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<a href="#">Larry Hall</a>
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**The 2023  
SoCo Region  
Film Competition**

**Entry closes 31st July 2023**  
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# Chairman's Chat & Editorial

Pip Critten  
Writes...

## SoCo Competition 2023

I am delighted to announce the launch of this year's SoCo Regional Film Competitions, albeit a little later than I would have liked.

There is a change to the categories to be aware of. In the past we had the Dolphin and Baby Dolphin sections for short humorous films. This was a left over from days gone by when we had the SoCo Weekenders.

In there place will be a One Minute category for films that are 60 seconds or less which includes all leaders and credits. It's easy to tell if your entry will qualify by simply looking at the run time in your film player.

The plan is to award a First, Second and Third in each category.

All entries in the One Minute category will automatically be included in the main competition. So, theoretically, if the winner of the One Minute film is outstanding it could also be the overall winner.

The judges will be invited to make any other awards they feel are appropriate, such as Best Story, Best Edit etc. It will be up to them to make the awards as they feel fit.

## So who are the Judges?

I am doubly delighted to welcome back two of the very best judges on the competition circuit, Tom Hardwick and Tim Stannard. They are both highly experienced and respected in national and international competitions. You can read more about them on page 8

They have, once again, kindly agreed to do a written feed back for each film. Entrants in the past have commented how fair and valuable these comments have been not only confirming the good things about the films but offering ways the films might be improved even further.

## Star ratings

Each film will be awarded a Star Rating which will indicate the level of film making skills that have been

demonstrated. SoCo uses the same skill rating as used in BIAFF and a full explanation is on page 8.

Film makers have told me that the star ratings and feed back has helped them make tweaks and improvements to their films which can help if they are entering subsequent competitions.

There is an immense amount of time and effort that goes into judging and write ups. I am so grateful to Tom and Tim for many many hours they will dedicate to this.

## Closing Date

The closing date is the 31st July 2023, so you only have a month to enter.

## Results show on Zoom

and there will be a Results Presentation on Zoom on Wednesday 30th August 2023, 7pm for a 7.15pm start. Here are the link details:

## Zoom Meeting

Topic: SoCoResultsShow2023

Time: Aug 30, 2023 07:00 PM London

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87113083110?pwd=M3FpTTRENVF2Q040TkdzSktpcE1vQT09>

Meeting ID: 871 1308 3110

Passcode: 484964

Make a note in your diary now - copy and paste the link!

## Full Results

The full results, star ratings and links to all films will be published in the September edition of SoCo News.

Wishing good luck to all those that enter.

Keep Smiling, Pip

[pipcritten@googlemail.com](mailto:pipcritten@googlemail.com)

Rules on  
[page 7](#)  
Entry Form  
[Click Here](#)



Dave Watterson  
Informs us on  
UNICA

# UNICA

## UNICA 10TH-16TH SEPTEMBER

BFVS - Filmmaking in Bristol circulated an invitation from UNICA to attend the festival on 10th-16th September in Comacchio, Italy.

Larry Hall commented with a touch of sarcasm perhaps: "Absolutely. We should all go. Get the mini-bus hired, the beer crates loaded and the Union Jack T-shirts distributed. It's the Italian Job all over again. (And if anyone says that line they have to sit at the back!)"

The more I think about this ... the more I say: why not? We are all a little depressed after COVID and with the state of the economy, we need a chance to blow off the cobwebs. It can be done. Let's get several club groups coming!

Via Michelin reckons it would be about 17 hours driving from Bristol via the Folkestone ferry. Cost about £233 each way (not including the beer.) For smaller

groups, I recommend flights to Bologna and the special UNICA bus from there.

The event hotels are at the Lidos just outside Comacchio (itself a beautiful "little Venice without the tourist rip-offs".) There are also apartments to rent, pitches for camper-vans, tents etc. and miles of beautiful Adriatic shore and clear water to enjoy.

The main function of UNICA is to watch short film programmes by fellow amateurs from a range of countries, meet other enthusiasts, enjoy a new place, eat too much and have fun. Cheap deals on local hotels are available until the end of June ... but even after that you can find fair prices.

UNICA information about it is at:

[www.unica.movie/2023](http://www.unica.movie/2023).

One of Bristol's films will be representing.

Dave Watterson





# There's life in your printer yet

You have a message telling you your printer is now dead?

There's life in your printer yet

Tom Hardwick

You have a message telling you your printer is now dead?

Maybe, you don't need to throw it out and buy another!



The Epson XP625 printer is a very versatile all-in-one photo and disc printer from 2014

Whenever I've been down our local tip (sorry, Household Waste Recycling Centre) there's always been a complete skip loaded to the gunnels with discarded electrical items. Lots of old vacuum cleaners, computers, table lamps, toasters, but above all there seems to be an abundance of discarded **printers**. It's as if printers are so ludicrously cheap these days that the first head-clog gets them jettisoned and replaced.

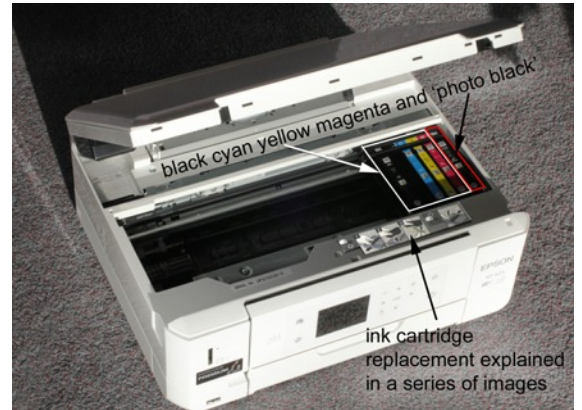
## My Epson XP625



My 8 year old Epson XP625 printer has done sterling work and has been incredibly reliable, versatile and useful

I've had my £90 **Epson XP625** for nearly eight years now. I bought this particular model because I was doing a lot of disc printing back then, and being an Epson, compatible ink manufacturers were falling over themselves to be Amazon's lowest price seller. While the manufacturer's guarantee was in force I bought genuine Epson ink, but with the machine's thirst and five individual inks to buy at something like £13.50 for each cartridge, I soon shifted to feeding it compatibles. Subsequently the printer's little display screen would constantly warn me of the dire consequences of using non-genuine inks, but I went ahead anyway. At 53p per cartridge delivered, from e-Bay, what had I got to lose?

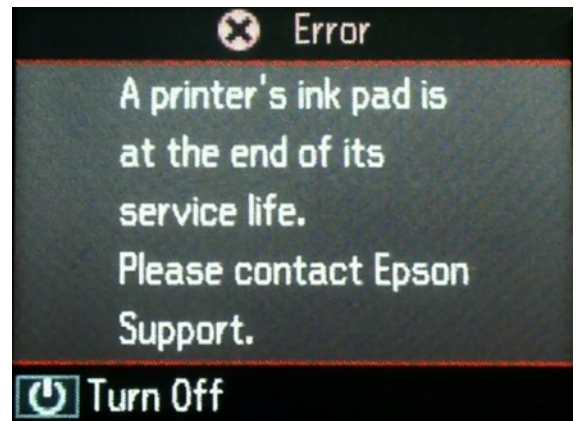
And the printer has been just fine thanks, all of these years. The longevity of my prints may not be up to those made using genuine inks, but ho-hum, they look good to me.



I've used 25 times cheaper compatible ink cartridges in my Epson for years, with no ill effects whatsoever

## But one day

I really can't complain considering the work this printer has done for me over the years, but one day last month a warning flashed up on the printer's screen telling me the printer was nearing the end of its service life and I'd have to contact Epson support. I ignored it, as one does, until a week or so later the printer came to an abrupt halt, displaying the screen of death, and I found there was nothing I could do to revive it.



