



[Alan Wallbank](#)

[Letters](#)

[Around the Clubs](#)

[Ian Simpson](#)

[Dave Jones](#)

[Melvyn Dover](#)

[Tom Hardwick](#)

[Robert Paget](#)

[Suzie Topolska](#)

[Gordon Young](#)

[Lee Prescott](#)

[Oli Seaman](#)



Robert Paget
This and That



Tom Harwick
Data Compression

These days,
4K recording is commonplace



Gordon Young
Pulling an audience



Pip Critten
Writes...

Chairman's Chat & Editorial

Sorry

I want to start by giving my apologies to Ian Simpson and John Simpson. In the last edition I wrongly credited Ian Simpson's article to John Simpson. Sorry guys!

Ian offers up another great article in this edition about editing and Artificial Intelligence.

BIAFF

About two dozen judges, projection room hosts and organisers spent a weekend judging this years BIAFF Competition.

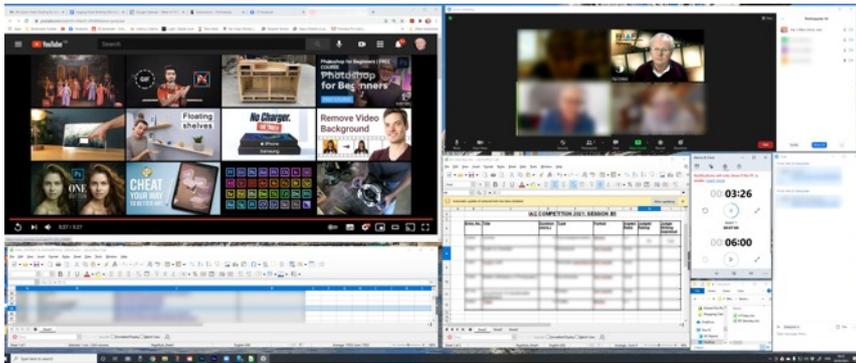
It was my first being involved and was, apparently, very different in some ways to previous years. It is normally held as a physical event within a hotel meaning people have to travel to attend.

This year, with the pandemic restrictions, it was held via Zoom with six virtual projection rooms coordinated by a host in each.

Three judges would enter their allocated room for a session of about one and a half hours. The hosts would post links in the chat so the judges could view each film at the very highest quality possible.

Following the viewing, the judges would have a discussion about the film they had just watched then come to a group decision on a star rating for it. Any films with a five star rating would then be sent on to the final round judges in another room. The judges would be in a different room with a different host and different judges for their following sessions.

Considering it was the first time the event was held on the Zoom platform it went remarkably smoothly with any issues being swiftly solved by our Competition Manager, David Newman.



It did mean I had to try and manage seven windows open at the same time to monitor everything that was going on. As a room host, it was great to see the films without having to write up any judges comments!

As I have said, it went remarkably well and the feelings about using Zoom were mixed. I think everyone missed the actual meeting up in person and being able to chat over a coffee, the general social side of it which most of us are missing at present.

However, there were many who were pleased not to have to journey across the country and get put up in the hotel, saving time and money.

Thanks again to David Newman and his team for the incredible amount of work that goes into organising BIAFF each year.

Is it just me!

It's extremely rare that I watch live television, it is almost always from recordings so that I can me "whiz" through the adverts. But it's not just the adverts. The thing that annoys me most, and I can feel myself getting irritated just at the thought of it, is the continual "coming up next", "later", "previously" and so on. Don't tell me what's coming up, I'm going to see it anyway. Don't tell me what I've just seen, I'm going to see it aren't I?

The worst ones not only do that before and after commercial breaks but within the programme as well. For example in a police patrol fly on the wall documentary they will run several "stories" within each episode. Instead of showing the whole of the story then move onto another they show you a bit of a story, then tell us what we will see later, move onto another story, tell us what we are going to see, show two minutes of actual events, recap on what we have just seen (I know I just watched it!), move back to a previous story - recap on what happened, show a bit more footage before recapping and tell us what's coming up later.

In an hour programme, once you remove the adverts, coming ups, recaps, previously's and so on, they often cram as much as nine minutes of real content into it.

I mean you would not put up with that in a book would we? "On the previous page we discovered that Barry went out without his mobile phone and missed an important call which affected his business." - Two paragraphs of actual story - "On the next page Barry struggles to come to terms with the events of the previous page and gets murdered by his estranged wife."

Life is short enough, record and "whiz" I say.

Zoom Club Meetings

The pandemic is terrible and has had a devastating effect on far too many people and life will never be the same again. But it's not all doom and gloom.

There are many progressive video clubs who have taken a negative and turned it into a positive by holding very successful Zoom meetings.

Admittedly, nothing beats getting together in person to chat with friends over a shared interest. In a actual meeting venue you can have several different groups of people talking about all manner of things.

You can't do that with Zoom. BUT you can have specialist speakers from overseas, you can have quests from the other side of the country and share your passion about film making.

Teignmouth, Bristol and Gloucester are great examples of what can be done and have even increased it's membership in this difficult times.

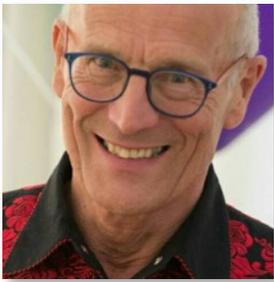
As Chairman, I would love to virtually visit any other SoCo region clubs meetings as I can't visit in person. So please do send me an invite.

I was going to my office to join one meeting when my wife said; "are you going off to meet your virtual friends? I suppose it's a step up from your imaginary ones!"

Keep Smiling,

Pip

pipcritten@googlemail.com



Let's talk about data compression

Tom Hardwick
FACI

This month Tom
Hardwick

Explains some of
the complexities of
data compression

As I look at my camcorders I realise that they're just inanimate lumps of glass, magnesium and plastic. They don't weigh much, they don't cost much in reality, and they don't take up much space. They all sit there just like powerful computers, doing nothing, waiting for input, any input. Once in the loving hands of a filmmaker a camcorder is able to show off its amazing potential energy, and there seems little they can't do these days. They'll give astonishingly picture quality in good light; good pictures in near darkness and lots will give you pictures in total darkness. They go where it's tough, dusty and wet, and go where bigger pieces of kit cannot reach. The stereo sound they record is as good as affordable microphones will deliver, and the fact that very detailed pictures can be recorded onto amazingly cheap and cheerful flash memory cards is a big bonus.



Standard definition 4:3 MiniDV

I've owned lots of camcorders in my time, and in the analogue Hi-8 days I paid quite a lot of money for woolly footage with wobbly verticals and shifted reds. Then DV came along, and in the shape of Sony's VX1000, changed overnight the way a lot of broadcast TV footage was shot. DV was the norm for digital 720 x 576 standard definition, and was gradually replaced with the startlingly good 1440 x 1080 HDV (and later Sony's HDV-related XDCAM formats). Changes are happening all the time of course, and AVCHD, or H264 MP4, has grabbed a firm foothold in the domestic market.

AVCHD has a higher compression ratio than DV. AVCHD crams high definition video of up to 1920x1080 pixels into at most about the bandwidth (by which I mean bits per second) as DV used for standard definition, so obviously it has to squeeze harder. But that's not quite an apples-to-apples comparison. First, like HDV, AVCHD compresses a group of frames at a time rather than each frame individually as DV did. While this has disadvantages from an editing standpoint, it's much more efficient for most real-world video.



The diminutive Panasonic SD900

In addition, AVCHD uses a more advanced compression algorithm than HDV, which employs MPEG-2. How well AVCHD works in the real world depends on the specific codec -- decompression is deterministic, but the quality of compression varies. Early reviews (mainly of consumer AVCHD camcorders) made me very wary of AVCHD.



