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Here's hoping you had a  
Peaceful  
Festive Period  
and that 2014  
brings you lots of  
filming opportunities

### *5,000,000 hits and counting*

Over five million hits on Youtube for this fine example of editing and post production work.

Of all the One To Watches this one is an absolute must, various animals "singing" a festive treat.

The editor is clearly an expert at his craft and a talented voice over artist to boot.

Where do you start with a project like this?

Just click one of the pictures to be taken to the film.





Pip Critten  
Writes...

## Editorial

### Thanks

Let me start by saying a huge thank you to everyone who contributed to SoCo News over the last year.

It takes time to put finger to key, we used to say pen to paper, to write up an article and I am very grateful to those who did and hope that we will all continue to do so in 2014 and into the future.

We must be getting something right as other regions are now following our lead and going digital, SERIAC being the latest.

### Printers

Some time ago, I purchased a colour lazer printer to make the printing of DVD sleeves quicker and cheaper.

It did produce excellent quality prints but cheaper it was not. The cost of the replacement toner cartridges far outweighed the cost of the whole machine. The toner did not seem to last as long as I felt it should.

When I needed a replacement DVD disc printer I opted for a Canon iP4950. A cheap and very economic way of producing full colour DVD discs. Especially since "compatible" inks are a fraction of the "original" manufacturers inks.

I ended up scrapping the Lazer printer, which had a scanner built in. So I purchased another Canon All In One,

MG 5350. It was chosen as the ink tanks are compatible with the other Canon.

I can thoroughly recommend these machines as being both good quality and economical to run.

### Shazam

Until recently I had thought of this as being a magic word. That was before I downloaded the "app" onto my smart mobile.

This incredible free application "listens" to any music that it hears playing and very quickly returns details of the track.



It's really handy when you hear a track that you like but don't know the name of. It may be just the piece you want to back a video you are making.

When you consider what it has to do it is even more remarkable. To hear a few seconds of a track, go away and compare it to the millions of tracks out there, come back and tell you what it is - all in a few seconds.

It even offers links to where it can be purchased and can sometimes give you the lyrics scrolling in real time. If the artiste is touring, it offers links to give web links.

And it's all for free.

What "apps" do you know that are useful to video makers? Do write up a short article and share it.

Keep Smiling,

Pip,

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



Chairman  
Anne Vincent

## Chairman's Chat

Happy 2014 to you all.

I hope the year will be a good one with plenty of filming and activities.

I know we are in the dead of winter the toughest season of the Year, but for the Wildlife Film Makers amongst us, there is plenty to look out for and film.

The Fox for instance with his brick-red coat stands out amongst the winter frost and snow, yet he can find plenty of food this time of year with many small mammals and birds struggling to survive the cold.

Otters have been introduced to Radipole Lake close to Weymouth Harbour in recent years, should the lake freeze over he switches his prey from fish to water birds, such as ducks and moorhens.

Our largest wild animals, Deer, can be seen any time of year. Several species are abundant in many parts of Dorset.

If the ground is covered in snow or ice, they feed by browsing the low hanging leaves on evergreen trees or tall grass, which is an important part of their diet. I find the Deer one of the easiest of our wild life to film.

'What's the secret I am asked?'

For years I only got shots of deer from a distance, but now I take to the tracks in the woodland on my electric disabled buggy and they seem to take no notice of me, if I sit there still they will even walk within a few yards and

I can get all the pictures I want – but – if someone comes walking down the path the deer are gone.

One doesn't have to go searching the woods for some of our wildlife, we can watch it from our very own window if we put a bird feeder out.

Tits, Finches, Starlings and Sparrows are the most regular visitors to hanging Feeders, while Blackbirds, Thrushes, Robins and Pigeons forage on the ground beneath.

One day I was sat by the window and a lovely little Grey Squirrel came along the branch to the bird feeder, it was no hardship for him to hang upside down on the feeder and try to get out some of the nuts.

I didn't think him so lovely when he bit through the wire and all the nuts fell out – but then an amazing thing happened, he ran by plank of wood and scratched a hole in the earth beneath it.

He went backwards and forwards and buried quite a lot of the nuts, then he ran off. It was then I noticed a row of Pigeons sat on the wall opposite, they had been watching these goings on and would you believe, they all flew down, scratched out the nuts and eat them, then all flew off.

How's that for intelligence?

More than what I had because I should have had a camera at the ready to film all this, but then with wild life one never knows what is going to happen.

Happy Filming!

All the Best for 2014

Anne



## Reader's Letters

Have your say

Hi Pip,

Just read two articles on "Amateur" and "SAVING CLUBS" in the magazine. Both seem to gel together. Every person has a different view regards amateur. If people pay you to do a job they expect a professional service.