Something I didn't want to see - the announcement of death appeared on the printer's LCD screen



It looks really ominous, but in reality you'll be up and running again in no time

Google really is your friend, and I found I wasn't alone in this, and it was a fairly common occurrence to be shown this message with printers that have worked hard.

What happens is that with every cartridge change, every head cleaning operation (and no doubt on other occasions when the printer is buzzing and whirring



## Tom continues ....

internally) ink is sprayed through the fine ink-jet heads under considerable pressure so as to clear and clean them. This ink is then ducted away into an internal ink reservoir where it's absorbed by thick felt pads. This can only go on for so long, as after a while the pads become completely saturated and simply cannot accept any more ink, and to stop the machine spilling ink all over your work surface or pale cream carpet, the machine shuts down. Permanently. To ensure you don't simply override this ink pad full warning the clever machine requires that you input an additional **Reset Key code**, which effectively resets the machine to 'new' status once again.

My first thought was to heave the printer over to my local computer repair shop and tell them to get it up and running again. Sure, we can do that they said. There was a bit of a silence when they told me what they were going to charge me, as it was the sort of money that would buy me a brand new new printer. Of course having paid to have it repaired I'd still be left with an eight year old model, although admittedly one with excellent disc printing capabilities.

### For the technically minded, let me explain

The printer has a value in its internal memory that is incremented with any action that generates any kind of waste ink. So for example, changing cartridges results in a small priming routine that pulls ink into the printhead and pushes some of that out into the waste pads. Similarly running a printhead cleaning routine will suck a lot of ink through the nozzles in an effort to clean the printhead but also pushes the waste into the pads. With each event the counter is incremented by a certain amount according to the action and eventually the counter hits a pre-calculated limit which engineers have determined is a relatively conservative point where the pads are likely to be getting saturated and will need replacement.

With all that in mind what the reset process does is reset that waste counter back to zero as if the pads have been replaced by an engineer. What the reset process does not do however is freeze the counter at zero. The printer will increment as before until it again reaches "full" according the actions applied over its new printer life span.

The "reset key" actually a 16-digit code and it's a way of confirming a credit has been paid for so that the app can complete the reset. The **WICReset** has Ukrainian developers, and their app makes the all important job of resetting the waste ink counter possible. So all credit to them for their hard work, which continues despite current events.

I should probably note that:

### You can simply buy a Reset Code

If the thought of disassembling your printer to change its nappies sends you into a frightened frenzy, you can just purchase a **Reset Code** from any number of e-Bay sellers.

You connect your printer to your computer and the supplied code (sent on disc or USB stick or over the airwaves) can be input to reset your printer's waste ink electronic counter. The printer won't know you've not emptied its overflow tank, so will then allow you to start printing again. But you see the dangers? This emergency *get you up and running again* trick now means you will

have serious leaks from the printer's innards any time soon, and such spills can be pretty disastrous.

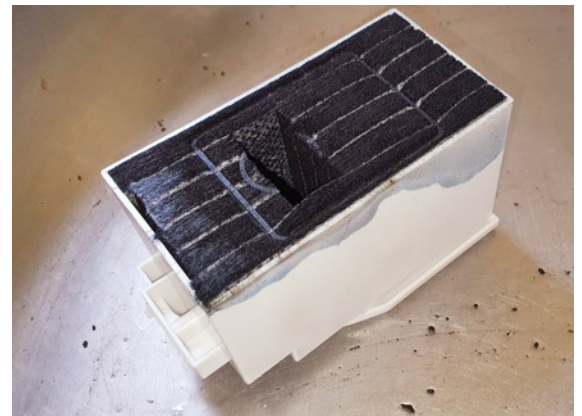
### Let's do the CPR job properly



The instructions that come with your new ink absorption pads explain exactly how to dismantle the printer, and it's a pretty simple job

I decided that I wanted to keep my printer away from landfill, and do a complete clean and reset myself. I contacted a firm called **OctoInkjet** who were most helpful, putting me in touch with **PrinterPotty** ([www.printerpotty.com](http://www.printerpotty.com)). I paid a grand total of £16.95, told them my printer model and PC's operating system (Windows 10) and through the post came a fat envelope that contained all the new waste ink printer pads, the Reset Key code and crucially, excellently illustrated take-you-by-the-hand **instructions**.

These instructions contained no less than 21 colour photographs, showing you exactly which screws needed to come out, in which order, to access and remove the waste ink pad holder from the bottom of your particular printer. Further instructions (15 colour photos) explained how to remove the old ink saturated pads and replace them with the new ones.



On removal from my Epson my ink reservoir looked like this. The absorbent pads were completely saturated with waste ink and needed changing. The supplied replacements fitted perfectly

If this isn't enough there's an email help-line and YouTube films to guide your every move. There are also, I may say, dire warnings about following to the letter the way you must input the Reset Code, otherwise you could brick your printer irretrievably.





## Tom continues ....

So I took it slowly, putting the printer on a big protective plastic sheet, and found that the whole operation was quite straightforward.

### I spoke to Martin at Octoinkjet support, who said:

"I've spent a phenomenal amount of time working to make the instructions and process as easy as possible for people with low tech confidence (eg: my mum) and having spoken to numerous customers over the years I'm reasonably confident that we're getting better at it. That and if you get stuck you can drop me a line and I can walk you through any issues.

The replacement pad sets are now heading into the 6,000+ mark thanks to customer word of mouth, YouTube videos and apparently the fact that we actually answer the phone. It's a somewhat sobering though to realise that that probably equates to a stupidly large amount of electronic waste that was delayed, let alone avoided, thanks to people not actually replacing printers for lack of a nappy change.

Research has very much been of the "suck it and see" variety with numerous refinements over time, but most of the work has been the "hard won" variety with ink stains

down my attic wall attesting to some of the more "interesting" lessons. After over a decade of doing this, the kits themselves are now pretty well worked out, so most of our efforts now are devoted to working out the installation process for the numerous different printer designs.

We then jump into our customer's shoes and look for a way to describe and lead the majority of them through that process without making them feel lost. Thankfully considerable effort spent learning video shooting and editing techniques has paid dividends, and we're finding that video instructions not only help our less confident customers but also provide the odd chuckle when we show how we too can completely mess up."

And there we have it. The new porous pads are safely stored in the cleaned out waste ink pad holder, it has been reassembled into the printer, all the screws have been tightened up, the Reset Code double checked before hitting enter, and we have switch on. It all works perfectly, and my printer gets to live another day – if not another decade.

[tomRhardwick@gmail.com](mailto:tomRhardwick@gmail.com)



## Using Ai as an aid to improving your film

It's easy to dismiss Ai as yet another gimmick and possibly the more traditional amongst us might just ignore it and get on with making films the way we always have done. However, Ai is just another tool to add to the mix and we really should have a look at what these new-fangled routines can do for us.

I recently edited a film for the Bristol club. It was the result of one of their experimental nights where a local dance school loaned three of their best dance students, representing Ballet, Tap and Irish Dancing, to perform their favourite routines at the BFVS studio. The BFVS members brought along their cameras and record the performances. The resulting footage, taken from a variety of different angles, was to be edited together to make a complete record of each performance, with a short interview of each of the dancers to link it all together. We would then end up with something that could stand as a club film and also provide the dance school with something they might use for promotional purposes.

While editing it all together, some problems became apparent. The dancers had performed to their music being played over the speakers in the club room. The plan was to over-dub the inevitably noisy recorded-in-camera sound with the original high quality music tracks at the final edit stage, using an audio synchronisation marker played at the start of each performance. This worked perfectly for the ballet dancer, and with the original recording of the Spanish Doll variation from Coppelia overlaid, it looked and sounded superb.