All compact cameras shoot HD video these days

But today cameras have much better codecs, and if you choose the highest supported bitrate, the results look pretty good. When AVCHD breaks down (as it will given a sufficiently detailed image that's constantly and drastically changing), it still tends to degrade less objectionably than HDV, because rather than producing obvious compression artefacts the picture just looks softer.

It's interesting to see what Sony is offering nowadays on their camcorders. My A7R2 mirrorless camera lets you choose to shoot small 1280 x 720 MP4 movies at 6 Mbps, or you can switch to AVCHD using 24 Mbps, then to Sony's proprietary XAVC S HD using 50 Mbps and topping out at XAVC S 4K at 100 Mbps. Everyone's catered for, and modern computers with their prodigious processing power are not fazed by such editing tasks.



The current range of mirrorless cameras have become very popular camcorders

Sensors are getting bigger

There's change happening in the camcorder market these days, and it's being brought about by the video capability that's being built into virtually every DSLR on the market. Filmmakers have been quick to latch onto the delightful big-gate film-look of video shot in SLRs and their mirrorless equivalents, and very many professional films have now been shot with what is essentially very cheap recording equipment. These cameras use sensors that are vastly bigger than those we've become used to in conventional domestic camcorders, giving great low-light capability and the option to control depth of field because



Tom continues.....

of the longer focal lengths that are employed. Manufacturers have cottoned on, and in an effort to stop the move away from camcorders to DSLRs, are starting to produce dedicated camcorders that use these DSLR sensors.

To give you an example of the size difference, the Panasonic TM900 (a dinky camcorder that I love) uses chips that are 3.5mm wide, whereas Sony's NEX VG10 and NEX-FS100 have sensors that are 23.4mm wide. You could put forty-four $\frac{1}{4}$ in TM900 sensors into the same space as Sony's Super 35mm sensor. Let's continue the comparison. The Panasonic has a 12x f/1.5 to f/2.8 zoom going from 3.45 mm to 41.4 mm, whereas the Sony has an 11x f/3.5 to f/6.3 stretching between 18 and 200mm.



The Sony NX5.
Small $\frac{1}{3}$ " sensors used to be the norm

Camera manufacturers are much the same. A few years ago Sony's big improvement in adding an R to the EX1 was a case in point, and similarly the NX5 is a face-lifted Z5. The PD170 tweaked the original PD150 and the brochure's ability to splash NEW across the top has always had remarkable rejuvenating properties and helped the sales push.

I sense that we've all got to the stage of "not buying" a camera that's been out a couple of years simply because we feel the next model must surely be just around the corner. And with the rate of development in all things electronic and digital, this time-span will, if anything, shorten.



Camcorders come in all shapes and sizes



These days, 4K recording is commonplace

When to buy?

Look at cars. They're put into production and the customer finds all sorts of foibles that many thousands of prototype testing hours never discovered, and constant running changes are made until finally a face-lift is announced and that's the time to buy.

The GoPro encased in its waterproof housing



The DSLR started the move towards shooting video using large sensors

But, if you wait for the approaching train rather than hopping on the one in the station you can find yourself waiting for ever. Getting a bit poetically romantic here, but you know what I mean. If you've got a film burning away inside you, film it now. The film has far more to do with you, the person cradling the hardware, than ever it has to do with the hardware itself. As I said at the beginning, your camcorder will just sit there, doing nothing, waiting for input, any input. Once in the hands of a filmmaker, a camcorder will delight in demonstrating its amazing potential energy.

Tom Hardwick



Gloucester Film Makers

We opened our 2021 programme with 9 films eligible for The Muriel Gray Trophy. Yours truly, with my film A Suburban Garden, scraped home to win. Our One Minute Competition, Christmas Cheer, was won by Paula Clare.

Many thanks to Chris Wheatley and Kevin Daws who organised these events, both viewed at our Zoom meeting. (Where would we be without Zoom?)

We were very pleased to welcome Pip Critten, SoCo Chair and Editor of SoCo Newsletter to our meeting. Also present, via Zoom, was Larry Hall from Sheffield who became a virtual member of the club. We look forward to seeing his films.

On February 8th. we held our Open Competition which attracted 6 entries on various themes.

The winner was Chris Wheatley with his film Cragside.

Runner up was new member Larry Hall, from Sheffield, with his film based on the famous Yellow Submarine song by The Beatles. Incidentally this film was awarded 5 Stars when shown at BIAFF. We look forward to further films of such high standard from Larry.

However, during the year, we will welcome films from members of other clubs in the following competitions.

- March 15th. Animation.
- June 7th. How to do/make something
- November 8th. A film about Gloucestershire.

See our Web Site for more information.

The Annual Inter Club Competition takes place on Saturday 20th. March. Bristol are the host club. It is most likely we shall be using Zoom once again for this event. To be confirmed.

If you are interested in joining our meetings, via Zoom, do contact me and I will send you the link.

John Greene

[Gloucester Film Makers](#)



The first meeting of 2021 was a Chairman's choice evening and, after welcoming everyone to the first meeting of 2021, Ivan Andrews proceeded to show his selection of 13 films made by members during 2020.

The following week brought the results of the Christmas Challenge to our screens when a total of six films made by members during the Christmas and New Year break were shown.

For those wondering where their next production was going to come from, the presentation by Peter Hiner entitled 'What To Film' gave some advice and provided inspiration for members.

Other meetings up to the time of writing have included: an advisory film about lighting and effects made by Roger Edwards (professional cameraman) and club member, Roger Western and member's choice, where each person chose their own favourite film to show.

A presentation by Geoff Hodgkinson, entitled Balancing Sound, delved into the technicalities of improving a soundtrack and this was followed by the next meeting during which the results of the latest challenge were shown. For this, members were tasked to make a film including at least one of three specific items which

resulted in a bumper thirteen entries being shown on the night.

Other programmed events include a presentation by Suzie Topolska on stop motion animation and the showing of a selection of SoCo competition films.

The virtual programme until June 2021 will have been posted on the Club website by the time of publication.

Currently meetings are held every Monday, start at 7pm and last about an hour or so. Topics range from basic film making skills to advanced editing techniques as well as encouraging the making and showing of members films.

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

Both the website and Facebook page are updated on a weekly basis.

<http://www.teignfilmmakersclub.org>

or visit the [Facebook page](#).

Quick update

Just finished making a film about robots and tractors.

It's called "Transformers"

Keep Smiling
Pip





Are you using the right medium?

Melvyn Dover

Takes a look at different mediums for story telling

Make sure what you're shooting is a film

Ever wondered why you want to make a film? As opposed to say, writing a book? Let's look at various types of media:

Book

Good for telling story from first person's viewpoint. Strong identifying with main character by reader : Due to a novel's essential nature the dramatic action or storyline usually takes place inside the head of the main character. Unlimited locations, including ones that don't exist. Unlimited time to tell story. Good for conveying a character's feelings, thoughts, intentions, memories, dreams and ambitions. Good for providing background information.

Stage Play

Limited number of characters and sets. Strong audience involvement ('the fourth wall'). Good for revealing character's hopes, past and present plans, needs and desires. The action of the play relies on a lot of dialogue and words.

Television Drama

Good for less than four characters per scene. Close ups. Talking heads. Limited number of sets, and usually internal.

Radio play

Like books, radio plays feed the imagination. Unlimited sets. Characters need distinctive voices.

Film

Good for live action, movement, varied and expansive outdoor locations. Highly visual - a story told in moving pictures, bits and pieces which form a whole. Limited time to tell story.

Computer Game

Not an obvious category when it comes to story telling, but computers and social media are being used to tell stories, often promoting brand names. Interactive. Limited number of often age-related 'audience'.

Sometimes transferring from one medium to another works well, other times not so.