I think the word amateur started when cine clubs flourished, all people from different walks of life had the opportunity to having a go at making films and today its video's. In the public eye you were an amateur.

Saving Clubs is in the decline due to technology I see many youngsters getting together and making there own videos and posting them on the net. Members who have been associated with their club for years hate changes or embrace any new members who have knowledge of the media set up.

As an excise I decided to join a club. I was struck by the facilities but shocked by the membership for such a long established club. I did managed to introduce a few new things. But I guess my tempo and ideas and honest verbal communications did not go down well.

I did learn that today holiday films are still show in its long format and little attention is paid to sound and the same format of video films are made Holiday, Comedy, Documentaries.

So how can one save a club? New members who have no idea give them all the attention and make them welcome. Members who know, find out why they are joining the club and and any ideas they have let them prove there ability and most important thing, "All Work Together". Also learn from other members who have the knowledge. Also club members should make use of the internet in web cam communication as if a member gets stuck they can help besides club night.

That was one idea I was going to introduce so one could help on the spot, specially editing.

Frank Maxwell



Christmas in a Day -A peep into the homes of families up and down the country at Christmas.

Christmas in a Day is a beautifully moving document of who we were on 25th December 2012. Created by Academy Award-winning director Kevin Macdonald and Scott Free Productions, the film presents one of the few moments in the calendar when the whole nation steps back

from ordinary life.

And guess what we have contributed to this film and were one of the 117 to have their clips used in compiling this extraordinary little film.

It was premiered at BAFTA in London on Thursday night and has now been released on Youtube.

Here is the link to our bit of us in the kitchen which is about 24 mins into it.

You can watch the whole 48 minute film, it's now on Youtube.

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Od1WIDxI44Y&feature=player\\_detailpage](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Od1WIDxI44Y&feature=player_detailpage)

Happy Xmas, Susie Walker

### SERIOUS THOUGHTS – SoCo COMP.2013

Following upon the 2012 judging fiasco, I note from published 2013 judging results, the SoCo Competition definitely appears to be a complete waste of time considering let alone entering. The reason for this is that of the eight major awards five, that is 62½%, went to "Into The Light" to Mike George and Declan Smith of the Bristol Film and Video Society. (I will not dwell herein on the previously well covered subject of the "professionals" with regard to this club).

With regard to those of SERIAC who undertook the "judging", (of the four, I know three of them well), it didn't enter their heads that to conclude the exercise in the manner they have done means that they totally failed to realise, or understand, the ramifications of such a decision; i.e. to make five of the eight awards as they did no matter how good "Into The Light" is and I have seen it, that sort of decision making is flawed as is often the case within the IAC! (The only other two awards went to two films outside "Drama")! It also makes the SoCo Competition "valueless"!

As a comparison, harking back to the days of The Cotswold International Film and Video Festival such multiple decisions as here in the SoCo Competition were not permitted, except possibly for Sound. These matters were always covered in the Judges Pre Briefing and achieved by considering the individual subject Rankings coupled with the Constructive Remarks, oh yes, time consuming but easily done.

Further comments are these: In The CIFVF I had three categories of Entrants; AMATEUR, STUDENT (*Young People*), Professional. None were mixed together. Again within each of these three Classifications I had: Drama: Documentary: Comedy: Music: Experimental: Dramatised Documentary: etc. etc. In other words in no case were "Oranges compared with Onions", NOT like with unlike! Every film was considered entirely on its individual merits and NOT against any other film! This is why, to this very day, truthfully, I receive regularly even weekly, five years after the enforced closure, Emails from UK and around the world commenting on the quality of the CIFVF Judging and now asking for this Festival to be re set up! This sadly and unfortunately cannot be done as no one else is prepared to do the work and I, although still running up and down stairs, am nearer that final judgement by the Intelligent Universal Designer in some parallel Universe!

Phil Marshman it is again stated is retiring from the post of Competitions Secretary. I quite respectfully suggest that IF the SoCo Competition IS to continue, Phil's successor should seriously take on board all of the foregoing and brief and ensure understanding by all "judges" accordingly.

It is constantly stated that the judging is "subjective" – an excuse – it should be "OBJECTIVE"!

If a job is worth doing it is worth doing properly. If people here in The Cotswolds can do it, so can anyone else. Admittedly nothing is perfect but with regard to Regional, IAC and BIAFF judging it certainly can be, by far, more so. I have also repeatedly stated that results and especially judge's comments can and will eventually, make or break any Competition or Festival.

by Lee Prescott. FACI



Around The Clubs



The new intake of members at RFVM for our 6 week "Beginners Course" this year, delighted us with films which each put together to tell us a little bit about themselves. These "Introduction" Films carried on from an idea which I proposed to our club 2 years ago, as it seemed like a great way to let members know a little about each other, beyond their shared hobby of film making. (photo of new members with their certificates)

On club nights there always seems so little time to chat, and I felt that even after several months I did not really know anyone. The idea had previously gone down well with several existing members, and it was hoped that by giving these new members a project to work on over the 6 weeks, they would have a starting point and a goal.