Sadly, this brilliant idea came crashing down to earth as I started on the tap dancing footage and quickly realised that I could certainly overdub the music but a ballet dancer's feet don't produce any sound, whereas tap

dancer's do. With no isolation, that wonderful rhythmic tapping of the feet was inextricably mixed with the music. Overdubbing the original track wasn't a problem in itself, but then the sound of the tap dancing would disappear. In an ideal world, the music should have been relayed to the dancer via a radio earpiece and the taps recorded separately, but hindsight is a wonderful thing. The only choice seemed to be to clean the mixed-up sound as much as possible, use it "as is" and move on.



However, it occurred to me that there were some Ai software programs that could isolate voices from a music track to, for example, produce Karaoke tracks where the the singers have been removed, leaving just the music. It's also becoming possible to isolate and remove individual instruments, so a keen guitarist could, for example, sit in with their favourite band replacing the original musician.

Larry Hall  
Offers tips and advice on the use of Artificial Intelligence.



## Larry continues ....

I wondered if it would be possible to use such a programme to isolate taps from my mixed-up track. It's a longer story than I have room for here, but I found that the taps were pretty much like a drummer hitting hi-hats and by twiddling with the frequency settings, managed to end up with a track containing just the taps and then, by mixing it back with the original music was able to create a high quality soundtrack with the sound of the taps intact.

Ai also came in handy when I edited the interviews. These had been recorded in less than ideal circumstances and suffered from room echo and, worse, some leakage of music drifting in from the adjacent studio. Cleaning this sort of thing up is fairly common these days, especially for those using DaVinci Resolve which has noise reduction built in. This magically removes everything from a sound clip, leaving only the human voice, clean and crisp. For those who don't have Resolve (it has to be the paid-for 'Studio' version), there is a good alternative. Adobe have their own speech enhancer and it's available for free. It's an on-line service, so there's that pesky "create an account" business first, but it isn't intrusive afterwards.

The procedure is that you take the sound file you want to clean up, drag and drop it into the programme, and sit back for a few minutes. This is what I used, and the result was excellent. All that room echo disappeared and it even took out the music leakage. Definitely recommended if you don't have Resolve Studio.

I also had some issues with the interview visuals, where the focus was just a little too soft. Applying some sharpening and increasing the contrast helped a little but I was still reluctant to use those shots. Once again, Ai came to the rescue. There are a number of programmes available that will take, say a clip shot in HD, and up-scale it to 4K without loss of resolution and provide enhancement at the same time. These tend to be very expensive but most provide a free trial. Topaz seems to be the best known, although I find it quite fiddly to use.

I eventually found one called Hitpaw Video Enhancer. It doesn't have many bells and whistles but is reasonably priced and easy to use, with only four modes, or "models". These are general noise reduction, animation, face modelling and colorization (American spelling). The "Face" mode proved to be the most effective and produced remarkably sharp and detailed images from what was, frankly, marginal source material as you can see from these before-and-after examples. The main drawback is the rendering time. A fourteen second clip can take three and a half hours to render and although I

did the clips piecemeal, it was a twenty six hour drag altogether.



So there we are, Ai helping make our films that little bit better. So what have we learned? Well, the obvious answer is that it's better to make your film as perfect as possible right at the beginning. However, we all make mistakes and things that perhaps should have been allowed for can slip through and it's usually impossible to go back and re-shoot once you've got home and that dodgy clip manifests itself on your screen perhaps days later. So, as I mentioned earlier, consider Ai not as a substitute for perfect film-making, but as another tool in the box. If it can rescue that dodgy clip and make it usable, then it's doing its job.

Here are links to the programmes I mentioned above.

Sound "Stems" Isolation:

<https://www.virtualdj.com/>

Adobe Speech Enhancer:

<https://podcast.adobe.com/enhance>

Hitpaw Video Enhancer:

<https://www.hitpaw.com/hitpaw-video-enhancer.html>

Larry Hall



### Zoom Meeting

Topic: SoCoResultsShow2023

Time: Aug 30, 2023 07:00 PM London

Join Zoom Meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87113083110?pwd=M3FpTTRENVF2Q040TkdzSktpcE1vQT09>

Meeting ID: 871 1308 3110

Passcode: 484964



*Only available to  
SoCo Region  
members and clubs.*

*Sorry to our  
national and  
international  
readers*



## SoCo Regional Video Competition 2023

### Rules

1. Entry into the “The SoCo Regional Video Competition 2023” is open to:
  - 1.1 Individual members of the IAC within the SoCo Region
  - 1.2 Individual members of an IAC Affiliated Club within the SoCo Region
  - 1.3 Club Entries from an IAC Affiliated Club within the SoCo Region
2. Films must have been made since January 2022 and have not previously been entered into a SoCo Regional Competition.
3. There are two categories in the competition:
  - 3.1 Main competition: Films on any subject with a maximum length\* of 20 minutes
  - 3.2 One Minute Competition: Films with a maximum length\* of 1 minute

\* Maximum film length includes all credits and any lead in’s and out’s
4. There is no entry fee.
5. Entries will only be accepted into the competition electronically via:
  - 5.1 Preferred Method: The entrant providing a link (and password if needed) to an online version (such as YouTube, Vimeo, or via a google drive)
  - 5.2 Alternative Method: WeTransfer, using [www.WeTransfer.com](http://www.WeTransfer.com) sent to [picritten@googlemail.com](mailto:picritten@googlemail.com). The entrant agrees that the film can then be uploaded to the SoCo Competition Public YouTube Channel
6. **The closing date for entries is midnight 31st July 2023.**
7. Each entry must have a completed Online Entry Form that can be found here:  
[ENTRY FORM](#)  
[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeRKYmKwmz2xwNo-xlM9b6nsnO6\\_dWnmf7feO6LPRKK9E657g/viewform?usp=sf\\_link](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeRKYmKwmz2xwNo-xlM9b6nsnO6_dWnmf7feO6LPRKK9E657g/viewform?usp=sf_link)
8. Entries into the One Minute competition will be automatically included in SoCo main competition.
9. The competitions are for films made by individuals or clubs for pleasure and not for commercial gain, other than for the benefit of their club or a charity. Members of the production team, including actors, must not have been paid for their time.
10. Copyright clearance of all material, both sound and vision, is the sole responsibility of the entrant.
11. Name(s) on the entry form will be used on any certificates that may be awarded.
12. Entries will be assessed by a judging panel. Their comments will be sent to entrants by email in September.
13. Details of the 1st, 2nd and 3rd in each of the two competitions will be published in SoCo News.
14. The SoCo Regional Council reserve the right not to accept entries that are deemed offensive or in bad taste and will rule on all matters concerning the competitions and no correspondence can be entered into.
15. Submission of an entry confirms acceptance for award winning films to be uploaded to a public YouTube channel.
16. Submission of an entry confirms acceptance by the entrant of the above competition rules.
17. Submission of an entry confirms agreement to process personal data for administrative purposes.



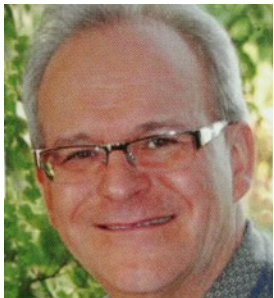
## Meet the judges



*Tom Hardwick (FACI) has for many years been a member of BIAFF's judging team, and has often been called upon to judge local film competitions.*

*He has had his Positive Image articles published in every edition of Film and Video Maker magazine for the last 23 years and is a regular columnist in SoCo News*

*He teaches photography and filmmaking and ran a successful filmmaking business for over 15 years.*



*Tim Stannard AACI bought his first camcorder in 2005 to film his new daughter, Elise, and he hasn't stopped filming her yet! He quickly developed a particular interest in editing. After joining Stains Video Makers he directed or edited several club films.*

*He is perhaps best known in IAC circles for his light hearted films at BIAFF usually featuring a cast of youngsters in historical costume singing lyrics written by his wife.*

*Tim has given talks to many clubs and IAC Regions from Southampton to Edinburgh and enjoys critical analysis of short films as well as discussing film making in general.*



## The Star Ratings

The judges have used the same star rating criteria as used in BIAFF. This was adopted so that film makers can use this to see if they can or want to make any improvements should they wish to enter their film in the next BIAFF Competition. They could use the judges comments, which all films receive, to see if there maybe tweaks that could be made to move their film up the star rating. All judges comments should be viewed as constructive feedback.