Recently I heard a 90 min radio drama which was an adaptation of a book. It showed. Much of it consisted of the main character narrating events. It was classed as a thriller. A man took on the task of finding why his brother committed suicide, if indeed that's what it was. Any tension towards the end was lost because the narration came between the story and the listener, and much of it was told in flashback. No matter how much danger the hero was in, we knew from the start he survived it. Probably more exciting to read the book in the first place.

Of course many famous films have been adapted from books. They work because either the book is written in a 'filmic' way, with scenery, people and action highly detailed, or because the film director has taken a lot of liberties with it. In some cases the film retained only the book's title.

Francis Durbridge had many successes with adapting his characters to other media. His radio plays successfully transferred to television and theatre. His character Paul Temple ran for sixteen radio serials and later spawned a

sixty-four part big budget television series. Paul Temple also appeared in comic strips and four feature films. A lesser-known character of his, Tim Frazer, featured in stories adapted for television, crediting the writer with eighteen episodes.

I'm sure many of us can think of television series which have made it onto the big screen. Often with disastrous results. Often a problem ensues because the writers, who have made a success of the thirty minute programme format, suddenly find they need a script three times as long for the big screen. To be successful, it requires a lot of planning and creating plot points in the right place. Which could explain why some big screen adaptations are episodic.

Something like radio's The Archers or a successful T.V. soap would need many changes before hitting the screen. These are series which rely on several plot threads running concurrently, and foreshadowing of events. Though of course, if someone brought back those cliff-hanger serials of the 1950s, such entertainment might be well received.

Books transfer to the screen better than some of the other media. Harry Potter films have been very successful. I must admit of the books I've read, Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone, didn't seem to have a clear plot and the story meandered all over the place. Was it the quidditch game which was important? Harry's father Lord Voldemort? Or the Philosopher's Stone? Still, who am I to argue, a mere Muggle?



Not to worry. The Harry Potter series included enough characters to make the films interesting on screen. And the basic idea of a child going to school to learn magic fuelled many a child's imagination.

Agatha Christie's thrillers did well on the big screen (and on stage), as did Ian Fleming's Bond books (though the books were sometimes more sadistic when it came to the villain's treatment of the hero.) The franchise reached a point where some books were written after the film.

Enid Blyton's Famous Five books always seemed to me to be better kept as such. Transfers to other media, television usually, has often resulted in parody.

Finally talking of parody, a word of warning. In 1956 two writers, Brad Ashton and Dick Vosburgh were sued by the makers of *The King and I* musical for their comic parody. The writers argued that their sketch was based on the original book from 1944, *Anna and the King of Siam* by Margaret Landon. Alas they lost their case. The judge pointed out that their sketch parody included a character which was in the film but not in the original book.

Happy Filming,
Melvyn Dover.



Editing - Ask not how, ask why

Ian Simpson

Wollongong
Camera Club Movie
Makers,
Australia

If you have the latest smartphone you will have noticed that not only can you shoot up to 4K video, but your phone will also edit your pictures and video clips into a short video with a musical track and an opening title.

A video, ready to be posted on the net for all your family and friends to enjoy. Often these videos are cut to the beat of the music and employ face recognition software, location tracking and the date of capture to select and organise the images and clips that make up the video.

With such automation available in your phone, one could ask why spend hours or days at your computer editing your footage and images trying to achieve a similar result?

CHART HERE

Why not just let the computer do it for you? For sure these videos will not win a video competition at your club, but they are great records and memory joggers of family events and holidays.

For one who began this hobby using Super 8 film, where editing was a tedious and time-consuming job of cutting up film segments and gluing them back together, this computer editing and movie generation still seems a bit surreal.

But is the "how" of doing an edit all there is to editing?

Is this simple assemblage of shots in a logical order all there is to editing? For many people it is. For others, once the "how" is understood and the skills developed by practice, then the "why" becomes an important consideration during editing.

As an example, the table lists the shot sequence of a boat ride through the narrow gap of the horizontal falls in Western Australia. The narrow gap restricts the tidal flow and as a result there is a drop of about one metre between water levels. A consequence of this is that there is a turbulent and fast flowing current.

This passage through the narrow gap could easily have been captured as one continuous shot. Such a shot would have successfully documented the rough ride and drop between water levels.

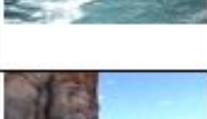
However, there is another approach which takes advantage of the several passes made through the gap. Here extra shots can be taken of the water flows, the rock walls as well as the boat navigating the gap. Now the passage through the gap can be broken up into alternating scenes of the movement of the boat and of the turbulence of the water.

This inter cutting expands the actual time it takes to pass through the gap and so enhances the experience.

The tension in the ride is also increased by the continual referencing to the turbulent and fast water flow.

To date no program on your phone will this sort of editing, that is, editing that enhances the viewer's experience.

It's the human not the machine that understands 'why' this type of editing is important and often better.

HORIZONTAL FALLS SEQUENCE		
1		4 sec : 24 frames
2		2 sec : 6 frames
3		2 sec : 47 frames
4		1 sec : 3 frames
5		0 sec : 54 frames
6		0 sec : 57 frames
7		1 sec : 9 frames
8		0 sec : 50 frames
9		0 sec : 59 frames
10		0 sec : 58 frames
11		2 sec : 22 frames



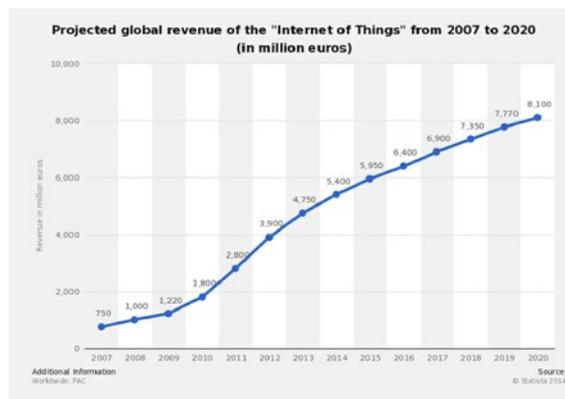
My Science Teacher (1951) was right

Seventy years ago, I had a science teacher by the name of Ron Wood. Every Thursday afternoon, we had two hours of 'Activities', wherein we were able to pursue a hobby. I chose photography and Ron Wood took the class, because he was an FRPS (Fellow of the Royal Photographic Society). He was also about thirty years old and had a brilliant memory, with another four letters behind his name in biology and even more for chemistry. Today, he would be classed a scientist with vision.

He always started a lesson with a statement. He entered the classroom, and his pupils would immediately fall silent. (They had corporal punishment back then). Taking a piece of chalk, he drew an exponential curve on the blackboard and said: 'This is the past, present and future of science ... and we are about here.' He chalked a small cross on the knee of the upward curve. A 'brilliant 12-year-old mathematician who could do logarithms, teacher's pet,' sitting at the front of the class mentioned a time-line.

'Your lifetime,' came the reply. According to the little cross, we were approaching a near vertical part of the curve.

The objective of business is to keep the public buying wares, which advance in stages, i.e., without quantum leaps. Our whole world is now computer driven, like it or not. Computers are in nearly everything we touch. Modern cars are packed with a computer. My motorcycle has about fifteen sensors, just to run a single cylindered engine, the mixture being governed by an algorithm taking readings from RPM, road speed, air temperature, engine temperature, atmospheric pressure (exhaust backpressure), throttle opening, exhaust pipe temperature. It then recycles hot gasses from the exhaust to burn anything unburnt from the previous cylinder charge. When you ask why, the most common answer is 'because they can'.



For many years, manufacturers struggled with producing good pictures when their cameras were set to AUTO, the main problem being, we see colours dependent upon surrounding colours, backgrounds etc. In order to reproduce colours as we humans perceive them, calls for a great deal of accuracy.