Their mission, to present a short film (max 5 mins) about themselves. Offers of help from existing members were turned down, and it turned out that these film makers although new to our club, were not "Beginners"!

The results were excellent, and made some of our existing members "Intro" films look dull by comparison. What a breath of fresh air.

One member used a mix of animation and conventional video for his film. What great imagination Tomasz has. Every film however, was equally as well put together with particularly good script ideas which generated much laughter from the audience. Well done

to all. Here is Tomasz's film.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wZAGaDKL1ec&list=PLB5zF3fHyawbDUkZahvaf6wSeGxiJNvtB>

Included in our programme for early 2014, I have booked a local theatre as a venue for film making one evening, offering at least 4 locations within the theatre as opportunities as "film sets" ie bar, office, dressing room, auditorium. As the year end approaches, we will enjoy listening to a selection of Synopsis put forward by those creative scriptwriting members, and look forward to further planning and getting crews and actors allocated to each script, at our first meeting back in the new year.



Our club's annual competition for Fiction Films was poorly supported last year, and I hoped that by offering a venue other than our usual church hall venue, our script writers would be inspired. So far it is looking good. With pre-planning, the evening at the theatre should produce at least 3 if not 4 fiction films. I wonder if any other clubs have tried this idea of using an outside venue?

Admittedly, it is costing us some money for the hire of the theatre, but I do believe that as a film club, an opportunity like this is what we need to get those creative juices flowing, and also help retain membership. If it turns out to be a success, it is something that I would certainly be hoping to include on our programme in future..... different location of course, to keep the ideas fresh.

Anne Massey  
Programme/Promotional Co-ordinator

Saltash Video Group were out filming the 'The Big Switch On at Saltash on 7th December 2013.

This photo shows Alan Barrett, Chairman & his wife Sheila, setting up the camera for the shoot.

The Town was absolutely packed with people and the Group has made a DVD which will be shown to the public at the next years MayFair celebrations.

The next project will be a documentary about 'Cider Making' which has already been started'

Saltash Video Group would like to wish Pip and everyone of SOCO a happy Christmas and a happy new year.

Keep those cameras rolling!

Alan Barrett



## 2014 AGM

### IAC AUTUMN CONVENTION & AGM



16 - 19 October 2014

hosted by CEMRIAC

in Stratford-upon-Avon

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vU8LXdMAkc>





## My Husband, The "Flickers-Man"

David Fuller's  
wife  
Joan  
reminisces about  
her husband's  
obsession with  
moving images

I suppose, after some 50+ years of marriage to David, I should be used to seeing pieces of perforated celluloid or cassettes of video tape lying around the house. Perhaps, as a baby, he was cribbed in a discarded projector box.

David occasionally reminds me that he could never control his craving for "movies". Apparently, as a kid in elementary school, some local NUT gave him an old toy 35mm silent projector along with a bunch of small reels of movies, cleaned out of the projection room when sound movies arrived. I can imagine it - at that tender age, the "flickers boy" in his farm home in a small country town.

This famous toy projector, he once told me, was something "special". It pulled the 35mm film down frame at a time, using a "loop" in the same way as an IMAX now moves the film. Mean anything to you? Me, either.

When our paths crossed, and destiny had us married off in 1957, I knew nothing about his "other" passion. Soon enough, it surfaced when he arrived home with a Nizo 8mm camera and a Bolex M8R projector.

In a way, this passion was a good thing, provided I could tear him away from it, as needed. We raised two kids. A record of our children's growing-up had grown quite large by the time we decided to emigrate from Australia to Canada in 1967.

But think of it - how many long hours we must have sat through these home movie shows. Pity the poor, innocent victims - the over-polite visitors! You know, along with the disorganized maze of "opportunist shots", there was a glimmer of hope. A hint of organization had begun to emerge. David & I had our kids act out short skits; he'd scratch away with his "frame-line" splicer again and again and I could see structure emerging from chaos. There was hope!

Oh yes, then adding "sound" raised its ugly head. David brought home his new toy, a reel-to-reel tape recorder. Friends, if you thought that the silent movies, when hapless friends visited, were pretty much "hard-tack", now with the tape-recorder, their ears and eyes were unceremoniously assaulted!

I know, that's harsh. To be fair, at least I always knew he wasn't in the pub or betting shop or - worse. I could hear him diddling and doodling around in his hobby room.

