

# North Thames Region



The Film & Video Institute

[www.theiac.org.uk](http://www.theiac.org.uk)

# NEWSLETTER

*March—April 2015*



**March is the NTRIAC Knockout Competition Month**

**First Round Dates, Times & Venues (p.11)**

*plus*

- **Vimeo—what is it & how to use it? (pp 4—5)**
- **“Steaming Harz” - thoughts on amateur film making (pp6—7)**
- **The death of a NTRIAC stalwart (p 3)**
- **Trends in our NTRIAC Annual Competition (p 10)**

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# Chairman's Chat

John Howden joined Colchester Film Makers in 2004 and took over as Chairman in 2005. Now the Club's Competitions Officer, he joined the NTR Council in 2012 & also now serves on the National IAC Council. He is an active film maker, regularly receiving 3 and sometimes 4 Star Awards in BIAFF.



Fellow Film Makers, Hello!

**I am now absolutely convinced that no one reads this column!**

Apart from one comment from a member of the Regional Council, I had no response at all to my request in the last NewsLetter. I was asking you, the members, to tell me what you wanted of your Council. Since there was no reply I have decided that the Council has carte blanche to do as it likes. So please do not complain if you do not like what we do!

Enough of this rant, on to the news and ideas that have arisen since last I wrote.

The North Thames Region has been asked to host the IAC AGM Weekend in 2016 and your Council has accepted the offer. We are currently looking for a venue and are throwing the net as wide as we can. We require a hotel that can take about 100 people, has a conference room with a sufficiently high ceiling for projection purposes and is in easy reach of a couple of venues for outings. **If anyone has any ideas PLEASE let me know asap.** We need to settle the venue very soon.

Some of you may have heard that, sadly, the East Anglian Regional Council of the IAC has retired. This means that the Region is not functioning for the time being. Members in that Region are being encouraged to seek regional contact with North Thames, CEMRIAC or NERIAC.

On this basis your Council is looking at a possible venue for the 2016 AGM in Norwich.

On a film making front, the NT Council had an interesting discussion about how films are submitted for competition. What formats are film makers likely to use? SD, HD, HDV, Mini DV, or even now, 4K? Speaking for myself I try to keep abreast of latest developments in the industry and if I could, I would buy the latest camera! However, having only just bought a decent full HD tapeless camera I am now saying that this will have to see me out.

The film industry is using 4K in much of its filming. What is 4K? Full HD is 1920 x 1080 pixels, 4K roughly equates to 4 times that pixel rate, giving an extraordinary picture quality. The question is: "How will we cope with films in this and any other new format?"

It will happen, and those with the latest GoPro cameras already have the capability of shooting in 4K. Clubs and Region beware! - and I must go and have a look at a new computer! Happy filming.



**Hilda Blackburn, a long-serving member of the West London Film Group, formerly Ealing Video & Film Makers, died on December 11th 2014 in her 93rd year.**

**Fellow Club member Neville Withers, pays tribute:**

Hilda had been married to Norman who was a prolific film maker, and from the films I've seen, they travelled not only to the usual holiday destinations, but to other towns and cities across Europe and beyond.

After Norman died, Hilda's love of film continued – she would often go to shows and competitions across the London area with our current Chairman Jean Dockley, and of course always to BIAFF wherever it was being held. Even if Jean wasn't available to give her a lift, Hilda was quite happy to travel to a venue on her own, knowing that she would be well looked after when she arrived.

I believe on at least one occasion she travelled to Malta for the Golden Knights Awards.

Her energy and enthusiasm belied her age, and she joined seven other Club members on a trip to Paris where she enjoyed sightseeing, and the cuisine of the French capital.

In April 2004, Hilda became our Club Treasurer and, as I discovered at the funeral, this wasn't the first time she'd looked after a club's finances – which explains why, whether it was tea money or Building Society accounts, her figures were always accurate down to the last penny.

Eight members of our Club attended the funeral, along with Brenda Granshaw representing the NTRIAC, and about twenty other friends and relatives paying their respects. I know there are many other members of the IAC across all the Regions who knew Hilda and will mourn her loss.