### 1 Star

Work at this level shows little understanding of the basics of filmmaking. It may for example have unsteady photography or problems with exposure, obvious distortions of sound or unattractive abrupt changes. It may lack understanding of the conventions of editing. The film may typically lack effective story or structure and fail to engage the viewer.

In rare cases where a film is of such an atrocious standard that it does not constitute a serious entry to the competition, the judges may award a 'Certificate of Entry' rather than 1 Star.

### 2 Star

The work is a 'Near Miss' by the filmmaker. They may have tried some brave or novel ideas which the judges believed didn't work. Apart from shortcomings in the concept, there may have been technical or constructional issues: Cinematography may be inadequate with little sign of attractive or well-composed images. Sound may be uneven. Story may feel too long. The film may fail to show an adequate sense of purpose/structure/timing. Voiceover may state the obvious. Editing may not flow.

### 3 Star

Good. Basically good cinematography, and with signs of using pleasing compositions. Sound appropriate and well balanced. Clear structure and planning. Appropriate pace. Acting good enough not to spoil the story. Flows reasonably well with few distractions. Overall the film largely holds the viewer's attention.

### 4 Star

Very good. It is expected that the story will hang together well as an artistic whole. This standard of film would have something special about it: perhaps something original in the treatment of the subject, or something out of the ordinary about the content, or be technically creative. It may, however, have minor flaws which detrimentally affect the audience appeal.

### 5 Star

An excellent film, creative and well structured, possibly stylish or innovative. It has a clear and satisfying structure, appealing to the audience. Films at this level would generally be technically excellent, demonstrating a comprehensive grasp of filmmaking. Any acting/narration will be of a high standard, and the subject matter will be well researched etc.





Melvyn Dover

Asks: why do we have to rely on computers?

# Why do we have to rely on them?

## Computers!

There was an 'A' board outside a national eatery chain, advertising for new staff. To apply, candidates could scan a Q-code (one of those patterned squares read by a mobile phone), and go to a website to upload their videos. Those people interested in applying are likely to have the equipment and knowledge of how to do it. Hard luck if you haven't, and forget the C.V. typed on paper.

An Indian takeaway in town was taking orders only via the internet - no need to put menus outside for people to take home to study.

Just two examples of how the use of technology is rapidly becoming the norm. Thanks to the pandemic the 11% of homes without internet access has now fallen to 6% - around one and a half million. Adults with previously limited digital skills have embraced online shopping, digital banking and video-calling friends and relatives - while younger people act as IT support.

## But what if it all goes wrong?

I found out not so long ago it's gnash the teeth and swear time. Or sit in a dark room gibbering.

Neither of which fixes computer problems. I'd've happily thrown them out of the window, yes all three I have here. But I can't. I rely on them. That means I'm at the mercy of software companies too.

Until last year, one of those had been happily working away for years. It was still running Windows XP, that's how long. On it I backed up my data from my 'Main Computer', I printed photographs on it, and watched DVDs on it. Then it all went haywire. when I put a DVD in the drive (data or movie) the PC decided to reboot itself. Which took longer and longer. Not every time, mind. Sometimes it was perfectly behaved and played the film. Only the DVD drive had an issue.

Oh well then, thinks I, I've a newer PC up the loft. I'll take the DVD drive out of that and put it in the XP machine. Nope. That led to a 'device not recognised by Microsoft' error. Which never went away even though I replaced the original DVD drive. Which in turn started the PC telling me I need to reactivate Windows XP within 3 days. 2 days, 1 day...

I phoned Microsoft and of course was told XP is no longer supported. End of story. A vein in my forehead started twitching. Was I really going to have to throw out a perfectly good PC simply because Microsoft wouldn't reactivate my legal software.

Read this quietly: I tried a hack I found on the net. That gave me a 'Windows Reactivated' message, but still continued the three day countdown before it all went pear-shaped. And time was ticking away merrily. Hack number two reset the counter and gave me a month's grace. I phoned Microsoft again. This time I didn't mention the operating system I was using, told them I have a PC identification number and needed a reactivation number. This time the man at the other end was helpful. Didn't worry about me using XP. I had to give him my email address, phone number and read out the long, long PC ID and in return he gave me the equally long activation number. Nice man - I left feedback to tell Microsoft so. Windows XP was going again!

Well, at least back to where I started. Of course it still rebooted sometimes when inserting a DVD. But I could

carry on backing up and printing photos. Oh hang on. My printer needed three new cartridges. I put them in and that threw a wobbly. It refused to recognise any of the cartridges. So I replaced those and put more in. And more. Still telling me it doesn't recognise the cartridges. Found various suggestions on the internet. No joy. I got it working again after a fortnight by replacing all the cartridges with freshly ordered ones. Another few hours off my lifespan.

## But how fragile it all seems.

Apparently things are getting better. The Mean Time Before Failure (MTBF) of a Hard Disc (spinning motor and all) used to be given as 300K hours whereas the MTBF of a solid state drive (SSD) is given as 1.5 million hours. Mind you when SSDs break it tends to be without warning or much chance of recovering data. Of course there are many factors involved.

I had way past enough of all this technology. Did something different. Went for a walk to collect a prescription. The woman in the pharmacy was twiddling her thumbs. 'Can't do anything,' she said, 'computer's down.' Aaarrgh! 'But,' she added, 'it should be up again in 30 minutes.' On the way home I did wonder why she couldn't have looked on the shelf under D to check whether my prescription was in. Probably couldn't have given it to me anyway without a computer.

And I now get messages from the surgery - my phone telling me to log on to a website to book an appointment.

My video editor has an obvious bug in the latest version. I reported it, only to be told to download the new beta version and if it's still there, then report it. Nope. I'll stick with the older version which doesn't have the bug, thank you. It was such an obvious one, let them find it.

## See what I mean? Too much reliance on technology.

On top of that my internet browser automatically updated itself while I was sipping coffee. There I was suddenly facing a pure white screen with a little icon on it telling me to click here to add a bookmark. I spent some time trying to make it look like it used to. Gave up. Deleted the browser. There are others.

Then there are the software developers we rely on. Don't mention Windows 11. I checked the specification needed to run it. Basically the PC needs to be under four years old. You need to have a Microsoft account. Some Win 10 features are lost. And they actually say if your machine can't run it, you might consider buying a new one.

## What arrogance!

Of course, I'm not the only one. In April 23's Classics magazine, one dedicated to restoring and driving old cars, contributor Iain Ayre says pretty much the same thing in an article headed 'Computers? Great when they work!' He found owning his 1947 Bentley MKVI refreshing and relaxing to work on due the absence of computers.

Yes, computers are fine when they work. The rest of the time I'll gnash my teeth and swear.

Now I've got that off my chest, I'll um, try emailing this off then...