Our movie-making fortunes took a new course when my husband began to "diddle around" with a sync-box that loosely married the tape machine to the Bolex projector. Incidentally, I noted at the time, more and more pieces of rejected "bootlace" pieces in the trash can. A good thing! One day, in good faith, I swept his table clean in his editing room and thought I'd done a great service by throwing away those short "useless pieces of bootlace" lying on his desk. Never did that again!

As our fortunes improved in our newly adopted country, David realized that this bootlace film could never win many prizes. Home he trotted one day, with a much-used Beaulieu 16mm camera, complete with an Angenieau zoom lens poking out like a huge, long snout. A few weeks later, he saw an ad. in an American magazine for a discontinued 16mm Bolex 321, brand new. New York. a heavy, but durable monster projector. (A widower, I feared. A hernia generator, at least.)

Magnetic sound-on-film. It didn't end there. Oh, No. A Vancouver film studio was upgrading its editing gear. Yep,

home came a 4-gang sync. block plus an audio cassette recorder that would read sprocket holes. Lip-sync sound had arrived.

Sounds of car-doors slamming, rifle shots, spoken words matching lip movements - - piece of cake for him. "Add a sound-proofing, lead-lined blimp around the camera. Hmmm," he continued musing (aloud), And built one for the Beaulieu. And on to recording and syncing live dialogue Edison's reincarnation dwelt at our place.

Well, that was his "thing", I guess. To my surprise, all this diddling around began to pay off as David was winning an occasional award in amateur contests. At last, I didn't have to lock the doors shut when we had visitors over - trapped - to "watch our movies." ust limit the number of reels he showed. I'd rattle the tea cups.

Simultaneously, David developed an instructional course. He pioneered it and had it approved by the Ministry of Education. Fancy, in 1972, TV Production classes for his students at his Secondary school. Both of our kids enrolled in Dad's classes. Two B/W video cameras, a switcher, audio mixers, lights, microphones, etc. and a couple of Panasonic "flying heads" reel-to-reel VTR's. Mean anything to you?

Video was well and truly "in" by the early 1990's. David reckoned that when Hi-8 and S-VHS arrived, the image quality, though nowhere nearly as good as 16mm Kodachrome, was "good enough". History repeats; Videonics analogue surfaced.

Renewed interest in winning awards in amateur contests, too. And making "baby movies" of our grandchildren. All genres were grist for his mill. The new movies on tape were stashed away.

And he's happy "diddling" away in his hobby room and his "stuff" is much easier on the eye and ear, too. As a dutiful, supportive wife (of long patience, I add), I've "acted" for him and I've written amateur-grade short Screenplays for him.. Again, grist for his mill! We've both had heaps of fun directing out short scenarios, featuring our grandchildren who are just born to be the most natural actors. Of course!

You know, come to think of it, I haven't noticed in our wills any mention of what's to happen with his legacy of recorded memories and how his paraphernalia is to be "disposed of". I wonder: as heirlooms or in a dumpster?

But, David is still cranking' em out,; Until very recently, he's as active as ever in Moviemaking Clubs and has helped out with sundry North American Contests.

A highlight, in 2004, single-handed, he ran the Ten Best of the West Contest with 64 entries from all over Western America.

For the first time in N. America he concocted six DVD's, each 55 minutes long, for presentation at the Amateur Convention in Victoria, B.C. Two of the Contests attracted entries from overseas. No problem. He converted the PAL format to our N. American NTSC. Seventy plus visitors attended that Victoria Convention.

I suppose, one day, when he can no longer lift his Sony 2000 or his FX7, , he'll hang them up gracefully and be content to watch the young cats doing the same thing as he's done since childhood.

# Chaotic Storage at Amazon

John Halloran provided this story which he found on the internet.

Amazing, absolutely amazing, chaos reigns supreme, but I guess managed chaos is what this is, not Keystone Cops chaos...

If you've ordered from Amazon, here's how it works. Absolutely Amazing!

As the world's largest online retailer, Amazon needs somewhere to put all of those products. The solution? Giant warehouses.



Eighty to be exact. Strategically located near key shipping hubs around the world.

The warehouses themselves are massive, with some over 1.2 million square feet in size (111,484 sq m). And at the heart of this global operation are people (over 65,000 of them), and a logistics system known as *chaotic storage*.

Chaotic storage is like organized confusion. It's an organic shelving system without permanent areas or sections.

That means there is no area just for books, or a place just for televisions (like you might expect in a retail store layout). The product's characteristics and attributes are irrelevant. What's important is the unique barcode associated with every product that enters the warehouse.

