

# North Thames Region



# NEWSLETTER

May—June 2014

The NTR  
Hosts



BIAFF 2014  
@ BEDFORD



41 Entries from the North Thames Region:

- 2 5 Stars
- 11 4 Stars
- 15 3 Stars
- 11 2 Stars
- 2 1 Star

*Two more entries than in 2013!*

**Congratulations to all our entrants, and especially for their 5-Star Awards to Chris Taylor from South Essex FM, and the team from West London Film**

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# Chairman's Chat

*Brenda has been a member of Wanstead & Woodford Movie Makers for over 20 years, was its Chairman from 2007 > 2010, and has been Chairman of the North Thames IAC Region since November 2007. She was made an FACI in October 2012.*



**Brenda Granshaw FACI**

March saw the first rounds of the 4 x 4 Competition.

Each programme of films was different, some taking the view that a programme of shorter films would be more successful in keeping the judge amused and others that a good longer film would carry the day.

The results from each round proved that all these ideas worked and the programmes of films going through to the semi finals, which are to be held at the end of April, are all very different.

I have to say that I enjoyed all the programmes and am glad I did not have to judge.

All four judges did a great job gathering their thoughts on each film and being able to give worthwhile comments at the end of each programme when they were very restricted in the time they were allowed.

Our thanks go to them all – Ben Simon, Clive Gifford, Paul Welton and Alan Colegrave.

As this is the first year of the 4 x 4 competition it would be useful to have views from competitors and also audience members as to how they thought it went and what changes they feel should be made. Do please write and tell me (*see page 8 for an interim report*)..

In the meantime the North Thames Council continued its preparations for hosting BIAFF at Bedford. By the time you read this it will all be over.

It has not been an easy ride as the hotel managed to overbook itself by 100 rooms and many of the IAC members ended up in a different hotel at the last minute!

At least complaining about the hotel stopped the audience complaining about which films had been judged the best! It will be a strange day when the audience agrees with the judges!!

I am pleased to say that with BIAFF behind us I can get my camera out and go back to making films, which I seem to recall was my hobby!!

**Brenda**



# Club Matters



**Mid-Suffolk Video Camera Club** took part in the first round of the 4x4 Competition at Colchester.

**Ann Evans** tells us a little about the Club:

Mid Suffolk Video Camera Club has been in existence for eighteen years. Our aim is for our members to enjoy making films and showing them in a friendly atmosphere.

We are a small club and have nine meetings a year.

Our meetings have varying themes and technical help.

Once a year we make a Club Film. This film involves all members. Our Treasurer and Chairman have years of experience in video making.

We have entered competitions in the past with varying degrees of success.

We welcome anyone interested in joining our friendly, progressive club.

We meet the first Tuesday of the month at 7.30 pm at Hillside, Stowmarket, IP14 2BD.

There are no meetings in January, July and August.

Please look at our web site—[www. midsuffolkvideocc. onesuffolk.net](http://www.midsuffolkvideocc.onesuffolk.net)—for further information.

**Ealing Film & Video Makers** have recently changed their name to **The West London Film Group**.

They can still be contacted through Karen Cherrington on 020 8429 8497.

## 9.5mm Films for Sale

Harrow Cine & Video Society has been donated a quantity of silent 9.5mm films of commercial productions, such as Laurel & Hardy and Charlie Chaplin comedies, Popeye and Betty Boop cartoons, etc. etc.

If you collect films in this gauge and would like to see titles available, send a request to myself at [aivarkaulins@onetel.com](mailto:aivarkaulins@onetel.com).

If you do not have a computer, please send a self-addressed stamped envelope to 19 The Ridgeway, Stanmore, Middlesex, HA7 4BE.

**Aivar Kaulins**

**As Editor, I am delighted that the last Newsletter produced three responses from our readers.**

**First, IAC Member John Randall takes to task the views on Audio-Visual expressed by MoanerGeezer/Gal:**

I write in response to the Moaner Geezer/Gal article in the March-April 2014 Newsletter.

The writer has missed the point in that we are in the age of merging technologies where moving and still photography can exist side by side.

Modern cameras (such as the Lumix GH3), can produce high quality still and HD video files all in one box.

To say that he or she was glad that they did not go down the still photography road is quite frankly a very blinkered approach.

I have enjoyed all aspects of photography for over 40 years and have produced "films" using the most appropriate material to suit the subject.

For my railway work the obvious choice is video, whilst pictorial work is more suited to stills.