Happy Filming,  
Melvyn Dover



# Movies of Their Times - Part Two

Ian Simpson

Wollongong  
Camera Club Movie  
Makers,  
Australia

## The Arrival of Video Cameras for the Masses



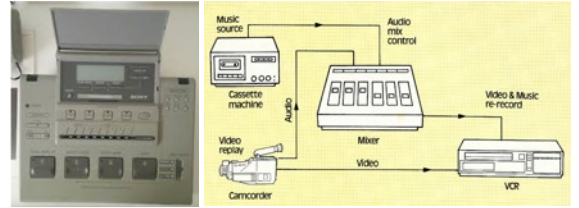
Super 8mm Cine Camera



Camera and separate tape recorder



Early Camcorder



Simple Video Editor - programs 4 shots at a time

Video editing setup for linear editing, re-recording from camcorder to VCR

So, travelogues and family videos were the same as their film equivalents except for one major and important aspect—ideos had lip-sync and live sound effects. Amateur movie makers who moved to video traded high picture quality for poor picture quality but you had the nirvana of lip-sync.

### The 2010s

At the end of the 1980s desktop video was appearing in the form of computers such as the Amiga A500 and Amiga 2000, but these were expensive and were used for titles and special effects. Non-linear editing computer programs appeared in the 1990s and developed in the 2000s, so that by 2010s they had become not only sophisticated tools, but there was little difference between some of them and what Hollywood used.

Thus, the dream of amateurs of using the same editing process for video as was done for films became a reality, and what' more it could be done non-destructively to the original camera footage. So, in the 2010s, amateurs no longer needed to be "conservative" they could experiment to their heart' content.

The camcorder design had been king during the 1990s and into the 2000s. Then in August 2008, Nikon introduced the DSLR camera, D90, that could shoot video at 720p. From then on it was only a matter of time before DSLRs and mirrorless cameras took over from the camcorder, as the benefits



of the larger sensors were realised. For the amateur, by 2010, HD video had been established and 4K video arrived in 2014, so no longer were there "technical limitations inherent in film making" for the amateur. The viewing experience of HD and 4K videos on a large TV screen could now exceed that of Super 8 projected onto a 4-foot screen.

### Amateur Videos of the 2010s

So, with this increased freedom of expression, what movies did amateurs make for public showings and competitions? The following table gives the percentages of digital films. Amateurs were now venturing into more serious documentaries or fictional videos as lip-sync was no longer a problem. The videos of the 2010s also showed the sophistication that non-linear editing software enabled.

Source	Percentage Documentary	Percentage Travelogue	Percentage Fiction	Percentage Experimental
FAMM Competitions: 2010, 2012, 2014, 2016	36.4	21.4	32.1	10
WCCMM Catalogue: 2010—2019	56.8	26.5	11.6	5.4

The arrival of the video camera, first as a two-piece unit, camera and tape recorder, then as a single unit CAMera-reCORDER, camcorder, did not significantly change the structure of the amateur movie. Appearance wise there was a major difference, as video editing involved re-recording the camera footage to a VCR. The result was often fuzzy or soft images and colours that bled. The soundtrack was no better in quality than that from stripe, as initially only a linear edge track was available to record sound.



Making movies was child's play, if you could hold the camera!

Shots from the camera footage, one after the other, were re-recorded onto the VCR' tape. Fine tuning of the edit was difficult as (say) you wanted to trim a shot 1 minute into a 10 minute movie, you would have to find all the camera footage that constituted the next 9 minutes and re-record them again. Hence amateur videos were perhaps slower paced and much longer than their film cousins because of this. Also, not forgetting that there were no longer the physical restrictions imposed by the 50 foot Super 8 cartridge and the economic restriction of the cost of film.

### Edit controllers

Video Edit Controllers became available, positioned between camera and video recorder, that automated the scene transfer from camcorder to VCR. Initially these units were thousands of \$, but early in the 1990s some simplified units became available for the amateur.

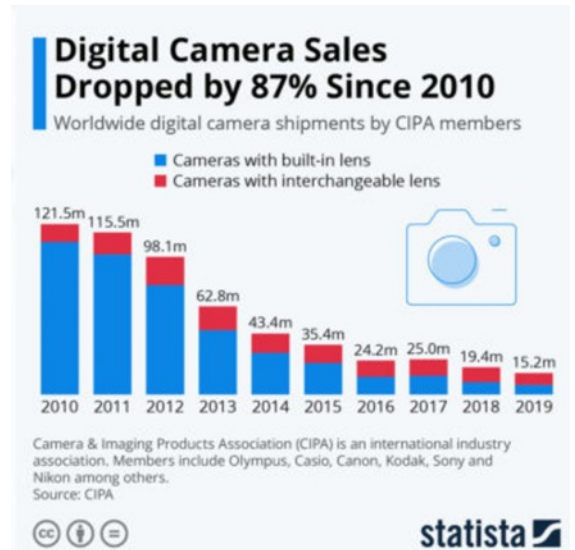
Ian continues ...

Titles were now professional looking, not hand assembled plastic letters or rub on letters of the film days. The editing software provided many visual effects that amateurs quickly exploited and sound effects were just a click away. No longer did you need to copy a track from an LP or audio cassette. Such freedom of expression led to many "experimental" videos, where images were synced to music, multi-split screen images were produced, or the extensive superimposition of images over other images. Processes, some of which could not be achieved during the Super 8 film era.

#### The Rise of the Smartphone, Artificial Intelligence (AI) and the 2020s

Unveiled in February 2009 was the Samsung Omnia HD i8910 phone that could shoot 720p video at 24 fps with an 8 MP rear camera. Although phones before this could shoot 480p video, Samsung, with this phone, heralded where smartphone' video capability was heading. Also of note was that in 2010 Netflix launched its streaming services, streaming videos was the future for all. Between 2010 and 2018 there was a 6 times increase in smartphones sold. At the same time the camera market took a dive.

With the rise in the smartphone and the need for better automatic systems in cameras, there was the rise in AI. We see it already in our phone images, in the movies the phone composes of our shots put to music and in the smarter auto-focus systems.



Digital camera sales

For the amateur movie maker, the encroachment of AI into editing will see shots catalogued, shots processed to correct any image and sound faults, voice controlled software, the making of a movie in the style of a certain director. Video competitions will require the author to declare any AI contributions. T

Ian Simpson



## Gloucester Film Makers

It was 40 years ago I attended my first meeting of the then Gloucester Cine Club.

My equipment at that time was a silent Eumig super 8mm cine camera and a silent Eumig projector. What a wonderful surprise that evening to watch sound films with music and commentary. The door to a new way of film making had opened.

Soon afterwards I purchased Kodak sound film and a sound projector.

I should add that my interest in cine began some 70 years ago when a rich uncle filmed my sister's wedding which he later showed to the family. I was hooked.

How the world of amateur film making has changed, no more waiting about 10 days to have the film developed before viewing the results of a shoot, thanks to modern technology it's immediate. How wonderful that is.

In the 40 years I have made made many films including animation, 18 shots per second of film, wildlife,

drama and documentary. In total hundreds. Yes hundreds! A head ache for my family when I am no longer around.

Meanwhile back at Gloucester Film Makers life goes on. Two competitions have been held recently, Chris Byrne won the Documentary with The Laxey Wheel and Clive Blackmore's film 2 days in St. Petersburg won the Holiday Travelogue Competition. Congratulations to both.

Our planned trip to do some phone filming at Gloucester docks was poorly supported due to heavy rain and a thunderstorm just prior to the starting time.

On July 13th filming using drones with members of the Tewkesbury club is on the programme. Fingers crossed for good weather.

September 11th, back to our club room for the Wildlife Competition and a demonstration on 360° filming by Paula Clare.

Our final film competition is on November 13th when we judge the best film on a Gloucestershire theme which has been completed this year.

For further information on our club please see our website which is; [www.gloucesterfilmmakers.org.uk](http://www.gloucesterfilmmakers.org.uk)

John Greene

Gloucester Film Makers.