Every single shelf space inside an Amazon warehouse has a barcode. And every incoming product that requires storage is assigned a specific barcode that matches the shelf space in which it will be stored. This allows free space to be filled quickly and efficiently.



At the heart of the operation is a sophisticated database that tracks and monitors every single product that enters/leaves the warehouse and keeps a tally on every single shelf space and whether it's empty or contains a product.

There are several key advantages to the chaotic storage system. First is flexibility. With chaotic storage, freed-up space can be refilled immediately.

Second is simplicity. New employees don't need to learn where types of products are located. They simply need to find the storage shelf within the warehouse. You don't need to know what the product is, just where it is.



Lastly is optimisation. Amazon must handle millions and millions of orders. That means that at any given moment there is a long list of products that need to be 'picked' from the shelves and prepared for shipment.

Since there is a database that knows every product required for shipment and the location of each product inside the warehouse, an optimized route can be provided to employees responsible for fulfilment.



Since Amazon deals with such a wide variety of products there are a few exceptions to the rule. Really fast-moving articles do not adhere to the same storage system since they enter and leave the warehouse so quickly.

Really bulky and heavy products still require separate storage areas and perishable goods are not ideal for obvious reasons.



In this storage system a wide variety of products can be found located next to each other. A necklace could be located beside a DVD and underneath a set of power tools. This arbitrary placement can even help with accuracy as it makes mix-ups less likely when picking orders for shipment.

Overall it's a fascinating system that at its core is powered by a complex database yet run by a simple philosophy.



It's Chaotic Storage.

There's no better way to put it :)

John Halloran



Lee Prescott  
FACI.

## A Tale of a Sorry Wild Adventure into the Internet

First I must admit that I am NOT an enthusiastic user of Internet Purchasing "On Line" and in fact, I virtually never do so. I do not trust 'em as it were!

However, during a recent forage into the Internet I came upon a HD camcorder named The Eviro GZ-E15REK by JVC. @ £xxx.

On my way along the Cyber Road I tripped over Amazon who offered the same camcorder @ £xxx less about 25%, seller Argos Ltd....

Now, being an intelligent person the thought struck me, (not too hard some of you will be relieved to know!), that a visit to the Argos Site direct might prove fruitful. "Oh Yea" as the Town Crier is wont to yell, there it was @ £xxx ÷ 2 = £xx. So I thought I'll give it a whirl and on the 25<sup>th</sup> November, 2013, The Wild Adventure Began.

Oddly I thought, Argos stipulated that this item was available for (free) home delivery only. Not in their stores, could not be delivered to any store for collection. So I waited. Came the 27<sup>th</sup>. November the 'phone tootled: "Hi" I said: Mrs. Argos said: "Your camcorder will be delivered on the 28<sup>th</sup>. November between 8am. and 5pm. I said "OK" . On the 28<sup>th</sup>. 5.15pm. tick tocked up – nothing! I tootled Mrs. Argos who then said: "It'll be delivered by 9pm! 9pm. came and went – nothing! Mrs. Argos apparently had gone home.

An entire day wasted sitting down upon my botty! (Cheez TV is boring!)

The dawn of the 29<sup>th</sup>. November: I leapt from my "dream time" – (imagine that) - and tootled Mrs. Argos: I complained crunchingly, having a mouth full of cornflakes! Madam Argos then said: "It'll be delivered today", (the 29<sup>th</sup>. November).

I said "It better had be delivered coz I aint hangin' around here much longer and...I will not be ordering ever again from Aunty Argos"! She then trotted out a tracking Number and the delivery driver's mobile 'phone number.

3.15pm. came I tootled the delivery driver's mobile 'phone. A wild and woolly sound response hit my shell like ear....

"YEAH", decibels about 200! I asked: "Are you delivering Argos Parcels"?

A further blast: "YEAH".

I enquired "Have you got a parcel for me name Prescott"?

Response: "Yer name an' pos' code"? I repeated my name and gave my Post Code.

Mr. Decibels: "YEAH BE WITH YER ABOUT ARF FOUR".

"Ta" I said.....

Right then - there was a knocking on my front door, I put the 'phone down and answered at the door....

There stood a young female aged about 25 years, she handed me a parcel and said "Sign Here"!

I said: "Is this from Argos?"

She responded "Yes". I said I've just spoken to a delivery driver who said he had this parcel and he'd deliver it about "arf four"

She said: "Weird, no one knows what the hell they're doin', keeps everyone on their toes"!

On opening the parcel I found a sweet little camcorder en-shrouded in a beautiful glossy plum colour along with a 40 minutes battery!!! (Maybe). Plus several cables, a mains adaptor and a 12 page 'Quick Start Guide'. Apart from setting the tiddler up, two pages tell me how to avoid an electric shock and how not to dispose of batteries.