There are three distinct groups of people where colour is concerned, we have the realists, who demand that the colour be truly accurate. The second group tend to prefer the twee, where the warm red tones are preferred and saturation is pushed. The third group ignores what the original colour is or was at the time they

took the shot, as they become colourists and tint their films in accordance with mood. The manufacturer is expected to provide accurate colours with consistency.

Many expensive cameras are overly expensive, as they are with facilities that enable the user to control every facet of the recording, even unto the point of utter confusion. The majority of users are without interest in filmmaking and we also have the 'in betweenies' who make short films using iPhones. In the past, you could tell the difference ... and now you can't, the common factor being AUTO.

With computers becoming ever smaller, we have university students thinking in terms of a computer making its own devices to handle a change in shape of a new or modified product, using a 3D copier. When thinking in those terms, it is likely that computers of the future will sense touch ... and that is very humanoid. We are fast approaching a computer with the size and capability of the human mind ... God forbid, if they ever develop a need for self-preservation!

It has long been a desire of mankind to inject a computer into the bloodstream to seek out biological problems and correct them, but by then, we will have mastered DNA to such a level that, RNA medicines of which we've read so much about alongside vaccination, will probably be advanced enough to put things right.

Cameras of the future will be so small that it may prove difficult to handle, probably be mounted on tiny drones and be radio controlled over a distance of say 20 metres or so. Studio cameras today are not manned, but controlled from a consul, the producer dollying them into positions of his choice. Instead of propellers, drones may have wings, such as those found on an insect, as they are far more efficient. Most of us have heard the one about the bumble bee, according to the theory of flight, shouldn't be able to fly ... but the bumble bee doesn't know that. The 'V'- formation of waterbirds that fly thousands of miles when migrating, it was published in 2014, is so that the bird behind may take advantage of turbulence, which produces both 'upwash' and 'downwash'. They sense and use the upwash. What I found odd about this new discovery, was that my father told me of this in 1950 and he worked in a gasworks. I always did suspect that he was a bit of a clever bugger.

It follows that TV's will not be computerised, but computers in their own right and such computers won't have a screen, but will produce a Hologram and it will be like watching a stage play, with real people.

Every generation has its Luddites and Dinosaurs amongst its elderly, of which I'm one, preferring that which I know and am familiar with, to some new technology that is mystifying from the start. It took me a fortnight to learn to 'drive' my first NLE and the pictures it produces still take some beating. One's eyes worsen with age, so the pictures improve! It's a win-win situation.

Cameras today are using the dualling of processes, to bring about ever greater resolution with speed and efficiency, in much the same way as microprocessor work in tandem, they now being worked with multiples of four and five or even seven.

The physical limitations of CMOS (Complementary Metal Oxide Semiconductor) is that it is slow, much

Dave Jones

Shares his thoughts



Dave Jones continues ...

slower than TTL (Tata Technologies Limited) of 1994. The advantage in CMOS is that it uses an incredibly small amount of current per device. In order to achieve the best of both worlds, the scientists devised a way of using multiple devices to work in parallel and the mathematicians, provided the algorithm. Today's i7 CPU employs no less than 1.75 billion transistors and the numbers are growing with each passing year.

It is a fact of life that whilst some of us prefer to manually set our cameras, as do I, the modern-day camera will always produce the best picture. The only reason that we 'artists' prefer to set our own exposure etc., is to produce FX in camera, it being argued that to produce the desired FX at source gives one a greater scope than an editor will provide, as it lends itself to experiment ... 99.9% of videographers don't have the

need for FX beyond greenscreen, as they don't produce dramas or go in for special lighting etc., you know ... the serious stuff.

As most youngsters today have an iPhone, I think it is time that they include filmmaking as part of their curriculum, after all, it's like maths and English, things that are used every day. It's also time for iPhones to be strapped to their wrists, so that they can use both hands and reduce theft. Virtual imaging will surely become a teaching method, with Body Locking, this is where the image follows the user's gaze and the user is thus 'placed' in a virtual environment ... a wonderful teaching aid! Should a child misbehave, you stand them in the corner of a room and run a 'Nightmare', as punishment. Oh ... the mind boggles!

Dave Jones



Alan's Ramblings

This continued lock down has obviously meant not being able to go out filming with the freedom we once had, so I look forward to the day when the restrictions are relaxed. In the meantime, I have been looking through some of my old films and numerous boxes of slides and I am dismayed at the picture ratio in nearly every instance.

Why was it that I always filmed and photographed scenes 50/50 instead of the rule of thirds? It is so obvious when applied, but not at the time when half of my images consisted of just sky. There was so much of interest directly in front of the camera, yet it never occurred to me that this should be part of the overall view. Thank goodness I joined a video club to learn the finer arts of composition.

low sun and deep blue skies so rewarding to the film maker. I hope to take advantage of these conditions, as I have just had an idea for a five minute film.

This difficult period has also allowed me to clear out my numerous video camera tapes and few VHS tapes that have lain untouched for many a year. In addition, I have whittled down my cine film collection to about thirty reels on 400 foot spools, most of which I will keep for the time being.

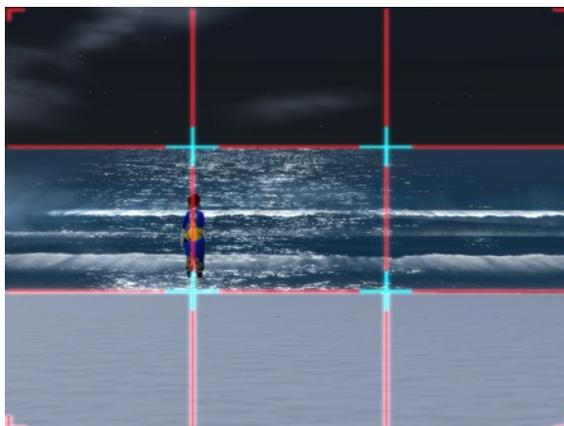
On that point, I remember reading not so long ago either in the So-Co News or the Film & Video Maker, an article about a business that copies cine film. Could someone please provide contact details as I don't seem to find them at the moment. Please email alan46exdriver@virginmedia.com or phone on 07889154853.

Thanks to Zoom, I was able to show two of my films to the RCTS, that's the Railway Correspondence and Travel Society formed in 1928 to bring together those interested in rail transport. It has numerous branches throughout the country and with the coming of Zoom it allows members and visitors to attend any meeting nationwide.

Normally I show my films at their meeting room in Chichester, but these online gatherings allow for a wider audience and in this case I attracted 90 viewers. I was a bit worried as my internet connection is not too good here, but I managed a full two hours without incident.

Over the following days I received several emails about my programme, completing an overall experience that I found very rewarding.

Alan



That's why I cannot wait to get out again especially with Spring approaching as I find this time of year with its

Alan Wallbank

Difficult times



Pulling in an audience

Gordon Young
LACI

Bristol Film &
Video Society

In December, Handforth Parish Council in Cheshire held a planning and environment committee meeting. In attendance were two councillors, Aled Brewerton and Brian Tolver, and clerk to the meeting Jackie Weaver. They argued about the legitimacy of the session, insults were hurled and members kicked out. A video was posted on Twitter and went viral, gaining more than two million views overnight.

Let's ponder this: a rowdy meeting takes place and we don't know what they're discussing. For me, it is of absolutely no interest whatsoever. Couldn't care less. I would, however urge the 6,266 residents of Handforth to watch it. But a group of people twice the size of the population of Birmingham think it is worth watching.