# The Chocolate Soldier Competition

Formally know as 'The West Midlands Amateur Film Festival'

Hosted by 'Virtual Video Group'

## Competition Rules 2023

1. The host club is the 'Virtual Video Group'. The VVG contact is Ian Bennett [yannybav@gmail.com](mailto:yannybav@gmail.com)
2. The competition is open to all clubs and societies in the U.K.
3. The competition will normally be held annually during November.  
The 'Virtual Video Group' will arrange the date and advertise as appropriate.
4. This is an Open Competition and there is no set theme.
5. The entry should be the work of the competing club, society or their members and must not have been previously entered into this competition.
6. Maximum running time of 10 minutes including titles and credits.
7. Only one entry is allowed from each club or society.
8. Entries should be submitted via the 'You Tube' platform. See link to the entry form: <https://forms.gle/R8N5uRomDqSizGs8> Please paste into your browser.  
All details must be notified to the 'Virtual Video Group' on the entry form three weeks before the competition.
9. In the event of over subscription 'Virtual Video Group' reserve the right to pre-select entries.
10. There is no entry fee for this event.
11. Judging will take place on the evening of the competition.  
The winners will be decided by an audience vote.
12. Third second and first placed winners will receive a certificate which will include a watermarked digital version of the trophy.
13. It is up to individual clubs to ensure that all copyright is obtained.

The 'Virtual Video Group' shall not be held responsible for any infringement of any current copyright law.

**THE DEADLINE IS THREE WEEKS PRIOR TO THE  
COMPETITION ON THE 8TH NOVEMBER 2023**



## It's Never Easy

Dave Jones

Shares his thoughts

In recent times, we have been hearing a lot about AI (Artificial Intelligence), and alongside this it has become the fashion to present it to the public as a threat, in terms of “it will gobble you all up”.

### I think such threats are best left with the under-fives.

The truth of the matter is, with the increase in speed, our computers are capable of number-crunching faster than ever before. Yes, of course you knew that, it is common knowledge. Then why is everybody concerned about natural progression? AI isn't something new, it is a name given to a stage of development, like the Stone Age, the Iron Age, the Bronze Age ... we live in the Space Age.

When my son was about five years old, he played with my Z80 and later learned Basic, the then computer programming language. They brought out 'C'-Basic after the BBC computer and then, slowly but surely, the professionals took over and shut the door on the public, so we went from everybody to nobody in the public domain understanding computer programming, unless professional.

The speed of any single computer, at best, today, are those with an i9-13900KS which runs at 6.0 GHz and it will set you back around \$570, but this is rip-off Britain, so let's call it £600, it's a nice round figure.

When you hear that AI can learn in much the same way as we do, simply ask how we do it, and you have the answer. Clever people have good memories, dim people have poor memories, AI has a perfect memory that is instantly accessible and with perfect recall, so it appears more “intelligent” than humans, but it isn't. There are two basic ways of solving a Quadratic Equation – don't panic, we won't go into that – if you gave AI one method, then said, “Devise an alternative method,” it would likely give you the only method it had to give, unless, you wrote a program that enabled it to seek and find an alternative method, but here's the crunch, it would do it in the blink of an eye.

### Algorithms

Scientists devise the means and convert those means into an algorithm and the computer does so much in a trice that we have the answer in days or weeks instead of decades. It's a machine and is like CinC machine, a machine that you give a piece of metal to. It puts the metal in its chuck, tightens it, touch-probes the metal to measure it, sets the tool position, then determines the start point. You feed it the data from your computer at home, which carries your CAD drawing, then go and have a cup of tea. When you return, you make a phone call to see if the job is finished, if it isn't, it soon will be.

“It has learned to drive a lathe and turn out a perfect job without a single error!” It hasn't learned a damn thing, it has been given an algorithm to follow. What made it AI was, somebody has patiently developed an algorithm that writes algorithms and they named it Artificial Intelligence, which it is. The question to now be faced is, if an algorithm can write a program to write a program, what will it decide to write a program to do? Then along comes a politician and said, “World dominance!” and that's where the fear factor came in.

If you were a genius and wrote a program that could write any program, then left a blank field (a place to write and input things), you could come back after ten years

and it would still be blank ... because you haven't told it what to do.

Man is the danger, not the machine. A friend of mine had a glass eye. In the court room, it was established that the man's little boy had seen him using a catapult to fire fish bane. The child put a stone in daddy's catapult and that's how my friend lost his eye. This puerility doggedly follows some people throughout their lives.

### Dystopia or utopia?

How will IA affect us? It has two paths, dystopia and utopia. If you can't be bothered to get out of bed and buy a camera, it will provide a picture that is near to life, but not quite. Or you could have a camera with just one button, you press it, it chooses the best picture that can be extracted from the framing, then pans and crops it out ... and that is what you get ... unless you apply yourself to the task, you will never know if you are as good as AI. It has probably gone through a billion scenarios, whilst you instinctively know where you have a good shot ... by walking ten paces and mounting the camera on a monopod held high above your head. That is creative thinking. It is that which brought about civilisation and the means to destroy it. There are always two paths.

When it comes to creative thinking, there are few hobbies or jobs that can go beyond filmmaking. A director must be a psychologist, psychiatrist, personnel manager, technician, parent and guardian and above all else, creative.



Here's the rub though, we've all taken shots we just knew would be great, but when they hit the screen, they don't work. How do we know? You can't teach that. I'm not even sure you can learn it in a life time, but I do know this, some people can make a film and capture the audience throughout its run-time. Ten years later somebody else does a remake and it flops, despite a decade's technical advancements.

I remember watching a film by a director, Stewart Mackay, in it was a shot that dollied, panned and zoomed simultaneously. I stopped the film and back-tracked 3-times to look at that shot. The reason was because of its execution, helped along by the lighting, acting, sound and background music. AI won't replace that sort of talent. It may be able to execute it, but it will never be able to think it up, unassisted, it has to be told ... by a Director.

Videography is complex and demanding, if you fully engage its needs and your need to excel. Whilst AI in the future will assist us, I very much doubt it will ever match or replace us when it comes to the talent we employ in



## Continues...

Dave Jones

Shares his thoughts

front of the camera and creative elements devised behind the camera, the combination, when we pull it off, is one of pride ... and pride is something that will never be understood or programmed into a machine.

However, when endeavouring to achieve success, it's never easy. So when in the middle of a film and you are frustrated and everything seems to be turning to custard, you are probably doing a good job, because that means you care and you are caring from the heart. My advice ... turn to a trusted friend and bounce things off him. If he smiles understandingly or bursts into laughter and slides down the wall, you know he's been there ... often. It's what stops directors committing suicide. It's never easy.

I've seen a sound man tear up, when a central heating system started to expand ... and it rang like a bloody bell! When he did his survey, it was off. The director screamed at him, "Don't you know you are supposed to be

clairvoyant?" It was decided to turn it to 'HIGH' and await the end of the 'campanology', we couldn't open the windows, as there was passing motorway traffic heard in the distance! When grown men howl at something going terribly wrong, that is true dedication ... you can't buy that.

### Miraculous

Today, that would have been no problem, for we cannot just 'filter out', but literally 'eliminate' all unwanted sounds other than a human voice/s ... and ... it ... is ... miraculous! AI understands language and anything that we talk to is considered by our minds to be 'one of us'. I was once told by a vet that dogs think we are dogs, like them ... mind you, he was very elderly and he'd been a vet for a very long time, so .... ??

Dave Jones



Since our last report in SoCo News there have been a Coronation and two Bank Holidays. On these occasions we decided we would not meet. However, this does not mean that nothing has happened down here in Devon.