The thing that really surprised me was that JVC assume that purchasers can read!

I then noted that the appropriate "JVC User Guide" could be downloaded. I went for this and in it came quite rapidly in PDF Format. I decided to print it out, all 82 pages of it 'coz I find it difficult running around with a desk top computer!

I must state one thing though, I have gone on for years about "technobabble" – so it would seem someone at JVC reads SoCo News etc. 'coz herein the long standing advice of "RTFM" is as easy as reading SoCo News!

I must state that the camcorder has a jolly menu and just a minimum of buttons which I should be able to operate when I've shoved my finger tips through a pencil sharpener! It's a smart cookie: It employs what JVC call "IA = Intelligent Auto Mode".

It has 40 X optical zoom, very useful for sneaky video! (plus a rubbishy 200 X digital zoom).

It is also able to recognise and adjust exposure for up to sixteen faces, I will have to find out how it works when videoing the dogs!

As has been usual for years, it incorporates some form of "anti shake" - stabiliser. Its HD scale is 1920 x 1080.

A slight puzzle at first was that the W.A. to TELE slider is also a sound volume control – then of course I realised that only operates as such in playback. The stereo mics. can be set to operate in a windy environment. It also has the availability to record time lapse video at frame rates from 1 second to 80 seconds!!! That's going to start me on some experimentation. (Judges be aware)!

There is a crunch that made me sit up: Obviously a battery with a top limit of 40 minutes aint much use. On visiting the JVC site I stunningly found that the largest capacity battery is offered at a horrifying £100. A separate charging unit is offered at another grotesque £100. 200 quid inclusive, to avoid having to charge batteries via the camcorder itself.

Well, I was always taught from a very early age to "shop around" which always do. Result: I found a specialist supplier in Stockton-on-Tees who offers the large capacity battery at a flabbergasting £24. and the charger at £9. Total £33. Guaranteed!

So Brothers and Sisters – who's ripping who off? My flabber was never so gasted!

Lee Prescott





## Thinking Back

Alan Wallbank

Portsmouth  
Film Makers

Part One of his  
series looking back  
over his film  
making days

For sometime now, there has been alot written and argued about, regarding our art of film making, so I thought it was time for me to have my say.

Like many of you, I started with cine, in my case about 1980. I really cannot remember how it came about or what camera I used, but I do remember what I filmed. It was old bangers being driven in series of stunt driving manouvers, like speeding up ramps and jumping over as many cars as possible or driving at speed through the side of a blazing van, a film which I still have today.

Without a guiding hand, I then followed my main interest, which was motor sport in general, such as motorcycle racing at Brands Hatch, scrambling, grasstrack and trials riding, along with autocross at Lydden in Kent. Also banger racing at Matchams Park, near Ringwood, in Dorset.

One year, I took my camera to London. I think it was the day Prince Charles married Princess Diana, as I remember filming them that day. I was fortunate to find a wall to stand on in the Mall, next to Admiralty Arch. It was an excellent vantage point, that gave me a clear view to film the returning wedding procession? I seem to remember that I was there for about four hours or more on a lovely sunny day, so expected the end result to be very good, but it was dreadful!

So much camera shake. It was terrible, absolutely awful, so I binned the lot!!! I actually kept the film for several years, hoping I could salvage something, but it was hopeless, so it had to go, as did my film of the Fleet Review in the Solent.

I did my best to keep the camera steady, but it was very difficult in the choppy waters on the flat bottomed Gosport ferry boat, that was being used for sightseeing trips that day. To make matters worse, the camera was over exposing most of the time. Perhaps manual exposure would have helped, but I seem to recall, that manual settings were not that reliable, so I always used the automatic feature.



About this time, I bought a Bell and Howell 1237XL Super 8 Sound Camera, from Stan Mould in Totton, near Southampton. As an optional extra, I also bought a lovely leather case, for the camera, which also had compartments for all the extra pieces of equipment for sound filming. It proved to be the best cine camera that I ever owned.

I also bought a tripod with a fluid pan and tilt head, as I had to improve the steadiness of my films. My great love at that time, were steam trains, so thought that to be a good subject for a sound camera.

However, I was not using sound film, as I only had a Bell and Howell silent projector. I seem to recall, that I had a B&H Filmosound tape recorder, that was connected to the camera. When filming, the recorder would record the live sound onto tape and pulses from the camera.

On projection, the recorder was connected to the projector, with the pulses keeping film and sound

synchronised. Unfortunately, the system had too many drawbacks, especially when it came to editing, so I bought an Elmo ST1200 Sound Projector and started using sound film, which produced excellent results, although the film itself was quite expensive.