Hilda & Norman on an IAC Weekend around the Year 2000.

*(Photo: Christine Collins)*

As discussions continue about how to stop the alarming decline in amateur video club membership, we focus on one way individuals and clubs can get their videos seen by like-minded enthusiasts, potential new club members.

Alan Colegrave, from Harrow FM, enlightens us about “Vimeo”.



### What is Vimeo?

I guess its nearest relative is YouTube. Both sites host video clips and video productions. There the similarity finishes.

Vimeo is for Video Making Enthusiasts while You-

Tube is for anyone.

Vimeo was founded in November 2004 by Jake Lodwick and Zach Klein. The name Vimeo was created by a play on the words *video* and *me*. It is also an anagram of the word *movie*.

Although very much a little brother of YouTube, Vimeo can still boast of over 20 million users.

**There are three membership packages: “Basic” (free), “Plus” and “Pro”.**

For the majority of non-commercial filmmakers, the “Basic” would be adequate, though there are several limitations. One of the main limitations of the Basic package is the maximum file size which is 500MB. Using a reasonable amount of compression, that is an HD file of 10 minutes. The user with a longer HD film could take the option to use more compression or go to SD, but in both cases the quality would suffer.

Many more serious filmmakers opt for the “Plus” package at a cost of around £45 per year. I personally use the “Plus” package and manage two other Vimeo “Plus” sites on behalf of professional clients. For anybody interested, my site is:

[www.vimeo.com/acprods](http://www.vimeo.com/acprods).

The Pro package is really outside the scope of this article but includes features such as “Pay per View”. The cost of the “Pro” package is around £160 per year.

So that is a description, what is it?

### How do you get your videos on it?

I am not going to say too much here as all the instructions for almost every bit of editing software are on Vimeo Video School - more about the Vimeo School later.

In general terms, as opposed to burning a BluRay or DVD, you export your video production as a H264 /MPEG4 file. It is about the only file type in universal use, so you are sure to find a setting. Enough said.

Go to <https://vimeo.com/help/compression> and if you use, say Pinnacle Studio 14 or 15, Wyatt Brown will take you through the process, while if Edius 6 is your choice, then Christos Montes will guide you.

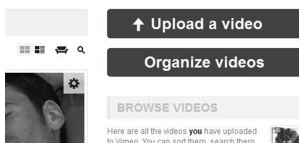
Once you have the file, store it somewhere on your computer so you can find.

**You will now need an account with Vimeo.** Just go to:

[https://vimeo.com/sign\\_up](https://vimeo.com/sign_up), and fill out the form and a few

minutes later, you will be an account holder.

Go to your account address, click it and go to the box towards the top right where it says “Upload a Video”. The upload speed tends to vary—most likely depending on the traffic at Vimeo. I guess a 500MB file takes about 30 minutes.



Once it is with Vimeo you could go and have a cuppa as Vimeo will need to process it. The time this takes varies—it can be anything from a few minutes to over an hour. Hopefully in about 20 minutes, your video will be on-line and your audience is World-wide.

**As a default, Vimeo will copy the uploaded filename as the production's title.**

Just click on “Settings” and this can easily be changed.

There is also a box where you can describe the production and another section where you can add credits.

Vimeo will choose a frame as the thumbnail. If this is not suitable, just click thumbnails to make your own choice.

Another section allows you to enter “Tags”. These will help your film to be found if somebody searches for it by subject matter.

**There are a large number of specialist groups you are free to join.** I am a member of the following groups: “Short Comedies”, “Video Britain” and “Short Narrative Films”

amongst others. Just go “Groups Directory” in the search section.

The advantage is that your film is more likely to be viewed by people with similar interests. If the viewer likes the production, they may give you a “Like”. Also you will find other films worth viewing of a similar genre.

**There may be a time when you do not want to make a video public.** Say you are working on a production and the editor has finished making a superb presentation but before he starts burning-off BluRays for everyone, he wants feedback from the director and producer. Also due to the nature of the production he does not want anybody else to see it before it is officially launched. Then the editor can make it “password protected”. Upload normally and go to “Settings” and then to “Privacy”.