On 8th May as it was a bank holiday to celebrate the coronation there was no scheduled and programmed meeting. However, an invitation was sent out to all members to log onto zoom for an informal time of catching up. We also took the opportunity to view some of the results of a previous green screen evening held at our club room on the 17th April during which we explored lighting the screen to match a background provided and the filming of two short sketches.

On Monday 15th May we were back at our club room at Bitton House, Teignmouth. On this evening we were taken through two exercises, led by Peter to practice using the manual settings on our cameras. The first was to practice using manual focusing instead of letting our camera's auto system do the job. Peter provided an object to film – a clock mounted on two model elephants. We also took some shots adjusting the white balance of our cameras manually. When all shots from all cameras were joined together to compare cameras the colours looked very similar proving what a good idea it is to set white balance manually, particularly on a multi cam shoot.

On the following Monday on Zoom, Alec shared some interesting thoughts about using transitions which created quite a lot of discussion.

The Monday after that saw us back at Bitton House when we had a fun evening filming yet more sketches by Alec and filming the lovely grounds in which Bitton House is set. The results of this evening were shown after our AGM on Monday 26th June.

The results of our in Club Film-of-the-Year Competition were announced on Zoom Monday 19th June. The seven films were entered were:

**The Crippled Cobbler by Eileen and Tony Colburn**, the story of a humble shoemaker who was an inspiration for the development of free education for all children.

**Who Let The Dogs Out? by Peter Hiner**, An amusing musical film.

**A Lighting Workshop: by Pip Critten and Mervyn Brooking**, An educational film for photographers and film makers on lighting an interview subject

**Reinstating the Village Hall Roof at Sampford Courtney**, by Geoff Hodgkinson - A record of the work done

**Christmas Cracker by Geoff Hodgkinson**, An amusing film about Christmas parties

**Filming Transitions by Alex Ball**, another educational film for film makers.

**Looking for Santa by Ivan Andrews**, A Christmas Eve story of two young girls looking to see Santa fly over.

Judged by member's voting the results were:

Third placed was Peter's "Who Let The Dogs Out?"

Second was Pip and Mervyn's "Lighting Workshop"

First was Eileen and Tony's "The Crippled Cobbler".

Congratulations to all.

Anyone is welcome to attend both the Zoom and face to face meetings, whatever your expertise and wherever you live. A limited number of "visitor" places are available for the zoom meetings which can be "booked" via the website contact details. Feel free to visit and if you find that it isn't for you, we shall not be offended if you leave early.

<http://www.teignfilmmakersclub.org>

<https://www.facebook.com/tfmcadmin>





# Alan's Ramblings

Alan Wallbank

Shares his thoughts



I begin with the very sad news that Stuart Egbeare has passed away after years of battling cancer. He joined the Portsmouth Cine Club in 1971 making mainly holiday films that he entered into the IAC competitions receiving awards for his photography. I first met him in 1994 when I joined the PCC where I found we both had an interest in railways. As a teenager he travelled the country filming, photographing and recording the sound of trains, while I started my working life on them.

Like all of us, he moved onto video where he continued his passion for trains until last year using the clubs Casablanca Avio to edit his films, still in good working order 22 years after the initial purchase. He regularly attended the So-Co Weekender at Bournemouth along with other Portsmouth Video Club members and is seen on the left of the photo being presented with a PVC trophy for editing. He only made a few other films, much preferring to appear in many of the PVC's short films including the Albany Competition.



Stuart Egbeare is on the left

Yet without his help I would not have been able to make my numerous documentary films, interviewing people and doing pieces to camera. I recall one where we had to be on a bridge over a railway line in the Portsmouth suburb of Copnor which had a single flow of traffic in each direction controlled by traffic lights due to the bridges condition. We arrived at seven on a Sunday morning in the hope that the early hour would be quiet enough to allow me to do "a walk to camera piece" without any cars appearing.

## How wrong we were!

Just as I was about to complete my piece, a car would appear behind me time and time again. To make matters worse, I would sometimes fluff my lines and there was the interference on the radio mike to content with, yet we managed to get it done by 8.30 even though the traffic flow had increased considerably.

The film itself was about everything that went on around the bridge while the restrictive traffic flow remained in place. A nearby florists was the first casualty followed by a bowling green when the new bridge was put in place. Due to his cancer treatment, I had to find another cameraman, but it will never be the same without Stuart.

The funeral was on the 28th June at 12.00 at Portchester Crematorium.

## Eye issues

My dry eye problem still remains along with the bottom eyelash touching the eyeball, so I now ease the discomfort by sticking a clear piece of surgical tape on my cheek to hold the bottom lid away from the eyeball. This has allowed me to start filming from June and more recently editing, the first time since January and how much I have missed putting films together. I must remember to blink regularly, as not doing so caused the condition in the first place preparing films for BIAFF!

Talking about editing, have you ever given any thought to how much work must go into programmes like 'Match of the Day'. Not only to they have to edit several matches down to about five minutes each with one sometimes ending shortly before MOTD is aired, but they also have to prepare clips for presenters to pre-analyse. I feel this is an astonishing feat programme presentation that we all take for granted.

## A last word on BIAFF.

I much enjoyed the online Zoom presentation, watching almost the full eight day programme all for just £10. My hearing is not too good these days, but I managed to hear all the presenters without any issues. Film wise, there were two that I could not decipher at all and put this down to the mikes not being close enough to the actors. Perhaps this will improve once I get a hearing aid!? Another problem was the roving mike in the theatre. Again I heard very little with one comment asking if the mike was broadcasting to the hall, but not on Zoom?

My thanks to everyone who put together on an excellent presentation.

# Inflation

If I had a pound for every time I've moaned about the price of cinema snacks, I could buy a small drink.



Keep Smiling Pip



Robert Paget

Tips, advice and  
chit chat.

## This and That

Occasionally we are exposed to art and drama that actually makes us feel better within ourselves. Sometimes you find that the film you are editing begins to “gel”, and becomes something better than you hoped. Whether a future audience will ever recognize that or understand it does not matter, because you have been working on and producing a form of art.

If you enter it in a competition and you may be enthused and encouraged toward greater things, but the flip side is that a poor result could have a negative effect on your film making.

The greater joy from making a film is the whole process. Starting from the initial idea, through to worrying about tiny aspects of the edit, and spotting months later where cutting out a single frame would improve it. I am certain that when I am working on a film, I actually sleep better.

### Astounding

Watching the recent TV series “The Piano” starring Mika and Lang Lang, which featured talented members of the general public playing pianos in major UK railway stations, had made me feel uplifted. We were watching creativity and art which stirred emotions. The final episode was filmed at the Royal Festival Hall, with astounding tear-jerking performances.

I note that others have experienced that hesitant fear of using the highest resolution on their camera. My anxiety was that perhaps I could not edit 4K so easily, so I filmed in 2.7K initially, as though I were “testing the water” by swimming at the shallow end. Whether your graphics card is up to the task of instantly displaying a good resolution when editing playing from the time line, is the game changer.

I find little difference in rendering times between 1080p and 4K footage, providing I am using the graphics card for the render. A far greater test of a 4K video camera may be its physical temperature when recording, and the possibility of a “shut down” and a digital file which has not been closed. The perfect camera to suit every situation will never be produced, and it would not benefit the manufacturer.

### Mixing formats

The whole subject of including 4:3 aspect footage in with 16:9 aspect does become interesting in the edit. Two of the films I have completed this year, include brief sections of cine film. As far as I remember, Standard 8 and Super 8 were not exactly the same screen aspect, although Wikipedia says they were, and were each only approximately 4:3. Scanning film reels in the last year of Super 8mm taken on Canon models: 318, 512, 518, 814 and 1014 cine cameras, there were small differences in frame size between each model. When including Cine footage in a modern film, I now allocate it to a separate video track, and after dealing with correcting to the play rate of the Standard 8 16fps or Super8 18 fps, adjust the “Track Motion” for the whole of that track to fill both left and right of the 16:9 frame. That then gives the opportunity to “pan up” or “pan down” within the cine frame, apply a zoom or just select a good framing position.

