KEMIRA DIARY OF A STRIKE

Sydney Opera House
November 19-December 2

Australia has undoubtedly some of the strongest and most militant unions in existence, just look to those in Broken Hill. Look also to those miners' unions who have played such a dramatic part in labour history.

The Stay-In strike has traditionally proved to be the popular weapon of these unions and source of the drama in rank and file action.

Used to fight sackings, pit closures, mechanisation, conditions, the first Stay-In strike was detailed in Richard Lowenstein's *Strikebound*.

Strikebound told the story of the Korumburra Stay-In of 1936. Union action resulting in Stay-Ins such as this was an important part of miner's industrial action in the 50s and 60s. Mechanisation causing re-trenchments was the big issue then, just as it is today.

Most Stay-Ins lasted only for a short period but several, notably the 1952 Glen Davis 27-day Stay-In, were longer.

In October of 1982 a 16-day Stay-In strike commenced at the Kemira Colliery at Wollongong.

Filmmaker Tom Zubrycki captured the Stay-In, the support mechanism, the miners, their families, arbitration action and the storming of Parliament: to present a film that won the 1984 AFI Award for Best Documentary — *Kemira: Diary of a Strike*.

Kemira: Dairy of a Strike is the story of big business and the economy (or so they say) versus individuals and their jobs.

At Kemira big business is Australian Iron and Steel, a subsidiary of BHP. The individuals are 31 miners who staged the 16-day underground Stay-In and the jobs are their own and that of the other 369 miners (206 at the Kemira pit) due to be retrenched by AIS.

The mining unions took BHP (and therefore AIS) to arbitration before the Coal Industry Tribunal. They wanted a moratorium on the sackings pending a proper enquiry.

The unions and workers claimed the company's reasons for the sackings (the decline in export and domestic markets was simply an excuse to sack workers and introduce labour-saving technology).

And so while the Coal Tribunal, the Unions, AIS, BHP, judges and the Government argued the men, who decided that arbitration would get them nowhere, occupied the pit.

The 31 miners were supported by their fellow workers, other unions (especially Wollongong's steelworkers), a pit-side kitchen, the Womens auxiliary, their families and the people of Wollongong.

In conclusion it turned out that the men were right in their distrust of arbitration. Coal Tribunal chairman, David Duncan, recommended that BHP extend the men's

jobs for two weeks beyond the period stated on their retrenchment notices. He believed that this would allow more time to discuss the issues involved.

The miners believed that Duncan's decision was a victory for them but BHP refused to cooperate.

Duncan finally ordered BHP to postpone the sackings and as a result the men left the pit jubilant. They believed that in the next two weeks a concerted effort would be made by all involved to save their jobs.

The Coal Tribunal did not make this effort. The men had lost their bargaining power and in the end gained only better severance conditions. Some also believe that they gained places on a black list.

The decisions and indecisions made by arbitration presented to Zubrycki problems in the structuring of *Kemira*. The sequences involving the Arbitration Tribunal, its decisions, orders, legal jargon, could have become confusing. Zubrycki overcame this problem by using voice-overs across written action from the Tribunal. Devices such as this enable the story to unfold in a clear and uncomplicated way.

Another difficulty that faced Zubrycki and crew in filming the strike was the need to establish themselves as an independent crew and gain therefore, the trust of the miners and their families.

They did this by simply being there when mainstream media representatives were not. They were recognised as being sympathetic and committed to the cause of the miners.

As well as the actual Stay-In, *Kemira* interviews the miners families, notably Ngaire Wiltshire, whose husband, Will, is one of the Stay-In miners.

Kemira also takes the famous train ride to Canberra that resulted in the protesting miner's forcing their way into Parliament House at the expense of a few glass doors.