**Before I finish, I will just deal with existing DVDs – i.e. if your finished production is only on a DVD. Vimeo is entirely file based so you will need to extract the video file from the DVD.**

Sounds a little complicated but in fact it is very simple. Just use a “Ripping” program, of which there are many free ones available on the internet, and after a few minutes your video file appears. As before, store it somewhere you can find it.

**Vimeo is a site for film enthusiasts.** Apart from the hosting there is a video school on: <https://vimeo.com/videoschool>.

If you want to know “How to Make a Cool Time Lapse on FCP with the EX1” or discover: “After Effects Tutorial—Flare Text” - they are all there!

I guess the last thing to say is: try to avoid becoming a Vimeo addict! There are so many fantastic video productions to view that you may wonder where the day has gone. Start with “Staff Picks” - but you may get hooked!



# **Your editor's 10-minute travelogue, "Steaming Harz" was adjudged Best Film in the NTRIAC 2014 Annual Movie Festival.**

**Below, he muses on the making of the film, and on amateur movie-making in general:**

**I suppose you'd call "Steaming Harz" a "travelogue".**

There are thin dividing lines between "travelogue", "holiday Film" and "documentary", but I've always assumed that a "holiday film" should feature primarily the participants in the holiday, and show the audience what they were doing on their vacation. Such films in the amateur world are few and far between, thankfully perhaps, because they are often too long and boring to a non-family member. And if you go on holiday on your own, it's difficult if not impossible to make such a "holiday film" anyway.

A "travelogue" focuses more on the area visited, rather than the holidaymakers visiting, and gives the audience some background information usually gleaned from tour guides or guidebooks.

A "documentary" would involve a much more in-depth treatment of the subject, with more thorough research and filming, again not an easy task to accomplish on a holiday.

Yet in amateur competitions, a "travelogue" is happily accepted under the "holiday film" banner, presumably because it was filmed on holiday. I doubt, though, that a "holiday film" as described above, would be accepted as a "travelogue".

So I think "Steaming Harz" is a "travelogue", because as well as just showing pictures, it sets out through the voiceover to impart to the audience some information about the Harz area of Northern Germany, the history of the Brocken Mountain, the story of the railway, and its current situation.



**The Brocken re-opens after the end of the Cold War**

**It was filmed on an eight-day railway holiday to the region in October 2013,** on a package holiday organised by a small, specialist company – "Inside Track", from Winslow in Buckinghamshire - who had been running this holiday for several years.



**Two steam trains depart simultaneously on parallel tracks**

To get as many terrific shots of steam railways in action as possible, it's a huge advantage to go with a specialist company.

For example, three stations on the network only have one steam train a day – "Inside Track" knew the timings, and got us there to see it. There is only one moment & place in the day when two steam trains depart side by side on parallel tracks; "Inside Track" knew that, and got us in good time to the best photographic viewpoint. Coach trips were organised to "chase" a steam train, so we took up a viewpoint, photographed the train passing, clambered back in to the coach, overtook the train and reached the

next viewpoint in good time to photograph it again. I don't think I've ever been able to take so many lineside shots of steam trains in such a relatively short time.



**Panasonic SD900 Camcorder**

convenient, compared with the “old days” of taking four or five MiniDV tapes. It’s all certainly good enough for me!



**A Brocken-bound train crosses a town street in Wernigerode**

neither grab nor sustain the audience’s interest.

I’m not always successful, but **I always try to add pace and impose a structure on my films.** Unless there’s a special case, I try to keep individual clips to a four or five second maximum. “Steaming Harz” was cut back from a wealth of material to 10 minutes, quite long enough for a “special interest” type of film. I doubt I would ever make a non-story film longer than fifteen minutes.

I also imposed a structure that progresses coherently from sequence to sequence, engages the audience’s brain cells, and comes to an acceptable finish: a montage of steam clips to set the scene and create an atmosphere > a map to

locate the area and explain the railway’s origins > info about the area today > the railway’s situation today (rolling stock, staff, workshops, operations, financial situation) > the principal steam services up to the Brocken Mountain Summit (including the Brocken’s history) with an on-board/lineside intercut sequence > a final “summing-up” montage of steam railway clips.