What is going on? Has the world gone mad? I uploaded a two-minute film, *Sicilian Wedding*, to YouTube on 3 January. It has had 11 hits since then. Now, I'm certainly not expecting two million views but it is a pleasant little piece, featuring a beautiful bride and elegantly-dressed wedding guests who perhaps exude a whiff of, shall we say . . . a certain Sicilian syndicate.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jbmoloxocls>



Filed on the fly, I could not mingle among the guests but just moved around on the periphery with camera running. The bride looked directly at me for just half a second – twelve frames, so I time-stretched the shot to within an inch of its life.

At the same time I uploaded *Longest Rail Journey in Britain*, a five-minute film shot through a train carriage window in a day, from Aberdeen to Penzance. It even features bits of Birmingham but has only recorded 59 views. And

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1cHzbTqFvsw>



Observing the Bridge is a pensive little production, eight minutes long - a proper documentary with a serious, contemplative script. How many views . . . ? Two million? Nope. One hundred thousand? Nope. 232 since last

August, and that figure is influenced by showing it via Zoom meetings.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FHFVZnXpslk&t=400s>



So, how do I get just some of those two million folk who were transfixed by a lively parish council meeting to raise their game, be a bit more discerning and enjoy my films? YouTube advises key words in titles: I renamed *Britain in a Day* to mention 'rail journey'. And should I fill the 'description' box with lots of appropriate words, rather than a lyrical elucidation?

Those of us who make films need to address this problem. I can't screen my films at public showings nowadays and I want people to see them, otherwise there is no point making them. They say that Facebook is for friends you went to school with; LinkedIn is for those you wish you went to school with. Similarly, Vimeo is a snootier version of YouTube. But the shouty councillors were on Twitter. Is that the platform of choice for uploading our films? And what is all this 'hashtag #' metadata business? Will that entice potential viewers?

What about renaming all my films **#Rowdy Parish Council Meeting** to pull 'em in?

Gordon Young

It's probably a long time ago that you gave your email address to head office and some of the email addresses are no longer current.

If you have received this email direct from the editor then we have your current email address.

If you have received it from a third party, such as a club secretary or friend, could you please let us have you current email address.

Please send any email address amendments to:

pipcritten@googlemail.com



Making "Pork Chop"

The '48 hour film challenge' is a yearly competition run by the multi-arts venue, Exeter Phoenix. I've been taking part for 3 years now. The task is to create a short film no more than 3 minutes long within the space of a weekend. It seems feasible at first, but the tricky part is that you must also abide by a given brief (this usually is a line of dialogue, prop, or character that you must include) as well as a genre picked at random. Even though this sounds daunting, the competition welcomes filmmakers of any level of experience, but for those who are more competitive, there is an opportunity to win awards. Due to current situations, all entries needed to be filmed remotely this year which made it slightly more challenging.

Suzie Topolska

Takes us behind the scenes in her film "Pork Chop"

A film made for the 48 hour Challenge.



Friday evening, which was when I started haphazardly jotting my story idea onto a scrap piece of paper. Luckily, I've always had this idea at the back of my mind of creating a film with my toy animal puppet collection (no judgement please), and I thought this was the perfect opportunity for me to finally execute this idea. A pig would be enjoying their ordinary daily routine (therefore adhering to the biopic genre), but then a frog would suddenly arrive at the door and have a grand battle with them because they are the pig's angry ex-lover (therefore adding a spicy spin to the overused 'daily routine' concept). I know it seems like an outlandish premise, but wacky family-friendly comedies are my forte. I also wanted to play around with the film shifting into parodies of other genres like action and romance, and I would accompany this with changing music choices.



Then to bring the film to an end, I wanted to have the pig accidentally kill the frog in a melodramatic death scene. As for the brief, the toilet roll would be incorporated when the frog's son goes for a bathroom break during the fight, whilst the line of text "whatever happens, don't touch that" would be used as part of the

frog's last dying words. The animals would be able to speak through subtitles.



On Saturday, I started filming as much as I could during daylight (though I will admit that I didn't wake up until 10:30). Having to make sure my hand wasn't visible in any shots was a bit tedious, but I had a lot of fun filming the action sequence without a strict plan; deciding to include my toy Nerf guns, trying tracking and whip pan shots, throwing my guitar around, and using a tacky explosion effect. My parents found it a bit odd why I was crouching in the kitchen playing with toy puppets. Then during the evening, I recorded some of my own foley and searched for fun sound effects I could use.

Stressful day

Sunday was easily the most stressful day since I still had more than half of the film to shoot, edit, add all the sound design, and then upload it by 7 pm. I managed to send mine in at precisely 6:59. I thought my heart was going to give out. I probably would've had time to colour grade and fine-tune the version I sent in if I hadn't spent some of Saturday evening watching Shrek 4, but what's done is done I guess. Everyone's successful entries were screened online as part of the Two Short Nights film festival 2021.

I hope I've encouraged some of you to maybe take part in the competition next year. I promise I'm not being sponsored. It's a great way to prompt people into producing a short film with only 2 days of your time being taken up (since I tend to procrastinate my film projects). The screening is always the most fun part since you get to watch different filmmaker's creative spin on the same brief, but interpreted through varying genres.

I hope you enjoy my entry, "Pork Chopped":



<https://youtu.be/aYruhRUJG14>

Suzie Topolska



Filming in Lockdown

Oli Seaman

Making the most of lockdown

I used to regularly make films – getting crews of actors and technicians together usually in the function room of a pub on a Sunday afternoon. Lockdown put a stop to all that, so I spent nearly a year making only a few solo projects. I could theoretically have attempted to work a crew applying Covid safe practices but didn't want the hassle or responsibility if someone got infected.

Then it occurred to me that a film which is about two people having a webcam-based conversation could be made under lockdown rules without people needing to get together. This is the same principle as BBC's most excellent 'Staged', although I think I had the idea independently.

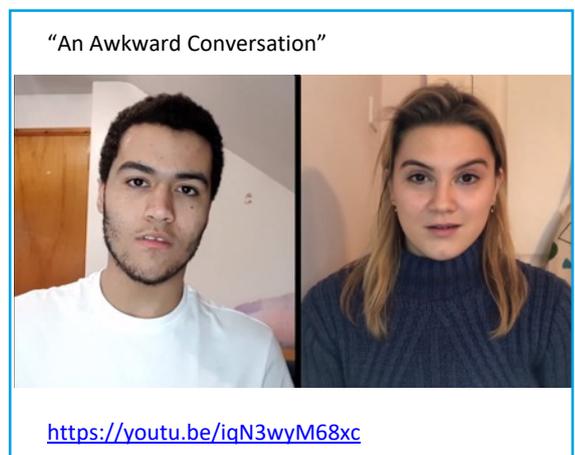
So with the limitation that you can only have actors interact through webcams, and you're restricted in their movements etc within the frame, the only remaining limitation to the film you can produce is your imagination. If you can come up with a script within those parameters, you can get it made without leaving your house.

The website Mandy.com is full of actors with little to do; they generally have modern phones which are very capable of filming in HD quality, they often have ring lights etc for basic lighting, and some have plug-in microphones or independent ways of recording sounds. Those are basically all the elements you need for filming. So I've posted details of the film onto the site and quickly got responses from lots of actors to pick through.

Before filming day, I've asked actors to send me a short clip using the video and audio equipment they're planning to use so I can confirm the file formats, quality etc and sometimes ask them to adjust things. Then on the day I have the actor face directly into their phone for recording their scenes, but just next to their phone they have a laptop with a zoom session running so I can watch their performance and give direction notes while they're recording.