I use the same process for scanned images or even when including any modern 25 mega pixel still images (up

to 7680 pixels wide, as in 8K) and which are perhaps not 16:9.

It avoids the time-wasting process of cropping to 16:9 in a photo program, and gives the option to then move around or pan within the image, thus making its brief appearance in the film more interesting and less stilted.

### Purpose

My recent film “Arrow of Time” presented an opportunity to use multiple special effects with purpose. It is a documentary with questions but without answers, touching on space-time, gravity and the crazy consequences and paradoxes which would arise if time travel in either direction were possible.

I remembered those days at school as a fourteen year old when we challenged the junior physics master with questions about space ships approaching each other at near light speed, and asking why we even needed to calculate escape velocity when you could build a very tall ladder or lift. I think “homework” that week was made tougher for us.

This project meant that I could almost film anything, include time lapse, motion-lapse, small world, and show people walking backwards. I looked out some very poor Standard 8 film of the first Severn estuary bridge under construction, and recalled how the tops of the towers were a couple of inches farther apart than at their bases. It would be an opportunity to joke about disappointed “flat earthers”, and possibly relieve what may be a boring commentary.

I started the edit to music to three music tracks, as a guide to mood, pace and “impact” points. I needed a close up of a hot drink being stirred, and filmed that using my phone running in 4K slow motion when we were shopping in Tesco. At this point a phone call and a piece to camera recording with Jim Al-Khalili CBE FRS, or if not available even Prof. Brian Cox, would have been handy and greatly improved the film.

I would have relished the challenge of recording them, but with my feet back back on earth, I had to type a script and record it sitting in a car.

### Pro’s and Con’s

Did a film about “questions” teach me anything? Had it been fun?

Having cast caution to the wind with use of special effects, I had never previously attempted altering colour balance, or exposure parameters between edit points. It was also only the second time I had used any “ramp edits”.

Apart from the cine film footage, I had shot it entirely in 4K on four devices, including my mobile phone, a gimbal camera and a DSLR. What did the results of those devices tell me, and was any one of them better?

I found that using the phone for timelapse and slow motion made me far less conspicuous when filming in a busy shopping street, but that I could not choose frame interval rates or control shutter speed to add motion blur. Battery usage was considerable for the few sequences I shot, and would not be up to the mark for an extended shoot.

The gimbal camera excelled with handheld slow motion although it is not especially wide angle. The “Motion lapse” function is outstanding, as is stable



## Robert Paget continues....

handheld 4K footage. My lack of skills managed to get some footage out of focus when filming road works and traffic chaos in an unexpected hailstorm.

The 25mp DSLR has to have the view screen open to access the excellent time lapse options, and becomes the viewfinder with the internal mirror "up". This reduces auto focus options. With the first lens I had fitted not marked with a distance – infinity scale, I wasted minutes setting the focus. In video mode the frame is cropped from that available for stills, irrespective of turning on or off the internal stabilization. The internally fitted battery and limit of 30 minutes or so to any continuous video shot could be restrictive.



The main video camera with one inch sensor performed flawlessly in poor light filming ten-minute sequences which I could then speed up or reverse, of various clocks in the house.. I quickly selected whether I wanted the clock pointer or the clock face in focus by just using the "touch screen focus". When working on colour and contrast in the edit, including harshly cropping the frame, it displayed far greater bit depth, especially compared to the phone. My conclusion was no surprise: that each device performed best when using each device for its prime purpose, although their individual adaptabilities were of benefit to the shoot.

When we were trying to squeeze every last ounce of quality out of the projected image of cine films and even more fragile soundtracks, projectionists put equal effort into that as they did when they were operating a camera. Basic errors seen were usually projecting beyond the screen edges causing audience distraction, deciding to correct the focus mid film, and displaying projected white light before and after the film is on screen. It is a surprise

how much is automated when you first operate a video projector, which may even be controlling the focus. A classic error these days is to display desktop icons or the selected default computer media player continuing to display the "task bar" at the bottom of the screen, thus covering up part of the film, and most likely an elapsed play line farther up the screen. Who wants their lovingly produced film badly projected?

### Memory

I never really approve of my USB memory sticks being put in another person's PC because of potential computer virus issues. If you then see that stick just casually unplugged from a PC without the "eject" function being used, expect that USB drive to be damaged. These issues do not occur when using a modern Bluray unit with built in media player function, and which will sense whether the output device – in this case the projector - is 1080p or 4K, altering its output signal accordingly. When I purchased another back up Bluray player for the very rare occasions I project a film, I was surprised to find it even played with a better range of colours.

### Love or hate

Whether you "like" it or hate it, "Eurovision" has moved a long way from the days of Pearl Carr and Teddy Johnson. This year was such a massive event that pellet fuelled Drax power station had to be brought online to meet power demand in Liverpool.

What I always look out for are the location films of the individual countries and this year did not disappoint. Exceptional "video postcards" were shot by "Windfall Films" using 360 degree cameras mounted on drones. Transitions between footage from two countries rapidly swung the image upside down and when it returned, a radio tower in deepest Europe had become Blackpool tower. Camera cue points for each performance were electronically set using Danish company Cue-Pilot who provided an automated cueing system. This allowed each Euro delegation to script the camera movements, focus, zoom and edit points. There was a mix of performances in super cropped widescreen. Watching it with all of my family made it a fun event, even for any mediocre song performances.

Reading a screen message in the closing credits "United in Music", I realized that us mere amateurs are "United in Film".

Robert







# One To Watch

A few from Pip Critten

12 Stages Of The Hero's Journey - Christopher Vogler

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oNNaMuBOxv4&authuser=0>

Selected  
Movies  
from  
the  
World  
Wide Web

Send your  
contributions to  
[pipcritten@googlemail.com](mailto:pipcritten@googlemail.com)



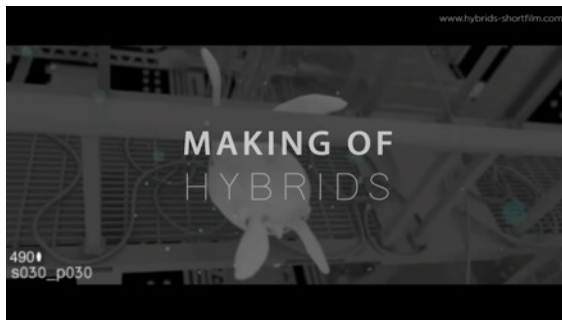
Hybrids Short Film - amazing animation

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=acnWy-tl3ng>



Making of Hybrids

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vK4-OGNhrjI>



How to SOUND DESIGN a Video

<https://youtu.be/Wcxw3BPst3A>



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**Council Members**

Ivan Andrews – Teignmouth

# Changes

*New & Rejoined:*

MRS KATHERINE PEAKE, Gloucester

*Change of address / contact:*

*Resigned:*

MR ANTHONY COLBURN, Torquay

*Cancelled:*

MR IAN BATEMAN, Exmouth

MR P C V HINDE, Alton

*Deceased:*

*Moved into SoCo Region:*

*Change of Name*

BRITISH CAVE RESEARCH ASSOCIATION,  
Formally HIDDEN EARTH

The SoCo News Archive can be found

at either:

[Pip's SoCo News Archive](#)

<http://www.theiac.org.uk/iac/regions/soco/soco.htm>

# SoCo Diary Dates

To have your event featured in SoCo News drop an email to

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For a full list of national and international events

[Cti](#)

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**Copy Deadline** for July - August 2023 Issue

To reach Editor by 15th June 2023