**A train at the Brocken summit seen for a long time”.**

Considerable self-discipline is needed in editing, particularly in rejecting good clips (that you may have worked hard to take in the first place), because you realise they’re surplus to requirements.

Anyway – I was doing something right: **one of the judges called “Steaming Harz” “the best railway film I’ve**

**John Astin AACI 7**

## NTR 100 CLUB

Contact: John Farrer

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Owing to the success of the 100 Club, January was a bumper month—9 prize winners!

Can you afford not to take part???

Each of the following wins £12:

January 2015

19 Angela Stroud

*PBFM*

83 Aivar Kaulins

*HFM*

35 Eric Jukes

*EVM*

62 Ted Bateman

*SAMM*

85 Arthur Gatcum

*WWMM*

79 Norman Lewis

*HFM*

45 Tony Loader

*PBFM*

6 John Farrer

*PBFM*

104 Judy Long

*HFM*

**THERE WERE INSUFFICIENT CONTRIBUTIONS TO FILL THIS NEWSLETTER.**

**WITHOUT YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS, THE NEWSLETTER WILL CEASE TO EXIST.**

**ANY CONTRIBUTION ABOUT OUR HOBBY WILL BE WELCOMED — BE IT FACTUAL OR CONTROVERSIAL, ABOUT YOU OR YOUR CLUB OR A CURRENT PROJECT, ABOUT THE STATE OF OUR HOBBY—ANYTHING !!!**



*To our new members:*

**No new members**

***To join the IAC , contact:***

**IAC, The Film and Video Institute,**

**McCracken Park,**

**Great North Road,**

**Gosforth,**

**NEWCASTLE ON TYNE NE3 2DT**

**Tel.: 0191 303 8960**

**E-Mail: [admin@theiac.org.uk](mailto:admin@theiac.org.uk)**





## SPOTLIGHT ON THE FUTURE

**THURSDAY>SUNDAY APRIL 16th—19th 2015**

**BIAFF 2015 hosted by SERIAC at the Best**

**Western Hotel, Sittingbourne, Kent**

***Details in "Film & Video Maker"***

**THURSDAY APRIL 23rd**

**Harrow Film Makers Spring Public Show,**

**Pinner Village Hall, Chapel Lane Car Park, Pinner**

**HA5 1AA.**

**Doors open 7.30 for 8 pm.**

**Tickets £6 on the door, inc. refreshments**

### **THE NTR AGM & Annual Movie Festival**

**The Region's principal annual event will be held in 2015**

**in Northaw Village Hall—yes, a change of venue! - on**

**Saturday November 21st—yes, a change of day!**

**Further details & Competition Entry Forms to follow**

**From south of the Thames, Mike Coad tells us that the**

**North v South Competition Set Theme for 2015 is :**

**"Broken"**

**Further details will follow in due course.**

***Please note:* Harrow FM's contact is now Geoff Foord.**

**Tel.: 020 8868 4021**

# Ken Mills FACL, our retiring Festival Competition Organiser, reflects on the 2014 Entry



## Ken reading out the winners' names at the NTR 2014 Festival

I received 25 videos this year, but unfortunately at the last minute, one member asked for his entry to be withdrawn as he had discovered a problem with it.

I had hoped, as this was to be my last year, that it would be a bumper year but we were five entries down on 2013 although the running time was slightly longer at 3hrs 45mins.

This was well down from 2012 when we had 31 entries lasting over 5 hours.

We weren't helped by the non-appearance of the printed NTR Newsletter in the vital mid-year issue which had the entry form included.

Only two entries were on Mini-DV this year—both in 16:9, and one letterboxed.

There were six entries on Blu-ray, one letterboxed and the rest on Standard Definition with five of these in 4:3 format.

One BluRay gave us trouble in projecting but fortunately we found a player which could cope.

Interestingly, Blu-Rays dropped from nine last year to six this year. With upscaling available in players & projectors now, standard DVDs appear to produce almost the same quality pictures as Blu-Rays, so I have to wonder if High Definition really is worth the extra cost.