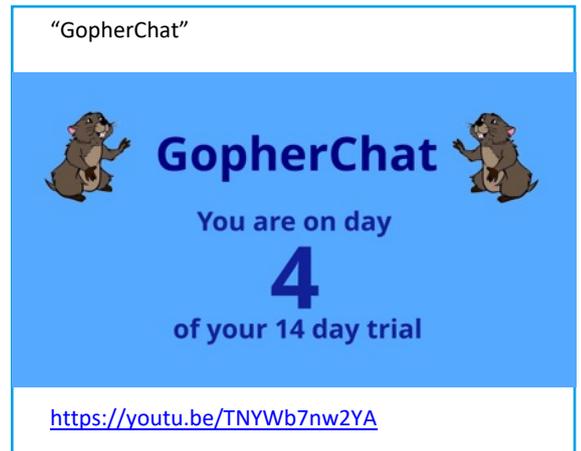
If a couple are having a conversation, I will film them on different days (good to focus on one actor at a time) and have someone (sometimes the other actor) reading in for the other part on zoom so they have something to act against.

Using this technique I've filmed "An Awkward Conversation" and "GopherChat"



They are both two-person comedies. Each took about a month from draft script to publication.

This technique produces a different style of film – specifically, there's much less 'cinematography' involved since you don't have much control of lighting, you can't control camera angles etc. This suits me personally as my films tend to focus on the story rather than the look and feel (mine are more like writing a play and filming it). You can attempt to make up for lack of cinematography control with post-filming lighting effects, and in both of those films I've made use of zooming in to the footage I've got as a substitute for moving the camera in to the actor on a dolly track or slide.



I then got to thinking, "Where else can I take this technique", and it occurred to me that I've always avoided films involving a significant number of actors because of the problem of scheduling them together on filming day, but that's no longer a limitation. So the film I'm currently working on is an 'ensemble' piece involving 6 actors (one is not human) which would be much more of a challenge to film face-to-face, and already thinking where I could take this technique for the next film beyond that.

One of the potential problems of this approach is that you're relying on the technology available to the actors and, although you can ask for test footage, you really have little control on filming day. I have had cases where DaVinci Resolve was not able to understand the film format so I had to first convert it with another tool (then it all came out upside down!) and cases where the audio sounds okay but on close examination has room echo which is very odd if you're cutting between that actor and one whose sound recording is perfect.

When you go to Mandy.com to fill in the details of your film, I specify "Online/Digital", "No pay", "Copy of the project", "Food expenses" and "Travel expenses". I've found in the past (pre-Covid) if you don't specify these then the Mandy job review process will reject the job before actors see it. Personally I also offer the actors £10 in lieu of the meal I would have bought them if they'd come to filming, and also it's a nice gesture of appreciation, bank-transferred to them after the shoot. Other actor websites are available, Mandy just the one I've used.

I'm expecting to see lots of "Staged" style films coming out soon, since there's now really no excuse not to get out and make films!

Oli Seaman

Chair, Reading Film and Video Makers



This and That

Robert Paget

Tips and advice

Does everything we film have to be towards a specific film?

Is every completed film for a competition? Surely, it is good to just pick up the camera and test your abilities to film something different, experiment with focus transitions, or just work on composition skills?

In the last year I have seen impressive films which had been shot entirely in a club members' gardens, using a lot of thought and patience. I consider that sets an example to us all. Even in lockdown, there are opportunities to film, and lots of time to edit and research.

"If you are passionate about anything, make use of your time" (Gary Barlow BBC TV Saturday Kitchen live. January 2021)

Locked in, our late Autumn garden moving towards winter

After capturing some film of water droplets on the washing line and the few remaining green plants in the garden over a period of days, I found that some of the footage could be used for a new project. The telephoto end of my video camera gave the possibility of shots which on my DSLR would require heavily cropping of the still to achieve the same result. A few stills grabbed from the video gave material to experiment with in "Paint Shop Pro", and a new wallpaper image for the day. Somehow, I had managed to alter the video camera optical stabilization settings, so just finding that out and correcting it was useful.

It is often the way, that you search for one piece of information, you find out something entirely different. I remember one very loved SVHS recorder, which we had used for time-shifting TV, and was now on its way to the dustbin, when I realized that a sticky clear protective panel was on the front of the illuminated display. I removed that on its last day.

My Canon 250D DSLR, which I bought specifically for timelapse video, had not been showing me how full the SD card was, leading me to scour the lengthy downloaded instruction manual. I had found that despite the touch screen focus, and follow eyes focus system, it did not match my main Canon video camera's optical stabilization abilities. I did not really expect it to. After taking some stills of the cobwebs, when the camera came into its own,



I briefly tried some video handheld "push in" shots, which I could slow down when editing. Even though the selected lens had its image stabilization running, I felt it was better suited to giving improved sharpness to stills, than dealing with larger camera movements when shooting handheld video. Although I never found the card usage display until later, I discovered that I could also

enable two levels of image stabilization settings within the camera body, and although that causes a slight reduction in field of view, whichever lens is fitted, it now produces a very steady image.

Timelapse

Most of my attempts at timelapse have been through filming long clips of say half an hour, and then squeezing them down on the timeline. But there are all sorts of tempting products which can aid with motion lapse and hyperlapse:

The Syrp Genie mini powered device at under £250 looks very interesting, and will fit to a DSLR or Video camera, but buying any equipment enthusiastically "on spec" is always risky, and there may be simpler ways of achieving the same. The "all in one" option with a DJI Osmo Pocket2 starting at around £330 may simplify what you need to take on a shoot, and the programming of its motorized camera head give even a better range of shots. With an optional radio microphone, four built in microphones, programmable motion-lapse sequences, a tiny lens which actually focuses and the possibility of 64mp stills, who would not want this in their gadget bag?

Music Makes the Movies

Somewhere in my LP collection, is an old album "Music Makes the Movies".. However "1960s" that may sound, there is a lot of truth in it. When researching the forthcoming competitions of IAC member clubs via their websites, the "film to music competition" is still alive and well in various guises. When you see the competition entries it becomes clear that the simple concept of adding music is perceived in different ways, so let's analyse why that is, and how enjoyable it can be.

Since mid October I have unashamedly indulged myself by editing several short films which rely heavily on their music tracks. It had been years since I had attempted this style, and found it great fun. The results included three seasonal "video greetings" films to send to friends, and which were an attempt to emulate the "Jacquie Wilson" online animated greeting films. One of those films has even provided me with a different "House logo".



I consider there is great opportunity, not to just learn how to initially use basic editing to a musical beat (and please, please, NOT to every single beat!), but to make your film interpret that music with your story. Remember this can be in a way that nobody else could, because your visuals are unique, and so is your imagination. Work towards taking your audience on a visual journey precisely where you want them to go, and avoid their predicting where every edit will come.



Robert Paget continues....

I far prefer to watch modern or Ballroom dancing when there is an accompaniment of emotional music, and there are dramatic moments being interpreted visually. Dawn may be watching every step, hold and hand extension, but I am letting the whole experience wash over me, just as I try to do with any film.

Always avoiding the “musical wallpaper” approach, where the background music is added at the last moment, it certainly helps to have a basic plan of where the visuals will take the story. Your plan may include some “key moments” where you know you may be able to grab and hold the attention and “heartstrings” of your audience. A notepad with scribbles, arrows and barely readable notes often precedes my starting the edit. Identifying where all the media clips are stored, and adding them immediately to the project, steers you straight into the edit.

When you have already made a film using the very same music track, that experience does seem to implant a style or pattern into your edit, because you already know where the emotional moments will be. When filming, I always try to capture plenty of B-Roll. I never think of it as downbeat sounding “B-Roll”, but shots which are equally important to any project. They can give you so many more options when editing, and can be used for a change of pace or a dramatic moment. Those can range from an extreme close up, a focus transition, or a downward looking drone shot which pulls away from the subject. These shots can almost dictate how your edit goes, and sometimes “your best shots” have to be excluded because they simply do not work. I have found that by the time of the first trial render, I am beginning to better understand the music than ever before, and that where I had put the visual emphasis in the first edit, perhaps needed to move, change or be made more subtle.