I visited several private railways and also filmed mainline specials, mainly on the Settle and Carlisle Railway. Looking back now, I must have been mad, but I would get up at the crack of dawn and ride my 900cc Honda motorcycle, (I didnt have a car then), from Havant, near Portsmouth, to Euston and put it on the train.

My destination station would be either Preston or Carlisle, depending on whether the steam hauled "Cumbrian Mountain Expresses" were running north of south. I would then head for places like "Ais Gill" the lines summit, with its stunningly beautiful mountainous backdrop or the twenty four arch, one hundred and four feet high "Ribblehead" viaduct, which takes the brunt of the westerly gales.



After waiting for up to three hours for these trains, as they were quite often late, I then rode to Preston or Carlisle for the train journey home.

On one of these round trips, I went to Garsdale Station, only to find it shrouded in dense fog, so I had little choice to go straight back home!!!

It wasn't long afterwards, that the guards on the trains, began complaining about the smell of petrol from my Honda. It was only because the engine was hot, but the thought of not being allowed on the train, say from Carlisle, left me with no choice, but to film closer to home.

The filming I did on the S&C, is a great favourite with everyone who has seen it.

I also went to several Air Shows, mainly at Greenham Common and Farnborough. The Isle of Man was also a great favourite, with its Victorian transport system providing many hours of colourful memories.

Besides the B&H camera, I also had a Bauer 350XL, which had a lap dissolve facility. Unfortunately, it did not always function properly and occasionally would jam altogether, but I loved those cameras so much, that I went on to own about four altogether.

However, from the moment I used them, I always had problems with the focusing, an element that we take for granted now. The Baur in particular, according to the instruction book, had a self focusing setting, for those nice sunny days. However, several really good filming sequences were totally ruined, with the film being out of focus.

Then in December 1991, at the age of 47, I went abroad for the first time. It was a small group tour of Northern China, led by my railway photographer Colin Garrett. We were there to film steam hauled trains, that were still fairly common in that part of the country.

Besides taking masses of warm clothing for the freezing temperatures, I also packed my hand luggage

## Thinking Back *continued*

with two cine cameras, in case one failed, about 30 boxes of cine film, a tripod, a still camera and 20 rolls transparency film.

I also took plenty of batteries to cope with the -30 temperatures. If that wasn't enough to carry, I also took my latest purchase, an Iscorama Anamorphic Lens, (AL), a 2lb lump that I should have left at home, but I wanted to be possibly the only person to film Chinese steam in wide screen!

The tour meant being on the move nearly all the time. It wasn't unusual for us to spend one day at one particular location, then catch a night train to the next place, often arriving about 2 or 3 am, then to the hotel for a few hours sleep, before getting up at 7 am for another days filming.

I cannot express how tiresome and demanding the tour was, especially as we had to carry our own luggage. The final days, were spent at a place called Nancha, just about the last northern town before the Russian border.

The night time temperatures at this northern outpost, often fall to -40, but we were lucky, as it was warmer that year and by 7 am it was only -30. Our hotel was at best 'dreadful', but that was the only accommodation in the town.

Filming in cold weather brings its own problems. The batteries cannot cope with filming long sequences and as the voltage drops, the sound suffers, the end result being a dreadful 'warbling sound'.

Exposure control lasts a bit longer, but eventually even that succumbs, as it fluctuates uncontrollably.

To overcome the battery problems, I would keep them in my pocket until a train came into sight, then quickly put them in the camera. Of course, the cold was also causing the camera to slow up, but there was nothing I could do about that. It was not much fun for me either, often standing around for hours in minus temperatures, with feet like lumps of ice!!!

The film looks great on the screen, but a lot of the sound and some of the picture quality is poor, due entirely to the cold weather. In November that year, I went back to China, taking all the same cine gear again!!! To begin with, we travelled west, to inner Mongolia, and arrived at place called Zhongwei.

Close to here, was a single track line providing the most spectacular sight of steam hauled trains in the world! Double headed locos, meandering through the Gobi Desert, rising to a horseshoe curve, before disappearing into a restricted zone.

I found this hilly terrain, to be physically demanding, mainly due to the amount of walking in warm clothing, to find suitable filming positions, at this high altitude location. Those perfect spots, would have had H&S officials having nightmares!!! Yes, it was dangerous, but we didn't travel all that way for the 'standard view'.

One such place, was high up above a railway station, an excellent vantage point, offering a superb panoramic view.

So there I was, on day one, in the ideal position to capture that perfect shot, when out of the 'blue', a gust of

wind toppled my tripod, with camera attached!!! I made a mad dash to rescue the situation, but too late, as the camera and AL parted company!!!

I feared the worst, but fortunately the only damage was to the filter thread on the camera, so I had carry on filming without the AL and naturally had to do the same for the three remaining days there, but it proved to be some of my best filming in China.