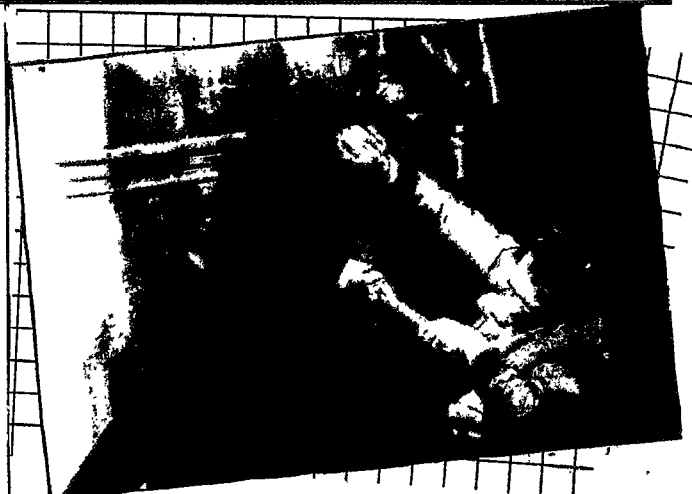
It is this, the coverage of the demonstration and subsequent storming of Parliament House that Zubrycki remembers as the highlight of the filming:

"The atmosphere on the train was electric — feelings were high that this seven hour long trip wasn't going to be a wasted excursion. Two hours later we found ourselves in a football scrum crashing through the doors of Parliament House."

Along with the footage of all aspects and findings, *Kemira* follows the miners after the protest and after the retrenchments.

Kemira: Dairy of a Strike is a focus on "one of the strangest and most determined attempts to challenge the right of employers to make mass dismissals of workers on the pretext that business is bad."

It's also compelling, thought (and anger) provoking and, as you see retrenched miners forced to move, break up their families, live on the dole or start an endless search for work, despairing.



TIGHTROPE

Village

A young blonde gigolo lounges in the lamplight on a seedy street in the French Quarter of New Orleans.

"Honey, mister?" he calls to a passing stranger.

"No thanks, I don't eat sweets," Wes Block replies with a macho expression.

Block strides past purposefully and Clint Eastwood is once more plunged into another of his tough cop roles.

In *Tightrope*, he plays homicide detective Wes Block investigating a number of related sex-killings in the back parts of the city. The victims are prostitutes, found strangled by red ribbons. (Symbolism!)

Block's search for the killer (naturally psychopathic, aren't they all?) leads him into massage parlours and kinky strip shows where he finds himself unable to resist the temptation of flesh. Later, he finds that the women he has slept with are killed, and he realises that the psychopath is taunting him, forcing him to confront his own compulsions.

Block's character is superimposed onto the killer's — the classic Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde theme of good and evil within us all. His dark side is tempered with his role of divorced father of two young girls. His gentle, domestic nature is shown by tucking children-in-bed scenes, shown not once, not twice, but three times!

(Director: "He needs compassion! Let's do another tucking in bed scene. No? Well, how about a pat-the-family-dog's scene!")

The trouble with Eastwood's "understated" acting is that his angry grimace face is remarkably similar to his loving father face. Nevertheless, the film does have its suspenseful moments. One of these is the murdered house-keeper stuffed into the clothes dryer. Without giving too much away, the last twenty minutes of the film are quite tense, with a confrontation between policeman and killer who share frightening similarities.

To its credit, the film does not emphasise scenes of women being attacked. But neither does it explore the potential questions of women as victims and sex objects.

Block's love interest Beryl Thibodeaux, played by Genevieve Bujold, runs New Orleans rape crisis centre. The character is shallow, her token gesture of feminism is that she wears natural-looking make-up.

The prostitutes that were attacked were portrayed as sleazy nymphomaniacs, who morally deserved their fate. This stereotyping disguises the idea of women being forced to sell their bodies for sexual gratification.

Instead, director and script writer Richard Tuggle, deals almost exclusively with the character of Block. All other characters fade into insignificance.