Forget about trying to make the whole thing fit into the perhaps restrictive time constraint of a competition. That may well have been chosen somewhat arbitrarily by a committee. Remember that you are making this film initially for yourself as fun, using your creativity and to your own exacting standards.

Where have all the “silent film” competitions gone, and could they ever resurface?

Sharing

When you upload a film to Youtube, perhaps sharing that to your Facebook page, or load directly to Facebook, will the audio track always be listened to? When viewed on a mobile phone there is a good chance that it may be played either with fairly poor audio or completely silent.

To retain audience attention in that scenario, is an even greater challenge, and we may need to return to the roots of the moving image, the content and composition of every shot. Recently we struggled to watch the Antonioni film “The Passenger”. For myself, it felt as though he was overawed by the scenic locations, and

failed to exploit that in camera work and edit. Perhaps he was making up the shooting script on the spot, watching and guiding actors using a megaphone as though he were in the early days of silent Cinema, and working out how continuity could be made for the next shot. As for sound recording and Foley sound, it has to be an instructional example of “how not to”. Yet his skills and artistry flourished when filming “Blow Up”.

For a comparison, I tracked down “8 ½” by Federico Fellini, and after only a brief period of watching it on a Tablet, with sound turned off, I was stunned by the strong images and compositional skills in every shot. Whatever film we are attempting to make, we have to give at least as much time and effort to the visuals as we do to the audio.

Last opportunity



30th December 2020 presented a last opportunity for location filming before another lockdown. In addition, the amended CAA Drone regulations would alter where, or certainly which, drones with cameras of various specifications and mass, could be flown legally.



Amazingly, just as we left Europe, the UK adopted the EU regulations. In fading pale winter light, I set out to capture a very basic “Winter Landscape” film. Wind speeds had abated, and there was still flooding to reflect the bleak winter sky.

Robert Paget

If you have any video equipment for sale contact the editor to feature it in this magazine:

Pip Critten

pipcritten@googlemail.com



Lee Prescott
FACI

Looks back on the
life of Stars of
Yesteryear

Super Stars - gone but not forgotten

With the "Passing" of **Christopher Plummer** CC a.k.a. Arthur Christopher Orme Plummer brings me to the thought that this now effectively concludes what were, possibly never to be again, the great days of the Cinema with so many, many wondrous films all gathering dust in vaults somewhere!

He was a Canadian (December 1929 – February 2021) and appeared in many notable films in his 70 years career. (I wonder how he "escaped" Star Trek!)

Of course maybe the most famous was "The Sound of Music" with Julie Andrews.



Plummer was born in Toronto but reached adulthood in Senneville, Quebec. He debuted on stage in 1958 in "Stage Struck", his career then followed Theatre, Film and TV. His film career for which he is most noted, involved appearances over the decades in what were are all notable productions - far to long to list here.

He won many awards over the years; An Academy Award, Two Emmy Awards, Two Tony Awards, Golden Globe, the Screen Actors Guild Award, and a BAFTA.

He was also one of the very few winners of the Triple Crown of Acting. He won the Academy Award at the age of 82 for Best Supporting Actor! At the age of 88 he received a Nomination, the oldest Actor to have ever done so.

Jack Hawkins CBE a.k.a. John Edward Jack Hawkins (September 1910 – July 1973). His Career 1930s to 1970s. He was mostly and best known for portraying Military Officers et al. He was a Student at the Italia Conti Drama School, London.

His death was caused from cancer of the throat due to his constant smoking as many as 60 fags a day although he cut these down to 5 a day!

During the production of "Guns at Batasi" (1964), his voice began to falter. At Christmas 1965 he was diagnosed and then had an operation on his throat. He continued to work but his failing voice was, by his approval, dubbed by Robert Rietty or Charles Grey. He died in 1973 shortly after the insertion of a "voice box" in his throat.

He was voted top Box Office British "Star" in 1954. He was offered the part of Melville Farr in "Victim" (1961) but turned it down and was replaced by Dirk Bogarde. Later Bogarde said that Hawkins turned the part down because he thought that portraying a Gay Barrister would compromise his Screen Image and spoil his possible chance of a Knighthood! What these days then?



He resented the suggestion that he was typecast as the man of war films noting that John Mills, Dickie Attenborough, Trevor Howard had played in more war films than he had.

In 1965 Jack Hawkins had started coughing up blood. His last role using his own voice was in 1961 – in "Dr. Kildare".

Jack Hawkin, in 1940, joined The Royal Welch Fusiliers and was Commissioned.

Serving in India in 1944 and been promoted Colonel, he was responsible for ENSA In S.E. Asia. He left the Army in 1946 and was made a CBE in 1958.

He was in three Best Picture Academy Awards. "The Bridge on the River Kwai", (1957). "Ben Hur" (1959), "Lawrence of Arabia" (1962) also in the Library of Congress. And also in the Nominated film "Nicholas and Alexandra" (1971).

Sir Dirk Bogarde: a.k.a. Derek Niven van den Bogaerde – March 1921 to May 1999. He was originally a "matinee idol" in such films as the "Doctor" series, (*Books by Richard Gordon*), Rank Organisation. Apart from being an actor he was also a writer responsible for several best selling memoirs and novels.

He became prominent in film starting with "The Blue Lamp" at the start of the 1950s. This was followed by the very successful, "Doctor" productions. He won a B.A.F.T.A. award for his performance in "The Servant" (1963). There followed many successes including "A Bridge Too Far", (1977).

He was appointed as a "Commander of the Order of Arts and Letters" in 1990 followed by his Knight Bachelor



Lee continues.....

in 1992. His ancestry was Flemish through his Daddy. His Mama was a Scottish actress.

Dirk had a sister younger than himself and a brother Gareth who became an advertising film producer.

As a result of his home then in North London becoming unmanageable, Dirk wallowed off to his Mama's relations in Glasgow. After three or so years he returned to North London in 1937. In Scotland he was a pupil at Glen's Science High School, an unhappy time apparently. Back in London he was a student at the University College School. This was followed by studies at The Chelsea School of Art. He then commenced his acting career just before the star of WW2. His entry into films was as a none credited extra in George Formby's "Come on George" (1939).



In WW2 and known as Derek "Pip" Bogaerde he served in the Royal Corps of Signals. Aged just 22 he was commissioned 2nd Lieutenant in the Queen's Royal Regiment. He saw action in both the European and Pacific conflicts. Promoted Captain and then Major he became a specialist "Air Photographic Interpreter" with the Royal Canadian Air Force and also with the "Second Army" for which he selected targets for the R.A.F. Bomber Command.

Later on when visiting some of the targets which had been selected to slow and halt the Germans in retreat he saw horrors quite unmentionable here! He was one of the very first officers to enter the Bergen Belsen Concentration Camp in Germany... "An experience I could not talk about for many, many years"!

"It was Dante's Inferno"!.....

His London acting debut happened in 1939 with the stage name of Derek Bogaerde. In the play "Cornelius" by J.B. Priestly. Then his Agent renamed him as Dirk Bogarde! "Handsome enough to have a film career". So, he was contracted to The Rank Organisation under the control of producer Betty Box who produced almost all of his early films and via whom he acquired his "Matinée Idol Image"!

Early on, 1949, he starred in the film "Once A Jolly Swagman". This was followed by performing as a Speedway Rider for the "Cobras". Through the 1950s Bogarde was under extended contract to The Rank Organisation. There followed many films in which he "starred" becoming a very good box office draw.

He left The Rank Organisation in the early 1960s. He rid himself of the heart throb image he'd acquired performing more challenging and successful roles. He collected two B.A.F.T.A. awards. It's also claimed that his performance in the film "Victim" advantageously

influenced The Sexual Offences Act of 1967 that ended the illegality.