We then travelled to the far east of the country, where I used my other camera with the AL. It was colder there, but not enough to affect the battery power. The first location, was on a footbridge over looking a railway station. It was snowing and there were lots of steam trains, passenger, freight and a loco shunting the yard. The end result was perfect and its a film I have watched many times.

In December 1993, I repeated the three week China tour of 1991, but without the WL. This time, I had jackets made for the Bauer cameras and special battery packs, that allowed me to connect them to the camera, moments before train approached.

Also, at great expense, I bought quite a lot of Hi Energy Lithium AA batteries, that were designed to cope with low temperatures. However, my costly outlay proved to be a total waste of money, as these batteries weren't much good at all and as I only took a few Durcells, I had no choice, but to buy more batteries, all being sold outside in freezing weather!!!

That's how it was then, where ever we went, whether it was in the far north or on the southern shores, all the shops wares were on the pavement! I remember two in particular, one selling everything for the bathroom including numerous tile patterns and the butcher selling four legged animals identified by the legs that dangled over the tables edge.

My Canon T50 SLR still camera, that I had used on the previous trip, was again coping perfectly well with the freezing conditions. However, when looking through the view finder, one had to hold ones breath, otherwise it would ice over in an instant!

This only occurred at Nancha, where another bizarre incident took place. That year, we had the use of a 'warm house', a residents home where we could escape the cold conditions. These single story brick built buildings lie on the outskirts of the town, within yards of the railway line.

On one particular morning, my friend and I had been up since first light, yet again! By about 8 am and no trains to photograph, the cold was getting the better of us, so we had no choice, but to seek out our residents hospitality.

It was such a relief to get inside and feel the lovely warmth from the under floor heating. I then noticed my SLR camera slowly freezing over, until the whole camera was white! Then, just as quick, it was drenched in moisture.

We then heard a train outside, but we were still too cold to be bothered, so we stayed until my camera was dry and made a grateful exit.

One chap in the group had a video camera, that coped perfectly with the cold. Even the batteries seemed unaffected by the extreme conditions, and of course, we would watch the results each evening, whereas I had to wait several weeks, before I saw mine!

So, was it all worth it? I have to say, that I am a bit undecided about that. Yes, it looks great on the screen, especially the wide pictures, but so much of the film suffers from poor sound and picture quality.

[to be continued in next issue]





# One To Watch

When countries and shipping of all genres dump their waste at sea this is just one appalling consequence;

Mike Owens

<http://www.whydontyoutrythis.com/2013/11/this-film-should-be-seen-by-the-entire-world.html>



Selected  
Movies  
from  
the  
World  
Wide Web

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

I think the members will like this one.

Still trying to get a local group going.

Kind regards

John Flanagan

Swindon

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UelJZG\\_bF98](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UelJZG_bF98)



There's a 9 years old girl in Holland – just listen.

Lee Prescott

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VBMfgLvRZJs>



Wonderful trapeze artists, but non-swingers – great viewing!

Really original and thoroughly entertaining too!!

Noel Leader

<https://www.facebook.com/photo.php?v=717211468307619&set=vb.23453895>



Thought you might like to see this short movie from Sydney's latest Tropfest.

I guess there must be a message there somewhere!!

Noel Leader

[http://www.youtube.com/embed/gSw4CLV14sQ?feature=player\\_embedded](http://www.youtube.com/embed/gSw4CLV14sQ?feature=player_embedded)



Some nice bush-pilot clips of today's STOL (short take off and landing) flights in PNG.

Reminds me of my crazy geologist days doing this and much worse over fifty years ago in PNG and the Philippines.

Noel Leader

<http://vimeo.com/72343999>



No traffic lights, no pedestrian crossings, no accidents! There is even a van doing a u-turn. Amazing!!! Traffic in Vietnam. Like ants!

Lee Prescott

<http://www.youtube-nocookie.com/embed/4phFYiMGCIY?rel=0>



I'm quite sure this'll give you a Lift!

<http://dotsub.com/view/6c5d7514-5656-476a-9504-07dd4e2f6509>



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For a full list of national and international events  
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# Changes

## New & Rejoined:

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Mr G A Briggs, Branston,  
Mr M. M. Smith, Emsworth, Hampshire

## Cancelled / Removed:

## Resigned:

Mrs Diana Taylor, Bristol  
Mr B Palmer, Bournemouth  
Ferndown Camera Club, Highcliffe

## Cancelled:

Mr C.J. Churcher, Gosport

## Deceased:

## Moved into SoCo Region:

**Copy Deadline** for Mar - Apr 2014 Issue

To reach Editor by 15th Feb 2014