Eastwood says of his character: "Block is a cop who discovers he has a lot in common with a killer. The moments of vulnerability in his life start to close in on him and he has to reach back for those special resources in his character to pull him through. I liked his human quality, but I also found the tension in the script very appealing. You don't really know which way he'll turn."

Eastwood's daughter, Alison, plays his screen daughter Amanda Block, and does a creditable job.

However, the film lacks originality. Many of the intended surprises are predictable, formed from a mish-mash of traditional thrillers and *Charlie's Angels* episodes gone up-market.

Tightrope has a gloomy, oppressive look about it. The film was shot in New Orleans, Louisiana, and depicts the ugly side of America. It captures something of the character of the notorious French Quarter, haunt of pimps and prostitutes. In particular, the Mardi-Gras scene reveals both the sensual and grotesque nature of the festival — on the one hand fun, and on the other, sinister. A good backdrop for the quality of the central character.

Overall, *Tightrope* is a film for die-hard Clint Eastwood fans or manic depressives who want to feel worse.

Judy Cho



Marianne Carey

★★★★★

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Suzie Eisenhut Sun Herald

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in a film by
Andrzej WAJDA

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OPINION

It may be a little extravagant to say Mr Hawke has merged triumphant from this week's ALP National Conference in Canberra. But it would not be going too far to declare him a comfortable winner on points.

He has had some minor feathers ruffled, but in the main has held far too many guns for his opposition.

Mr Hawke and his right wing allies were defeated or have aimed at ensuring the Commonwealth does not subsidise future hydro dams in Tasmania's National State wilderness area. Big deal. On the other side of the ledger, they:

- Combined with the centre left faction to endorse the entry of foreign banks into Australia, defeating a left wing move for a two-year moratorium on the issue.
- Ran the uranium gauntlet and succeeded in having adopted a resolution to allow exports from the two existing Northern Territory mines and the proposed Oxby Downs project to South Australia. This has led to a limbo of people accusing the Government of a sellout and must give Mr Hawke some cause for concern with an election in the air.
- Defeated a left wing move to phase out US bases in Australia and stop visits by B52 bombers and nuclear warships.
- Defeated left wing resolutions attacking Indonesia over East Timor, seeking reconsideration of a capital gains tax, and seeking control of Australia's domestic satellite for Telecom.
- Defeated all the left's main amendments to the economic platform.

One conference decision yesterday must be seen as disappointment for many South Coast miners. Delegates voted to call on the Government "to examine the feasibility" of establishing a national coal authority. Miners who have lost their jobs or whose jobs are in danger would have hoped for a much stronger commitment.

The conference also must have been a disappointment for Mr Peacock and the Opposition, sitting in vain to exploit any real chink that appeared in Mr Hawke's armor.

It was the scene of spirited, sometimes heated debate. But it was far from the uncontrolled mudslinging seen in the past.

Mr Hayden's centre left team emerged as a responsible group committed to the moderates holding power.

The ALP in the five days from last Monday to yesterday demonstrated it is coming to grips with the possibilities of a party in government. It has profited by its experiences of the last 12 months, and will be even better equipped when Mr Hawke decides to go to the people again.

Tom puts miners' plight in focus



● Film producer-director Tom Zubrycki pictured yesterday at the Wollongong premiere of his Kemira documentary with Combined Miners Women's Auxiliary district secretary Mrs Joyce Critcher and Mr Fred Moore.

Film producer-director Tom Zubrycki's documentary of the 1982 Kemira mine sit-in will bring a tear to your eye or at least a lump to your throat if you're even 40 per cent with the miners' cause.

Mr Zubrycki is committed to the miners and his documentary *Kemira - Diary of a Strike* is not only the miners' story of why 31 men stayed underground at the Australian Iron and Steel colliery for 16 days, but of the desperation which prompted their protest.

Kemira - Diary of a Strike yesterday had its Wollongong premiere at WIN 4, but it was just a curtain raiser to public screenings at Wollongong Town Hall on July 21-22. There will be two sessions each day at 6.30 pm and 8 pm.