I am therefore in agreement that the IAC should encompass both subjects.

In analogue days it was one or the other - cine/video or slide/tape. With the wonders that the digital age have given us, it is easy to mix both.

For instance, I have just completed a film covering Swiss Railways and all the pictorial shots are stills. What would be the point of using video files when nothing is moving?

Also, you do not need a tripod for the stills as the correct use of shutter speed can ensure the picture is sharp and of course not showing any signs of movement.

Tripods are obviously essential for video when practical (or allowed), but do I want to lug one up the Jungfrau? - No thank you.

So stop moaning, Geezer/Gal, and accept that there is a place for both forms of our hobby in the IAC and maybe then you will come to terms with the modern world.

**Secondly, Enfield FM Member Nigel Lee talks finances:**

### **A Dilemma**

There were three statements in last month's Newsletter that caught my attention. In Brenda's "Chairman's Chat", she wished there were more clubs participating in the new 4x4 Competition but acknowledged the fact that there were less members in clubs actually making films.

Under "Club Matters", Aivar referred to the important role of club officers and in particular the Publicity Officer to promote the club's existence to the general public. He also acknowledged the fact that with falling membership, sometimes duties have to be doubled up, and he also mentioned that already three clubs in the region had ceased to exist.

Then Tom implied that club projectors are now substandard and advocated the spending of money to upgrade equipment.

And there, ladies and gentlemen, we have the dilemma and the conflict of interests. On one side an ageing and reducing membership and therefore less club income available, balanced against the requirement to keep abreast of new technical developments.

In the circumstances, I suspect that most club finances are just “ticking over “ and therefore the first word any club treasurer has to learn when approached on this subject is “NO”!

## **And third, Milton Keynes CC's Philip Bridge FACI(M) takes up the topical issue of HC v SD at BIAFF:**

Following on from Tom Hardwick's note last time, I must say, first of all, if any attention had been given to his earlier writings on the subject, the comments to which he refers wouldn't have been made in the first place.

A little while ago I had to go to BIAFF in Harrogate to pick up a prize.

This enabled me to see my film, which had been submitted on HDV tape with a back-up on DV tape, projected onto a large screen.

The opening shot is music manuscript; pure white background with some black lines and a few black dots.

I couldn't decide whether I was watching HDV or DV.

Later shots convinced me that it was indeed the HDV version.

My reasoning, in retrospect, was that the excessive white background was causing flare in the projection lens.

Whatever the reason, it was clear that the picture was nowhere near what I was used to on my TV set at home and anyone who had read the judges' comments as they waxed lyrical about the picture quality, would have been mystified.

They presumably were assessing it on a properly adjusted TV set too!

The indignity was further enhanced when, about a third of the way in, someone or something suddenly reduced the volume by 10dB or more!

Mind you, this was nothing compared to the makers of one film who had to endure the distraction of the blackout curtains falling down!

All this during what should be the most prestigious event of the year!

Is it any wonder people are drifting away from the IAC?!

**Many thanks to our three contributors.**

**As Editor, I'd love to have a double Letters Page like this in every Newsletter.**

**There must be points raised even on these pages with which you would like to take issue.**

**If so, please e-mail in—[john.astin1@ntlworld.com](mailto:john.astin1@ntlworld.com).**

**Those of us who attended the NTRIAC Movie Festival in Pinner last November were entranced by “Walk on the Wild Side”, the delightful wildlife film which quite rightly took first prize. Here its maker, Staines VM’s Joe Phillips, tells us about his passion for wild life, and why & how he films it.**

Extinction goes hand in hand with evolution. Between 95-99 % of species ever to exist on our planet have become extinct. Species would normally exist for four millions years; it may be more, it may be less, but it is all part of the normal process of extinction and evolution.

There have been five mass extinctions during the history of our planet, whether they be from an asteroid strike or from other natural disasters.

We are currently experiencing a sixth period of mass extinctions on our beleaguered planet. With the human population now at seven billion, we are bursting at the seams.

With the competition for more and more land, there is only one winner—natural wild areas and their animals will be lost. The list of species and lost habitats is too long to go into here but, to give you one example, the African Lion is now extinct in 75% of its former range. Yet despite this dire situation, it is still possible to purchase a licence to shoot one legally, and there is no shortage of takers.

### **Why do I film wildlife and the natural world?**

Ever since cameras became widely available, people, perhaps without realising it, have been documenting the world around them. Those early cameramen and women have left us with a wonderful record of our woodlands and natural history. Every time you go out to film, that is what you are doing—leaving a record for future generations.