Not surprisingly, the bulk of the entries were documentaries, but it was good to see that there were five stories, five music videos and one video to a poem.

Last year we had the One Minute Competition but received so few entries that it became uneconomic to run and was therefore dropped this year. I think this was a pity as there have been some excellent examples in the past, and we do need a good one to enter in the Mini- Mermaid Competition at the IAC's AGM.

I am as usual very grateful for all the help I received from Jim Gatt who masterminds not only the presentation on the Festival Day but works very hard copying all the Standard Definition entries onto DVDs to ensure on the day as smooth a presentation as possible. He also has to cope with my requirements for producing a programme which is as varied in subject as possible and which has to fit to a precise timetable.

In previous years, he has also prepared two DVDs with the whole day's programme on them as the Council wanted to have them in the library available for clubs to be able to borrow for discussion. Since no one has borrowed them in the past, to save the cost, the Council decided not to have them prepared this year.

**There is one thing that would greatly help in the presentation of videos and that is to standardise DVD production with 5secs. of black before and after the movie starts and finishes. This year it went from one frame (!) to 20secs of black at the start, and 5 frames to 20secs at the finish, with one DVD even having music for 12secs.after the video finished !! How is the projectionist supposed to know when to stop the film?**

I have enjoyed running the Competition for the last ten years, but feel that perhaps there needs to be a younger person at the helm who will be able to stimulate more entries.

**March is our KnockOut Competition Month.**  
**Here is the Draw, plus the dates & venues of the four First Rounds.**

**Round A**

**Walthamstow A.C.C.v Hemel Hempstead Movie Makers v Enfield Video Makers**

Hosted by Walthamstow at 2 pm on Sunday 22nd March at Stafford Hall, St. Barnabas Road, Walthamstow, E17.

**Round B**

**Potters Bar FilmMakers v Colchester Film Makers Club v Bourne End Video Makers**

Hosted by Potters Bar FM at 7.45 pm on Thursday 19th March in the 60+ Centre, Wyllyotts Community Centre, Wyllyotts Place, Darkes Lane, Potters Bar, EN6 2HN..

**Round C**

**Harrow Film Makers v Staines Video Makers v Finchley Film Makers.**

Hosted by Harrow FM at 7.45 pm on Monday 2nd March in the Canons Room, Harrow Arts Centre, Hatch End. HA5 4EA.

**Round D**

**Wanstead & Woodford Movie Makers v St Albans Movie Makers**

Hosted by Wanstead & Woodford MM at 8 pm on Friday 20 March at St. Pauls Church Hall, Chigwell Rd., Woodford Bridge. IG8 8BT

**The Winner of each Round goes straight through to the Final, hosted by Hemel Hempstead Movie Makers at 2.30 pm on Saturday May 16th at Leverstock Green Village Hall, Leverstock Green Way, Hemel Hempstead, HP3 8QG**

Apologies from our printers for printing the Colour Photographs on pp 6—7 of the last Newsletter in Black & White.



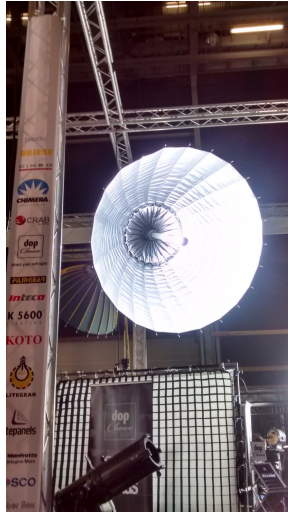
Apologies from the Editor for omitting Eric Jukes (*left*) from the photo line-up on the front cover of the last Newsletter.

**Eric is, of course, our new Publicity Officer.**

**Spotted at BSCEXpo (the professional British Society of Cinematographers' Exhibition) at Pinewood Studios in early February.**

**Do you need . . .**

**. . . a tiny floodlight or two??!!**



**. . . something to hang your camcorder on??!!**



**. . . a small rig for filming the driver of a moving vehicle??!!**



**Deadline for the next issue is Sunday April 5th**  
**Please send all contributions by e-mail to:**  
**[john.astin1@ntlworld.com](mailto:john.astin1@ntlworld.com)**