Mr Zubrycki is an independent film maker and produced the 63-minute documentary with help from the Miners Federation's southern district and the Australian Film Commission.

It won praise at the Sydney Film Festival and is a finalist in this year's Australian Film Institute awards.

Mr Zubrycki's treatment of the subject encourages sympathy.

150 more mine jobs in jeopardy

Another 150 mine jobs in the Burragorang Valley were in jeopardy, a miners deputation told the Federal Government in Canberra yesterday.

National coal liaison committee secretary Mr Bob Williams said about 2200 jobs had been lost on the NSW coalfields in the past two years because of the industry slump and two more Valley mines were in danger of closing.

It is understood Clutha Development, now BP-owned, asked permission to close its Brimstone No 1 and Nattai-Bull collieries, but the new Mineral Resources and Energy Minister Mr Peter Cox requested Clutha keep them operating.

Two busloads of South Coast and Valley mine workers went to Canberra yesterday to join mining union officials who had preceded them to the ALP National Conference.

The miners forced through an amendment to the Labor Party's

Deputation alerts Govt to problem

minerals and energy platform by getting the conference to call on the Federal Government to examine the feasibility of establishing a national coal marketing authority.

Prime Minister Mr Hawke refused the unions a marketing authority when he spoke to them at Bulli before the last elections, telling them he could not pull coal contracts out of the hat.

However, the conference motion accepted yesterday called for the marketing authority to consider ways of overcoming the "current crisis in the coal industry arising from reduced demand, rationalisation of production, the pricing policies of sellers and buyers and changing technology."

Trade Minister Mr Bowen said

while he supported the proposal, the delegates should realise there could be difficulties in obtaining the co-operation of Queensland.

Mr Bowen said he had tried to negotiate the best price for Australian coal "but it is not easy when your own producers are trying to cut each others throats."

This was a reference to the producers' practice of negotiating separate deals with the Japanese buyers, the biggest buyers of Australian coal. The Japanese prices tend to become standard for the industry.

The mining unions later had talks with Resources and Energy Minister Sen Walsh and expressed dissatisfaction the Government had not given a firm commitment to the concept of a national coal marketing authority to handle export sales.

They told the Minister they would continue their industrial campaign to ensure it was set up.

● More on the ALP Conference — Page 4

PRISON DOCTOR SENT TO TRIAL

A former Long Bay prison medical superintendent, charged with sexually assaulting and committing buggery on an inmate, was committed for trial yesterday at the Redfern Court of Petty Sessions.

Edward Patrick Houston, 52, of Oswald St, Randwick, is charged with committing buggery and having sexual intercourse without consent with a 27-year-old prison inmate between January 28 and March 29, 1983.

Miss Susan Schreiner, SM, also found a prima facie case existed against Houston on a fresh charge of supplying methadone, a drug of addiction, at Bathurst Jail on May 28, 1983.

During cross examination by Houston's counsel, Mr H Ritchie, the former prisoner, whose name has been suppressed, told the court the doctor had given him a silver medallion around September or October, 1982.

He said, at that time, he

was on a "one to one basis — sex for drugs." Asked by Mr Ritchie if the sexual acts between the doctor and the former prisoner were done freely, with his consent, he answered: "Yes. Freely for the drugs I needed."

Houston also was charged with introducing methadone into the Bathurst Jail on May 28, 1983 and with introducing Serexap into the Kirkconnell Afforestation Camp on May 27, 1983.

Both charges are not indictable and Miss Schreiner adjourned these charges to December 18 for mention.

Bail was continued, no plea entered and Miss Schreiner committed Houston to the current District Court sitting for trial.

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ILLAWARRA MERCURY, Saturday, July 14, 1984

Nuclear waste in suburban factory

The campaign chairman of the Nuclear Disarmament Party, Dr John Ward, has revealed that the Government munitions factory at St Marys is being used as a storage dump for some of Australia's nuclear waste.