### **A few points on filming wildlife.**

Of all the filming disciplines, filming wildlife is the most time consuming and difficult. For a start, you can't boss them around, and tell them to “go and stand over there!”. You are the one who has to make all the compromises. Always wear earth coloured clothing, dark brown and green. Don't wear noisy clothing—by that I mean nylon or canvas clothing that swishes when you move. If you do, you are likely to cause a quick exit of your subject.

Consider using a small lightweight hide, the sort that folds into a small bag. Be prepared to contort your body into uncomfortable positions and then to hold your position. A hot bath later will help ease the aches and pains!



**An Otter**



**Filming in Kenya**



**Lowland Gorillas**

Before you set off filming, learn something about your subject. Habituate your subject: that means get them used to your presence. Fortunately, many of our waterfowl species are used to people strolling around so, as long as you don't try to get too close, they will tolerate your presence.

### **My Equipment**

The main two main cameras I use for my work are the Canon XF300 and its baby brother, the Canon XF100.

There are several reasons I chose these models; one is the codec - both cameras shoot 50 mbs and 422 colour space and boast a plethora of adjustable parameters to tweak and get the look I want.

The XF300 has a superb Canon L series lens on the front, specially developed for the camera. This is why the BBC put it on their broadcast list.

The Canon XF100 I use on the Slider Plus, and is how I obtain my glide and moving in shots; for me, they give a much more seductive image.

Anyone like me who has used conventional slides, one metre long and very heavy, will know what a burden they are.

For your interest, the Glider Plus is a device developed by a company named EDELKRONE. The model I bought is only one foot long but, because of the physics in the design, the whole device moves smoothly, and doubles the range of movement giving you two feet of movement. It is small and not too heavy and fits into a small backpack.

All the glide shots in "Walk On The Wild Side" were shot on the Canon XF100 sitting on the EDELKRONE Slider Plus, on a tripod.

### **An Offer**

The version of my film I brought to your film festival is a slightly shorter version. The full version is two minutes longer and, shows just how effective the Slider Plus can be. If you would like to see this, just send me an address and I will mail you a BLU RAY or DVD copy..



**Canon XF100**



**Edelkrone Slider Plus**



**Canon XF300**

**A worthy winner!**

## NTR 100 CLUB

Contact: John Farrer

Tel.: 01462 434948 E-Mail: [jffarrer@madasafish.com](mailto:jffarrer@madasafish.com)

The Draws for March & April were made  
at the NTR Council Meeting on March 25th.

Each of the following wins £12:

### March

62 Ted Bateman  
*St. Albans MM*  
6 John Farrer  
*Potters Bar FM*  
26 Margaret Farrer  
*Potters Bar FM*  
15 Colin Gass  
?

### April

62 Ted Bateman  
*St. Albans MM*  
49 Anne Mills  
*Harrow CVS*  
53 Kim Harrold  
*Potters Bar FM*  
11 Potters Bar FM  
  
102 Staines VM

## 4x4 Competition: How's It Going?

- The four 1st Round Ties seem to have been completed successfully in the available time, but disciplined time-keeping is essential.
- Colchester hosted their tie on a Saturday, supplied lunch, and made it into a really social event. Brilliant. The way forward?
- One Club would have preferred to have had three judges for a more balanced, diverse set of comments.
- Is there any need to repeat critical comments at the end?
- Ron Jones is finding it increasingly difficult to find judges, so welcomes only having one per tie.

By the time the paper copy of this Newsletter appears, we will know who the finalists are.

The Final is being hosted by Staines VM (see "Spotlight on the Future") on Sunday May 18th.

As Brenda asks on p. 2, please let us know *your* thoughts on the 4x4.



**Welcome!**

To our new member:  
John Garratt, Herts.

To join the IAC, contact:

IAC, The Film and Video Institute,  
Dorset House,  
Regent Park,  
Kingston Road,

LEATHERHEAD, Surrey, KT22 7PL.

