

## May Meeting:

Waverley Film Society will meet at Wadham House, 52 Wadham Parade, Mount Waverley (MEL 61 E2), on **Wednesday, 13th of May**. Apologies can be left with Brett on 9807 3426.

The film to be screened is *Philomena* (2013).

A world-weary political journalist picks up the story of a woman's search for her son, who was taken away from her decades ago after she became pregnant and was forced to live in a convent.



## Last Meeting

- Seventeen members and one visitor attended, and there were two apologies;
- *To Kill a Mockingbird* scored 4.9 stars, the highest for several years;
- Rod performed well as the sole projectionist for the first time;
- A few outstanding subscriptions need to be paid – EFT details were in the Treasurer's report at last month's AGM;
- James highly recommended the circus currently playing at Wheelers Hill;
- Petrol issues may have contributed to the lower numbers than usual.



## Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, June 10th.

The film to be screened is *The Little Princess* (1939).

A little girl is left in a girls' school but is forced to become a servant when her father is reported missing during the war.



**Posters are available** for posting in community spaces to advertise the society and the next screening.

The society's website is [www.waverleyfilm.org](http://www.waverleyfilm.org)

Our email address is [contact@waverleyfilm.org](mailto:contact@waverleyfilm.org)

## PHILOMENA (2013) *(Reference: www.imdb.com)*

**Director:** Stephen Frears

**Writers:** Steve Coogan, Jeff Pope, Martin Sixsmith (book)

**Cinematography:** Robbie Ryan

**Music:** Alexandre Desplat

**Editing:** Valerio Bonelli

**Cast includes:**

Philomena Lee                      Judi Dench

Martin Sixsmith                      Steve Coogan

Young Philomena                      Sophie Kennedy Clark

### Trivia

- There are flashbacks, done with "home movies". Some were created for this movie, and some are footage of Philomena's actual son.
- Several decades later, partly due to the original book, it became apparent just how common stories like Philomena's were in Ireland before, during, and after the 1950s. These revelations have given this movie a much darker undercurrent than originally intended.
- At the beginning of this movie, when Philomena has sex at the fair, the camera pans down to an apple with a bite taken. It's a not-so-subtle reference to the original sin.
- Dame Judi Dench was 79 at the time this movie was released. If her character had been a teen mother, her age 50 years later would have been mid to late 60s.

### Review: A strong script and lead performance makes up for lack of ambition

*(Sergeant Tibbs, 2014)*

Stephen Frears seems to be the champion of the above-average middle-ground cinema. .... *Philomena* is lovely and simple. Perhaps too simple to be anything more than mildly satisfying. It hinges on Judi Dench's terrific performance. She's created a thoroughly charming character who, through her acceptance and determination, we can't resist following. ....I've always been a fan of Steve Coogan. .... While here he's better as a writer than an actor, his performance is good too, despite some off-moments.

The script diligently follows the script- help books and efficiently lays out the plot in that moment-to-moment guide. But this restraint isn't a distraction, in fact it's admirable in its economy. The only thing that holds back the script is the dramatic appeal of the material, but it makes great use by taking an indisputable injustice into a detective story with an unlikely pairing.

However, while it makes great use of its limitations, it doesn't feel ambitious in scale. Instead, it feels like it's prepackaged to be adapted to the stage in some form or another. It would benefit the story greatly as the film suffers from poor editing. Shots are left noticeably too short or too long among distracting continuity errors and it affects the pacing severely. ....

The key moments are in Dench's heartbreaking-or-making closeups.

The film has a theme in its design of bouncing around binary oppositions. The cinematography is simple and minimal, focusing on contrasting shades of blue and orange. The oppositions are most apparent with the pairing of Coogan and Dench and the past with the present. .... I loved how it has self-aware ideas on storytelling: whenever the film hits a lull, it re-evaluates itself and decides what kind of step it needs to take next.

With an only-sometimes preachy religious argument, the film's dignity is in its fascinating climactic note. A film more worth watching than I expected.