The depot's nuclear role was confirmed by a spokeswoman for the Minister for Resources and Energy, Senator Walsh, who said the St Marys plant had been used to store radioactive waste left over from medicine, industry and some Government research since 1979.

However, the Town Clerk of Penrith, Mr B. Long, said his council knew nothing about the storage of nuclear material at St Marys and said he would investigate the matter.

Dr Ward said he was not surprised that few people knew that waste was being stored in an urban area.

"But they should know ... they have a right to know," he said.

The senator's spokeswoman said the nuclear waste at St Marys posed no danger to local residents.

"Low-level radioactive material is stored there as well as radium in lead pots," she said.

The material was housed in a secure building with concrete walls and a concrete roof. Doors were fireproof and all access to the building was strictly controlled.

"Atomic Energy Commission safety officers regularly inspect the area, but they have found no danger to workers or residents."

She said that according to the last figures available to the Government, there was one curie of cobalt 60 from the Defence Department's Materials Research Laboratory stored at the St Marys depot.

There was also one curie of radium-226 from contaminated laboratory equipment used by the Material Research Laboratory, as well as the Australian Radiation Laboratory and private industry.

The depot acted as a storage dump for 200 millicurie of caesium-137 from the Materials Research Laboratory, in



Flashback to 1982 ... Ngairé Wiltshire weeps and she and her son Greg are reunited with her husband John after the Kemira sit-in.

Bitter legacy of the Kemira sit-in lingers

Miners on strike for more than a week over 314 retrenchment notices at two South Coast pits will be urged to go back to work today after a State and Federal Government package which will guarantee them jobs for at least six months. The miners went on strike at three pits controlled by Kembla Coal and Coke Pty Ltd, a CRA subsidiary, 25 months after a 16-day sit-in at the Kemira pit by retrenched miners. Even if, as expected, the miners go back today the future is bleak for many South Coast pits because of cut-throat coal prices and a sagging export market. The miners are fighting desperately not only for jobs but for their way of life. **GRAHAM WILLIAMS** looks back at the Kemira sit-in and its impact.

"Men will do anything to keep their jobs, especially miners," says Kevin Donohue. "There's a growing feeling in the South Coast pits that we have to take direct action to stop the multi-nationals from throwing us on the scrapheap."

Mr Donohue, a 36-year-old father of three, organised the historic 16-day sit-in in the

with in a one-hour feature film by Tom Zubrycki which is screening at the Sydney Opera House until December 2. The film, *Kemira - Diary of a Strike*, has won a British award and been acclaimed by the American show-business magazine *Variety* as one of the best documentaries made in Australia.

The sit-in, says Mr Donohue, who was then president of the Kemira Mine Lodge, was purely about the right to work. "We have to accept the harsh reality that today we have to fight hard against the bosses just to be allowed to work. And we have to keep on doing it."

He said the miners at Kemira had been "lied to only a couple of weeks before the sit-in by management who said that if we kept up production we had no reason to fear for our jobs. Then they sacked us".

“We have to fight hard against

unemployed have tended to accept this with despair and resignation - now we're more likely to get an explosive reaction".

Down in the pit, Kevin Donohue and the sit-in miners were adamant that they would not come out until they got their jobs back. Mr David Duncan, of the one-man Coal Tribunal, recommended that BHP extend the men's jobs by two weeks. The miners were advised to come out.

They thought they had won and left the pit amid emotional scenes. But they discovered they had lost: all that was to be discussed was increased severance pay, not jobs.

"We were powerless and we'd lost our bargaining power. We were conned," says Mr Donohue.

About half the retrenched miners went to work in open-cut coal fields in Queensland. Mr Donohue went to a mine at Singleton, but because his wife and children could not bear it, he returned after eight months. He worked casually behind a bar and finally got a job back at the Kemira mine when it was

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STREAMERS

1984

KEMIRA, DIARY OF A STRIKE

Nobody could possibly emulate John Hinde's way of balancing critical generosity with critical precision. You couldn't replace him - so you'll be relieved to know that I'm not about to try.