Tel.: 01372 824350

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



## SPOTLIGHT ON THE FUTURE

**SUNDAY MAY 18th**

**The 4x4 Competition Final**

**Hosted by Staines VM**

**at Laleham Village Hall, The Broadway,  
Laleham, Middlesex, TW18 1SB., at 2.30 pm.**

**THURSDAY OCTOBER 16th—SUNDAY OCTOBER 19th**

**IAC AGM Long Weekend, hosted by CEMRIAC in Stratford –  
on-Avon. (*Details to follow in "Film & Video Maker"*)**

**Please send me the dates of your Autumn Public Shows, and/or  
anything else for which you'd like an audience.**

### **NORTH v SOUTH COMPETITION 2014**

#### **A plea from Orpington VFM's Mike Coad:**

This year, the North v South Competition celebrates its 40<sup>th</sup> year. Following the success of the new format introduced last year, we will be continuing in the same way for the 2014 Competition.

The Grand Final will take place on Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> December at Farnborough Village Hall near Orpington, Kent.

It is being held a week later this year in the hope of encouraging more clubs in the North Thames Region to participate with both films and attendance at the Festival.

In past years, your own Regional Festival has fallen on the same day and prevented each of us from attending both events.

Last year, as in previous years, we showed every entry that was entered into the Competition and plan to do the same again this year. Should that not be possible due to time restraints, we guarantee to show all of the Southern entries and all of the winning Northern entries. We feel this is only fair if you have travelled a fair distance to join us on the day.

The entry fee remains at £10.00 per film and there is no limit to the number of films you can enter.

**The theme for this year is 'IF'** and an Entry Form and Full Rules will be found on our website : [www.n-v-s.co.uk](http://www.n-v-s.co.uk) . (*We hope to publish one in the next Newsletter*)

In addition, I will be contacting eligible clubs individually with full details.

I look forward to receiving your entry(s) and to seeing you at the event in December. Thank you in anticipation of your support..

**Staines VM's Silver Salver Inter-Club Competition has become a valuable part of the competition scene in our North Thames Region, this year attracting entries from seven clubs in the NTRIAC and SERIAC Regions. The host club's Tim Stannard reports on the evening, and an innovation!:**



Ealing VFM's dark drama "Jubilee" was victorious at Laleham Village Hall on March 7<sup>th</sup> at the 41<sup>st</sup> Staines Video Makers Inter-Club Competition.

Guests from Orpington, Epsom and Bourne End watched the 80 minute programme submitted by seven clubs from NTRIAC and SERIAC regions. The films were judged on the night by Geoff Harmer of Fraught Productions, who have won many international awards for their work including a Five Star Award at BIAFF 2014, and Laurie Joyce, a partner in a corporate video production company and member and former chairman of Reading VFM. Visitors from Bourne End VM saw their club comedy "On the Rails" scoop second prize, whilst Harrow CVS's "Antarctic Journey" took third.

Other films were Surrey Border MM's club comedy "Frequency Hertz", Potters Bar FM's comedy/drama "The Gamble", Orpington VFM's satire "Power Corrupts" and Epsom MM's documentary "The Key".

Interestingly, of the seven entries, five were comedies/dramas made as collaborative projects whilst the two documentaries were solo efforts. Perhaps bringing together people with the wide variety of disciplines required for making a fiction is where the future of amateur film making clubs lies.

As a footnote, SVM Deputy Chairman Geoff Rippingale tested out the video capabilities of his new Sony RX11 Mk II by filming the judges' comments. The video quality was excellent and the audio "good enough" that he posted the results on YouTube enabling members of clubs who could not visit to both see and hear how their films went down.

This has proved surprisingly popular and is something we shall investigate doing "properly" in the future.



**Judges Laurie Joyce (left) & Geoff Harmer deep in thought**

# In the last Newsletter, Enfield VM's Eric Jukes filled us in on the pros and cons of film making with a DSLR. This time, he turns his spotlight on filming with a smartphone:



The quality of video filmed on a mobile phone has improved drastically and many phones can film in HD quality. The critically acclaimed Iranian documentary, "This is not a Film", directed by Jafar Panahi, was made whilst the director was under house-arrest in Teheran, using an iPhone 5S and a digital video camera.

So I decided to present an evening at my club exploring the possibilities of using a mobile phone for serious film-making. I must say straight away that I am definitely not an expert on filming with a phone, and, in fact, I'm not even competent at it!

What I did, though, was to take the subject and look into it in a serious way. I own an iPhone 5s, but had only owned it for just under a month before I put on the evening. Before that I had an Android phone, had taken a small amount of video but done nothing at all with that.

This year saw the 30th birthday of, not me I'm afraid, but the Macintosh computer (24th January to be exact). To celebrate this, Apple made a celebration commercial, all filmed on the iPhone 5s. I used this commercial to introduce the evening and show what the professionals can do when they film on a phone.