Dirk Bogarde was nominated some five times for B.A.F.T.A. awards. He received a special award for services to the Cinema at the Cannes Film Festival in 1983, a B.F.I. Fellowship in 1987, a B.A.F.T.A. Tribute Award in 1988, a Honorary Doctor of Letters St. Andrews University, Knight Bachelor in 1992, Ordre des Arts et des Lettres by the French government in 1990, Doctorate of Letters in 1993 University of Sussex. He was also the very first Britisher to be Jury President of the Cannes Film Festival. Regarding Dirk Bogarde's career there is very much more.

JOHN MILLS CBE: a.k.a. Sir John / Lewis Ernest Watts Mills (February 1908 to April 2005). Appeared in more than 120 films. His considerable career was over 70 years.

Come 1971 he was awarded an Academy Award as Best Supporting Actor for his performance in the Irish based film - "Ryan's Daughter". From my recall a memorable performance.

A native of Norfolk, his Mama was a Box Office Manager, his Daddy was a mathematics teacher. John Mills entered the world aboard the Watts Naval School as a result of his Dad's employment therein. When a child he also lived in the village of Belton his papa had become the headmaster of the village school wherein he enjoyed his very first stage performance at the grand young age of 6. Much later his sister Annette was Presenter of BBC TV's "Muffin the Mule".

His education took place in three schools London, Beccles, and Norwich. He inscribed his initials in a school wall and I understand that they can still be seen there. After leaving school he obtained a clerical job in Ipswich before he moved to London as a commercial traveller for Sanitas.



In 1939 in WW2 he joined the Army in R.E.M.E. He was promoted to 2nd Lieutenant. In 1942 he was discharged for medical reasons.



Lee continues.....

He became quite interested in acting, his debut took place at the London Hippodrome, 1929 in "Five O'Clock Girl". He then went into Cabaret.

He later toured in India, China and the Far East in several Plays. Noel Coward saw him and gave him a letter of introduction to use in London. He featured in "Coward's Cavalcade" (1931) then in "Words and Music" the following year.

He moved into Films firstly "The Midshipmaid" (1932), "The Ghost Camera" (1933), "Britannia of Billingsgate" (1934). He was then given leading roles in several films and shorts in 1934, 1935. He was also in "The Royal Cavalcade" (1935).

He had the starring role in "Brown on Resolution" (1935), then more Shorties followed by a leading role in "Tudor Rose" (1936) as Lord Guildford Dudley. Apart from films he also continued with stage work.

He was in "O.H.M.S." (1937) directed by Hollywood's Raoul Walsh. He was then in "The Green Cockatoo" (1937). He was in the very popular film "Goodbye Mr. Chips" (1939) with Robert Donat. He continued to appear in many films and on stage. A special mention here of his

role as an Able Seaman in Coward's "In Which We Serve" (1942), which was an enormously popular hit.

His ascent to "Stardom" commenced with the film "We Dive At Dawn" (1943). Another great success was as Pip in "Great Expectations" (1946). An especial mention here - he appeared as Captain Scott in "Scott Of The Antarctic" (1946).

His film earnings had reached £20,000. Per film! He became a producer but his career took a dive. Later his popularity revived.

As with all the others much, much, more can be written about John Mills.

All were "Super Stars". Gone but will never be forgotten as long as my generation and the previous one lives on.

They were and remain the "Super Stars" of the Cinema. I would add that there isn't anyone "today" who can approach or come near them. They were ALL Entertainment PLUS.

Lee Prescott FACI



Dear Pip,

If there's one thing I admire more than anything it's people that are expert at something that I am absolutely useless at. In this case it's 'script writing'.

In 2003 the club I belonged to at the time were filming a local street carnival. This took place in the village of Chacewater just 3 miles from Truro.

We started filming in the Spring at the committee meeting stage and went right through the carnival to where all the money collected went right up to Santa giving out presents to all good causes.

While filming the set up in the field on Carnival day I asked a lady if she would mind if I could interview her. "Not me" she said, anything to do with film you should ask my Dad, He's over there, he used to write scripts in HOLLYWOOD!"

I looked around and I saw that all my fellow club members were busy filming away. So I made a dash and introduced myself to Stan Mason. He was an extremely pleasant chap and wasn't short of words answering any questions I may have had to ask. The important one was, "Would he be interested in giving a talk to us at a club night sometime?".

"Love to", he said.

The following is his complete transcript of his chat to us that evening. I hope you enjoy reading it as much as we club members enjoyed that summer evening in 2003.

Think positive and stay negative.

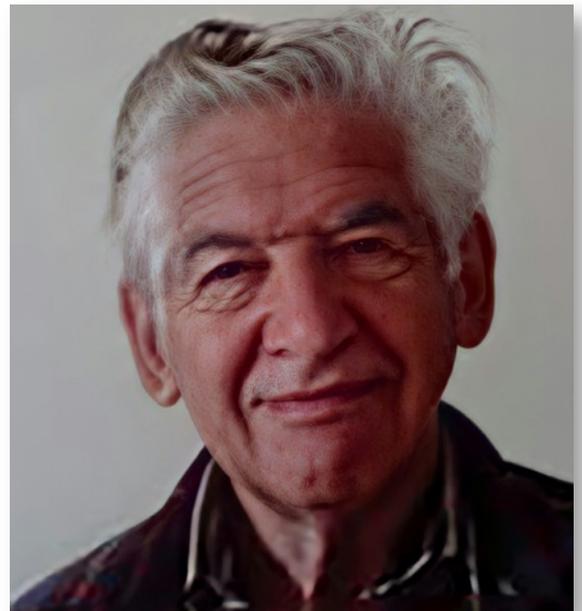
Good Luck for 2021 and stay safe.

Richard Abram - Mylor Movie Makers

[Editor: I have scanned this document and it can be downloaded from the SoCo News Archive.]

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Stan Mason



One To Watch

A couple from Lee Prescott

All aboard!

<https://www.youtube.com/embed/mcbHKAWik3I>



Bird Ballet. It's good and the birds are identified in the end credits. Sound on. 2 ½ mins

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HzKsfhalAPo>



Once in a while you get film that is really worth sharing. Cannes competition winner.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hRMcPjRWm-g>



A Few from Pip Critten

A delightful animation with a little twist at the end. So clever that with no words you know just what the characters are thinking.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZQGuVKHtrxc>



One Voice Children's Choir. Top rate video editing.

https://www.facebook.com/OneVoiceChildrensChoir/videos/669837753713448/?notif_id=1608216562773817¬if_t=live_video&ref=notif



Why I don't shoot RAW or 4K with digital cameras - No not me, a pro film maker.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oZiW4PGURwk>



Envato Tuts+ This is a great channel for FREE tutorials about digital media. This link is to an introduction to Premiere Pro, but there are loads of others.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KfPIp-G1bpY>



Selected
Movies
from
the
World
Wide Web

Send your
contributions to

pipcritten@googlemail.com

SoCo Regional Council

Changes

The SoCo Website can be found here: <http://iacsoco.webs.com/>

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John Simpson – Weymouth

Lee Prescott – Stonehouse

New & Rejoined:

MR CLIVE STANLEY, Tewkesbury

MR MELVYN DOVER, Weymouth

MR IAN BATEMAN, Exmouth

MR CHRIS GIBBONS, Twyford

Change of address / contact:

Resigned:

MR J.L. DAVIES, Brixham

MR TIM LOWE, Truro

MR GENE D ROBINSON

Cancelled:

MR JOHN GRAVETT, Basingstoke

Deceased:

Moved into SoCo Region:

Change of Name

The SoCo News Archive can be found
at either:

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

[Pip's SoCo News Archive](#)

SoCo Diary Dates

To have your event featured in SoCo News drop an email to
pipcritten@googlemail.com

For a full list of national and international events

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