What I am going to do in these two sessions while John takes a break is discuss, mostly, some aspects of the local film situation. The main new releases give us excuses to do that. This week, something about documentary, next week, commercial feature.

But first, there is one important new film from America that does claim our attention. Streamers, now playing at the Dendy in Sydney is perhaps the simplest film Robert Altman has ever made, and one of the best. I ought to qualify that it does depend which Altman you like. There's the pretentious Altman, I mean the one who made Brewster McCloud and Three Women straining after super-significance, divine madness destiny-laden obsession. The difference Altman of Nashville, the original MASH, the grimmer one of McCabe and Mrs. Miller. In Streamers, as in all those, he's still on about desperation. But here, he doesn't need to communicate neurosis and psychosis through neurotic and psychotic bravura. This time, the material of the story which is right out on the far edge, dominates the style, indeed organises it.

The drama refers to Vietnam, rather than being about it; we're closed in this dark, bare barracks with four young soldiers who are waiting to go. The beautiful young Richie, a privileged upper class lad, teases his straight companions, playing sexual cat and mouse games, flaunting and taunting, and combines lethally with Carlyle, volatile and infantile and hopeless, a screwed-up young black whose accumulated frustrations make him literally murderous. Two drunken sergeants who've been over there, lurch round singing, trying with utterly grotesque emotional incompetence to deal with their memories and guilts.

But it's misleading to talk about Streamers as though it consists black melodrama and individual character complexity. What's more important is that through the tense, close-range observation of camerawork and editing, the way they splinter and re-combine dialogue and performance, we're drawn not into souls, so to speak,

but into the interactions among them, the ways in which the six turn each other inside out, bringing out biography, fantasy, bringing out the worst and even, in odd moments, the best of each other: it's not about individuals, in the usual over-concentrated sense of that over-worked term. The acting is indeed superb and has been rightly praised and rewarded; but the fragmentation doesn't let us concentrate on, or identify with any one of them. What we're looking at is a tremendous orchestration of links, breaks, affinities misunderstandings, and eventually lethal collisions. What's made visible is the relations of light and dark, classes, races, sexual identities, intractable needs; and what's perhaps being said is that when you know enough about the power-play inside this room you can begin to think about Vietnam.

OK. Let's come closer to home, here and now. The most important new film on release for us. It gives me the greatest possible pleasure to welcome Kemira, Diary of a Strike on national release just around election time. Kemira has a lot to say about social and industrial conflict in Australia: a lot to say to all the organised parties, and to the bemused voters, organised and otherwise. Briefly, it chronicles those sixteen days in October 1982 when 31 south coast miners occupied the Kemira colliery, five kilometres underground, in protest against the impending retrenchments of 400 miners by Australian Iron & Steel, a BHP subsidiary.

On the most obvious level, the story's about the men and their mates, the card games and songs and jokes, the running of the outhouse kitchen by the stalwart wives and their aunts and mothers, the kids mucking round, the formal debate involving BHP, the unions and the Coal Industry Tribunal, communicated in voice-over and animated printouts, the wives under pressure; the harassment and threats; the support marches in Wollongong & Sydney. Climactically, it's about that 2,000 strong safari from Wollongong to Canberra; and that's a really fantastic bit of filming - camera and sound catch us up into the crowd as we cross the lawn outside Parliament House, up the steps in a mass, and finally break open the doors. Mr. Fraser then agreed to meet a delegation and eventually, the pressure worked: BHP first refused, then agreed to delay the sackings; the men, believing that in some important way they'd won, finally come up out of the pit.