## **So, what is needed to film on a phone?**

A smartphone - an iPhone, Android, or Windows phone and editing software, or an "App" if none on the phone (for example, iMovie on the Mac).

iMovie is just like any other editing software, except I found it fiddly to use on a phone on account of the limited working space, but I am sure one would get used to it quickly enough. (It is possible to "transmit" to one's television, using another gizmo, and this could make things easier as the working area is then considerably magnified.)

## **So, how do you become an expert at filming with a phone?**

By controlling your focus so as to use differential focus, and controlling your exposure. You do this (in the case of the iPhone) by downloading another App. The one I used was Filmic Pro which cost £2.99 (can hardly grumble at that!). With this it is possible to fix the focus on a particular point and also fix the exposure. This means, in the case of exposure, that, for example, you can lock the exposure on an area in a room, and then, on moving the camera to bring a window into the picture, the window will simply burn out (but look more natural) rather than seeing an awful autofocus darkening the image.

## **There are now a number of gadgets available to assist in filming with a phone.**

The two most important are a tripod mount which grips the phone and allows it to be put on a tripod, and another gadget to enable a "pro" directional microphone such as the Sennheiser MKH-416 to be connected to the phone via an XLR connector to an appropriate jack. Although I had heard that the sound quality of the iPhone wasn't good through its own mic, I must say I was pleasantly surprised, but, of course, using the pro microphone does allow for directional recording.

## **Of course, there are disadvantages of a technical nature.**

I believe (and, as I've said, I'm not claiming to be the expert) that the frame speed varies with exposure, and so yet another App might be necessary to correct the frame speed. Because of the amount of file compression I understand that there is less latitude for making corrections to exposure and colour, but I haven't tried it so I don't know.

I had intended that the evening would include making a sequence, editing it, and uploading it to YouTube. We didn't quite get there, but this was because there was so much enthusiasm and the audience took enormous interest in this particular evening which did make all the preparations and research worthwhile.

# BIAFF 2014 @ Bedford April 11th—13th

With last-minute accommodation problems having been overcome, the BIAFF 2014 Weekend at Bedford passed off smoothly, and there was a tangible ambiance of contented enjoyment.

Projection teams from Colchester FM Club, Hemel Hempstead MM, Potters Bar FM & South Essex FM provided the equipment and ran the shows in the four Saturday mini-cinemas. Ninety-six 3, 4 and 5 Star Award Winners were shown throughout the day.

Only one DVD proved recalcitrant – a high success rate!!

For the Sunday Award Winners Show (twenty-nine 4, 5 & Diamond Award Winners), it was Harrow C&V S doing all the work, with the redoubtable Jim Gatt in charge. There were no major hassles here either, and the pictures sparkled on the huge 12 foot screen supplied by the CEMRIAC Region.

Competition Organiser David Newman seemed to have gone for a lighter Sunday programme this year, including more than the usual number of 4-Star Awards, and no really long films. Although not necessarily to everyone's taste, it probably created a more entertaining programme overall.

Our NTR Committee had introduced one or two innovations. Extra lighting had been provided for the Awards Table surrounded by balloons, providing an attractive back drop for the presentations.

NTR Council & Colchester FM Club member John Howden, a former BBC broadcaster, acted as MC, giving a smooth and polished performance that enhanced the introductions & presentations.

It was encouraging to see our Region well represented in the Sunday Show, with five films from London & the North Thames appearing on the screen.

It was good, too, to see so many young peoples' films – indeed, the prestigious "Best of British" Award went to "A Fistful of Conkers", a delightful short film with a bullying theme made by teacher Liam Sanderson from the Film & Animation Department of Wales High School in Sheffield.

Videography is alive and well!

The Daily Mail Silver Trophy for the best film in the whole competition went to "Crossover", an allegorical animation film from Germany.

Just about half the total number of films entered had been shown over the two days, and filmmakers who didn't attend missed the chance to enjoy and perhaps be inspired by the excellent offerings on show.

Next year, BIAFF 2015 will be hosted by SERIAC in Canterbury.



**Awards & Balloons, nice & bright!**



**John Howden on mike**



**Penny Love on lights**



**(r>l) Jim Gatt & Judy Long with Christine Collins, on almost everything else!**

**Deadline for the next issue is Sunday June 8th**  
**Please send all contributions by e-mail to:**  
**[john.astin1@ntlworld.com](mailto:john.astin1@ntlworld.com)**