They won a two weeks' stay - but they lost their jobs. Mr. Fraser lost his, but surprise the change of government didn't make much difference on the south coast. There were some gains in severance pay, and after that the men have a choice between joining the open cut mining force in Queensland, a very long way from their home community, or staying to go on the dole and do a bit of fishing. The final segments include a South Coast promotion campaign with p.r. lines like Welcome to Wollongong, Gateway to the Leisure Coast. The unemployed joke about the dole capital, and leisure coast - we're all at leisure, they say.

So-- a social realist film. We all know how boringly moralistic they can be, how predictably, how little room they often give us to think for ourselves. Why is Kemira different? Because, I think, it works also on a not so obvious level, in terms of what we're given the chance to see for ourselves. For instance, the way history and politics are as it were ambiguous, in the story. The traditional mistrust between Labor the unions is invoked through the old footage, the quotes from 1949 and Ben Chifley's discreditable role then - but there's no settling back into fatalism, the pessimistic sense of history repeating itself. We do see that present conflicts come partly out of what's past, they didn't erupt for nothing. Bob Hawke and Bill Hayden have brief, and unheroic speaking parts.

A larger part is played by the miner's wife Ngairie Wiltshire, who's almost a representative heroine: but unlike the stereotypical brave wives of most such films Ngairie is seen changing: she begins as part of the women's auxiliary, the tea and sandwich makers, whose who stick it out and wait. In a series of powerfully succinct transformations, she turns into a woman who won't take, as she says, what they dish out to her any more; separated from the husband she supported through the crisis, she takes as much control over her life as anyone, under these conditions can have. Her story doesn't finish; we're left thinking about it, wondering.

That's what's so good about Kemira, it's so many stories, that pick us up, carry us with them and go on after the credits have rolled through. There's so much to work on., for instance, what, after all that, can we think about new mining technology, the primacy of the family, what can we think about consensus and accord. I must leave those questions to you, but from some points of view I think Kemira's circulation right now is just fabulously inopportune.

But - in the context of our contemporary, and apparently thriving documentary industry: it's interesting that Kemira, which films actuality communicates the issues round a strike so much more dynamically than the jolly, but still simplistic feature version of Strikebound. It matters too to ask why does this one work on us, when I'll Be Home for Xmas so clearly doesn't. That's the very long one about derros in Melbourne - John was talking of it last week.

Briefly, I think the difference is partly that Kemira understands that any story is a whole multiplicity of stories, and only parts of each can be told, but that we can move in and out of these stories, registering their intensity, knowing there's always more to know, that we have to leave such a lot hanging, go on still wondering - about these men and women, about politics and industry giants and about unions themselves. This is a bit of recent history and it's all still going on. By contrast I'll Be Home for Xmas tries to communicate a grim situation as though it had no

dynamic relations with other groups, as though the 'derros weren't parts of a world, as though the audience couldn't work out a few complicated connections. So with all its moments of eloquence it's still only description, only depiction, it's boring, it doesn't let the audience be anyone but the standard liberal decent citizen muttering there but for the grace of whatever and whatever etcetera.

It's not enough. Films about our own world should trigger our reflective energies at least, maybe more than that: and to do that is in fact, entertainment.

So: good luck to ~~Kemira~~, which ~~won the AFI's award this year for~~ best documentary (that was the time they got it right, for once) more recently won the Tyneside award at the Newcastle's Tyneside Fest in UK where - not surprisingly - they judged it just as relevant to the contemporary scene in Britain. And this is one oppositional film which isn't set to preach only to the converted. It opens tonight at the Opera House in Sydney and in Perth at the FTI; it starts in Melbourne Thursday at the Glasshouse at RMIT, and in Adelaide at the Classic on Friday. Apart from that, it's already being widely distributed on videocassette for living room screening and discussion, not least on the south coast. Kemira was produced and directed by Tom Zubycki, fantastic camerawork by Fabio Cavadine, sound by Russ Hermann, editing by Gil Scrine, and it was as all those pros would agree, by all the people you can see - many more off screen. I'll be talking to you again next week. Goodnight.